

# FAIR ISLE TIMES

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## School News: An Interview with Steve and Ruth, Community Playground Tidy and a visit from the Resident Artist.

*Steve and Ruth from the Bird Observatory very kindly joined us at school for what only could be described as a wide-ranging interview. They gave some fabulous answers to our well-designed questions. We love that you love Fair Isle so much!*

Q: If you were a visitor would you like to stay at the Obs?

R: There are the most incredible views as well as all the interesting bird work that's done there. There is a very nice space you can sit, relax and have a nice time with lots of people. Also, we have the most fantastic chef in the whole wide world.

S: Yes, I too would like to stay at the Obs. The staff are absolutely fantastic (especially that Steve guy).

Q: What is your favourite part of the Bird Obs?

R: My favourite part of the Obs is the lounge. The views are so incredible and you can watch the light change and the puffins flying. Everyone sits together and socialises and enjoys the company and the view.

S: My favourite part the Obs is the bar and lounge too. It is where everybody socialises; where we get to meet all the guests and all of the islanders play games.

Q: Where else have you lived other than Fair Isle?

S: OK I've lived in Somerset, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Cumbria, Scotland, Lancashire and Greater Manchester.

R: I'm very boring and I've only ever lived in Greater Manchester and Fair Isle.

Q: What features would you add to make the Obs even better?

R: My suggestion would be a water slide that came out of the Obs, went down the hill all the way down to the Haven. We could use it every summer!

S: I would like a games room with table football, ping pong, arcade games, darts and pool. That would be enough.



Q: What jobs did you work at before Fair Isle?

R: Steve and I ran a flower wholesaler which means we sold flowers plants and sundries to florists and to people who run events and other people in the industry. It was a very big warehouse with lots of fresh goods and other things. We got up very, very early every day to do that job.

Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you love living in Fair Isle and why?

S: Oh, it's a good question Luca. I give it 12 out of 10 mainly because of the weather. The community is amazing, everybody helps each other out and wants the best for everybody. The island is beautiful.

R: I agree the island is beautiful and so are the people on the island. They are so friendly and welcoming and they've made us feel at home from the minute we arrived. We look forward to looking after them and looking after the island and all the guests as long as we can be here.

Q: What sports do you like and what teams do you support?

S: I like football and I support Bolton Wanderers. I also like rugby league and I support Leigh Leopards.

R: I like football and I support Manchester City. I also support Leigh Leopards, and I also enjoy rugby union in Leigh where we have our own rugby union team.

Q: If the world was going to end, what meals would you have?

R: If the world was going to end and then one last meal I would get Steven to get me a lobster and I would ask Nair to make me the beautiful lobster and lobster bisque sauce that she makes with a little bit of avocado on the side.

S: If the world was going to end my last meal would be something that would take a very, very, very long time to eat but I think I would have Mackerel Sashimi.

Q: If a genie gave you three wishes, what would they be?

R: OK my first wish would be to get the water slide that I'd like from the Obs down to the Haven, my second one would be never-ending cake machine that just kept giving you cake every time you open the door, and the third one - a never-ending ice-cream machine so we can have ice cream on the cake.

S: My first wish would be to not let the fish I catch with Steven go, my second wish and third wish will be the same as the never-ending cake and ice-cream machine!

*Now that's how you do an interview. Brilliant answers.*

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A huge Fair Isle Primary School thank you to everyone who came to our community playground tidy-up on Wednesday afternoon.

The garden is looking beautiful, the edges of the playground are rid of moss and the weeds didn't quite know what hit them. We were well-fed by Eileen and Nair's delicious baking and we are so grateful to folk for giving up their afternoon. The weather even behaved too!





And finally, we were very lucky to be joined by visiting resident artist, Lori Deeley, this week. She kindly came into school to teach us all about what she does. She makes her own paint from natural materials such as shell, ash and bone. We had a go at making and using our own paint using a really cool creative process involving pestle and mortar and Gum Arabic. It was so much fun. More pictures via the link below:

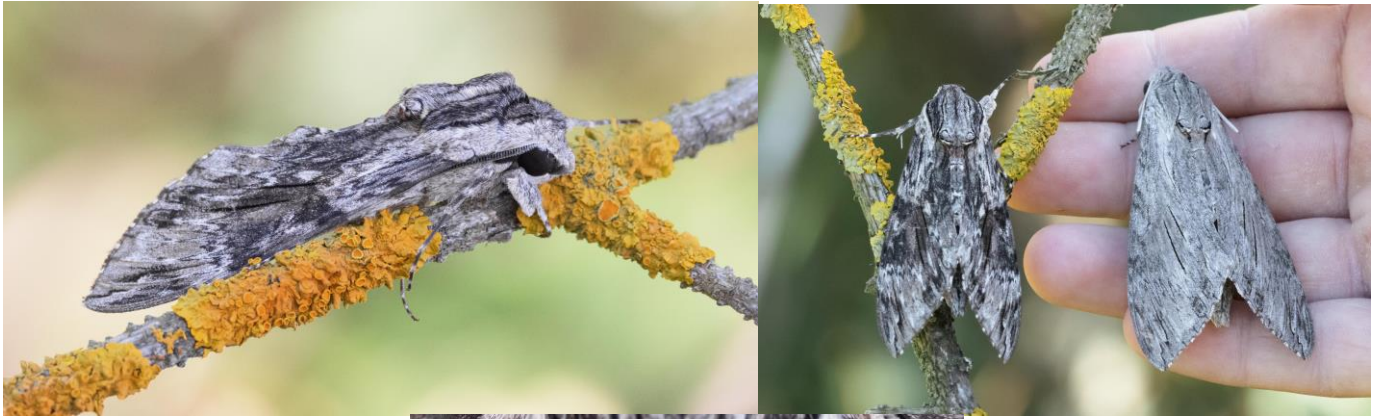
**Khalicee's beautiful artwork.**

**"This is me walking through the woods in the rain and touching the trees."**

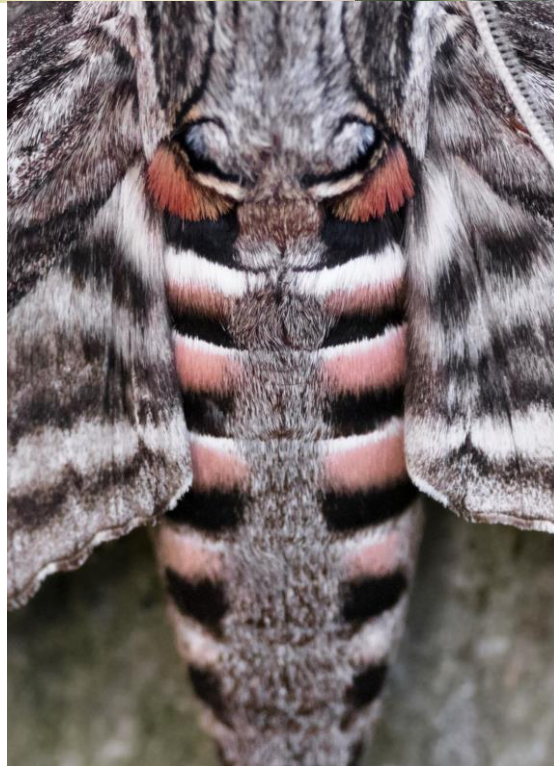


<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sh/fairisleprimaryschool/2025/09/02/a-resident-artist-visit/>

## A mothtastic evening!



This week proved to be a special one for natural phenomena in Fair Isle, starting on Monday evening with the mirrie dancers (*aurora borealis*), then a superb showing of mareel (*bioluminescent life in the sea*) on Tuesday. Rare birds have been scarce



but rare moths have been arriving in decent quantities including many of these convulvulus hawk-moths (*agrius convolvuli*). There were 5 spotted simultaneously both at Shirva and the Obs on Thursday evening, feeding on honeysuckle. Thanks to Alex Penn for these photos

Now and again we like to introduce our readers to a member of our community, this week we get to know one of our newest residents – Alice, who moved across Scotland to come and live at Brecks with her family this year. Welcome Alice, Khalid Jay and Khalicee!!



**Name:** Alice Moss-Lojera

**Age:** 37

**How long has Fair Isle been your home?** 2 months!

**Who do you live with?** My husband Khalid Jay and daughter Khalicee.

**What is your earliest memory?** I think it was painting the shed with my mum in the back yard when we lived in a terraced house in Liverpool. I don't remember the painting part, what I do remember is being shoved under the kitchen tap to rinse the creosote out of my eye. I think I was 3. Similarly, I remember sitting in the same kitchen on the counter top eating sticks of rhubarb dipped in sugar whilst my mum was doing the dishes.

**When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up and why?** An Archaeologist! Specialising in Ancient Egypt. I was fascinated by it all. I wanted to be the next Howard Carter discovering amazing tombs full of wonders preserved from the ancient world.

**What do you do for a living?** When I was 20, I signed up to the Merchant Navy as a Deck Cadet. And there I stayed until I was 31 or 32. I moved up the ranks over that time and ended up as Safety Officer (Chief Mate rank), 3rd in command behind the Captain and Staff Captain. I had been earmarked for fast track to Captain as I was the only female officer in the fleet. But I met Khalid and we decided to put our relationship above all that and left to start a life ashore together. My first shore job was with Calmac Ferries as Fleet Compliance Officer (internal audits and incident investigation) which I stuck out for 2 years but hated it, too much like a paper pushing kind of job. After that I fell into a lecturing role with UHI Argyle college teaching maritime skills. A job I really didn't want to take but ended up loving!

**If you didn't live in Fair Isle, what would you like to do for a living?** Hard to say, I'm really happy here, I'm doing exactly what I want and I'm excited for the new opportunities that are coming up here for me. However, if qualifications didn't matter, probably something to do with archaeology or history.

**What is your philosophy in life?** It is being in tune with nature. Eating natural things, living by the weather and season (*Editor – you'll be fine here then, Alice!*), protecting the planet not damaging it. Mother Earth 🌍  


**If you had a free, 'fantasy' 24 hours with no travel restrictions – where would you go and what would you do?** I'm struggling to think of anything... I would love to go back to Bulgaria again though, I loved living there, the food and scenery are both amazing. The mountains – wow! Hands down the best food in the world too! It would be summer, I would go to *Stara Planina* (old mountain) mountain range, stay in a small village, do some hiking, enjoy the incredible food (also I'm not gluten intolerant for this trip 😊), revel in the smells and sights. Then a quick change of season and it's snowboarding time. After that it's summer again and I'm heading south over the border into Greece to enjoy some swimming in the sea and lying on the beach in the sun. Go on then, I'll have an Aperol Spritz too then.

**What is the most enjoyable thing you do?** I loooove working out and exercising. Before I became a mum I was an absolute gym-o-holic. I love to be active as much as I can still. I try to do some HIIT and resistance training at home and yoga as much as I can. This summer the most enjoyable thing has been swimming in Gunglesund and the sea!!! I am a complete selkie, I NEED to get in the water as often as I can.

**What is the hardest thing you do?** Parenting. It's hard to know if you're doing it right and you never get a break from it. Most rewarding thing though and I wouldn't change it for the world.

**What concerns you for the future?** I'm concerned about what is happening to our planet, all the loss of biodiversity and habitats, all the pollution and forever chemicals that are everywhere, I'm concerned about

how all that will impact the future of our children. I'm also concerned about climate change about how that will impact migration to the habitable parts of the world, about food production for us all. I'm concerned for the generations to come.

I'm a complete over thinker, so almost all things concern me 😊

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?** Yikes, Khalicee will be 15! And giving us a hard time no doubt. I will be nearly 50! I hope by then I'm a proficient gardener and cook and I'm setting a good example for my child/children. I'd like to say I see us still being here, but I don't want to jinx it.

**What has occupied your time this week?** Doing the dishes - we need a dishwasher.

**What was the best thing to happen to you this week?** Being nominated as the most inspirational online lecturer by some of my former students. (*Editor – congratulations!!*)

**What is the best thing about living in Fair Isle?** The beautiful weather of course! Who knew it was so Mediterranean here 😊

No, it is definitely the community. I love how we're almost like a tribe, like a group of individuals who co-exist. It feels like this is how humanity is supposed to function. Thank you all for bringing us here, including us and welcoming us so warmly to the island. We've been living our best lives here this summer it's been incredible. We're looking forward to the winter ahead, cosy gatherings, board games, puzzles and films! 🐾

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### **ISLE NOTICES**

- **Chapel – Susannah leading this Sunday 7th, all very welcome to join at 11am.** No Sunday School this week, stone painting postponed for later in the year.
- **Nurse visit –** A reminder to all, that nurse Emma Williamson is here this weekend, staying at North Shirva. Emma will be at the clinic on Sunday and Morning morning and is available for home visits and callouts on **07795151426**.
- **Fair Isle Committee Quarterly Meeting – Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 7.30pm.** Any more items for the agenda to Eileen asap please.

### **Our unforgettable trip to Fair Isle**



**Above: Bridesmaid and groom's twin Lynsey, bride Cara and mother of the groom Pauline - The groom's party at Utra**

So, mum and dad “we are going to hold the wedding on the most remote inhabited island in the UK, the timing is a problem as the main visitor accommodation has tragically burned down and we will probably self-cater in the village hall”. That’s where the ensuing job-of-work, daunting prospect, wonderful idea or fabulous experience (all count) started for us oh, and we wish it had not ended!

The preamble went on with, “we think we would like to invite around a hundred people overall” but as there are already 60 people on the island and even with a rebuilt bird observatory and some lovely hosted crofts, maybe only thirty will probably travel with us. The two centre wedding event was born at Fair Isle and Salford, simple really.

Fair Isle takes maybe, 30 hours to get to just like the Galapagos with a similar wildlife experience, for those of us with four supermarkets and several wedding venues within 10 miles this was going to be an interesting experience.

We have seen a team put together combining friends, family, visitors and an islander community, most of whom we met for the first time. For some, an introduction to a very different way of life with an amazing cooperative spirit not commonplace elsewhere, for others an exciting event with much disruption, lots of enthusiasm and quite a bit of visitor toing-and-froing in the island’s limousine fleet (thank you Jimmy).

These two groups created a wonderful venue and an absolutely intoxicating atmosphere that we will never forget. We are immensely grateful to everyone!

The magical chapel ceremony was missing only the late John Best who we sadly never got to meet, but who we have learned a lot about and whose spirit imbued the event.

**Right: Nigel, Pauline, Alex, Cara, Fiona & Robert**



This was followed by 100 hot-pots of the Lancashire variety with home grown Fair Isle lamb skilfully prepared by Robert who also procured just about everything else. All put together by Alex’s Brother-in-Law and an Eton school teacher supported by the most eclectic spud and veg-peeling party ever created. This was complemented by a wedding cake lovingly baked by Alex’s mum and sister and home cooked desserts. This feast was followed by moving speeches and a ceilidh with much leaping about to live music by us, whilst others gracefully danced!

In the mean time we sat with Puffins, walked along cliff tops and have been harassed by great skuas which we now know as “bonxies”. We stared-at and were stared-at by seals, we played in or spectated at a game of football with no rules and *almost* a pitch. Supplemented by sheep shearing, luxuriating in the balmy Atlantic waters and working methodically through the bottled beer range at the Obs!

In retrospect we can honestly say it has been a genuinely uplifting experience, our son has married Cara, someone we love and respect who in turn has introduced us to a whole new group of fabulous people in a fascinating place!

Thank you,

Nigel and Pauline Beevers

## Aliens amongst us

Those of us who venture out after dark may have become aware of beings in our midst which our forebears would not have encountered. Not only that but the ones we have now defy the concept we may carry of their kind. Before I cause concern or engender alarm sufficient to make headlines in the national news, I am referring to members of the natural world, the natural world of our planet. I'm talking slug, but not as you know it. Fair Isle is no longer just the realm of the small creamy beasties partial to cabbages and other crops, nor the fat black slugs so partial to damper habitats across the Isle. Even these Great Black Slugs *Arion ater* shrink into insignificance compared with what we have now. Suddenly there are giants amongst us, and they are getting adventurous. You may even have them with you!



Suddenly is perhaps too emotive a word as the Great Grey Slug has been on the island since June 1999. Its scientific name *Limax maximus* is well suited because it is unchallenged in length, at least where we live. But that has changed! Meet giant slug number two. The perspicacious – with a good torch - may have noticed that some of the giants were more spotty than others. There was a good reason for this. The Great Grey is indeed spotty across the head but its body consists of a series of pale and dark stripes, more Newcastle United than Manchester City away kit. Not so Mr spotty all over. Detective work, deer stalker hat applied, led to the Green Cellar Slug. Again the scientific name is spot on, as you scholars of dead languages will testify: *Limacus maculatus*.

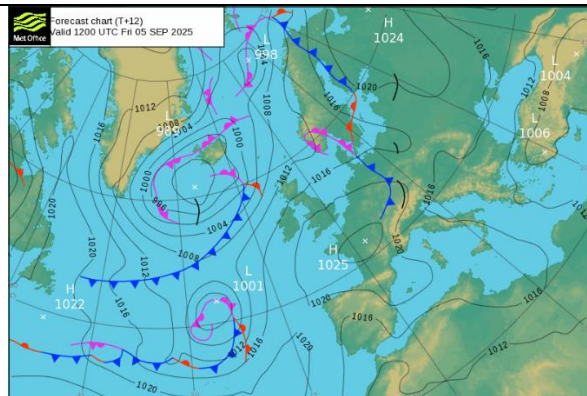
This second giant has an intriguing history. It did not emerge recently like green plasma from a cellar. It has a much more interesting history than that. It was probably perfectly happy in its original home, the Caucasus and Black Sea coast, until somehow uprooted – probably with horticultural produce which hurtles largely unregulated across the world – an unintentional immigrant to western Europe. It was found first in Ireland in the 1970s, quickly spreading to Britain. Its progress has been rapid, extending through much of the UK and as far north as Orkney. It was first detected on the Isle on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

The Great Grey Slug is a UK native but shares with a number of other smaller slugs the status of recent arrival on Fair Isle. Its alternative name, long in use in the UK, is Leopard Slug. This is most unfortunate because that name is far more suited to our newer arrival and certainly more appropriate than Green Cellar Slug. Who has a green cellar on this island? The Great Grey would be much more accurately be termed Tiger Slug. Should we not start a petition?

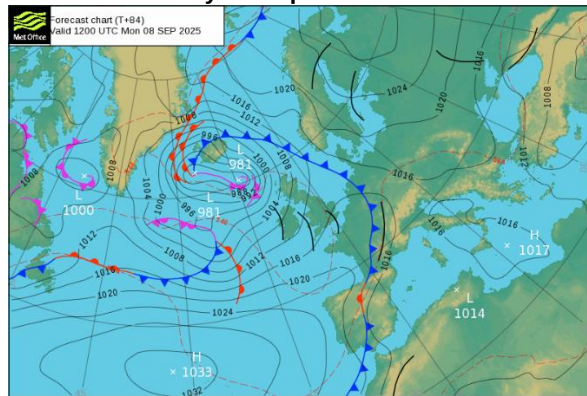
Both our giants seem very happy around our houses, mopping up algae from walls and posts. They are active at night and have already reached several homesteads. Perhaps they have arrived with you? Get the torch out and be wary where you step. I am not aware of them damaging garden vegetation (though I may be told otherwise by FIT correspondents). They do like alcohol-laced honey, however, which Isle lepidopterists spread on suitable surfaces – this is an Isle, of course, of baffling activities. On a more serious point, these slugs will probably not have damaging consequences for the Isles but it does expose the extreme vulnerability of the Island to unwanted biota as recognised by the biosecurity project for seabirds set up by the RSPB and various other organisations recently.

Nick Riddiford, Schoolton

## FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



Analysis Chart 1200 UTC  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025



Forecast Chart 1200 UTC  
Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025

### GENERAL SITUATION

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025

An overnight flat ridge of high pressure is now declining ahead of an Atlantic frontal trough pushing towards western Scotland bringing some mist and rain for the weekend. By Sunday a large depression west of Ireland will include much of the British Isles within its circulation. During the course of next week the low centre is expected to drift north past Iceland.

### OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND

Temperature 15° by day, 10° to 12° overnight.

**FRIDAY 5<sup>th</sup>:** Mainly dry and sunny with a F4 SW wind. Cloudier though mainly dry overnight. **Sea State:** Mostly moderate at SW 2 metre.

**SATURDAY 6<sup>th</sup>:** A dry day with plenty of long sunny periods but cloudier evening and overnight. A F4-5 S breeze freshening SSE F5. Chance of some light rain overnight. **Sea State:** Slight or moderate at SW 1 to 2 metre.

**SUNDAY 7<sup>th</sup>:** Mostly dry. with sunny spells though windy with a F5-6 SE breeze. **Sea State:** Moderate or rough at SSE 2 to 3 metre.

### FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK

Temperature 14° by day, 11° overnight.

**MONDAY 8<sup>th</sup>:** Starting cloudy with rain mist and low cloud, becoming drier and brighter from midday as strong SE winds ease fresh SSE. **Sea State:** Moderate or rough at SE 2 to 3 metre.

**TUESDAY 9<sup>th</sup>:** Cloudy or partly cloudy with sunny or clear spells and scattered showers. Fresh or strong SSE winds. **Sea State:** Mostly moderate at SSW 2 metre.

**WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> – SUNDAY 14<sup>th</sup>:** Bright start on Wednesday before clouding over. Fresh SE winds. Generally cloudy with moderate occasionally fresh S or SE winds tending W or NW later. **Sea State**  
**Wednesday:** East of Shetland mostly slight or moderate at SSW 1 to 2 metre otherwise moderate at 2 metre.

Dave Wheeler

