

# Wemyss Bay Village News

172nd Edition

January 2004

Ken and Eila Roberts Tel: 529375 eilaroberts@care4free.net  
Community Centre Tel: 521955 <http://wemyssbay.net/>

## Happy New Year!!

The Community Association would like to wish all residents of Wemyss Bay a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. We hope that you all enjoyed the festive season, that Santa was good to you, and that the need for Aspirin has passed!

## Wemyss Bay Web Site Wins Award

Wemyss Bay web site has received a commendation in the Calor Scottish Community of the Year Awards 2003 for its internet activity.

The Minister for Communities, Margaret Curran MSP, announced the success at a ceremony in Edinburgh at The Hub at Castlehill on Thursday 25 November.

Gavin Tomlinson, Communications Manager for Calor Scotland, commented, "This is an excellent example of the important role the internet can play in a community. In particular, the judges noted the successful campaign to bring broadband to the area, and the website itself being clearly divided into six distinct areas." He continued by saying that the web site offers, "A particularly effective news section which can be contributed to by anyone in the local community also contains a comprehensive range of community information."

Brian Purdie from Inverclyde Council also attended the awards and offered his congratulations.

Thanks must also go to all those who have contributed to the web site over the last three years.

The awards were launched in 1998 by former First Minister Henry McLeish MSP in his capacity at that time of Local Government Minister. The event is sponsored by Calor Scotland and organised by the ASCC (Association of Scottish Community Councils). It is supported by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Business in the Community (SBC) and The Robert Gordon University (RGU).

The overall winner of the Community of the Year award was Isle of Arran Community Council, who were winners of the Environment category, highly commended in the Older People and Young People categories, and commended in the Business and Community Life categories.

*Congratulations must go to Stephen Renton for all his hard work in setting up and running the web site. If you want to know what all the fuss is about log on to [www.wemyssbay.net](http://www.wemyssbay.net)*

## Rhodi-Bashing

Yes, at last work is starting in the main wood! Although funding for the project was secured last year the Woodland Association ran into some legal difficulties when they found out that a very narrow strip of land running down the edge of the wood belonged to a development company which is in liquidation and not to Inverclyde Council as was initially thought. Negotiations have taken place between the Association and the council and the local authority is committed to purchasing the land. The Woodland Association is appealing for volunteers to come out and help with some of the clearance work and is holding two "Rhodi Bashing" weekends this month. Come along on Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January and/or on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January and work off some of the excesses of the festive season. The Woodland Association will provide tea and coffee, gloves and some tools. If you have long loppers or a bush saw it would be helpful if you would bring these with you.

## Country People's 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 7<sup>th</sup> Jan: Mr Gordon Law: "The Royal Route and Coll Fire Station"

\* Wed 21<sup>st</sup> Jan: Mrs Ann Fawbert and Mrs Margaret Kane: "Burns – The Woman's Touch"

## **Vandalism at Community Centre**

Last month there were three occasions when mindless vandalism caused problems for youth organisations using the Community Centre. During a Guide meeting a wheelie-bin was dragged in front of the fire escape, blocking it, and was then set on fire. Leaders managed to extinguish the blaze but this was a potentially serious incident which could have resulted in injury. Again later in the month another fire was set in a bin at the rear of the Community Centre, this time during the youth club. Once again it was tackled and extinguished by leaders.

The following week vandals wedged the front door of the centre shut with a piece of wood, trapping the Brownies inside. Again leaders dealt with the situation by using the fire escape to get round to remove the obstacle. In the event of an accident when help may be needed in a hurry, this could have caused unnecessary delays.

All of these incidents are typical of the mindless actions carried out by a small minority of local young people. If you are involved GROW UP! If you know of anyone involved in this sort of incident please inform the police each and every time that something happens. They may seem minor incidents but the more often people get away with them the longer they will continue.

## **Girlguiding in Wemyss Bay**

The Christmas Bazaar which was held in the Community Centre last month raised the grand total of £412.75. Thanks to everyone who came along and supported the event on a very wet and windy morning. Cameron was the lucky winner of the 3ft high Tazmanian Devil!

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January members of the Guides and Brownies are going to the pantomime in Glasgow. Everyone attending is reminded that the bus will be leaving the school at 6.00pm sharp, so don't be late! The Rainbows, Brownies and Guides will restart as normal during the week beginning 12<sup>th</sup> January.

Towards the end of the month girls from the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides will be getting together for their annual Burns Ceilidh, when everyone should remember to wear something tartan.

Later on this month girls from the Brownies will be competing for the Rob Roy Trophy in country dancing at the Inverclyde Festival. Wemyss Bay Brownies have won this trophy five times in the last six years so the pressure is on! Special thanks go to Alison Carmichael for training this year's dancers. The guiders would like to send Good Luck wishes to all the girls taking part in this year's festival, whether through guiding or through their schools.

Finally, it is hoped to organise a Race Night sometime nearer Easter to help raise funds – these evenings are great fun so why not drum up some friends and go along and show your support.

## **Wemyss Bay girl becomes Scottish judo champ**

A member of the Wemyss Bay Judo Club recently claimed gold in the Scottish Age Band Championships at the Kelvin Hall in Glasgow.

Competing in the girls age band one, U-32kg category, Kym won all of her fights to reach the final, where she won with a Nippon. Brothers Stephen and Darren, who also attend the club, picked up bronze medals in their categories.

The club also had a number of competitors in the Scottish Schools Championships. Kym added a silver to her collection for Inverkip Primary, Stephen won a bronze for Gourrock High, and Ashley brought home a bronze for Larkfield Primary.

Coach Suzi Kirkpatrick is rightly proud of all of their achievements, and we would like to add our congratulations. The Judo Club meets in Wemyss Bay Community Centre on Wednesdays from 7.30 – 9.00pm and on Fridays from 6.30 – 8.00pm and is open to anyone over the age of five. If you are interested in taking up the sport why not pop in to the centre at the beginning of one of the classes or contact Suzi Tel: 798575.

Perhaps you are a champion in the making!

## **Thank you**

Graeme Inglis and Dino Zavaroni would like to thank all the public who contributed to their "Save the Horses and Ponies Fund" for Ardgowan Riding School. They are very grateful and so are all their friends at the riding school.

## **Rannoch Road kids earn money for cancer research**

A group of children from Rannoch Road recently went on a sponsored walk to help raise money for cancer research.

Despite the rain the kids enjoyed themselves as they walked from their road down to Wemyss Bay

Pier during the October holidays. They were sponsored by family and friends and, through their efforts, they managed to raise £150 which was recently presented to Daphne Shaw-Collins, Cancer Research store manager.

### **Community Christmas**

The switch-on of the Christmas lights was a great success and was attended by almost 300 people, most of whom enjoyed a glass of mulled wine, provided by the community association, in the community centre afterwards. The lights were switched on by the Gala Queen and there was even a visit by Santa, while the carol singers came from P6 and 7 at WB Primary. Inverclyde Council provided tea, coffee and mince-pies for the adults and juice and crisps for the children. Everyone enjoyed the evening and it was a great way to start the run-up to Christmas.

### **Woodland Association**

The Woodland Association's **Annual General Meeting** will be held on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm in the Community Centre. The main aim of the Association is to conserve Wemyss Bay Wood as a safe and pleasant greenspace which can be enjoyed by all sectors of the community and prevent its continued decline. Come along to the meeting and find out more about what's going on. There have already been a number of nominations for office-bearers and committee members and although nominations will be taken on the night, please do not feel that by coming along to the meeting you will be roped into some committee or committed to work. It is your opportunity to discuss what you feel is important about the Wood and the work of the Association. There will be a committee meeting on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January in Inverkip Hotel at 7.30pm and any members of the Association are welcome to attend.

### **A Message from David Cairns MP**

As Christmas has just gone, I thought I would share a few of my thoughts on the festive season. I am always struck each year by the number of people busy rushing around buying more and more presents and food. Department Stores in the big cities become jam-packed with bustling shoppers and even Greenock town centre takes on a scrum mentality. But I wonder if we could be losing sight of the true meaning of Christmas. Many people have complained that the true spirit of the time of year is getting lost amidst the growing commercialisation of Christmas, and I have to say that I agree. Christmas should be a time for families, for reflecting on the past year, and thinking about what we are actually celebrating. But it seems to be turning more and more into a shopper's marathon, with many people feeling under pressure to go into debt, in order to provide for a good Christmas.

In my former job, as a catholic priest, Christmas was of course a very busy time of year from a work perspective and I think we should take a moment to think about the many people who will have been working over the festive period - medical staff, the emergency services. Another huge group of people who will have worked flat out over the Christmas period are shop workers.

Over the past year, I have been struck by what a raw deal shop workers often get, so much so that I felt the law needed to be changed in order to give them a better deal. Last year, I won the House of Commons ballot to put forward a law of my choice in Parliament. Around that time, several shop assistants in Scotland were sacked for refusing to work on a Sunday and this was something that could only have happened in Scotland, because in the rest of the UK people can refuse to work on Sundays. This really appalled me, so I managed to get the law amended so that Scottish shop workers would only have to work Sunday's if they chose to do so.

This year, a colleague has decided to put forward a bill to stop the large stores opening on Christmas Day. I know that the Government is planning to support this, and so do I. I certainly think we have gone too far in terms of the 24 hour, 7 days a week, 365 days a year shopping mentality and I hope that we can get back to thinking what Christmas is really about.

I hope everyone in Wemyss Bay had a great Christmas and all the very best for 2004.

*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.*

### **Too Much Rubbish!**

The Karsten family from Holland recently visited Scotland, staying for two weeks at the caravan park. Jan posted a message on the web-site thanking local people for their friendliness and kindness. They found walking here much more tiring than in Holland because of the hills. One

drawback however, as far as they were concerned, was the amount of rubbish (beer cans, broken glass and paper) which was lying around the train station and the beach. Is this the impression we really want to give visitors to the area? Take your rubbish home and help keep Wemyss Bay tidy.

## **Local Wildlife**

When we mentioned last month that we would talk about birds in this edition we were surprised at the response. Several people contacted me to tell me about the birds they see in their gardens. I have pulled together these comments for this article and thank Miss Herbert, Mrs McCartney and Mr Tindal for their input.

Gannets, cormorants, shags, mallard and eider ducks, oystercatchers, redshanks, curlews, black-headed and herring gulls and both pied and grey wagtails are just some of those you may see around the shore. There have also been a number of recent sightings in the Undercliff Road and Leapmoor Drive areas of a female grouse – it seems very likely that she has somehow become lost as it is certainly unusual to see these birds around although their relatives, pheasants, are easier to spot. (Last winter a single female grouse was seen regularly around Morar Road – perhaps this is the same one and she has opted for a change of scenery this year!)

Why not put some food out for the birds and see how many you can attract to your garden?

Remember however that once you start feeding the birds it is essential that you continue throughout the winter as they will come looking for food and, particularly small birds cannot afford to waste energy making futile visits. In addition to bread, cakes and table scraps try feeding peanuts (not the roasted or salted ones!) wild bird seed, sunflower seeds, and fat snacks which can be bought cheaply or made by melting suet and mixing with bird seed. Bird tables and feeders are visited on a daily basis by blackbirds, robins, blue tits, great tits, coal tits, long-tailed tits, chaffinches, greenfinches, collared doves, wood pigeons, magpies and crows. Great spotted woodpeckers visit from time to time. Although I have never been visited by sparrows or starlings, they are frequent visitors elsewhere in Wemyss Bay. In the Morar Road area several blackbirds have recently fallen victim to a female sparrowhawk – within 15 minutes all that was left was a lot of soft grey and shiny black feathers. Elsewhere in the garden wrens, pied wagtails and thrushes can be seen and, in or near woodland, it is not uncommon to see goldcrests, treecreepers, goldfinches and bullfinches. Step outside at night and listen to the tawny owls familiar cry – they roost in trees during the day and I came across one when walking through the woods recently. During the day the song of the blackcap is a regular sound, although they are quite difficult to spot, and in spring listen out for a cuckoo.

One local resident contacted us regarding the number of crows, magpies and seagulls which are to be found in gardens and the detrimental effect they have to smaller birds. Certainly they frighten many small birds away and they have been known to attack and kill smaller birds on occasions. In addition magpies and crows will raid nests for eggs. There is no doubt that as more of us put out food to attract feathered visitors, gulls and members of the crow family have found easy pickings. There are various views on this subject; some people feel that the bigger birds are behaving naturally while others believe that they should be driven off or killed. Various ornithological groups suggest that although many varieties of common small birds are declining this is as a result of other environmental issues rather than an increase in numbers of crows and magpies. It is possible to provide food for smaller birds which is inaccessible for the bigger varieties by fitting bars round the edges of bird tables so that only small ones can get access and by using assorted feeders which are less popular with larger birds. I do however provide a limited amount of food for the magpies and crows in the hope that they will be less likely to attack other species if they have ready access to alternative food. At the end of the day we are surrounded by water and by countryside – it is inevitable that we will have these birds on our doorstep. Magpies in particular, although very noisy are beautiful birds.

We are lucky in Wemyss Bay to have such a rich variety of wildlife on our doorstep. Watch carefully and you might just be surprised by what you see.

## **Ardgowan Football Development – [www.ardgowanfd.co.uk](http://www.ardgowanfd.co.uk)**

The Coaches of AFD would like to thank parents for their generous gift at Christmas time, we all enjoyed it(!) and wish you all a Happy New Year.

The AFD 2004 Sessions begin on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January at the usual times with the Ardgowan Thistle Wednesday evening sessions re-commencing on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January at 6pm. We will be issuing club tracksuits on the 8<sup>th</sup> and are delighted that the Greenock Morton Supporters' Trust has agreed to sponsor strips for ATFC.

The club are holding are holding a Race Night on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February and anyone wishing tickets should contact Tom McClurg on 520179.

### 'Allo, 'Allo

From Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March until Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> March the Attic Players are staging their spring play in a rather unusual venue. They will be performing the play 'Allo, 'Allo in The Seaview Café with the audience sitting among the actors, and effectively playing the part of other café customers. In keeping with the atmosphere of the play, Loretta and staff at the café will be providing supper. Tickets, including supper, are priced £12 and are selling out fast. Telephone 522366 for details or book online at [www.attic-players.co.uk](http://www.attic-players.co.uk)

### Wemyss Bay Adult Association

The Adult Association programme for 2004 is as follows:-

TUESDAYS :	Home Furnishings/ Dressmaking	8.00 – 9.30pm
	Cross Stitch/ Embroidery	7.30 – 9.30pm
WEDNESDAYS :	Sign Language (Level 1)	6.30 – 9.30pm
	Yoga	7.40 – 9.15pm
THURSDAYS :	Body Zone*	6.30 – 7.30pm

All groups will commence during the week beginning 12<sup>th</sup> January 2004

\* If enough interest is shown, it is planned to introduce PILATES to the Body Zone class on Thursdays.

If you are interested in taking part in any of these classes, or if you would like further information, please call Morag Wilson Tel: 521626

### Recycling

Greenlight will be carrying out their doorstep collections in Wemyss Bay on Mondays 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> January – make sure that you put your bags out early. Remember that they collect empty drinks and food cans, plastic bottles and milk cartons, plastic bags and rags, in addition to papers. Just the thing to get rid of all the empties after the festive season and help the environment at the same time! Greenlight do not collect glass bottles or jars but there is a glass recycling facility at the community centre – smashing all the bottles into the bins is a great way to get rid of tension after all the visitors have eventually left!!

### 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. They will resume after the holidays on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January. Speakers are yet to be confirmed but we should be able to give you more details next month. Everyone is welcome to come along to any of the meetings. There is no joining or annual fee and the entrance cost is £1.80 (£1.50 for concessions). For further information please call Jenny McGee Tel: 521090

### Articles Wanted

Do you have any news or information which you think may interest other folk in Wemyss Bay? Share your news of births, graduations, marriages, anniversaries or other special events. Perhaps you, or someone you know, is involved in some charity fundraising event or has done well in a sporting competition. I would also be interested in suggestions about what you would like to see included. If you would like to contribute to the Village News please contact Eila Roberts, 14 Brueacre Drive, Wemyss Bay. Tel: 529375 E-mail: [eilaroberts@care4free.net](mailto:eilaroberts@care4free.net)

### Parliamentary Report from Duncan McNeil MSP

Well I hope you all had a good festive season and that you are keeping to (at least some of) your New Year's Resolutions.

Sadly, I have been forced to relinquish my original resolution (to which I was adhering admirably, I might say). It seems that resisting the temptation to go to Tesco on a Saturday morning and instead accompanying my new 9-iron to Whinhill and practicing my short game was not an adequate test of my willpower.

Still, I have many potential substitutes.

There is a daunting parliamentary programme ahead of MSPs in the coming session and its successful conclusion is by no means a foregone conclusion. Key measures in our long-awaited bill aimed at cracking down on antisocial behaviour will be opposed by special interest groups and their political allies. And the Health Committee inquiry into how the NHS is staffed and run is set to prove unpopular with some of the powerful vested interests in the service.

Perhaps, then, I will resolve to work to ensure that neither is allowed to duck the big issues, or put the needs of the professionals before the needs of the people.

Not an easy task, but more rewarding than living on celery and carrot juice for a month and cheaper than joining a gym.

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

## School News

On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January P6 and 7 will be involved in a European Day which parents are invited to attend. Each child had a personal topic and chose a country to find out about. They will be talking to parents and explaining the things they found out.

Is your child due to move into P1 after the summer? Induction afternoons for all the children starting school in autumn will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> January.

Finally, the Christmas Show "Bugsy Malone" which had to be rescheduled due to ill health will now be held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January. (Note: the dates have been altered from the ones which appeared in last month's Village News.) Letters have gone out to parents with details of how to obtain tickets.

## Have Your Say

How do you pronounce Wemyss? What do you think about the schools debate? Are there enough "poop bins" in Wemyss Bay? Polls on each of these topics are currently being run on the web site. Log on to [www.wemyssbay.net/news/polls](http://www.wemyssbay.net/news/polls) and register your vote. There is no point in trying to vote more than once as there is software in place to prevent this.

## Cancer Research

Due to the generosity of staff and customers at Spar a total of £95 was raised for Cancer Research. Well done to all involved.

That's all for this month. The closing date for adverts or articles for the February edition of the Village News is 20<sup>th</sup> January. Send them to Eila at the address on the front page or drop them in to the Village News folder behind the counter in Spar

## Kids Stuff

Did you know that it is good luck if the first person to come into your house after midnight on Hogmanay is tall, dark and handsome? January 25<sup>th</sup> is Burns' Night, when we celebrate the life of Robert Burns, our national poet. The word search this month is all about New Year and Robert Burns. See how many words you can find

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

BAGPIPES KILT  
 BELLS NEEPS  
 BURNS NEW YEAR  
 FIRST POET  
 FOOT RESOLUTION  
 HAGGIS ROBERT  
 HOGMANAY TATTIES  
 JANUARY