

### My Weekend

Gina and Glen came to stay at our house (they are my uncle and auntie). As I was saying, on Saturday we went for a walk to Goorn. We tried to skim things on the pond. We saw a dead starfish and a weird squidgy thing but we didn't know what it was.

On Sunday, we went to the harvest festival at the hall. There were lots and lots of games. Ander won one of the games. It was the one where you shoved the penny across the ground and tried to get closest to an Irn Bru bottle. After that we played some football, it was really fun. Next we did some high jump, I jumped over 70 centimetres.

On Monday we went to pick some mushrooms and we found a 20cm mushroom.

Luca (8)



### My Amazing Weekend

This weekend Grace came home late because the plane broke so she arrived on Saturday afternoon. In the morning, I made challah bread for harvest which is a sweet bread glazed with egg. After lunch we played Dominion - I got lots of minus points so Dad won! Then Dad, Grace and I went and re-watched the previous episodes of Ahsoka. After tea, which was really yummy gammon and homemade chips, we then watched a new episode - they are really good but also, very sad.

On Sunday, we went to the harvest church service and then went on a walk north and came home for a fish finger sandwich lunch! We got ready for harvest afterwards and then headed down to help set up. Harvest was really fun. I helped Luca at the primary school games and played with Brodie who was very happy and bouncy! We didn't win anything in the raffle but I got to do a lucky dip and got a pencil case with 3 tubes of fruit pastels! I was very happy! When we got home Grace and I played Mine Craft and found lots of cool things. Then I started reading a book about Mine Craft to get better at the mechanics. For tea we had a Sunday roast and watched some more Ahsoka! It was great! Grace is also staying until Thursday because of strikes.

I had an amazing weekend!

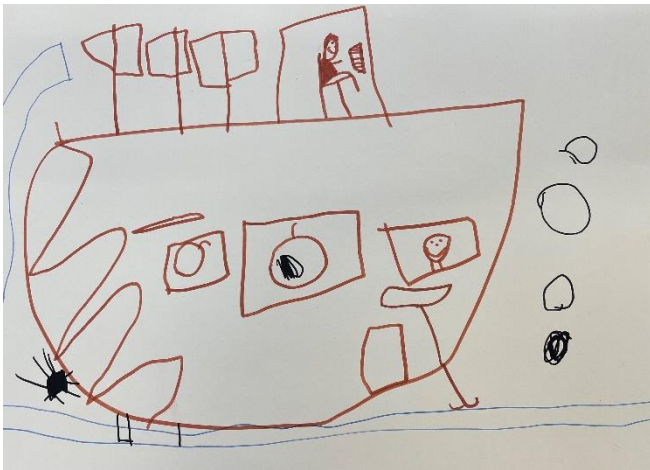
Freyja (11)

## El Gran Grifon

Primary 1 have enjoyed learning about El Gran Grifon with CHROMA this week.



"This ship was part of the Spanish Armada a long time ago." **Ander (5)**



"This ship crashed on the rocks of Fair Isle."  
**Heidi (6)**

PS - The older children will share more of their work with CHROMA in next week's FIT!

## Friends Over

On Friday, Luca, Freyja and Ander came to our house to play after school. Ander and Heidi played upstairs while me, Luca and Freyja played downstairs on the Xbox. We played Minecraft for a while. Then we played a game with Groggu. We were hiding it from each other and just being really silly. Luca kept chasing me which was funny!

Mum, dad, Heidi and I watched two more episodes of The Mandalorian. It is so good! We think Ashoka is going to be in the next episode. I also had a light saber battle with mum in the dark.

**Harris (9)**

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Thank you to everyone who gave beautiful home-produce, made amazing cakes, bread, preserves, arts, knitwear and everything else which made Harvest last weekend such a success. We raised an incredible £1000 which has been split between our chosen charities of The Goodwill Children's Village in India and The Red Cross for their efforts in Libya and Morocco. I think we can all agree Fair Isle folk have once more shown how generous they are!



## **Week Dat's Awa**

### **Friday**

Happy Days! Amazon tells me I'm 2 books behind on a series I really enjoy- DCI Harry Grimm by David Gatward, set in the Yorkshire Dales. Try this series if you like police procedurals. The plane gets mended during the day and everyone hopes for flights tomorrow. Iain spends the day fencing. Amy pops in and leaves Brodie for a while in the morning which is always fun. We spend a lot of time walking around outside, jumping in puddles but mostly admiring all the machines we can find, especially the tractors! A 'sold' sign goes up at my mum's house in Yorkshire, hopefully it will all go through this time. She is going to move back to Shetland as soon as she can. We are needing a school cook here - mum if you fancy coming out of retirement 😊. This is a job she used to do but I am only joking here.

### **Saturday**

The plane comes at lunchtime so Jimmy gets away and Glen comes for a holiday. No mail made it onto Thursday's planes and today only bags of mail make it, but no boxes. Brodie comes up at plane time so that Amy can collect, sort and deliver the mail. I go out to meet him to do our usual vehicle check around the sheds and forget the cakes for harvest in the oven! They actually don't look too bad but as they had double the time they should have had in the oven, they end up as hen food. Never mind. No boat today due to the weather and the forecast doesn't look great. We are still needing to get at least 2 boat loads of sheep/lambs away to the Marts. Iain carries on fencing. Strictly starts in the evening. It was really, really good.

### **Sunday**

Busy morning baking more cakes then icing them all. The weather isn't great so Iain is hanging around so I get him on icing some of the cakes too! Late morning he gets out to clear up the end of our byre for the new hens to go in. We go to the hall for Harvest in the afternoon. Tea and cakes, raffle and loads of games are on offer. Susannah offers up 'Pink Slice' which evidently is a favourite in Sunderland. It is shortbread sandwiched with jam and topped with lurid pink icing. I grew up in Sunderland but don't remember this delicacy! I check with mum and she doesn't know it either but she did make something similar at school dinner years ago. We obviously didn't live in the right part of Sunderland as David P did!

### **Monday**

Windy night and morning. Plane is on delay... hoping for 2 late morning! Will the mail even get on? Two planes do come late morning and the mail gets. Brodie stays for the day so Amy can do the mail. Pre plane I buy our TV licence and birthday cards. I don't like looking for birthday cards and it was really difficult for a 19 year old girl. I also get a tall storage container for Duplo which Brodie is just starting to be interested in. It was a great day for washing, 3 loads were done. Slightly windy for tee shirts but great for towels etc.

**Tuesday** was spent at school. We do some 'basics' then Chroma arrive. So lovely to see them all again. Anne also joins us and we have a chat about the sinking of El Gran Grifon here in 1588. After that it

is introductions to all the instruments and some great tunes. In the afternoon we practice some Elizabethan/sword dancing!

**Wednesday** was a lovely morning/day. I get our recycling sorted and the porch cleaned out before the plane. I pick up Jimmy and take him home. Not easy driving around the isle with a cruise ship visiting, there are people everywhere! I spy a very pleasing line of washing at Shirva on my way round. I am jealous but I have none left to do. A cover nurse arrives which is good to see as our nursing provision is pretty poor at present.

I pop into the shop but that is packed with people too so it's a quick visit grabbing essentials and then Brodie on my way home. He goes straight to the byre with Iain to finish getting it ready for the new hens' arrival off the boat in the afternoon. Iain had an early start taking two rams to go out on the boat in the morning. These are a private sale and unfortunately it was not weather for a boat load of lambs to get to the marts.



The birthday cards I ordered on Monday arrive in the mail, amazing how all this stuff gets here so quickly.

I also get time to look at some bills and manage to get £20 off my BT bill. Very pleased with that. None of the usual companies we work with offer any deals, you really have to look into it yourself. It is well worth it, as well as not accepting any auto renewals for insurance. I've done well with 3 car insurance renewals this year, even got one down on the year before but house insurance is proving more difficult.

**Thursday** starts wet, miserable and a lot of low cloud. It brightens slightly and the low cloud does lift. Warm and windy but no planes or boats. The shop is full of fruit and vegetables off yesterday's boat and after my visit there, Brodie comes to play. Amy is working at school, Iain and Andrew do paper work then roads for the rest of the day. Brodie has a small step which he can drag around but this learning ladder he's standing on is one of the best things I've bought. It is usually at the kitchen island so we can play games, draw etc, it also lets him play safely in the sink. He's always had a bit of an obsession with water (and tractors!).



Forecast not so great for tomorrow so I don't think we will get our covid/flu vaccinations but at least we have a concert from Chroma to look forward to on Saturday . Happy weekend to you all and happy holidays. It's nearly the school holidays and I know many of you are going away.

**Ruth  
Setter**

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## ISLE NOTICES

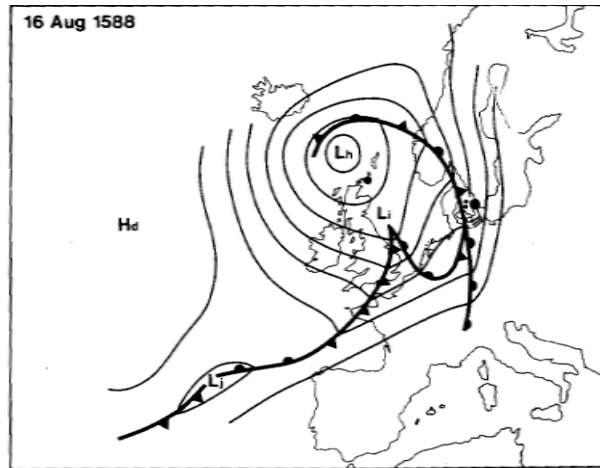
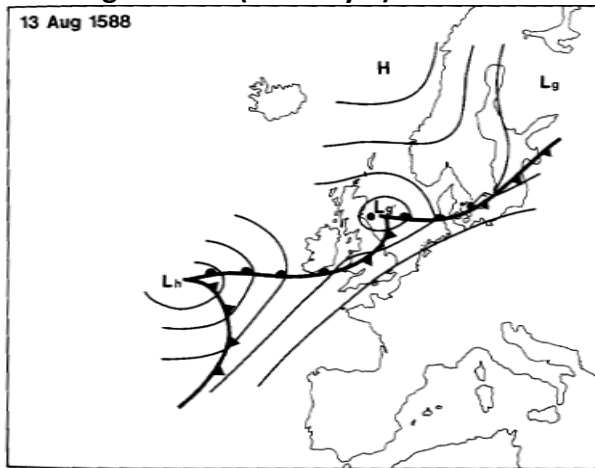
- **Chroma – El Gran Grifon project - Saturday** – there will be a music session for all comers with their instruments and voices 2pm in the hall! Followed by a  
**Free gig at 7pm – all welcome!**
- **GP visit** – Dr Shah due to visit on Monday, please call the surgery today (Friday) for appointments
- **NTS visit** – Clea and Sheona from NTS are due to visit Monday – Wednesday, there will be a brief meeting on Tuesday evening for NTS to share updates with Isle – more info to come
- **Chapel** – All welcome to join on Sunday at 11am
- **Next week** will be our last issue before the October break, please send any items to Eileen asap

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO DAVID P AT SHIRVA TODAY!!! Have a super day!**

**THE WEATHER AND THE ARMADA - Extracts from a couple of books in my library. Dave Wheeler**  
**The following is extracted from *Historic Storms of the North Sea, British Isles and Northwest Europe.***  
**H.H. Lamb, *Cambridge University Press.***

For comparison (and a date coincidence) I include the summer storm of 13-14 August 1979, known as 'The Fastnet race disaster'.

**14-18 August 1588 (New Style)**



**Area**

Northern North Sea off Scotland's east coast and among the Northern Isles.

**Observations**

Ships of the Spanish Armada reported (14 August): 'A very great gale at SW'; 'A great storm at WSW' and 'From 13th-18th we experienced squalls, rain and fogs with heavy sea and it was impossible to distinguish one ship from another'. Elsewhere in the North Sea (probably southern North Sea) Sir Francis Drake reported (15 August): 'A great storm considering the time of year'.

**Meteorology**

The wind directions reported in the northern North Sea were from virtually every point of the compass, during those days NE, SE, SSE, S, SW, WSW, W, NW and N. The strongest winds mentioned were from WSW on the 14<sup>th</sup> and SSE on the 16<sup>th</sup>. It seems clear that two depressions were successively involved and that the centres crossed the British Isles and North Sea region, broadly from west to east. The depressions may be identified with the centres marked Low g and Low h on the map analyses. The centres are shown on the maps moving from SW or SW by W to the NE, coming from the Atlantic across or very close to the British Isles and probably continuing across Scandinavia to near the White Sea. One was centred east of Berwick on the 13<sup>th</sup> and the next between Orkney and the Faeroes on the 16<sup>th</sup>, followed by NW and N winds.

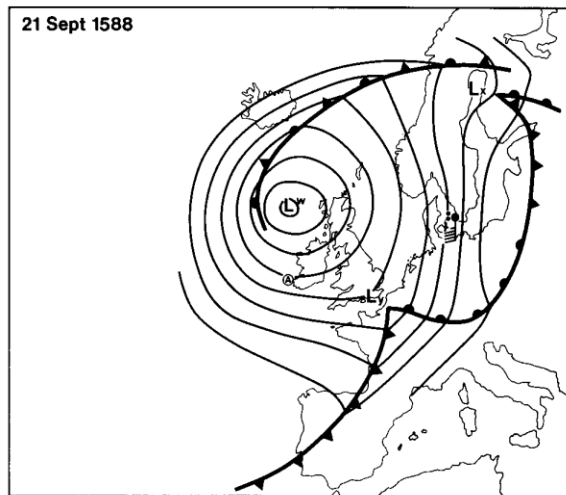
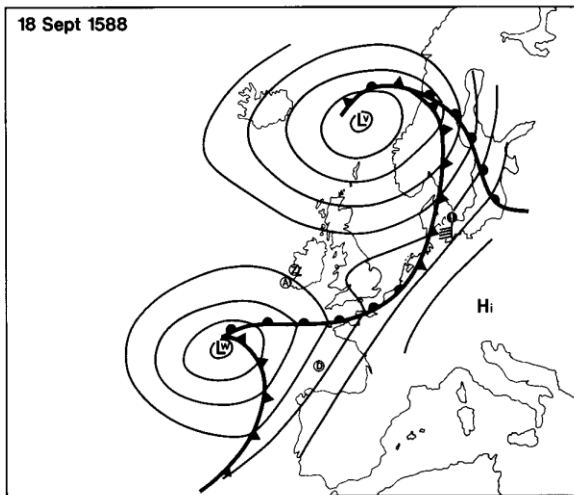
**Maximum wind strengths**

Before the existence of barometers the pressure gradients cannot of course be accurately indicated on the maps. From the distances covered in 24 hours by the depression centres Low g to Low i on the map sequence, a Jetstream of great to exceptional strength for the time of year (up to 60 m/sec or 115-120 knots) seems to be implied by the statistical association between depression speeds and jet stream strength (Douglas *et al.*, 1978, following Palmen, 1928). Surface pressure gradient winds in the warmer air around 20 m/sec (39 knots) and at the rear side of the depressions up to 35 m/sec (70 knots), with the strongest surface gusts certainly reaching this order of speed, could be expected to develop. From the descriptions by both Spanish and English captains, it seems likely that the surface pressure gradients in the warm air over the North Sea, especially the southern part, were actually rather stronger than these values which represent the statistically most probable figures. Gradient winds approaching 50 knots in the warmer air stream and 80-85 knots in the NW'ly rear-side air stream seem indicated, with strongest gusts at the surface of about that strength.

*Data source*

*Details of the weather reports available for the storms in 1588 from the ships of the Spanish Armada and other records, and on how the analysis was performed, are given in The Spanish Armada Storms by K.S. Douglas, H.H. Lamb and C. Loader, Climatic Research Unit Research Publication CRURP6. Norwich (University of East Anglia), 1978.*

### 21 September 1588 (New Style)



#### **Area**

West coast of Ireland (and, presumably Hebrides, NW and N Scotland on 21-23 September).

#### **Observations**

Ships of the Spanish Armada in Basket Sound and at Streedagh Strand, Co. Sligo report (21st): 'On the morning of the 21st it began to blow with most terrible fury. It was bright and with little rain.' 'There sprang up so great a storm on our beam (i.e. W'ly) with a sea up to the heavens so that the cables could not hold nor the sails serve us and we were driven ashore with all three ships upon a beach covered with fine sand, shut in on one side and the other by great rocks ...'

Many of the Armada ships, including three in each of these places were wrecked upon the rocks or the open shores, a greater loss than had occurred in the battle with the English at Gravelines in the Channel in August. The date of the storm, also in Co. Mayo reckoned as 'a great gale', seems confirmed by various written reports of the Clerk to the Council of Connaught.

On 21st Tycho Brahe reported the wind in Denmark as a S'ly storm and 'at night sometimes slashing rain, wind SW'.

#### **Meteorology**

This severe storm can be confidently identified with one encountered on the 18th by other ships of the Armada in the Bay of Biscay, where it was already vigorous. The cyclone centre was clearly moving NE from the region of the Azores to lie off the Hebrides on the 21st and off western to northwestern Norway on the 23rd.

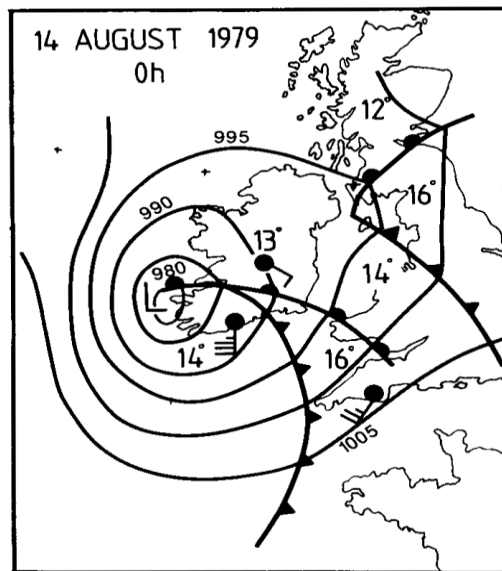
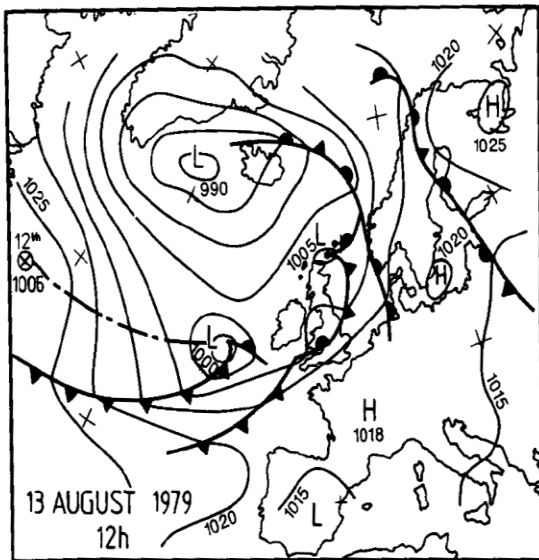
There seems to be a possible analogy with the severe storm, a former Atlantic tropical hurricane 'Debbie' which passed along a similar track off the west coast of Ireland on 16 September 1961, causing enormous damage in the west of Ireland and devastating woodlands. It is possible, therefore, that the storm of 21st September 1588 also originated as a tropical hurricane.

#### **Maximum wind strengths**

The jet stream over the British Isles (region around this date seems from the measured 24-hour movements of frontal waves and young cyclone centres to have been of very great strength, such as would now be exceptional for the time of year, viz. up to 50-67 m/sec (97-130 knots) on 15th-17th and 55 m/sec (107 knots) around 22 September 1588.

The corresponding surface pressure gradient winds and order of magnitude of the strongest gusts observed at the surface were likely to be up to 18 to 23 m/sec (37-44 knots) in the warm air and 32-38 m/sec (62-75 knots) in the cold W'ly air stream.

## 13-14 August 1979 (The Fastnet race disaster.)



### **Area**

Southwestern approaches to the British Isles.

### **Observations**

Mid-August is well after the normal seasonal minimum of wind strengths in the British Isles which falls between sometime in May and early July. Even so, this storm in August 1979 must rank as a notably disastrous one for high summer.

The biennial Fastnet yacht race saw 303 yachts leaving Cowes, Isle of Wight, about midday on the 11th to sail to Fastnet Rock off southwest Ireland and back to Plymouth via Bishop's Rock near  $49\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  N  $6\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  W. On the night of the 13th-14th a great storm struck the competitors between Fastnet and the Scilly Isles, 24 yachts were abandoned, 15 of their crew were drowned, and only 85 of the starters were able to finish the race.

### **Meteorology**

A depression which had been a rather small feature near Nova Scotia on the 11th (central pressure 1002 mb) moved towards mid-Atlantic in latitude  $47^{\circ}$  N and filled to 1006 mb on the 12th, but then deepened and turned more towards the northeast as it approached the British Isles, drawing in Arctic cold air at its rear side from the circulation of an older depression near Iceland. The centre was near southwest Ireland, pressure 978 mb, at 00h on the 14th. This was a notably rapid deepening for the area and time of year. And it was, of course, the quick increase of wind and sea that underlay the upset to the sailing race.

### **Maximum wind strengths**

Mean wind speeds over the sea area Fastnet-Scilly were estimated reaching 50-55 knots with gusts to 68 knots at the time of the tragedy on the night of the 13th-14th. The geostrophic wind is estimated to have reached 110 knots, but owing to the strong cyclonic curvature of the wind flow the strongest gradient wind was probably no more than about 65 knots. Strongest gusts up to and somewhat in excess of this were measured in southwest England and Wales: 74 knots at Hartland Point, 65 knots at Milford Haven. At several places the strongest gusts were the highest speeds ever measured in August. The Hartland Point value was 'treated with some reserve' officially, probably because it exceeded the gradient wind strength - though examples of this seem to be established in a number of the storms in this catalogue. The source used in this account was: A. Woodroffe 'The Fastnet storm - a forecaster's viewpoint' (*Meteorological Magazine*, 1981, vol. 110, pp. 271-87).

This quote is an extract from the epic, weighty and very readable book by Colin Martin and Geoffrey Parker: *ARMADA The Spanish Enterprise and England's Deliverance in 1588*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London.

**Please read on next week to learn the fate of the Gran Grifon as it met the weather above...**



**Finally, some images from my photographic database!**

Members of the *Orden del Mar Oceano*, the Spanish military order, led by Señor Don Pascual Barberan, visited Fair Isle on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1984 to commemorate the 'original' visit and thank the islanders for their earlier hospitality to the 300 survivors of Gran Grifon 28 September 1588. Fair Isle, with its usual gusto, entertained the visitors to a fine lunch in the Hall followed by presentations. The company then marched to the graveyard for the dedication of the 'Spanish Cross' placed in the graveyard, to those who did not survive their shipwreck.



Above – the party and islanders (Stewart Jr, Annie & Stewart Sr Thomson left, Lucy Wheeler, Ross & Inness Thomson to right) marching from the Hall to the graveyard, note porch on Auld Haa, the ruin of North Busta and Burkle and Kenaby not yet built!



Part of the party at Stromshellor where the Gran Grifon was wrecked



At the Spanish Cross in the graveyard. Please note Utra being renovated – no roof at this point!



**Fair Isle Primary School bairns,**  
 from left, back row: Catriona (Mary) Wheeler, Inge Thomson, Steven Sinclair, Ailsa Murray, Paul Wilson, Roddy Murray, Inness Thomson, Ewen Thomson as hen (?) Front: Lucy Wheeler, Ross Thomson, Alan Wilson



Stewart Thomson of Quoy – surely this photo is worth a caption competition!!  
 Answers to Eileen please!

**FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST**

**Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**GENERAL SITUATION**

The strong southerly airflow across the Northern Isles will veer southwest to westerly today as a depression west of Shetland continues north. A ridge building from the west brings a quieter day on Saturday before a south-easterly airflow strengthens as a small low developing on the southern flank of a depression near Iceland, swings north to the west of Scotland overnight.

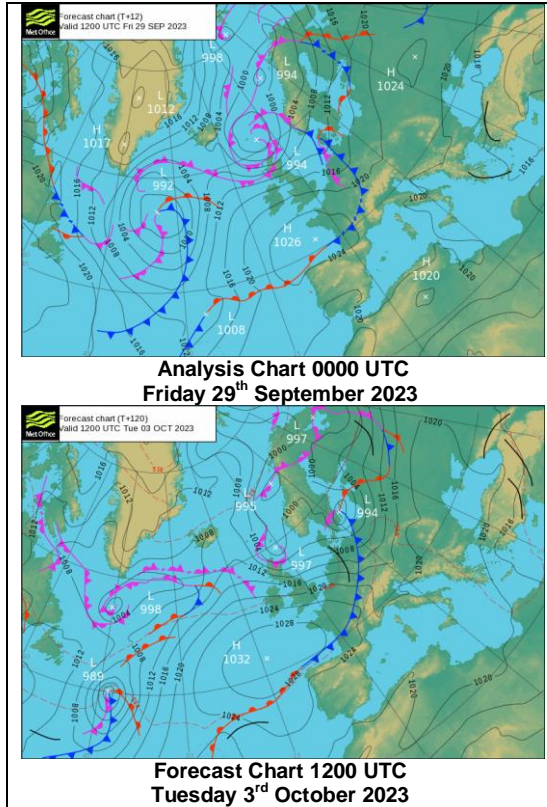
With low pressure then slow-moving between Scotland and Iceland next week starts with a strong, showery west to northwest airflow, with a possible small secondary low passing close to Shetland bringing a cyclonic airflow on Tuesday.

The airflow then eases mid-week as low-pressure transfers east and a ridge builds north over the North Sea. The week ends with a strengthening southerly airflow as the next Atlantic depression drives fronts east towards northern Scotland.

**OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND** Temperatures 13° Celsius by day 11° overnight.

**FRIDAY 29<sup>th</sup>:** Bright with showers and F7 to gale F8 SSW winds veering WSW. Winds easing overnight. **Sea State:** Mainly moderate or rough with a 2 to 3 metre S'ly wind swell.

**SATURDAY 30<sup>th</sup>:** Dry and bright, F5 WNW winds falling light and backing S. SE winds freshening F5 overnight with rain by morning.



**Sea State:** Mainly moderate with a 2 metre W'ly wind swell but slight east of Shetland. **SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup>:** A dull, misty morning with heavy rain clearing to blustery showers and sunny spells by afternoon. F5 SW winds occasionally F6.

**Sea State:** Mostly moderate with a 2 metre S'ly wind swell.

**FORECAST FOR NEXT** Temperatures at first around 11° Celsius by day and 8° overnight. Later in the week around 13° perhaps 14° by day, 11° overnight. **MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Blustery showers, some heavy, sunny spells between. Fresh WSW winds occasionally strong. **Sea State:** Moderate or rough with a 2 to 3 metre W'ly wind swell. Slight east of Shetland.

**TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>:** A showery, bright day. Fresh occasionally strong W to NW winds moderating later. **Sea State:** Moderate or rough with a 2 to 3 metre W'ly wind swell. Moderate or slight east of Shetland.

**WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> – SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup>:** Wednesday perhaps mainly dry with lighter winds. Thursday onwards unsettled with rain or showers and strong S to SW winds. **Sea State Wednesday:** Mainly moderate with a 2 metre W'ly wind swell. Later moderate or rough with a 2 to 3 metre WSW'ly wind swell.

**Dave Wheeler**

