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### Skekkler Hats and Lost Songs

On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> of May, Jenny Sturgeon and Eve Eunson worked with us on a project about Skekkler Hats and Lost Songs of Shetland. When they arrived, we performed the Fair Isle song we made with Jenny a year ago. Since then we had introduced chime bars. Jenny was delighted and Eve really enjoyed it too. We started with a musical warm up that was good fun. We sang different melodies in three rounds singing: Mango mango mango .... Kiwi kiwi kiwi ... Pineapple, pineapple. It was so funny. Then we changed the words to Fair Isle/Shetland words with the same syllables so we sang: Tattie tattie ... Peerie peerie peerie ... Good Shepherd, Good Shepherd, Good Shepherd, Peerie Orange! After our voices were warmed-up, we learned a song called 'Da Norrawa Wheel.' Jenny showed us an Indian instrument called a Shruti Box. We took turns to play this in the background – it is an easy instrument to play as you just move the bellows in and out. Heidi and Ander loved the Shruti box!



After break, we learned about Skekkler hats. These were part of a traditional Shetland guising costume made from straw and we were going to make our own! It was a lovely sunny day so we went outside to work with the straw because it is so messy! Stewart came to help us. We had to tie bundles of straw together and eventually ended up with enough bundles to make our hats. After that, Stewart sang us some old songs in Shetland dialect. We also started learning a song called "In A Mourneen" that was about animals like crows, sparrows, ewes, etc. doing a job to grow crops like sowing, scything and so on. Stewart sang us a version of this song to a different tune.



In the afternoon, we visited Stewart's workshop to see how he makes Fair Isle chairs. Eve and Stewart are the only people who make Fair Isle chairs! Eve learned how to make them from Stewart. We watched Stewart knotting the straw and he made it look so easy but we knew it was quite a skill! He has had lots of practice having made over 90 chairs! Wow! The chair he was making is actually going to be Jenny's chair so she got an early sneak peek at it! There was a lot of fancy machinery and many interesting treasures in the workshop. We saw part of a whale's baleen, a bit of copper ore and the spinal disc and vertebrae of a dolphin! He showed us a bullet/weapon case from the RMS Oceanic that sank near Foula in 1914!



When we got back to school, we started the first part of making the Skekkler hats. We had to use a special tying technique to join the bundles of straw together. After some help to get going, we soon got the hang of it.



On Thursday, we started the day with some more singing. We learned another song called 'King Orfeo.' The Shetland lyrics were tricky at first but we practised lots throughout the day and even added the ukuleles by learning the chords. We finished off our hats by tying everything together and had the choice of plaiting the ends (Freyja and Harris did this) or just tying them into bundles (Luca did this).



Our final activity was to create pictures of a Skekkler. When Skekklers went guising they could pull their hat over their head. People had to ask questions to guess who was who. When answering a question you would say it on an in-breath to disguise your voice and sound very creepy!



By Freyja



By Harris



By Luca

At the end of the day, Heidi, Ander and Hollie came through to watch us perform the songs we had learned. Anne also arrived in time to hear one of our songs too!



We want to say a **huge thank you** to Jenny and Eve for teaching us new songs and new straw skills! We are going to continue working on the songs with Pat. We were also very delighted and grateful to receive a copy of Eve's book 'The Fair Isle Chairs Project' for our school library. It was a brilliant couple of days enjoyed by all!

**By Fair Isle Primary School**

## Da week dat's awa...

How do you report Island events when I cannot see because the persistent daily fog has prevented me from seeing what Jimmy, my nearest neighbour, is up to?

Passengers from the cruise ship wandering around will have problems describing the island they visited but didn't see. To this end, the week has been indoors.

Work in progress towards a new shower room is progressing nicely. Ian has spent many hours down at Utra as this project has had to include setting up new office facilities. Robert has used his professional butchering qualifications to link and install electricity from the main sitting room. To my delight, he has hidden away the mass of computer's connecting cables, screens and printers.

The week started well with a morning visit on Friday from Cara and Alex coming down to Utra to announce their engagement. Apart from seeing the ring, if they had waited until the Saturday evening gathering at Stackhoull, I would not have heard their news above the noise of family and friends gathered to celebrate Fiona's birthday. Goodness knows when the event ended, but I awoke down-home around 3 am thinking that the Isle had gone quiet.

Looking at my lovely 60-years-old daughter brought back many happy memories...



We looked a bit different in those days. Betty and I are showing off our two-month-old baby daughter in north Wales, where I worked as Night Superintendent.

Building works and weather have dictated that I had no excuse not to explore and dispose of my mass of paperwork. My dear daughter has rejected my leaving the stored boxes of files to her in my Will; therefore

so began the week of memories. Last week's FIT recorded the seventh anniversary of my first official sermon, so it was a delight to receive a phone call from a girlfriend present. The two young German ladies visiting from Cologne made me reflect upon my time in Germany. Our Lower Leogh visitor lives in Rutland. She was surprised that I regularly saw a friend at Catmos Vale Hospital, Ockham and later that day had discovered a photograph of Mary Hodgkinson. Having a conversation with folk on the visiting sailing boat reported that they had just come from the Hardanger Fjord in Norway, where Ian learned his boat building. The gardening provided a break. Cut the small top lawn, and thought about putting in the early seed potatoes. Jimmy visiting said his potatoes were coming up so I had better change the name from early tatties to old!

The mass of 'Northmen' Builders records nearly resulted in a pulled muscle extracting the boxes from the loft. Betty's Given Days music folder was heavy and required a search of sheets in case bank details were included. It is good that some remaining money from that project is again assisting a music group in visiting the Isle. At long last, I found again the old deeds for the Chapel which were a great contrast to some old scout songbooks. An article written by Betty about Fair Isle recorded links with Walter Scott, Robert Lewis Stevenson and, of interest to Marie, mention of the Duchess of Bedford, who had the old house Pund. A community/ internet provision thesis by a Swedish student is not for the burning barrel but on its way to our island museum. What else happened this week?

My son Andrew represented Shetland and the area's Red Cross in being a guest in London to see Prince Charles get a new hat and title. Also, this week, there were issues requiring writing (via the computer) to raise doubts about the new system where a hospital in Glasgow phones individuals to ask if they still need their hospital appointment at the Gilbert Bain. It would have helped if one had known a date for the hospital visit in the first place! Not Scotland but down in England, nurses have announced a continuance of further strike action. This prompted another look at old press items from Betty and me commenting upon conditions needing action beyond a pay rise. In 1967 we wrote *"Does your operating theatre use American masks at more than 1s each or less refined but adequate British one at 1/2d. Where did your cord clamps come from; urinary drainage bags, catheters, autoclave tapes, plastic film, exchange transfusion sets, syringes? Start searching! Many nurses appear to have no conception of the money they are using or effectively throwing away into disposable bags for incineration..."*

Today there is a need to look beyond nurses' pay rise, such as the cost of masks during Covid 19, which seemed to enhance some MP's salaries. We should thank Felicity as there is talk again of other outer isles not having a resident nurse.

What have I missed? Eileen's dulcet tones as she tells stories during our unloading of supplies at the shop from the van. I hear she and Pat are stuck in Lerwick because of the fog (a report from Kaylee-Ann, who added she missed Neil, who always finds time to talk with her).

I am not a fan of British Summer Time, especially as we operated at this time of lambing hours. We recorded that a particular young lady in the family once declared that it was 7 o'clock and that her young brother should change his watch back. The reply was simple *"it was the clock that had changed, not the watches"*.

I was not feeling like walking the back of Ward Hill. Dave and Josie did 90% of my share. I thank them, especially as I don't think I am going to be allowed a quadbike (I do have a licence). Finally, it was good to have a coffee session with Dave putting the world to rights, and to realize when returning home, that it wasn't a huge black snake outside my house but a 150 metre pipe gathered by Ian from the South Harbour.

John

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## ISLE NOTICES

**FERRY TICKETS** - Good Shepherd IV is currently only able to take cash payment for sailings and we're unable to issue the paper ticket. Apologies for any inconvenience caused, I have no information on how long this will last.

Regards,  
Ian

**LAMB WANTED** - I'm looking for a female lamb to be a companion for my blind lamb, Mary. Hill lamb, special needs, will happily take anything!  
Thank you,  
Rachel,  
Barkland



**FAIR ISLE COMMON GRAZING** - A public meeting for the above common grazings will be held for the purpose of appointing a new Grazings Committee, in the Committee Room, Fair Isle Community Hall, Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May at 7.30pm.

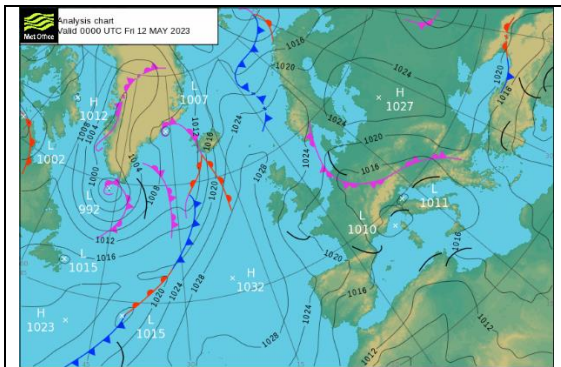
Dave Wheeler,  
Grazings Clerk.

**CHAPEL** - All welcome to join in the Sunday service at 11am. Dave leading and Sunday school with Pat

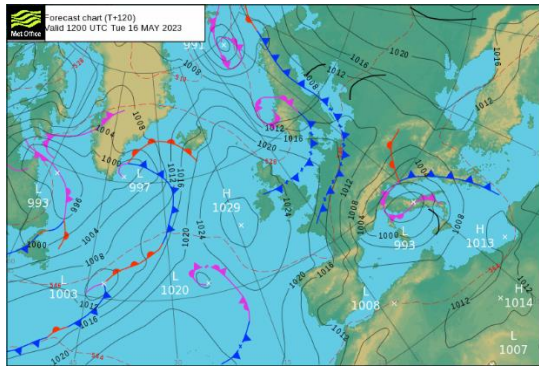
**THIS WEEK'S CRUISESHIP VISITS** – We are scheduled to have 5 cruise ships visiting this week, details below. Let's hope for a fine week of weather! Would be great if stall holders could let me know who plans to set up at the Hall. Thank you,

Eileen

Date	Day	Ship name	Time due
16/05/23	Tues	Greg Mortimer	PM
17/05/23	Wednesday	OceanAdventurer	AM
18/05/23	Thurs	Greg Mortimer	AM
19/05/23	Fri	Silver Wind	Mid day
20/05/23	Sat	Polar Pioneer	PM



Analysis Chart 0000 UTC  
Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023



Forecast Chart 1200 UTC  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST

### GENERAL SITUATION

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023

During the last 24 hours the Azores anticyclone has extended a ridge north-east over northern Britain. The associated settled weather is expected to last today and Saturday as the ridge topples across Scotland with a cold front crossing from the west bringing some rain on Sunday. Early next week a shallow low near Iceland is forecast to move east with high pressure to the west of the British Isles then building north bringing a cool northerly airflow down across Shetland. This should become lighter after midweek as the ridge moves in over northern Scotland.

### OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND

Temperatures 10° or 11° Celsius by day and 7° or 8° overnight.

**FRIDAY 12<sup>th</sup>:** Dry but rather cloudy, perhaps with some sunny periods later. Light and variable winds. Low cloud returning overnight with risk of haar and patchy drizzle.

**Sea State:** Mostly slight with a 1 metre W'ly wind swell.

**SATURDAY 13<sup>th</sup>:** Low cloud lingering along with fog patches. Best chance of any brightness likely in the afternoon. Cloud thickening overnight with rain later as S'ly winds freshen F5.

**Sea State:** Mostly slight with a 1 metre W'ly wind swell.

**SUNDAY 14<sup>th</sup>:** Cloudy with some early patchy light rain and F5 SW winds then drier and brighter.

**Sea State:** Slight to moderate with a 1 to 2 metre W'ly wind swell.

### FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK

Temperatures 9° or 10° Celsius by day, 5° overnight.

**MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup>:** Bright with sunny spells, a dry start but chance of showers later and overnight. Moderate W or NW winds, occasionally fresh. **Sea State:** Mostly slight with a 1 metre W'ly wind swell.

**TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup>:** Some sunny spells and scattered showers. Turning colder with fresh NW to N winds.

**Sea State:** Mostly slight with a 1 metre W'ly wind swell.

**WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> – SUNDAY 21<sup>st</sup>:** Chance of a shower on Wednesday otherwise mainly dry though cloudy with mostly moderate NNE winds. Thursday dry with light NW winds, the week then ending mainly dry and bright with mostly light winds. **Sea State Wednesday:** Mostly moderate with a 2 metre W'ly wind swell.

Dave Wheeler

