

FAIR ISLE TIMES

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18.11.24

On Sunday Ander mummy and I went to the pier to see the super high tide. When we got there a massive wave hit and there was quite a lot of spray. We got out of the car. We did not go on the pier just because the tide was so high. I think that the highest bit of spray was about 5m. We went back home. It had been great tide.

Luca (9)





18.11.24

We have a mouse. It is a Fair Isle mouse which has ginger on its sides. It eats mostly anything. We are getting a mouse ball so it can run around. It will be fun to watch! Andor (6)

ISLE NOTICES

Fair Isle Committee quarterly meeting – Next isle meeting will be held at the Hall Committee Room, on Wednesday 4th December at 7.30pm. Please send any items for the agenda to David Parnaby by 22nd November, and there will of course be mince pies at the meeting!

CHAPEL – cancelled this week due to poor weather forecast for Sunday morning

HUGE CONGRATULATIONS to Amy, Andy and Brodie at Upper Stoneybrake on the birth of their peerie boy this morning!! No name yet but they are all doing well and baby is a healthy 8lb 3oz (3770g). Well done Amy!! Proud grandparents Ruth and Iain at Setter look forward to hosting the baby's head-wetting once they are all back from Lerwick.

We Will Remember Them

Eighty years on and two engine blocks sit immovable amongst the sparse grass and heather between Gilsetter and Vaasetter; a gully the final resting place of all that remains of the rear fuselage and tailplane. Whilst corrosion and rust cover the pistons and cylinders of the engine blocks, dozens of etched signatures cover every square inch of the fuselage skin - a patina of decades-old graffiti. The location of these remains is circled on the maps of most visitors to the isle - there are surely few places in the UK where wreckage from a World War II aircraft is as accessible as this, un-fenced and touchable. The pieces certainly make for striking photographs, but I always wonder whether people give much thought as to the fate of the crew of this aircraft?



There is an excellent book called 'Lost to the Isles - Accounts of Military Aircraft Accidents Around the Scottish Isles, 1914-1941' by David W Earl and Peter Dobson, which gives a much more in-depth account of the crash but, to paraphrase:

On 17th January 1941 a Heinkel He 111H-2 set off from Oldenburg, near Bremen, on a routine weather reconnaissance mission. On board was a crew of five - Karl Heinz Thurz, the pilot, Josef Wohlfahrt, the wireless operator, Georg Nentwig, the second wireless operator, Bernard Lüking, the engineer/gunner and Leo Gburek, the meteorologist. As they neared the Shetland south coast they were spotted on radar and five Hurricanes from Sumburgh were scrambled to intercept them. Bullets raked the Heinkel from nose to tail, shooting Lüking through the legs and Nentwig in the side, wiping out most of the instruments in the cockpit and hitting one of the engines.

Thurz's first plan was to head for Norway but, as he turned east, the starboard engine started to smoke, soon followed by the port engine. As he came out of the cloud he spotted Fair Isle just off his right wing and started to bring the aircraft down, coming in over North Haven. His speed was too fast, however, and, as he touched down, the plane bounced into the air again, catapulting him over his intended landing point. Thurz forced the plane down again and it skidded along the ground, crashed through a stone wall and caught fire. As the crew made their way out of the aircraft, amidst exploding ammunition and flares, the bodies of Nentwig and Gburek were discovered about 200m away from the main wreckage.

Following a citizen's arrest by George 'Fieldy' Stout, servicemen from the naval base at North Haven and anti-aircraft gunners from Ward Hill were soon on the scene and the three German airmen were taken to the barracks at Pund, where they were billeted and had their wounds treated. I was once told, or possibly read somewhere, that when the islanders found out it was to be Thurz's birthday on 19th January, they threw him a party! Sadly though, like the story of sailors from the Spanish Armada teaching the Fair Isle residents to dye wool and knit back in 1588, this is likely to be more fiction than fact, but it does make for a good tale!

The three surviving airmen were transported from Fair Isle and taken to Lerwick, but even this was not without incident - on 18th January the RAF launch sent to collect them ran aground coming in to South Harbour, with the same thing happening to the second RAF vessel sent, and it was the Lerwick lifeboat that eventually collected them. From Lerwick they were sent to London for interrogation, then to a Prisoner of War camp in Cumberland and, finally, to Canada where they saw out the war, with Thurz returning to Fair Isle twice before his death in 2006.

On 20th January 1941, Nentwig and Gburek were buried here in Fair Isle's kirkyard, their plots marked by wooden crosses. Having begun his university studies as a geophysicist in 1929, in 1937 and 1938 Gburek took part in scientific expeditions to Spitsbergen and was the recipient of a medal for his role (as a final-year PhD student in geophysics) in the Third German Antarctic Expedition, 1938-1939. The expedition leader named a group of rocky elevations in this region the 'Gburek Peaks' (or *Gburekspitzen*) after him. He was then conscripted into one of the *Luftwaffe's* weather reconnaissance squadrons at the start of World War II. Unfortunately, I could not find any further information about Nentwig but, given the age at which he died (21) this is perhaps not surprising and one can only imagine how his life would have turned out if the war hadn't intervened.

But that is not the end of their story: in July 1962 their remains were disinterred and reburied in the German Military Cemetery at Cannock Chase, England, along with 4927 of their countrymen from both world wars. In September of this year I was travelling throughout Scotland and England on a research trip and, as part of my route took me close to Cannock Chase, I made a detour to visit the cemetery. Gburek and Nentwig are buried in the same plot at the end of a row, shaded by a tree and surrounded by green plants, their headstone identical to the thousands of others that flank it. Simple in design, it just records their names, dates of birth and dates of death, along with their ranks - Nentwig's *Gefr.* (*Gefreiter*) denoting a rank roughly equivalent to a Corporal, and Gburek's *Reg-Rat* (*Regierungsrat*) denoting he held the rank of Administrative Advisor of the Meteorological Service of the *Luftwaffe* - equivalent to a *Luftwaffe* Major. I'd taken with me a sprig of heather from the isle, which miraculously had survived to this point, and laid it on their grave - a little bit of Fair Isle to be with them. You might ask "why?" and the answer is simple: because they were just two boys whom I wanted to know had not been forgotten.

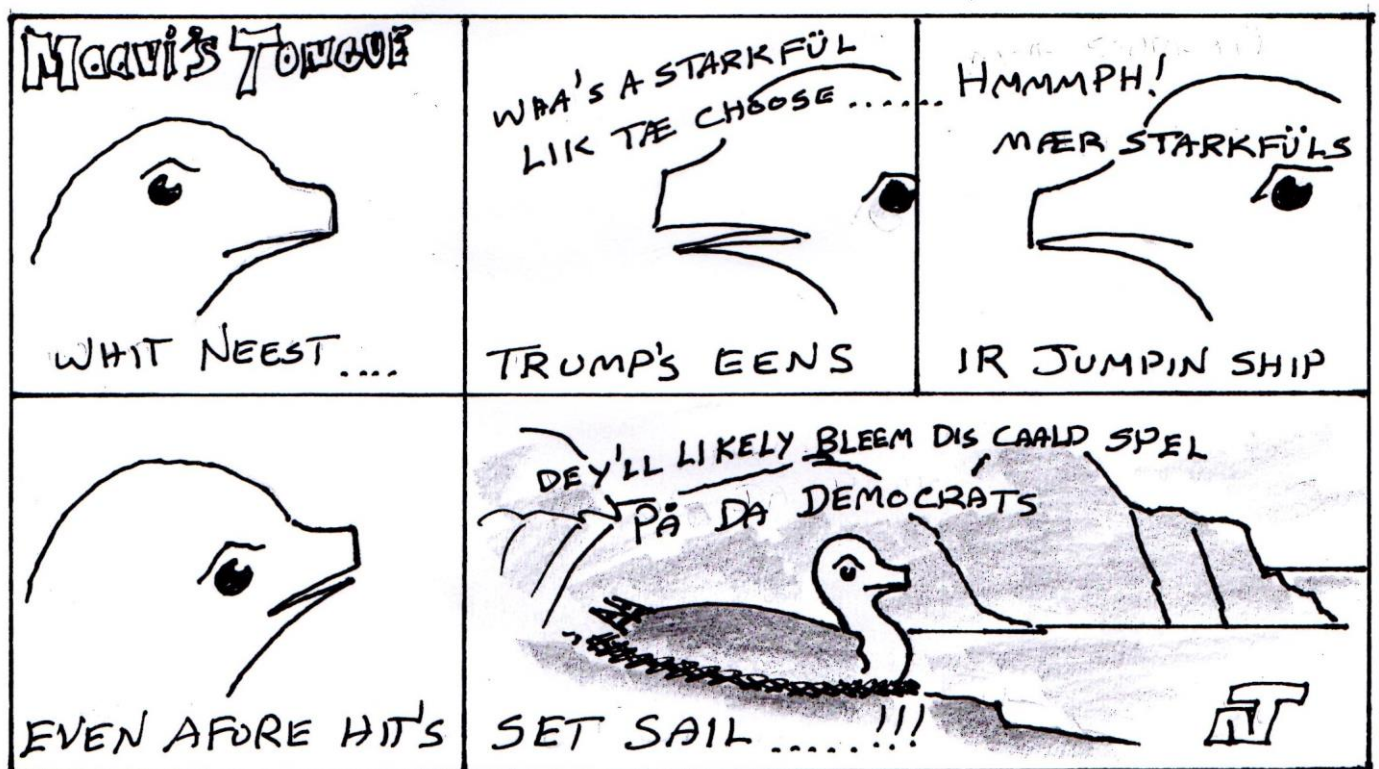


In the same year that Gburek and Nentwig were killed in Fair Isle, George Waterston (who, as an ornithologist, had been visiting Fair Isle since 1935 and, in 1948, purchased the isle from the last 'laird' and established the Fair Isle Bird Observatory) was taken Prisoner of War in Crete. Waterston's grave lies in the churchyard of the tiny village of Humbie - by coincidence the site of another Heinkel crash, this one being the first German plane to be shot down in World War II. I cannot begin to summarise Waterston's contribution to Fair Isle over the years but his is also a piece of the Fair Isle jigsaw puzzle which deserves to be remembered.

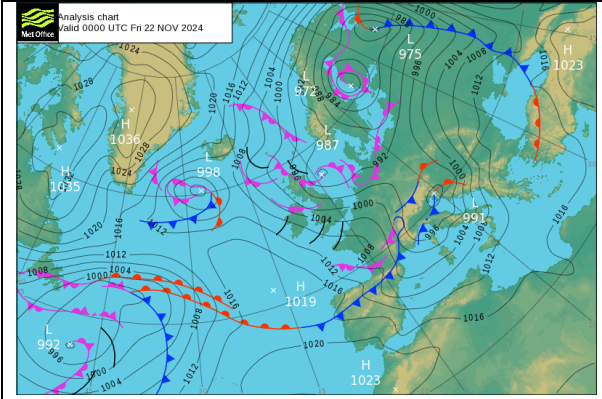
In another Fair Isle connection, the insignia of the *Wekusta 1/O.b.d.L* (*Wettererkundungsstaffel 1 Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe* - the 1st Weather Reconnaissance Squadron of the Commander-in-Chief of the German Air Force) features a rainbow over the silhouette of Fair Isle with South Light. The daily weather reconnaissance missions took the aircrews from their base in Oldenburg up to the Faroe Islands and back and this insignia was selected as Fair Isle and South Light were major landmarks on their route, with the rainbow signifying the squadron's role in weather reconnaissance.

With very many thanks to Stewart (Quoy), Jimmy (Skerryholm) and Anne (Busta) for their kind assistance and patience with me pestering them with questions!

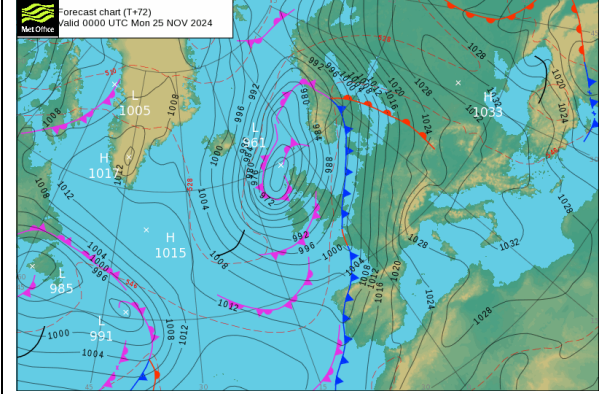
Rachel, Barkland.



FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



**Analysis Chart 0000 UTC
Friday 22nd November 2024**



**Forecast Chart 0000 UTC
Monday 25th November 2024**

GENERAL SITUATION Friday 22nd November 2024
 The cold northerly airflow eased overnight as low pressure over Scandinavia weakened. A weak ridge extends across Iceland and northeast Scotland today before being squeezed out tonight as Storm Bert heads towards the British Isles. A southeasterly airflow rapidly strengthens gale-force Saturday morning as Bert drives fronts northeast over the UK. These clear Fair Isle Sunday morning leaving a strong south-south-westerly airflow. This becomes cyclonic variable Monday as the now-filling low centre drifts east across Shetland. A northerly airflow strengthens on Tuesday as low pressure continues east then eases Wednesday into Thursday as a ridge follows across northern Scotland. A south-easterly airflow strengthens on Friday day as the next Atlantic depression is predicted to track northeast over northern Scotland.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND
 Temperature 4° or 5° today, 1° overnight with a grass frost. Saturday 6° by day night. Sunday 10° by day 7° overnight.
FRIDAY 22nd: A mainly dry bright cool day with some welcome sunny spells. F3-4 NNW winds falling light overnight and with clear spells the risk of a grass frost.
Sea State: Moderate or rough 2 to 3 metre N.
SATURDAY 23rd: A fine start cloud increasing and thickening as light winds rapidly strengthen ESE F6-7 and gale F8 by late afternoon as rain arrives, possibly preceded by sleet or snow before turning to occasionally heavy rain. Winds are likely to peak during the evening

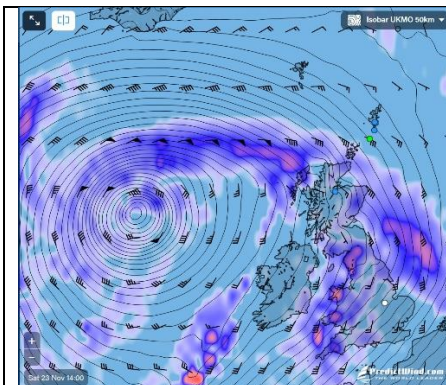
when we may see severe gale F9 with gusts of 60-65mph. After midnight winds ease ESE F7 though the rain continues. **Sea State:** Becoming very rough at 4 to 5 metre SE.
SUNDAY 24th: Overnight rain, occasionally heavy, and strong SE winds clears to sunny spells and scattered showers late morning as winds ease SSW F6. A cloudy night with rain or showers and F6-7 SSE winds. **Sea State:** Mostly very rough at SE 4 metre.

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK

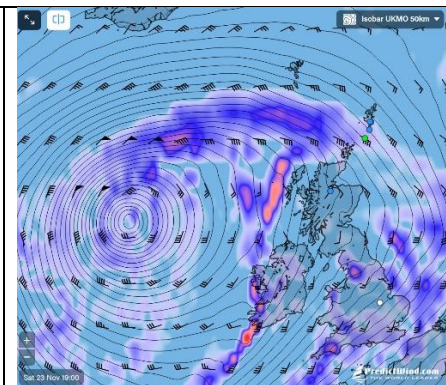
Temperatures Monday 9° by day, 6° or 7° overnight. Then a little cooler 7° or 8° by day, 6° overnight.
MONDAY 25th: Cloudy with rain clearing to showers by afternoon as fresh cyclonic winds become strong NNW easing a little overnight. **Sea State:** Mostly very rough at 4 metre, S at first NNW later.
TUESDAY 26th: Cloudy with scattered showers. Strong NNW winds easing fresh.
Sea State: Very rough at 4 to 5 metre NNE.
WEDNESDAY 27th – SUNDAY 1st: Scattered showers Wednesday and Thursday. Fresh NW winds backing moderate W. Rain on Friday with fresh SE winds becoming fresh or strong S. The weekend perhaps mainly dry with fresh SSW winds. **Sea State Wednesday:** Moderate at 2 metre NNE.

Dave Wheeler

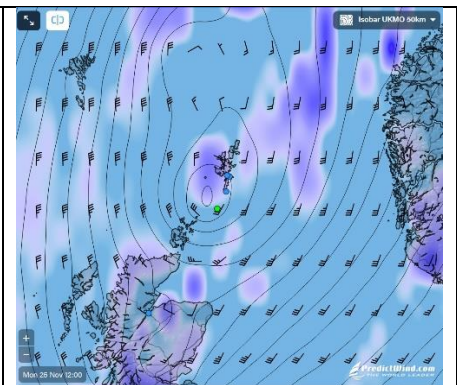
Forecast track of Storm Bert



**Forecast deepest central
pressure 935hPa Sat 23 Nov
1400**



**Forecast strongest winds
Sat 23 Nov 1900**



**Remains of Storm Bert Mon
25 Nov 1200**

