

Quite a lot to get through this month.

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## Nautical News

### Ferry Extends The Season

Highland Ferries have announced they will start the Cromarty-Nigg service on May 1st this year - a month earlier than previous years. The shops and eateries in Cromarty have been urging for this for a long time. In a recent survey 50% stated that the ferry had a 'significant impact' on their business with a further 25% saying it was 'essential'. In recent years many folk from the north have started coming as foot passengers, seeing it as a quick and pleasurable way to spend a day in Cromarty. Black Isle residents should also be aware that a bus service operates from Nigg to Tain when the ferry is running and this makes for an interesting excursion without need for a car.

### Dredging To Harbour Complete

The recent weeks of dredging in the harbour, although getting off to a much later than anticipated start, have finally been completed.

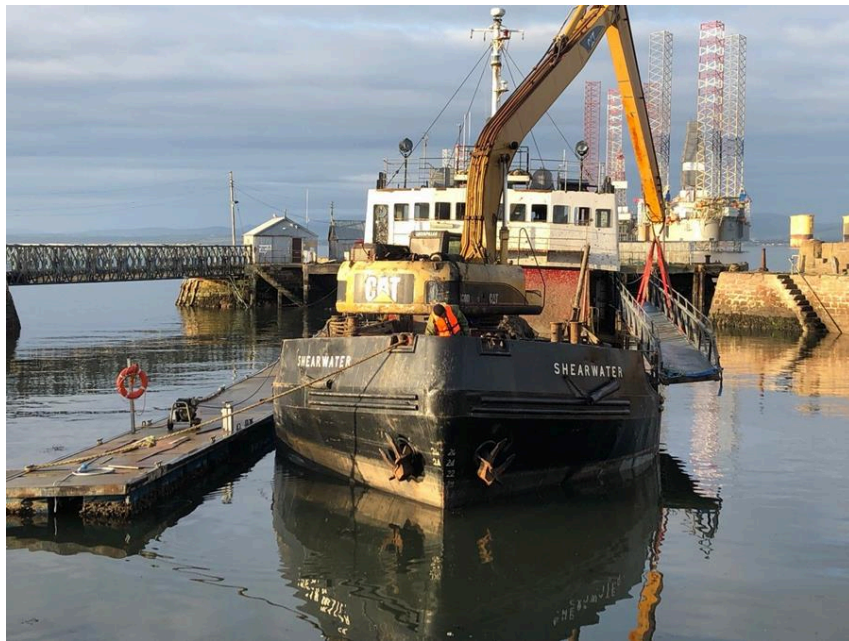
Approx. 3000 m<sup>3</sup> of dredged material was removed from the harbour, rather more than was anticipated and which has been deposited in the designated dumping ground between the Sutor. The Harbour Trust is very grateful to the folk from the Aberdeen University Marine Research Team who assisted in monitoring marine mammal activity during the dredge to minimise disruption.

In addition to the dredging, the pontoon mooring chains have been replaced and the works will now allow much safer and deeper access to the harbour, even at lower tides. The Trust would like to thank everyone for their

patience during the disruption caused by having such a large vessel in the harbour, and they look forward to everyone reaping the benefits of the work done. Existing berth-holders wishing to make use of the pontoon again this year should email their interest soonest to [info@cromartyharbour.org](mailto:info@cromartyharbour.org). It is especially important to know early if you do not intend to take up your option to renew so that we can offer the space out to those on our waiting list.

Meanwhile, further work continues submitting funding bids to a variety of sources and working with consultant engineers Wallace Stone to prepare designs and contracts for the essential repairs works urgently need to the Smeaton Mole and Inner Admiralty Pier. Listed Building Consent has been obtained for all the proposed works subject to the fine detail of conditions being agreed with Highland Council and Historic Environment Scotland and Pat Hayes, secretary of the Harbour Trust said "I must say that the staff of both organisations have been incredibly helpful and supportive. We now have tenders in for the stone work to the Smeaton Mole (under the bridge) and as soon as we have the sign off from the Highland Council Conservation Officer for the detail of the work, we hope to award the contract and start the repairs by the end of March. We have funding in place for this thanks to grants from Marine Scotland, the SSE Sustainable Communities Fund and, subject to final confirmation, Highlands and Islands Enterprise."

Further works to the concrete piers and decks are dependent on other funding bids. The Trust expects these works, including those covered by the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) and SSE Sustainable Communities Fund, to cost upwards of £645,000 of which funding of just over £293,000 has been secured to date. Following this, there will have to be wider stone work repairs to the North (East) and West Piers before tackling the decaying structure that is the Outer Admiralty Pier.



The MV Shearwater, which completed the dredging, is seen here about to replace the walkway to the pontoons which were removed during the operations. Image: Jeremy Price

## Cromarty Firth Complaints

If you have a complaint or question about activities taking place in the waters of the Firth, or on Port-owned facilities (Invergordon Service Base and the Saltburn Pier), they should be made directly to Joanne Allday, telephone 01349 852308 or [email](mailto:joanne.allday@port.com). It is also possible to report issues to Environmental Health via the Highland Council website. In all matters it would be useful to copy the Community Council in to any correspondence so they can keep track of the complaints: [d.brawn557@btinternet.com](mailto:d.brawn557@btinternet.com)

## Ferry Slipways Update

As we reported last month the application submitted by Cromarty Community Development Trust made it through to round two of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) awards programme.

This could see up to £400,000 being invested in Cromarty, split between two elements of the project. These are: the restoration of the slipways to secure the long-term future of the ferry; and the establishment of a modest site for the motorhomes, which have been using the Links without any management or charge.

Two sites were being explored for this. The first was at the western end of the Links. This has proved problematic with the cinema development being approved.

The second was at Whitedykes which is owned by the Highland Council. That means control of the site could be passed to the CCDT under the new Community Empowerment Act. But considerable amounts of spoil were deposited there during the extension to the Primary School. Appeals to the Highland Council to remove the material seem unlikely to succeed.

Despite this, the CCDT's application for the second round of the RTIF awards (deadline January 31st) is based on this area of ground. An initial planning application has now been submitted to the Highland Council as planning authority.

The cost of removing the spoil may well prove too much for the council, however, and the CCDT may not be able to afford to undertake other preparatory remedial work. The directors have therefore identified another small patch of Highland Council-owned land very close to the Whitedykes site. It lies to the west and north of the industrial units on the western periphery of Cromarty on the Jemimaville road. We are now exploring with the council the feasibility of this becoming our fall-back option.



The site at Whitedykes showing how much work needs to be done.



The alternative site beyond the industrial estate on the Jemimaville Road.

## Forthcoming Attractions?

South Sutor

As highlighted in a recent Press & Journal article Historic Environment Scotland are close to declaring the old military base on South Sutor a 'monument of national importance'. If/when this comes to pass it will, presumably, pave the way for a fund-raising strategy to enable the site to be opened up to the public as a visitor attraction. If appropriately handled this could be a very exciting development and would add another dimension to the extraordinary range of attractions in and around Cromarty. It would undoubtedly increase the number of visitors to the area, so there's lots to consider. It will be interesting to see at what point, and in what ways, the community has an opportunity to contribute to a plan. Watch this space!

## Townlands Barn Latest

David Ross writes: 'One of the most important meetings in the short life of Cromarty Community Development Trust (CCDT) will be held in the coming weeks. On Sunday February 10th the CCDT will host an open meeting in the West Church Hall at 2.30pm. It is to be a 'brainstorming' session to discuss the options for the future use of Townlands Barn.

The CCDT was specifically established to save the oldest building in Cromarty, and find the most appropriate future use for it. Should it just be conserved or should it have a new role in the life of the community? There are many possibilities.

We would like to hear all your ideas. We are open to whatever weird, wacky and creative suggestions people want to make.

We will also have to work out how we are going to pay for whatever work is needed. We have learnt from a visit made to the Muir of Ord Hub by two of the CCDT's directors, that whatever use is finally agreed, it needs to be self-sustaining financially after the initial funding period. This is usually three years. Ideas for the barn need to reflect this, otherwise they won't qualify for crucial financial support.

So please come along and tell us what you think. The meeting will be open to all, not just members of the CCDT. Any wishing to join or rejoin, however, will be able,

to do so at the meeting – still great value at £1 a year. To contact CCDT email [ccdt-main@googlegroups.com](mailto:ccdt-main@googlegroups.com) Or speak to one of the directors: David Fraser; Estelle Quick; Jacquie Ross; Sheila Currie; David Ross; Greg Fullarton; Nigel Shapcott; and Ronald Young.'



## Keeping Mind And Body Active... and Sustained

### [Cycling Without Age Trikes Are Arriving!](#)

Cromarty Care Project are looking for volunteer pilots (peddlers? - Ed). If this could be you come along to the demonstration and training on Wednesday 6th February. Time 11:30-13:30 West Church Hall, Cromarty

Please contact Shirley Matheson if you are attending: 600451 or via [Cycling Without Age Cromarty](#) on Facebook

If you are interested but cannot attend this session, please let Shirley know. Further training will be available in the future.

### [Half Term Fun With Cromarty Youth Café](#)

EQ Morning: Bubble Ball Football, Nerf Wars, and much more. Tuesday February 19th. Victoria Hall, £2 refreshments.

Don't forget the regular Fun weekly session on a Monday night: 4pm – 6pm for P1-P7, 6pm – 8pm for S1+

Indoor Rowing: Monday nights: 4pm – 5pm for P6-P7 or  
5pm – 6pm for S1+

## What's this Mindfulness all about?

Maggie Dove writes:

'Many of us develop habits that distract us from NOW by dwelling on problems or worrying about the future. Mindfulness is about focusing much more on what is going on in the present moment enabling us to lead happier, calmer lives. We follow the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh, Thay, a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk whose teachings invite us to try to be aware in all aspects of our lives. His definition of mindfulness “being 100% aware in the present moment”

We have a group in Cromarty which meets in the East church hall at the end of Church st on Monday evenings 7.30 – 9.30pm. We do mindful sitting, walking, speaking and listening, then have an optional cup of tea and discussion.

We have quarterly days of mindfulness in various parts of the Highlands.

All welcome from any religion or none.'

Further details contact Maggie Dove on 01381 610212 or [maggiedove29@gmail.com](mailto:maggiedove29@gmail.com)

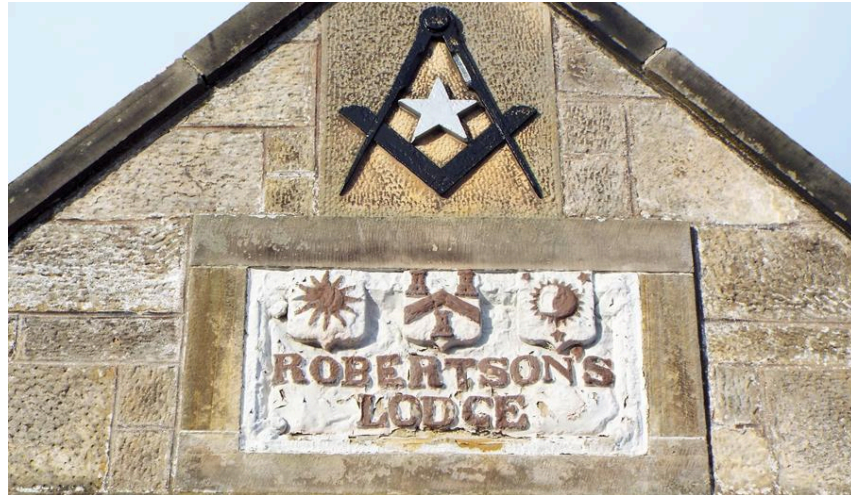
## History Society Latest

The next meeting of the Cromarty History Society will be on Thursday 21 February, when we continue our popular occasional programme of looking back at Cromarty's houses and their inhabitants.

This month Fran Tilbrook will tell us about the results of her research into her former home, “Rosenberg: from factor's house to The Factor's House – a journey through 170 years”. Not to be missed!

Visitors are always welcome and the meeting takes place, as usual, in the West Church Hall, Cromarty. Our website is [www.cromartyhistory.scot](http://www.cromartyhistory.scot)





## Cromarty Masonic Lodge

Robertson's Lodge No. 134, located in Duke Street, holds meetings on the third Wednesday of the month from September to April.

The Lodge always looks forward to welcoming back previous members and for masonic visitors to the Lodge.

There is a good amount of history regarding this old Lodge, in order to expand on our knowledge we would appreciate borrowing, for scanning or reproducing, any such photographs or documents that people have. They will, of course, be returned to their owners, unless donated.

Contact from previous members, at home or abroad, can be done through contacting the Lodge Secretary, Peter Ratcliffe, at: [secretary@robertsonslodge.org.uk](mailto:secretary@robertsonslodge.org.uk)

## Cromarty Community Markets 2019

Sheila Currie writes: 'The monthly Community Markets start again in February at Victoria Hall. Come along on Saturday 9th February from 11am to 2pm for all your fresh meat, fish, veg, eggs, plants, crafts, Indian snacks, cards, gifts etc.- plus the ever-popular soup and cake lunches.

It's always on the second Saturday of every month. The markets are organised by Transition Black Isle to support local producers and help make a better Black Isle. Check out the other markets in Fortrose, Culbokie and North

Kessock too. There's a TBI stall, so do please speak to us and find out more about what TBI does and why.'

## Sutor Creek Specials

### CURRY NIGHTS AT THE CREEK

Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd February. Heat up your winter with Curry at The Creek! Mild, medium and hot curries (meat and vegetarian) available with a wonderful selection of authentic side dishes and desserts.

### VALENTINE'S DINNER

Thursday 14th February. Treat your loved one to a romantic dinner at Sutor Creek. Reservations available 6-8.30pm.

BUY ONE WOOD-FIRED PIZZA AND GET ONE 1/2 PRICE!!

We have a special on our wood-fired pizzas for take-away until January 31st. Buy one pizza and get one 1/2 price! For a full list of available pizzas please visit our website at [www.sutorcreek.co.uk](http://www.sutorcreek.co.uk) To order phone 01381 600 855.

All events can be booked through our online booking system on our website or send me an email!

## A Packed Programme From Cromarty Arts Trust

CLAUDE BOURBON – 9 February, The Stables  
Ready for a unique and talented take on a wide range of musical traditions? Claude Bourbon is known throughout Europe and America for amazing guitar performance that take blues, Spanish and Middle Eastern stylings into uncharted territories. "A breath-taking acoustic fusion... from a stunning guitar virtuoso." [www.claudebourbon.org](http://www.claudebourbon.org)

BEGINNERS SEWING WEEKEND – 23 & 24 February, repeated 25 & 26 May, Old Brewery. 10.00 – 16.30  
Designed for complete beginners or for those who have not sewn in a long time. In this class you will be guided by tutor, Rebecca Barbour, through the basics of your sewing machine. Learn how to draft a pattern, cut fabric and

many other skills, giving you the confidence to do your own projects at home. Within this course you will make a lined tote bag, zippered pouch and a cushion cover to take home. All materials provided. Accommodation available in the Old Brewery.

£110 for two days. Bring a packed lunch (and sewing machine if you have one).



And coming up in early March...

MIXED MEDIA MANDALAS – 2 March, the Stables.

10.00 – 16.30

Join our international artist-in-residence, R.L. Gibson, in making mandala variations using watercolour and embroidery. Learn how these traditional sacred circles of meditation can serve to help focus your creative energy and use colour and mark-making as a tool of personal discovery. And accidentally learn a little about painting and embroidery whilst having fun! Suitable for all abilities. £55. Tea/coffee provided; bring packed lunch.

[www.rlgibson.com](http://www.rlgibson.com)

ANDY MCTAGGART & LAURA MACINTOSH – 3 March, the Stables. 16.00 (doors from 15.30)

Baritone Andrew McTaggart and pianist Laura MacIntosh will perform a programme of English song including Finzi's 'Earth and Air and Rain' and music by Howells, Britten and arrangements by Derek Clark. Andrew will be known to many in Cromarty either through his performances in Inverness and Strathpeffer with Opera Bohemia at Gianni Schicchi and Falstaff or with Cromarty Youth Opera as Noye in the 'Noyes Fludde'.

£13 (£11 conc; school children go free!) Purchase in advance: [web](tel:01381600354) 01381 600354 or pay on the door. Tea/coffee available.

The Cromarty Arts Trust has a packed programme of courses, workshops, live music of all genres, events and exhibitions throughout 2019. You can pick up a copy of the printed Events Programme from mid-February but why not browse the [website](#) today and book your tickets early!

## Fill Your Diaries With What's Coming In The Year Ahead

### Friends of Hugh Miller

Martin Gostwick writes: 'We are looking forward to a busy Spring. We will be participating at a "Societies Day" event at the Dippy on Tour exhibition at Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow, on 16th February, and are putting on our own associated Natural History Adventure Day at the Old Brewery here in Cromarty on Sunday, 7th April.

The day before that, 6th April, we will host, also at The Brewery, a public talk by 'North Words' editor Kenny Taylor on Highland Writing Today, and the launch of an anthology of writings inspired by Hugh Miller, 'Conversations in Stone'.

More details on these events in your next bulletin.

### Cromarty Open Studios

This year Cromarty Open Studios will be on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd June. Artists around the town will open up their working spaces and welcome folk from far and near. Pop the date in your diary!

### Floral Exhibition and Open Gardens

This year's floral and art exhibition in East Church will start Saturday 15th June and continue for a week. Open Gardens is the following weekend - 22nd/23rd June



The Police House garden will be participating once again but let's hope the temperature's a degree or two warmer come June!

## Speaking Of Which, Finally... A Call For Volunteers

The Cromarty Gritter runs on a voluntary basis and we are short of volunteers. If you are interested in helping out please let me know: [nigel.shapcott@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.shapcott@gmail.com) or 600760. We also have a 'short' video to familiarise people with the gritter which can be seen [here](#). It stars Duncan who you may have seen around town and who is a leading light in the organisation and the chief trainer.

You need to have a driving licence, to be over 18 years old, (retirees welcome) and to complete a 45 minutes training session. Each gritting session is about an hour and a half and always has two people involved- one for reaching those hard to reach areas and the driver. Again, please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you, Nige'

We trust 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 The Cheese House

Forward

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