

FAIR ISLE TIMES

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Fun with Grace

This weekend Grace came home on the boat which meant she came in on Thursday. I didn't know this until she arrived! As soon as I had done my homework, we started playing Mine Craft. It was the best because I've missed having Grace home.

The next day was Friday so I had to go to school. Later on, we had Luca and Ander round for a play. We made a Lego house with a slide, basketball net and a crocodile! Then after a while Robert, Fiona, Pat, Neil and Guillermo came round. We had lots of fun. It was nice to see everyone.

Saturday was spent playing Monopoly, which lasted over 3 hours! It was sooo great! I only just won but the rest of it was still really good. Later we watched a bit of Star Wars since there are some new series coming out! Afterwards it was dinner and it was curry night that meant a Bollywood movie too! It was very funny as it was one of the sillier ones (they can be quite intense!).

On Sunday, church was at John's because it was very windy. It was really cool because I could see the old light house slip from the window and the waves were massive! Then we

went back and after our walk, played a game called Parks; it was very close but I ended up last! Shortly after, it was time for dinner. Afterwards we played Grace's new Dominion. Again, it was quite close but this time I beat them! By then it was twenty to ten so I rushed to bed, as it was a school night!

Freyja (11)

New Kittens

We have two new kittens and they are girls. They are called Coco and Willow. They are both Bengals. I know a lot of Bengals. There is Tammy. She lives in my house with Coco and Willow but she is very old. She is nearly 17! My cousins have two Bengals and they are both boys. They are called Hugo and Hector.

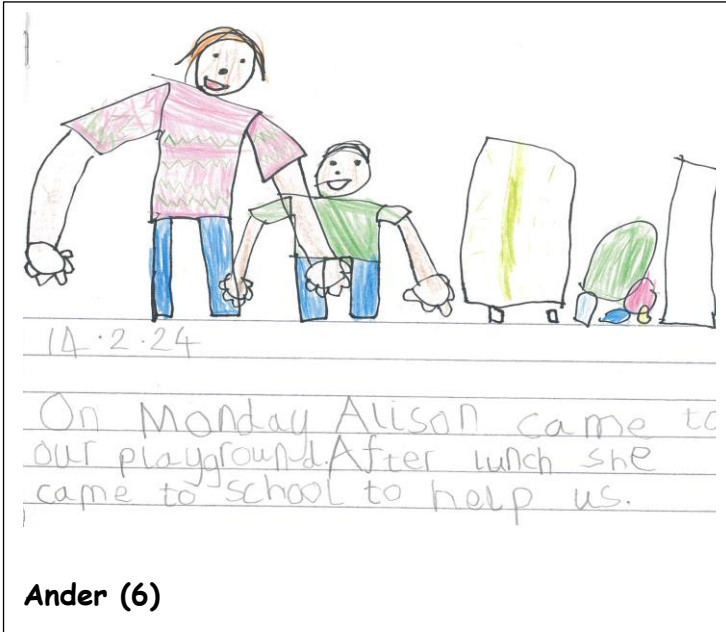
Harris (9)



Alison Came to Play

On Monday Alison walked by the school playground when we were having break. Next she climbed over the gate and jumped down. Then she started to play with us and guess what she came again after lunch and even better she stayed until home time. We all enjoyed her coming to play!

Luca (8)



Da week dat's awa

Friday starts at 0730 – a bit of a lay in considering I was up at 5am the day before for the trip to Grutness on the Good Shepherd. I'm skipper just now as Captain Kenaby is having a long earned rest from duties.

My new kitten Marmalade quickly heard my stirring and started meowing as loudly as she could for some breakfast. After complying with cat and dog needs, I had my tea and toast before heading out, fully kitted out in waterproofs. Has anyone else noticed the rather inclement weather or is it just me?! Roll on spring! The sheep are already waiting. I reckon the chickens told them "Our slave human is awake!" I am greeted by Tallulah, one of the matriarchs, who used to dance for nuts when she was younger. Now she just tries to run me over – the joys! Ash is always close by, even if it is just to witness the sheep feet stamping, showing their displeasure at her presence. I later headed up to the boat to finish paperwork that had sprung to mind in the middle of the night. Seeing the sea crashing over Kubbi Skerry made me glad we had ventured to Shetland the day before. Fresh goods in the shop were enough encouragement to head to Stackhoull.

The afternoon consisted of chopping kindling, cleaning out the ferret cage and putting a new hose on the washing machine down at Springfield. The old one had been eaten by hungry mice (those pesky critters). Another case for Marmalade!

Had a lovely evening throwing arrows at a darts board. Mr Stout got 180 at one point. I've only had about half a dozen 180s in my whole darts career. Luke Littler is safe this year!

Saturday: Yippee it's the weekend and I rush down the stairs only to realise the troop still need fed and watered and it's blowing a hoolie outside with rain trying to find a way in. The day quickly becomes a realisation of getting what needs to be done outside finished! I explain to the ewes that it's really not my fault that it's raining again. Total silence with blank stares is what I received in return from them! I retreated to the comfort of Koolin to get on with spring cleaning. I do love a spring clean! It is so cathartic and you discover so many gems along the way. I reacquainted myself with piles of electrical cables of various sorts that we just can't part with, as you just don't know when one might possibly be needed. I have several thousand CDs from the last 30 years of collecting them. I am not as precious about CDs as I am with my vinyl collection so off to the charity shop they will go, as soon as Lerwick trips start.



GRANNY'S @ HouLL

3rd BIRTHDAY PARTY

Then I discovered a box of photos that came from my mother's house last year. So many memories, going way back to her childhood and before. I took out a few from the 60s and 70s which show our time as a family on the isle first

time around. As many people reading this will know, I was brought up in Stackhoull and led a very idyllic childhood. I have so many beautiful memories of the 'auld eens'. Smells of baking, milking cows, sitting on various laps, steering tractors and Landrovers, tilly lamps and dregs of Babycham bottles!

The land that I watch over has many footsteps from my kith and kin who went before, and I feel a responsibility to continue the work of my ancestors to my best ability.

Although I fully intended to continue with the spring cleaning while listening to the Scotland rugby match, I quickly discovered the radio to be so unfulfilling and so unsatisfactory that I resigned myself to watching the match on TV. All I wish to say about that game of rugby is that "we was robbed!!"

I went to Taft for an evening meal: as usual at Taft, the food was delicious. Smoked haddock and scallops followed by poached mulled pears made by Alison Sinclair who is learning knitting from one of our plethora of master knitters (Marie).

Sunday: My Sunday mornings always start with a dose of Premiership (English) football, followed by politics with Laura Kuenssberg. I don't know why I put myself through the torture of listening to politicians lying through their teeth. Surely in these days of interactive technology, our 'red button' could be used collectively by the public to send a 240V shock to the offender sitting blowing bubbles to the proletariat. As if we don't know that they are speaking rubbish! Imagine the viewing figures!?

Sunday is also washing day in my house, and I'm not talking armpits (*editor – hopefully they get seen to more than once a week Steven!!*). Clean sheets on a Sunday night is always comforting, as are the underpants on a Monday morning.

Monday: "Tell me why, I don't like Mondays" I don't mind Mondays at all. Monday mornings are Good Shepherd maintenance time. We have an electrician in fixing our sector light so we can safely navigate in to the harbour at night. There is a large swell breaking – another good day not to be at sea. Boat day will be Thursday and all relevant people have been informed. Not to belittle anyone's importance as we are all important. That's what makes community work. Afternoon started with burning rubbish and continuing to tidy the spare room upstairs so it is ready for guests.

Some of you already know, but I have registered to create a home for Ukrainian refugees. It's a long, drawn-out process as the UK is not the easiest place to gain access to legitimately, via immigration anyway – surprise, surprise. Victoria and her 19 year old daughter, Anastacia should be here in the next month if all goes well. Victoria speaks fairly good English and I'm sure Anastacia will learn quickly too. Victoria is a qualified paramedic and Anastacia is in her last year of nursing training.

Tuesday: Woke up, and as usual checked the weather on various apps. Oh £\$%^&*!!! The weather has changed again and Thursday is no longer a goer for the boat with strong easterly winds forecast. So, before I could do so, Deryk phoned with the same concerns. We agreed to bring the trip forward by a day and sail with 3. Not ideal, but 'dat's just da wy it is!'

In the afternoon I pumped some oil down to Springfield. I'm so good tae the workmen that I let them have a hot shoor wance a week!!

Caught a limping eye and gave her some Alamyacin. Even after all the expensive foot jags in the autumn, you still get the odd one limping.

The day is turning inclement again so time to get the fire on and do some paperwork. Old great uncle Jerry would be spitting if he kent the price of coal!

Curry for tea – that will heat me up.

Wednesday: I was awake at 4am and should have just gotten up, but I lay in bed till the alarm went off at 5am. Boat day and I like to listen to the Shipping Forecast at 5.20am just to solidify my intentions for sailing. Cyclonic 2-4 which is great at this time of year. A fine journey to Grutness, we were averaging 10 knots. There were lots of goods waiting for us and Alan Pottinger there to give us a hand. We are all very grateful for Alan's continuing contribution to keeping the Good Shepherd operating – I'm sure everyone agrees. He's a fine fella.

Although we got there with plenty time, we also had a ships audit by surveyor Zander Simpson. He leaves no stone unturned, shall we say, but men like him keep us safe as sailors, insisting that certificates and machinery are all kept in good order. We even did a 'man-overboard' exercise which Zander videoed for his records. Coming home wasn't as pleasant as the Sumburgh Roost was in full display and I steered manually for several miles through some rather large waves. I do, however, think that the Mull of Kintyre roost takes some beating. 11.5 knots and sometimes showing 13. Tom made us some rather delicious soup which became a bit of a challenge eating rather than wearing it!

We were glad to get home and cargo discharged to lots of cheery faces as usual. We have such a unique and community-minded approach to this chore, but I cannot emphasise enough that we need to keep this operation safe at all times. Please watch your backs and everyone else's too. Let's call it a proactive safety net!

Got home and had a quick Hoover around the house with my new 'Shark'. What a tool that is! I can't speak highly enough of its capabilities. I had Jimmy and Graham up for a curry which went down very well with a cider or two. My cat Marmalade enjoyed all the attention and petting. Got the decks on and played some golden oldies including our own Chris Stout who I listen to a lot. Catrion McKay's 'The Swan' always gets a play. What a wonderful piece of music it is, and my Dad was there at its inception, as they sailed on The Swan on the same trip many moons ago.

Thursday: I'm wide awake at 6 so I got up and played with the Hoover. Cat and dog not amused! I think we have had enough rain now. Is it time to build an ark? If only we could get 2-3 hours of sunshine (*Editor – hurrah Steven, your prayers seem to have been answered, temporarily at least!*). My land is running out of grass. Roll on the spring!

Regards,
Steven at Koolin

ISLE NOTICES

Chapel – Sunday at 11am, Susannah leading the worship. All very welcome.

Reminder – party tonight at Taft: "I can't believe it will be already 7 years to the day that I moved to the island. I'm so grateful for the opportunity and the life I have here! Let's have a party to celebrate: Friday the 16th of February at Taft, from 7pm all welcome! Marie

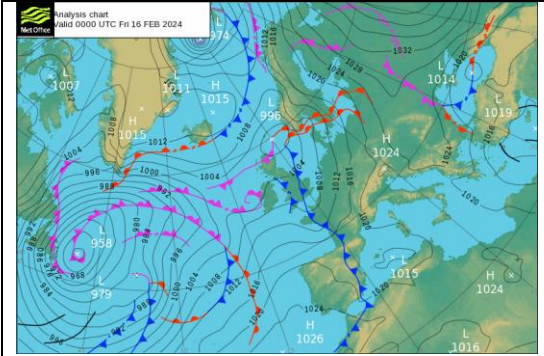


'Walter' the young male Great Spotted Woodpecker has survived the winter so far on Fair Isle, mostly by living on peanuts. He's been roosting at Haa (where he widened the entrance hole to a nestbox so he could fit in!) and spending most of the day feeding at Shirva whilst Tommy is away. Fun fact: woodpecker feet are zygodactylic (my favourite word) - meaning they have two toes facing forward and two toes facing backwards.

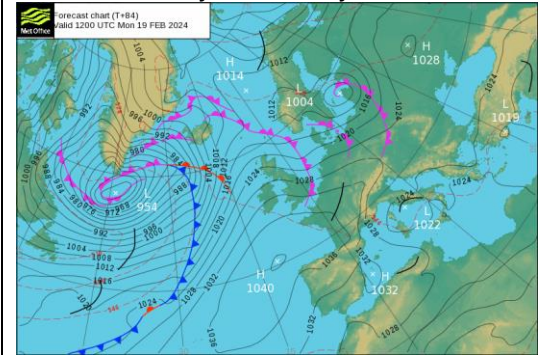
Susannah found a Crane on Monday, which was initially on South Green, but went wandering around the Isle on occasions. A rare visitor to Fair Isle, sightings have become a bit more regular in recent years, although most are in the spring. This appears to be the earliest record for the Isle (and possibly Shetland).

David, Shirva

FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



Analysis Chart 0000 UTC
Friday 16th February 2024



Forecast Chart 1200 UTC
Monday 19th February 2024

GENERAL SITUATION

Friday 16th February 2024

As a shallow depression moves east into Scandinavia a northerly airflow covers Shetland. This eases as pressure briefly builds before freshening southeasterly later Saturday ahead of fronts driven east by a depression south of Greenland. As these clear overnight an anticyclone over Biscay feeds in a cloudy, mild south-westerly airflow for Sunday and the start of next week. This strengthens ahead of further Atlantic fronts bringing rain Tuesday and Wednesday. A strong southerly follows for Thursday as the front stalls along the west side of the UK. This clears east on Friday, but more fronts follow bringing an unsettled weekend.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND

Temperatures 6° or 7° Celsius by day, 4° or 5° overnight.

FRIDAY 16th: Clearer conditions with the odd shower soon extending southeast across Fair Isle. F4-5 N winds. Cloudy but mainly dry overnight with a F4 NE wind. **Sea State:** Moderate or rough with a 2 to 3 metre NE'ly wind swell.

SATURDAY 17th: Mostly dry but rain spreading east later as F4 E winds become F5-6 SE. **Sea State:** Mostly moderate with a 2 metre N'ly wind swell.

SUNDAY 18th: Overnight rain clearing then mostly dry with F5 WSW winds tending W. **Sea State:** Moderate or rough with a 2 to 3 metre WSW'ly wind swell but mostly moderate at 2 metre east of Shetland.

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK Temperatures 6° to 8° Celsius by day 4° or 5° overnight.

MONDAY 19th: Cloudy after early rain, perhaps brighter by afternoon. Fresh to strong WSW winds. **Sea State:** Moderate or rough with a 2 to 3 metre W'ly wind swell, moderate at 2 metre east of Shetland.

TUESDAY 20th: Cloudy with rain, heavy at times and fresh to strong SW winds. Becoming mainly dry by evening but chance of rain overnight. **Sea State:** Rough with a 3 to 4 metre W'ly wind swell, moderate at 2 metre east of Shetland.

WEDNESDAY 21st – SUNDAY 25th: Wednesday brighter with showers and fresh to strong SW winds. Showers merging to a longer spell of rain on Thursday as S winds strengthen with risk of gales. Rain or showers with strong S to SW winds for Friday and the weekend. **Sea State Wednesday:** Rough or very rough with a 4 to 5 metre W'ly wind swell but mostly moderate at 2 metre east of Shetland.

Dave Wheeler

