

Wemyss Bay Village News

182nd Edition

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MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

The Community Association would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The Christmas tree lights switch on will take place this year on **Friday 3rd December at 7.00pm. We will gather round the tree at the school at 6.30pm** for Christmas carols prior to the lights being switched on. To help us all get into the Christmas spirit, the Community Association will be holding a community get together in the Community Centre after the switch-on. Come along and enjoy the carol singers and Christmas music, mulled wine and mince pies, tea and coffee. This will also provide an opportunity to meet representatives from various community organisations and to find out a little more about what goes on in Wemyss Bay. Santa will be taking time out from his very busy schedule to come along and meet the boys and girls in the centre and, if the elves have finished making them in time and everyone has been very good, there will even be small gifts for the pre-5s and primary school-age children. If you have not yet written your letter to him this may your last chance to put in your requests before the big day. Unfortunately Rudolph will not be able to make it along as he and the other reindeer are busy training for their mammoth journey to visit children all over the world on Christmas Eve.

Wemyss Bay Brownies

The Brownies have been having a wonderful month. Lots of new girls have started. 7 new Brownies have made their Promise and 14 girls passed their Hostess badge.

We have booked a Pack Holiday in January at South Newton, Kilmacolm, so we will have to start getting organised for that. The Waterfront Ice Rink held a closed session on a Saturday afternoon just for Brownies and Guides, and a wonderful time was had by all. It was fun to watch them doing the Time Warp in the middle of the rink and then dancing a conga led by Polo the Bear. It was so good (and wonderful value) that we intend to hold two more sessions before Christmas.

We are off to the Panto in January and we are looking forward to that. Oh yes we are!

Thank you to everyone who bought from our Webb Ivory catalogue this year. We really appreciate your support, and if you still have presents to buy please check out <http://buy.at/wemyssbaybrownies>

The Brownies will not be receiving a Christmas card or sweets from Brown Owl this year. The Brownies in Wemyss Bay have so much, that instead a child's desk and school supplies for a child in a Third World country is being bought in their name.

So Happy Christmas Brownies, and all the Brownies and Leaders wish all our family, friends and neighbours a very merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

Surgery Opening Hours

The Doctor's surgery will close for Christmas at 5.30pm on Friday 24th December and will re-open on Wednesday 29th December at 8.30am. At the New Year the surgery will close on Friday 31st December, re-opening at 8.30am on Wednesday 5th January. During these times, as with all other out of hour's times, an emergency service will be operated by Ayrshire Doctors on Call Service. You can contact them directly by calling 0845 741 3003. If you mislay this number call the normal surgery number and a recorded message will tell you what to do. Hopefully no-one will require to make a call this Christmas.

Tropical Fish

Calling all tropical aquarium owners. Silver mollies free to a good home. Current owners have too many due to certain fish that won't stop breeding! E-mail to marilyn@mclaughlintraining.com with your phone number please.

ST JOSEPH AND ST PATRICK'S CHURCH

Many of us will be heading home for Christmas; it's what we tend to do. It's not always easy to go home and it's not always easy to welcome everyone back home. In the Catholic Church the Sunday after Christmas (26th December this year) is the Feast of the Holy Family whose hearth and table enabled a child to so grow to maturity that He would change the world and we would still be celebrating His birth 2000 years later. Let our prayer be this Christmas that our homes may be places where our children are enabled to grow to their full maturity. May our childhood homes be always places of welcome for us, and may our parents always find a welcome at our hearth and at our table.

May the Blessings of the Holy Family of Nazareth be in your homes at this time.

Rev. Thomas Boyle, *Parish Priest*

Advent

Two evenings of Scripture Study are planned for Advent. Fr. David Cotter, an American Benedictine monk, currently working in Scotland will lead the reflections. Fr. Cotter is a noted author and Biblical scholar. On Tuesday 7th December he will reflect upon the Scriptures usually associated with Advent. On Tuesday 21st December he will discuss the Scriptures associated with Christmas. Both evenings will begin at 7.30pm and will include a cup of tea and time for questions ending at about 9.30pm.

Sr. Denise will host an Evening of Recollection for women on Wednesday 15th December at the Notre Dame Centre, Lincluden, Skelmorlie. All are welcome.

Christmas

The first mass of Christmas will be celebrated at 9pm on Christmas Eve; it will be preceded by Carol Singing at 8.30pm. On Christmas Day Mass will be celebrated at 10am and 12noon.

Toch

This year's Toch calendar is now on sale and is available from Wemyss Bay Pharmacy, the Station Bar and from the McConnachie's newsagent at the pier. There is no fixed price and instead you are asked to make a donation towards this worthwhile organisation. It costs over 50p just to produce the calendar so bear this in mind and dig a bit deeper into your pockets

Wemyss Bay Pharmacy – Christmas Opening

This year the pharmacy will be closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. It will be open on Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th December from 10am – 12noon, and will be open as normal on 29th, 30th and 31st December. Over the New Year period it will be closed on New Year's Day, Sunday 2nd and Monday 3rd January, open on Tuesday 4th January from 10am – 12noon and then will resume normal opening hours from Wednesday 5th January. If you require regular medication remember to order and collect your prescription in advance and, while you are in the pharmacy, why not check out some of the lovely Christmas gifts.

Ice King

John Harkins, our local ice-cream man who trades as Bay Ices, has won the prestigious Ice Cream Alliance award for the national Mobile Retailer of the Year. Following nominations by his loyal customers in Wemyss Bay, Inverkip and Skelmorlie, John travelled down to Harrogate where he fought off stiff competition to walk away with the top award, going one better than his second place last year. John said, "I have been on ice cream vans most of my life as my parents operated vans throughout my childhood prior to moving into shops. When I reached the age of 14 I bought my first van, which I still have tucked away in the garage. Since then I have continually upgraded and my latest van is my pride and joy. Winning first prize this time around was amazing. The venue was the size of the SECC and was full with vans from around the country." John was judged on the quality and safety of his van, which is fitted with rear-view cameras to check for children running out behind the van. He also had to demonstrate his knowledge of ice cream and the range of products available. In addition to his regular rounds, John is available for parties and other special events and, among the 64 tunes available, the van even plays Happy Birthday! He is already looking forward to the opportunity to defend his title next year. John asked us to convey his sincere thanks to those customers who nominated him for the award and to all his customers locally for their continued support and custom.

FIND A SPACE IN A BUSY CHRISTMAS

What does Christmas mean to you? You probably don't have the time even to think about it. You're far too busy getting ready for it. There are presents to buy, cards to send, meals to prepare; everybody has enough to do! What does Christmas mean to me? Many people say to me as Christmas approaches: "This is your busy time, minister", as if I had nothing to do for the rest of the year. It is a busy time, with extra Church services and parties; and it is good to be involved in the run up to Christmas. Despite the fact that our children have grown well past the age of early rising on Christmas morning, my real buzz still comes about that time. The Christmas Eve Service past and most of the Christmas revellers disappeared into the darkness, I sit for a while in the silence and the reek of doused candles, and I think on a wee man with a shining face who used to share these moments with me. No, his name is not Santa Claus, but Tommy. Years ago, Tommy was our Church Officer. Though getting on for eighty, his face shone and his eyes lit up, just like the eyes a child on Christmas morning. As we sat in the stillness, Tommy would think his way back to Bethlehem, and recount his simple version of the story of the birth of Jesus. He used practically the same words every year, yet the atmosphere was always magical. What will Christmas mean to you? Just find a space in your busy Christmas, and listen.

Bill Armstrong, Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Parish Church

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Tuesday 7 December, 7.30pm

"Advent" Lecture at St Joseph's, Wemyss Bay

Sunday 19 December, 11.00am

NOAH'S ARK and SUNDAY SCHOOL NATIVITY

Children are invited to bring gifts of sweets

Monday 20 December, 6.30pm

SKELMORLIE SCHOOL CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Tuesday 21 December, 6.30pm

WEMYSS BAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Tuesday 21 December, 7.30pm

"Christmas" Lecture at St Joseph's, Wemyss Bay

Friday 24 December, 11.30pm

WATCHNIGHT SERVICE

Christmas ples and punch served from 10.30pm

Sunday 26 December

CHRISTMAS PRAISE – led by the Choir

Scottish Parliament Report from Duncan McNeil MSP

A quick thanks, first of all, to everyone who attended the coffee morning David Cairns and I held recently in St Joseph's and St Patrick's. As a politician, it's always good when plenty of people want to engage with you, even if that engagement is to make a complaint or get something off their chest.

One issue which came up a number of times – and which many also took the opportunity to discuss with the police, who had kindly agreed to attend – was antisocial behaviour. Now, there is no suggestion that antisocial behaviour in Wemyss Bay is anything like as vicious or serious as it is in other parts of the country, or indeed my constituency. But that doesn't excuse it. Yobbish, intimidating behaviour – wherever it happens – has to be challenged. Thankfully, the toughest provisions of the new Antisocial Behaviour Act, which the Executive secured in the face of fierce opposition from the right-on brigade and other political parties, have now come into force, allowing the police to disperse groups of youths in designated trouble spots. The genuine beauty of Inverclyde on a cold, crisp winter's day is one of the highlights of my winter. And I don't believe we should let the selfishness of others spoil it.

May I also take this opportunity to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

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

Have You Seen Claudia?

Claudia is an eleven year old female cat. She is mostly black with a white patch on her front leg. She was not wearing a collar and was last seen in the Brueacre Drive area during the summer. She has been a family pet since she was a kitten and is sorely missed. If you think you may have seen Claudia or have any information which may help trace her please call **529404**.

Councillor Eric Forbes

Mobile phone mast at Forbes Place - For the third time the phone company has asked for its application to be continued and not presented at this time to the Planning committee. The reason for this is that they want more time to carry out further investigations. We shall just have to await the outcome and deal with the application should it come before the committee in the future.

Parking at Wemyss Bay Pierhead - I am still receiving a few complaints about the indiscriminate parking here which causes obstruction and frustration to those who want to park legally. On-going discussions are taking place to look at providing further parking places but these are at a very early stage. I thank you for your co-operation.

Refurbishment to Primary School - Proposals for the design of the new extension and refurbishment of Wemyss Bay Primary should begin to surface early next year (2005), around January or February following which consultation will take place. The extension will affect the surrounds of the school and discussions will have to take place with interested parties to see how these issues will be addressed.

Secondary School proposals - The consultation period for the Secondary School proposals has now finished and as can be seen from the recent articles in the Greenock Telegraph there was a large response. The report to go before the Education Committee is in the process of being completed by the Director and his Officers and we shall await the production of that and then further deliberations will take place before any final decisions are taken. It may require a Special meeting to consider the issues.

Contact Me - Over the past year I have dealt with complaints and issues brought to my attention and I have been successful with most of them and when a resolution was not possible at the time I am either still dealing with it or the matter has now been concluded. I am not always able to solve issues to everyone's satisfaction simply because at times it is outwith Council control but I certainly alert the appropriate person/agency to the problem and I thank everybody for being the eyes and ears of the village and surrounds. It is only through partnership, co-operation and understanding that we will continue to work for the betterment of Wemyss Bay. I would like to remind everyone that, if you have a problem or query which you think I may be able to help with, I can be contacted at the Municipal Buildings **Tel: 717171 Fax: 01475 712976 or e-mail: Eric.Forbes@inverclyde.gov.uk** Out with office hours I can be contacted at **home: 520012** or on my **mobile: 07747 006725**. I believe that rather than waiting several weeks for a surgery, it is better for my constituents if I am available at the end of a telephone at any time. Thereafter, if necessary, I can arrange a suitable follow-up meeting.

Merry Christmas - May I on behalf of my wife, myself and Inverclyde Council wish you all a very Merry Xmas and a happy and prosperous New Year

Honest, They're True!!

So you think my headers are bad! In the press most reporters don't write their headlines but in many cases, where their efforts are spoiled by a ridiculous headline, they probably wish that they did. These are just a few genuine headlines which appeared during 2003

"Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says"
"Miners Refuse to Work After Death"
"Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant"
"War Dims Hope for Peace"
"If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile"
"Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures"
"Man Struck by Lightning Faces Battery Charge"
"New Study of Obesity Looks for Large Test Group"
"Kids Make Nutritious Snacks"
"Typhoon Rips through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead"
"Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges"
"Chef Throws His Heart into Helping Feed Needy"
"Iraqi Head Seeks Arms"
"Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers"

Bible Club

The Bible Club will close for the holidays on Monday 13th December when they will be holding their Christmas Party. They will restart after the holidays on Monday 10th January. The club meets on Monday evenings from 6:15 – 7:30pm in the Community Centre. The club is open to all primary age children and any newcomers will be made very welcome. Activities include games, competitions, songs and Bible stories. Contact **Stephen Renton** on **01505 355994** for further details.

Community Association

Wemyss Bay Community Association will hold their December committee meeting on Wednesday 1st at 7.30pm in the Rogues Room at the Inverkip Hotel. If you are interested in finding out a bit more about what the Association does or would like to get more involved you are very welcome to come along.

From January there will be a bit of a change as meetings are moving to Sunday nights and will, once again, be held in the Community Centre. The first meeting of the New Year will take place on Sunday 9th January at 7.30pm.

Woodland Association

The Association ran into further problems last month when the contractor who had initially won the tender to carry out work put up his price by 25% to carry out 75% of the work in the initial tender. Legal difficulties over access had caused delays however an increase of this amount within a short period of time was totally unacceptable. There was no option but to run the tender again and this has taken place. A successful contractor will be identified by the beginning of December and work will start prior to Christmas for a 12-week period (not including the holidays). The work which will be carried out in this initial phase includes essential tree surgery, creation of paths, some levelling and planting work and installation of seats and benches.

The Association is already considering what should be included in the second phase. It is likely that the parking / service bay which had to be shelved in phase 1 will be included along with a short family cycle path. Other possibilities are also being considered at this time and will be discussed at the Association's AGM which will be held at 7.30pm in the Community Centre on Sunday 23rd January.

It is not too late to make donations to the Bulb Fund as in addition to spring-flowering bulbs we will be purchasing a variety of wildflowers to be planted in spring. Cheques, made payable to Wemyss Bay Community Woodland Association, can be sent to **Eila Roberts 14 Brueacre Drive, Wemyss Bay** or left in a sealed envelope in the Village News folder behind the counter in Spar. Alternatively if you have bulbs which you do not require telephone Eila on **529375** to arrange for them to be uplifted.

You can also get involved with the work of the Association by helping out at one of the working weekends. The next one takes place on Sat 11th and Sunday 12th December from 10am – 3pm. All tools, gloves and refreshments are provided and volunteers meet at the Ardgowan Road end of Cliff Terrace Road. Unfortunately numbers have been dwindling at the weekends and we rely on a small core group of volunteers. In addition to getting through more work, a few new faces now and then would really help the morale of the die-hards!

The Woodland Association will have a stall in the Community Centre at the Christmas Lights Switch On and will be selling toys, made of wood or with a nature theme, which will make ideal stocking fillers. Why not come over to see us while you are enjoying your mulled wine and waiting for the kids to see Santa?

The next committee meeting will take place on Wednesday 15th December. There will be a committee meeting in January prior to the AGM, which takes place in the community Centre at 7.30pm on Sunday 23rd. If you have any questions or comments about the work of the Association please come along to the AGM. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and proposals for the next phase will be discussed. Don't worry, you will not be roped into serving on the committee unless you really would like to – we have a number of people willing to continue, although fresh faces and new ideas would be very welcome. If you are unable to come along but have any comments contact Eila at the above address or email: eilaroberts@care4free.net

And Now For The Small Print

Please note that we do our best to ensure that adverts are neither misleading nor offensive, however the appearance of an advertisement in the Village News does not imply that either the editors or the Community Association endorse the advertiser or their products / services.

School News

The annual Christmas Cracker fete was held last month and was, once again, very well attended. Unfortunately, at the time of going to print, the final total was still not known. The previous day p7 were responsible for organising and running a Fun Day for the entire school. The year are currently involved in a Scots language project and themed the day around this with activities such as "Pin the Tail on Nessie".

If you watched BBC TV's Children in Need evening did you spot Wemyss Bay Primary's name? Congratulations to Cara, Erin and Laura of p7 who designed and made Pudsey badges and sold them to fellow pupils for 50p (and staff for £1!). They managed to raise £70. Well done girls.

P4 are running a Maths Week from 6th – 10th December as part of their enterprise project. They have taken on the responsibility for all the teachers' timetabling for the week and every lesson will have a maths theme; PE could involve counting how many jumps can be done in a certain time while in Art every class will have to design and make a hat with a maths theme. The highlight of the week will be a Maths Evening which will take place at 6.00pm on Thursday 9th December and involve a variety of puzzles, games and fun aimed at encouraging the whole family to take a bigger interest in maths. December is always a very busy time for staff and pupils alike and this year is no exception:

Fri 3 rd 7pm	Christmas Lights Switch-On
Thurs 9 th 6pm	Maths Evening
Fri 10 th	PTA Children's Disco
Tues 14 th	M & M Pantomime Productions visit to perform "Peter Pan" for the entire school and nursery
Wed 15 th pm	Nursery Nativity Play
Wed 15 th (1.20-2.15pm)	Senior pupils will be carol singing in the Oak Mall
Fri 17 th	Senior pupils will be visiting Greenock nursing homes to entertain residents with carol singing
Mon 21/Tue 22 nd 6.30pm	p1 – p3 Nativity Play (date to be confirmed)
Wed 22 nd am	Talent Show
Wed 22 nd	School Closes

After all this everyone will need a holiday! The staff and pupils of Wemyss Bay Primary School would like to thank all parents and the wider community for their support during 2004 and would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Christmas Refuse Collection

There are likely to be changes to the normal refuse collection times over the festive period however at the time of the Village News going to print discussions were continuing between the Cleansing Dept. and the relevant unions so we are unable to bring you details of any changes. We have been assured however, that all customers affected by changes will be notified in plenty of time. If you require to check out the details contact Transport and Cleansing Department Tel: 717171 or look out for notices in the Greenock Telegraph.

What Would You Like To See In The Village News?

Since taking over editing the Village News in September last year we have listened to a number of suggestions and tried to include them where possible. We are very aware however that many people may be sitting at home with great ideas about how to improve things. If you have any suggestions please contact me and I will do my best to implement them. Perhaps you would like to contribute to the newsletter on a regular basis – if so get in touch and we can chat about how you can contribute. Contact Eila Tel: **529375** E-mail: eilaroberts@care4free.net or leave your suggestions in the Village News folder behind the counter in Spar.

Having a Party?

If you are thinking of having a party, why not consider holding it at the community centre? Although it is pretty busy, party bookings are still available out with the regular lets. Even better, why not theme your party? When placing your booking just say if you would like a Bouncy Castle Party or would like local DJs, Disco Divas, to provide your entertainment. A 2-hour Bouncy Castle Party costs £52, while a 2-hour Disco booking only costs £50. For more information or to make a booking contact **Kirsty Donnelly** on **520738**. Remember that, if you are having food at your party, the centre's kitchen was completely refurbished last year and is available for your use.

Kids' Stuff

Have you ever wondered why no-one sees Santa when he visits their house on Christmas Eve? Even if he only had to visit every child in Britain he would spend less than 0.003 seconds in each house! At that rate he could win every Olympic and World record for running. No wonder he needs all the biscuits we leave out for him – he needs the energy to keep going. Now that's magic!

I hope that you've all been good and Santa brings you lots of lovely presents. This month's wordsearch is all about Christmas. See how many words you can find.

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

BAUBLES
BRANDY BUTTER
CARD
CAROLS
CHRISTMAS
CRACKERS
DECORATIONS
HOLLY
IVY
PRESENTS
PUDDING
RUDOLPH
SANTA CLAUS
SNOW
SNOWBALLS
SNOWMAN
STAR
STOCKING
TINSEL
TREE
TOYS
TURKEY

WORDFINDER

Try and find as many words as possible using the letters below. Each letter can only be used once and every word must contain the letter in the middle square. No plurals, names or hyphenated words are allowed. There is at least one 9-letter word.

G	D	P
I	E	R
A	T	R

20 words – at least you're trying! 30 words – good
40 words – shows promise 50+ words – brain-box!!

Here is a clue to the 9-letter word: This bird features in a popular Christmas song.

Finally

We would like to thank readers, advertisers and regular contributors for their input over the last year. We are always grateful to receive your comments, information or ideas for articles. We also would like to thank Rhona Martin for printing the Village News every month and especially for putting up with all the last minute alterations. Finally we have to thank Ann Marie Cockburn and her army of volunteer distributors who ensure that you receive your copy of the Village News every month. We hope that everyone has a lovely time over the festive period and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

The closing date for submission of articles and adverts for the January edition of the Village News is 15th December. We know that this is a little earlier than usual but we need the extra time, as the printers will be shut over the festive period. Send your information to **Eila Roberts, 14 Brueacre Drive, Wemyss Bay** Tel: **529375** E-mail: eilaroberts@care4free.net or drop it into the Village News folder in Spar. Adverts should be sent to Ken at the same address.