

FAIR ISLE TIMES

VOLUME 47 ISSUE 23

PUBLISHED SINCE 1978

2nd JULY 2024



Farewell Freyja

On Monday, we held a Farewell Tea Party for Freyja at school as it was her last day at FIPS! In the morning, we had fun making Mars Bar Squares and Peat!

We gave Freyja an enormous card (purple of course) and a photo album of her time at FIPS (pink of course) - both beautifully put together by Amy - and of course, the traditional gift of a scientific calculator for high school! We had a lovely afternoon sharing memories of Freyja, looking through the album and eating lots of cake!

Freyja is a delight to be around who draws everyone in with her bubbly, kind personality and sharp, engaging conversation (she certainly keeps us all on our toes). Freyja is a bright, intuitive young lady with exceptional interpersonal skills for her age ... a natural ability that will undoubtedly take her far in life! And on top of that she is incredibly empathetic, thoughtful and polite. Fair Isle's loss is Anderson High's gain! FIPS will be very quiet without Freyja after the holidays. She has been an excellent role model to the younger children who will miss her very much, as will all the staff. We wish her all the best on her next chapter.

We hope everyone in the community has a lovely summer!

Gillian and everyone at FIPS ☺



This F.I.T is my last one for FIPS and I'm not going to write about my weekend, instead I'm going to write about my time at FIPS over the last nine years!

I have had the most amazing time in school and nursery and I am extremely lucky that I have been able to go to such a lovely school with such supportive, kind teachers.

I love FIPS because all the staff make learning fun and new concepts understandable, we have also done many experiments and craft projects to learn how things work or how to use the equipment we have got. One of my favourite memories in nursery is of chatting with Pat whilst trading some of our packed lunch! I have really liked talking to all the teachers and staff throughout my time in school on various topics but mostly just for a nice chat!

Although I will dearly miss all the pupils and teachers I am looking forward to the Anderson as there will be lots of new kids and different classes, I think the best one will be CDT or home economics. You even get to eat all your food later! I think the Anderson will be very fun and an exciting step in my life.

To finish off I would like to say a super duper massive thankyou to Pat, Hollie, Ruth, Gillian and Fiona for helping me prepare for high school and teaching me many, many useful interesting facts, skills and knowledge over my FIPS journey, I have loved it all!

Freyja (12)

We thought it might be fun to include Freyja's first F I Times contribution along with her final one, thank to Dave for hunting through the archives for this!

Hello, my name is Freyja and I am 5 years old. I have just started school and I like it. I have been playing in the playground, doing my number book, having school lunches which are nice, and I like playing with our new magic sand which keeps its shape and I am learning to read.

In the holidays we went to Norway. Before we went to Norway we had 3 days in Lerwick. We went to the library and did a competition. I had to find lots of posters of book characters that were hidden around the library. I found all of them and I won the competition. I got a 'Complete Bird Spotter's Kit' as the prize. It is a bag with a bird book, a notebook, a pencil and some binoculars. Freyja (5)

We have loved your wonderful writing in the Times, Freyja! All the best at the big school – we know you'll have a brilliant time and be just as popular there as you are here in the Isle. Don't forget to keep in touch with us all!

And now from our Royal correspondents! Isle folk may have noticed a change in staff at Stackhoull Stores this week as the proprietors have swapped traditional Fair Isle summer rigouts of LHD boots and wirsit for something much more refined. Thanks to Fiona for these photos from the grand day out at the Royal Garden Party held at the Palace of Holyrood House, with King Charles in attendance. Fiona and Robert have run the Fair Isle shop and Post Office for over 30 years and we are very grateful for their dedication to the community and pleased at the recognition of your hard work in being invited to the party, hope you had a super day out!





Orca! The FIBO boys had a very a welcome distraction from ringing puffin chicks at the Holms recently, when these 2 beauties swam past. Markings seem to confirm that they are Hulk and Nótt who are often seen around the northern isles. Thanks to Alex Penn from FIBO for the photo.

The Fair Isle Sea Cave survey report has recently been published by NatureScot and is available online at:

nature.scot/fairisle

A survey team from Heriot-Watt University and NatureScot visited Fair Isle back in 2021 to carry out sea-based surveys of some of the caves around the isle. A total of 175 potential cave sites (including arches and tunnels) have been identified, with 'Diamond' cave being the most extensive surveyed at ~200m in length. Despite weather related challenges the team were able to carry out full biological surveys of 4 of the caves, which showed caves to contain typical cave biota and be in favourable condition.

Using a combination of direct observations and historical records this information has been collated into a cave inventory for the isle which makes a brilliant addition for the DR MPA knowledge and will form a detailed database for reporting on the Annex I habitat 'submerged or partially submerged sea caves' in that area and also provides an important baseline for future monitoring of cave condition.

The survey team and NatureScot would like to thank the Fair Isle community for the warm welcome they received during their time in Fair Isle, with a special thanks to Neil, Stewart and Martha Thomson for their advice, hospitality and for sharing their local knowledge of the Fair Isle caves.



Painted Top Shell. © Graham Saunders



Orca who joined the survey team © Graham Saunders



Common Starfish on the upper cave walls of Diamond cave. © Graham Saunders



Squat lobster and a (closed) beadlet anemone on the cave floor of Diamond cave. © Graham Saunders



Dahlia anemone. © Graham Saunders.

We turn to Skerryholm for the final week dat's awa of the session. Thank you to Jimmy for always being a willing (and often-asked) contributor!

Having been on holiday, there is a lot of catching up to do, so last Friday was spent in the garden, removing the indigenous weeds from my sown crops. I planted less this year, mostly carrots and onions, so the task was not so onerous, especially as my seeds have germinated well, and mebbie the weeds have protected them from the elements while I was away.

The weather is better again, and Saturday is a lovely day, so I cut grass at the play area and museum and then at Skerryholm. I visit Busta for my morning coffee and find Barry in fine form, well recovered, and full of praise for all the medical care that he received.

I meet the boat in the afternoon, and read the Times in sunshine. Then a surprise - Steven with his exceptional catch of a **halibut**. I was on the Good Shepherd when the last one was caught, in 1974, three or four mile SE of Sumburgh Head. With no piltocks nowadays, I don't know how you would bait a halibut line now. Funny how things change.

There's a beach party at night at North Haven, but I do consider myself too old for some things , so stay at home and watch Belgium improve after a poor start in the Euros. The industrial creel fisherman is here again, which, even at my age, upsets me in that someone can lawfully take from our limited resources and put nothing back; but in the world in which we now live, that's perhaps an old fashioned notion.

Sunday is another bonny day, especially later as the westerly wind eases. Not so pleasant was watching Scotland depart the tournament. It was a game that showed our limitations; our star players did not show up, and we failed to get a meaningful shot on goal. VAR looked at a possible penalty against us, but ignored a much more obvious claim in our favour. Had that been given by the referee, the game would surely have ended differently, and we would be judging the team and the tactics differently too.

The telly is tough for some, though - broadcasting either football or politics, the latter being a tough watch, as we brace ourselves for this earth shattering change, which will really not make a lot of difference to our lives. Politicians don't always fill us with confidence, and the latest episode of Tories backing what they already knew as fact only strengthens our distrust. Robbie Burns would have called them "a parcel of rogues". With support for the rural economy continuing as bad as it has been, things could get even worse; through lack of funding and punitive health and safety measures, we have seen closures of abattoirs, petrol stations, local halls, churches, banks and the continuing lack of any responsibility for our essential ferry fleet. Yes indeed, it could get worse, as, in Scotland especially, funding has gone to the central belt.

My sheep have been around the house for a few days, so on their way back to Meoness I put them in their cru. I dose a few lambs, trim and spray a few feet, and clip a couple of ewes. The latter I don't find as easy as it used to be, but I guess that's to be expected.

More football at night when I feel more for the Croats than the Scots as their joy was extinguished in the hundredth minute by the undeserving Italians.

My congratulations to Mhairi and Lachlan on the safe arrival of their baby daughter, and my apologies to Hollie for forgetting her invitation to Burkle.

The boat is away on schedule on a fine Tuesday morning. No fuel for me though, as the company's trucks are in bad order at present.

The cruise ship *Island Sky* is anchored between the Sheep Rock and the South Gavel.



He must be aware of some unknown hazards as they are ferrying the passengers around Bunes to the North Haven. Some difference from the *Seabourne Venture*, which, a few weeks ago, was nearly tied up to Lang Maunsie.

I wake up to power cut on Wednesday. I guess some others were woken up long before me, but I am glad when power was restored later. When we came here in 1969, electric power was part time: there were no freezers, and fridges, if you had one, ran on paraffin - but we seemed to manage ok. We set up start-o-magic generators and later inverters as back-up. We now rely solely on our island supply and so are vulnerable when it fails, especially the elderly, as I am, with no mobile reception. Progress is indeed measured in various shades.

We all rush to the shop in the afternoon to stock up after yesterday's delivery. It makes you wonder how you would

manage without fridges and freezers now, or even worse, without a shop, as I remember, for a time, perhaps a year, after Jimmy and Hannah left the Isle in 1950. We got our supplies from 'Pete's', which was Grantfield Stores, which was run by folks my father knew: others bought from Irvine's at Robins Brae, or Eunson's at Exnaboe. Butcher meat, usually of poor quality, came from the shop at Boddam, also owned by Irvine Bros. These days, at the click of a button, even the cats can be supplied from Amazon prime. I remember the empty tea boxes going out on the boat one week to return on the next sailing. These were not good times.

It's a dull but fine calm day, but later going downhill with fog and patchy rain.

This continues on Thursday morning, so no planes and no jags. The boat is sailing to Lerwick; I enjoyed my many years on the boat... on three boats in fact, but not so much on days like today with a fresh breeze and poor visibility. But a big improvement in the afternoon will make for a better trip home.

The football has now reached the no second chance stage. I felt sorry for Ukraine last night who failed to progress with a point more than others who progressed. Bottom of the class was never good news!

Voting papers arrived so have placed my x in the correct box. Incidentally, I have also been with the same bank for 65 years, but alas, as I have said already, the future of that establishment in Lerwick is not one of progress, so my allegiance there is not guaranteed.

I'm off now to meet the ferry, so wish you all a pleasant weekend, and try to take a few hours to relax, but it's likely easy for an old man to give that advice; in fact I now realise that my story this week is much more about the past than my present, but I guess that's just how it is at my time of life.

Jimmy.



Huge congratulations to Lachlan (of Burkle) and Mhairi on the birth of their first child, a girl, Elsi Vaila Irvine Shaw, on Sunday 23rd June. A first grandchild for Hollie and Deryk at Burkle and Sandra and Joe Irvine in Orkney. First great-grandchild to Hollie's parents Pat and Alistair. We can't wait to meet Elsi when she comes to the Isle!



We hosted our largest ever cruise ship on Sunday, the Hurtigruten cruise ship *Maud* (photos above courtesy of Alex at FIBO), measuring 135.75m long and wider than our Good Shepherd is long! The ship's crew impressively offloaded over 400 passengers on to the beach at the South Haven in 90

minutes. The guests were treated to a fine day in the Isle, enjoying a splendid visit to the museum, trips to see the norries and of course plenty of tea and scones at the Hall.

Upcoming Dance in Fair Isle: Hunt and Allison Smith, from Maine, USA, are life-long musicians in the New England tradition. They will offer a traditional New England barn dance, accompanied by Hunt on a fiddle that he made, and Allison calling the dances and accompanying Hunt on piano accordion. Local musicians are welcome to sit in!

Friday 12th July, 7.30pm at the Hall, all welcome.



Recently, some of the Fair Isle airstrip firefighters undertook a refresher course at Sumburgh Airport, where they have the set up to practice extinguishing an aircraft fire, thanks to Fiona for sharing these photos, that is real fire-fighting!!



Fiona shared this interesting photo of the Kirk in Fair Isle, taken by Cara's partner Alex Beevers. It is a solargraph, taken over 5 months from January to June, we think you will agree it is stunning!

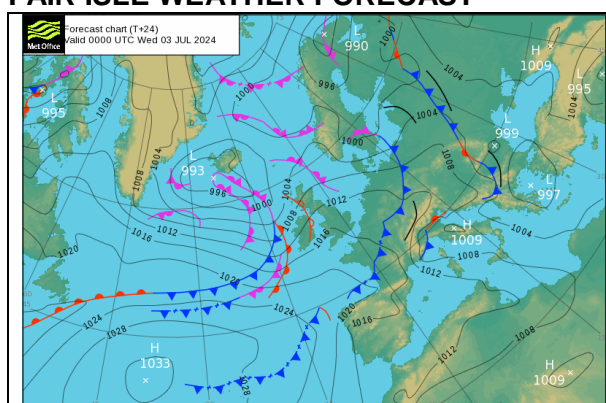
So, this is the final edition of the Fair Isle Times this term and we leave you all for a well-deserved summer break.

A raft of thanks are, of course, in order - firstly to the bairns and staff of Fair Isle Primary School who always start us off with super stories and pictures and often a laugh or two. We will miss Freyja's input but she is welcome to send us a *week dat's awa* any time! Huge thanks to our stalwarts – Neil for Maavi and his tongue, and to Dave for keeping us right weather-wise. The editors would like to thank all who contribute and to those who take the time to pass on their positive feedback on the Times, glad you are enjoying reading!

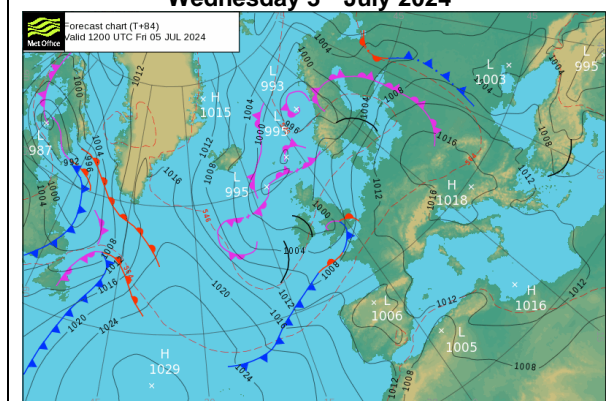
Have a splendid summer, let's hope the sun shines for clipping, cutting hay and swims at Gunglesund, or whatever you fancy this summertime.

The Fair Isle Times team

FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



Forecast Chart 0000 UTC
Wednesday 3rd July 2024



Forecast Chart 1200 UTC
Friday 5th June 2024

GENERAL SITUATION Wednesday 3rd July 2024

With the Azores High extending a flat ridge northeast a westerly airflow on its northern edge covers northern Scotland. As the ridge declines a frontal trough sinks southeast across Shetland on Wednesday, remaining as a slow-moving slack area of low pressure over northeast Scotland and the Northern Isles through Thursday and Friday before drifting away into Scandinavia during the weekend leaving behind it a cool north-westerly airflow. Fresh at first this soon eases as pressure slowly builds northwest and north of Scotland during the next few days. A slack area of low pressure is forecast to drift northeast across the British Isles during the second half of next week.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND Continuing cool with temperatures 12° or 13° during the day, around 9° overnight.

WEDNESDAY 3rd: Cloudy with some patchy mist and hill fog. Mainly dry at first with rain and mist from the west during the afternoon. F4 WSW winds. Some longer spells of rain for the evening and overnight.

Sea State: Moderate with a 2 metre W wind swell, slight inshore east of Shetland.

THURSDAY 4th: Cloudy with outbreaks of mainly light rain at first becoming brighter with showers. F4 W winds. **Sea State:** Moderate with a 2 metre W wind swell, slight inshore east of Shetland.

FRIDAY 5th: Cloudy with some showers, perhaps some brighter spells through the afternoon. F3 WNW winds. **Sea State:** Moderate with a 2 metre W wind swell, slight inshore east of Shetland.

SATURDAY 6th: Cloudy with showers or longer spells of rain, perhaps drier and brighter later. F3-4 WNW winds freshening F4-5 NW. **Sea State:** Mostly slight with a 1 metre WNW wind swell.

SUNDAY 7th: Cloudy with scattered showers and some brighter spells. F4-5 WNW winds falling light by evening. **Sea State:** Mostly slight or moderate with a 1 to 2 metre NW wind swell.

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK Temperatures 13° or 14° Celsius by day, 10° overnight.

MONDAY 8th: Cloudy with early showers dying out though staying cloudy. Light winds. **Sea State:** Mostly slight with a 1 metre NNW wind swell.

TUESDAY 9th: A mainly dry day, bright at first but clouding over. Moderate SW winds backing S to SSE with chance of rain overnight. **Sea State:** Mostly slight with a 1 metre wind swell, NNW in west SE in east.

WEDNESDAY 10th – SUNDAY 14th: Wednesday starting cloudy with mist and drizzle, perhaps hill and coastal fog. Drier and brighter later. Fresh SE winds easing. The rest of the week possibly rather cloudy with scattered showers. Chance of freshening SE winds and rain later. **Sea State Wednesday:** Mostly moderate with a 2 metre SE wind swell.

June 2024: As with the rest of the UK Fair Isle experienced a cool month but, unlike elsewhere, here we had our 4th dullest June on record. While much of the UK was drier than average, like the rest of northern Scotland, Fair Isle experienced above average rainfall. Mean sea level average pressure for the month was well below average at 1008.2hPa, equal lowest June msl pressure for Fair Isle. This reflects the general atmospheric pressure pattern for the month with low pressure rather persistent over the N Atlantic and in the Iceland region a situation responsible for feeding returning Polar maritime or Polar maritime air across the northern half of the UK in a predominantly SW to NW airflow, with some small-hail and "wintry showers" on the 5th and 6th!

According to the Met Office June 2024 was drier than average, with the UK recording 29% less rainfall than the long-term meteorological average. It saw 55.1mm recorded across the month. Wales and the south of England received much lower- than-average rainfall amounts. Wales recorded 48.1mm which is 48% less than average. The south of England recorded 24.8mm which is 58% less than the average. Northern Scotland recorded above average amounts. It saw 122.0mm of rainfall.

Dave Wheeler

