

FAIR ISLE TIMES

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Cruise Ship visits to the Hall

Our stall has been great and successful. People really love our merchandise like our tea towels. In the hall, I like adding up the money too. I also like meeting interesting people. We raised lots and lots of money for school trips to Lerwick. This will be my first ever sports day!

Ander (7)



1. The boys in action. So many compliments about them.



2. Ready to go with our stall.



3. Brodie even joined us too!

So far, our stall has been super-successful. People have been amazed by how creative our merchandise is and how engaging we are. When the first cruise ship arrived (the Silver Endeavour if you would like to know the name), we broke our own record and took a whopping £519. Everyone was really generous. We even sold out of tea towels. Running the stall is fun and something I love doing. One thing I like is adding

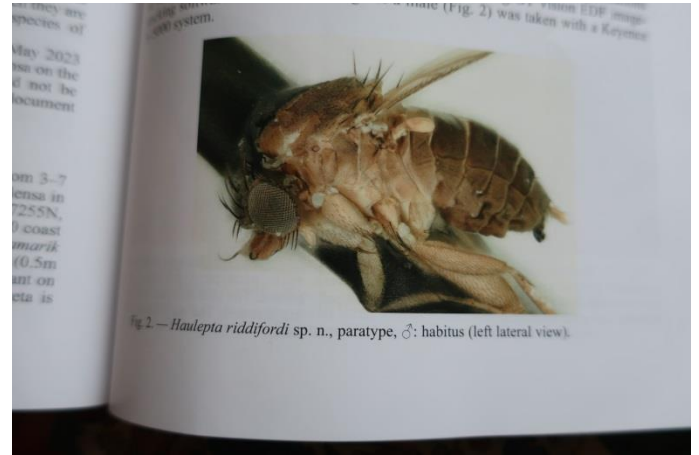
up the money. Also it gives me the chance to see and chat to people of different nationalities.

You may know this but the money we raise is really important because it helps us to go on school trips and buy new school equipment. We are even going on a school trip to Sandwick Sports Day with the money we raised this year.

Luca (10)

Famous Fly for Fair Isle (kind of...)

We are very lucky to be blessed with experts of many kinds here in Fair Isle and more often than not if you find a plant, insect, fungus, moth, bird or sea creature which you don't recognise, the first port of call will be to Schoolton where the humble but endlessly knowledgeable, Nick Riddiford will no doubt be able to help with an identification. Recently, Nick's huge contribution to conservation in Mallorca has been recognised with a new species of fly being named after him. As Nick said, these kinds of creatures don't often get English names but if it were to have any English name it would like be "Riddiford's Scuttle-fly". Congratulations, Nick!



"The latest issue of the Entomologists Monthly Magazine included a contribution by Mark Welch (Natural History Museum, London) and Brian Brown (Natural History Museum of Los Angeles) entitled A new species of Haulepta (Diptera: Phoridae) from Mallorca. The connection with Fair Isle is not as tenuous as it first seems. New species require new names and it is the task of the authors to choose it. They explain their rationale for choosing the name in a short statement headed **Etymology**.

In this instance the **Etymology** reads: *The new species is named Haulepta riddifordi Welch & Brown in recognition of the outstanding contribution to the conservation of biodiversity of the Balearic Islands made by Nick Riddiford (Fair Isle, Scotland, UK) over the past 30 years, including the creation of The Albufera Initiative for Biodiversity ('TAIB'), which has been a major driver for informing the management of wetlands in Mallorca.*

The authors add that the ecology of *Haulepta riddifordi* sp. n. is unknown. However certain features of the body suggest that it may be a parasitoid or parasite of ants. Over 100 specimens of the ant genus *Tapinoma* Fabricius were collected in the same sample which is consistent with such an association."

ISLE NOTICES

Chapel – this Sunday at 11am, all very welcome to join

House sitting opportunity – A family of 4 from Shetland are looking for an opportunity to visit the isle in the summer, ideally house sitting – they would be happy to look after animals etc, if you are interested, contact Eileen

Visit to Fair Isle this week

Andrew Best (*my middle son – Fiona and Ian's brother*) visited from NHS Shetland to share time with Laura, our Nurse, exploring updates on life support procedures, moving and handling, plus Automated External Defibrillator (AED), in anticipation of new equipment she is getting.

Later in the day, he had a session with the Fire and Boat Crews, covering life support and airway management, which were much appreciated.

In Rod Thorne's time as teacher at Fair Isle Primary School, Andrew was the first Editor of the Fair Isle Times, back in 1978.

John at Utra

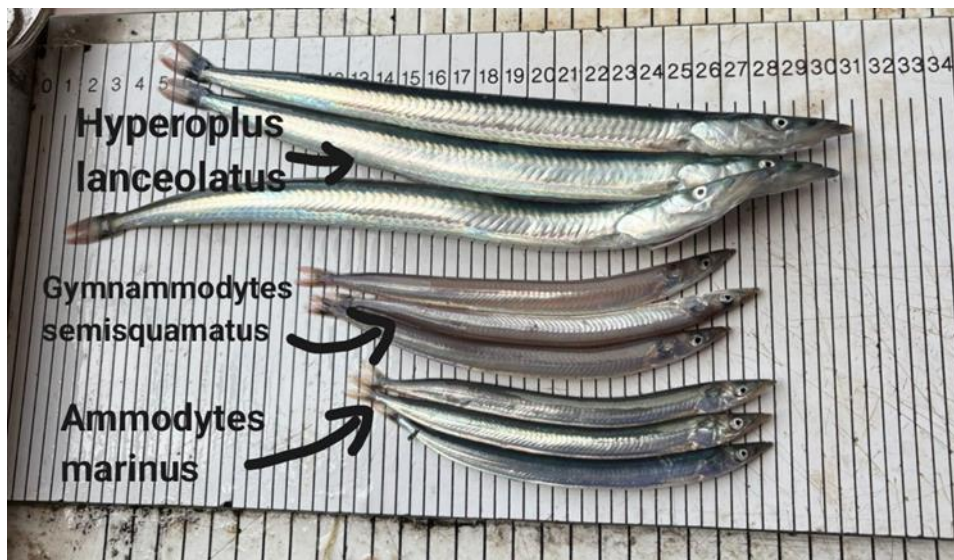
Fair Isle Sandeel survey update

The team from UHI Shetland made the best of an excellent weather window last week and managed to put in a few long days in Fair Isle to achieve good survey coverage on the sandbanks both east and west. They managed 18 valid tows split between east and west, plus pelagic camera drifter deployments on both banks, sediment grabs on both banks, and a brief opportunistic BRUV lander deployment on one of the banks during a period of slack tide. They were also able to take some sandeel samples from each site for further analysis.



UHI Shetland research vessel MV Atlantia II alongside the Good Shepherd IV in Fair Isle last week

So far, the results demonstrate clear spatial differences in the catch rates and species compositions that relate to both depth and east vs west, with overall catch rates generally highest on the shallowest areas of each of the banks. Acoustic data and pelagic camera drifting footage indicate that sandeel are concentrated in the near bed region. Results show three species of sandeel including smooth sandeel *Gymnammodytes semisquamatus*, greater sandeel *Hyperoplus lanceolatus* and Raitt's sandeel *Ammodytes marinus* with the bulk of catches being smooth.



Elasmobranchs continue to be a prominent feature of Fair Isle fish communities, with observations of smooth hound, starry smooth hound, spurdog, lesser spotted dogfish and a flapper skate which was tagged.

More detailed findings from the survey will be coming soon following formal analysis. This important research will help us gain a better understanding of Fair Isle sandeel populations, how they compare to populations across the rest of Shetland and what this might mean for Fair Isle's seabirds.

Thank you to everyone who helped Shaun and team while they were in and for the brilliant hospitality as always. UHI Shetland will return to Fair Isle in July/August to carry out the fourth Fair Isle inshore fish survey.

This project was kindly supported by the Viking Energy and Shetland Community Benefit Fund. Match funding for this project was also provided by players of the People's Postcode Lottery through the National Trust for Scotland's Love our Nature project with in-kind contributions from UHI Shetland.

National Bioblitz by the Rockpool Project

I just wanted to signpost some upcoming events and webinars. The National Bioblitz by the Rockpool Project is running between 17th-25th May, which is a nice opportunity to contribute to a UK-wide data collection effort. More info can be found here: https://www.therockpoolproject.co.uk/national-bioblitz?utm_campaign=Ocean%2Band%2Bciten%2Bscience%2BMember%2Bpoll%2Bfor%2Bnational%2Brock%2Bpool%2Bbioblitz&utm_medium=email

As part of the week, there are several interesting free webinars available:



14 May (Wed)	How Citizen Science Data Can Influence Policy in UK? DASSH, The Marine Biological Association (MBA) 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm (BST)
15 May (Thu)	Invasive Non-native Rock Pool Species Dr Ben Holt, The Rock Pool Project 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm (BST)
16 May (Fri)	Why Monitoring is Important? Jan MacLennan, Natural England 3:30 pm to 4:15 pm (BST)
20 May (Tue)	How Invasive Species Are Reshaping Our Shores? Dr Nova Mieszkowska, The MBA 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm (BST)
22 May (Thu)	Introduction to Rock Pooling Dr Christophe Patterson, The Rock Pool Project 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm (BST)

All the webinars can be found here: https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/national-bioblitz-2025-4267273?utm_campaign=Ocean%2Band%2Bciten%2Bscience%2BMember%2Bpoll%2Bfor%2Bnational%2Brock%2Bpool%2Bbioblitz&utm_medium=email

Further updates

The Spring edition of the Fair Isle Demonstration and Research MPA Newsletter will be published later this month. To keep up-to-date with project progress you can subscribe to our quarterly newsletters here: <https://www.fair-isle-marine.org.uk/fair-isle-dr-mpa/dr-mpa-newsletter/>

Katie Cubbon- Fair Isle DR MPA Research Officer



Blue Skies and boats

The isle has played host to various types of boat this past week, 2 different cruise ships – *Sea Spirit* (top, by the South Light) and *Ocean Nova* (below, between Bunes & Sheep Rock along with a French yacht). We were delighted to welcome *Andholmen* (above) - a historic vessel which took part in the famed Shetland Bus journeys in World War II, linking occupied Norway with Shetland. *Andholmen* formed part of a flotilla of vessels which crossed the North Sea from Norway to Shetland to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day. Finally, an image of the North Haven looking very busy with the arrival of *Andholmen* and a party of dredgers, barges and tugs to work on the improved harbour for the long-awaited Good Shepherd V.





Report of the Archives. Part 2: Making a Living (1803)

In the second part of our report from the archives we have included a section on what we call *Making a Living*. Here we found the details on the amounts of fish being landed, it would seem that this was just the fish that were taken as part of the estates 'cut'. The details on boat numbers and crews is also really interesting. The six stone of bird feathers was also intriguing, how many bird feathers does it take to make a stones worth?

Any mathematicians out there with an answer?

Accepting when the weather is so boisterous as to prevent them from going fishing. The chief support of the inhabitants depends upon their success in fishing, which is pursued with the utmost diligence and attention. There are at present on the island 18 fishing boats in each of which three men are usually employed. Several of these are however almost useless for service, and the inhabitants are much in want of a supply three or four more could be employed were they to be got. These boats are usually brought from Norway by the proprietor in boards and put up by the carpenters who reside in the island.

From the best information that could be contained, the fishing over and above what is consumed in the island annually produces 600 Ling fish, 2000 cod and the same quantity of seath. These produce about 20 barrels of oil on the whole are always sold to the proprietor at the following prices 3s 6d per dozen Ling, 1/ per dozen cod, 9d per dozen seath and the oil at £1 sterling per barrel. The proprietor finds salt procuring the fish with casks for the oil. The island likewise produces about 6 stone of feathers yearly which are sold to the proprietor at 3/ per stone. There are about 900 spindles of linen yarn spun by the female inhabitants from lint furnished by the proprietor for which he paid them at the rate of /8 per spindle.

The island annually produces about 3 tonnes of kelp which is manufactured at the rate of 31 16 per ton it is supposed that with some exertion and better encouragement it might produce near double the quantity.

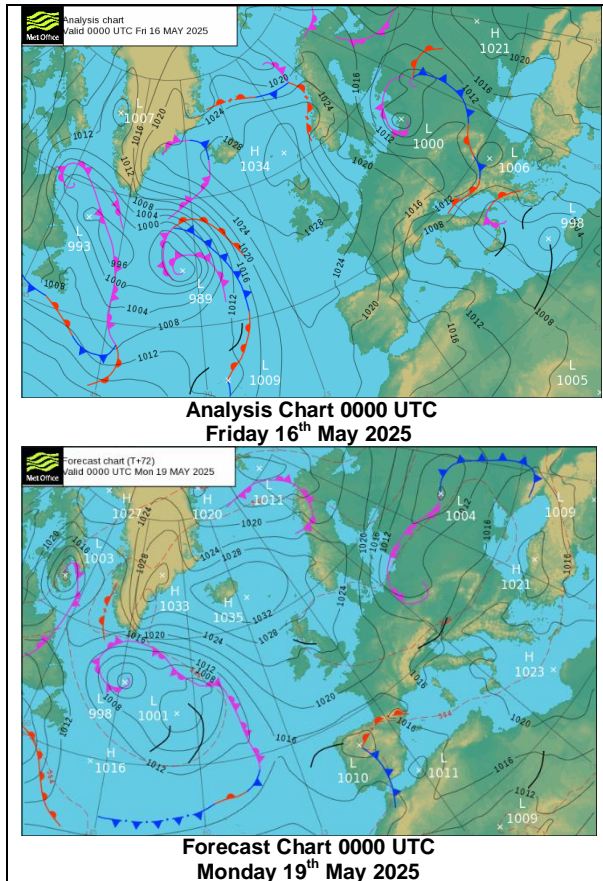
The grain is seldom sufficient to support the inhabitants for one half of the year during the remainder they depend on the proprietor for bread which as well as the land rent is chiefly paid for by the produce.

By these means the rent of the island amounting to 64 pounds sterling is paid and the proprietor has a considerable profit over and above from the produce.

More next time.

Matthew Blake and Corinna Rayner (Ragna's Islands)

FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



GENERAL SITUATION

Friday 16th May 2025

An anticyclone firmly established between Scotland and Iceland will continue to dominate the weather of much of the British Isles - especially northern parts. The down side is that due to its position a cool northeast to northerly airflow will persist across the Northern Isles during the weekend and into the first part of next week. After that there are indications high pressure will weaken northwards, allowing low pressure to edge in from the Atlantic later next week.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND

Temperatures 11° to 13° by day 7° or 8° overnight.

FRIDAY 16th: A dry day with lengthy sunny periods and moderate F4 NNE winds. A cool dry night with a moderate N breeze.

Sea State: Mostly slight at 1 metre N but slight or moderate east of Shetland at 1 to 2 metre.

SATURDAY 17th: Another fine dry day with plenty of sunshine, though cloud tending to increase later. F4 N winds. Mainly dry and partly cloudy overnight.

Sea State: Mostly slight at 1 metre N but slight or moderate east of Shetland at 1 to 2 metre.

SUNDAY 18th: Dry with some bright or sunny periods but also chance of patchy low cloud and risk of fog. F4-5 NNE winds. **Sea State:** Mostly moderate at 2 metre NNE.

Moderate or rough east of Shetland at 2 to 3 metre.

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK

11° to 13° by day, 7° or 8° overnight. **MONDAY 19th:** A cloudy start otherwise a bright dry day with sunny spells and a moderate N breeze. **Sea State:** Mostly slight at 1 metre NNE. **TUESDAY 20th:** Fine and dry with sunny spells and a moderate N wind. **Sea State:** Mostly slight at 1 metre NNE. **WEDNESDAY 21st – SUNDAY 25th:** Perhaps cloudier and milder with freshening S winds bringing the chance of some patchy rain for the weekend. **Sea State Wednesday:** Mostly slight at 1 metre NNE but slight or moderate east of Shetland at 1 to 2 metre.

Dave Wheeler

I have looked back to 1974 in my daily data as the April of that year is the driest month on record. Current dry spell 12 days - that includes 0.2mm of dew. Longest dry spell 30 days. 23 March - 21 April 1974. That included a day with 0.1mm of dew. That dry spell was 3x as long as the current one!

