



VOLUME 46 ISSUE 36

PUBLISHED SINCE 1978

1st DECEMBER 2023

My Family Weekend

On Friday afternoon we met up with Grace in Lerwick, ready to catch the NorthLink ferry to Aberdeen. We were going to Sunderland to visit Nana and Gramps and my Auntie Vicki's family! We made a den on the sofas in the front of the ship because we didn't have a cabin. It had been quite stormy and the wind was still strong so it wasn't the most fun journey ever. Eventually we arrived in Aberdeen. Thankfully the ferry got in on time so we didn't miss our train. When we went through Union Square to get to the station there were loads of Christmas lights and even a few massive stars.

Nana and Gramps met us in Newcastle and instead of taking the Metro straight through to Sunderland we went to buy a new bauble each from Fenwick's. Fenwick's is a big department store in Newcastle and it's a family tradition to get a Christmas decoration there each year. They also have a Christmas window story display. This year it was the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. It was really nice to actually be able to see the window in person again this year - last year we watched it as a virtual tour online. We did some clothes shopping as well, mostly for Grace's Bean Feast dress but I also got a really nice cozy dressing gown as I've grown out of a lot of my clothes this year! In the shopping centre we saw a very noisy procession of drummers. That night we went to Auntie Vicki's for tea. We had a Chinese takeaway. It was delicious! As well as catching up with them all, we got to see their dog Otie. It was really fun playing with her as she can do some tricks.

On the Sunday we went to Durham for a day out, but as a surprise we went to the panto! It was Cinderella. Our cousins, Jude and Toby, made us little bags of sweets to snack on during the performance. It was really great! When it was finished we got a shout out for having travelled 550 miles to visit and we got to get our photo taken with the cast. Afterwards we went out for lunch. I got a roast dinner with really nice pork and a massive Yorkshire pudding! Then we headed back to my cousins' house for the evening.

We had to get up early on Monday morning to get the Metro back to Newcastle for our journey north. However we still ended up having a few hours before our train so we went to all the charity shops we could find! I got some DVDs which I really liked. Then we headed to the train station to catch our train. Thankfully that night we had a cabin, although it was still quite a rough crossing! It was really good to make it back onto Fair Isle in the morning, because after that it started snowing!

Freyja (11)

A New Game

On Friday night, we watched a movie called Home Alone. It was about a boy that was left behind when his family went on holiday. Two burglars tried to rob him but he set booby traps. It was okay.

On Saturday, Luca and Ander came to our house. We played a very scary new game called Grounded where the humans are tiny and the bugs are huge.

You have to run and hide from wolf and orb spiders, praying mantis, stink bugs and soldier ants. You have to survive by drinking drops of rainwater and eating smaller bugs like weevils and aphids but you have to cook them on a fire first or it makes you ill. This is my favourite game at the moment.

Heidi (6)



Harris (9)

Ander (5)



DATE FOR YOUR DIARY!



Thursday 14th December

7pm

The Hall

Please come along to

**Fair Isle Primary's
Christmas Concert**

Followed by

Tea/coffee & bakes

ALL WELCOME

My Busy Weekend

On whatever day the 25th was (Saturday) we woke up at 8.30 and we went downstairs and had some breakfast then we walked up to the shop, well, kind of to the shop. We went past it up to Pat and Neil's house Stoneybrake. After a wee while we went to the garden and we picked some beetroot. One of the beetroot was massive and one was little and then we took up some leeks, then I noticed a carrot that had gone to seed. Then we went into the poly-house and picked all the radishes. Nanan and Daddad took us to Sompal and we found lots of bruck! Then we went to Muckle Urigeo and we found even more bruck! After that we went home. In the evening we went up to the Maxwells' and played lots of games. On Sunday we went to Anne and Barry's and we stayed for 2 hours and straight after that we went to Nanan and Daddad's to watch the Man United v Everton game and Man United won 3-0! But we could have lost about 8-3!

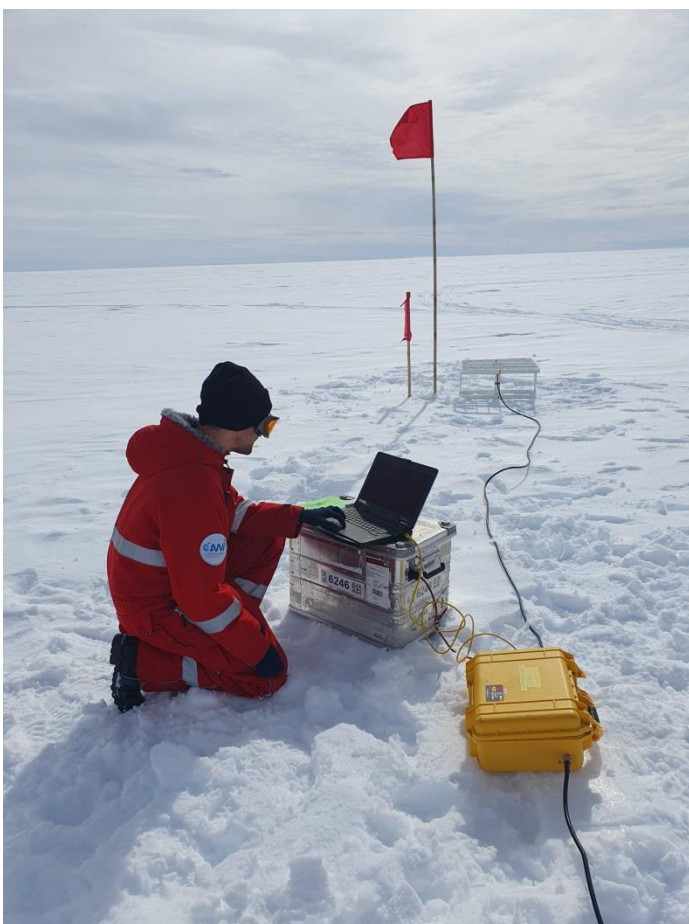
Luca (8)

More this week from Fair Isle's own Antarctic explorer, Fyntan from Burkle. Fyn is a physicist working on his PhD, currently undertaking an incredible adventure in the most southern continent.

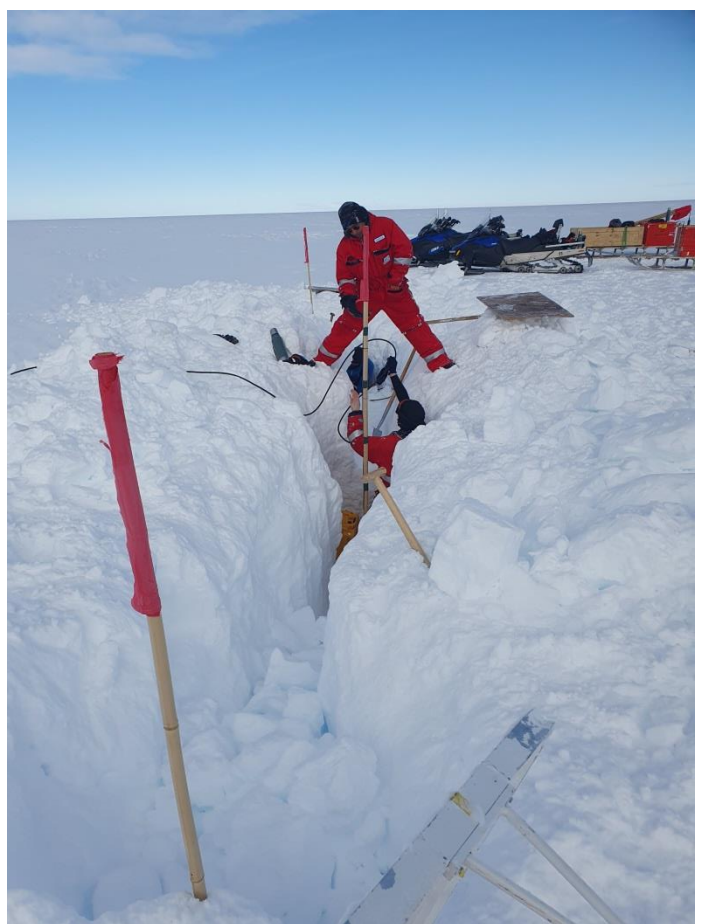


Visiting the emperor penguins

After a short stay at a Norwegian Antarctic station, I arrived at Neumayer station on Wednesday 8th November via a smaller ski plane, although still bigger than the islander! This station is the largest of the AWI stations, situated by the coast, and stands on 16, six metre tall legs to avoid snow build up. After a long safety talk, we were given a tour of the stations facilities, including a table tennis table, an electric drum kit, a sauna and a lounge with a bar. Showers and toilets with plumbing were always available, quite a luxury considering the location! That evening I tried skidoo driving for the first time, something I'll be very experienced with by the end of the expedition.



Fyntan using the radar equipment



Digging out the equipment

Considering our delayed arrival, the traverse logistics team were eager to get started, but it would take about 2 weeks to prepare. In the meantime, Hameed (the other scientist on the traverse) and I had radar measurements to take around Neumayer, but outside work is very dependent on weather. We spent a couple of days preparing equipment, and on Friday went to the nearby Emperor penguin colony, which was incredible and surreal.

Finally the weather cleared up and we drove 24 km on skidoos with a couple of helpers to dig out the radar device that had been continuously recording data over the last year. Due to snow accumulation, it was 2 m under the snow and took us 4 hours to dig out. We brought it back to the station on a sled behind one skidoo.

Over the next few days we familiarised ourselves with the radar and got GPS data of the 8 locations we would need to measure, spread around Neumayer between 4 km and 32 km away. We brought it to the first site fully prepared, only for my laptop to give up in the cold after only 5 minutes, unfortunately wasting the afternoon. The next nice day we went back with a laptop built to handle the cold, but while setting up we noticed spark sounds coming from the box containing the large battery, and then smoke! We backed away and called the station on the radios, and they told us to bring it back to the station to inspect. When they opened it there had clearly been a fire inside, as the packing foam and wires had all melted and soot covered everything, but miraculously the battery remained undamaged. Another day with no progress, and now we're under time pressure. Thankfully we experienced no more technical faults, and managed to take all 8 measurements over 2 (very long) days before burying it back in the snow where we found it for the next year of data.

In the evenings I spent a lot of time with 3 PhD students and a professor that made up the penguin research team. We all got every Sunday afternoon off, and one Saturday we had a BBQ in one of the underground floors. There was plenty for entertainment, and a canteen for meal times. Weirdly, it was a little bit like being back at the hostel!

On Wednesday 22nd November, everyone was ready to start the traverse, and we left around 9am to begin our 770 km journey. There were many hugs and farewells, I especially will miss the penguin group. But we all fly out of Antarctica back to Cape Town on the same flight on the 20th of January, so we'll have the chance to catch up again.

Internet is limited during the traverse, and this will definitely be the hardest part of the expedition. I will write another piece once we reach Kohnen station

Fyntan

Photo right: The convoy of pistenbullies pulling containers. Fyn is a tiny black dot, just left of centre, behind the convoy – see if you can spot him!!



ISLE NOTICES

- **First Sunday of Advent** – this Sunday at 11am, Neil leading the service, all very welcome to join the beginning of the festive season
- **Isle Quarterly Meeting** - a reminder of the upcoming FICA meeting on Wednesday 6th December 2023, 7.30pm, in the Hall Committee Room. FIDC AGM will happen at a later date but there will be mince pies!
David at Shirva
- **Christmas Tree Party planning** - We will have a brief meeting at 3pm on Thursday 7th December in the Committee room at the Hall, to plan the Christmas Tree party (food, games etc). Will only be half an hour or so, please do come along if you can. If you are away on the 7th but would be keen to make something or contribute in some way, please do let me know.
Eileen (on behalf of the Hall Committee)
- **Christmas Fair Isle Times** – only a couple of weeks to go so please do send in any items to include, all ideas welcome!
- **Good Shepherd sailings** for the next month:
Sailing next week **Monday 4th December**.
Sailing Tuesday 12th December will change to **Wednesday 13th onwards**.
Sailing **Tuesday 19th December**
Extra sailing **Friday 22nd December**
Sailing **Thursday 28th December**
Sailing **Friday 5th January** onwards after which back to normal schedule of Tuesday sailings
As ever, sailings are weather permitting, please call the voicemail 01595 743978 for updates on sailing days.
- **Biosecurity visit** – A biosecurity detection dog and his handler Rachel will be visiting the Isle hopefully on 7th December, planning to search around the airstrip, Haven and Obs site. If you have any questions, please email Holly Paget directly at holly.paget-brown@rspb.org.uk



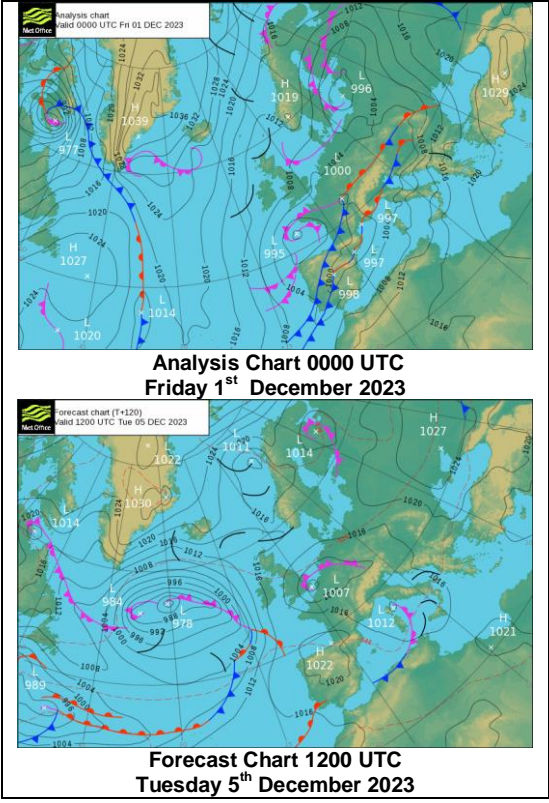
Have you lost the DVD “Le gout des autres”? (left) If so, it is at Houll.

Also, we have lost 2 DVDs – “El Aura” and “Nueve Reinas” – if you have these please return to Houll – haven’t a clue who we lent them to!!

Thank you



FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



GENERAL SITUATION

Friday 1st December 2023

Though an Atlantic depression will approach the British Isles from the southwest, across the north of Scotland a slack east to north-easterly airflow will persist through Friday and the weekend. The depression is expected to continue east across northern France early next week with little effect on the Northern Isles. However, from mid-week a depression moving towards Scotland will bring a strengthening south-easterly airflow as it drives its fronts northeast over the UK bringing rain and gales by the weekend.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND

Temperatures Friday and Saturday 3° Celsius by day 0° overnight with risk of ice. Sunday less cold 4° or 5° by day 1° overnight.

FRIDAY 1st: Sunny intervals and a few scattered wintry showers with light F1-2 winds. Any slow-moving shower could result in temporary accumulations of snow, more so overnight when frost and icy patches are to be expected. **Sea State:** Slight to moderate with a 1 or 2 metre NNE'ly wind swell.

SATURDAY 2nd: A few wintry showers with sunny intervals and light winds. Frost and icy stretches overnight. **Sea State:** Mostly slight with a 1 metre NNE'ly wind swell.

SUNDAY 3rd: Bright and mostly dry with light winds. Feeling a little less cold. Again frosty overnight. **Sea State:** Mostly slight with a 1 metre NNE'ly wind swell.

FORECAST FOR NEXT

A cool start with 3° to 5° Celsius by day 1° to 3° overnight. Temperatures recovering after midweek.

MONDAY 4th: A mainly dry bright day. A light or moderate E breeze. **Sea State:** Slight to moderate with a 1 or 2 metre ENE'ly wind swell. **TUESDAY 5th:** Rather cloudy, mostly dry with a moderate NE breeze. **Sea State:** Moderate to rough with a 2 or 3 metre SE'ly wind swell. **WEDNESDAY 6th – SUNDAY 10th:** Wednesday and Thursday mostly cloudy with showers or rain, perhaps with sleet at times and moderate E winds. Friday and the weekend cloudy with rain or showers and strengthening SE winds with risk of gale. **Sea State Wednesday:** Mostly rough with a 3 metre SE'ly wind swell.



Friday 1st December – an icy start to the month! Though our air temperature did not fall below freezing, a minimum of +0.1° temperatures on the ground fell to -6.6°! Lowest December grass min -11.5° in 1985, lowest winter grass min -12.5° March 1994 (that was over a snow surface)

Dave Wheeler

