

# FAIR ISLE TIMES

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## The best Christmas holiday ever

It was Christmas. I was happy my tree was up. Ross came to Fair Isle for the holidays which was great, I love him staying with us. I got lots of presents from Santa and other people. Mum and Dad gave me a good fun present, it is an obstacle course which you have to take a ball round. I also got a few Lego sets and games.

On 4 January it was my birthday and I was 7! I had a party at the hall. We played lots of different games and football. We also had a birthday tea and my cake was a Man U one.

Ander (7)



## Christmas holidays of the kings

On Christmas Eve I won an Alexa (smart speaker) from the Yankee auction which Tommy was holding. On Christmas day Ander and I woke up (not at 6am in the morning). Our Santa socks were stuffed, I had lots of Match Attax football cards and an amazing 'Hot Wheels' set which needed D batteries which we didn't have. We eventually got some at the shop a few days later. Triona, Stewart, Nannan, Daddad and Ross were at our house and we had a delicious Christmas tea of turkey, roast tatties, sprouts, pigs in blankets...

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of January we had Ander's birthday party at the hall. We also took the A-frame out, the horse and some crashmats. We had a great time playing on them and playing football. We also played some games and I won the cereal box game and finished off the piñata.

The holidays were brilliant.

Luca (9)



**The place names in Fair Isle have always been interesting to me.** You can see a lot of our Norse and maritime heritage in the names here. Also, the sheer abundance of place names in such a peerie place is fascinating – this editor’s partner has been known to state that he thinks the majority of place names here are just made to confuse folk, but I admit to feeling quite the opposite – Fair Isle has had its own version of “WhatThreeWords” for centuries, and in times of birders visiting the isle, it is helpful to be able to describe each location with its own name rather than saying “Near so-and-so place” or “over the brae from...”. I am proud of our dialect and place names and feel it is very important to ensure that they live on and are pronounced correctly and not as they were often unhelpfully spelt in older maps and books. As any folk who have said “The Havens” (*it is the Haven - singular*) or “The Gully” (*it is Finniquoy – pronounced Finniwhy*) or Reeva/Reevas/Raevas (*always pronounced Rayva, never plural*) will know I get a little bit cross – call it the linguist, and maybe the purist, in me.

Matthew Blake from Nottingham University wrote an article for us recently on the places in the isle named after birds, i.e. Scarfi Stack and Fugli Baa, and he would still be delighted to hear from any readers with any more comment or knowledge on the subject (contact Eileen for details or refer to F I Times edition dated 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024).

Continuing on this topic, Jimmy has written this interesting piece mentioning places named after people, including details about a favourite Isle place name – *Groggy’s Cup*. Jimmy – I wonder if you have any information on who ‘Skinner’ was and why there is a ‘Glig’ named after him – *Skinner’s Glig* being another stand-out name in the north-west banx.

Eileen, Houll

#### **I quote from a book I was reading...**

*‘A mob of cattle will settle sweetly on that flat. They call this the Chinaman’s Flat. There’s an old Chinese prospector buried over there somewhere. I don’t know exactly where. There’s no headstone’.*

The definitive statement ‘*Chinese Plain*’ transferred my thoughts to here on Fair Isle, where there are also such places, named after a person long since departed, but named so that that place belongs in its entirety to that specific person.

There are more places, I have no doubt, but good examples are *Jeemie’s Brae*, *Auld Jeems’ Hill*, *Lang Maunsie*, and closer to home, *Jaurm’s Geo*. The first two examples possibly referred to peats, or even areas to hunt woodcock, and I have no idea who *Lang Maunsie* was nor how he could have taken ownership of that barren skerry at Maversgeo. Having ownership of Jaurm’s Geo was, I think, a dubious honour, as it is a most useless geo, and so at best, a poor possession of the man from Utra. Derogatory even, it could have been, as not so very long ago a gentleman bearing that name was the excise man and receiver of wrecks which was any wood driven ashore here, and he did his best to uphold that dubious position or profession. And then there’s Malcolm, the proud possessor of that great headland to the west; who was he that was there even before *Luckie Minnie*? Mebbie he was just like *Sloggar Joe*!

However, to get to my story, surely the most notable of such named places here, is *Groggy’s Cup* ‘cup’ in this case being a small valley on the east side of Burrashield. Its name is steeped in history, being the alleged burial site of a seaman from the sailing ship *Anne* (but generally referred to as the *Caroline*) which ended its journey in South Naaversgill in the year 1773.

Allegedly, the Captain had made a robbery of bullion in America, and the destination of this bullion is uncertain, but the crew all made it ashore, including the Master’s small child. As well as bullion there was also strong drink on board, so much in fact that one seaman died of its effects after getting on land and no doubt rejoicing in their good fortune; and so he rests forever on the Face O’ Burrashield, in a place named in his honour, and to the effect that his cause of death was the grog he had consumed.

I have not been there of late, but we were pretty sure we knew his exact resting place, by an upright stone placed in

an area of soft earth. We dug for many rabbits all over the hill, but did not ever consider an investigation on that site! Total belief in folklore is not for tampering with, and so may he rest in peace in *Groggy's Cup*.

Jimmy.

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### An Evening in the Long Hall



If you read the *Saga of the Earls Orkney (Orkneyinga Saga)* you quickly learn that the folk of Orkney and Shetland liked nothing better in winter than sitting around, enjoying each other's company and telling good yarns. In an attempt at imitation the Ragna's Islands team invite you to join them for an evening in the long hall.

So why not settle down with a home bake, a mug of tea or in true saga style a glass of homebrew, and listen to winter talks. These will be informal gatherings with short presentations lasting around 20 to 30 minutes on some of the subjects we are currently pondering.

➤ **Thursday 16th January 6:30 pm**

Judith Jesch: *'If you can keep your head while all about you are losing theirs' ...*

➤ **Thursday 23rd January 6:30 pm**

Matthew Blake: *Orkney: the intertidal names of the North Isles*

➤ **Thursday 30th January 6:30 pm**

Corinna Rayner: *In a flat place... slope and hills names in the islands*

➤ **Thursday 6th February 6:30 pm**

Judith Jesch: *Fair Isle, a curious name...*

➤ **Thursday 13th February 6:30 pm**

Matthew Blake: *Bird place-names: flights of fancy in North Ronaldsay, Papay and Fair Isle*

If you are on our mailing list (i.e. I pester you with emails about the project) there is no need to book. If you are not on the list then email me [matthew.blake@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.blake@nottingham.ac.uk) to book your free spot.

PLEASE SHARE





Looking north from Udi Geo



The Keels & Skerry from Heed o Tind (*E Thomson*)

### Fair Isle Demonstration and Research MPA Research Update

Happy New Year everyone!

- Reminder: Wednesday 15th of January Shaun Fraser and Tanya Riley from UHI Shetland will be coming in to give a talk on the research findings from this year's inshore fish survey and benthic survey respectively. 7pm at the hall, all welcome.
- The Scottish Government have recently published a report to Scottish Parliament on the progress being made in implementing Scotland's Marine Protected Area (MPA) network. See section 4 "The MPA network in Scotland" which includes a spotlight on the Fair Isle DR MPA. Report available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/marine-protected-area-network-2024-report-scottish-parliament/>
- For those who completed the Marine Restoration and Enhancement Action Plan (MREAP) for Shetland online survey, the initial phase executive summary and full report have now been published and are available to read here: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ayg9\\_RAMip0L1VdiO9nN97ntnh-TbNXM?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ayg9_RAMip0L1VdiO9nN97ntnh-TbNXM?usp=sharing) The project will now progress into its second phase in January. During this phase UHI Shetland aim to gather further community feedback. I will share further information as I receive it.

**Katie Cubbon, Fair Isle Demonstration and Research MPA Research Officer**



Looking north to Kenaby & Sheep Rock from the Heed o Tind



Skaddan & South Lighthouse from Heed o Tind

**Visiting artist and friend of Fair Isle, Rafael Martig** is in the middle of an extended winter stay in the isle, enjoying the festivities, weather (!) and beautiful winter light of the Isle in December and January. In between working, walking the Taft dog and feeding sheep, Rafael has also decided to make some one-off original post-card sized artworks inspired by his time here in Fair Isle. A new one will be released for sale every 3 days, the first one with the puffin (*below*) was sold earlier this week and will be leaving the isle on Saturday for its journey across the ocean to its new home.

To be in with a chance of buying one of these lovely artworks for yourself, find Rafael on Instagram: [@rafaeldavidmartig](#). The next artwork will be for sale tomorrow – Saturday and will be one of these lighthouses:



From Rafael's Instagram post (*with permission*):

SOLD! First Fair Isle Post Art is a puffin! 😊🐧

This is your chance to get a piece of Fair Isle in your house! Inspired by Fair Isle, made on Fair Isle and sent to you from Fair Isle. The repetitive patterns and movements in the landscape, from the water, wind, birds, and lights, are the inspiration for this series.

Every 3 days, I release a Fair Isle Post Art, on 100% cotton handmade A6 paper, for 85 euros, and it will be sent to you. First come, first serve. Send me a DM to secure it!

The background is wonderful knitwear made by [@fairislewithmarie](#)

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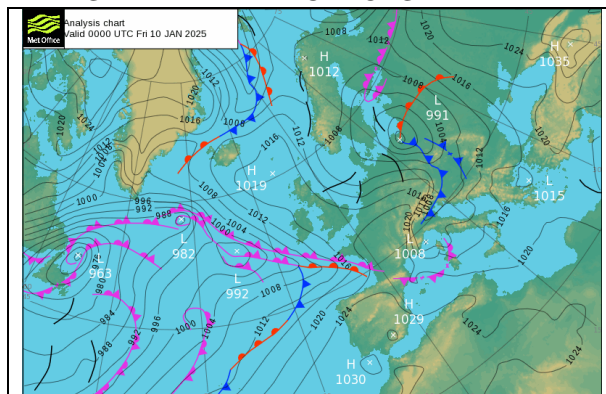
## ISLE NOTICES

Good Shepherd – will be sailing Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January

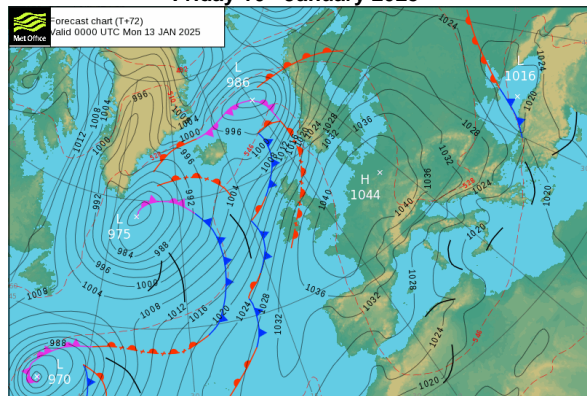
Chapel – on Sunday at 11am, all welcome to join. Neil will be leading the service.



## FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



Analysis Chart 0000 UTC  
Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025



Forecast Chart 0000 UTC  
Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025

### GENERAL SITUATION Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025

An area of relatively high pressure has brought a light cloudy anticyclonic airflow across the Northern Isles. The airflow freshens southerly later Saturday, strengthening on Sunday as the weak high slips southeast across the North Sea and Atlantic frontal systems approach. These affect Shetland on Monday, temporarily veering the airflow westerly on Tuesday as they clear east. For the rest of next week high pressure persisting close to the southeast of the UK is expected to maintain a mild strong south-westerly airflow across northern Scotland, this possibly easing southerly by next weekend.

**OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND** Temperatures 3° or 4° today, 0° to 2° overnight. The weekend milder at 5° on Saturday, 3° overnight and 7° on Sunday with little change overnight

**FRIDAY 10<sup>th</sup>:** A fine day and feeling less cold with a light F3 N wind. Sunny spells and just a small chance of a wintry shower. Risk of frost overnight. **Sea State:** Moderate at 2 metre N.

**SATURDAY 11<sup>th</sup>:** Dry with bright or sunny intervals. Light and variable winds freshening S F3-4 through the evening and overnight reducing risk of frost. **Sea State:** Moderate or slight at W 1 to 2 metre.

**SUNDAY 12<sup>th</sup>:** Mostly cloudy though staying dry with a F4-5 SSW wind strengthening F5-6, possibly F7 later. **Sea State:** Moderate at 2 metre SW.

**FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK** Mild at 9° or 10° by day, 8° overnight.

**MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup>:** Cloudy with a strong SW wind veering W. Dry at first but risk of patchy rain or drizzle with mist and low cloud later and overnight. **Sea State:** Mostly rough at 4 to 5 metre SW but 3 metre east of Shetland.

**TUESDAY 14<sup>th</sup>:** Some early light rain or drizzle otherwise staying cloudy and mainly dry. Fresh or strong W winds backing SW. **Sea State:** Mostly rough at 4 to 5 metre W but 2 metre east of Shetland.

**WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> – SUNDAY 19<sup>th</sup>:** Cloudy though mostly dry on Wednesday with fresh or strong SW winds. The remainder of the week remaining rather cloudy though mostly dry with fresh mild SW winds occasionally strong before easing S later. **Sea State Wednesday:** Mostly rough at 4 to 5 metre W but 2 metre east of Shetland.

Dave Wheeler

