

**Under the surface** – a project as part of ‘Sea Cromarty Sparkle’, Cromarty’s celebration of the ‘Year of Highland Culture 2007’

### **Report to the Moray Firth Partnership on progress with this project**

Project team – Peter Tilbrook, Ben Leyshon, John McNaught, George Brown

#### Introduction

The original objectives of the exhibition, in the grant application, were –

1. To explain to, and enthuse, people about the wildlife that exists, but which is rarely seen, in the sea that they live next to.
2. To catch the imagination of the ‘uninformed’ public, particularly the young, about the amazing living system/web of life inhabiting the watery world on their doorstep.
3. To help with the support of local communities, young and old, for the conservation of their local marine environment.

These remain the primary objectives, though the means of delivery have slightly changed and made more ambitious due to the award of a further £4000 grant from The Crown Estate.

As the exhibition is not due to be on display until 27 June 2007, there is still much work to be undertaken, but most materials have been purchased, most images obtained and a great deal of preparatory design work completed.

#### Current state of project

There are now two main components to deliver the project’s objectives, the main exhibit and a short film.

##### Exhibition –

Initially the exhibit was to be housed inside, using photo images and text on display boards, but the project team quickly decided on the more innovative approach of mounting the display outside. The great advantage of this being that many more people will be exposed to it (including those who would not have been drawn into an internal display) and it will be accessible for viewing during all daylight hours.

This was possible because one of the project team (JM) had direct experience of the materials suitable for external display and the means of transferring onto them high quality and greatly enlarged images.

It was decided that 20 one metre square banners could be produced within the funding available and that these should be fixed to prominent walls around Cromarty, thus creating a trail. Much publicity for this exhibition would be given, through posters, a short film on the Cromarty website, fliers and media advertising, in the weeks before it starts. So, hopefully, visitors will come to Cromarty to see it. But as well as those who have prior knowledge, almost all of the many tourists who visit Cromarty in the summer would quickly be aware of the exhibition by seeing one or more of the banners. There will be various indications as to where the remaining banners can be viewed, including a leaflet. So, many individuals who

would not normally visit such a display on marine ecology, will be exposed to the pictures and the story associated with them.

Detail of banners –

Each banner will have a theme and consist of one or more spectacular underwater image and short text to illustrate it. The 20 themes are –

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Orientation
- 3 'Forests' (of kelp)
- 4 Soft bottom
- 5 Rocky bottom
- 6 Water column
- 7 'Flower' gardens (of sedentary colonial animals)
- 8 Living amongst the 'flowers'
- 9 Mobile bottom dwellers
- 10 Speed merchants (mainly fish)
- 11 Floaters (plankton)
- 12 Mammals
- 13 Birds
- 14 & 15 Man's larder
- 16 Fragile system
- 17 SAC
- 18 Viewing/enjoying (eg divers, snorkelers)
- 19 Wrecks
- 20 Sponsors and acknowledgements

Most images have now been sourced and much work has been completed on the layout and textual content of each banner.

#### MFP acknowledgements

It is proposed that all banners will have sponsors logos on and the last banner will be entirely devoted to thanking sponsors and others. The leaflet and all other publicity material will include reference to the MFP as one of the major sponsors.

#### After use

It is still intended that the exhibition will be put on display at other locations around the Moray Firth after its Cromarty month, but as yet no firm arrangements have been made as to how this will be achieved.

Peter Tilbrook  
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