

FAIR ISLE TIMES

VOLUME 48 ISSUE 32

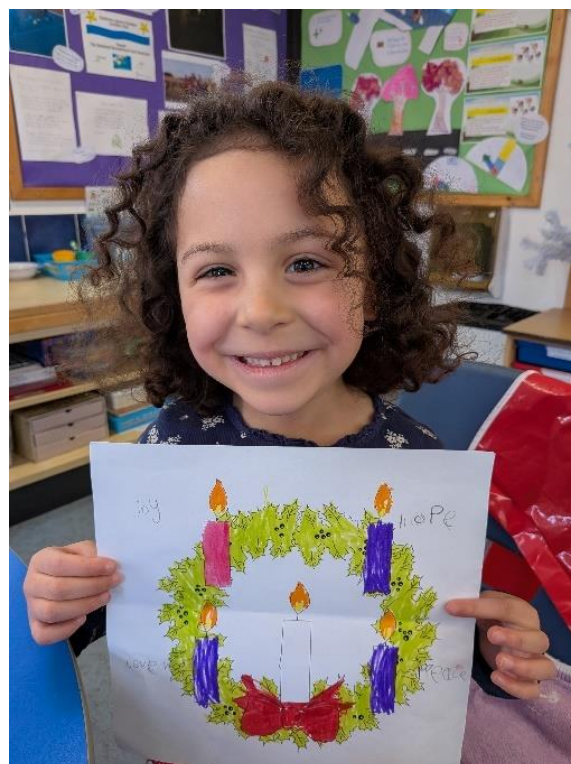
PUBLISHED SINCE 1978

5th DECEMBER 2025

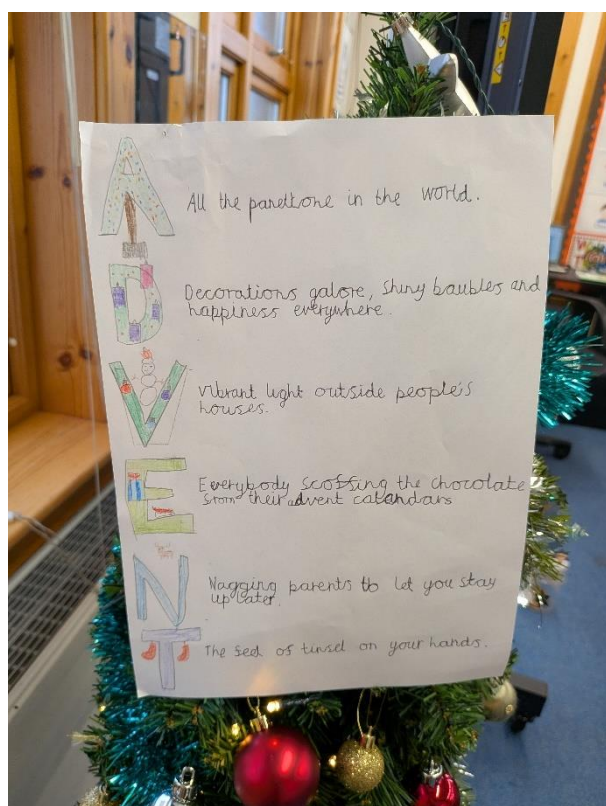
Fair Isle Primary School News “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas.”

But not quite yet. We have been learning all about Advent in some of our lessons this week. We learned it means “arrival” or “coming” and thought about the meaning of the candles on a wreath. We thought about what Advent means to us and came up with some ideas for fabulous acrostic poetry. We hope you enjoy reading them. We have also been decorating our classroom too, which was super-fun and enjoyable.

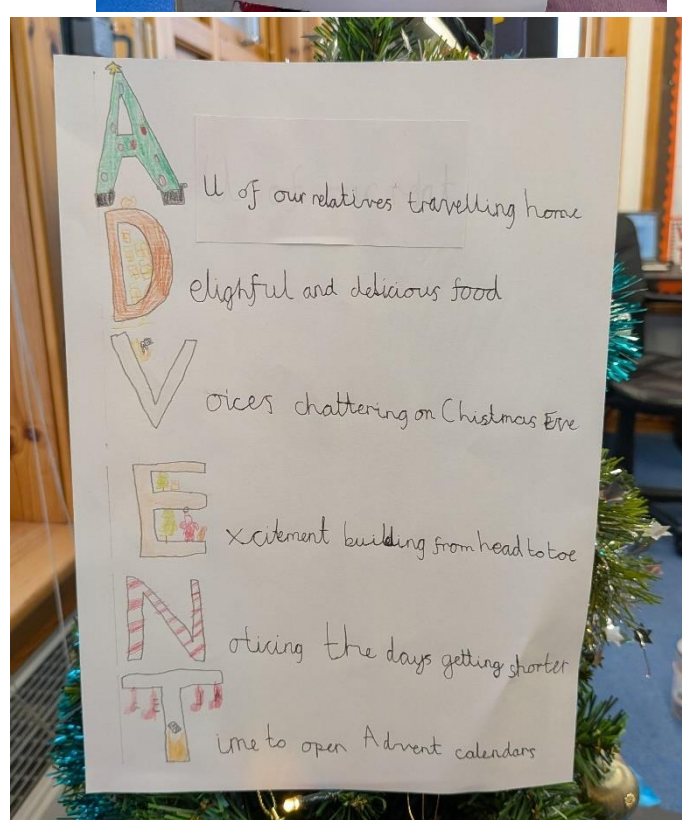
Don’t forget. Our school pantomime, “Sheep Rocks” will be performed on Thursday 18th December at 6:00pm in the hall. We would love to see you there.



Luca’s Advent Acrostic



Ander’s Advent Acrostic



ISLE NOTICES

Christmas Choir will meet in the Committee Room at 3pm on Friday. All welcome.

Also, we will plan an informal gathering to sing some favourite carols soon – no need to be chorists, just fun for everyone. Maybe with a mulled wine or 2 ☺ Watch this space for a date and time

Chapel this Sunday – all welcome to join in an advent gathering at Quoy this Sunday at 11am. Susannah will be leading.

Fair Isle Committee Quarterly Meeting - Monday 15th December at 7.30pm in the Hall committee room. Any items for the agenda to Jonathan and Eileen ASAP please. We'll have mince pies as it's so close to Christmas! Thanks, Eileen

Fair Isle Classifieds – We have started the Fair Isle Classifieds WhatsApp group, no obligation to join at all but might be a good place to find something useful or get rid of something folk might need! Ask Eileen or Hollie to be added to the group.

A festive poster for 'A Fair Isle Festive Fiasco!'. The left side has a green background with white text. The right side is a photograph of people and sheep in Christmas costumes. The text on the green background reads: 'Diane and Jonnie invite you to....', 'A FAIR ISLE FESTIVE FIASCO!', 'Join us for a community get-together before the holiday departures begin!', 'We're having an Xmas party from 19:00 til' late in the Committee Room on Sat 13th December. All are welcome!', and 'Enjoy nibbles, mulled wine, games and more - donations of homebakes etc. gladly welcomed!'. The photograph shows a woman in a Santa hat, a man in a Santa hat, and a black dog with reindeer antlers and a red nose. There are also sheep, some with snowflake headbands, and a large red Santa hat on the right. Snowflake graphics are scattered throughout the image.

Diane and Jonnie invite you to....

A FAIR ISLE FESTIVE FIASCO!

Join us for a community get-together before the holiday departures begin!

We're having an Xmas party from 19:00 til' late in the Committee Room on **Sat 13th December**. All are welcome!

Enjoy nibbles, mulled wine, games and more - donations of homebakes etc. gladly welcomed!

Remembering John Best



John and family at sister Margaret's birthday recently



At Seaham Harbour, near where John was born



In June of this year we lost a dear member of our community, John Best of Utra. John was a proud dad, grandad and great-grandad, a neighbour and friend to many. John was devoted to and incredibly proud of his beloved wife Betty. He was a nurse, a builder, a crofter and of course a minister in the Chapel here for many years, conducting many important ceremonies here in the isle over his career. A talented artist, he loved teaching folk how to paint and draw in his studio. I will miss John's impeccable timing at always being outside Utra for a chat when I was passing by and I know many others enjoyed his kindness. John loved to speak to visitors, sharing his love of the place he made home for more than 50 years.

John was a brilliant writer and contributor to the Fair Isle Times, and even at his grand age, never refused a request to write *Da Week Dat's Awa*, much to the joy and appreciation of the editors.

John is a huge miss – it seemed strange having the Remembrance Sunday ceremony without him, and no doubt Christmas will be the same, but we can be grateful for his long and happy life, for all he did for the isle. We, of course, send our love to all John's family this Christmas – a time he loved so much and played a key part of for so long.

See you anon, John

Eileen

(Thanks to Fiona and Hannah for the lovely photos)

Below is the eulogy written by friends David and Jeremy, thanks to Jeremy for sharing it with us.

John was born on the 3rd of January 1936 when his parents were living in Seaham, Co. Durham. It was a coal mining township with three pits and a harbour. The pits were owned by Lord Londonderry who used pit ponies bred from the old family stud on Bressay. John remained a proud northeasterner all of his life. (He was fond of a story of taking Betty to visit his family and parking at night by the coast. They awoke to the sun rising over the North Sea in the east and an iron works behind them!). John spent his childhood in and around the whole county, adventuring from a young age.

He was always very attentive of his younger sister, Margaret, who describes him as “always making life good fun”. Whenever he was home visiting family, John always made sure that they had a day that they could escape, just the two of them... off on the motorbike.

John had many interests in his life, here are a few snippets from a very full life:

During National Service in Germany, John trained to be nurse. He felt that this experience shaped much of his future and he enjoyed regaling the tales over the years.

John had a long nursing career, shared with his wife Betty. They were a formidable team, always taking on new challenges together. Betty was his devotion in life.

Mountaineering was one of John's many passions, he was youngest expedition leader at 25 to climb the 2000ft ice wall on the mountain Sonklar Spitz on the Austrian-Italian border, a feat that had never been done before. The quote in the press was that John said “it was a race against time.” How poignant a phrase from John considering he was still busy, carrying out many new plans until the end.

Art was another great passion of John's, which he enjoyed all his life and in particular sharing this passion with his children, grandchildren and many, many islanders and visitors over the years including decorators and plumbers for compulsory art lessons. Some may remember his touring exhibition of sheep!

Having moved around for multiple jobs and places with Betty, they found a home and a life in the isle that lasted more than half a century.



John and his wife Betty moved to Fair Isle when Betty was appointed the island nurse, for a year. This was extended and they stayed on the island. Taking on a croft, being involved with building work and supporting the Methodist Church became John's life. A family of three: Fiona, Andrew and Ian grew up on the island.

John was a local preacher from his late teens. He felt called to ordained ministry. Training was offered through the Wesley Study Centre in Durham. Here one of his teachers was Prof Jimmy Dunn who remained a friend and mentor for Croft House Theology. John was ordained as a Minister in Local Appointment in 1990, based on Fair Isle and part of the Lerwick and Walls Circuit of the Shetland District.

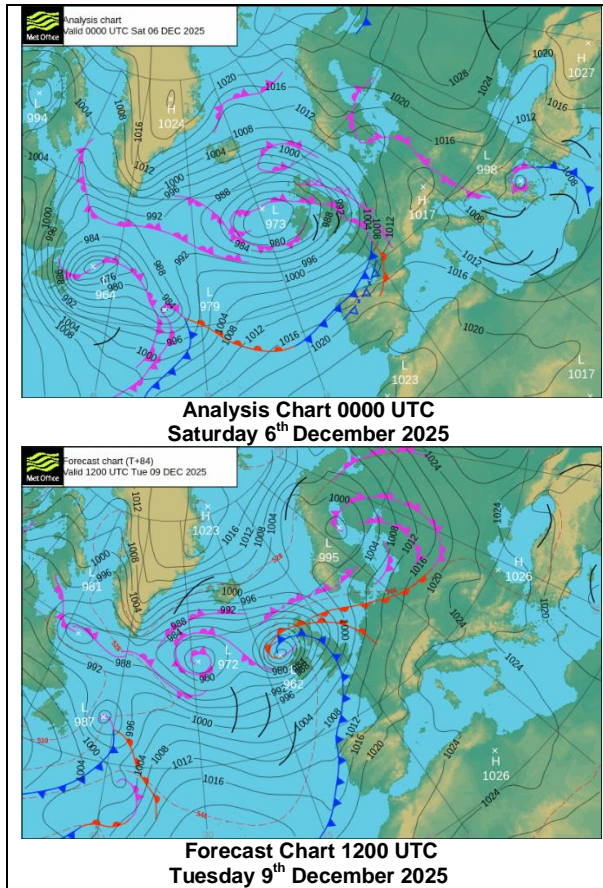
John ministered in a leading capacity until the Sunday before he was called home. This was a considerable sustained work for over thirty years. He encouraged several people to develop worship leading and preaching skills. One aspect of his ministry over a number of years was to facilitate conversation between people of a range of Christian faith traditions at his Croft House Theology group meetings.

But most of all, John was enhanced and enriched, and greatly mellowed, by his seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren, and talked with immense pride of their achievements and ambitions.

David Cooper and Jeremy Dare

(Photo above courtesy of Judith Jesch)

FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



8° or 9° overnight.

MONDAY 8th: Early rain clearing then mainly dry with sunny spells by early afternoon. Fresh WSW winds. **Sea State:** Mostly moderate at SE 2 metre.

TUESDAY 9th: After a bright start cloudy with rain or showers by the afternoon as SE winds strengthen near-gale to gale-force. Showers and SSW gale overnight. **Sea State:** Mostly rough at SSW 3 metre. East of Shetland moderate at SSE 2 metre.

WEDNESDAY 10th – SUNDAY 14th: Cloudy with rain or showers and strong to gale-force SW winds. The afternoon perhaps brighter. Thursday and Friday drier and brighter with fresh S winds occasionally strong. The weekend wet and windy. **Sea State Wednesday:** West of Shetland rough at N 4 metre. East of Shetland rough at SE 3 to 4 metre.

Dave Wheeler



GENERAL SITUATION Saturday 6th December 2025

Frontal systems will continue to affect the Northern Isles over the weekend, though the strong east-southeasterly airflow will ease as low pressure west of Scotland fills.

While Monday brings a quieter day the next Atlantic depression is already tracking east towards Scotland bringing a strong southeast airflow and frontal systems on Tuesday. The current forecasts indicate this low possibly tracking close to Shetland on Wednesday. A brief ridge may bring a brighter, drier and less windy day on Thursday before a depression tracking east south of Iceland drives fronts east in a strong south or southeasterly airflow for Friday and next weekend.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND

Temperatures around 10° or 11° by day, 8° or 9° overnight.

SATURDAY 6th: Cloudy with light showers through the morning with a period of more persistent and heavier rain for the afternoon. F5-6 ESE winds. Showers and clear spells overnight. **Sea State:** Mostly rough or very rough at SE 4 to 5 metre.

SUNDAY 7th: Cloudy with showery rain dying out with bright or sunny spells for the afternoon. F5 ESE winds veering SE later. Further rain overnight. **Sea State:** Mostly rough at SE 3 to 4 metre.

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK Temperature 11° or 12° by day,