

NATIONAL RAILWAY HERITAGE AWARD



The recent renovation of Wemyss Bay station was judged the 'best entry' at the 2017 National Railway Heritage Awards. A commemorative plaque was unveiled by Andy Savage, Executive Director of the Railway Heritage Trust on 24 May. It is to be mounted on the brick plinth by the booking office, where the plaque for the 1994 award is displayed. Speaking at the unveiling, Andy Savage paid tribute to Nancy Cameron's determination that the station should be returned to its traditional colour scheme.

Jacqueline Rae from ScotRail, Andy Savage and Donald Stevenson from Network Rail

Robert Hayward, Awards Manager for the National Railway Heritage Awards, made a day trip by train all the way from East Grinstead, Sussex to attend the unveiling. He had not visited Wemyss Bay before and said the station "is simply lovely and I am glad I made the effort to get up at 4am to do the journey."

LIFEBOAT CERTIFICATE

Recently put on display in the Gallery is this certificate from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, recording the award of a silver medal to Mr Hector Robertson "for gallantly assisting to save, at the risk of his own life, two of the crew of the yacht 'Valtos', which foundered in a SW gale and a heavy sea, in Wemyss Bay, on the 3rd July, 1903". The incident was reported briefly in the *Glasgow Herald* next day, thus: "Owing to the boisterous nature of the weather yesterday, the Royal Western Yacht Club could only carry through a portion of their regatta at Wemyss Bay. The winners of the races decided were *Valdora*, *Camellia*, *Vagrant* and *Verve*. The day's proceedings were unfortunately attended with loss of life. *Valtos*, belonging to Mr Robert Clark, sank off Innellan and one of the hands named Gilmour was drowned." It is hard to imagine today's media reporting a drowning in such an offhand manner.



Another recommendation

On 26 May *The Guardian* newspaper published a feature on '10 of the UK's best seaside towns', including Rothesay. It said: *You get there by ferry, a 35-minute crossing from the terminal at Wemyss Bay railway station. This a wee marvel in itself, its Edwardian canopy a swirl of steel and glass. Make sure and leave enough time to pick up something to read from the secondhand bookshop in the former first-class waiting room.*



Spring flowers on the concourse

GARDENING

The weather has resulted in plants being later than usual this year, but our gardeners produced a stunning display when the spring flowers finally bloomed. There were many compliments from visitors to the shop.

At the start of summer the trees on the pier walkway were replaced by twelve *Photina*, variety 'Red Robin'. A lot of work went into this from the team, including removal of old trees and soil, followed by renewal of composts and fertilisers, making ready for the new trees. The trees are evergreen and considered to be hardy, outdoor and requiring full sun in the summer – so good luck to them!

Two *Euonymus Japonicus* 'Green Spire' have been planted near the old bookstall. This evergreen is also considered as hardy and outdoor, but requires partial shade.

In the corner of the concourse, near platform 1, we have installed a beautiful Acer Palm, variety 'Blood Good'. This small tree, with red foliage, is sure to make a statement at all times. Please take the trouble to check it out; it is a beautiful specimen.

The gardening team will be placing bedding plants under the trees and around the station. This takes time, so please be patient! Delivery of a large planter is awaited, where another statement piece will be installed – *Prunus Carolina*. Keep checking out for this.

The gardening team from Parklea, Port Glasgow have planted out the three towers on the concourse, which will soon be awash with colour from the Busy Lizzies and Trailing Lobelia.

Many thanks to Cathy Galbraith and her helpers for all their hard work and the resulting splendid displays.

General Data Protection Regulation

Please see our website

<http://friendsofwemyssbaystation.co.uk/news/> for details of how we comply with the new data protection legislation and protect your personal information.



The new trees on the pier

SIR SIMON JENKINS' VISIT

Sir Simon Jenkins, author of *Britain's 100 Best Railway Stations*, gave an interesting talk on stations on 23rd March at the Mitchell Library. Next morning he re-visited Wemyss Bay, which he has described as Britain's loveliest station. There he was shown the various projects that we have completed recently.

Sir Simon later emailed: "Thank you so much for your warm welcome to Wemyss Bay. It fully lived up to my recollections and expectations. Many congratulations on all your good work there."

Simon Dell shows Sir Simon Jenkins the Clyde panoramic map that the Friends recently installed in the station entrance.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 12th MAY 2018

Sheena Inglis, on behalf of the Committee, reported on another successful year. Income from the bookshop remained healthy and proceeds had been used to redecorate and refurnish the Bookshop and Gallery. The station had come to wider attention, through the book, *Britain's 100 Best Railway Stations*, and the *All The Stations* video on You Tube. As a result of the latter, we now have supporters in Canada, the United States and Australia. Margaret Shaw retired from the Committee with effect from the Annual General Meeting. Margaret was a founder-member of the Friends and we are most grateful for her help over the years, particularly in the shop and with gardening. Morag Adams was elected to the Committee, together with the other existing members. Following the formal business, Sue Hothersall gave an interesting talk about buildings, other than our station, which were designed by architect James Miller.

A TITLED LADY TAKES UP RESIDENCE

We are very fortunate to have acquired a model of turbine steamer ***Duchess of Montrose***, which was previously in the former Royal Oak bar in Largs. Following renovation it is on display in the Gallery.



The original vessel was built by William Denny & Bros. Limited in 1930 for the Caledonian Steam Packet Company. She was to be used for Clyde cruising, but has a special association with Wemyss Bay. For most of the Second World War ***Duchess of Montrose*** operated the ferry service from Wemyss Bay to Innellan and Rothesay. The large turbine steamers were normally laid up each winter, but many of the Clyde's paddle steamers had been called up to serve as mine sweepers. Therefore, ***Duchess of Montrose*** was in use throughout the war years.

She returned to summer cruising in 1946, with only occasional winter service, but continued to call regularly at Wemyss Bay. A typical day would see her sail from Gourock, Dunoon, Wemyss Bay and Rothesay and then cruise to Inveraray, Campbeltown or Ayr. ***Duchess of Montrose*** was withdrawn at the end of the 1964 summer season and was broken up at Ghent, Belgium.