

# Fair Isle Times

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## Our AMAZING week with CHROMA!

Last week CHROMA came to Fair Isle and worked with us all week on a creative project. It was about El Gran Grifon, a Spanish Armada ship that was wrecked on Fair Isle 435 years ago. On Tuesday, we met Claire, the producer, and the musicians: Lydia plays the oboe, Caroline plays violin, Stu plays clarinet and Jo plays the bassoon. Anne came to tell us all about El Gran Grifon. In the afternoon, we learned an Elizabethan sword dance with Claire. It was nice and easy to learn and it was also funny trying to keep serious expressions on our faces! *(by Gillian and Harris, 9)*



On Wednesday, we composed our own music. It was really fun. There were five rhythms. The first one was bouncy castle. The next was cup of tea. The third one was coca-cola pepsi. The fourth one was one big pizza and the last one was Fair Isle which has two beats. We had to choose a rhythm for each bar. Together we made a base line. We chose from 5 chords on the bassoon. After that, we made a wavy line on our bars. This was where we put the notes for the tune. Once our piece was finished, the musicians played each of them out for us. They sounded amazing! *(by Luca, 8)*





On Wednesday afternoon, we went to Muckle Uri Geo to collect shells, pebbles, bits of seaweed and other things. The next day we used these things to make necklaces and other crafts. Jo showed us macramé knotting. It was actually easier than we thought it was going to be. On Thursday we did some writing in class as though we were the Captain's hen aboard the *Gran Grifon*. I wrote the first part, Luca wrote the middle and Freyja wrote the end. The story was read out as part of our show on Saturday. On Friday we rehearsed everything then did more crafts in the afternoon.

*(by Harris, 9)*

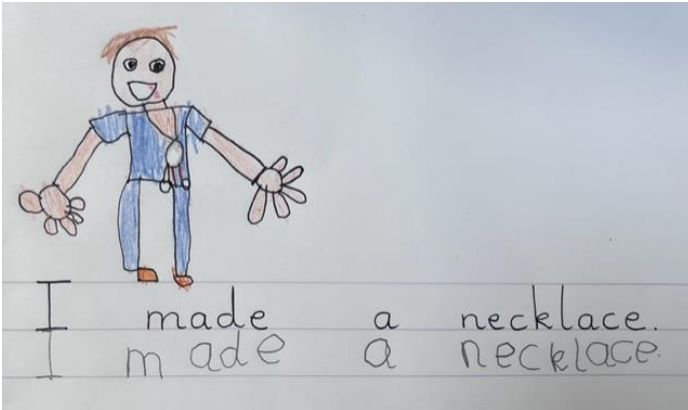


## The performance

Saturday was the night of the concert, so we had a rehearsal after lunch. It was lots of fun doing the warm-up song and singing in rounds. We also practised our Elizabethan dance which felt very regal and grand! That night we arrived for the concert and got all our instruments ready. Harris played the triangle and drums. Luca played a different sounding drum and Chinese bells. Heidi used a washboard looking instrument and castanets. Ander played a drum and triangle and Freyja played the fiddle with bells on her foot! We started off with us all playing background percussion then Grace read out the first part of our story. Hollie read the next part then we did our sword dance; it was brilliant fun! It looks quite hard but is actually easy to remember! Next Pat read out the final part of the story and we moved onto metallic sounds. Freyja used her fiddle to play a sound like a castanet. Finally we went on to sing our song about galloping white horses (in Spanish). It was very fast to sing and we sang it in rounds which added to the complexity and sounded amazing! After that, Chroma played some really good Spanish tunes! We had a wonderful night. Thank you Chroma! *(by Freyja, 11)*

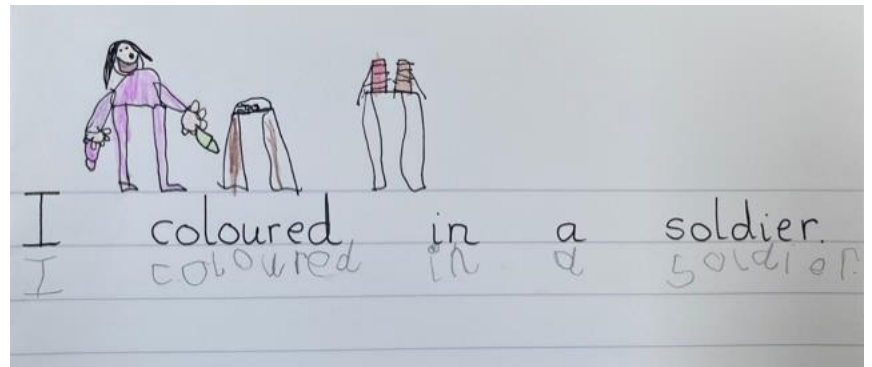


Primary 1 drew a picture of their favourite activities from last week. They copied their sentence underneath and we are all so proud of their writing!



Ander, 5

Heidi, 6



### Estella the Armada Hen

Estella, the precious hen belonging to Captain Gomez, settled into her cosy nesting box below deck. The *Gran Grifon* rocked up and down gently on the calm seas as they set off from Lisbon. People cheered and waved them off. Estella was a very nosy hen so she hopped up to a nearby canon and peered out. She gasped at the sight of 130 majestic ships gliding north and sniffed in the salty sea-air. Estella was tired so she scuttled back down to her box. She nibbled on some of her delicious seeds then snuggled into her bed of hay. The sound of sailors singing sea shanties hushed her to sleep.

(by Harris, 9)

Suddenly, Estella jolted awake to the desperate shouts of the Captain ordering his sailors to load the canons. BOOM! CRASH! Estella tumbled off her perch and one of the chamber pots fell to the wooden floor. A disgusting smell filled her nostrils so she scuttled up on deck. This wasn't much better as she choked on clouds of gunpowder. Everyone was panicking as the *Gran Grifon* got hit. The whole ship shuddered and then creaked as it escaped the captain said to his sailors to go up north. Luckily they didn't sink!

(by Luca, 8)

BOOM! Ferocious waves crashed against the boat as thunder rumbled above Estella's head. She was resting in her nest box as a shout came from outside, "Captain! The *Barca de Amburgo* has gone down. The *Trinidad Valencera* has taken half the crew but they need assistance!" "We shall go right away!" barked the captain, deafening the poor hen as she decided to inspect the damage. Salt filled her nostrils as she clambered to the top deck. Disaster! Water lapped at her feet! Were they sinking? Then, by lightning, she spotted rocks! Were they saved? As the rest of the crew

saw this, there were shouts of glee and fear throughout the ship! Then BOOM! CRASH! They were wrecked on Fair Isle. (By Freyja, 11)

### **A final thank you!**

On behalf of the staff and children, I would like to say an enormous thank you to everyone on the CHROMA team for a fantastic week of creativity and fun! The children fully immersed themselves in every activity and the whole community were extremely proud of their performance on Saturday night. The concert was beautiful and we were mesmerised by the musical pieces. We are very grateful and look forward to next time!

Best wishes,

Gillian

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**We continue the Gran Grifon theme this week with our *week dat's awa* and part 2 of the story from Dave Wheeler about the wrecking of the Gran Griffon, here, 435 years ago.**

#### **THE FATE OF *El Gran Grifon* – part 2**

The Spaniards aboard *Gran Grifon* fared somewhat better. The ship carried the general of the *urca* (or hulk) squadron, Juan Gomez de Medina, two infantry companies and a small group of priests and expatriate Irish volunteers as well as her regular crew.

Like *Valencera*, in June she had sailed to the Scillies instead of Coruña, but returned safely. She suffered serious damage on 3rd August, when more than twenty roundshot smashed into her hull, and the recoil of her own guns further strained the vessel's light construction, causing her seams to leak with the working of the sea. She kept company with *Valencera* until the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, the day after the two ships rescued survivors from *Barca de Amburgo*. Now alone, *Gran Grifon* beat south-westwards into the Atlantic until 17th September, when a violent storm drove her weakened planks further apart. Everyone on board took turns at the pumps but the following day, fearing that an oncoming sea would sink her, Gomez de Medina decided to run with the weather '*until we reached Norway, where we could repair the ship and supply our needs*'.

They sighted St Kilda but then the wind suddenly veered into the north-west, allowing her crew to turn once more '*towards our dear Spain*'. The favourable wind held for three days, but then shifted to the south-west, '*driving the ship back to where we were before; but this time we thought we would die because the wind was so strong and the waves reached to the sky, tearing the ship apart. When we could not expel all the water coming in, everyone stopped trying.*' The next day was calm, which allowed the crew to '*patch up the worst of the leaks with ox-hides and planks until just one pump could clear the rest of the water inside*'; but when the sea and wind rose again, destroying all their repairs, Gomez decided to make for the nearest land.

Somehow the ship negotiated the Orkney archipelago by night, aided by the glow of the Northern Lights - '*God in His mercy at that moment sent us a sudden gleam of light through the dark night, and so enabled us to avoid the danger*' – but waves continued to batter the ship. '*Our only thought was that we would all die, and so each of us placed ourselves in God's hands*' until at 2pm on the 27th September, with ten feet of water in the hold, they espied tiny Fair Isle, midway between Orkney and Shetland. At dusk Gomez de Medina dropped anchor on its sheltered eastern side.

The *urca* fetched up in the triangular inlet of Stroma Hellier, close to the south-east corner of the island, wedged between the overhanging cliffs and the rocky spine in its middle. Most of those on board escaped by climbing the foremast, which leant against the overhang, but seven perished in the attempt and little could be saved from the ship apart from personal possessions and the squadron's pay-chest.

The situation of the 300 survivors, though improved, was still fraught with danger. Fair Isle was small (less than three square miles) and storm-bound, and there was no immediate prospect of escape. They had salvaged no food from the ship (probably because she was waterlogged). An anonymous survivor, although relieved to be on dry land again, was appalled by what he found:

*"The island was inhabited by seventeen families living in hovels, more like shacks than anything else. They are savage people whose usual food is fish, without bread, except for a few barley-meal bannocks cooked over the embers of a*

*fuel which they make or extract from the earth and call turf [peat]. They have livestock - cattle, sheep, pigs - enough for themselves, for they rarely eat meat. They depend mainly on their cows, which produce milk and butter, and use their sheep principally to produce wool for clothing. They are a filthy people, neither Catholics nor altogether heretics. They freely admit that they do not like the preaching of those who come once a year from another island, nine leagues off, but they say they dare not contradict it, which is a pity."*

The situation deteriorated as winter approached, because the seventeen crofting families had little to spare for the hungry castaways who (to their credit) made no attempt to seize the islanders' provisions by force. A report later sent to Philip II stated that 'a gentleman of rank [Gomez de Medina] was in the Scottish islands, where the people were very much pleased with him, as he paid well for everything he had of them'. Seabirds and fish were plentiful but could not wholly alleviate the weakness and disease brought on by two months of malnutrition and unimaginable living conditions aboard the overcrowded vessel. Fifty of those who came ashore soon died on the island, '*most through starvation*'. They included the ship's master and owner, Burgat Quequerman of Rostock. According to local tradition their bodies were buried in a mass grave the 'Spanniart's Grave', later lost to the sea. Six weeks passed before they made contact with Fair Isle's landlord on Shetland, Malcolm Sinclair of Quendale, who arranged for a local skipper to collect Gomez.

The account of the last meeting between Sinclair and Gomez de Medina recounts Gomez, via his interpreter, asking Sinclair, '*if ever he had seen such a man [as himself, imagining the people did admire him]*'. To which Malcolm replied disdainfully "*I have seen many prettier men hanging in the Burrow-Moor*" - site of a public gallows in Edinburgh.

Sinclair arranged for two fishing boats to bring the survivors of *Gran Grifon* to Anstruther in Fife, a journey of 350 miles. Panic gripped those who saw '*a ship full of Spaniards*' enter the harbour on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, since fears of large-scale Spanish landings were still strong. However, tensions eased when Gomez de Medina explained their circumstances and friendly intentions to James Melville, the local Protestant minister. In contrast to Sinclair's insulting assessment, Melville deemed Gomez de Medina '*a very reverend man of big stature, and grave and stout countenance, grey haired, and very humble like, who*', after bowing low many times, '*began his harangue in the Spanish tongue, whereof I understood the substance*'. Melville was about to reply in Latin, but Gomez had brought '*a young man with him to be his interpreter*', who repeated the harangue '*in good English*'. He explained how King Philip '*had fitted out a navy and army to land in England for just causes, to be avenged of many intolerable wrongs he had received from that nation*', and requested assistance in feeding his men and getting them back to Spain.

Melville showed the strangers '*Christian pity, and works of mercy and alms*' - although he could not resist pointing out to Gomez how Scots in Spain '*were violently taken and cast in prison, their goods and gear confiscated, and their bodies committed to the cruel flaming fire for the cause of religion*'. The Scots, he continued, '*were better Christians*', because they allowed the Spaniards, all in a '*most miserable and pitiful*' state, '*to come ashore, and lie all together, for the most part young beardless men, silly, trauchled [distressed] and hungered, to whom for a day or two kale, porridge and fish was given*'.

Melville then visited nearby St Andrews, where he found a pamphlet hot from the London presses which gloatingly reported the catastrophes that had befallen the Armada in Ireland, naming the ships and noblemen who had perished.

As he returned to Anstruther, Melville brooded on '*the prideful and cruel nature of those people, and how they would have used us in case they had landed with their forces among us*', and decided to show the pamphlet to Gomez de Medina, who '*cried out for grief*', and wept. Shortly afterwards the survivors, now reduced to barely 250, boarded a ship that took them across the Firth of Forth to Leith, where negotiations for their repatriation began. Technically they were free men, because Scotland remained neutral throughout the conflict and its aftermath.

Thank you to Dave at Field for the above from:

ARMADA The Spanish Enterprise and England's Deliverance in 1588 by Colin Martin and Geoffrey Parker  
Yale University Press, New Haven and London.

## Da Week Dats Awa by Claire Shovelton, CHROMA

Guest DWDA chronicling CHROMA's week in the isle – so some overlapping with Ruth's in last week's edition!

During CHROMA's last visit to Fair Isle in 2021, folk asked for the next project to tell the story of the Gran Grifón which was wrecked on Stroms Heelor 27 September 1588. Fair Isle's wish is our command! So for this visit CHROMA brings Renaissance and Spanish music arranged by Stu on clarinet with Lydia on oboe and cor anglais, Jo on bassoon (and crafting) and Caroline on violin - myself on producing/documenting/choreographing duties.

### Monday

We have been in Bigton since Thursday, going into Sandwick and Dunrossness schools, working with Bigton Band and gigging at Hymhus.

Now to Fair Isle! I check in with Ann at Tingwall on the 11am flight – she says all good, can leave earlier if we are there. We head out from Bigton allowing time for tractors and random Shetland Wool-Weekers, have a clear run and get there in good time. We have packed impressively light for this 12-day trip - our cases weigh in around 12kg each on Alan's scales, just as well as there is a small mountain of post and packages to also go in the tail.

Smooth flight despite wind warning, hugs all round for our friends on the fire crew as they open the doors, and after waving the plane back off to the mainland we disperse to our Fair Isle hosts. After kitchen table catchups and lunch we head out to explore. This is Jo and Lydia's first time to the isle, glad the sun is out to show it off. Anne shows us round the Museum, a fascinating trove of histories. There is a violin made from driftwood on the wall - which Daniel restrung 6 years ago when we were here - today Caroline picks it up, tunes it and plays some folk tunes on it. It has a lovely warm, robust sound.

We want to see Stroms Heelor, where the Gran Grifón was wrecked. Ian offers to be our guide. We walk up in the golden evening light - the wind is fierce, whipping around our ears, and the sea churns white against the dark rocks. It takes only a small imaginative leap to see the Gran Grifón foundering here 435 years ago.

Back to Kenaby for aperitif o'clock, watching the sun set, snug in the west wing. As the light disappears Lower Stoneybrek and Stackhoull are pinging in for supper, so Caroline, Jo and Lydia head back across the fields under a big moon.

### Tuesday

Sunny morning. We start the day at the school where Anne gives a talk on the Gran Grifón. After that we introduce our instruments and play some short pieces to show them off. When it comes to the bassoon Jo measures the children against it - almost all of them are shorter than the instrument... Freyja asks "how do you know to start at the same time?" - which leads to a short lesson in chamber playing technique.

After lunch we return to the school for a session that starts with clapping and rhythm games, then Caroline teaches the steps of the Pavane, followed by me on sword dance choreography. I start with a "slo-mo goblin" version of grandmother's footsteps (thank you Will Tuckett for that one!) which produced some excellent exaggerated movement and expressive faces, then move onto teaching them the dance. They pick it up quickly and so well that we decide to speed it up. Report from Eileen later was "very tired and very happy children" at the end of the day! I head to Lower Stoneybrek to chat with Neil, who talks local folk memories of the Gran Grifón, plus stories of the Good Shepherd, including the time he fell in the Haven and Ian had to fish him out. Then Stackhoull to say hello to Robert and Fiona. Jo returns from her walk while I'm there - kitchen table chat with a drink before I am called to eat Shepherd's Pie at Kenaby.

### Wednesday

Another sunny morning. We start at the school with music composition, which Stu will integrate into the new piece. He has broken down the first 8 bars of a Galliard by Ferrabosco (from the Armada period) into rhythmic sections and chords so the children can arrange in an order of their choice - they set two parts, a melody and a bass. They use manuscript paper to mark up their compositions, with our help. They complete this and Stu gets them to add a third part. Then he asks which instrument they would like to play the melody and we play the pieces. Amazed to hear his piece, Ander says "I didn't know I could do it so well!"

At lunchtime I go to Field to see Dave, who had told me at the airstrip that he had forensic weather reports for 1588.

Dave has an enviable library, plus collections of his data and neatly indexed photographs since 1972. He shows me his photos from 1984 when the Orden del Mar Oceano visited Fair Isle dressed in full period costume and erected a memorial to the dead of the Gran Grifón. He also shows me the meteorological reports depicting the storms in 1588 that led to the wreck. (See last week's FIT for photos and reports).

After lunch we meet schoolies and ranger Sally at Muckle Uri Geo to forage for objects to use in our Armada set and Elizabethan-style jewellery, all of which will be realised via the art of knotting aka macrame, which seems appropriate given our maritime theme. It's great to have Sally with her seaweed knowledge, there's so much to learn!

I go into the graveyard to visit Lise, with whom I started planning this Armada project more than a decade ago. I remember the fun conversations we had dreaming up possibilities... I tell her "we're here, doing it, finally!" On the way back to the hall I chat to a couple of birders on the road (rare sightings, rather happy) and reach the shop just as supplies brought by the Good Shepherd are arriving with Jimmy. I join the chain of islanders offloading into the store, John gives me a lift to the hall. The foraged haul is laid out artistically on a table ordered from natural objects to man-made, and it looks splendid.

Jo gives me a macrame lesson - instant result, very gratifying - then we head down to Lower Stoneybrek as it's Neil's birthday. Cups of tea, a very tricky get-the-ball-in-the-hole game which Luca is beating everyone at, excitement over the new lava lamp and Eileen has made a massively chocolatey cake. I also get to catch up with Susannah, who I haven't seen yet this week.

Stu takes Caroline, Jo and Lydia up to the North Haven. They wander the beaches and the cliffs, have a gander at the lighthouse and look at the progress of the Bird Obs rebuild. Back home to Kenaby where Ian makes Cullen Skink, another excellent supper.

## Thursday

The bairns are given the Gran Grifón story by [Shetland with Laurie](#) as stimulus then do their own creative writing telling the tale from the point of view of a hen on board the ship. Stu will weave these into the new piece. We start the music today with a warm up followed by singing *Cabrillas Galopando* (White Horses Galloping) in 4 parts. After the singing and galloping instruments were fetched and Stu leads a music improvisation session based on an arriving storm – this material will also be used in the new piece. While they do this I write out El Gran Grifón in large letters on a banner for folk to colour in throughout the day.

The afternoon is an open-to-all crafting session with Jo on macrame teaching duties. It is a happy scene - folk chatting and knotting, pebbles and sea glass are wrapped and some added to the macrame jewellery, Fiona creating a set off the A-frame (Anne has donated a length of damask fabric and people have also brought in rope and ribbons). There is an excellent life-size cannon with cannon balls Fiona has made out of cardboard with the bairns. Folk take it in turns to doodle and colour the letters in the banner. The resulting macrame pieces look great - some get taken home but we will make an installation of the rest for the concert. The CHROMATies stay after the session is over, with Jo starting some giant macrame, Fiona carrying on distressing some rigging, Caroline and I making some paper ruffs and Lydia knotting some smaller pieces.



As we leave the hall we see the sun in a mist, looking like a glass orb filled with milk, a slight violet glow. Never seen it look like that before. Feels like we are on another planet! Later Stu sees in the news that it is a consequence of the fires in Canada.

While we have been crafting Stu has shaped the created music and words into *Armada! The Misadventure of El Gran Grifón* - it is coming together!

### Friday

Today starts with a music call for CHROMA to practise the brand new Galliards as composed by the bairns which Stu has integrated with the Ferrabosco, and de Falla's Ritual Fire Dance which will be used in the Fire Ships section. When the bairns arrive we canter through *Cabrillas Galopando*, then start working on the 2 percussive sections in the new piece.

After lunch we have a crafting session making Elizabethan ruffs, more necklaces and wrapping driftwood. While we do this CHROMA rehearses – an unusual scene as music rehearsals do not usually have other activities going on in the same space! But so lovely to have everyone being creative together. The peerie bairns start with some colouring in of Elizabethan soldiers, then dance around the hall to the music, picking up ribbons to twirl like rhythmic gymnastics.



At the end of the day we put up the banner - it feels representative of the project as everyone who has come through into the hall for our sessions has done some doodling on it to colour the letters in. We also hang Jo's finished giant macramé in a great swag - the result looks great. Fiona's set of a drowned Captain's cabin is brilliant, with so much detail - from the distressed rigging (dragged around the car park) down to the parchment scrolls in the basket.





## Saturday

Concert day. We have an all-comers music session from 2pm - a general warm up and singing, then show those gathered all the sections the bairns have put together and Neil joins us on guitar. Once we've run through everything so far we ask if they would be happy to sing *Unst Boat Song* as the finale of the piece.

Young Grace joins Anne, Pat, Eileen, Neil and Stewart to sing acapella... it is stunning, a beautiful blend of voices, all the generations together, and moves us CHROMATies to tears - they turn to us and say "was it that bad?" as we wipe our eyes - laughing we make it clear it was the great beauty and soul of the singing that is making us an emotional mess! We play them Stu's arrangement of the song for the CHROMA quartet, which fortunately they approve of mightily.

We arrange the audience chairs in an elliptical curve like a wave coming into shore, with enough room on one side for the Sword dancers, and head off to our hosts for break and supper.



Concert time sees a hall filled with islanders and visitors. We start with the premiere of *Armada! The Misadventure of El Gran Grifón* – everyone performs it so well, and it goes down a storm. Then the CHROMA quartet play a selection of Spanish dances - some Albeniz, de Falla, Grovlez and Ravel, taking it in turns to introduce the pieces. The bairn's feet are tapping, but they hold on until the encore – CHROMA play *Pieds-en-L'air* from Warlock's *Capriol Suite* - they run into the middle and make a tumbling, rolling choreography on the floor together. Quite as it should be! After the post-concert chatting the CHROMATies, hosts and schoolies gather at Houll (thank you Eileen and Guillermo for hosting) to celebrate and breathe out. There are delicious snacks, daft stories and much laughter around the kitchen table.

The Community of Fair Isle and CHROMA present:

### ***Armada! The Misadventure of El Gran Grifón***

Part 1: Narrative written by Harris, spoken by Grace

underscored by bairns with Galliard drumbeat and sea shanty violins

*The Fair Isle School Galliards with Ferrabosco*: intro sung in the Ferrabosco tune:

*"Fighting for the King of Spain / We will end Queen Bess' reign / Hoist the sail! / Weigh the anchor! / Glory to Armada!"*

Part 2: Narrative written by Luca spoken by Hollie  
*Ritual Fire Dance* - bairns on percussion

Part 3: Narrative written by Freyja (part 1), spoken by Pat  
Warlock *Mattachins* Sword Dance with choreography  
Sing *Cabrillas Galopando*

Narrative written by Freyja (part 2), spoken by Pat  
Acapella *Unst Boat Song* performed by Anne, Pat, Eileen, Grace, Stewart and Neil  
followed by Stu's arrangement for the CHROMA quartet

## Sunday

John had brought Betty's *Given Days* producer folder ... I spend some time looking through it. *Given Days* in 2002 was CHROMA's first time to the isle, invited by composer Alastair Stout, who was commissioned to create a piece for Fair Isle Community choir and ensemble. It was interesting reading, and included a lovely handwritten letter from Peter Maxwell Davies, who was the project patron.

Meanwhile, Caroline, Jo and Lydia head to Burkle where Hollie shows them round the knitting studio - they buy some small pieces. Then we all descend on Busta to have coffee with Anne and Barry. Anne has been great this week - a font of fascinating information and histories; popping into the hall with helpful things - her experiment making ruffs with crimped lengths of interfacing particularly successful, much more comfortable than the paper version! It's lovely to sit in the kitchen and chat together.

Back at Kenaby later Eileen and Luca pop in during their walk. Eileen has been wonderful with on-the-ground organising for this project, our WhatsApp thread alive with all the things! There's been a running joke about the moon this week (the full Harvest Moon on Friday was enormous - causing sea-swell too steep for the Good Shepherd to get sheep out to the markets, but that's another story...) Eileen and Anne kept texting me to go and look NOW, but deep in conversation with Ian and Stu I'd miss the texts and then we'd miss the moon as the rain came down or cloud came over. But tonight I remembered to look, the moon still huge and yellow hanging in a clear sky. Afternoon weather is fine, Stu decides to walk Malcolm's Head and while he does that I leaf through Lise's stash of piano music and practice my sight-reading. Not done that for many, many years. Stu has been steadily tuning her old piano through the week, and it's sounding much better.

Caroline, Jo and Lydia are also walking the isle under the blue skies. John drops by Kenaby - he takes a dram and I thank him for bringing the *Given Days* folder. He tells stories of Betty and her marvellous way with words. An iconic lamb supper by Ian and then it's time to pack - an early start in the morning. Weather forecast promising for the plane.

## Monday

An early breakfast as we await the Tingwall ping on the first flight of the day. Ian on fire duty today, Fiona and Robert on same planes as us south to Dundee. The plane brings the doctor - Deepa - who we had met in Bigton. It was nice to see her again, but no time to chatter as the plane has places to go and people to move about! We say our fond farewells and fold ourselves into the plane seats - smooth flight. We head to Lerwick where we have a second breakfast at the Dowry. A short bit of wandering later and we're on our way to Sumburgh airport to catch the Loganair flight to London via Dundee.

More goodbyes as we wave Fiona and Robert off the plane at Dundee. A spot of delay taking off again, but we make it to Heathrow for 6.15pm. Caroline is getting the bus to Oxford but the rest of us pile onto the Elizabeth line, leaving one by one. As I live in East London I am the last one left, but a young lad carrying a large box of crockery gets on at Bond Street, sits next to me and starts chatting - we natter away till Whitechapel, where we both get off and wish each other a happy evening. I text Ian that I must have brought the island vibe with me - it is unusual for folk to strike up conversations on the tube these days!

Another wonderful sojourn, full of conviviality, creativity, music, dance, crafting, stunning scenery and many small details that add such richness and interest to life - from a perfect bit of sea glass found on the beach to a forensic weather report from 1588. THANK YOU to everyone who joined us.

## MORE THANK YOUS

Huge thank yous to our friends who give us a home in the isle: Pat and Neil, Fiona and Robert, and Ian.

To Gillian, Hollie, Ruth and Pat for facilitating with the bairns, giving us so much time with them, and letting us take over the hall. To Fiona, Anne and Eileen for being involved from the beginning, for your energy, enthusiasm and help.

To the above, plus Dave, Neil, Stewart, Triona, John for your contributions to the research/remembering.

To Anne, Pat, Eileen, Grace (bonus Grace!), Stewart and Neil for uplifting us all with the *Unst Boat Song*.

To everyone who came to the hall to join in during the week, and to our appreciative audience of islanders and visitors.

To the funders for this project, we could not do it without their support: Awards for All Scotland, Classic Fair Isle, The Foyle Foundation, The Hope Scott Trust, The Hugh Fraser Foundation, The Golsoncott Foundation, Scops Arts Trust, Shetland Community Benefit Fund and The William Syson Foundation.

## ISLE NOTICES

**Ferry refit** - Good Shepherd IV refit is due to start Wednesday 25th October until 7th November. Return sailing to Grutness as normal on Tuesday 24th or next fine day after. Hopefully relief ferry will get in during this period. Details to follow. Ian

**Wildlife and Aurora News on WhatsApp** - There are three WhatsApp groups relating to wildlife news on Fair Isle: a group for all things marine wildlife related (including sightings of killer whale and other cetaceans), a group for rare and scarce bird sightings and a 'birds and birders' group for sightings of commoner migrants, questions (are the puffins back? what's this bird in my garden? etc) and birdy chat. There's also a WhatsApp group for aurora sightings. To be added to the groups speak to Fiona or Susannah (Marine), the Obs team (rare birds) or David at Shirva (general birds and Aurora). If you're not a regular user of WhatsApp, you might not realise you can set a group up so you can still get the messages, but don't get a notification every time a new one is posted (press the stack of three dots in the top right, and go to 'mute notifications'). David, Shirva

**Chapel** – 11am on Sunday, all welcome to join, Susannah leading the service.

**Crafts left from Chroma visit** – if anyone wants to claim any of the crafted pieces made in the Chromas workshop, they will be left in the school porch over the holidays. Thanks

**That's the final Fair Isle Times of this term, what a busy few months. Have fun lifting your tatties everyone!!**

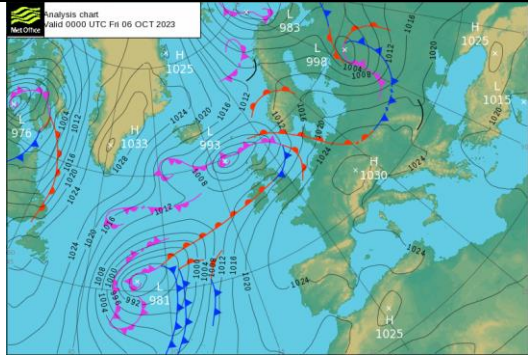


### **Last week's caption competition:**

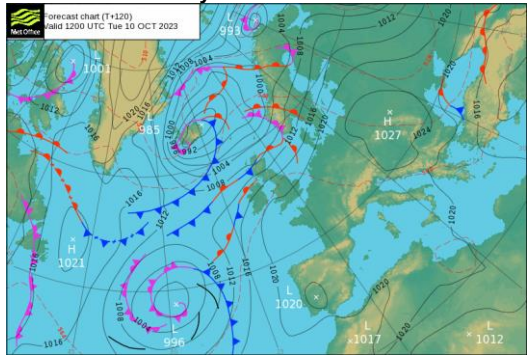
"Go on Neil, only two steps to the right..."

*from Guillermo*

# FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



Analysis Chart 0000 UTC  
Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023



Forecast Chart 1200 UTC  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023

## GENERAL SITUATION

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023

A small depression will pass east close to Shetland today, followed by a quieter day on Saturday as a small anticyclone near Iceland slips southeast. A large mid-Atlantic depression then spawns a small depression which tracks east-northeast across northern Scotland on Sunday.

Next week, with Scotland closer to low pressure tracking east or northeast close to Iceland, the Northern Isles will lie in an unsettled and sometimes strong south-west to westerly airflow, this probably turning north-westerly from midweek.

**OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND** Temperatures 13° Celsius at first today, turning cooler with 7° overnight. 9° on Saturday then 12° on Sunday 10° overnight

**FRIDAY 6<sup>th</sup>:** A cloudy, misty start with patchy rain or drizzle accompanied by F6-7 WSW winds, occasionally gale F8 with gusts to 45-50kn. Drier and brighter conditions spreading from the south late morning as the strong to gale winds veer strong to gale W then N'ly. Cloudy though mainly dry overnight the strong NNW wind easing.  
**Sea State:** Rough with a 3 to 4 metre SW'y wind swell.

**SATURDAY 7<sup>th</sup>:** Mainly dry with some sunny spells, F5 NE winds easing F3-4. Mainly dry overnight, winds falling light and turning SE, freshening F5 towards dawn as cloud thickens. **Sea State:** Mainly

moderate with a 2 metre NNE'y wind swell.

**SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup>:** Rain spreading from the south then dull, wet and misty by afternoon with occasionally heavy rain and F6-7 SE winds. Rain clears to blustery showers overnight as winds veer F6-7 WSW. **Sea State:** Mostly moderate with a 2 metre NNE'y wind swell.

**FORECAST FOR NEXT** Temperatures around 11° Celsius by day and 9° overnight. Perhaps cooler later.

**MONDAY 9<sup>th</sup>:** Scattered showers and sunny spells with fresh WSW winds veering NW. **Sea State:** Mostly moderate with a 2 metre WNW'y wind swell. **TUESDAY 10<sup>th</sup>:** A cloudy day with showers or longer spells of rain. Fresh to strong WSW winds. **Sea State:** Mostly moderate with a 2 metre WSW'y wind swell. **WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> – SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup>:** Wednesday cloudy with showers and strong to gale W winds. Thursday onwards unsettled with rain or showers and strong to gale W to NW winds, possibly severe gale mid-week. **Sea State Wednesday:** Building rough with a 3 to 4 metre W'y wind swell.

Dave Wheeler

