

Welcome to another busy month  
in our wee Highland town.

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## A Town That Won't Back Down



Cromarty Primary School parents got front page billing in October with a leading article in the Ross-shire journal. The piece highlighted the plight facing the school with the pupil role falling and subsequent loss of teaching staff. The point was clearly made that small rural schools such as ours are in a 'catch 22' when it comes to attracting young families to relocate to the area. Less pupils means less teachers, but less teachers then means there are no places for new pupils. The current council policy implies that anyone with primary age children wanting to move to Cromarty and attend the local school can only do so between the end of one academic year and the start of a new one, when a larger role would warrant another class teacher. In essence a 6-week window of opportunity. This is an absurd situation especially given the recent refurbishment of the school which now sees classrooms empty whilst in Avoch, for example, pupils are having to be taught in portacabins due to increased numbers. One can only hope that the publicity and increased awareness

of this anomaly brings a more flexible approach to the situation. The parents are going to keep on battling.

## Cromarty Community Development Trust

The Cromarty Community Development Trust is still in business, and is back on track to deliver the near half a million pounds worth of investment it had announced early in the summer. Neither looked certain until recently.

The CCDT suffered a hammer blow at the beginning of October when it was announced it was to lose £200,000 of the £300,000 award from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) announced in June.

The panel which administers the fund, claimed there were too many uncertainties in the trust's plans to upgrade the ferry slipways. It also argued that deadlines had been missed. Both points were robustly challenged by the trust.

At a meeting a representative of the panel told CCDT directors the decision was final. There was no right of appeal. Neither would the trust be recompensed for the work it had commissioned after the June announcement.

But the balance of the RTIF award would be paid to allow the development of the motorhome site at Whitedykes to continue, despite it apparently missing the same deadlines as the slipways.

What was not recognised was the panel's decision had jeopardised the entire match-funding of over £130,000 which had been raised. SSE, for example, would have been well within its rights to withdraw the offer of £50,000 each to the CCDT and the Nigg and Shandwick Community Council, from the Beatrice Windfarm Fund. There was a very real risk that the CCDT would have to fold.

CCDT directors embarked on an intense programme of lobbying, which went up to cabinet secretary level. Our MSP Kate Forbes engaged all those who had the power to intervene. In sporting parlance, she played a blinder.

Three weeks after the panel's announcement, a new communication was received via the Highland Council confirming its decision had indeed been reviewed. The trust could look forward to the reinstatement of the full RTIF award, but only if we met some strict conditions and deadlines.

SSE announced at a meeting at the end of last week, that it was ready to help. It would release £7,500 from the £50,000 Beatrice award, to allow the preparatory technical work on the slipways to continue. It would also consider releasing the same amount from Nigg's award. There would be another £18,000 to allow work at Whitedykes to proceed, on receipt of basic costings. These have now been sent.

The Highland Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise are both now committed to help the CCDT complete its plans.

Therefore, despite having been derailed, the CCDT project is now back on track, although there is a lot of work still to be done. This should allow the slipways to be repaired and extended, to allow the deployment of a bigger ferry. How far they can be extended, will depend how much extra money we can raise. The more money, the longer the slipway and the better the ferry service. So any fund-raising ideas will be welcomed.

## Other Development Trust News

The Annual General Meeting was held on October 15. David Fraser resigned as trust chairman and as a director before the meeting. Jacquie Ross and Estelle Quick stood down as directors, but were re-elected. Fraser Mackenzie was nominated for the final director's place from the membership and was duly elected.

The volunteers running the Thrift Shop were praised for the job they had done raising round £6,000. It was agreed that electrical power should be restored to the building before they open for their second season next year.

### **Board meeting**

The new board of directors met for the first time on Sunday 26th October. Jacquie Ross was elected to chair the CCDT; David Ross as vice-chair; Sheila Currie as Secretary; and Estelle Quick as Treasurer.

One proposal considered was to see if there was any local interest in a project to design a more impressive entrance(s) to Cromarty, with newly designed signs on both roads. Anyone interested or with ideas, please contact one of the directors.

## Cromarty Bonfire & Fireworks Night

THIS Friday **1st November**. Our annual FREE community event - all welcome!

6.00pm - food, drink & sparklers available to purchase

6.30pm - bonfire is lit

7.00pm - spectacular fireworks display

8.00pm - all over for another year!

There will be delicious hot food on offer courtesy of Sutor Creek plus mulled wine, hot chocolate and home-made sweet treats as a fundraiser for Cromarty Primary School Parent Council.

An ice cream van and neon toy stall will also be present and sparklers will be on sale with all proceeds going back into the fireworks pot for next year.

The bonfire Guy has once again been created by the kids at Cromarty Youth Cafe.

A huge thank you to our funders: Global Energy, Slaughterhouse Coffee, Calico UK, Cromarty Brewing Company and Highland Stoves plus many local businesses that supplied generous raffle prizes.

Can you help? We can always do with extra bodies to help create the bonfire on the morning of Friday 1st Nov so if you can spare an hour or two, please come down to the Links any time after 8am. We also very much appreciate any help the following morning (Sat 2nd) to pick up

debris and clear up the Links. We hope to see you there!  
Thank you.

Georgia Macleod



## Cromarty Film Festival - 6-8 December

The 13th Cromarty Film Festival is fast approaching. The programme will be available from 2 November - at all the usual establishments around the town and online at [www.cormartyfilmfestival.org](http://www.cormartyfilmfestival.org)

Tickets for the Festival will go on sale at the Hugh Miller Institute on **Saturday 16th November** 10-12 for Film Soc. Members and Festival Friends and for all comers from 13.00 to 15.00. Thereafter tickets will be available from Eden Court Box office (01463 234234) or online [www.eden-court.co.uk](http://www.eden-court.co.uk). We'll also be selling tickets at Cromarty Library on Tuesday evenings in the run up to the festival. During the Festival, Tickets will be available at the Festival Hub in the Old Brewery.

### Cromarty Cinema

The cinema build is progressing with a target of opening in January 2020 and to make sure that this is a true community asset, we want to set up a dedicated volunteer group to run it. So if you want to learn more about how the cinema will operate and are interested in volunteering to support screenings, please come by the Hugh Miller

Institute on 16 November at 3:30pm for an initial meeting.

Fraser Mackenzie - dfrasermackenzie@gmail.com - 07414 855582

## Library News

Lynn Anderson writes:

To celebrate Book Week Scotland drop in to the library on **Tuesday 19th November** and enjoy a blether with local artist Izzy Thomson about her recently commissioned pop-up book on Cromarty.

We are planning a regular board games club to be held in the library meeting room so look out for posters around the town with dates and times when we have these confirmed.

## James' Support Group

Patrick Mullery writes:

'Craic, Giggle and Games' evening on **Monday 18 November** from 7.30pm to 9.30pm in The Cabin at Jalidor, plus the Breakfast club on **Sunday 17 November** from 10.30 to 12 noon at The Mercure Hotel in Inverness- these are both the first ones, and I hope to announce more as the winter progresses.

Also we have launched a webpage for the support group: [jamesupportgroup.com](http://jamesupportgroup.com)

## Cromarty Care Project

From Jill Stoner:

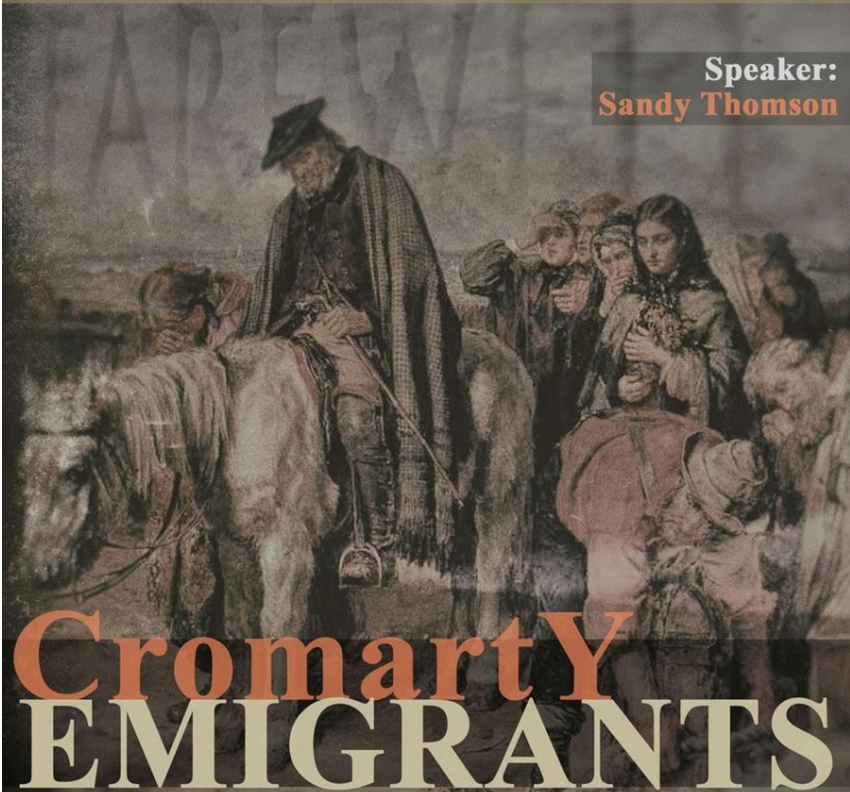
'We will be holding our AGM (which was postponed) **Tuesday November 5th** 7pm West Church Hall.

Professor Gill Hubbard - or more commonly known as Gill McZappa - will give a short talk drawing on her own

research about the challenges of changing people's behaviours to improve health and well-being.

Everyone welcome to hear about what we are doing in Cromarty. Tea and Coffee.'

## Cromarty History Society & Friends of Cromarty Courthouse



**CROMARTY HISTORY SOCIETY  
& Friends of Cromarty Courthouse**

**Speaker:  
Sandy Thomson**

**Cromarty  
EMIGRANTS**  
And the ships that took them

**7.30pm Thursday**                      **West Church Hall**  
**21st Nov 2019**                              **Cromarty**

**ALL WELCOME NON-MEMBERS £3.00 UNDER 16s FREE**  
**[www.cromartyhistory.scot](http://www.cromartyhistory.scot)**

Last month we attributed these great posters to Gillian McNaught when the credit should, in fact, go to John McNaught. Apologies and applause in equal measure.

In 1998, the Courthouse published a study by Janet (Jenny) Fyfe, a key member of the Society, on this same subject. It dealt with emigrations specifically between 1707 and 1850 and identified America, Canada and the West Indies as the primary destinations for Cromarty-

born folk or erstwhile residents of the town, although India, New Zealand, China and Australia also took their share. Whilst there is a wealth of information in the historical record, she and others have found that definitive information regarding the sailings, the numbers and names of passengers, the destinations and even the fates of the voyages are sometimes incomplete. She also found that the usual patterns of both Highland and Lowland emigration didn't accurately apply to Cromarty emigration and concluded that this 'needs further study'.

Sandy Thomson retired from Strathclyde University and moved to Cromarty twenty years ago. While studying Scottish History on Dundee University's distance learning programme he became a very active member of Cromarty History Society and was our Convener for many years. He has been a regular speaker at our meetings, focusing on topics of local interest. On this occasion he will be paying tribute to the late Professor Jenny Fyfe by updating some of her early researches into emigration from Cromarty.

Cromarty History Society meets on the third Thursday of each month, September - April [www.cromartyhistory.scot](http://www.cromartyhistory.scot)

### [The Hugh Miller Writing Competition 2019 - 2020](#)

Prose and poetry entries from all ages are welcome. The competition invites entries inspired by one or more of the '51 Best Places to see Scotland's Geology', including our local museum and The Black Isle. This is about responding to where we live, our landscape and seascape and our geological heritage. Feel the creative pulse beneath your feet!

<https://www.scottishgeology.com/hughmiller/>

## **News From The Harbour Trust**

Pat Haynes writes:

"The first contract to repair the decks and columns of the piers which has been undertaken by the Fraser Bruce Group is nearing completion. Columns and soffits have been repaired and redundant steel work has been removed. New concrete has also been painted with a protective coating to protect against corrosion.



Lochshell will be the new contractors who plan to start work in early November to install the new fenders and ladders on the east side and the new deck on the west (seaward) side of the mole. It now seems likely that the work to replace the sheds will commence as early as weather conditions permit in the New year.'



This painting by Neil Thompson is just one of the items for auction in the upcoming fundraising event being held at the Sutor Creek Seafood Tasting Dinner. It could be yours if you want to make a bid!

The Seafood Tasting Dinner and Auction at Sutor Creek is now sold out but anyone can make bids for the auction items which also include:

An original painting by Pat Hay; 2 x tickets plus hospitality to any Ross County Football match in Dingwall; a bottle of 'first release' Mortlach Single Malt Whisky; a luxury two-night stay at the newly refurbished Newhall Mains; a meal for 6 at your home prepared specially by Graham Fox and the Sutor Creek team; a unique jigsaw and poster of life around Cromarty Harbour - only one in existence so highly collectable!

Bid now by emailing [friends@cromartyharbour.org](mailto:friends@cromartyharbour.org)

## Cromarty Arts Trust

To purchase tickets/book places:

[info@cromartyartstrust.org.uk](mailto:info@cromartyartstrust.org.uk) / 01381 600354

Check out the website for full information

## **INTRODUCTION TO FREE MOTION**

**EMBROIDERY:** 2nd Nov, Old Brewery, 10am – 4.30pm  
FULLY BOOKED!

## **SEWING: CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS**

**WORKSHOP:** 3rd Nov, Old Brewery, 10am – 4.30pm  
FULLY BOOKED!

**SING YOUR HEART OUT:** 16th Nov, Stables, 10am – 4pm. Sing some acappella harmony songs with tutor, Kate O’Connell in a fun, friendly environment. Open to all; no experience required. Tea/coffee provided; bring a packed lunch. £35. Booking required.

**ALDEN, PATTERSON & DASHWOOD:** 17th Nov, Old Brewery, 8.00pm (doors 7.30pm) Enjoy a delight of rich vocal harmonies, fiddle, dobro, guitar and mandolin from this folk/Americana trio. Our last gig of 2019! £11/£9 conc/£5 under 16. Reserve in advance or pay on the door.

**CHRISTMAS MARKET:** 29th (6.00-8.00pm), 30th Nov & 1st Dec (10.30am-4.00pm), Old Brewery. Crack your Christmas shopping in one fell swoop! Attractive, unique, quality crafts and goodies galore in a cosy, festive environment. Complimentary mulled wine, mince pies and carols courtesy of Black Isle Acappella on the Friday evening.

## **The Legend of Saint Martin**



Cromarty Sunday Club meets again on **24 November** at 3.30pm in St Regulus Church. Both local congregations (St Regulus and West Church) have recently combined their children's activities and invite all local children and parents to this event. As the days get shorter we'll make paper lanterns to take home and learn more about the life of Saint Martin of Tours. Of course there will be homebaking and juice and tea/coffee for the grown-ups. All free, just come along!

## Decorate your home this festive season - and support a local good cause

Gill Fea writes:

'We will be selling Nordman fir Christmas trees which hold on to their needles. Height available on request but rough price guide £30 up to 6ft - £40 up to 8ft - £50 - 10ft and over.

Money goes towards Malawi fund raising Project. Will deliver to Cromarty and Black Isle area. Contact: [gill@plexusmedia.co.uk](mailto:gill@plexusmedia.co.uk) 07732881000 or 01381 600242'

## A letter of introduction

Hi,

We are a family (myself, husband Stefano and 1 year old son Luca) who have recently bought a house in Cromarty (3 Forsyth Place). We are in the process of renovating it (extensively!) so we won't actually be moving in for another few months (we're currently staying with my parents in Tain).

We have also started a picture framing business in Inverness (Inverness Framing Company), based in the new Wasps artists studios in the Midmills Building.

Jess Gunn

## And finally...

With elections for the new Community Council taking place we are sure the town would like to join us in thanking those members who are standing down this time. The C&DCC does an enormous amount of work 'behind the scenes' which is often not recognised or appreciated. So take a bow: Rosemarie Hogg, Kenny Macfarlane, Estelle Quick, Jacquie Ross.

We hope you've found this an interesting and informative read. Please let us know what you think, or send suggestions and ideas for articles via [editor@cromartylive.co.uk](mailto:editor@cromartylive.co.uk)

The Cromarty Live Newsletter team is Jon Palmer, Jeremy Price, David Ross, Laura Shepherd

The Newsletter is currently sponsored by Cromarty Stores. Printed copies are also available at the Stores for those unable to access the online version.

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