



VOLUME 49 ISSUE 16

PUBLISHED SINCE 1978

22nd MAY 2026

### Fair Isle Primary School News

#### Our Favourite Butterflies

This week in school, we have been exploring the world of butterflies after seeing on Newsround that the Butterfly Conservation Society is running a vote to find "Britain's Favourite Butterfly". Naturally, we had to pick our favourites and vote for them too as well as producing some beautiful drawings and writing to go alongside them.

If you would like to take part in the vote, please visit [Home page | Butterfly Conservation](#) and select your favourite. Will it be the same as one of ours, we wonder?

#### **Khalicee (6)**

I vote for the Small Tortoiseshell ...  
flashy, tough and sporty.

#### **Ander (8)**

I vote for the Swallowtail

The Swallowtail is the biggest butterfly in the U.K. They are so beautiful with their red and blue spots. This is my favourite butterfly. I love the wing extensions (which are its sticky outie



bits) and the colours.

This butterfly is not found in Fair Isle, it is only found in one place in the U.K, which is Norfolk. When it is threatened as a caterpillar, it might (if you're unlucky) release a pineapple smell that is really disgusting from its horns.



**Luca (11)**

I vote for the Red Admiral.

The Red Admiral is one of the more commonly found butterflies on Fair Isle. Famous for its colourful bands of orange, white tips and bold black that make up its wings. Also, the under-side is brown, which is perfect for hiding against tree bark and stones. They come to Fair Isle from Europe, North Africa and sometimes even from southern England. This means that they are very adventurous butterflies. If they are hungry, they will probably suck on fruit, tree sap (not very much of that here on Fair Isle) and even poo! This is my favourite butterfly because you can find them on Fair Isle. Also, I love the bright, vibrant colours on the wings as well.

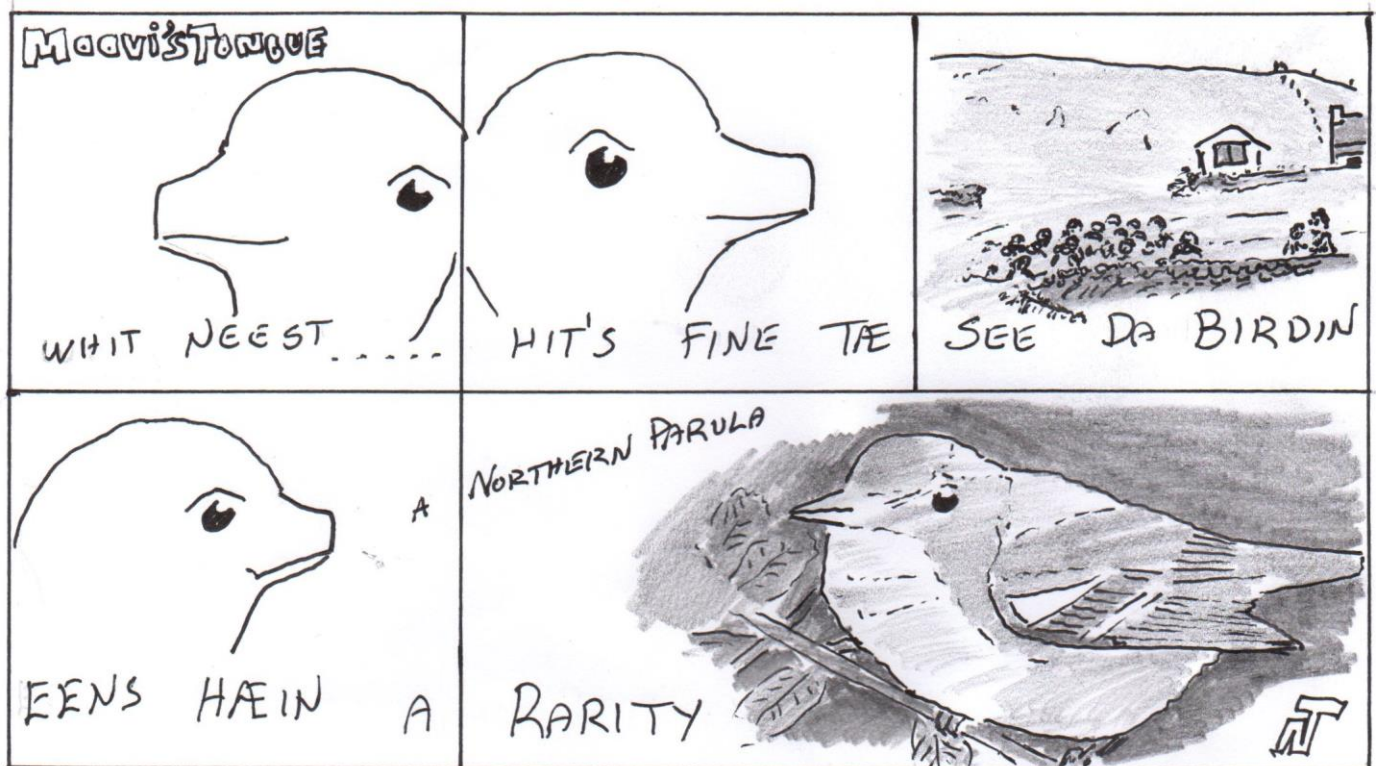


\*\*\*\*\*

**CONGRATULATIONS TO TOM AT FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY**

FOR HIS SECOND 'FIRST FOR FAIR ISLE' THIS SEASON!!

A *Northern Parula* (yes, we had to look it up too...) found on Saturday at Vaila's Trees. More to come next week, but we thought we would include it so that our very up-to-date Maavi made sense!





# Sessions and Sail

## North Isles tour 2026

The tall ship Lady of Avenel and her musical crew, led by wir ain Barry Nisbet, will be plundering the harbours of Orkney and Shetland this summer — catch them at one of these ports if you dare!

May 22-24: Stromness (Orkney Folk Festival)

May 25: Pierowall Hotel, Westray

May 27: Fair Isle

May 29: Lerwick

June 15: Waas Sailing Club

June 18: Baltasound Hall

June 19: Skerries Hall

June 20: Lerwick Boating Club

June 21: Vidlin Hall

June 23: Cullivoe Hall and Pier

June 24: North Roe Hall

June 27: Scalloway

June 28: departure for Mallaig

Sessions and Sail run open sessions; so bring along your fiddle, accordion, moothie, voice or dancin shoes, and join wis for some fine tunes!

**REMINDER – THIS WEDNESDAY IN KENNY’S BAR AT FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY, all very welcome to join in a traditional session and meet the musicians visiting on the Lady of Avenel**

## **Fair Isle Knitting - Some News!**

Back at the start of 2020 I received the exciting news that Kate Davies' 'MAKE / MARK' publishing arm wanted to commission a book proposal I had submitted. The idea was to combine a selection of new Fair Isle knitting patterns with a history of the knitting tradition in the isle, features on past and present knitters and a look at other aspects of island life through photographs, written records and anecdotes. And then Covid came along and put paid to those plans with the cancellation of the commission!

For the next couple of years I continued to collect information and, as time went on, realised that I had a sound basis for a genuine research project. After a further two years of applying for numerous local, regional and national funding opportunities in order to progress my research, and getting nothing but rejections, in 2024 I took the plunge and launched 'The Fair Isle Project' on social media, my website and through interviews and articles in national magazines, hoping that public exposure would generate interest and maybe even turn up some long-lost Fair Isle-knitted garments, photos or links to other relevant research. Whilst Fair Isle itself was the 'known' quantity, in that it's a given that we have the knitters here, the cultural heritage of the knitting tradition in the isle and countless knitted items in both the museum and people's private wardrobes, it was important for me first to spend time looking at the 'unknown' quantity - did any examples of Fair Isle knitwear exist in museums or collections outside of Fair Isle and Shetland, where there was evidentiary proof that it had been knitted in Fair Isle, as opposed to in Shetland or elsewhere? I needed to see whether the project had 'legs', in terms of its scope being restricted to Fair Isle or on a more national scale.

Since 2024 I've put in hundreds of hours of research and travelled several thousand miles around the UK: I've spent time photographing, measuring and documenting dozens of garments and accessories from the 1800s onwards that were knitted here in Fair Isle and are now kept in museums and collections throughout England and Scotland, as well as putting in long hours in archives and libraries sourcing written evidence and documentation. It's an ongoing body of work and will, of course, continue to be added to, but I've curated a visual archive of extant examples of knitwear that have been made in Fair Isle and compiled databases which chart the use and evolution of motifs used in knitwear made in the isle as well as documenting trends in design. The applications for funding have continued apace, to be able to carry out more research trips and follow up on new leads, but those rejection letters just keep flowing in!

I've found it disheartening that there has been neither interest in nor any support for (on either a local or national level) research into Fair Isle knitting - that is its evolution and practice here in Fair Isle, as opposed to the Fair Isle knitting tradition as practised in Shetland. However, at the start of this year I submitted an in-depth research proposal to Glasgow School of Art and, following panel interviews, two rounds of cross-institutional academic peer review of my research proposal and the submission of examples of my academic writing, I found out in April that I've been given the opportunity to carry out research for a PhD with Glasgow School of Art, one of the top ten creative arts institutions in the world.

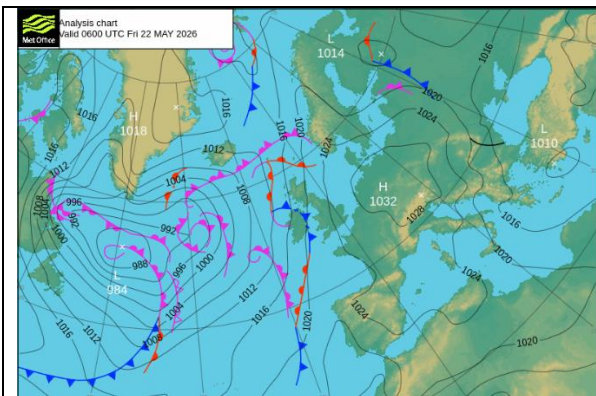
After another long wait, last week I got the news that my application for funding for the PhD has been successful so I've finally been able to accept the offer and shall officially start my PhD journey later this year. My PhD will continue the research I've been doing for

the last six years and will also examine the concept of (perceived) authenticity in the Fair Isle 'brand' as well as documenting the past and present and looking towards the future of the knitting industry in the isle. I hope that the work I do will help to document, protect and create resilience in an at-risk craft and address the value of the craft in its own right - the intangible cultural ('living') heritage of Fair Isle.

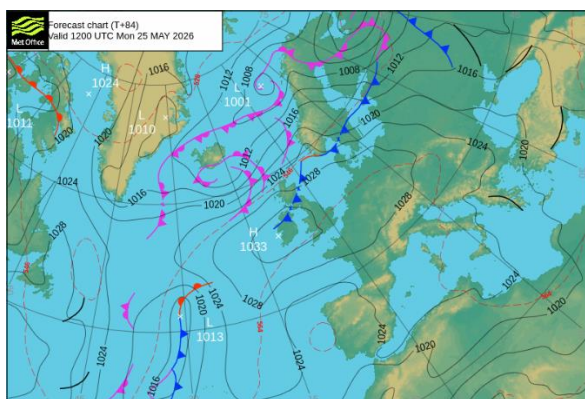
In 2024 I started running weekly 'oral history sessions' throughout the winter months, where folk could gather in a social setting (with coffee and cake, of course!) and talk about a different topic of Fair Isle life each week, with the sessions being recorded to provide digital audio files for the museum's archives. In a similar vein, I really hope that over the next couple of years people will be open to talking to me about their - or their family's - involvement in Fair Isle's knitting tradition, allowing me to document and preserve these valuable insights. It is hoped that, further down the line, all the research that goes into my PhD will be made freely available online. If any Fair Isle Times readers outside of Fair Isle have any relevant photos or information that they would be willing to share with me, I would be really happy to hear from them at: [thefairisleproject@hotmail.com](mailto:thefairisleproject@hotmail.com)

Rachel  
(Barkland)

## FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



**Analysis Chart 0600 UTC**  
**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026**



**Forecast Chart 1200 UTC**  
**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

### **GENERAL SITUATION Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026**

With pressure low across the north Atlantic a mild southerly airflow covers the British Isles. While high pressure over the near-Continent extends westwards bringing fine weather and high temperatures to England and Wales the west and north of Scotland sees a mild cloudy south-westerly airflow carrying trailing weak Atlantic fronts across the area during the weekend and start of next week. Later on high pressure possibly relocating west of the British Isles perhaps results in a westerly airflow across northern Scotland.

**OUTLOOK FOR THE WEEKEND** Temperatures 12° or 13° by day. 9° overnight. **SUNDAY 24<sup>th</sup>:** Cloudy with early showers then brighter spells followed by some rain later. F4 SW winds. **Sea State:** Moderate at WSW 2 metre. East of Shetland SSW at 1 metre.

**FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK** Temperatures 12° or 13° by day, 8° overnight.

**MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup>:** Cloudy with patchy rain or showers. Fresh SW winds. **Sea State:** Moderate at W 2 metre. East of Shetland slight at SSW at 1 metre.

**TUESDAY 26<sup>th</sup>:** Mostly dry, cloudy at first then brighter with afternoon sunshine. A fresh W wind. **Sea State:** Moderate or slight at W 1 to 2 metre.

**WEDNESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> – SUNDAY 31<sup>st</sup>:** Mostly dry, cloudy or partly cloudy with moderate or fresh W winds. **Sea State** **Wednesday:** Moderate at W 2 metre. **Dave Wheeler**