

WE HAVE THE BUILDERS IN



Builders have been working at Wemyss Bay since March to stop water coming into the building.

One of the problems in the bookshop has been water percolating down the chimney stacks. This is what caused part of the cornice to collapse in our main room. When the fire places were in use that was not a problem, because the heat dried out the chimney. Contractors working for Network Rail have inserted a damp proof membrane into the chimney stacks, which should prevent further problems.

The more serious flooding into our fiction room was caused by the gutter round the edge of the concourse overflowing. Down pipes from the gutter had been damaged, so water could not drain out properly. Repairs have been carried out, so we hope that problem has been sorted out as well.

That leaves the ceiling in the fiction room to be repaired and the cornices there and in the main room to be replaced. Meantime, part of the fiction room remains out of use.

We are grateful to Network Rail and their contractors for their perseverance in dealing with these problems.

Much more remains to be done around the station. An extensive area near platform 1 is out of use, because water leaks have rotted the timber deck. Unfortunately, this prevents our gardeners accessing the tap where they get water for the plants. Instead, they have to use a hose from the lavatory in the bookshop to fill the bowser, which is far from ideal.

We hope that the project by the Landmark Trust to convert the clock tower flat into a holiday let will go ahead.

It is hoped that the clock mechanism may be replaced, so the correct time is shown at last. The new works would be electronic, receiving a time signal by radio, but without changing the appearance of the clock. The Friends have offered to contribute to the cost of this work.

RAILWAY HERITAGE

TRUST VISIT

Tim Hedley-Jones, the new Executive Director of the Railway Heritage Trust visited Wemyss Bay on 18 July. The Trust gives grants towards work to heritage stations and structures owned by Network Rail and Tim expressed willingness to help with the cost of work that needs to be done at the station.

He met several of our volunteers and said that he was immensely impressed by the bookshop and gallery!

The photograph shows Tim Hedley-Jones (right), Greg Beecroft (centre, representing the Friends) and John Wilson (ScotRail) at the station. Our old friend John Yellowlees was behind the camera.



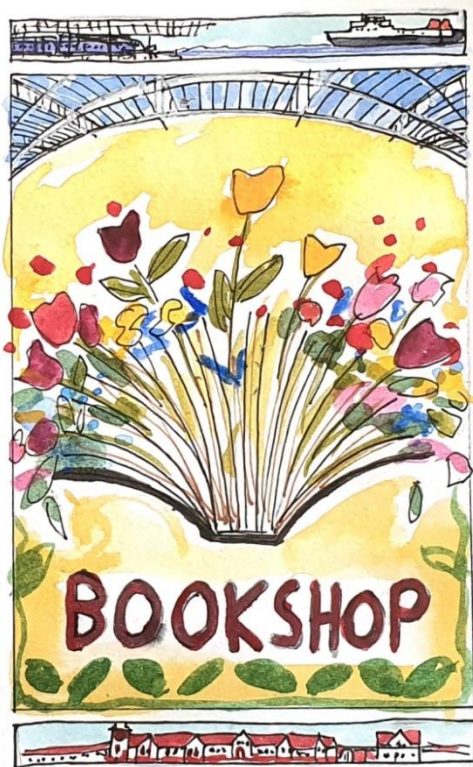
FIDDLE CONCERT – SATURDAY 27th AUGUST

The Clyde Coast Strathspey and Reel Society, more colloquially known as the "Clyde Coast Fiddlers", will be performing a concert on the station concourse outside the Bookshop and Gallery on Saturday 27th August. The time has yet to be confirmed, but is likely to be early afternoon. Watch out for further details in the bookshop, on our website and social media channels.

ART WORKS

We have engaged artist Leo du Feu to produce two art works for display at the station. One will be a triptych to fill the frame at the head of the pier, currently occupied by a rather faded Rothesay poster and ship paintings and photographs that are past their best. The other will occupy a poster space by the bookshop. The piece on the pier will illustrate the voyage from Wemyss Bay to Rothesay. The image on the left is a preliminary study for what will be displayed by the bookshop.

Leo has undertaken art projects at other ScotRail stations and he entertained our annual general meeting with a presentation about his work. He is freelance, but is ScotRail's artist in residence. His studio is in rooms at Burntisland railway station. Much of his art depicts the natural world, but pieces at stations often include local features, as demonstrated at Dalry, the nearest station to Wemyss Bay where Leo has worked. See <https://leodufeu.co.uk/> for more about Leo and his work.



FLOWERS

Once again, Cathy Galbraith and her helpers have produced a stunning summer display. The pink geraniums on the pier are particularly impressive.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our first Annual General Meeting since 2019 was held at Skelmorlie parish church hall on 18 May, chaired by Sue Hothersall. She summarised developments over the last three years, particularly how we had dealt with Covid restrictions and the ongoing problems with water penetration into the shop. Despite these problems the shop had traded well, though we were obliged to shut when the Scottish Government required non-essential shops to be closed. Fortunately, the shrubs on the station concourse and pier survived these periods. The Members' Newsletter had helped to keep supporters informed of developments through these difficult times.

The meeting expressed its appreciation for the sterling work that Sheena Inglis had done managing the bookshop for twelve years and noted that Simon Dell had taken on this role. Morag Adams and Cathy Galbraith have retired from the Committee, but Cathy remains as head gardener, in charge of the floral displays. Elizabeth Campbell and Agnes McAuley have joined the Committee. We are grateful that Elizabeth has agreed to be our Treasurer. Thanks also to Erika Charlier for her work as Treasurer. Agnes McAuley is the Membership Secretary, in place of Simon Dell, who now has his hands full running the shop.

ON THE RADIO

BBC Radio Scotland's 'Out of Doors' programme recently visited the station. You can hear their coverage of Wemyss Bay at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0019jsn> until 19th August. The piece about the station starts at 1 hour 2½ minutes into the programme.

ORAL HISTORY

We are planning to interview and record people who have memories of our remarkable station in years gone by. We are keen to hear stories and memories about life in general, especially rail and ferry travel in our local area. It is intended to feature this in a new section on our website.

If you have memories of working at or travelling from the station or pier, please do contact us. Leave a note at the bookshop or email info@friendsofwemyssbaystation.co.uk.

BOOKSHOP

Despite some space restrictions and occasional closure days caused by the flooding and repair work, the bookshop continues to go from strength to strength. Indeed, July this year saw us record two of our strongest ever weekly sales figures, as many people continue to holiday in the West of Scotland and visit the station.



We continue to expand the range of items for sale in addition to our renowned second hand books, and have recently added a range of gift cards featuring local and wildlife images from artists Leo du Feu, Ruth Slater, Michael Hepburn and Doris Walker. Many thanks to all our volunteers who help keep the shop going!

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Covid restrictions have limited work we can arrange at the station, but as we return to something like normality, it has been possible to take up projects again. We report on the art project elsewhere in this newsletter.

There is a problem with cigarette butts being discarded onto the chippings by the station entrance and these are very hard to clean up. We intend to provide a couple of bins for butts. ScotRail has agreed to this and Inverclyde Council is content with the design, which looks rather like a bollard. We hope the bins can be installed soon.

We are pressing ScotRail to provide a dropped kerb at the station entrance, to make access possible for those in wheelchairs or mobility scooters. You have to be a very muscular wheelchair user to get up the kerb unassisted. We have offered to contribute to the cost of this.