

Wemyss Bay Village News

174th Edition

March 2004

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George Anderson

George Anderson has been the Secretary of Wemyss Bay Community Association for over three years and is one of the main volunteers involved in running the Community Centre, Gala Day, Christmas light switch-on and other community events. Unfortunately George was taken ill recently and admitted to Coronary Care at Inverclyde Hospital. Despite being unwell George's sense of humour has not diminished! We all wish him a speedy recovery and hope that he will be out and about again soon.

Ardgowan Football Development

First of all an apology - In last month's edition I said that AFD's race night would be held on Sunday 21st Feb instead of Saturday. I am sorry for any confusion I caused. Despite my best efforts the race night went ahead on the Saturday night and was a complete sell-out. Final calculations are still being done but it looks like a magnificent sum of around £1300 was raised. Everyone who attended had a fantastic time although some people apparently are still feeling a little under the weather!

PTA

On Friday 5th March Wemyss Bay Primary School PTA are holding a special Wherries Evening featuring the popular local band. There will be a licensed bar and all proceeds will go to school funds. Tickets are a very reasonable £5 and can be ordered by contacting Sharon Tel: 521552 or Margaret Tel: 521846. Why not organise a baby-sitter, round up some friends and make an evening of it?

Thank you

In February 1998 Jenny McGee took over as editor of the Village News. She also organised the distribution of the newsletters from the printer to the army of volunteers who hand deliver on a street by street basis. Jenny continued to edit the Village News until October 2002, by which time she had produced 48 editions – a mammoth contribution by any standards. As more and more houses have been built in Wemyss Bay the distribution network has had to expand considerably and Jenny has managed to recruit volunteers as required. Such was Jenny's skill that sometimes people did not realise that they had been "roped in" until she was away! With many other commitments, Jenny is now stepping back from organising the distribution, although we hope that she will continue to be involved in contributing to the newsletter whenever possible. The task of organising distribution will now be carried out by Ann Marie Cockburn. We would like to thank Jenny for her many years of service to the Village News and the local community and wish her well.

Recycling

This month Greenlight will be carrying out their doorstep collections on Mondays 8th and 22nd March. Remember to put out your old newspapers & magazines, plastic bottles & milk cartons, food & drinks cans, rags and carrier bags. Recycling couldn't be easier – come on and do your bit for the environment.

New Ferry for Wemyss Bay – Rothesay Route

Calmac are having a new ferry built to replace one of the existing ships on the Wemyss Bay – Rothesay route. The order for the vessel will be placed by the end of March, with the new ferry entering service during 2005. The new ship will carry up to 60 cars and 450 seated passengers and will be designed to operate on the existing timetable. The ship will be designed for roll on-roll off operation; however there will also be a side ramp on the starboard side to accommodate the existing pier facilities at Rothesay. Attention has been paid to the facilities for disabled passengers, including a lift between the car deck and the passenger lounge, disabled toilets on the car deck, signs designed for visually impaired passengers and induction loops for those with hearing aids.

Compensation for Phyllis

As a result of a transfusion of contaminated blood following an operation at Irvine Central Hospital in 1979, Wemyss Bay resident Phyllis Macleod contracted Hepatitis C.

Many sufferers do not wish to be identified and Phyllis is one of the very few victims who have campaigned publicly for compensation. Over the past five years Phyllis has travelled back and forth to Edinburgh meeting government and health officials, talking to the media, putting forward the case for all the victims and working tirelessly to force the government to admit that mistakes had been made with blood supplies.

Finally, a few weeks ago, Phyllis was awarded £45,000 following an announcement from Scottish Health Minister, Malcolm Chisholm. The government has decided that it will pay £20,000 to all Hep C victims who have contracted the disease through contaminated transfusions, with a further £25,000 to sufferers in the advanced stages of the illness.

As a result of Hepatitis, Phyllis has a number of other illnesses and has suffered two strokes in the last 6 months, which led to her having to give up editing the Village News. She continues to attend hospital for rehabilitation treatment and, although still having some communication difficulties at times and experiencing severe pain, her condition has improved. Phyllis told me that some people seem to think that the award is excessive. I would ask them – would they like to swap places?

On a positive note, Phyllis is looking forward to her daughter Heather's wedding to Simon at the Priory House Hotel in Largs later this year.

Mother's Day

As Mother's Day takes place this month we will all be thinking about what our Mum's mean to us, but we should also remember what we mean to our Mum and why sometimes she does the things she does. The following poem was sent in by Jean:

A Mother's Love

Some day when my children are old enough to understand I will tell them:

I loved you enough to ask you about where you were going, with whom and what time you would get home.

I loved you enough to insist that you buy a bike, which we could afford to give you, with your own money.

I loved you enough to make you return a Milky Way – with a bite out of it – to confess: "I stole this."

I loved you enough to see hurt, disappointment, disgust and tears in my eyes.

I loved you enough to admit I was wrong and ask your forgiveness.

I loved you enough to let you stumble, fall and hurt.

BUT most of all, I loved you enough to say "NO" when you hated me for it. That was the hardest part of all.

New Dance Class

Graffiti Dance Group is coming to Wemyss Bay. Teacher, Lynn Cameron, who currently runs groups all over Inverclyde will be starting a new class in Wemyss Bay Community Centre in mid-March.

Classes, which are open to anyone aged 2yrs upwards, will take place on Saturdays between 12.45 and 1.45pm and will specialise in Highland Dancing, Cheerleading, Majorettes and Disco. If you are interested in attending, please contact Lynn Cameron Tel: 01475 892821. Lynn will be able to confirm the starting date with you. Have fun!

Community Association

The next meeting of the Community Association will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 3rd March in the Rogues Room at the Inverkip Hotel. The Association is responsible for the management, letting and upkeep of the Community Centre and also organises the Gala Day, the Christmas lights switch-on and other community events. You are very welcome to come along to any of the meetings, whether you are interested in becoming involved or if you simply want to observe what goes on.

Scottish Parliament Roundup – Duncan McNeil MSP

Planning Ahead

Stricter planning guidance is being introduced to avoid more property development in areas at risk from flooding. Under the new policy, published last month, local authorities will be allowed to refuse planning permission on the grounds of flood risk. New developments with a 0.5% or above

probability of being flooded in any year will be considered as medium to high risk for planning purposes.

For more on this story, see: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/pages/news/2004/02/SEC393.aspx>

At the same time, in another positive development for the greenbelt, recently published figures show that more brown-field sites are being used for residential development. While there is still a long way to go, especially in areas like Inverclyde, the amount of vacant and derelict land in Scotland is continuing to fall. And, of the land brought back into use last year, 44% (256 hectares) was used for house-building.

More details are online at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/pages/news/2004/01/SEC387.aspx>

Crossing Out Road Risks

Progress continues to be made on the pedestrian crossing at the Wemyss Bay Pier. I have now confirmed a meeting with the Police and AMEY Highways at the site to discuss the matter in more detail.

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

Woodland Association

Most people are now aware that members of the Association are working regularly in the wood to clear rhododendron ponticum. As the ground is cleared of this invasive plant the volunteers are delighted that so many young saplings (in particular beech, birch, ash, rowan, sycamore) are now being given some light and the chance to flourish. In the summer the area is likely to be a riot of colour as foxgloves excel in newly cleared land, however they will really only be around in the first year or two until more native ground and shrub-layer plants are re-established. The Association has also already planted over 1000 bulbs and spring plants this year (last year over 1000 snowdrops were planted and they have already flowered), and more planting will take place in coming weeks. The contract for path construction, essential tree-surgery and other works has been awarded and workers will begin on site this month. In the meantime the Association continues to hold fortnightly Rhodi Bashing Sessions and all willing volunteers will be made most welcome. One of the regular volunteers is 93 year old Maurice Dawson, who has not missed a work day in the last year – he puts many of the others to shame! There are also several 5 – 7 year olds who come along regularly with their parents. No matter your age there are ways in which you can participate and volunteer. In addition to working at weekends, the Woodland Association is hoping to start some weekday sessions and are appealing to anyone who would be available mid-week to put their name on the contact list. If you would like more information about any aspect of the work of the Association, would be interested in attending the Weekend Rhodi Bashing sessions, would like to help with bulb and wildflower planting, or would be available to help out occasionally during the week please contact Eila Roberts Tel: 529375

The Association will be holding their next Weekend Rhodi Bashing and Planting Sessions on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th March and then again on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st March. If you are able to help out, even for part of the day, go along anytime between 10am and 3pm to the main entrance to the wood at Ardgowan Road. The Association will provide gloves, some tools and refreshments. All you require is warm and waterproof clothing and footwear and plenty of enthusiasm!

The Association's next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th March at 7.30pm in the Rogues Room at the Inverkip Hotel. If you would like to become more involved in the work of the Association, have suggestions about possible improvements or simply would like to hear the latest details about what is going on, you are very welcome to attend.

Share your News

If you have news relating to Wemyss Bay, don't keep it to yourself! Go to <http://wemyssbay.net> and click on news to publish it on the Wemyss Bay web site. Don't forget to let the Village News know too.

David Cairns MP – Energy Transfers

Last month, I had the chance to introduce a Ten-Minute Rule Bill in the House of Commons. This is where an MP puts forward a law of their choice to be debated and voted on. After quite a bit of thought I chose to put before my fellow MP's a Bill designed to compel energy suppliers to compensate consumers who have been the victim of energy mis-selling, known as erroneous transfers. This is where consumers have fallen prey to unscrupulous sales tactics employed by

electricity and gas suppliers. Over the last few years, more and more people have been coming to my surgeries with nightmare stories of how they suddenly find that their gas or electricity suppliers have been changed without warning. Many had no idea how this happened while others recall being called at home and agreeing to be sent some information. However, it appears that some companies were using this request as a green light to go ahead and switch people over without their knowledge. In one particular case, an elderly lady was not receiving any bills at all and two power companies denied all knowledge of her. Months later she was presented with a huge bill for her arrears. Other problems have included the length of time to find out which company is actually supplying the service. Meanwhile, another constituent was receiving two sets of bills from different companies and was threatened with credit blacklisting if they didn't pay up. The consumer watchdog, Energywatch, who I have worked very closely with, is still receiving around 500 complaints every month from worried consumers, who have had their power switched without their consent. I believe that this is just the tip of the iceberg and that the problem is much bigger still. Heavy fines are the only way to deter these power companies from transferring consumers against their will or after heavy-handed door-step selling. Over the last two years we have seen some quite shocking cases which have really traumatised people, especially the elderly and vulnerable. At the present time, companies found guilty of erroneous transfer can be fined by the regulator OFGEM. London Electricity/Virgin were fined a massive £2million and Scottish Power has been fined £200,000 for blocking legitimate transfer requests. However, the fines are paid to the treasury – the consumer gets nothing. But I believe that the victims themselves should receive some degree of compensation. Those who suffer most should benefit most, which is what my Bill would achieve.

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.

HAPPY 80TH BIRTHDAY!!

Family in Wemyss Bay contacted us to say Isa Archibald of Toward Road will be celebrating her 80th Birthday on Thursday 11th March. After retiring she decided to keep busy and at the age of 66yrs became the first lolly-pop lady at Wemyss Bay Primary. Isa and husband Willie, who have been married for over 58 years, moved to the area to work in the new power station – Isa in the canteen and Willie in the stores. They have 3 daughters and two sons who are spread out between Wemyss Bay (daughter Isabel works in Spar), Glasgow, England and Canada. With 8 grandchildren and 5½ great-grandchildren (including an ever increasing bump who is due to make a first appearance shortly) life for Isa is never dull.

Son James, who has stayed in Canada since 1974 contacted us and asked us to include the following message, "Happy Birthday Mum – hope you have a great day as it is so well deserved. Thank you so much for who you are and what you do. Best Wishes from James and Kate, Nicole and Angela and great-grandchildren Hunter, Eden and Austin. All the very best on your special day from all of us in Canada."

Everyone at the Village News and Community Association would like to add our very best wishes too for a very Happy Birthday.

Bible Club

The Bible Club will be holding an Easter Party on 29th March and will then stop for two weeks for the Easter holidays. The club will resume again on Monday 19th April from 6.15 – 7.30 pm. All primary school age children are very welcome to attend.

Contact Stephen Renton Tel: 01505 355994 for further details

Gala Weekend 18 – 20 June 2004.

Yet again the Gala Committee are looking for volunteers to help with the Gala this year. Last year was a great success and we hope to have another bumper of a weekend this year. This can only be done with the help of the local community. We have decided to run the Gala over the weekend again with a family Ceilidh on the Friday night, Gala Day on the Saturday from 12pm onwards and a Karaoke/Disco in the Marquee on the Saturday night. For this to work we desperately need bodies to help with various events i.e. bouncy castle, beer tent, face painting, etc etc (no experience necessary!). I know this seems early to be looking for help, but we need to know that we have the manpower to operate the weekend. It's a huge task for the limited number of committee members to organize on their own. If you can help in any way, please call Ann Marie (Gala co-ordinator) on 522998. And remember, there is a committee meeting on the first Wednesday of every month at

7.30pm in the Rogues Room at the Inverkip Hotel. If you have any comments or ideas which you think would make the weekend even better than last year's event, then come along (we really are quite a nice bunch!)

Keep Your Children Safe Online

If you have children who use the internet, you can visit the government backed web site "think U know" for information on how you can keep your children safe online.

It says on the web site, "If you are a parent or carer, the Home office has produced a leaflet to help you find out what you need to know to keep your children safe when they use the internet. You don't have to be an expert to make a difference! Talk to your child about what they do online and pass on the safety advice in this leaflet."

The site is easier to use if you choose the text only version and contains information for children and parents. To find out more go to **www.thinkuknow.co.uk**

Skelmorlie Golf Club Junior Section

Skelmorlie Golf Club Junior Section is an accredited Starter Centre for the Golf Foundation, which provides professional coaching and whose aim is to make the sport of golf accessible to young people. The Foundation has a "Passport Scheme" which monitors progress under the guidance of a PGA professional.

Skelmorlie Golf Club Junior Section will make any child interested in becoming involved very welcome with fees for this coming season as follows: 14 and under - £55; over 14 - £80. The club have a team entered in this season's Ayrshire Junior League.

For more information contact Iain Crighton Tel: 522369

Be a Winner!!

Spar stores throughout Scotland have launched a weekly website competition. Why don't you log-on to www.sparscotland.co.uk click on shoppers and then on competitions where you will find some easy questions. There are weekly prizes of shopping vouchers, redeemable in your local store, and monthly prizes which have previously included mountain bikes, home chillers, DVD players and a TV. It's simple to take part and who knows – you could be the first winner from Wemyss Bay!

Workers' Educational Association

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:

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

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

17th – Annual General Meeting. The meeting will be followed by a surprise talk.

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 contact Jenny Mc Gee Tel: 521090.

An Interest in Brownies or a Way of Life?

Over 40 years ago, local woman, Marilyn McLaughlin joined the Brownies and she hasn't looked back since. Working her way through the Brownies and Guides, she went on to the Sea Rangers (the precursor in this area to the Ranger Guides). As a Sea Ranger, Marilyn learnt to sail and also attended a survival course at Blair Athol where she learnt to live off the land – she assured me that hedgehogs are delicious and taste a bit like chicken but I think I'll stick to Safeway or Tesco!!

After leaving the Rangers, Marilyn continued as a leader and, over twenty years ago, started up the brownies in Wemyss Bay – previously the nearest Brownies or Guides were in Inverkip. Currently over 40 girls attend Wemyss Bay Brownies with a further 30 in the guides.

There are over 11 million members of the Girl Guide movement worldwide with over 70,000 of these in the UK. One in three girls between the ages of 7 and 10 are in the Brownies and every second female in Britain is, or has been, involved at some point in her life.

Moving up in Guiding, Marilyn is now an international trainer, travelling the world to train Guiders. She is also head of self-esteem training for guiders within the UK. With her own limited company, McLaughlin Training Consultancy, Marilyn carries out training on a range of topics for companies throughout the country and is therefore ideally placed to compare the level of training available to

guiders as opposed to that offered by many companies to their employees. Marilyn said, "Guide leaders are all trained to a very high standard, often surpassing the training of many companies. Leaders are trained in Health & Safety, Risk Assessment, First Response (*first aid*), Safe from Harm (*child protection*) and Food Handling & Hygiene. In addition courses on self-esteem, positive leadership and personal development are also available for both girls and leaders." Marilyn estimates that over 50% of her leisure time is devoted to Guiding, which would not be possible without a very supportive, and understanding, family.

Through her role as a trainer in guiding, Marilyn has travelled extensively within the UK and has also visited the Cayman Islands, the Caribbean and Russia. She is looking forward to visiting the Falkland Islands as her great-uncle, the explorer Ernest Shackleton, set off from there on his assault on the South Pole. Whilst in the Cayman Islands, Marilyn met a cousin she didn't even know she had.

Many people think that Guiding is solely a Christian organisation but Marilyn explained, "It is religious in the widest possible sense with girls promising to serve "their" God. Girls from a wide range of religions, including Buddhists, Moslems, Christians and Jews are all involved in the organisation." Locally girls are involved in a variety of outings, outdoor and residential activities and as a result leaders have been trained to prepare, handle and store Kosher and Halal food properly. When necessary, activities are tailor made to suit individual girls and leaders have experience of working with children with special needs.

Like many other organisations, Wemyss Bay Brownies require additional helpers. If there are not enough adults to comply with the required staffing levels then the insurance becomes null and void and children will have to be sent home. Currently they are relying on a rota of parents, but this is not an ideal situation and so they are appealing for more regular help. Even if you would not be able to help out at every session, please consider putting your name forward as it is possible to job share. You will however have to agree to a police check. If you are interested you can get more information by contacting Marilyn Tel: 520615.

By becoming involved you will be developing your own leadership skills while at the same time helping many girls and young women develop their own personal skills. Who knows – maybe there is a 7 or 8 year old out there waiting to broaden their horizons and travel the world, just like Marilyn. Best of all though – it's great fun!!

Antiques Roadshow

Sotheby's the auctioneers will be holding a valuation day in the Brisbane Suite at the Seamill Hydro on Thursday 11th March from 11am – 4pm. In particular they will be valuing Marine Objects, Clocks & Watches, Pictures, Furniture, Ceramics, Silver and Miscellaneous Objects. The £5 entrance fee can be paid at the door and includes two valuations – any further items can be valued at a cost of £1 per item. Tickets can be obtained in advance from Dorothy Stewart Tel: 520255. All proceeds will go to the RNLI Lifeboats of the Clyde Appeal. There will also be competitions and the opportunity to purchase a variety of RNLI souvenirs. Get up to the loft, search in the garden shed or garage and dust off your hidden treasures – you never know you might be surprised at the value, and at least you will the satisfaction of helping out a very worthwhile cause.

Kids Stuff

Hopefully you will all remember about Mother's Day, which is on Sunday 21st March. Maybe you could make a card or draw a nice picture for your Mum or even, if you are a little older or Dad can help, you could give Mum breakfast in bed. I always find that chocolates or flowers can never go wrong. This month we also have two saints days – St David's Day, the patron saint of Wales, is celebrated on 1st March, while St Patrick's Day, the patron saint of Ireland, is celebrated on 17th March. Try and see if you can find all the words in this month's wordsearch.

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

BREAKFAST	MUMMY
CARD	PATRICK
CHOCOLATES	PATRON
DAVID	PRESENT
FLOWERS	SAINT
IRELAND	SUNDAY
MOTHER	WALES

Finally

That's all for this month. The closing date for any articles or adverts for the April edition of the Village News is the 20th March. This is an absolute deadline and cannot be extended under any circumstances! People have regularly been sending in articles one or two days after the official closing date and up till now we have accommodated them but it creates problems for us and the printer. If you would like a reminder let us know and we will add you to the e-mail list. If you have anything which you would like included please send it to Eila Roberts, 14 Brueacre Drive, Wemyss Bay PA18 6HA Tel: 529375

E-mail: eilaroberts@care4free.net or place it in the Village News folder, which is kept behind the counter in Spar.