

## Caithness Arts Week

Written by Neil MacDoanld, Professional Programme Manager, The Mill Theatre, Thurso

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In the past, Caithness Arts Week was something that held only a vague awareness for me. I knew it was going on but I really feel that it wasn't something that I could contribute to or become involved with. With hindsight I now see that I was very wrong. Due mainly to the 'gentle nudges' from the event co-ordinator, Linda Hutton, I quickly realised that I could make a significant contribution to the event.

To begin with I was able to organise **two public theatre workshops**. The first of these events was held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September and was aimed at adults in the age range from 18 to 80. A total of 15 adults attended including one a couple of years outside the upper age limit. The event was led by Louise Allan and Alasdair Satchel, two talented young actors currently working with Glasgow based Theatre Modo. The workshop covered a wide range of stagecraft including movement, diction and mime which proved to be of great benefit to those attending.

The second event, held on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September was a further public theatre workshop, this time for children and young adults aged from 8 to 18. By this time news of the success of the adult workshop had gone around and a total of 32 children attended. Louise and Alasdair taught the children a variety of Circus skills including Juggling, Plate Spinning and Stilt Walking. The youngsters really enjoyed their day and, like Oliver, asked for more. Funding permitting, I would really like to repeat these events on a regular basis.

Our final contribution to the week, on the evening of 23<sup>rd</sup> September, was a musical event presented as part of the Thurso Players Professional Programme which is funded, in part, by the Scottish Arts Council. **'Music at the Mill'** featuring **Sutherland and Son** was a great success with the duo playing to a capacity crowd of 84. While such events in the past have been successful, this is the first occasion that it has been necessary for me to place extra seats in the auditorium to cope with demand. The audience attended from all over the county and I am convinced that this was due in no small part to the extra publicity provided via the Caithness Arts Week Programme.

I look forward to our participation in the event during 2007 and wish you every success in your bid for adequate funding.

Neil also went on to say in his questionnaire : "I feel the campaign was very effective this year. It certainly made me more aware of what was going on. It's difficult to see how this could be improved upon without some more commitment from the organisations involved".

"Caithness Arts are to be congratulated on their superb efforts which made this Festival a great success. I hope the impetuous can be maintained and carried forward to next year's event".