

# FAIR ISLE TIMES

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## A Fun Summer!

In the summer holidays we went to our house in Shetland. I love the new house. The driveway is fun to go down on my scooter. It was sunny so we went to Meal Beach and Minn Beach and I swam in the sea.

Next we went on the North Link and went down to Gran and Grandpa's house. Then we all went to Centre Parcs to meet my cousins, Lewis and Finlay. We went swimming, played badminton and went on quad bikes. I was good at quad bikes.

After that I went to my best friend Orla's for a sleepover. First we went to a skate park with our scooters. Then we went to Domino's for pizza.

It was my birthday on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August. I was 10 and I got V-Bucks and Robux and some clothes. Orla and I went go-karting and Orla gave me a funny gift. It was a friendship necklace and it said weirdo #1 on her half of the heart and weirdo #2 on my piece of the heart.



Now I'm back on Fair Isle for about 8 weeks and then we will move to our new house in Shetland. Heidi and I will go to Hamnavoe Primary School.

*Harris (10)*

## My Summer Holidays

I had fun at Center Parcs. I like the animals. I liked the summer holidays, it was fun. I went to a beach and Mum found a cat called Buttons, she is a calico cat. She is friendly. I missed Tammy. I went to my Granny's house and there was a bald magpie in her garden. I had fun.

*By Heidi (6)*



## Cousin Chaos and Abandoned for the Third Time!

I spent the summer on Fair Isle to see all our friends and cousins. Nona also came all the way from Argentina. She brought us gomitas de eucalyptus and lots of other sweets! She also gave us remote controlled cars, River Plate jumpers and River Plate hats. And the best bit ... alfajores! They are crumbly biscuits with caramel inside and they taste amazing! Maybe not amazing for your diet!

I went to the sheep hill for the first time. I went with Nannan to help and it was good exercise! We saw a bonxie chick but we did not get dive bombed by any bonxies! Oh I also almost stood on a maali's head.

Harris and Rona came to Fair Isle and guess what we played first ... FOOTBALL! After TV and more football we went to the beach, hooray! We all made a massive hole. It was so big it came up to my waist. We also made relaxing chairs out of sand where the waves got in to them (it's freezing so about as relaxing as it gets!)

After so much football my legs almost fell off, we had a shed party for Ellie and Laura's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was a dress up party but I dressed up as myself because I wasn't feeling the best and couldn't think of a costume. Harris had a great costume. He was the man who shrunk. He wore Inness' clothes (which are massive).

Hopefully this is the last time I say this. I got abandoned by family again for the third time.



Mum and Ander went out on a helicopter because the nurse thought he had appendicitis. My Dad was away when this happened again! It is basically the same story every time.

## Luca (9)



## The Best Summer Holidays Ever

I had fun in the summer holidays with Harris and Rona. We played football together and we played on the climbing frame and the trampoline. I had a pain in my tummy so I went on a helicopter to Shetland to hospital. I was ok and did not have appendicitis. We had a big shed party.

## By Ander (6)



# ISLE NOTICES

**SIC Development visit and drop in session – 4<sup>th</sup> Sept at the Hall.** Ana Arnett (Community Involvement & Development Officer

South Mainland and Fair Isle) will be visiting the isle on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> Sept, along with Yvonne Reynolds from Adult Learning and Peter Jamieson from Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The team will be at the Hall Committee Room from around 9.45 until the afternoon plane.

On Ana's previous visit, some households expressed an interest in having CAB along to provide advice and support around benefit entitlements, and other support CAB can offer, in this regard Peter will be available to offer help to anyone interested, please come along to the Hall.

Ana and Yvonne will be having an end of summer community pop in, offering a social space where everyone is welcome to drop along for a cuppa, a craft, games, magazines etc. Yvonne will also have information about what Adult Learning can offer folk.

**Fair Isle Committee quarterly meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> September. 7.30pm.** The next island meeting is due on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> Sept at 7.30 in the Committee Room. If you have any items for the agenda, please send to David Parnaby by next Friday (30<sup>th</sup> August), thank you.

**Chapel – this Sunday at 11am.** All very welcome to join, Susannah will be leading the service.

**Happy birthday to Iain at Setter!** Hope your birthday present is top price at the lamb sales today!!

**Talking of lamb sales,** the first of the loads of lambs heading to market left the isle on Wednesday this week, during a brief weather window in what has been a windy spell of weather. The crew of the Good Shepherd (how appropriate) managed to get a trip to Grutness and back to fit in with the first big sale of the season at the Shetland marts, today (Friday). Fair Isle lambs often get top prices, showing the quality of crofting here in the isle. Even more impressive when the lambs have a 2 and a half hour journey on the deck of the boat to get the mainland! Iain, skipper of the Shepherd, took a short film of the lambs on deck, which was shared by the SIC Ferries Facebook page, and at the time of writing, had been viewed more than 26,000 times! You can see it here:

<https://fb.watch/u82iGvmL8B/>

On returning to the Haven, the main pier was out of bounds due to divers working by the stack, so the Shepherd had to tie up along the old pier, not a sight we see very often today. It makes you appreciate how difficult it must have been to unload a full boat onto the very narrow pier until the new one was completed in 1993!



**This week we hear from one of our 'new' Assistant Warden at the South Lighthouse, Jonnie, who came to Fair Isle in the spring to work for Fair Isle Bird Observatory...**

*Squelching through sphagnum and twiggy heather, I plot an ungainly course on the small GPS held in front of me like a dowsing rod. The guttural chorus and faint whiff of Gannets carries on the breeze. It is chilly and at the summit of Ward Hill a scrap of low cloud snags on the ruins of the RAF radar station. In all other directions the ground peels away into an endless sea. But there is no time to ruminate. A sound like a banking jet rips the air above my head and I duck accordingly. For a bird built like a grizzled barrel, a Great Skua sure can move. The bird sweeps away low, turns on a primary tip, and returns for a further strafing. It is summer, and seabird monitoring dominates the responsibilities of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory team.*

*Perhaps the most infamous task is this, treading the peatlands and slopes of the island's north to map each Bonxie nest. The methodology is simple but character-building for the uninitiated: charting parallel lines through the territories of the skuas, until their attacks and strangled quacks reach fever pitch. Occasionally a noxious jet of excrement features. A nest is nearby. Scanning the ground reveals either a trampled cup of mottled brown eggs (though pale blue is also an option) or a hamster-sized chick, wobbling about with an oversized head and fleshy blue webbed feet. Luke, Alex and I collate territory totals over the early part of the summer, contributing to a dataset stretching back to the Observatory's conception, some 70 years ago. After the recent ravages of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1), monitoring the Bonxies has never been so key, as they muster an uncertain recovery.*

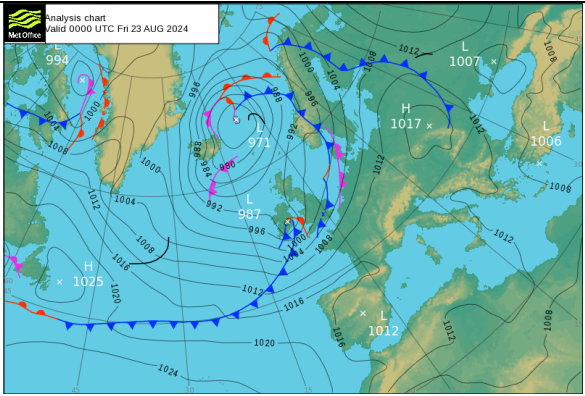
*'Recovery' may not be the word which can be used for all our other seabird species this year, which on the whole struggled through a difficult summer season. Much of our usual monitoring jobs list fell by the wayside as a dreich June killed off swathes of new chicks, a chill in the air tempered our opportunities to catch and tag adult birds, and sections of cliff which the Observatory has long used as productivity monitoring plots quickly emptied of birds. For a newcomer to the Obs', this was pretty demoralising, but I am big on mining the best of a bad situation, and in no-one's book can a season in Fair Isle be termed a 'Bad Situation'! This location is one from birding Bucket List dreams, and a northern summer is full of promise. Speckled Skylarks and short-tailed Meadow Pipits burst from the ground with trembling calls belying their age. Every walk along a drystone dyke or peat cut is escorted by a chastising parent Wheatear, with the tufty heads of their chicks whack-a-mole-ing from gaps in the rocks or the entrance of a rabbit burrow. One fine day Luke, Alex and I came across a Dunlin and its brood on the Mire o' Vatnagard – each golden chick powdered with miniscule white feathers. It was only the species' eighth breeding attempt in Fair Isle's history.*

*It was only the following day that we were then running pell-mell across that same site, following bellowed instructions from an Ian Best-shaped shape on a distant hillside. The woolly targets of the first, \*our first\*, Hill Caa of the year were lolloping towards Dumlin's Sink to meet the advance guard closing in from the north with crooks akimbo. This was something I'd been looking forward to seeing since our arrival in March! For a few long hours the birds did not matter, this was Fair Isle community craziness at its most organic. To a newcomer like me it seemed a slick operation; the shifting ovine organism of the sheep cru becoming gradually less hairy as the hot, sunny day wore on; the fellas in their Uptown Girl boiler suits blitzing their way through a world of wool; fleeces being folded, rolled and bagged according to shade; the sharp snip of shears and glug of water bottles; and Jimmy Stout, resplendent in orange overalls, overseeing operations with Glen at his side.*

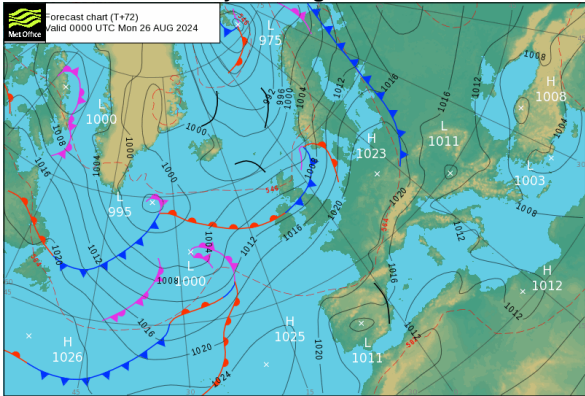
*This period, of late July into early August, felt like a true initiation into both island life and a glimpse into a 'proper' Fair Isle Bird Observatory summer and after such a dull and disappointing June, we were conscious to wring every bit of life out of those sunny, amicable days. Despite spending much of our time up to our elbows in Puffin burrows, neck-deep in the water of Guglesund or simply coated in Fulmar vomit, we've managed reasonably enviable Shetland tan-lines, and have put in tenable shifts at the crofting school of baling banter and at the hypnotic hands of the wrapper. When the sun sets, those windless nights see us ensconced in the Haven, ringing a hundred or so Storm Petrels until the wee small hours, and if it's too windy, then hey, we grab some folk for a game of pool in the Hall, both activities leaving us with enough time for forty winks at South Light before we do it all again tomorrow.*

Jonnie, FIBO

# FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



Analysis Chart 0000 UTC Friday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2024



Forecast Chart 0000 UTC Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2024

## GENERAL SITUATION

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2024

A small wave-low which, containing remnants of ex-hurricane Ernesto's moisture brought heavy rain and gusty winds to parts of England and southern Scotland will continue northeast over the North Sea. Between that low and a large depression centred near Iceland has resulted in the easing of yesterday's near-gale south-westerly airflow (gusts to 46kn) across Fair Isle. During the weekend the Icelandic depression is expected to edge closer to Shetland resulting in a return of fresh to strong south-westerly airflow. This depression is forecast to move away northwards early next week. However, pressure remains low across the North-East Atlantic through the week maintaining an unsettled south-westerly airflow across the British Isles.

**OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND** Temperatures 13° or 14° during the day, around 9° overnight.

**FRIDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>:** A cloudy though mainly dry start with scattered showers possible. Light F2-3 SSW winds increasing F5 WSW. Sunny spells developing this afternoon. Clear spells tonight with F5-6 SSW winds. **Sea State:** Mostly rough with a 3 metre WSW wind swell. Moderate east of Shetland at 2 metre SW. **SATURDAY 24<sup>th</sup>:** A bright mostly dry day with F5 SSW winds, then cloudier with showers around the middle of the day. F5

SSW winds. A few showers in the evening and overnight with fresh SW winds occasionally strong. **Sea State:** Mostly rough with a 3 metre WSW wind swell. Moderate east of Shetland at 2 metre from the S. **SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup>:** Bright with scattered showers and a F5-6 SW wind. The afternoon drier and brighter with WSW winds easing F4-5. Rain possible overnight with F4-5 SW winds. **Sea State:** Mostly rough with a 3 metre WSW wind swell. Moderate east of Shetland at 2 metre SW.

**FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK** Temperatures 13° or 14° during the day, around 10° overnight.

**MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup>:** Any early rain clearing then a bright mostly dry day with sunny spells and a fresh SW wind, this backing S and easing moderate for a time before freshening SSE bringing rain overnight. **Sea State:** Moderate to rough with a 2 to 3 metre WSW wind swell. Moderate east of Shetland at 2 metre S. **TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup>:** Cloudy with some early rain then mainly dry and bright with strong S winds. **Sea State:** Moderate to rough with a 2 to 3 metre S wind swell. **WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> – SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup>:** Some drier brighter spells but generally rather cloudy with showers or longer spells of rain. S to SE winds, fresh or strong at times S to SW later. **Sea State Wednesday:** Mostly moderate with a 2 metre S wind swell.

Dave Wheeler

