

Welcome to another busy month
in our wee Highland town.

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Welcome to the new Community Council



From left to right: Alan Plampton, Gabriele Pearson, Diane Brawn,
Peter Ratcliffe, Marcel Gommers

The new Community Council held its inaugural meeting on Monday 25th November. Much of the business involved sharing out responsibilities to ensure people's voices are represented on all sorts of matters that make for a good community. As can be seen by the photo this is a lot to ask of a team of only five. If you think you can help, and have a particular interest or skill set to offer, the council would be delighted to co-opt additional members. Have a conversation with a current member to find out what's involved. The more the merrier, as they say! Contact details can be found on cromartylive.co.uk

Cromarty Community Development Trust

Cromarty was in the press again last week, or more precisely the CCDT was making the news. The Press & Journal reported on the recent funding scare over the slipways project, and revealed internal Scottish Government communications, which led to a welcome reprieve

Under the headline “Intervention saves £200k plan to keep ferry service”, the newspaper’s story began: “Senior politicians have stepped in to resurrect a tourism project designed to save a ferry service.”

This referred to the announcement in June that CCDT had been successful in its application to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF), and could look forward to £300,000 from the fund. The money was to upgrade and extend the ferry slipways (the Nigg slipways has now been declared unfit), and establish a small site for motorhomes.

But four months later, without any warning, CCDT directors were informed by a panel of officials, that the £200,000 for the slipways had been withdrawn. It was claimed that there were too many uncertainties in the trust’s plans, and that deadlines had been missed. CCDT directors disputed both points.

The P&J accurately reported the decision jeopardised more than £130,000 of match- funding, and there was a "very real risk that the CCDT would have to fold".

Documents released to the P&J under freedom of information laws show a letter sent by local SNP MSP Kate Forbes (Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy) to Fiona Hyslop, the Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for tourism. In the memo, Ms Forbes expressed her astonishment at the way the CCDT had been treated by the VisitScotland-led panel of officials.

She highlighted the implications for the match-funding, and urged the minister to make an "urgent intervention".

Ms Forbes wrote: "I urge you to overturn whatever decision has taken place locally, and ensure that the original funding will proceed as promised.

"Failure to do so, will leave a small community organisation in financial jeopardy and also result in the project being literally and metaphorically dead in the water."

The efforts by Ms Forbes were rewarded. Despite initially being told there was no appeal, the trust was subsequently informed it could look forward to the reinstatement of the full RTIF award, if conditions and deadlines were met.

A VisitScotland spokesman is reported by the newspaper as saying that with a commitment that Highland Council would "undertake a more proactive role with this project to see it to completion", the panel (of officials) agreed to extend the funding deadline, subject to further detail being provided.

Jacquie Ross, CCDT chair, was also quoted. She said: "It is true that we suffered a huge set-back some weeks ago, when it looked as though we were losing the funding for the slipway. This could have brought the CCDT to its knees.

"But the issue has now been addressed and we are working well with the different agencies, particularly the Highland Council and HIE. We all want to deliver this vital project. If we don't, Cromarty will lose its ferry. It is as simple as that."

As a result of the above, CCDT directors and members of the Nigg and Shandwick Community Council (our slipway partners), are meeting representatives of the Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and SSE's Beatrice Fund monthly.

At the last meeting we were able to report that the Director of Aberdeen University's Lighthouse Field Station in Cromarty, had made contact to say that the University would be making a contribution of £5,000 towards the slipways project.

Professor Paul Thompson wrote saying "We really appreciate these efforts, as access to the slip had

underpinned so much of the research and training work that the University has conducted from the Field Station over the last 30 years. In particular, the monitoring work that we currently carry out for Scottish Natural Heritage and the Moray Firth Windfarm developers is dependent on us being able to launch and recover our research vessel when weather conditions are suitable, allowing us to undertake surveys of the protected bottlenose dolphins with in the Special Area of Conservation.”

“Given the continued importance of this facility for our ongoing work, I would like to offer the Cromarty slip project £5k from strategic reserves available for equipment and infrastructure to support future research activities.

“I hope this goes some small way towards meeting your need for match funding for this project.”

Project Progress

Within the next week or so CCDT hopes to submit to the Highland Council, a planning application to establish its campsite with facilities for motorhomes in the wooded area at Whitedykes. Our architect is putting the final touches to it.

We are now working with the CCDT’s lawyer to submit an official bid of £1 for the land at Whitedykes, conditional on planning permission for the motorhome site being granted. We have successfully applied to Highlands and Islands Enterprise for funding to cover the legal costs associated with this Community Asset Transfer.

Similar progress has been made on the slipways, and CCDT’s consulting engineers, will soon submit applications for planning consents and a marine licence.

Thrift Shop and the Barn

Meanwhile the Thrift Shop is having a well-earned rest till next year and we're still waiting on architect ideas for the Barn - we're getting these for free, so can't push too hard!!

The Thrift Shop raffle will be drawn in the Cromarty Stores at 1.30pm on Saturday 30th November. Tickets can still be purchased.

A Decade Of Service



Father Mel and the piperlings outside the Old Brewery.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Rev'd Canon Mel Langille taking his post as the priest overseeing the three Black Isle Charge churches, St Regulus' in Cromarty, St Andrew's in Fortrose and St John's in Arpafeelie.

As a surprise, last Sunday 24th November, the time of the service at St Regulus' in Cromarty was changed to allow the congregation and friends to attend a lunch straight afterwards. Little did Fr Mel realise that it was also to celebrate his milestone achievement and on exiting the church after the service, he was met with a group of his own *piperlings*, as he calls them, and their families. Fr Mel, an accomplished player of the bagpipes, runs the weekly chanter classes in Cromarty which have developed a whole series of budding pipers. Many of them turned out to lead a procession from St Regulus' to the Old Brewery where he was presented with a bottle of fine malt whisky and treated to an excellent lunch!

A busy man who is also Chaplain to the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Mel finds time to throw himself into the whole communities that he serves, supporting the sick and needy, lending an ear to those who need it and generally supporting everything he can outwith the demands of his role. He is much loved and admired by his congregations and those who know him outside of the church.

Harbour Matters

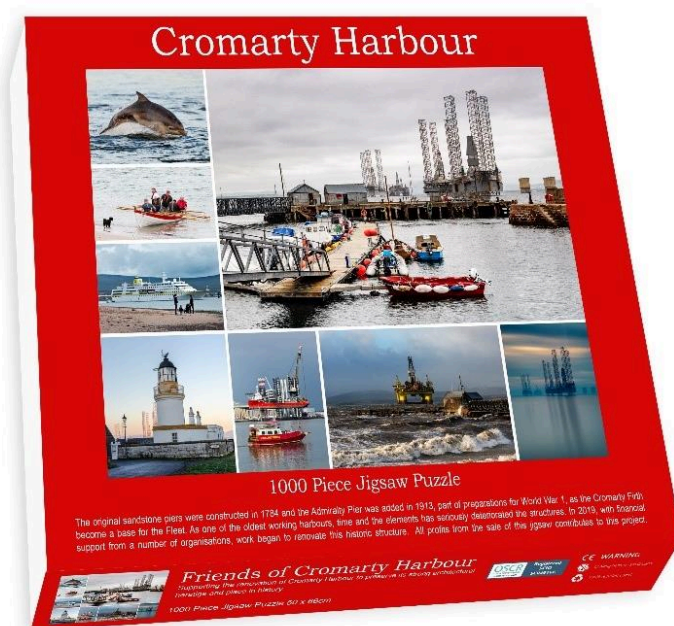
Colin Dickie writes:

'Work continues on the renovations to the harbour. With the scaffolding down you can now see the repaired supports. Those that aren't repaired aren't performing a support function and will soon be covered by the new fendering, which is currently parked on the grass. The base for the sheds is now down which will also act as a strengthening aid for the decking underneath in that area. Work will continue for a few months yet.

Whilst we have been very fortunate to have a number of agencies and organisations helping us with the funding of the renovation we have also been doing things ourselves, something funders like to see.

Our most recent event, held two weeks ago, was a seafood dinner in Sutor Creek which raised over £3,600 for our charity 'Friends of Cromarty Harbour'. Supplementing the money raised through an auction and raffle we were especially grateful to Sutor Creek for topping us up handsomely. This will allow us to "buy the odd brick or two".

But fundraising doesn't stop; at breakneck speed we have made a special jigsaw available for purchase. We have a small number coming into stock for Christmas....present I hear you say?'



A large (50 x 66 cm) 1,000-piece jigsaw. Photographs by award winning local resident David Kent. Available at **£24.99** with delivery expected before Christmas. Local delivery is free. **All net profits go to 'Friends of Cromarty Harbour'**.

More Awards For Cromarty Businesses

Congratulations to Graham and Phoebe Fox - and all who work at Sutor Creek - for winning the prestigious Inverness Business Award for Best Fine Dining. The awards ceremony, held on Sunday 24th November at the Drumossie Hotel, celebrated achievements from across the business community. Given that Sutor Creek isn't even in Inverness, plus the number of eating establishments there are in the city, this is quite an accolade. And, as we all know, justly deserved.



Phoebe writes:

'A huge thanks to our customers for nominating us and to our team who work so hard to make Sutor Creek what it is!

Christmas Pizza

Our Christmas Pizza is now on the menu! Who can resist our annual favourite special of Turkey dinner on a pizza!! Available now through to December 23rd.

Christmas Parties

We are offering our Christmas Menu throughout December to parties of 6 or more. Join friends, family or work colleagues for a traditional Christmas meal accompanied by a glass of bubbly and Christmas Crackers. Reservations required.

Sutor Creek is open until December 23rd then closed 24th, 25th, 26th. Open then until the 31st of December. Reservations recommended during the festive period! 01381 600 855 or www.sutorcreek.co.uk

Calluna

We are open daily from 10-5pm throughout December. New items in store include a lovely selection of gifts for men including jumpers, fleeces & long sleeve T-shirts; bamboo socks and books. New in women's clothing include beautiful rose gold pleated skirts, sparkly star tops and cashmere jumpers. We also stock a lovely selection of gloves, scarves, hats, bags and jewellery.

During December we are happy to open Calluna in the evenings by prior appointment. Just phone us on 01381 600 464 or message us through Facebook.'

Christmas Market At The Old Brewery

Friday 29th (6.00-8.00pm), Saturday 30th Nov & Sunday 1st Dec (10.30am-4.00pm) sees the ever-popular festive market at Old Brewery. Crack your Christmas shopping in one fell swoop! Attractive, unique, quality crafts and goodies galore in a cosy, festive environment. There'll be stalls selling everything from textiles, wooden items, cards and books to Christmas decorations, jewellery, teas and clothes! Complimentary mulled wine, mince pies and carols courtesy of Black Isle Acappella on the Friday evening.

Yarn Club meets at West Church Hall on Sunday 1st December - 2-4pm. All welcome. Knit yourself some winter warmers. And be sociable while you're about it!

The Big Christmas Lights Switch On

Cromarty Christmas Lights will be switched on by the Cromarty Toddler Group on Tuesday 3rd December at 6pm. Cromarty Primary School will sing their Christmas Carols and refreshments will be served. Hope you can join us!

Cromarty Film Festival - 6-8 December

Really strong ticket sales this year means that about 3/4 of our Film Festival tickets are already sold with a few shows including the finale sold out. However, there are still some tickets left for most movies so if you have not done so already have a look at the programme - available in various locations around Cromarty and online at cromartyfilmfestival.org - and buy your tickets direct from us in the library on the Tuesday evening before the Festival, online through Eden Court or pop along to the Festival Hub at Old Brewery from 5pm on 6 December.

Festival Fringe

This year's Film Festival has its own Fringe event in the form of an amazing display of imaginative, incredibly detailed models by Mark Stephens called "Spaceships from the Rubbish Dump". On at the Hugh Miller Institute 10am to 5pm Friday 6 December to Sunday 8 December. The exhibition is FREE to all so pop in between movies.

The Cromarty Cinema

The internal fit out of the cinema will continue through December and we are still targeting a late January 2020 opening - date to be confirmed. We will be selling Cinema Friend Memberships (which will give a discount on the ticket price and other benefits) plus Vouchers for the

Cinema from the date of the Film Festival onwards - so that is Christmas neatly sorted.

You can buy Cinema Friend Memberships plus Cinema Vouchers at the Festival Hub in the Old Brewery from 6th December. If you want your name on a star in the cinema - we have a limited number of sponsorship opportunities left priced at £40 each.

Fraser Mackenzie - dfrasermackenzie@gmail.com - 07414 855582

JV of Cromarty - silver jewellery

Janie will be opening her studio on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th December

11:00 - 12:30 and 15:00 - 18:00 (also available by appointment)

Big Film Festival Sale. 20% off beautiful, hand-crafted silver jewellery. Look for the banners on Bank Street.

Christingle Returns to Cromarty

Carsten Flieger writes:

'Cromarty Sunday Club meets for the last time this year on 8 December at 3.30pm in the West Church.

For the first time in many years we will again celebrate a Christingle service in Cromarty!

All local children with their families are invited to make their own Christingles (material will be supplied), listen to the story of St. Nicholas and sing cheerful songs of the season - come and help shine a light on Advent.

Of course there will be homebaking, juice and tea/coffee. Collection for our friend Alvio, the Sunday Club's 9-year-old sponsored child in Albania.'

Shoebox Appeal

12 girls and boys from Cromarty Primary school wrapped and filled a shoebox each for the yearly Blythwood Christmas shoebox appeal. The children packed items with basics like toothpaste, toothbrush, pencils, hat, scarf, gloves and sweets. 155 in total went from our sorting station in the West Church and we are very grateful to all who contributed items, donated money or knitted hats and scarves. Our boxes go to Romania and I know the people there will be thrilled with their Christmas boxes. A big THANK YOU to children and adults from Blythwood and the ladies in Cromarty who sort and pack the boxes.

P Thompson

Community Market

From Louisa Garratt:

'Our final community market of 2019 takes place on Saturday 14th December. It'll be a busy market, a place to get Christmas supplies, presents, stocking fillers etc.

A wide range of foods will be on offer: fish, fresh meat, vegetables, preserves, honey, coffee, vegan fudge chocolate, herbal tea - all locally produced. Also handmade wooden toys, eco soaps, plants, jewellery, baby/kids clothes, cards & prints, crafts, so much on offer!

Young people from Cromarty have a table selling homemade Christmas decorations and taking Christmas tree orders.

Lunches will be catered for by Day 1, a child & youth mentoring charity based in the Highlands. Please come and support this charity who do some fabulous work.

We will have a community market Christmas raffle. Tickets and the draw will all happen on the day.

Reminder to everyone there is no January market. The next one will be February 22nd 2020.'

Tuesday Talks

Alan Rycroft writes:

'Hugh Miller's Museum is currently closed for the winter, but we are presenting a series of informal weekly talks for (predominantly local) audiences, scheduled for Tuesday mornings, commencing at 10am, and lasting for up to around one hour. The talks are on a wide variety of subjects that we believe might be of interest to our visitors, and we have engaged speakers to deliver/lead the discussions. It is our intention to continue the talks throughout our closed season, with suitable breaks during the festive period.

There is an admission charge of £3 per person, which includes tea/coffee and cake.

We have currently scheduled talks every Tuesday until 17th December, and further talks will be arranged, and publicised, for 2020, probably commencing on Tuesday 14th January 2020.'

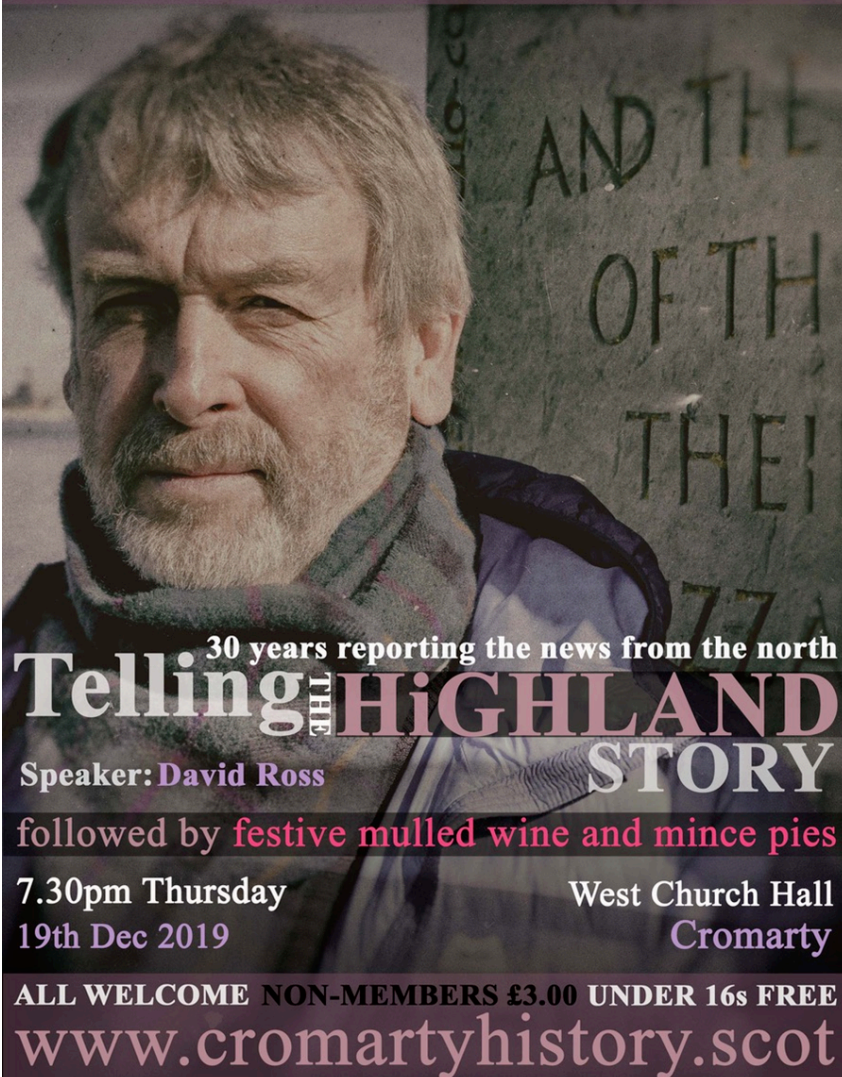
The December talks are as follows:-

3rd December: GARDEN PLANTS FOR SCOTLAND
Speaker: Raoul Curtis-Machin

10th December: NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND
BIG PROJECTS Speaker: Jo Mould

17th December: A BOBBY ON THE BEAT AND BEYOND
1970s/80s Speaker: Alan Rycroft

CROMARTY HISTORY SOCIETY & Friends of Cromarty Courthouse



30 years reporting the news from the north

Telling THE HIGHLAND STORY

Speaker: **David Ross**

followed by festive mulled wine and mince pies

7.30pm Thursday
19th Dec 2019

West Church Hall
Cromarty

ALL WELCOME NON-MEMBERS £3.00 UNDER 16s FREE

www.cromartyhistory.scot

The Hugh Miller Writing Competition

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!

The competition is open for entries (closing date 15 March 2020). Go on... write about the beautiful landscape that surrounds us! www.scottishgeology.com

Library News

From Lyn Anderson:

'The library is currently hosting the Tarradale Through Time Exhibition until 30th December.

Join us for our first board games afternoon on **Tuesday 10th December** from 2.30-4.30pm. We have a range of board games available but feel free to bring along a game of your choice. Hope to see you there!'

The Return of Blackhaven

Theo Seller writes:

'Team Blackhaven has lately re-assembled, like the superheroes we are, in what we are now calling the “shedsorrystudio” here in Cromarty, to record a new series of Blackhaven nonsense, entitled “The Radio Blackhaven News and Chat Show.”

It's a slight departure from our murderous Blackhaven narratives – though we hope to produce more of those too in due course. I'm not saying there won't be horrible murders in any episode of Radio Blackhaven – but it's more about the bonkers characters, the banter, and the little dramas of life in that very strange Highland village.

Anyway, we are happy to say that all our new equipment actually worked, nothing caught fire, and we managed to get three episodes in the can by the end of our scheduled time. So now that we have proved we can do the show right here and using our own kit, we might carry on and keep doing it. After all it keeps us off the streets.

The first three episodes feature Seymour Strangely as the radio host, assisted by Doris Macallan, and hindered by Tufty MacNicol. Popping in and out of the Radio Blackhaven shedsorrystudio in the first series are Brigitta Bovril, The Reverend Leviticus, Inspector Macyard, Fergus Lamentable, Dr Leckie, Shona MacBride, Auld Foggerty and the Womens Institute. There will be Jamgate.

All we have to do now is edit it, add in the FX and so on, and publish it for your tender ears. So, watch the skies,

dear listener. You have been warned.'



Cast members (l to r): Ginny Hourston, Julie Price, Marjorie Paterson, Theo Seller and Jon Palmer recording in a secret location somewhere in Cromarty.

And Finally...

We wish to extend warm wishes to one and all this festive season. Regardless of faith or belief it is a time to look out for one another, and to spread joy and support through the dark times!

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

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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