



## Launch of Tess - Town 1 Skiffs 3

Bruce Morrison writes:

On the 24th November Cromarty Community Rowing Club proudly launched their new St Ayles Skiff 'Tess'.

Tess is the club's 2nd skiff, and the third in Cromarty. Amazing as it comes only 18 months or so after the launch of their first skiff 'Cromba', such has been the uptake and interest in rowing in our community over the period.

'Tess' is named after the late Iain Robertson's boat. Iain's family donated the money to buy the kit so that the skiff would be a legacy to be used and enjoyed by as many in the community as possible. Everyone associated with the club is profoundly grateful to Rachel and family for this gesture, it means more to us than words can say.

The boat was blessed by our local minister Terry Burns and then Rachel further blessed the boat with some humorous words about Iain and the original Tess and also a bottle of Happy Chappy to anoint the skiff.

Cromba, along with skiffs from Fortrose, Findochty, Sutor Skiffies and Strathpeffer were present for the launch and performed the traditional ceremony of 'tossing' oars at the moment of the launch.



## **The Festivities Are Almost Upon Us**

Fans of the Big Screen will be arriving in numbers shortly. (Plus some keen on the more intimate variety too). The 12th **Cromarty Film Festival** begins this weekend and runs from Friday (Nov 30th) until Sunday (Dec 2nd). As always there are some big names heading here for the event. This year sees Jackie Kay, the Makar or National Poet for Scotland, making an appearance along with renowned Scottish actor Gregor Fisher, Rab C Nesbitt himself.

Directors Michael Radford, Molly Dineen and Callum Macrae will also be in Cromarty to talk about their work. The first feature film that Michael Radford directed was 'Another Time Another Place' in 1983, based on the novel by Jessie Kesson but shot on the Black Isle.

Venues for the different screenings range from the Lighthouse and the Victoria Hall to the Stables, mobile cinema the Screen Machine and the Old Buoy Store. (And probably the most intimate of them all - Ben's living room). Full details: [www.cromartyfilmfestival.org](http://www.cromartyfilmfestival.org)

**The Christmas lights** are going up - bigger and brighter than ever. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who have helped with this and especially Laura Shepherd and Phoebe Fox for organising it.

### **Carols by Candlelight**

This year's ever-popular concert of a selection of Christmas carols and songs from our local Christmas choir will take place in St Regulus' Church on Wednesday 19th December at 7.30pm. It is followed by mulled wine and mince pies and all proceeds from the event will be going to charities which focus on the homeless.

**Alternatively**, get yourself in the party mood with the best local covers band around, (well the only one in fact) – '**Clinging to the Wreckage**' play Victoria Hall Saturday 15th December. Tickets: £10 or £25 family available from

Calluna or Wendy Mullery's house (Jalidor). All proceeds to local good causes. Starts at 7.30pm

**Hogmanay Ceilidh** There are only a few tickets left - available from Calluna.

## Shop Openings in December and the Festive Season

**Janie's Silver Jewellery Studio** will be open during the Film Festival Sat 1st and Sun 2nd December 11.00 – 15.00. Look for the balloons on Bank Street. She makes silver jewellery in her studio inspired by the sea and land of the Black Isle.

**Ingrid's House** will be open 7 days a week, up to and including Christmas Eve.  
Closed 25-27th. Open 28th-30th, 11.00-3.00pm. Closed 31st-3rd January.

**The Cheese House** will be open every day from 13th December - closing at 4pm on Christmas Eve. Open 27th-31st Dec and then closed until 19th January. To avoid disappointment or having to wait during busy times they're always happy to take pre-orders.

**Cromarty Bakery** will close at 4pm on Christmas Eve and re-open on Friday 28th December. Also closing at 4pm on New Year's Eve.

**The Post Office** will stay open until 4pm on Saturdays and Wednesdays through December until Christmas.

**Cromarty Stores:** 24th 08.00-18.00, 25th closed, 26th 08.00-19.00, 31st 08.00-19.00, 1st January 09.00-12.00. Otherwise open as normal.

**Couper's Creek** open as normal but closed 25/26th and 1st/2nd January.

**Calluna** the same plus open until 8pm on Thursdays throughout December.

**Sutor Creek at the Old Brewery** - Fridays-Sundays for lunch and dinner (take away pizzas during these times too). Closed from 24th December. Re-opening 17th January.

## Light Up A Life

The annual Light up a Life service will be held in St Regulus' Church on Tuesday 4th December at 7.30pm. Locally it's known as Light Up The Highlands.

These events help families and friends to come together to remember and celebrate the lives of loved ones. The events are open to anyone, not just people whose loved one was cared for by a hospice.

Usually, the most important part of these events is the opportunity to dedicate a message in memory of a loved one by:

- lighting a candle
- hanging a message on a tree
- recording the name of someone special in a book of remembrance, or reading it aloud.

## Burial Ground Benches

Two new personalised benches have been placed in the Cromarty Wester Burial Ground to honour the memory of two young men who took their own lives within a few days of each other in October last year. A crowd of around 40 people came to see the families of James Mullery and Calum Mackay unveil and dedicate the benches to them in a moving ceremony.

Following the tragic death of James, Wendy and Patrick Mullery put on a music concert earlier in the year in the Victoria Hall and £1400 was raised. Half of this went to the Christmas Lights appeal and the other half paid for the materials and transport costs associated with the benches which were designed and fabricated as a goodwill gesture by Jonny Kerfoot of Black Isle Engineering. There had been no benches for those grieving loved ones or visiting graves and Karen Mackay worked with the Mullery family to have them installed.

Seen here sitting on one of the benches is Jodie Mullery, widow of James, with their three children (left to right) Parker, Oskar and Cooper.



## **Armistice Remembrance**

Caroline Vawdrey from Cromarty East Church writes: 'We joined with churches across Europe on Sunday 11th November to commemorate 100 years since the close of World War One.

It was very moving to think of so many communities filled with the wonderful sound of bells peeling, and very fitting to have our two young bell ringers take the lead - one from Scottish and one from German heritage.

A great symbol. Thank you Peter and Ben'.

## **Primary school news**

Cromarty Primary School continues to excel in the realm of science, picking up two awards in October.

At a ceremony at the school, staff and pupils were presented with the Primary Science Quality Mark Outreach award, demonstrating how established science leadership is having a sustained impact on science teaching and learning across the school and in other schools. This is a UK wide award, with only 8 schools attaining this level, a tremendous achievement for Cromarty Primary.

The school was also presented with a special award from The Scottish Engineering Special Leaders Award (SESLA) for the schools' outstanding performance in the last five years of this award programme. This is an annual event now attracting over 15,000 entries from across schools in Scotland, where judges drawn from academia, business and professional institutions meet to consider inventions and engineering solutions proposed by pupils. The award was presented to the school given the outstanding success of the pupils over the years. There have been many Commended and Highly Commended entries over the period, and the school has had three winners, in Robbie, Connie and Aidan. Aidan and Charlie's inventions have also been chosen to be built by Strathclyde University's Faculty of Engineering, with Aidan's already on public display at the Glasgow Science Centre.

## Youth Café Promotes Volunteering

The Youth Café offers a great way to get into volunteering - and pick up a Saltire Award for your efforts. Last year, on the Black Isle as a whole, 122 young people provided 8,877 hours of volunteer work. If that was paid wages it would have cost £85,000. If you would like to find out more about what you could get out of it, as well as what you put in, talk to Wanda Mackay in her office at the Leisure Centre in Fortrose.

Youth Café runs every Monday in the Victoria Hall - from 4-6pm for juniors and 6-8pm for seniors. We do sports, arts & crafts, cookwell and bakewell, EQ sports and we go over the wellbeing indicators every week so they know what they are getting out of coming to Youth Café.

## The Cromarty Peace Group

has nothing to report because they're going to be quiet in December! (Well, I thought it was amusing – Ed)

## Tuesday Talks at Hugh Miller

In December, we are following on from November's spritely set of informal Tuesday Talks for the public with two presentations:



On Tuesday 4th December we are pleased to present a seasonal member of the Hugh Miller Team: Alan Rycroft. Alan is swapping his Front of House role talking about Hadrian's Wall and his passion for this monumental barrier which marks the northernmost limits of Roman expansion into Britain.

While on Tuesday 11th we are delighted to be able to welcome Dr. Alex Woolf of St. Andrews University who will be talking about land ownership patterns in Mediaeval Scotland.

These informal talks start at 10am in the main Miller House Museum, next to the thatched Birthplace Cottage in Church Street. There is an entry fee of £3 per person, which includes a hot drink and slice of Cromarty Bakery cake. All are welcome.

### **The Advent Window on the World**

This community exhibition starts on Saturday 1st December. Each day of Advent a new exhibition will be placed in the street facing window of the Birthplace Cottage. Look out for the changes. (Image: Andrew Dowsett looking at the Kirkmichael exhibition from 2012).



Our next meeting will be on Thursday 20th December at 7.30 pm when we will host our Christmas meeting “Cromarty Cameos” with some Cromarty tales researched by committee members. Toast the season with mulled wine and enjoy some festive eats! Visitors are always welcome and the meeting takes place, as usual, in the West Church Hall. Our website is [www.cromartyhistory.scot](http://www.cromartyhistory.scot)

## Cycling Without Age

Further to last month’s news Cromarty Care Project is delighted to announce they have been successful in receiving an award from Highland Cross and now have the total amount required for two trikes for Cromarty. This will enable them to take folk who would not normally be able, to go out and around the town and feel the wind in their hair once again. CCP are now looking for secure storage with electricity to store and charge the trikes. If anyone has any thoughts or suggestions, please get in touch with Shirley Matheson on 600451.



## Focus on Fitness

There is a Taijiquan/ Qigong (tai chi/ chi gong) class at The Stables every Wednesday evening from 7.30-8.30pm. 'Currently we are practising the 24 Step form in the taiji



part of the class and learning a routine to benefit the lungs in the qigong session. All the exercises are done to music and have been designed to improve flexibility, balance, coordination, strength, concentration, relaxation and breathing. No experience is necessary to join the class, just wear comfortable clothing and flat footwear.

If you'd like to give it a try, give me a call or message me on 07879050273 or email me at [janisgillies@gmail.com](mailto:janisgillies@gmail.com) '

## Writers' corner

**Simon Gunn**, amongst other things known to many for his involvement in un-earthing Rosemarkie Man (quite literally), has recently published a fascinating book on the first flight to the Shetlands: 'RAF Catfirth 1918'. Though not of immediate local concern it is a fascinating read, beautifully researched and curiously, for such a seemingly 'dry' subject, packed with human interest. Copies available from The Emporium.

The Emporium's owner **Judy Harvey** also has a book published. 'Seamus MacTavish's New Home'. It is written for children ages 4-7 and is a great Christmas gift idea for that special child in your life. Follow the adventures of Seamus MacTavish the mouse, as he learns to adjust to living in a cottage by the sea with Robbie and Mum. The book retails at £8.50.

Avid listeners of the **Blackhaven** podcast will be pleased to know episode 2 is now available to download. Episode 3 in the next few days. Listen out for those local voices! And... try not to worry. [www.blackhaven.scot](http://www.blackhaven.scot)

## Cromarty Arts Trust

Creative Cromarty Competition – Exhibition. Saturday 8th December 11.00am – 3.00pm. We are holding a free, informal exhibition of all entries received into this year's Creative Cromarty Competition on the theme, 'Miniature World'. The prize-giving will take place at 11.30am. Whether you entered or not, why not take a wander up to see the wonderful range of amateur art on offer from children and adults across the Black Isle?

## Maritime News



### Harbour

You will have noticed that the harbour is currently empty of all vessels as we prepare for the dredge which will make the harbour more accessible and safer for users. This should commence in the next few days. Many thanks to the Aberdeen University team based at the Lighthouse for their assistance in monitoring the firths for dolphins whilst any dumping of the dredged material is undertaken.

The Trust has appointed Dingwall based engineering consultants Wallace Stone to advise on the urgent repairs to the Smeaton Mole and Inner Admiralty Pier. These works need to be undertaken before we can implement many of the FLAG funded improvements previously described. At the present time we have secured upwards of £100,000 towards the cost of these repairs with other potential grants in the pipeline. We are grateful to The SSE Sustainable Communities Fund, Marine Scotland and Highland Council for their support. We still have some way to go to raise all the money needed to implement the repairs and will be continuing our fundraising efforts. We are currently working with Historic Environment Scotland and Highland Council to ensure that all works to this Grade A listed structure are to the appropriate standards.

### Cromarty (still) Rising after 3 Years



This spectacular photo of a humpback whale by EcoVentures, was taken very close to where ship-to-ship transfers of crude oil is proposed by the Cromarty Firth Port Authority.

Cromarty Rising is a resident's action group representing the community on the Port of Cromarty Firth plans to transfer crude oil between tankers at anchor in the inner Moray Firth at the entrance to the Cromarty Firth. CR has been active in this endeavour for almost 3 years.

At the Port Authority Public Meeting held in Invergordon on 27th September, Cromarty Rising members asked about plans to continue with the STS licence process. Port Chief Executive Bob Buskie, whilst stating there are no immediate plans to resubmit the licence application, failed to rule out a new application in the future. He went on to say the Port Authority is keen to reinstate STS at Nigg Jetty, but the uncertain future of the Oil Terminal presents commercial and operational issues.

The Cromarty Rising petition to the Public Petition Commission of the Scottish Parliament remains open. This petition calls on the Scottish Parliament, to urge the Scottish Government, to ensure that environmental legislation in Scotland is sufficient to prevent ship-to-ship transfers of crude oil in environmentally sensitive

locations, such as the Inner Moray Firth, and to enhance the accountability of trust port boards to their stakeholders.

The Cromarty Rising formal complaint to the European Commission, on the failure to consider European Protected Species (EPS) licensing in the Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC), also remains open. The Scottish Government have written to Cromarty Rising and stated that they **will not** consider EPS licensing for the disturbance of a protected species in Scottish waters, as ship-to-ship transfers licences are a matter reserved to the UK Government. The UK Government, in the form of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), say that EPS licensing matters are an entirely separate matter and this **will not** form part of their ship-to-ship licence award considerations. Hence, no party is considering the disturbance of protected species inside a Special Area of Conservation, as required by European Directives.

The Port Authority maintains that it is keen to build strong community relations with Cromarty. The Cromarty Rising experience is not encouraging, the Port fail to walk the talk.

Cromarty Rising are ready and waiting to challenge any and all STS applications should and when they arise.

Many thanks to all supporters.

For more information visit [www.cromartyrising.com](http://www.cromartyrising.com)

## Latest from the Development Trust

Caledonian Building Surveyors of Inverness conducted a structural survey of Townlands Barn and have now delivered their report to the CCDT. The directors will study its findings and will consider the best way forward at their next meeting on December 6.

Work to clear trees, ivy and rubbish from the barn will continue over the winter. It is planned to hold an open-day to allow the community to see what has been done so far and consider the significant challenges that lie ahead. This is likely to be in the spring.

Estelle Quick and Greg Fullarton visited the Muir of Ord Hub and met those managing the community project, to see if there were ideas which could inform our thinking on the future development of Townlands Barn. The Hub project involved local residents taking over the Old Tarradale Primary School which was only being used as a store after a new school opened in Muir of Ord, and then lay empty.

It took many years, but the Hub now provides meeting rooms, acts as an information point, has a retail area for local crafts, and boasts an auditorium with stage, cinema and sound systems. There is a café run by the Calman Trust, which also has Artysans in Inverness. The trust provides employment support for local young people. Estelle and Greg will brief other directors.

CCDT has completed the first stage towards an application to the Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF), to see if there might be financial support available to allow the CCDT to proceed with the much-needed repair and upgrading of the ferry slipways at Cromarty and Nigg.

Highland Council advisers suggested that there would be a greater chance of success if the plan also included proposals for facilities designed to improve the visitor experience and allow for the better management of the increasing number of campervans. The final RIF application has to be submitted by the end of January.

Meanwhile if you are seeking ideas for stocking fillers, Irene Mackay's handknitted fingerless gloves are back in the Post Office for the winter with all proceeds going to the Townlands Barn project.

## Vacancies

The Community Council is looking to co-opt a new member. If you're interested in actively supporting the important work of the council in representing the interests of the community contact Diane Brawn through the CL website or talk to Estelle Quick in the Post Office.

The gritter team could do with more volunteers to help keep the streets ice-free this winter. Talk to Nige Shapcott (Wellington House) if you want to lend a hand. Tel: 600760 Email: [shapcott@pitt.edu](mailto:shapcott@pitt.edu)



## And a plea...

If everyone took just a few minutes to sweep leaves etc from the pavement and gutters outside their properties it would go a long way to keeping the drains clear over the winter. And please, dog-owners, take responsibility for dog mess - it's becoming a problem again. Lets have our town looking its best over the coming weeks and months.

Congratulations on reaching the end. Rather a lot going on this month! Which just leaves us to say... enjoy the festive break, when it comes, and we look forward to getting your news in time for the new year issue.

The Cromarty Live Team

Send any comments, feedback or news to:

[editor@cromartylive.co.uk](mailto:editor@cromartylive.co.uk)

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