

Wemyss Bay Village News

173rd Edition

February 2004

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No Plans for Catholic School

Following public consultation meetings on plans for a new non-denominational/Roman Catholic campus in Wemyss Bay Bernard McLeary, Director of Education reported to the Council stating, "It is recognised that there is a demand for denominational education in the area. However, considering the range of variables, including the total number of denominational pupils, numbers attending Inverkip, Wemyss Bay, St Ninian's and other primary schools, roll projections, parental choice and the changed phasing of new housing at the power station site, demand, as currently assessed, is insufficient to establish the need for distinct denominational provision."

Many villagers had objected to the idea of creating a Catholic school, saying that it could stir up religious bigotry in an area where children of all religious persuasions had attended the same primary.

Parish priest and education committee member, Father Tom Boyle had said that the proposed new Roman Catholic school should stand on its own and not share a campus with the existing non-denominational primary..

In his report, Mr McLeary said "There should be a review within five years to establish the extent, nature and location of demand for denominational primary education in Wemyss Bay.

Now it is recommended that the existing Wemyss Bay Primary should be refurbished and extended, and include pre-school education provision. The committee has also been asked approve additional teacher and support staff while improvements are carried out.

At the time of the Village News going to the printer the Council meeting to consider these recommendations was still going on.

WEA

The Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay branch of the W.E.A. meets every Wednesday from 9.45 – 11.45am in the reading room of Skelmorlie Community Centre. The programme for the next few weeks is as follows:

February 4th – "Clyde Steamers" by Iain Quinn *

11th – "The Life and Music of Paul Robeson" by Jim Service

18th – "Yukon Gold Rush" by Doug Stewart

25th – "Out of the Shadows" Heatherbank Museum by Alistair Ramage

March 3rd – "A Handful of Songs" Glyn Bragg *

10th – "A History of Royal Yachts" by Brian Searl

* Note: This is a change to the advertised programme.

Everyone is welcome to come along to any of the meetings. There is no joining or annual fee and the entrance cost is a very reasonable £1.80 (£1.50 for concessions). For further information please call Jenny McGee Tel: 521090

Inverkip and Wemyss Bay Community Council

Currently there are no representatives from Wemyss Bay on the Community Council following the reorganisation of Community Councils to a ward based system. Members of the previous Wemyss Bay Community Council resigned as they felt that the new system could not adequately represent the people of Wemyss Bay as the village has its own particular needs which may be quite different from those of people in Inverkip.

Should you have either an interest in joining Inverkip & Wemyss Bay Community Council or an issue that you think they may be able to help with, please contact either Innes Nelson (Chair) 520092 or Lorraine Marshall (Secretary) 520489.

Meetings are held monthly in The Rogues Room of Inverkip Hotel on the first Thursday of each month at 7.30pm, and all are welcome to attend.

Minutes of meetings can be viewed on the Inverkip.com Web site.

John McCallum

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have supported and helped us since the death of our son, John, in June 2001.

As we are sure you are aware, "John's Train" is now complete and in place. For us, this venture was the final "laying to rest" of John and it now seems appropriate to convey our thanks to the people of Wemyss Bay.

We would like to thank all those who visited our home after John died, for their kind words and their continuing friendship and support.

To the staff and customers of the Spar shop, our heartfelt thanks for their donations. The amount raised ensured a wonderful memorial stone for John in the shape of building blocks with pictures of his favourite toys on.

Thank you to all our neighbours for the memorial bench, placed in a position overlooking the playpark.

There have been innumerable kindnesses directed at all members of our family over the last 2 years, none of which were in any way insignificant. To these people, some of whom we do not know, we give our thanks.

Special thanks to Mrs Ritchie, staff and pupils at Wemyss Bay Primary, for their relentless fundraising in order to secure the purchase of "John's Train". Thanks also to the parents (some of who's employers contributed) for their patience and kindness – many of the children and parents knew neither John or his family.

Finally, our thanks to the community of Wemyss Bay as a whole. We were, and are still, overwhelmed by their reaction to our family's loss. Their genuine concern and understanding has given us an insight into true community spirit and has given us the strength that has enabled our family to move forward. We don't think that we would have got through this without all of you.

Leona, Ian and family

Heywood Hotel

The Heywood Hotel in Skelmorlie has been sold to a developer and is set to be converted into 16 luxury flats during the summer, provided planning permission is granted by North Ayrshire Council. Ownership of the hotel, which was built in the 19th century but which is not listed, will pass to a local developer. Harry Monaghan, who has owned the hotel for 16 years said, "My wife and I are really getting to a stage in life where we would like to have more time off. We have declined offers in the past but the time is right to move on. Unfortunately, the offer from a developer far supersedes that to one which is carrying it on as a going concern. It would have been nice to sell it as a hotel but the difference is too great." The hotel currently employs five full time staff and 15 – 20 part-time staff throughout the year. Depending on the planning application the building could be knocked down or converted and refurbished.

Ardgowan Football Development

AFD are holding a Race Night on Sunday 21st February in Wemyss Bay Community Centre. Tickets, priced £5, include supper and a disco. Remember to bring your own bottle! The first race starts at 8pm prompt so don't be late! Apart from being great fun, these nights are an opportunity to raise vital funds for a very worthwhile local group. If you would like tickets contact Tom Tel: 520179

Community Association

The Community Association meets on the first Wednesday of every month. As a result of the success of the community centre with regular lets every evening, meetings are held in the Rogues Room at the Inverkip Hotel. Anyone interested is welcome to attend. The next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 4th February.

Country Peoples Club

The club meets at 2.30pm in The Heywood Hotel, Shore Road, Skelmorlie on alternate Wednesdays. All members, old and new, and visitors will be made most welcome. The subscription is £9 per annum and £1 for Visitors. Further details may be obtained from the Secretary, Mrs Ann Haig, Tel: 522316

* Wed 4th Feb: Mrs Jan Marshall – "North from Kathmandu"

* Wed 18th Feb: Mr David Wellham – "Butterflies and Moths"

* Wed 3rd Mar: Mr Harry Monaghan – "Hotels – Behind the Scenes"

Scottish Parliament Round-up by Duncan McNeil MSP

Planning for Transport – Have your Say

In January, the Scottish Executive published national guidance aimed at ensuring that transport considerations are properly taken into account when planning new developments or redevelopments. The new policy, which has now gone out to public consultation, proposes that:

- New developments should be located close to good transport links and parking spaces should be constrained to reduce dependence on car travel;
- New trunk road or motorway junctions will only be considered under exceptional circumstances and will require significant developer funding; and
- Roadside service facilities should be developed for the comfort and safety of drivers with opportunities to stop and rest.

Consultation on these proposals runs until the beginning of April. For more information, see www.scotland.gov.uk/planning.

Moves to End Scandal of B&B Accommodation for Kids

At the end of January, Ministers took action to end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families with children.

Speaking as the Scottish Executive issued statistics on the numbers of people applying to local authorities for assistance with homelessness, Communities Minister, Margaret Curran, announced:

“The Executive has already made clear to local authorities that we expect them to end the inappropriate use of B&B accommodation for such families.... I now want to seek views on how we use the legislative powers in the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003 to ensure it is only in exceptional circumstances and for strictly limited periods that any child should be accommodated in a B&B.”

Duncan can be contacted at the Parliamentary Office, 20 Union Street, Greenock PA15 8JL, by E-mail: duncan.mcneil.msp@scottish.parliament.uk or via his website: www.duncanmcneil.com

Heartless thief

We were contacted by John with the following article, which we are happy to print.

Sometimes it is hard to believe she will be 78 years old in a few weeks.....

It was just 18 months ago that my mum uprooted, sold her house in England, and moved up to Scotland. We found her a lovely house in Wemyss Bay – just a hundred yards or so from our own. Like us, she fell in love with Scotland, and with the Scots. Everyone is so friendly up here!

And for twelve months she did not stop. This energetic 77 year old completely reorganised the house and garden, had a greenhouse and a shed built – and she planted...and planted.... and planted. 12 months after moving in, she was collecting her own vegetables from her back garden. And it seemed like every week she would drive herself down to Cardwell Garden centre to see what treasures were on offer this week. New fruit trees sprung up all over her garden – and shrubs appeared everywhere too.

And then.....

They began to disappear. During the last few months someone has visited her garden four times.

Each time, they have ripped up newly planted bushes by their roots, and walked off with them.

Who would do such a thing? Do you have any idea? Can you imagine how this makes my mum feel? If anyone has any idea who this hard hearted thief is, maybe they would be good enough to e-mail me? jj@tgjj.co.uk

Missing mobile

One lucky 15year old received an early Christmas present on Saturday 19th December when he received a Nokia 3510i mobile phone. Delighted with his gift he started carrying it around with him immediately; however the following day he lost it in the Lomond Road area! Is this a record for how long a Christmas gift lasts? His dad tells us that he is not the most popular person in the house at the moment. The phone is blue with a little orange. If you can help recover the phone please contact his dad Tel: 07766 162933

What a Cutie!

Pretty little Orianne, aged 4, was recently voted joint winner of the Greenock Telegraph's Cute Kids competition. Orianne wins a framed family photograph, clothes, games & toys, a family leisure pass to the Waterfront Complex and a family holiday weekend at Park Hall Hotel and Camelot Theme

Park. Mum Jacqueline, dad Andy, and sisters Melissa and Chantelle are all very proud of Orianne and can't wait to go on holiday.

Education Provision in Inverclyde

As part of a national inspection programme a team from HM Inspectorate of Education assessed the education function of Inverclyde Council between April and June 2001. An inspection team revisited the authority in September 2003 to assess progress made in meeting the recommendations set out in the initial report. The follow-up inspection report was published in January and praises Inverclyde Council in some areas while heavily criticising in others. We decided to print the conclusion but the full report is available by logging on to www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/followup/InverclydeINEAfarep

"Conclusion
Since the inspection report was published in September 2001 the Director and his staff had sustained a good level of improvement in attainment and achievement and had made very good progress in supporting improvement in learning and teaching in its schools. They had put into place some very effective systems to support schools and establishments in becoming more effective. The authority had been successful in developing and implementing a policy to improve educational provision for pupils with special educational needs within an inclusive setting. The Education Service had given a clear lead on Human Rights and Race Equality and had made significant investment in these areas.

The Council had put in place a number of innovative approaches to the use of ICT in educational establishments. It had made good progress in providing effective staff development that enhanced teaching approaches. However, there remained more to be done to meet the targets agreed for the installation of computers and a computer network in all schools and establishments. The lack of funding and the resultant slow progress in meeting these targets had limited the impact of ICT on pupils' learning.

Education Service Officers had demonstrated professional expertise and leadership plans for the improvement of the school estate which had the support of many key stakeholders. However, the new administration's decision to revoke the plans and the inevitable delays had resulted in an unsatisfactory situation. There remained significant weakness in the management of the school estate, in particular the need to address the issue of school rationalisation to ensure Best Value in the use of scarce resources. Alternative plans, and the funding to support them, now needed to be drawn up as a matter of urgency to ensure that all pupils in Inverclyde are able to learn in a suitable school environment.

As a result of the overall fair progress in connection with the rationalisation and improvement of school buildings HMIE will make a further visit to the Council in about a year of the publication of this report. In addition the Council should produce a report in April 2004 showing progress in implementing the National Grid for Learning targets. HMIE will follow-through with the Council on the areas for further development outlined in this report."

School News

Wemyss Bay Primary's Christmas show, Bussy Malone, had to be rescheduled due to ill health but finally took place on 20th & 21st January. Both nights were sell-outs and staff are delighted at the success. Parents who attended also voted the show a hit!

P6 & P7 recently took part in a special afternoon "Travel Fair" for parents and family. The children each spent time in class finding out all about a European country and then took on the role of tour guide, trying to "sell" their country.

New Service from Chemist

If you live in Wemyss Bay or Inverkip but have doctors in Greenock or Gourock, Wemyss Bay Pharmacy are now providing a collection and delivery service for your repeat prescription medication. All you have to do to make use of this new service is to contact Brian Spence or any of the staff Tel: 522995

Rhodi Bashing

The Woodland Association is continuing its work to remove the dreaded rhododendron ponticum from Wemyss Bay Wood. This month they are holding volunteer work sessions on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th February and again on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd February. The Association will provide gloves, tools, tea & coffee. There will be plenty of experienced volunteers on hand to give

advice on what has to be done. Contractors should start path construction and other work towards the end of the month and therefore there is a requirement for certain areas of rhododendrons to be cleared before then. If you are available to help on any of the above dates, go along to the main entrance to the wood on Ardgowan Road any time between 10am – 3pm where you will be made very welcome.

David Cairns MP

One of the most interesting aspects of being the local MP is that you have the opportunity to visit many local businesses etc and meet so many different kinds of people.

A few weeks ago, I visited the local Coastguard station based in Eldon Street, Greenock (now known as the Maritime and Coastguard Agency). This facility covers approximately 2,200 miles of coastline and stretches from the Mull of Galloway all the way up to Mallaig and 1000 miles out into the Atlantic. Last year they dealt with over 700 search and rescue incidents, involving everything from rescuing sailors whose yachts had lost their masts, to helping divers recover from “the bends”. Apparently the coastguard is much busier in the summer months when many small pleasure craft take to the sea. I would have thought that it would be the opposite, what with the rough weather we expect in the winter.

The local coastguard told me about their most memorable rescue effort, where they responded to a distress call from a fishing vessel in trouble in heavy Atlantic seas. The Coastguard helicopter reached the ship just in time to lift the crew off before the vessel sank. Ten people were saved; one had survived after twelve hours in the water. The coastguard winch man received the Queen’s Gallantry Medal for his part in the rescue.

I was very impressed with the energy and professionalism of the Coastguard Rescue Team. Most of the team work full-time, yet they can be called out at any hour of the day or night. They are all highly trained and can search and locate casualties quickly and effectively. The local team not only respond to incidents, they also do routine patrols and offer water and beach safety advice on a wide range of topics to members of the public.

David Cairns holds surgeries on the first and third Friday of the month from 10am – 12noon at his Parliamentary Office, 20 Union Street, Greenock Tel: 791820. Alternatively you can phone the office for details of his next surgery in Wemyss Bay.

.....And She’s Off!

If you were to ask anyone if they had heard of Lisa Jones, or Carol Williams they would probably reply “No”. Mention Tony McCoy, Frankie Dettori or Keiran Fallon and the response would no doubt be far more positive. All are successful jockeys, though the first mentioned are perhaps still a long way from becoming household names. Female jockeys in the U.K. are few and far between but they are appearing more and more on the racecards and are all hoping to emulate the success of Julie Krone, the most famous American woman jockey, who rode 3,545 winners before she retired in 2000.

Next month 16 year old Heather McGee, a former pupil of Wemyss Bay Primary and Greenock Academy, is off to Newmarket to The British Racing School to try and fulfil her dream of becoming as famous as those mentioned above. She knows that the next few years will be far from glamorous and will involve a great deal of hard work in all weathers and with leisure time. Pre-dawn wake-up calls, lots of hard, physically testing stable work and hours of exercising often highly strung, moody and extremely valuable racehorses over windswept gallops. All this, plus keeping her weight down to under 7 stone, will be the order of the day and there is no guarantee of a place in the Winning Enclosure at a racecourse at the end of it, as competition is fierce.

Heather has recently left Greenock Academy where she was only the second pupil to pursue a Racing Career since 1970. She has been riding since the age of two and has owned a series of ponies and horses since she was ten, so she is well used to early morning starts and all the hard work associated with looking after a horse. She competed regularly in Horse Shows and gained a lot of experience as a groom at events all over the country. Added to this she worked for renowned Renfrewshire trainer Jim Goldie at his Racing Stables in Uplawmoor over the summer holidays. As well as being allowed to ride her first racehorse, initially in an enclosed ring but later over the gallops, Heather was introduced to the wooden training “horse” – a rather basic simulator to help train the correct muscles and practice racing technique.

She decided that this was an excellent way to keep fit so designed and then built her own wooden horse, complete with elasticated neck, which now resides in the family garage.

Heather is now counting the days until she sets off for Newmarket. She has dreamt of becoming a jockey since the age of twelve and now the dream is in the first stages of becoming reality. She is confident that she will succeed though, so much so that her mum has already been told to start looking for a suitably stunning hat to wear at Royal Ascot in a few years' time!

SKELMORLIE and WEMYSS BAY PARISH CHURCH

What's on and when...

SUNDAY

Morning Worship, 11.00am
Sunday School and Crèche, 11.00am (September-June)

WEDNESDAY

Scottish Country Dancing, 7.30pm
Contact: M Cunningham (520878)

THURSDAY (except school holidays)

Noah's Ark, 1.30-2.45
*This is a group for all children (aged 0-5) and their parents/carers.
We have a fabulous selection of constantly updated toys and equipment.
Come along and enjoy the fun in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere!*
Contact: F Neilson (529158)

THURSDAY

Men's Fellowship, 7.30pm (fortnightly)
*This is a group for men organised by members of our Church and Inverkip Church.
Speakers are invited to address the Club on topics of general interest.*

FRIDAY

Friday Lunches, 12.15-1.30pm
*Come along and enjoy delicious soup and sandwiches.
A donation of £2.00 is suggested. All proceeds go to Church Funds.*

SATURDAY

Junior Badminton, 1.30-4.30pm in Skelmorlie Community Centre
Contacts: Elspeth Howie (520417) or Laura Armstrong (520703)

Coming soon...

CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED: A study course for all who would like to more about the Christian Faith, begins this month on Monday evenings (7.30pm) in the Church Hall. You will be made welcome.

STUDIES DURING LENT: A group drawn from local churches will meet on Tuesday evenings throughout Lent – from 3 March – in St Joseph's Church Hall.

The ALEXANDER BROTHERS are coming to the Church on Thursday 26 February. Tickets (£5) available from Spence, the Chemist, or Barry Streets (529167). All proceeds to Ardgowan Hospice.

Brownies and Guides Thinking Day

Lady Agnes Baden-Powell started the Guiding movement 90 years ago and on 22nd February Wemyss Bay Brownies and Guides will be celebrating this and thinking of the other 11 million members of the Girl Guiding movement worldwide. The special day will be marked with a service at

Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Parish Church. Guiding is extremely widespread and over 50% of the female population of Britain have been involved at some point.

Woodland Association

The Woodland Association held its second Annual General Meeting on Sunday 18th January in the Community Centre. It was good to see a few new faces along and everyone who attended found the material on display interesting and informative. The office bearers for the coming year are Chairman: Richard Charnock-Smith, Treasurer: Finlay McFee and Secretary: Eila Roberts. The next committee meeting, to which all members are welcome to attend, will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 11th February in the Rogues Room at the Inverkip Hotel. If you would like to find out more about any aspect of the Association's work contact Eila Tel: 529375

Vandalism

The spate of fires at the back of the Community Centre has continued and so far we have been very lucky that they have been spotted and extinguished by local residents. Car tyres and other assorted rubbish are being used to start the fires. Please try and dispose of your rubbish responsibly. Wemyss Bay Community Centre is one of the most used centres in Inverclyde with regular lets during the day and every night and the community really can't afford to lose it. If you see any fires, or any other trouble around the community centre, please report it immediately to the police and the fire service.

Kids Stuff

A couple of adults told me that they have tried the wordsearches and found them quite hard. If you see a grown-up struggling, give them a hand!!

This year is a leap year which means that instead of 28 days, February has 29 days this year. Leap years happen every four years. Did you know that in a leap year it is traditional, on 29th February, for girls to ask boys to marry them?

The wordsearch this month is about leap years and also about Valentine's Day. See how many words you can find.

T	B	O	Y	F	R	I	E	N	D
W	S	S	R	E	W	O	L	F	N
E	S	Y	E	B	F	R	G	H	E
N	R	A	V	R	X	D	I	E	I
T	O	D	O	U	P	R	R	A	R
Y	S	N	L	A	D	A	H	R	F
N	E	W	E	R	E	C	E	T	L
I	S	Q	U	Y	M	W	C	L	R
N	D	A	R	L	I	N	G	P	I
E	N	I	T	N	E	L	A	V	G

BOYFRIEND
CARD
DARLING
DAYS
FEBRUARY
FLOWERS
GIRLFRIEND
HEART

LEAP
TRUELOVE
TWENTYNINE
VALENTINE
YEAR

Finally...

We hope that you all receive a nice surprise for Valentine's Day – why not make someone's day with a romantic card or lovely gift? That's all for this edition. The closing date for the March edition of the Village News is Friday 20th February. If you have articles or adverts which you would like included please make sure that we receive it by then. We are grateful for any comments or suggestions. Items for inclusion can be placed in the Village News folder behind the counter in Spar, or sent to Eila Roberts, 14 Brueacre Drive, Wemyss Bay Tel: 529375 E-mail: eilaroberts@care4free.net