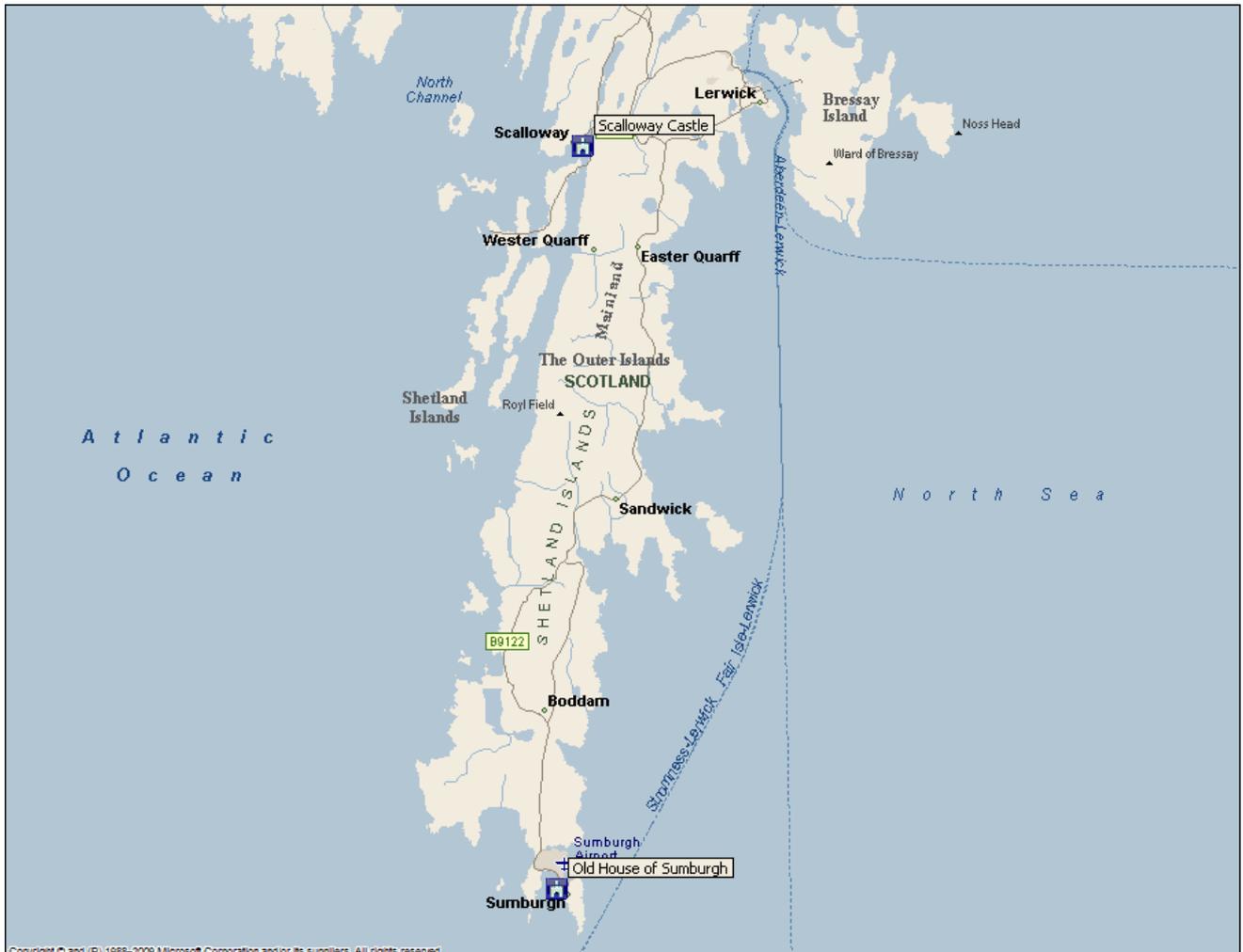


Hildasay Island – Cinderella Stamps

Where is Hildasay Island?

Hildasay is a small, uninhabited island located in the Shetland Islands, off the West Coast of the Shetland mainland. In the map image below, Hildasay Island is located just West of Scalloway, immediately beneath the “North Channel” notation on the map.



Map image source: http://www.castleuk.net/castle_lists_scotland/4/shetlandmap.htm

Hildasay Island made the news last year, during the first stage of the Coronavirus pandemic, when former soldier Chris Lewis and his dog Jet found refuge on the island during the lockdown announced by the UK Government effective from 23 March 2020.

In August 2017, ex-paratrooper Chris Lewis had set off with Jet from the Gower Peninsula on a walk around the coast and by March 2020, had arrived on the Shetland Islands mainland, 12,000 miles on from his starting point. Chris Lewis was sleeping in a tent when the Government announced the lockdown. Locals in Shetland took Chris Lewis across to the 108 hectare, Hildasay Island, to stay in the one house that is on the island: a former shepherd's hut, without running water, electricity or

heating. One month later, and Chris Lewis was still on Hildasay Island, enduring the lockdown in solitude.¹

The Hildasay Island Stamps

There are some attractive bird stamps relating to Hildasay Island. First up is this sheetlet of four stamps featuring a Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*), Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and Curlew (*Numenius arquata*). All four of these birds can be found in the Shetland Islands.²



These Cinderella stamps are based on attractive watercolour illustrations of all four birds. Graham Soutl (of dealer Graham Land Stamps) states on his website that the origin of these issues is not clear, though he thinks that they may date from the 1990s.³

As indicated on Graham Soutl's website, these stamps are most likely fantasy stamps and had no postal use. Of course, with the arrival of a temporary resident in Chris Lewis (and his dog) there was

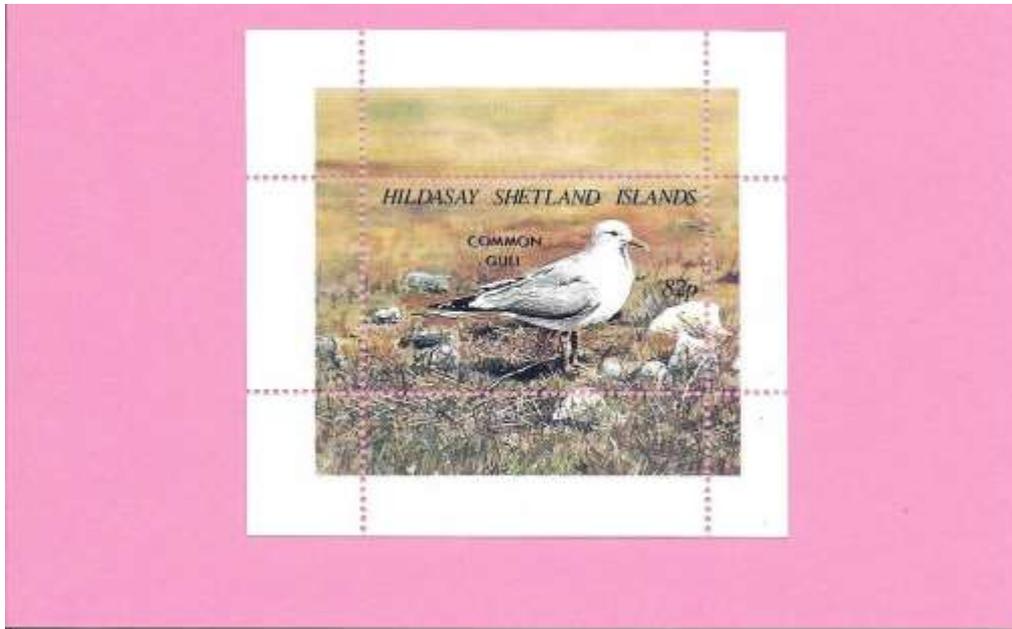
¹ Source: Yahoo! News: 20 April 2020.

² RSPB Handbook of Scottish Birds.

³ <https://www.grahamlandstamps.co.uk/>

arguably an opportunity to make use of these stamps to fund the cost of transporting Chris Lewis's post (if indeed he had any) across to the Shetland mainland. But of course, all this is just part of my fantasy.

The second, single stamp sheetlet features a Common Gull (*Larus canus*). This is also present on the Shetland Islands.



Once again, this is an attractive and high-quality design.



The final set that I have is the two stamp sheetlet (above) which feature I believe feature domestic farmyard geese and on the right-hand stamp, an Atlantic Puffin (*Fratercula artica*), sitting alongside the map of the Shetlands. The Puffin can also be found in the Shetlands.