

BOOKSHOP IMPROVEMENTS



Bookshop manager Sheena Inglis, with Simon Dell and the new shelves.

A lot of work was undertaken while the bookshop was closed in January. The old bookshelves were showing their age and sagging somewhat. They have all been replaced by more robust shelves, with a timber finish. The furniture in the gallery has also been replaced, with older pieces more in keeping with the station than the previous plastic chairs. There is also a new, larger stove. Redecoration has been carried out where necessary. Work in hand includes re-mounting archive photographs and records in a uniform set of hardback binders. Overall, this should make the gallery more welcoming and attractive.

Mapping the Clyde

Last year we were able to acquire a large, panoramic map of the Firth of Clyde. These maps were once widely used on steamers and at stations in the area. They appeared in various guises, ranging from large posters to small illustrations in timetables and leaflets. Two basic designs were used. One had north at the top and covered a wide area, including Jura and Oban. There is a framed example of this in the gallery, but it is a reproduction. The other type had west at the top and did not extend beyond Kintyre. This was more commonly used, because it focussed particularly on the Firth of Clyde and allowed more detail to be shown.



The map that we acquired was in quite fragile condition and had been affected by damp. We had it professionally restored at the Scottish Conservation Studio at Hopetoun House and their advice was that it should be carefully stored and not exposed to light. Therefore, we have had an exact photographic replica made. This is now displayed in the main entrance to the station.

A date for your diary: Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 12th May 2018. Further information will be circulated nearer the time.

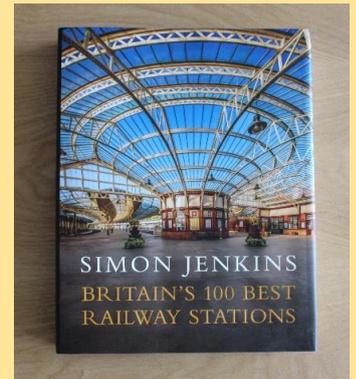


NANCY CAMERON stood down from working in the bookshop and tending the station flowers at the end of 2017. Nancy founded the Friends and has put in a tremendous amount of work for the benefit of the station. We are extremely grateful to her for all she has done over the last nine years and she retires with our very best wishes. We thank Cathy Galbraith for taking responsibility for gardening, and for arranging the excellent Christmas tree.

Nancy with a young customer in the bookshop.

BRITAIN'S LOVELIEST STATION

You may have seen Sir Simon Jenkins' book *Britain's 100 Best Railway Stations*, which features Wemyss Bay as one of the top ten in the UK. We still have a few copies for sale in the bookshop. Sir Simon kindly signed a copy especially for the Friends, thanking and congratulating us for our work. He also wrote an article for *Country Life* magazine, in which he described our station as Britain's loveliest and *the only station that, in my opinion, qualifies as a coherent work of art*. He goes on to say *once crowded with Glasgow daytrippers, Wemyss Bay is now a peaceful place, restored in the care of devoted local friends, who tend its flowers and run a genteel bookshop. Wemyss Bay's flowers are as glorious as its paintwork is subtle. Walking the deserted concourse is a statue of a small boy, purposefully off on holiday. Lucky boy*. We could not put it better ourselves!



Sir Simon is talking about his book and Britain's stations at the Mitchell Library, Glasgow at 7:45 pm on Friday 23 March. Tickets can be booked, price £9, through the Aye Write website, www.ayewrite.com.

More renovation work

Much of the glazing in the station roof is cracked. Following consultation with Historic Environment Scotland and the Railway Heritage Trust, Network Rail is to make a start on replacing the glass with polycarbonate. This has been done at various other stations, including Stirling, which is listed category B. The cost of the work is considerable, so it will be undertaken in phases, starting with the area at the south (booking office) end of the platforms. Most importantly, the appearance of the roof will be unchanged and Inverclyde Council requires Network Rail to monitor the polycarbonate for discolouration and to change any panes that do deteriorate. A few panes on the east side of the concourse have already been replaced with polycarbonate, as a trial.



LOST FROM WEMYSS BAY

We are often asked what happened to the paddle box decorations from various old steamers, which used to be displayed on the pier. We have found one of them, from *Marchioness of Lorne*, at the Scottish Maritime Museum in Irvine. The caption by it records that it was previously at Wemyss Bay. The Museum has informed us that they cannot find anything in their records that would reveal what became of the others. The Museum is close to Irvine Harbour and open daily 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.