

Wemyss Bay Village News

183rd Edition

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

NHS Climb Down

As the Village News went to the printers the "Greenock Telegraph" reported that NHS chiefs are set to climb down over plans to close Accident and Emergency provision at Inverclyde Royal Hospital.

Under the controversial proposals, the health board planned to close the busy A&E department and force patients to travel to Paisley for emergency treatment, but it has now emerged they want to keep the busy local emergency service. They are drawing up new plans which would mean doctors from Glasgow, Paisley and Inverclyde would staff the unit.

The news comes just the day after Scottish Executive figures revealed the Greenock unit was one of the three busiest A&E departments in Britain.

The revised plans have been made by David Meikle, Inverclyde divisional director at NHS Argyll and Clyde, who will reveal full details of them to the health board before Christmas. He said: "The key focus of our detailed health plans will be to maximise the amount of diagnosis and treatment, both in-patient and outpatient that is provided locally."

"The detailed plans should develop and extend the basic ambulatory care model described in the consultation paper to provide additional services, including increased local emergency services, in local acute settings at the Inverclyde Royal Hospital, Royal Alexandra Hospital and Vale of Leven Hospital."

"Specialist acute inpatient services should be networked with local acute services. Plans should include arrangements to ensure that services are networked across Argyll and Clyde and with neighbouring health board areas, notably NHS Greater Glasgow, to maximise benefits to patients."

Willie Duffy, regional officer for Unison, said: "We have been given a commitment that there will be an accident and emergency facility at the IRH. We have also been given a commitment that there will be elective in-patient surgery at the IRH, using consultants across Glasgow, Paisley and Inverclyde."

Christmas Lights Switch-On

Did all your Christmas wishes come true? Members of the Community Association were wishing that the centre had expanding walls as everyone piled into the building after the lights switch-on (or not!) last month. Despite the problems with the lights coming on, everything was sorted out and they were shining by the time people were going home. Santa was extremely busy and distributed over 170 gifts to the hordes of excited children, while the adults managed to work their way through mince pies and almost 45 litres of mulled wine!! Although it was a bit of a squeeze to fit everyone in at times, we hope you all had a good time. Thank you to everyone who came along and made the night such a success. We know that some people think that the council put much more effort into things this year, so we thought it important to clarify who did what. Inverclyde Council provided the Christmas tree and lights outside the school and were responsible for actually switching the lights on. In addition they provided tea, coffee and mince pies for the adults and juice and crisps for the kids inside the community centre and also provided staff to serve these. All the decorations inside the community centre were provided by the Community Association, with volunteers starting at 9.00am that morning to decorate the hall. The mulled wine, which was served by local volunteers, shortbread biscuits and additional juice for the children was provided by the Association. Finally all the presents which Santa handed out were funded by the Community Association. Special thanks must be given to Kirsty Donnelly, chairperson of the Community Association, and her willing(!) band of volunteers for all their efforts in insuring that this was one of the best Lights Switch-Ons yet.

Community Association

The next meeting of the Community Association will be held at 7.30pm on Sunday 9th January 2005 at 7.30pm in the Community Centre. 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.

Village News

The success of the Village News relies heavily on the army of volunteer distributors who deliver each edition to every home in Wemyss Bay. Many of the distributors have been helping for years. We would like to thank them all for their efforts every month.

We are aware that some people may feel that they have "done their bit" and think that it is time for someone else to take over their area. If you would like to step down please let us know and we will do our best to find a replacement.

Similarly, if you have an hour to spare once a month and would like to help with deliveries please contact **Ann Marie on 522998**. The more distributors we have, the smaller each area requires to be and the less time it takes for distribution, so you could really make a difference. Children love helping out – perhaps you could turn delivering the Village News into the opportunity for a family walk.

Very occasionally we hear of problems with someone not receiving their copy. If you experience any difficulties please let Ann Marie know.

Scottish Parliament Report, Duncan McNeil MSP

Happy New Year! I hope those of you lucky enough to have a break over the Festive Period had a great time. And, if you were obliged to spend your Christmas working so that the rest of us could enjoy ours, I hope you're now looking forward to some time off when everyone else is back at work – trying to get through a day's toil while keeping to their New Year's Resolutions. But, just as traditional at this time of year as pledging to exercise every day and drink nothing stronger than mineral water, is considering what the year ahead has in store.

In terms of the Scottish Parliament's 2005 agenda, the Health Committee will soon publish our report on NHS workforce planning. Given the sparks which flew at the evidence taking sessions, it should give those charged with delivering our health services – both professionals and politicians – a great deal to think about. It will also, I hope, signpost a route out of the

ridiculous situation where there is precious little strategic planning, leaving individual boards – such as Argyll and Clyde – dealing with Scotland-wide problems on a crisis-by-crisis, hospital-by-hospital basis.

At times, though, it can seem like the NHS centralisation bandwagon is the only thing travelling merrily along. That is why the major Transport Bill is also set to make progress. A comprehensive and far-reaching piece of legislation, the Bill will introduce *national* travel concession schemes. And, for us commuters, there will be tougher provisions for directing the timing of road-works, reinstatement and resurfacing.

One way and another, then, 2005 could be the year for getting things moving.

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

Hi From Australia

I lived in Woodburn cottage from 1950 to 1953 with my parents and brother. It was a great place for kids. We used to spend hours up at the Smithy, petting the calves left there to be picked up the lorry, and each of us took turns pumping the bellows for the Forge. One area that was out of bounds was the radar gun base that had been built up near where the power station is now. All the kids had free range of the gardens around the Bay so long as we did not cause any damage. We fished at the old harbour and generally had a carefree time. We had to get the bus to Inverkip to go to school. Sweets were still on ration, and the race to get to the bakers when the bus stopped to get the BEST broken biscuits was on each morning.

We moved to Ayrshire in 1953 and lost contact with our friends. Hope this triggers memories for some others of that era.

Regards

Wilson Blaikie

Bible Club

The Bible Club rounded off last year with a fun Christmas Party, filled with lots of games and attended by 30 children. They will start up again for the new session on Monday 10th January 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. For further details, contact **Stephen Renton** on **01505 355994**

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. To make a booking, or for more information, 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.

WEA

The WEA will resume in the New Year on Wednesday 26th January at 9.45am in the Reading Room of Skelmorlie Community Centre. The opening talk will be by John Miller, who will be discussing his Churchill Scholarship visit to Lithuania, where he traced his family roots.

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 McGee Tel: 521090**.

A full programme for the coming session will be available later this month. Look out for posters in Spar or watch out for details in future editions of the Village News.

David Cairns MP

Did you buy the new version of the Band Aid single? It rightly went to number 1 and raised a big sum for displaced people in Sudan. But the reality of life for millions in Africa is still grim. Over a billion people live on less than a dollar a day; 100 million children of primary age are not going to school; and every 24 hours HIV/AIDS claims the lives of over 4,000 people.

For this Government tackling global poverty is a priority, so when we came to power in 1997 we created the Department for International Development, devoted solely to helping the developing world. Over the last seven years we more than doubled the aid budget and are on track to double it again by 2013. And in 2005 Britain will hold the presidency of both the G8 (the eight richest nations in the world) and the European Union, and we intend to use this opportunity to put Third World poverty at the centre of the international stage.

We have four priorities for talking poverty. Firstly, we must have more aid and we need to improve its effectiveness. Each year UK aid helps more than 2 million of the poorest people permanently escape poverty, so we know aid works. Secondly, we need to create a global trading system that's fair to all. That's why we are pushing for greater progress with World Trade Organisation, so that developing countries can compete in worldwide markets. Debt repayments are crippling the Third World, so the UK launched a proposal at the recent World Bank and IMF Annual Meeting aimed at wiping out debt owed by the poorest counties. Fourthly, we must work in partnership with the developing country governments themselves. Aid works best when we are helping the developing countries to help themselves.

I believe we have a moral duty to help our fellow human beings and I am pleased that our Government is leading efforts in international development. Let's make 2005 the year we make a real difference to the lives of people in the Third World.

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.

Skelmorlie and Wemyss Bay Parish Church – January Diary

Every Sunday at 11.00am – MORNING WORSHIP, Sunday School and Crèche

Sunday 2 January, 11.00am – CAROLS for EPIPHANY led by the Choir

Thursday 20 January, 7.30pm – MEN'S FELLOWSHIP Illustrated talk on Alaska

Monday 24 January, 7.00pm – WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY Service

Monday 31 January, 7.30pm – BIBLE STUDY St John's account of the Gospel

Ardgowan Football Development

AFD will be starting up again after the Christmas holidays on Sunday 9th January. All the usual starting times apply. If you require any further information **Tel: 07791 964277**

Woodland Association

At long last, after a series of delays and legal hitches, contractors will start work on path construction and essential tree surgery within the woodland on Monday 10th January. The work is scheduled for completion by early April. During the time that contractors are working we ask for your co-operation. As machinery will be in use, it will be essential on health and safety grounds, to restrict public access at times. Please comply with signs and do not cross any safety barriers – they are there for the safety of everybody. We are sure that you will agree that, when the work is completed, it will have been worth the wait. Anyone who walks along Cliff Terrace Road cannot fail to have noticed the difference caused by the ditching and clearance work, which has been undertaken by Woodland Association volunteers. The path has dried out significantly and is no longer totally overgrown, which in turn allows a lot more light in. As work progresses this will continue to improve. Recently two older ladies commented that, prior to work starting, they had been afraid to walk along the path, however now they enjoy using it. Hopefully more people will feel the same and some may even feel motivated to help out occasionally.

With contractors working in the main wood, volunteers are once again concentrating their efforts in the terraced garden area. Work sessions are held every second weekend and are scheduled for 8th & 9th Jan, 22nd & 23rd Jan, 5th & 6th Feb and 19th & 20th Feb. Anybody interested in helping will be made very welcome. We work from 10am – 3pm on both Saturdays and Sundays, taking regular breaks for coffee, lunch etc. Even if you are only available for an hour or two, you can still make a difference. Meet at the Ardgowan Road end of Cliff Terrace Road and follow the signs to that day's area of work. Gloves, tools and refreshments are provided and children are welcome (we even have kid's sized gloves), provided that they are accompanied at all times by a responsible adult.

The Woodland Association AGM will be held on Sunday 23rd January at 7.30pm in the Community Centre. Many people choose to avoid attending AGMs in case they are "roped in" to doing something. Please be assured that, although more active volunteers are welcome and indeed desperately needed, you will not have to become more involved unless you really want to. Instead, come along and let us know what you think and find out a bit more about our future plans.

If you would like any more information about how you can become involved in the work of the association contact **Eila Roberts Tel: 529375**.

Councillor Eric Forbes

I hope that everybody had an enjoyable Festive break and are back refreshed and ready to continue to work with me to improve Wemyss Bay.

On the agenda this year is the issue of the extension to the Primary School and its impact on the surrounding area. The Council has also to resolve the situation with Secondary schools provision.

The question of parking at Wemyss Bay pierhead area is under discussion with all the interested parties. I had a tour of the area with the Director of Roads and other engineers, to look at possible sites, as has Network Rail, and hopefully in the New Year we will have some proposals to consider. We will work hard to relieve an ever growing problem which will be exacerbated come spring, as day trippers and holiday makers start visiting the area again. I am disappointed however to see that car drivers are illegally parking in the newly formed bus bay. This causes buses to double-park and prevents an early view of the crossing. I would ask again that locals and visiting drivers will observe the regulations.

A huge amount of work has been done over the last few months in the woodlands, and Cliff Terrace Road is now a favoured walk with residents. This could not have happened without the extra effort being put in by members of the Woodland Association. The formal works will shape the main woods allowing a whole range of activities and bring the woodland into a managed state for years to come. Extra pairs of hands will help us to achieve our goals quicker and you will be welcomed by the intrepid band of volunteers presently involved.

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.

Recycling

Following the Christmas holidays, Greenlight will be resuming their regular kerbside collections with uplifts on Mondays 10th & 24th January and 7th & 21st February. They collect newspapers & magazines, plastic bottles & milk cartons, food & drinks cans, rags and carrier bags. Recycling couldn't be easier - do your bit for the environment.

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.

Murdered to Death

Murdered to Death may appear to be an uncharitable comment on an uncharacteristically poor performance by the Attic Players, but nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the Player's production of Peter Gordon's comic murder mystery, which bears that title, was a resounding success.

How Bill Puckrin (Inspector Pratt) coped in a maelstrom of malapropisms – red haddocks for herrings, to name but one – was a feat in itself. His outstanding, outlandish performance was reminiscent of the feckless Clouseau; and Stewart Phillips (Constable Thomkins) made the perfect foil. Their slick repartee was central to the success of another excellent performance by the Players.

The play, a send-up of all things Agatha Christie, is set in a country house in the 1930's. The predictable formula has the usual suspects rounded-up and the familiar web of motives and dark secrets revealed.

Mildred (Hazel Gray) and her niece Dorothy (Julie Petitjean-Freytet), whose house party comes to an abrupt end when an old score is settled are to prove the victims. For newcomers to the stage, they both gave assured performances. Rosemary Willis, in her own inimitable style, caught the essence of Miss Maple, complete with knitting and unwanted interventions. However, unlike the character she mimicked she was invariably as wide of the mark in detection as the ineffectual Inspector Pratt.

On the side of the suspects, and not overshadowed by the central characters, a cast of newcomers and established campaigners gave very creditable performances. Bill Wright, with his accustomed panache, captured exquisitely the stiff-upper-lip Colonel Craddock whose desire for Mildred was just one of his murky secrets. Behind that pseudo-aristocratic façade lurked the most cowardly officer ever to don a military uniform. In the event of Mildred's death, he would inherit her family fortune.

Elizabeth Hatley-Trumpington, cheekily played by Donna Laing, was a la-di-dah opportunist with a convincingly cultured accent, which betrayed her lower-order identity. She was complicit in a scheme to relieve poor, gullible Mildred of her fortune, a crime perpetrated with the suave, sophisticated Pierre Marceau (Eugene Zoica). Eugene had to cope with the language and a French accent, a challenge he met with considerable aplomb.

Bunting (Paul O'Hagan), the requisite butler, amused, then amazed, his retainers when it was discovered that he was not the loyal servant he portrayed but he had conspired with the Colonel's wife, Margaret (Linda Beaton) to get their hands on the money. Margaret, an assertive, demanding spouse, would initiate divorce proceedings against her husband and take him for every penny of his anticipated inheritance. Both slipped convincingly into character.

Another debutante with the Players was director Liz Neill whose influence and ability was evident throughout. The behind-the-scenes staff, numbering as many as the cast, are to be congratulated for a quality set and excellent effects.

The Players richly merited the rapturous acclaim of delighted audiences following another rollicking repast of quality entertainment.

Thanks to Rev. Bill Armstrong for this review.

And Now For The Small Print.....

Please note that we do our best to ensure that adverts are neither misleading or 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.

“Inverclyde’s War” – Celebrating the end of War 1945

2005 is the 60th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. As part of a national programme of celebrations, and in combination with the BBC, the McLean Museum is putting on an exhibition to celebrate the lives of those local people who contributed in any way to the war effort. Did one of your relatives go to war? Did you go to war? Was your Grannie on the buses? Was she working in the shipyards? Did you serve as a Fire Warden? Did your mother bring up a family in the war years? We are looking for your stories. Perhaps your father talked about his time in a prisoner of war camp, but only a few members of the family know. This is your chance to leave a permanent record of what you or one of your family's experience of wartime was like.

The Museum wants to borrow & copy photographs, ephemera and stories from as many local people as possible to place in a permanent archive for future generations and to show in an exhibition in the Watt Hall in July 2005. It doesn't need to be a long, complicated story. Just a photograph and simple details – just as a simple memorial or tribute to those who were alive at a time when news of servicemen dying in foreign lands was a daily and large scale occurrence.

For more information please contact **Vincent Gillen** at the McLean Museum **Tel. 715624**. You can also contact Vincent by email: vincent.gillen@inverclyde.gov.uk

They Really Did Say It

We all know that people in the public eye can say some really daft things sometimes. Here are just a few examples which made me smile:

"I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body," Winston Bennett, University of Kentucky Basketball Forward.

"Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country," Marion Barry, Mayor of Washington, D.C.

"It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it." former U.S. Vice President Al Gore

"It's no exaggeration to say that the undecideds could go one way or another" George W. Bush, U.S. President

"We don't necessarily discriminate. We simply exclude certain types of people." Colonel Wellman, ROTC Instructor.

"If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure." former U.S. President Bill Clinton,

"Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 1992, because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances." Department of Social Services, Greenville, South Carolina

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.

Finally

That's all for this month. **The closing date for any articles or adverts for the February edition of the Village News is the 20th January.** This is an absolute deadline and cannot be extended under any circumstances! 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.

Kid's Stuff

On Hogmanay, the Bells at midnight signal the start of the New Year and a time to make resolutions about what we are going to do better. This month's wordsearch is about the year: the number of months and their names, the number of weeks. It is also about Robert Burns, our national poet, who is celebrated all over the world on 25th of January with Burns Suppers, when people eat haggis, neeps and tatties and sing or recite some of Burns' poems and songs. See how many words you can find this month.

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

- APRIL
- AUGUST
- BELLS
- BURNS
- DAY
- DECEMBER
- FEBRUARY
- FIFTY-TWO
- HAGGIS
- HOGMANAY
- JANUARY
- JULY
- JUNE
- MARCH
- MAY
- MONTH
- NATIONAL
- NEEPS
- NEW YEAR
- NOVEMBER
- OCTOBER
- POET
- RESOLUTIONS
- ROBERT
- SEPTEMBER
- TATTIES
- TWELVE
- WEEK

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.

- 20 words – at least you're trying!
- 40 words – shows promise

- 30 words – good
- 50+ words – brain-box!!

C	D	E
S	E	A
T	N	H