

FAIR ISLE TIMES

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Fair Isle Primary School News

It has been another busy week at Fair Isle Primary School. We have been out and about with our digital cameras for our photography project again. This picture of us busily snapping the freight plane was one we sent to Airtask. David kindly joined us for another Beach Clean down at Muckle Uri Geo bringing litter pickers and an ingenious invention for collecting all the plastic and other litter we found – lots and lots of items collected to keep our coastline clean. Finally, it was World Book Day this Thursday, which gave us the chance to be creative whilst celebrating our love of reading too.



On top of that, please enjoy these reports on South Georgia, written by Luca and Ander when Lucy was here. As part of our photography project on Fair Isle, we gathered notes and wrote reports on a contrasting island location to our own.

South Georgia (written by Ander, aged 8)

South Georgia is an archipelago that is quite inaccessible in the Southern Ocean. There are 20 jagged peaks and 160 glaciers. The penguins on South Georgia are abundant. Also, the South Georgia pipit is the most southerly songbird and 3,000,000 fur seals with the mighty humpback and blue whale. There is a vast amount of krill and sea spiders. The Wandering Albatross's wingspan is 1m 30cm long! There are millions of marine mammals and seabirds. South Georgia bursts with life.

South Georgia (written by Luca, aged 10)

South Georgia is an archipelago in the middle of the Southern Ocean.

Geography

South Georgia is a vast 160km island with 20 peaks over 2000m tall. There are around 160 glaciers. Glaciers are rivers of ice, which could be over 1000 years old.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity means lots of different animals and plants. There is an abundance of fur seals and elephant seals. Also, there are millions of birds including wandering albatrosses and the South Georgia pipit which is the most southerly songbird. South Georgia also has penguins. Lots of penguins. The islands has around 30 groups and around 900,000 King penguins which is around half the world's population. The sea is full of krill and small fish and that attracts blue and humpback whales. The sea also has: sea slugs, feather dusters and sea spiders. The reason for the sea being full of the marine life is because there are under-the-sea ridges and cold deep sea, which gets churned up bringing nutritious water up to the surface, which is perfect for plankton and krill.

Whaling

The vast amounts of seals brought sealers and then whalers. At the starts of the 20th century 3000 men were sent to South Georgia in the summer to hunt whales for their oil rich blubber, and their ships sometimes had rots on them which decimated the ecosystem. They also brought in reindeer for sport hunting which also damaged the ecosystem badly, but in the 1960s the men left due to there not being enough whales. The ecosystem has fully recovered and South Georgia is back to normal.



No Chapel this week – hopefully back to a bigger congregation soon!

Fair Isle Development Company and Fair Isle Committee AGMs – Monday 9th March in the Hall Committee Room – 7pm until 9pm

A week dat's awa and heem again...

The first week of March is done. It certainly feels like we have experienced a glimpse of spring this past week in the isle, with plenty of much needed sunshine and dry weather to help dry the ground under human and ovine feet. We've all had enough gutter (mud) this winter.

I always feel like the first three months of the year are the quiet ones where I can catch up on jobs forgotten about the rest of the year. Christmas and New Year here are wonderful but on the hectic side so I usually end up with '*the pile of doom*' on the kitchen table (my office) which needs attacked this side of the new year. *Some* of it has been done, that's all I'll say!

I decided, in the December madness, that a few days away might be a good idea. Main reason was to get our Edinburgh flat ready for new tenants. We were very lucky to buy a flat in 2010 when the housing market was having a terrible time and kept it on when we moved home, with my sister in law moving in. Now that Laura has happily bought her own flat, it was time to do the flat up a bit and get all the necessary landlord checks done. The Scottish Government implemented various checks for anyone renting out a property and it wasn't nearly as complicated as I thought to get them done – phew! Although I could never even consider living in a flat again after the luxury of a house, I am very fond of that flat. Great news is we have a close friend of a cousin moving in, with another cousin joining shortly. So the plan was hatched for me to go South for a few days.

The flight from Sumburgh to Edinburgh was via Kirkwall – which we nearly didn't leave! I was sitting in front of retired Captain Eddie Watt – a familiar face to many here as he flew the Islander here for a while when I was at school. We left Sumburgh with 2 knot of winds, landing in Kirkwall 20 minutes later to 35 knots! Definitely one of the heaviest landings I've experienced. Unfortunately, the limit for taking off again (it was a cross wind) was 25 knots, so we had to wait... and wait... for the wind to dip. We were almost off-loaded for a rather unwelcome night in Orkney but thankfully the engines revved and off we went.

I spent a few days with plumbers, carpet fitters, electricians and delivery companies getting the flat ready for the lasses to move in. To reward myself for being so productive, I stuck rigidly to my self-imposed rule of NO COOKING and had takeaways and a fabulous meal out at Fava, a superb Greek restaurant in Haymarket (do go if you are in Edinburgh, it really was excellent). I then swapped the capital for Glasgow, visiting a friend with a new baby then catching up with Ross and his kids and gorgeous grandkids and having a super meal out with many of the Fair Isle cousins. Such fun seeing them all away from the isle! (Photo below, Ross and I with the 'peerie' cousins)



Brother Ross was planning a weekend in Winchester to visit out Uncle Jim and Auntie Mary, so I tagged along and we spent a super time enjoying their renowned hospitality (more takeaways and excellent restaurants). Winchester is so beautiful and we enjoyed plenty of walking and enjoying the sights. Thankfully there are a good selection of pubs for refuelling!

From Winchester I headed north to York, where I was meeting a best friend from school for our much belated 40th birthday treat. The Grand Hotel York was very much just that, grand! I had only spent a few hours in York previously, so we enjoyed wandering about this ancient city with roman, Viking and plenty of Medieval history on show. Favourite street – Whip ma whop ma gate.



I'm considering renaming the Houll driveway that. York is probably the friendliest town I have ever visited, and I'd love to go back. We tried the 7 course taster menu in the Hotel restaurant, which was spectacular (I was even brave and tried crab, brie and VERY rare venison. All better than I expected). Throw in a spa day, plenty of shopping and even a pub quiz (we were rubbish, the music round was clearly aimed at 20 year olds...) and it was time to leave York. I caught the train to Newcastle to visit our Hannah and Ed, and meet gorgeous peerie Magnus their darling baby

boy. Magnus is a very happy smiley baby, which is good as he hasn't quite mastered the art of sleeping too much yet. He'll soon settle and they are doing a great job, it was lovely to see them as a family of 3. Hannah and Magnus took me on a lovely tour of their neighbourhood, visiting the magical Jesmond Dene, which really feels like something out of an enchanted tale – a wooded glade with a river and picturesque bridges and mills. Just needed a trow or two.

Back to Edinburgh for more trades visits and cleaning, and home to Shetland where I could see Guillermo for an evening – he was out on a fire training course for handling road traffic collisions – “permitted vandalism” Guillermo said – sounded fun. The grand Hotel Lerwick was **nothing** like its York counterpart, but it was nice to see him before he headed to Argentina to see his Mum and sister. He'll be home in April.

I was met at Tingwall the next morning by a gang of 6 bright young things from a London ad agency, making an advert for Stella Artois lager featuring our own Steven Wilson! I kid you not! They were a good bunch actually and thoroughly enjoyed their weekend in the isle, definitely feeling the brilliant welcome and fun of our community. Can't wait to see the final film!

So, after a while away, it is good to be home. I missed my boys so much and I swear Luca grew a centimetre in 10 days. The isle has turned greener and the days are lengthening noticeably, making it easier for all of us to go about our outdoor jobs or hobbies. There was a stunning full moon earlier in the week, the boys and I strolled down the brae to get a good view of it after tea one night – it was so bright. It is lovely to meet Tammy, our new neighbour and island nurse, who will hopefully feel very welcome and happy here. With ill health being a current issue for a few of our family members, having a nurse here

in the isle to care for them is more important than ever (*Get well, uncle Stewart in Lerwick, hope you are home soon!*)



The weather has allowed planes and a boat, bringing all the usual much needed supplies: sheep feeding, fuel, shop produce etc. With the boat cradle and winch having been removed, the Shepherd has to lie in Lerwick, meaning we need a few good days in a row for the crew to fly out, do the return trip from Lerwick to the isle, then fly home again. It adds an extra strain on our excellent and dedicated crew, and we are very grateful for them. Parkol in Whitby are cracking on with the new Good Shepherd. I love that our boat is being built by a local (ish) family business, which does their best to employ and train folk in their area. With few manufacturing jobs left in the country it is brilliant that this is a success story.

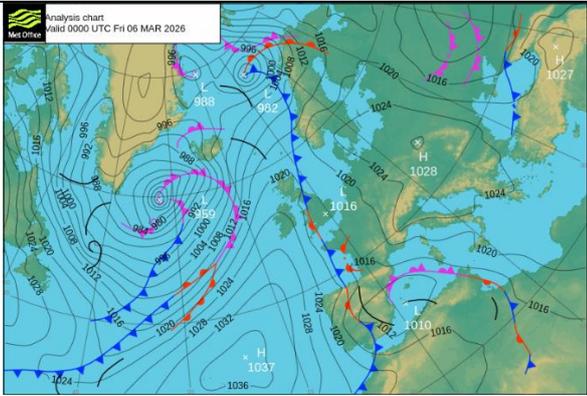
In delivering a pile of fire briquettes to Dave at Field, with the help of an enthusiastic team of Alice, Jonathan and David P, it was interesting to hear his predictions for how many sunshine hours we would get on Friday – it was just short of 9 hours, let's hope for more of the same. The evening sky was beautiful on Friday – with a funny zigzag remnant of a contrail visible over Hoini.

All the best for the weekend and the weeks that follow.

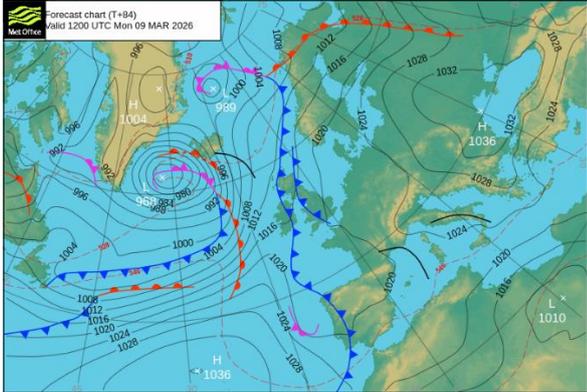
Eileen at Houll



FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



**Analysis Chart 0000 UTC
Friday 6th March 2026**



**Forecast Chart 1200 UTC
Monday 9th March 2026**

GENERAL SITUATION Friday 6th March 2026

A ridge of high pressure across the Northern Isles is now declining east. A southerly airflow then freshens ahead of Atlantic fronts driven east by a depression near Iceland. The fronts, making slow progress against residual high pressure to the south east, may not reach the Northern Isle until late in the weekend. Remaining slow-moving close to northern Scotland early next week until absorbed into a filling secondary depression predicted to swing northeast across northern Scotland midweek bringing mild, and cloudy southerly conditions for the remainder of the week.

OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND Temperatures 8° by day, 5° overnight.

SATURDAY 7th: Another dry often sunny day though with F5-6 SSW winds. **Sea State:** Rough at W 3 to 3 metre. East of Shetland moderate at SSW 2 metre.

SUNDAY 8th: Dry and bright with spells of sunshine and F5 S winds, Remaining dry overnight though cloudier. **Sea State:** Rough at WSW 3 to 4 metre. East of Shetland moderate at SSW 2 metre.

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK Temperature 8° or 9° by day, 6° or 7° overnight.

MONDAY 9th: Rather cloudy with chance of patchy light rain and fresh S winds. **Sea State:** Moderate or rough at W 2 to 3 metre. East of Shetland moderate at S 1 metre.

TUESDAY 10th: Cloudy with chance of rain or showers. Fresh SSW winds occasionally strong. **Sea State:** Mostly rough at WSW 3 metre. East of Shetland slight at S 1 metre.

WEDNESDAY 11th – SUNDAY 15th: Wednesday cloudy with chance of showers and fresh SSW winds. Remainder of week unsettled with rain at times and strong to gale S or SW winds. **Sea State Wednesday:** Mostly rough at SSW 3 metre. Later in the week perhaps very rough at WSW 5 to 6 metre.

Dave Wheeler

