



## *Milngavie Heritage Centre Newsletter*



*No. 1 – December 2011.*

*Hello and welcome to our first newsletter.*

**From our Chairman :** The beginnings went back to 2008/9 when I was chairman of the Bearsden and Milngavie Ramblers and was pursuing an interest along with members of the local Ramblers Group and Milngavie Community Council to establish a long awaited Tourism Office for Milngavie Town Centre. This interest involved considerable correspondence and numerous approaches to Council Officials and Councillors in an attempt to gain their support and highlight suitable locations for a Tourism Office.

Subsequently towards the end of 2009 a planning application was passed by the Council to set up a Tourism Office in an unused store adjacent to the Fraser Centre. This was received by both Groups as very good news.

Details of the application were later presented by a Council Officer to a Community Council meeting. The Community Council while accepting the need for a Tourism Office raised the question of also being interested in a Heritage Centre in Milngavie and suggested the Town Hall location for both Heritage and Tourism. The Officer stated however that the location beside the Fraser Centre had been finalised as a ring fenced project and there was no room for compromise, it was there or not at all.

The good news now is that the premises known as THE INFORMATION POINT is in situ and is extremely busy with walkers and tourists from around the world.

The Community Council however still had ambitions to have a Heritage Centre in Milngavie as did also the Milngavie History and Heritage Group. With the emphasis now on Tourism as an important strategy in East Dunbartonshire there were hopeful indications emerging to members of each Group that Heritage could become a feasible player in this strategy, and as a result they decided to join ranks and set up the current Milngavie Heritage Group.

Further meetings were subsequently held with Council Officials in various Council Departments. With the support of the 3 Milngavie Councillors, and at their request, I was charged with setting up a Milngavie Heritage Week, with full co-operation of the Milngavie Heritage Centre Committee and Heritage and History Group. It was held in the former Court Room in Milngavie Town Hall which we consider would be an ideal location for the Centre

As many of you know this was a great success. With the experience gained from it, we have obtained a temporary agreement from the Council to display items on the walls of the Court Room and use the adjacent room for storage facilities.

With approximately 50 new members we hope to encourage you to assist in any way possible, from helping with displays to donating material for displays, or any help at all.

Neil Weir.

## **The Idea of a Heritage Centre.**

**Milngavie Heritage Forum** was formed during the late 1990's; with one of its aims the establishment of a permanent heritage centre in Milngavie. Monthly meetings were held in Milngavie Community Education Centre (as it was known at that time). It was hoped to persuade East Dunbartonshire Council to allocate the former Council Chamber / Court Room at Milngavie Town Hall for the purpose, but when this proved impossible, at least in the short term, other solutions were investigated. As an interim measure a Local History Corner was established in Milngavie Library in the year 2000, in co-ordination with East Dunbartonshire Libraries & Cultural Services staff.

This was one outcome of a long period of close co-operation between Milngavie Heritage & History Forum and East Dunbartonshire Libraries & Cultural Services. Another was Nigel Orr's 64-page book *Milngavie the Village*, published by Milngavie Community Council in 2002. In 2006 Libraries & Cultural Services staff facilitated an amalgamation between Milngavie Heritage Forum and the Milngavie Local History Group as "Milngavie Heritage & History Group", with afternoon meetings held monthly in Milngavie Community Centre. These meetings, which still continue, take the form of a talk by a guest speaker followed by a wide-ranging discussion on Milngavie heritage matters, with a break for tea/coffee in between.

Following the amalgamation of the two groups in 2006, the idea of a Heritage Centre remained firmly on the agenda and was frequently discussed at meetings. The members of Milngavie Heritage & History Group have therefore been delighted to join with the Community Council and other local groups in working towards a concrete realisation of what was formerly a dream.

Don Martin. (Secretary of Milngavie Heritage Group and Minute Secretary of Milngavie Heritage & History Group).

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### **Milngavie Heritage & History Group Meetings – Milngavie CE Centre 2pm. New members will be welcome – Remaining Programme for 2011 – 12 is :-**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011 – “Developing a New Agenda for the History of Milngavie” – (Donald Shankland & Don Martin).

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012 – “Glasgow’s Trams & Trolley Buses” – (Colin Castle).

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012 – “Trongate – Heart of a City” – (William B Black).

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012 – “Transforming the National Museum of Scotland” – (David Forsyth).

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012 – Annual General Meeting.

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**Milngavie Heritage Group – Extraordinary General Meeting.** Has been arranged for Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at 7.30pm in the Court Room to which all members and non members are invited. The meeting will be chaired by Councillor Amanda Stewart who is also Chairperson of the Leisure and Culture Trust.. It will review the progress of the Heritage Centre Group and look at its future possibilities. Please come.

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## **Views from the Councillors.**

**Provost Eric Gotts** :- I am delighted to have been asked to contribute to Milngavie Heritage Group's inaugural newsletter. This has been a very exciting year for the local Heritage Group, the highlight of which must surely have been last September's Heritage Week Exhibition in the Former Court Room of Milngavie Town Hall. It was great to see pupils from all four local primary schools participating enthusiastically in the "Bygone Milngavie Quiz", part of the exhibition. The Heritage week sparked a great deal of local interest and has acted as a catalyst for the Group and the Council to work together to meet the local demand for future historical exhibitions. I wish the Group every success in its endeavours throughout 2012 and beyond.

**Councillor Jim Gibbons** :- This has been a fantastic achievement for all involved, leading up to a permanently available exhibition in the Court House.. Perhaps we should start referring to this space as the Milngavie Heritage (and history) Centre. The Milngavie Heritage Week exhibition was greatly enjoyed by all, especially the almost 200 schoolchildren who participated in the week. I had great pleasure in going to the schools with the children's paintings. They are now in prominent positions as part of local history projects done by the schools. The local schools now have important links with "The Heritage Centre".

**Councillor Bill Binks** :- Subsequent to their visit to the Milngavie Heritage Centre Exhibition, Clober Primary School has given pride of place to the painting of the Bennie Rail Plane by placing it in the hallway near the entrance from the school playground. On top of that, pupils have since built their own models and proudly include them in their own Heritage Display. This project just indicates how local history can capture the minds and interest of the very young. History is the very basis of progress and education and I hope that the Milngavie Heritage Centre will grow and grow into a permanent and expanding exhibition that will give inspiration and knowledge for generations to come.

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## **Post Heritage Week. (See also EGM Item on prev. page).**

**Going Forward** - The Group have been allocated by the Council the use of the surrounding area of the Court Room (other organisations use the main floor space) and are currently formulating ideas for the presentation of their displays. Banners both new and similar to the ones loaned from Douglas Academy are being considered as well as wall mounted photographs from the exhibition display boards. Also being considered are free standing display cases which can be suitably positioned in the room or easily movable from storage areas. Funding is now being sought for purchase of the various items required from grant applications and contacts with local businesses.

**National Local History Week** - This is the next full exhibition display for the Group and will take place from Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2012. It will be held once again in the Court Room with the theme for the event being "SPORT". It is proposed to involve as many sports organisations in the local area as possible. Further information on the preparations being made for this event will be given in the Group's website at [www.milngavieheritage.org](http://www.milngavieheritage.org).

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## Heritage Week – Milngavie Town Hall.



**The Heritage Week** took place in the former Court Room of Milngavie Town Hall from Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August to Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Setting up the displays for the exhibition was not an easy task as this was the first Heritage display that many of the committee had been associated with.

Fortunately this was not the case for our Secretary, Don Martin, who was familiar with East Dunbartonshire's archives and was able to borrow a wide collection of photographs from Brookwood clubs. The Group Library ranging from former Milngavie Provosts to school classes, previous industries and sports was also extremely grateful to Milngavie Community Council who generously donated the display boards for these photographs. Also many thanks to Croy Heritage Centre for the loan of their display boards.

The Opening of the Exhibition was performed by Douglas Academy pupils, Andrew Mawer and Cameron Smyth, who as part of their School History Group had been involved in the preparation of the School's very informative History Banners which were well admired during the exhibition. (See pictures above). Also in the Opening picture are Provost Gotts, Councillors Jim Gibbons and Bill Binks and members of the Local History Group Nigel Orr and Percy Couch who had all provided great support and assistance in setting it all up.

One of the main features of the exhibition, which the Group was privileged to have on loan from the Leisure Trust, was a display of the Bennie Rail Plane. This included a framed painting, an actual model and a video of its construction and trial run on the short elevated rail line.

The Group was also very pleased to have had the involvement of the local primary schools with pupils from the top classes taking part in supervised (artist James Clark from Croy Heritage Centre) painting of 4 specially prepared canvasses of significant places in Milngavie. After the exhibition the canvasses were presented to the individual schools. Also a question sheet competition on displayed photos was provided for the school pupils participation by Provost Gotts and prizes were later presented to the winners.

Within the week, over 500 visitors had come to see the exhibition which was very encouraging for the Heritage Centre Group. Thanks to all who assisted and provided the supervision rota and a very special mention to Neil Weir for his overall organisation and to Anne Hunter for her very welcome cuppas. Editor.