

MORE SHELVES, MORE BOOKS!



More bookshelves have been installed in the Gallery, where transport and travel books are displayed. These have replaced a miscellaneous collection of shelves, making the room more attractive and allowing more books to be displayed. Our transport section has grown considerably in recent years, with books at bargain prices. Most books relate to railways and shipping, which seems appropriate for a railway station with a pier, but we usually have a selection of road and aviation publications as well. The mobile book racks made surplus by the new shelves have been donated to schools in Wemyss Bay and Skelmorlie.

MORE ACCESSIBLE

After campaigning by the Friends, we are very pleased that ScotRail had a dropped kerb installed at the main entrance to the station in September. This is part of the national programme to make railway stations more accessible. (Major improvements are under way at Port Glasgow). Able-bodied people may have thought our station fully accessible, but the kerb was a significant obstacle for wheelchair users. Works such as this benefit other station users, such as parents with a child in a buggy. Network Rail has installed a tactile surface along the platform edges, for the benefit of those with impaired vision.



MUSIC ON THE STATION

Not only is the station concourse a spectacular piece of architecture, but it has excellent acoustics and has proved ideal for musical performances. We were very pleased to welcome Clyde Coast Strathspey & Reel Society, who performed on the concourse during the morning on 12th August, the day of Bute Highland Games. We hope that Greenock Salvation Army Band will be back again for a Christmas recital. Watch our social media for confirmation.

MORE FILMING

A TV series about the *Royal Scotsman* luxury train, featuring Scots acting legend Alan Cumming, is in preparation. The *Royal Scotsman* visits Wemyss Bay regularly, on some Sunday afternoons, spending over six hours at the station while passengers visit Mount Stuart. So Alan turned up at Wemyss Bay with a film crew at the end of July. Dugald Cameron was able to share his expert knowledge of the trains and steamers of the Clyde and talk about the history and design of our magnificent station. Watch out for this on Channel 4.

Alan Cumming with Dugald Cameron [L] and Shop Manager, Simon Dell [R].



REPAIRS

We have been very pleased to see contractors CPMS carrying out more work to the station on behalf of Network Rail.

Repairs to the seaward side of the concourse seem to have dealt with the water penetration and the damaged panelling is being repaired. That required the temporary removal of half of the Time Line, but it is now back in place.

Most of the half-timbering on the station frontage has been repainted.



GARDENING

Many thanks to our volunteers who look after the flowers on the station, particularly Cathy and Stuart Galbraith. There was another splendid display this summer.

Being under a glass roof, the flowers receive no rain, so frequent watering is required. Fortunately, we have regained access to the tap in the area where contractors have been working. It is no longer necessary to fill the bowser – very slowly! – from the tap in the bookshop.

The towers have now been stripped of the summer bedding plants, but bulbs for the spring have been planted. The begonias on the pier gave a colourful display well into the autumn, as did the flowers in the tubs by the bookshop.

Sadly the Red Robin tree by the shop has died, but will be replaced by something new. Other trees have been trimmed.

MORE TRAINS, BUT SLOWER

ScotRail is proposing timetable changes next summer and is asking for comments on their plans.

It is intended that Wemyss Bay has a train every half hour most of the day, instead of an hourly service, but they will call at all stations, instead of skipping many between Glasgow and Port Glasgow. As a result, journey time from Wemyss Bay to Glasgow will increase from 47 minutes to 61 minutes. The first train from Wemyss Bay will be earlier, at 06:27.

The evening service will be different, with trains hourly and only calling at Paisley and Bishopton before Port Glasgow. The last train from Glasgow Central to Wemyss Bay will depart later, at 22:55.



It is intended that these arrangements apply on Mondays to Saturdays. ScotRail has not said what, if any, changes will be made to the Sunday timetable.

We have written to ScotRail welcoming the additional trains and the later service from Glasgow, but asking for those connecting with the Rothesay ferry to remain semi-fast.

Please make your views known by going to www.scotrail.co.uk/ayrshire-and-inverclyde-timetable-consultation and completing the online passenger survey, which is open until 20th November.

MOVING THE FARM

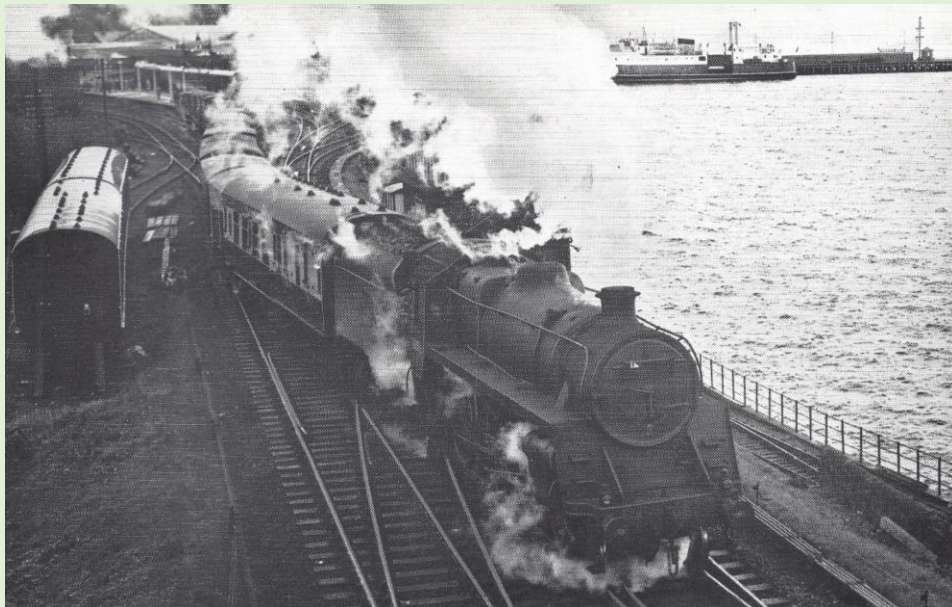


Jim Hair [L] and his family looking at the record of the farm move in our archive

We were delighted to welcome Jim Hair and his family to the station on 9th September. Jim is the younger son of Danny Hair, who farmed Skelmorlie Mains Farm until 1958. That year the family moved the entire farm to St Kew, in Cornwall, where the growing season and the winter days are longer. The move was undertaken by special train from Wemyss Bay. Within our archive we have a copy of a magazine article describing how the move took place, which the family were fascinated to see. While we knew of the special train, we had never expected to meet anyone who had been on it.

The train comprised a passenger carriage for the Hair family, their dogs and two newly-born calves; eight cattle wagons for 76 cows and a further seven calves; a van containing the family car and the hens in their coop; seven wagons loaded with farm implements and equipment; and three with containers for furniture and household goods. Loading took several days, with the animals boarding last.

The train left Wemyss Bay at 2.15 pm on Thursday 30 October and arrived at Wadebridge at 11.35 am next day. Such a long train could not possibly have been dealt with at the small station at St Kew. Stops were made at Carlisle, Crewe, Shrewsbury and Exeter. The animals were tended at Crewe and Exeter. There was one more passenger on arrival than departure, because a calf was born at Exeter.



The special train departs from Wemyss Bay

We think this must be the longest distance ever travelled by a through train from Wemyss Bay. British Railways charged £1,000 for the move, equivalent to almost £20,000 today.