

# FOULA HERITAGE *Ranger service*

NEWS UPDATE



*Cruise ship by M. Holbourn*

A GÖD MAET YEAR IS A GÖD PAET  
YEAR. BIT A GÖD MAEL YEAR WAS  
NEVER A GÖD KALE YEAR

*A good (dry) year for corn is a good year for peats,  
but kale grows best when it is wet.*

## Cruise ships

Early summer was a busy time for the Ranger Service, culminating in a visit from the cruise ship Clipper Odyssey and 134 people participating in a very successful Open Day, taking guided walks or trying their hand at peat cutting and raising. Spinning demonstrations, environmental displays and an array of souvenirs for sale had been organised at the community hall, which proved very popular. Unfortunately, the largest ship booked, the Spirit of Adventure, was unable to land its 360 passengers, but they enjoyed a spectacular cruise around the island.



## Cyfish

The weather has been kinder to John Tulloch this summer enabling him to make regular trips to Foula on Wednesdays and also on other days when demand was high. Passengers were taken on guided trips around the island to see the dramatic scenery and then landed for a few hours ashore so they could take a guided walk with the ranger or wander around themselves.



*Visitors on the Cyfish*

## Microlights

This summer was noticeable for the variety of ways visitors came to Foula. Fine days tempted small motorboats, yachts and even kayaks to call in at the pier and private planes to land at the airstrip. We occasionally see microlights flying over the island, but, on 23<sup>rd</sup> June,



*Microlights on airstrip*

two actually landed. The pilots were Tom Dawson (fixed wing Shadow) and Mark Hughes (flex wing Quick R), they were part of a group doing a round Britain trip to raise money for Children with Cancer. Of the 69 microlights that signed up, only three made it as far as Unst.

### **Killer whales**

Lucky visitors, saw killer whales off Stremness on the evening of 27<sup>th</sup> May. The big bull was identified as 32 year old Busta.



*Killer Whales (Orca) by Dan Brown*

### **School**

This term the schoolchildren were studying the Plant Kingdom. They enjoyed a morning in May with visiting bryologist (moss & liverworth expert) Sandy Payne and Claire Geddes, finding out how many plant groups were present in the school playground. In June, the children did a simple botanical survey of the playground, throwing a metre square and counting the different species growing within it. Paul was lucky to find a good specimen of Small Adder's-tongue, a scarce plant in Britain.

### **Wind Turbines**

The main construction work in Foula this summer was the installations of the three turbines at the South Ness. The old windmill was removed, and one of the new ones was erected on its base,

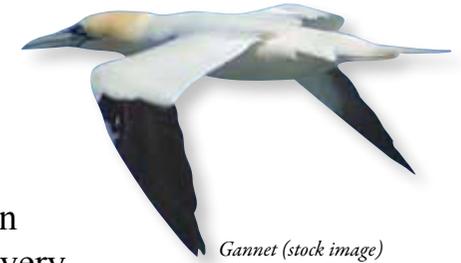


*Wind turbines on the South Ness*

and the other two on new bases 75m apart. The turbines were allowed to run for one day to enable them to be certificated, but apart from that, they are being kept lying down until the end of the seabird breeding season.

### **Seabirds**

Sadly most of the seabirds have done very badly indeed, due to the continuing lack of sandeels, their main feed. Not only were numbers present very low, many did not attempt to breed. Arctic terns, kittiwakes, arctic skuas, guillemots and shags were particularly hard hit. Only the larger species that can forage far away like bonxies, fulmars and gannets have managed. They are partly dependant on fishing boats for feed and have noticeably increased during the last century as fishing effort has vastly expanded. Seabirds dependant on sandeel appear to be facing extinction. Yet despite this, the quota for sandeel fishing, in the North Sea, was increased by an extra 200,000 tons this year.



*Gannet (stock image)*

*Please note, the old Foula Heritage website has now been replaced by a simple transitional website. Thank you for your patience, while we are continuing to redesign the new website.*

*Contact <[admin@foulaheritage.org.uk](mailto:admin@foulaheritage.org.uk)> for more information.*