

FAIR ISLE TIMES

VOLUME 48 ISSUE 34

PUBLISHED SINCE 1978

29th NOVEMBER 2024

My week

On Monday we went to the air strip because George, our supply teacher, was going out on the plane. Gina, our next supply teacher was coming in. The plane had to turn around two times and go back to Tingwall because of low cloud! On Tuesday the plane tried again and it got here.

We designed an advent calendar with Gina. It is in French and it is big.

On Wednesday Joan came to Fair Isle and did lots of sport with us, badminton and table tennis. We were going to learn how to play Pickle Ball but we ran out of time as there was a power cut on the whole isle on Thursday and school was shut. Today (Friday), we haven't done much yet because school just started! We are going to do some maths, spelling and reading though.

Ander (6)



My weekend

On Saturday I woke up, then I woke up Mummy. We went downstairs on to the sofa, sat down and turned on the TV. But just as we started watching it Ander came downstairs so Ander and I played with some toys, toys! It was evil!

At tea time we went to Ian's house for tea, it was just an amazing tea (lamb, vegetable curry and tatties). Give us more, Ian! But then we had to go home. Aaw!

On Sunday morning we got up and this time we watched some TV yaaaay! We watched quite a lot of TV, then we played some football for a while. After a little while we went to Pat and Neil's house to watch Manchester United vs Ipswich, the score was 1-1 (we played rubbish).

Luca (9)



This week we hear from another of the artists taking up a creative residency at Lower Leogh, also known as the Fair Isle Studio. Thank you to Gael for sharing this with us:



Windswept Voices: An Artistic Journey

My name is Gael Hillyard, and I am an artist and content writer based at the impressive Wasps ICA studio building in Inverness. I am spending November and December here to explore Fair Isle from a creative perspective.

I am fascinated by remote and windswept landscapes, and Fair Isle has been on a list of places I have wanted to visit since I was a child. Like many, I used to hear Fair Isle mentioned in the Shipping Forecast growing up and was always intrigued by what it would be like (along with Cromarty, where I eventually lived for a while, but that is another story). It is an honour to share a little of my journey with you.

My name, Gael, reflects the energy I have always been drawn to. I was born in a storm and grew up where the Mersey meets the Irish Sea, so I feel most at home in wild, weather-beaten places. Fair Isle has even more of this energy with its dramatic skies, seas, and landscapes. As an artist, I have spent much of my career exploring how to capture weather, light and colour, and my work aims to reflect the interplay between these.

But I cannot see how anything gets done here; the light alone is distractingly beautiful. Even at night, it is astonishing; I am often out very late, freezing cold and battered by the wind, trying to photograph the stars. I was thrilled to get a truly terrible iPhone photo at 03:42 on Friday of MV Hjaltland sitting between South Light and what seems to be Start Point on Sanday. Orion's belt was just visible over the lighthouse. It's not a great photo, and it was disappointing not to capture North Ronaldsay, nor the Milky Way which was behind the clouds. But you can't have everything, and it will be a photograph I will still treasure.

Life as an Artist

Art, for me, is a way of connecting with the land, water, and sky, and it is said that you cannot see anything properly until you have drawn it. Years of experience have confirmed that. But my best pieces feel like they have emerged through me without much input. This has very much been the case in Eday in Orkney, and I am now delighted to also find it here on Fair Isle. I feel more of a collaborator on these two islands, with the sea, light, land, and weather acting as co-creators.

The connection with Fair Isle is deeper than just my artistic practice, though. My eighteen-year old is called Geo, and that name resonates with the Isles of Orkney and Shetland. For me, geos represent the meeting point of strength and surrender and how nature shapes us as much as we shape it, just like my relationship with Geo. Geos are especially part of Fair Isle's identity, and seeing that name reflected everywhere I look feels serendipitous.

I am currently working on 12cm square pieces in watercolour and pencil to provide drafts for my larger scale work. These have been great fun, and been instrumental in making me look at things that much closer. Don't expect animals, though. I am terrible at drawing them, and the one sheep I tried to sketch looked like a cross between a ball of yarn and a dodgy door-to-door salesman.

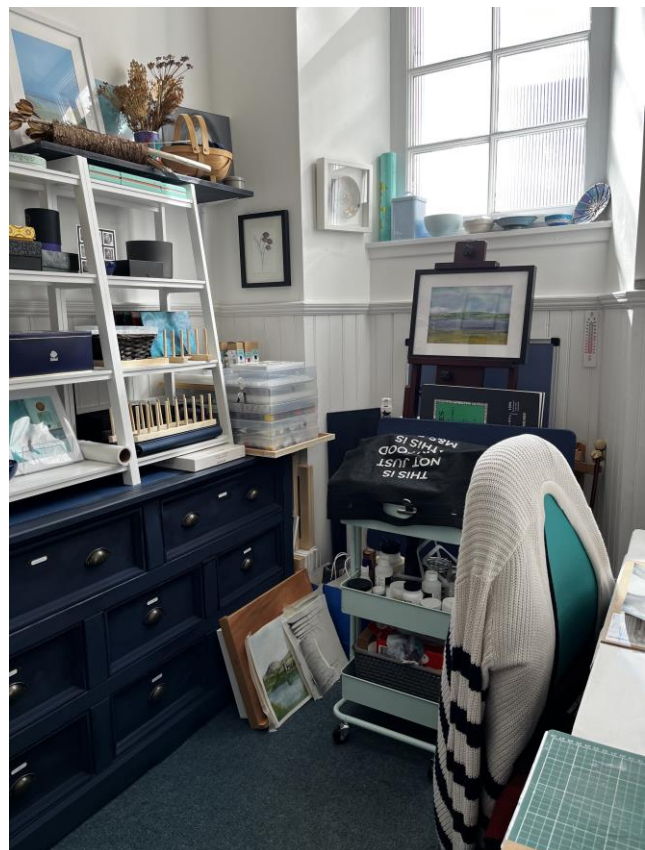
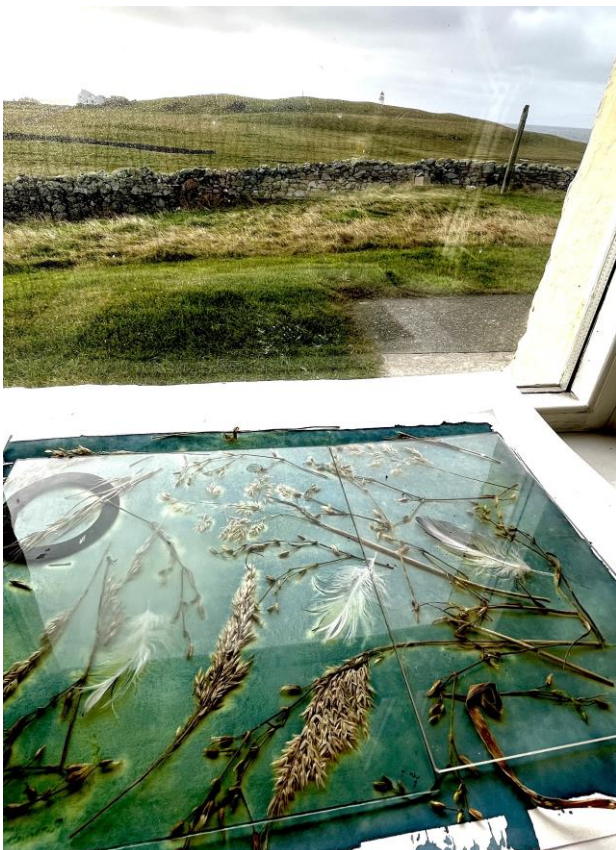
The Importance of Community

Although I spend much of my time in the studio or out alone exploring, I deeply value feeling part of a community. This balance between solitude and connection makes Fair Isle so unique. Whether it is the welcome you extend to visitors like me, and the invitations to pop into people's homes for a cup of coffee, or the chance to join local gatherings, I have been struck by how much strength and love there is on this small Isle. Above all, I am overawed and humbled by your resilience, resourcefulness, and humour.

The community has given me so much kindness, help, and information, and I hope that I can give a little something back in return. Whether through talks, creative projects, or simply sharing ideas, I will be delighted to help in any way I can, whether while I am still here or after I leave, so please let me know.

Looking Ahead

As I continue my time here on Fair Isle, I look forward to drafting ideas for a body of work inspired by my experiences. My residency is about creating material for an exhibition called *Windswept Voices*, and I hope to gather stories along the way, not to articulate them in writing but for them to imbue my work. So many of you have already shared so much with me, for which I feel incredibly privileged. I hope my work will capture some of Fair Isle from that perspective and reflect the essence of its human element.



I also hope to meet new friends while I am here and will be delighted to stay in touch with anyone who would like to. You are all welcome to visit me in Inverness if you are nearby. My studio building is worth visiting in its own right; some of you may already have a connection as it was originally Inverness High School and then Midmills College. My office was originally the rector's study, and my studio the ASN room, although it is tiny and people rather rudely call it the broom cupboard.

My solo exhibition, *Windswept Voices*, will be a collection of work and photographs from Fair Isle, including the watercolours I paint here and the oils I will work on when I return to my own studio. This will be held at Wasps ICA from 23rd August to 12th October 2025, and you are welcome to join me at the preview (date to be confirmed).

Thank you for welcoming me into your lives for a short time. I really wish it could be longer, and I will definitely return. But it is a joy to be here, and I look forward to meeting more of you. I would particularly like to thank Vivian and Clare Scott of Fair Isle Studio for creating the space to allow this opportunity.

Gael

ISLE NOTICES

Fair Isle Committee quarterly meeting – will be held at the Hall Committee Room, on Wednesday 4th December at 7.30pm. Please come along a bit early if you want to get a cuppa and mince pie!

Chapel - The service will be down at Dave's at the South Light at 11am this Sunday – all welcome to join. This will be the first Sunday of Advent. John

Christmas Tree party – The Christmas Tree party and Panto will be held at the Hall on Saturday 28th December this year, £10 per person for the evening including dinner and drinks. There will be a money box and sign-up sheet in the shop soon. Thanks, on behalf of the Hall Committee

Only 3 more editions of the Fair Isle Times this year! So please do send in any creative festive pieces, stories, photos, pictures, quizzes – anything you fancy! Thanks, Eileen

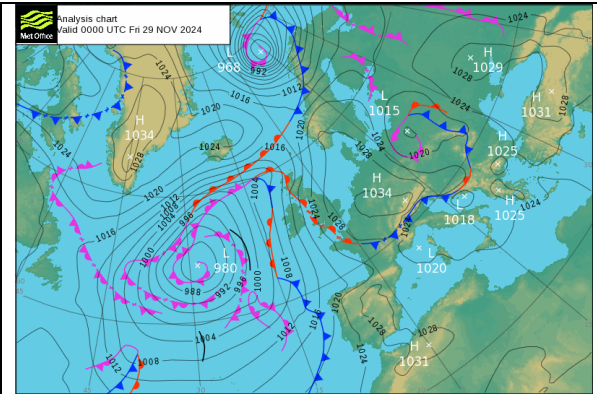
I have just received the sad news that Pat Sellar has passed away. Pat was a long serving Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trustee and regular visitor to the Isle, becoming FIBOT Chairman from 1990-1994.

His legacy includes donating the first moth trap to the Isle (in 1987). Now Fair Isle must have one of the highest densities of moth trap operators per head of population in the World. The news of his passing comes from Brendan O'Brien, well remembered by older Fair Islanders as part owner with Pat of a Jodel Mousquetaire light aircraft. It was so light the wind flipped it on to its back as Brendan attempted to take off from Fair Isle airstrip.

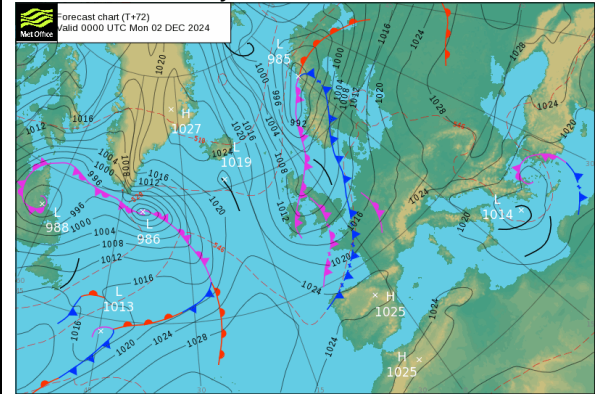
Pat was also the catalyst in Karl Heinz Sturz's post-war return to the Isle. Pat met him at a pilot enthusiasts' meeting in London, by sheer chance Fair Isle came up in conversation and Pat persuaded Karl Heinz to visit in the kinder circumstances of the 1980s. His love for Fair Isle continued to the end. Brendan, along with Brendan's wife, have written to say "he particularly wanted you to be informed" and to pass on the news.

Nick Riddiford (with thanks to Neil and Stewart for aviation inputs)

FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



Analysis Chart 0000 UTC
Friday 29th November 2024



Forecast Chart 0000 UTC
Monday 2nd November 2024

GENERAL SITUATION Friday 29th November 2024

A mid-Atlantic depression drives several fronts east along with a mild, strong south-south-easterly airflow. This veers south-south-westerly early Saturday behind a cold front then strengthens further during Sunday as the low approaches northwest Scotland Overnight the airflow veers westerly then north-westerly as the low centre passes between Shetland and Faeroe. Cooler by Monday as the low continues north along the Norwegian coast and a strong northerly develops. This eases overnight as pressure builds before the next depression tracking east from Iceland brings a milder strong southerly airflow for Tuesday, strengthening through Thursday and Friday as Atlantic fronts approach, becoming cyclonic variable by the weekend.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND

Mild, temperatures 10° to 12° by day, 8° or 9° overnight. Cooler later Sunday.

FRIDAY 29th: Outbreaks of rain, heavy at times, with mist and low cloud for much of the day – perhaps with a temporary slight improvement mid-afternoon. F4-5 SSW winds. Further rain tonight with F6-7 at first SSE.

Sea State: Rough 2 to 3 metre SW.

SATURDAY 30th: Cloudy, mostly dry apart from a few showers. Mild with F6-7 SSW winds.

Sea State: Rough at 3 metre SSW.

SUNDAY 1st: Cloudy with showers and a few brighter spells as F7 to gale F8 S winds ease F6-7 SW. Further spells of rain or showers overnight. Winds veering strong

NW and turning cooler. **Sea State:** Mostly moderate or rough at 3 to 4 metre S.

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK

Temperatures Monday and Tuesday with 4° to 6° by day, 2° or 3° overnight. Then milder at 8° to 10° by day, 6° or 7° overnight.

MONDAY 2nd: Cloudy with wintry showers and strong NNW easing overnight.

Sea State: Mostly rough or very rough at 4 to 5 metre N.

TUESDAY 3rd: Cloudy though mostly dry. Strong NNW winds easing.

Sea State: Moderate or rough at 2 to 4 metre N.

WEDNESDAY 4th – SUNDAY 8th: Wednesday cloudy but mainly dry, patchy rain on Thursday. Strong S'y winds. 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 SSE.

Dave Wheeler

