

Cape Wrath Range

Cape wrath range including Garvie island will be active with various combinations of air bombardment, naval gunfire support and helicopter operations during the following dates: 06 may, 08:00 to 15:00, 19 to 23 may, times 09:00 to 19:00 27 to 30 may 2008, times 09:00 to 19:00. When the range is active, red flags will be displayed and sentries positioned on the u70 road. All efforts will be made to keep the u70 road open. However due to the nature of some practices and in the interest of public safety, closure may be necessary. Access advice can be sought from the sentries, who will be in contact with the range officer conducting the firing, or by contacting the freephone number. However, whatever the nature of the practice, under no circumstances is any person to leave the road or proceed anywhere onto the land, particularly the land north of the road within the range area, when the red flags are flying. For further information on the opening and closing of the road and military activity telephone the range freephone number 0800 833300.

DURNES PUBLISHERS LAUNCH BOOK ABOUT CAPE WRATH

Attached photograph of four generations of David Hird's family, taken at the book launch of "A Light in the Wilderness" at Loch Croispol Bookshop, Restaurant & Gallery. The names, from left to right, are: Emma, Jackie, Rachel, Harry (pointing), David, Ashleigh, Nic and Doreen. Relationships: Emma, Ashleigh, and Harry: David's grandchildren. Jackie: his daughter in law. Nic: his son. Rachel: his wife. Doreen: his mother in law.



Durness based publishers; Balnakeil Press – owned by Kevin Crowe and Simon Long who also run Loch Croispol Bookshop, Restaurant & Gallery – has published a long awaited history of Cape Wrath: “A Light in the Wilderness” by David M. Hird. The book was launched on Friday 16th May at Loch Croispol Bookshop. Among the many people present was four generations of David’s family. Since its publication almost two hundred copies have been sold, and the book has been ordered online by people from as far afield as Australia and America. David, who used to work in local government in Yorkshire, now lives in Brora with his wife Rachel, and during the summer months he drives the minibus that takes people to the lighthouse at Cape Wrath. He spent four years researching and writing the book, which is the first comprehensive work on the most north westerly point of the mainland.

The book covers the Cape’s geology, fauna and flora, climate, delicate ecology, history of human habitation and accounts of military activity. But above all it is a history of the building and maintaining of the lighthouse, the road to the light, and how it became a tourist attraction, and tells of the work of ordinary men and women in ensuring that access to the wilderness continues.

Kevin Crowe said: “When David approached me two years ago with his manuscript, I said we would love to publish it. In the nine years we have been running the bookshop, the single most common request from

visitors has been a book about Cape Wrath. Not only can we now meet that request, but we can do so knowing that the book is accurate, comprehensive and entertaining.” Copies of the book are available from Loch Croispol Bookshop in Durness and online from the shop’s website: www.scottish-books.net . The book should also be available from other bookshops in the area.

Cape Wrath Challenge

The 2008 Cape Wrath challenge has been regarded as another great success. The event now wholly organised by the local committee and supported by many volunteers from the Durness Community has brought runners from all over the country. Runners participate at their own level. The Cape Wrath Challenge is unique in a few respects, the event offers a festival week of running, with two different lengths of run on every occasion and while the marathon is run by committed marathon runners as individuals the event offers two, three and five person relay teams giving an opportunity for participation at all levels. The final challenge involves the ferry crossing over the Kyle of Durness and runners are taken to the most north westerly tip of mainland Britain. During the week the event also includes a half marathon, 10K, hill run, fell run, target zero beach fun run.

This year saw a change in race Director, Tony Jackson took over the responsible position from Lucy Mackay. Lucy had been director for 3 years since the community took total control of the event and retired this year from her full time teaching post and handed over the reigns of the Challenge. Tony moved to Durness with his family after visiting to compete in the Cape Wrath Challenges. He is one of 3 families to have made this commitment because of the Challenges.

The social activities were all well attended from a visit to Keodale farm, clay pidgin shooting; country made wine tasting, Scottish country dancing, ranger walks and beach BBQ. The funds raised at the latter were donated to the charity that was nominated by Barry Copeland, a marathon runner that tragically lost his wife and children in a car accident in Montrose earlier in the year.

A selection of comments from the visitor’s book sums up the runners’ visits but the whole book is certainly worth a read.

“We missed last year but we came back for 2008 and realised that this place Durness has an attraction that cannot be described We have booked for next year” Diane and Harry Collins Norwich

It is a unique and wonderful week Ron Gibbs

4th Year at the event and it gets better and better Craig Carscadden

The real pleasure has been the fabulous hospitality of the local people the warmth and understanding and the tremendous camaraderie between the competitors. The event is truly unique I'm looking forward to next year already Alan Davies.

My first Cape Wrath Challenge and lived up to every expectation A fantastic week Nigel Bush

A very special experience, the people of Durness have given a memorable occasion. John and Shona Brown Somerset.

Please don't make us leave! What a great week Thanks for the great welcome and fantastic runs Sean and Carry Murphy, Cambridgeshire.

Where in the world is there an event like this? – There isn't and we love it .It goes from strength to strength Sue and Richard Roberts.

This year the courses had been measured accurately by Scottish Athletics and instead of a loop around the village square to make the correct distance the extra was added at the end. This meant the runners ran passed the hall and were looped about 200 metres further on and returned to the finish, a bit of a psychological shock!

BBC TV adventure programme spent two days in Durness and filmed the marathon for broadcast later in the year. This event, the third full week in May, has become a well established occasion on the running and Durness calendar bringing a welcomed economic boost at the start of the visitor season. Along with some local businesses the event has had three main backers since its inception and 2008 brought a new sponsor John Walker a sports therapist from Birmingham. Having sponsorship allows entry costs, which pay for the event itself to be kept to a minimum but allows development and investment for improvement. The event is being recognised as a good opportunity to be involved in and the Challenge committee were very disappointed when the application was turned down to the Year of Homecoming through Visit Scotland for support as a themed event. The week of festivities, running interspersed with a host of social events, is concluded on the Saturday evening with a buffet dance of banquet proportions all prepared by a band of local ladies. This has become as much a highlight as the running! This year the marathon and relays were able to be run on the Cape side after having to use a contingency last year due to bad weather conditions. There was little doubt that this would happen in 2008 when the sun shone and the weather throughout the week was perfect.

Although the emphasis on the event is participation not completion but the final night ceilidh is when there is prize giving for the marathon.

Fire on Cape Wrath

A Heath Fire on Cape Side on Monday which could be seen from Keodlale was still burning on Tuesday morning. The fire sent large plumes smoke from around Inshore. Military currently exercising said equipment set fire to the heather from tracer shots and became too dangerous to do anything about. Calls were made by local people to Faraid Head raising questions about the concern for bird life which quickly were unanswered. Mini bus operator Iris Mackay was told prior to the exercise there would be no scheduled mini bus operation this week. It was later agreed some excursions may be possible. RSPB and SNH were informed because of the lapwing population and a report has been made to the police.