

## SHOP OPEN AGAIN

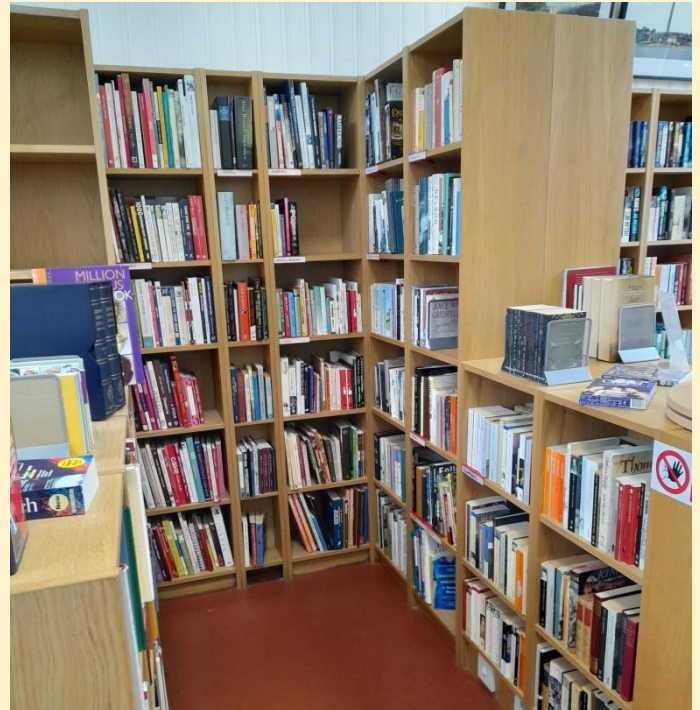
The bookshop re-opened on 21 February. While we were closed the shelves were rearranged in the fiction room (see right). That means more of the room is back in use, so we can display more stock.

This has enabled us to get rid of the temporary display in the gallery, so that has returned to normal.

We have had some significant donations, so there is much new stock. This includes a large number of railway books.

Our opening hours are 10.00 am to 4.00 pm Mondays to Saturdays. Do call in to see us soon!

We are grateful to Agnes McAuley for taking on the role of Membership Secretary, in place of Simon Dell, who is now running the shop.



## REPAIRS

We still have the temporary ceiling in the fiction room and the missing section of cornice in the main room. This is because the water penetration problem has yet to be dealt with fully and there is no point in repairing the ceilings until that is sorted out. Water penetrates into the building through the chimney stack. That was not a problem while fires were lit, because the heat dried out the brick and stonework. Network Rail intends to insert a damp proof course into the chimney stack and this work should start soon. A more difficult problem is the gutter around the concourse being overwhelmed when there is especially heavy rain. Work is under way to determine how the gutter can be modified to deal with these events and at what cost. We are assured by Network Rail that this is a priority, despite the financial constraints they are under.

## TRAIN SPOTTING



ScotRail has carried out a consultation on timetable changes, in view of the reduced level of travel. Fortunately, no cuts are planned at Wemyss Bay. What has changed is the type of train being used. Most weekday trains are either the old class 318 or 320, with 3+2 seating and no air conditioning, or the new class 385 Hitachi trains. There are now far fewer workings by the class 380 Siemens trains, with their particularly comfortable seats and very smooth ride. This may be because after twelve years' service they are being refurbished, but we hope to see them back soon.

*More of these, please! Class 380 at Wemyss Bay*

## STATION STAFFING

In January ScotRail launched a public consultation on a proposal to reduce the hours that station ticket offices are open. That would result in the ticket office at Wemyss Bay being closed in the afternoon and evenings, when fewer than twelve tickets per hour were being sold. We put in a response saying that we thought the station should remain staffed all day. Among the points we raised were:

- Many people prefer to buy a ticket from a person, who can provide information and advice, rather than a machine or website.
- If staff are not present the lavatories are closed, which is not acceptable.
- There is a much greater risk of antisocial behaviour and vandalism if the station is unstaffed.
- Nobody would be present to assist those with a disability, for whom the kerb at the station entrance can be a real obstacle.

On top of this, Caledonian MacBrayne has ceased selling through tickets between Rothesay and Glasgow, so there are more people needing to buy a ticket at the station.

The consultation attracted 1,550 responses in respect of proposals across Scotland, with all but 20 opposed to the ticket office closures. The response from ScotRail to this at Wemyss Bay and 50 other stations is rather odd. The closures will go ahead as planned, with some minor tweaks to the opening hours, but the stations will remain staffed all day. Whether the staff are in the ticket office or elsewhere on the station, our main objective has been met. How and where the staff spend their time in the afternoon and evening remains to be seen, but we understand they will be available to assist passengers with ticket purchases, either using the ticket vending machine or a portable machine. It may just be easier to continue selling tickets from the booking office!



*We were delighted to welcome the Salvation Army Band, who performed outside the bookshop on 18 December. There were many appreciative comments from those who came to hear the band, so we hope this can become an annual event.*