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Fair Isle Primary School News

It's really lovely to be back after the Christmas Break, with a few bonus days off due to the beautiful snow we had. The children have already begun some fabulous learning, especially a new topic on Fair Isle photography (more of that to come in later editions) where we have been given our very own digital cameras. In the meantime, please do enjoy reading about our "Holiday Highlights".



Luca writes...

My first highlight was Christmas dinner. We had our family (and our cousins) over. I like gravy with anything (well, pretty much anything). I like it so much I turn my roast dinner technically into a soup! The Christmas dinner looked like any Christmas dinner: crackers, turkey, delicious roast tatties, carrots, stuffing and sweet parsnips.

My favourite highlight was the guising. Everyone was amazing. I enjoyed the whole night. Particularly, I thought Marie's group had a high-quality sketch. My favourite part of their sketch was when there was the *carpenter* or *car painter* play on words.

Between the sketches (and I am not going to lie to you here), we watched The Simpsons. Overall, a great way to end 2025.

Luca (age 10)



Ander writes...

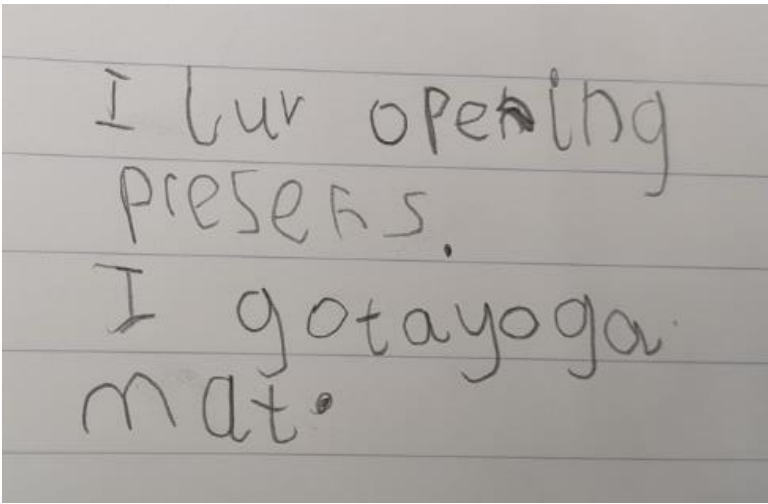


Ander (age 8)

My best moment from the holidays was sledding down the hill outside Shirva. I have chosen this because I was able to go speeding down the hill. Also, I had fun running in the deep snowdrifts (which is nearly impossible!)

As well as all of the snow fun, I had an amazing time in the school pantomime. Did **you** think it was good? One person I enjoyed was Luca because he was a brilliant baddie. He had a strong and evil voice.

Khalicee writes...



Khalicee (age 5)



Da Yule dat's awa...

As we have been struggling to survive these January storms, we should remember the beautiful weather we were blessed with over Christmas. There was no wind - how good was that?! And the sunsets, between the Kirk yard and Utra as seen from Skerryholm, left nothing to the imagination. This meant that those arriving for the festive holidays could accomplish this without delays, and likewise for those wishing to depart. As our Island becomes ever less indigenous, those departing at these times becomes part of our way of life. We are now a very small community at best, so are ever more thankful to those who make the effort to spend their holiday here, feeling, as I do, that their presence is a blessing to us all, and not just their immediate families. I am fortunate to have family here to help look after me at times like Christmas, which now for me is a lonely time.

Solitude is seldom a good companion, so I was grateful that my grand-daughter Diane was still here to stimulate the old man to give his house a festive appearance and brighten up the long dark nights.

Really not a lot changed at the Christmas from my childhood to that of our children. There was a turkey, as opposed to a hen or a cockerel. Santa came, but his reindeer pulled a lesser sledge than it does today. Near everyone would go to church, and Jesus was very much in the manger. Quite

simply, Christmas was Christmas Day. Now from a month before, in the towns and cities of our country, it is the season of sales and spending, as the stores cash in on those who have and those who have not, but who will eventually have to reap the cost.

Here on Fair Isle in 2025, the children performed for us in the hall. Not many in number, but how well they performed, from the youngest to the oldest! While this is a tribute to their teacher, they are also less insular than we were in our day, having a confidence that certainly we did not possess. Mind you, the adults also performed well in 'their' Pantomime, whether my same argument is still true or not, I shall leave up to you!

Christmas morning and another bonny day. I visited, in the Kirkyard, those who have gone before us - a time to reflect on the past before celebrating the present in the Chapel, with a good company of islanders and visitors.

We were treated to good, powerful singing of carols, and short, but what I considered to be words of good wisdom by Susannah.

The Christmas party was on Sunday. As I have said, I enjoyed the panto very much, followed by the food, which was up to the usual high standard, after which I went home, so cannot report on the proceedings. My leaving was partly due to my age, but also because dancing the quadrilles on a Sunday night was not in my Scottish Presbyterian upbringing.

I freely admit to having double standards, as I will watch live football etc. on the Sabbath, and so the guilty Presbyterian has a lot to answer for. But before you mock, just remember that it is not in religion only that there are double standards. This is private, and so not relevant, but I included the subject as a possible discussion in different homes. Mind you, I just realised that half the homes are single occupancy, and, as I know, the dog usually agrees with my point of view!

The weather is still reasonable, but deteriorating in time for guising at Hogmanay. Because there were to be as many guisers out as those receiving, I stayed at Skerryholm, along with my neighbours from Haa, arriving at Setter in good time to welcome in the New Year.

It is good that our guising is still locally inspired, if that's the right word? It's actually so good that we still do guising, as the tradition has gone in nearly all other places. Although our guising is locally inspired, we often need the help of those who may have eloped to distant shores to help develop the complexities of the action on the night! What the eye doesn't see the heart can only yearn for... So, as it was, the subject matter covered a wide spectrum, that last word being 'the' definitive article, as it were; there were local politics, seen from different viewpoints, there were dogs, cats, and those landing from far-away places, and then being questioned of their intended occupation, whether that of a carpenter or a car 'penter', and questioned in the best Doric language.

I depart the party at Burkle after realising that the new year is well under way, but before the time that there would be no tomorrow! I am reminded of a ditty from somewhere in the recesses of my mind...

"Here am I
Helmsman, Chartless,
Steering by the stars."

And since then - well, we've endured snow and storms, and now better weather again. Some of our visitors left on the ferry on the 6th, while those who did not fancy that mode of travel, have now flown out exactly one week later, along with those returning after their extended break. Much has changed in my lifetime, while some things stay much as they were, with just a modern take on them.

Technology keeps us switched on, quite literally, to our ever changing, and perhaps, at present, to an ever-more dangerous world: we see disasters as they happen and as they develop, and yet we seldom see the whole story, or both sides of the story. The other side of the story here, is that we are often as we were, a very isolated island in the middle of the ocean, often, in practical terms, cut off, much as we were when I was a peerie boy.

So that's my take on the immediate past. My New Year wish is that the year will be kind to us, and that we look out for each other, with a special thought and prayer for those who have not had the best of health of late.

Jimmy

Skerryholm

Fair Isle Demonstration and Research MPA update

*Dr Shaun Fraser, fisheries scientist from UHI Shetland will be in Fair Isle on **Wednesday the 21st of January** to give a presentation on the findings of last year's Fair Isle inshore fish survey as well as results from the first Fair Isle-specific sandeel survey also carried out last year. David Parnaby will also be providing an update from his time as FIMRO Education Officer over the summer months last year. The talks will be held at the Fair Isle hall from **7pm**, all very welcome. **(Please note this date might change if bad weather disrupts travel this week)***

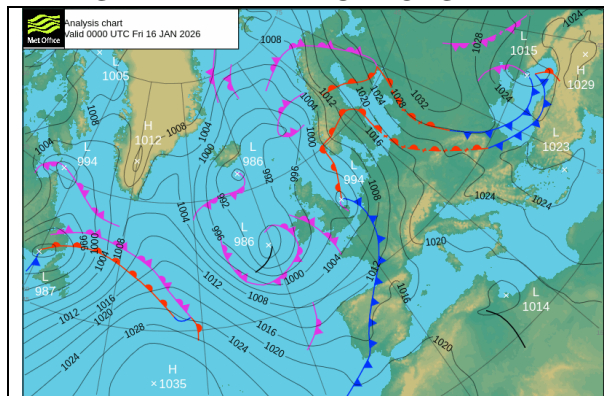
Thank you very much,
Katie

Katie Cubbon | Research Officer – Fair Isle Demonstration and Research MPA

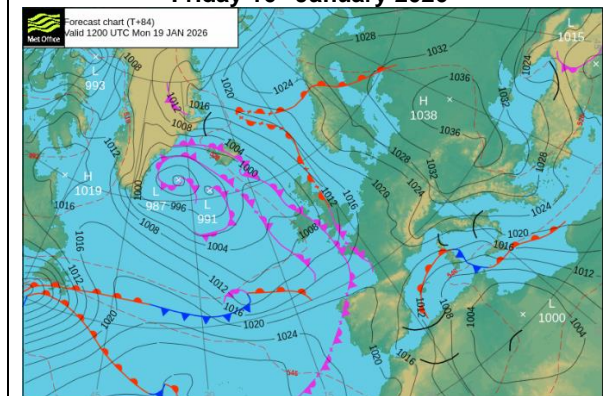
Thank you to Good Shepherd skipper Ian, as well as Iain and Andy of FIBS for the super job of facilitating the removal of so many old vehicles for scrap of late. It can be so difficult to dispose of old cars here (I know!) and I am sure we all agree that the isle looks so much better now that many have gone. Not only does it make the isle a boannier place for us who call it home, but also gives a much better impression for any visitors coming to the isle. Thank you again for your hard work!

Eileen

FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



Analysis Chart 0000 UTC
Friday 16th January 2026



Forecast Chart 1200 UTC
Monday 19th January 2026

GENERAL SITUATION Friday 16th January 2026

Though surrounded by mostly shallow small low centres pressure remains relatively high across Scotland. A slack airflow is expected to freshen south-southeasterly later in the weekend as a frontal trough pushes eastwards against building pressure over Scandinavia, possibly bringing some showery rain for a time. Currently little change is expected next week as high pressure persists near the Baltic blocking Atlantic fronts from moving east.

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK

Temperature 6° or 7° by day, 4° or 5° overnight.

MONDAY 19th: Cloudy though mostly dry with a fresh to strong SSE wind. **Sea State:** Moderate or rough at S 2 to 3 metre.

TUESDAY 20th: Cloudy though mainly dry. Fresh to strong SE winds. **Sea State:** Mostly rough at SSE 3 metre.

WEDNESDAY 21st – SUNDAY 25th: Wednesday cloudy and mainly dry with strong SE winds. While some rain may attempt to push in from the west the rest of the week generally dry though often cloudy with strong SE winds, possibly touching gale force on Friday.

Sea State Wednesday: Rough at SE 3 to 4 metre.

Storm Goretti brought us a severe gale with winds gusting to 77mph early last Sunday. Though winds had been far stronger in the South-West the day before our 73mph was only beaten by Cairngorm summit's 78mph and Cairnwell's 77mph. Storm Goretti also brought us heavy rain with a total of 36.2mm precipitation. **Dave Wheeler**

APOLOGIES to Dave – of course he did provide the Fair Isle Times with a weekend forecast too but the editor didn't manage to get the edition out in time!

