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Who was Johnnie Notions?

Johnnie Notions, whose real name was John Williamson, lived from 1730 to 1803 in Eshaness, Shetland. He had an outstanding amount of jobs including engineer, physician, tailor, joiner, clock-maker, watch-mender, blacksmith, farmer, fisherman and weaver. The interesting thing and the amazing thing was that he was self taught!

Johnnie Notions was important because he was a big part of eradicating small-pox. Smallpox was a deadly virus which came to Fair Isle first. 30% of the people on Fair Isle died.

How Johnnie Notions managed to find the cure was that he got some smallpox scabs and dried them with peat smoke then added camphor and then buried it for 7-8 years. He walked around Shetland saving lives as he went.

Edward Jenner noticed that milkmaids did not get smallpox because they had cowpox and his vaccine was chosen as the safest way. In 1980 smallpox was eradicated from the whole world!

by Luca (9)

Who was Johnnie Notions?

Johnnie Notions lived from 1730-1803. He lived in Eshaness in Shetland. He taught himself to be a doctor. Smallpox is a deadly virus. Johnnie Notions defeated smallpox. He saved hundreds of lives.

by Ander (6)

You can find out more about the fascinating Johnnie Notions [here](#)

This week we hear from Rafael Martig, a welcome frequent visitor to the Isle...

As you might not all know who I am, I thought to use my first Fair Isle Times writing to introduce myself. Why I came to Fair Isle for the first time in 2022 and why I keep coming back.

I have a background as a biologist and studied waders on the Dutch Waddensea islands. Soon however, I felt that I needed more, I wanted to tell stories. So I started working on projects in which I combined biology with art. I have been painting and drawing my entire life and also studied at the art academy. Since then I have become a full time artist with a studio in Delft, a wonderful 17th century city in the Netherlands.

How Fair Isle came into my life

I could have found out about Fair Isle a long time ago, as my mom had a Fair Isle knitting pattern book. I use the past tense not because my mom died, as she is still knitting her way through life, but as I smuggled it to my studio.

To be honest I do not really recall when I heard about Fair Isle for the first time. It must have been through the Bird Observatory instagram, or so. I was soon captivated by the landscape and its birds. The idea of visiting the island started to grow. When Georgia told me that there is an art residency at Lower Leogh it became a real possibility for me. Birds and art on an island, what more could I wish for?

I managed to secure myself a spot for the art residency for June 2023, prime time breeding season and loads of light. Little did I know that my first visit would be more than a year earlier. End of January 2022 I got the message that there was an opportunity to come to Fair Isle in March for two weeks. I thought it



In 2023 I painted many of the stacks around the island.
The rocks look so sturdy but are changing all the time by abiotic and biotic influences.

would be amazing to seize this chance to get to know the island.

First Fair Isle experiences

After some trains and two overnight ferries, I arrived on Fair Isle with the plane, where I was picked up by Amy. I quickly settled in Lower Leogh and the first few days I was outside as much as I could be. I was

overwhelmed by the Fair Isle colours, the changing light, the textures of the rocks, the lichens, the movement of the water, the wind and of course its birds. I talked to quite a few of the islanders about the birds, their importance for the island, and about how the island keeps changing all the time. I was so happy to see my first puffins off South Green, out on the sea. However I had to leave before they came to land. The moment I arrived back in the Netherlands, I got a message that they had set their orange feet on land. I wasn't too disappointed though as I knew I would see them the year after!

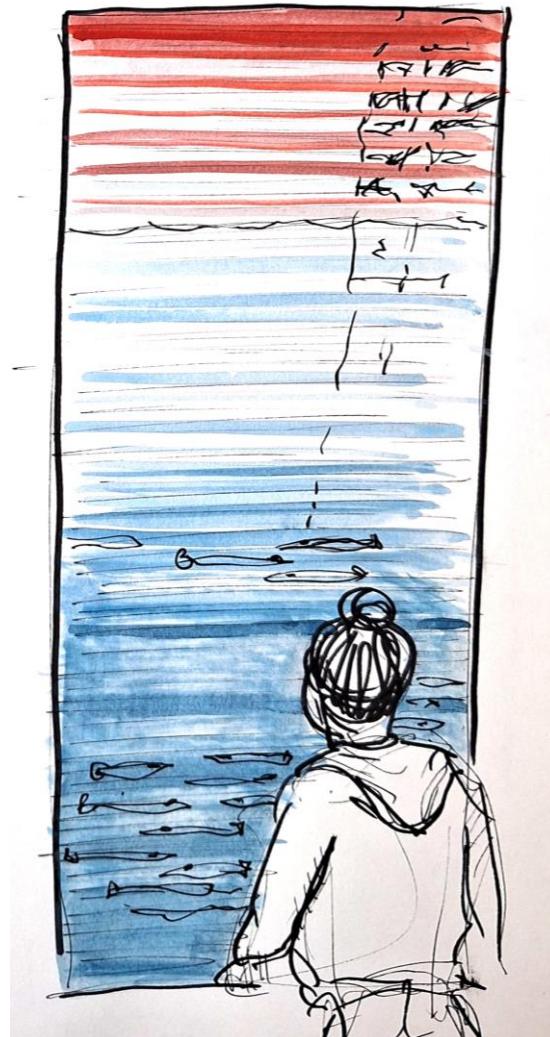
And I got to see plenty of puffins in June the year after. I could not resist being outside in the mornings and evenings with the amazing light. But at the same time I wanted to meet people, draw and paint, sit along the puffins, swim at Gunglesund and learn to knit. I found it very hard to decide what to use my time for, I got far too little sleep. Somehow I managed to do all I wanted. Including a few days of knitting with Marie, I had some hand knitting experience as a kid, but I really enjoyed learning something new. At the same time I was thinking about my initial plan, why I wanted to come to Fair Isle. I planned to develop an art project about the effects of climate change on Puffins. Now another year later the plan is getting more concrete.

Puffin art project

The poster bird of Fair Isle, the puffin is the protagonist to tell the story of climate change and its impact on ecosystems. A recent report of the British Trust of Ornithology highlights that the puffin will suffer the most from climate change of all British breeding birds. To tell the story I want to use local materials and traditions. Through a series of knitted tapestries made with Shetland wool and using both traditional Fair Isle patterns as well as my own, I will explore the fragile connections between humans, the ocean, and the birds. The project highlights how rising sea temperatures disrupt the food chain, changing the plankton community, the fish and eventually the puffins. By combining science, art, and local traditions, the work aims to make the complex issue of climate change tangible and relatable, inspiring viewers to protect the beauty and vulnerability of nature.

The project requires a lot of knitting, so in February of this year I came back to spend some time knitting. I tested out the online course made by Marie and I finished my first jumper among some other things. I am very thankful that I got this opportunity. I guess the Fair Isle knitting virus got me, as I was traveling back with 16 kg of wool that I picked up in Shetland. At home a knitting machine waited for me in my studio...

And back again



Initial sketch of a wall tapestry, showing the climate stripes. Every 4 knitted rows will show the average year water temperature of the last 150 years



Test knittings with plankton patterns, sand eels, and some elements that were added by hand.

So now I ended up on Fair Isle for the fourth time. This time to house sit for Marie, look after Fly and the sheep. It is so good to be back, to meet the lovely people I got to know over the past few years and experience winter. I will stay until the end of January, so plenty of time to write some art project proposals, apply for funding, draw, do some knitting and enjoy the wind and rain. Next week, if the weather allows it, my girlfriend Wendy will arrive too, together with her younger sister Anouk. Wendy has been here before in June 2023 and will stay with me until the end of January. I am so happy that we can experience this together. Anouk will stay for Christmas and New Year, before she goes home for a next adventure. Last year at this time of the year she was crossing the Atlantic on a sailing boat!

See you around!
Rafael

Fair Isle Primary School Presents: The Christmas Variety Performance 2024

Tuesday 17th December 2024
Community Hall
7.00pm
All welcome
Tea/coffee and mince pies



Sheep Hill – Saturday 14th December TOMORROW - final caa of the year – 9.30am sharp at the cru.

Oral History Session - our final session before Christmas will be held **today Friday 13th December at 3pm** in the committee room at the Hall. The topic this time will be lighthouses and social activities. All are welcome and there will be coffee and cake. Thank you to everyone who has joined in with these sessions so far and we'll start meeting again in the New Year. Rachel, Barkland.

Nurse cover – Laura is now away for a much deserved break! NHS Shetland are trying to find a nurse for a day trip visit this coming week, if possible, I will let islanders know the schedule. Nurse Margaret Cooper is booked to visit on the following days when she will be available at the surgery between the AM and PM planes: Monday 23rd, Monday 30th Dec and Friday 3rd January.

Call for used postage stamps!! Clan can raise funding from used postage stamps. I would be delighted if you could leave any either at the internal mail point in the shop porch or deliver them to Busta. I will send any collected down to Clan at the end of January 2025. Thank you in anticipation Busta Anne



Chapel – The service in Chapel is in doubt this week due to the poor forecast. If Sunday isn't too bad, Neil will lead the service at the Chapel at 11am for 3rd Sunday in Advent

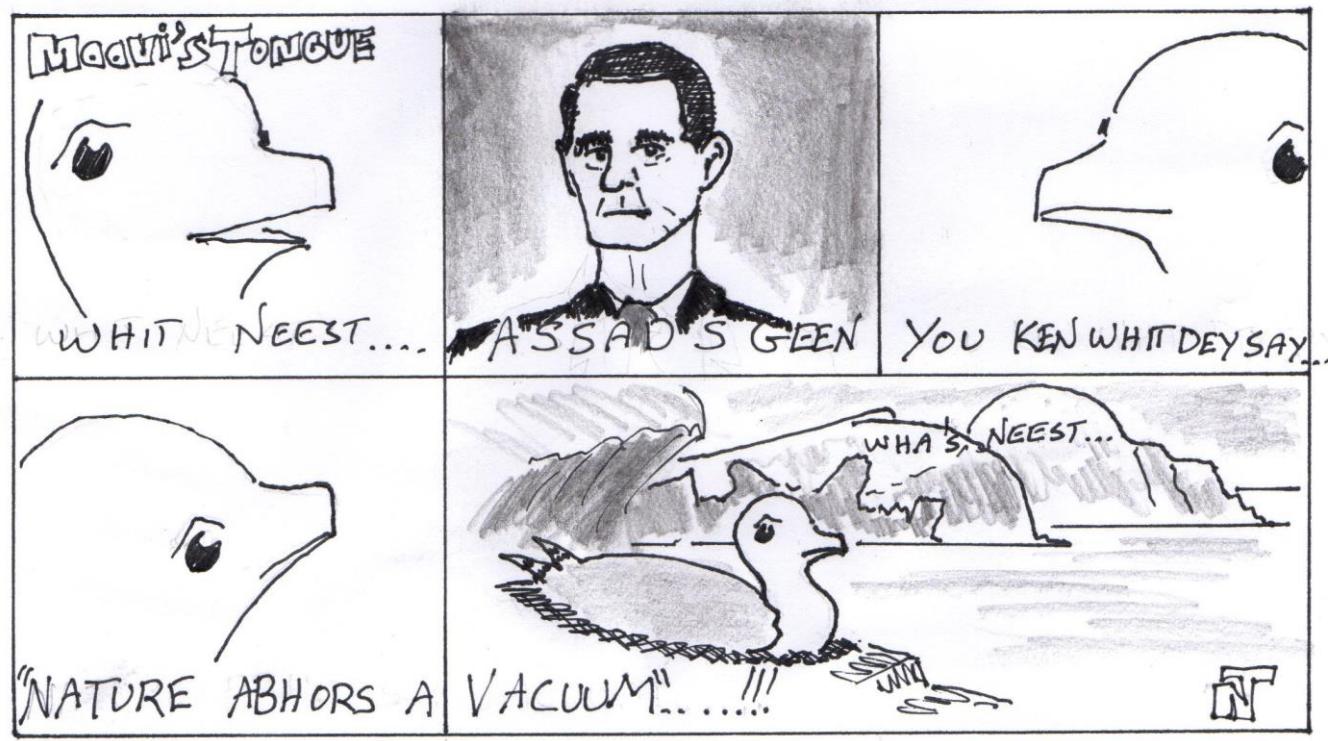
Good Shepherd festive sailings – There will be a sailing on Tuesday 17th December as per the schedule (weather permitting). The next trip is scheduled for Monday the 23rd December, however if the forecast for the 23rd is poor, we would look to sail sooner. The following sailing is scheduled for Monday 30th December. As ever, all these dates are very much weather dependant, updates will be available nearer the time on the voicemail – 01595 743978. Thanks, Ian – Good Shepherd IV Skipper

Hall Subscriptions – thank you to all who have paid your Hall subs so quickly, for any payments still outstanding, please either transfer to the Hall account as per Eileen's recent email, or you can pay at the Shop in cash. Thanks, Hall Committee.

Christmas tree party – will be on **28th December 2024 at 5.30pm**. There will be the much anticipated Fair Isle panto, followed by dinner, games, dancing. Entry is £10 per person and you can now pay at the shop, where there is a sign-up sheet and box for payments.

Festive Sing-a-long! - we're going to have an informal evening of festive singing from 7-8pm on **Friday 20th December** in the committee room at the Hall. Everyone is invited and we'll be singing carols as well as more modern Christmas songs. Wear your best (or worst!) Christmas sweater and feel free to bring a drink/nibbles! Please let me know in advance if you have any particular requests for carols/songs. Rachel, Barkland.

Fair Isle Teacher Job – advert now live! The job advert for our new teacher is now live, so please do share far and wide to help us find a great replacement for our much-missed Gillian and family. You can find the advert here <https://myjobscotland.gov.uk/councils/shetland-islands-council/jobs/principal-teacher-fair-isle-primary-school-406349>



Next week will be the festive *Fair Isle Times*, the final edition of 2024. Please do send any final items for our bumper edition to Eileen and Hollie asap. Thank you!

A GOOD READ



Sea Area Fair Isle: is a familiar phrase to all who follow the radio's Shipping Forecasts. It is also the title of a booklet now available for those visiting Fair Isle and from the Orcadian bookshop (14 Albert Street, Kirkwall, Orkney KW15 1HP; tel. 0185687800 (<https://www.orcadian.co.uk/shop/orkney-life-people-places/1453-sea-area-fair-isle.html>) for those who are not.

This 38 page publication is a tribute to the Fair Isle community's intrinsic dependence on the sea through the millennia, and the community's efforts – past and present – to ensure that this vital resource is safeguarded for the generations to come. It describes how impacts on that resource have focused community minds and explores the factors behind the ensuing changes, which have accelerated in recent times. Finally, it looks to the future and the positive steps being taken to demonstrate to the wider world the huge cultural, economic and environmental values the seas bring to this small Isle.

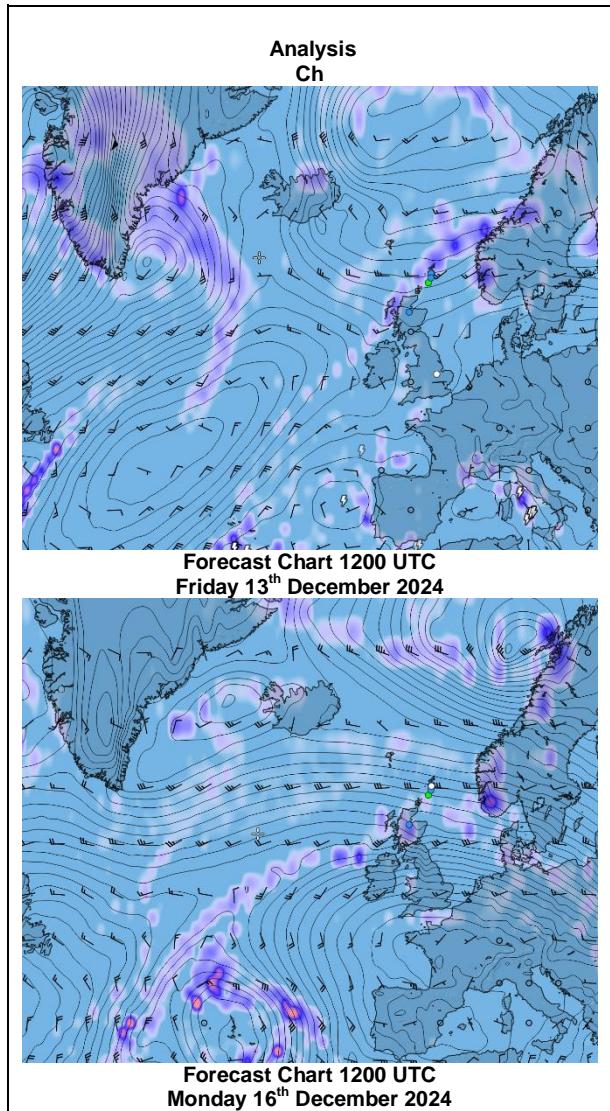
Sea Area Fair Isle is sponsored by the Williamson family, written by Nick J Riddiford and Kerri Whiteside and is a final addition to a series published over the last twenty years by the Fair Isle Marine Environment and Tourism Initiative (FIMETI).

Sea Area Fair Isle is not just a final farewell from FIMETI but fits neatly into the Demonstration and Research envelope, thus creating a bridge to the Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation (FIMRO) as well as an early document

for the new initiative. Read all about FIMRO at [The Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation \(FIMRO\)](#). The FIMETI website ([Fair Isle Marine Environment & Tourism Initiative | Home](#)) is still retained because of the wealth of additional information it holds. So, two more good reads during those long winter nights.

PURCHASING THE BOOKLET – a reminder. *Sea Area Fair Isle* can be purchased directly for £15 + postage and packaging from the Orcadian bookshop <https://www.orcadian.co.uk/shop/orkney-life-people-places/1453-sea-area-fair-isle.html>. Income from the sales goes to the Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation (FIMRO) to further their work. **But why not save the postage by visiting Fair Isle in 2025!**

FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



GENERAL SITUATION Friday 13th December 2024

As high pressure across the UK declines a depression near Iceland will drive a front into northern Scotland bringing a cooler north-westerly airflow by Saturday. As one depression moves away another takes its place, backing the airflow westerly for Sunday. With low pressure to the north a strong westerly airflow persists through Tuesday before backing south-westerly as a depression develops south-west of the British Isles. Current forecasts suggest this probably moving north-east over northern Scotland as a filling feature with a colder northerly airflow by next weekend.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND

Temperature 8° Friday, 3° overnight. 7° and 5° Saturday, a milder 11° and 7° for Sunday.

FRIDAY 13th: Bright and dry at first rain by afternoon, heavy for a time before clearing through the evening with a few showers overnight. F5-6 SW winds veering NW. **Sea State:** Mostly rough at 3 metre NW. Moderate in the east at 2 metre.

SATURDAY 14th: A bright, cooler day with a few showers and a F5 NW breeze. **Sea State:** Mostly rough at 3 metre NW but

SUNDAY 15th: Occasional rain or showers and a F7 locally gale F8 W wind. **Sea State:** Mostly rough at 3 to 4 metre W, 2 to 3 metre east of Shetland.

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK

Around 7° or 8° by day and 5° overnight at first. The week ending colder at 4° or 5° by day, around 1° overnight.

MONDAY 16th: Bright with scattered showers and a strong W wind. **Sea State:** Mostly very rough at 5 to 6 metre W, 3 to 4 metre east of Shetland.

TUESDAY 17th: Rain or drizzle at times, possibly heavier later. A fresh W wind backing SW. **Sea State:** Mostly rough at 3 to 4 metre NW.

WEDNESDAY 18th – SUNDAY 22nd: Rain or drizzle on Wednesday with a strong SW wind. Thursday cloudy with rain or drizzle clearing to showers as W winds strengthen. Friday and the weekend cooler as strong W winds veer NW. **Sea State Wednesday:** Mostly rough at 3 metre SW. Later in the week possibly rough to very rough at 5 to 6 metre W.

Dave Wheeler