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NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2019

1st April has come and gone, as has the last Heritage Trust evening meeting of the winter session. Consequently we have started a new financial year and those of you who pay your annual subscription by standing order will have seen the payment being made from your bank account, probably on 2nd April. It makes my life as treasurer very much easier to know that these subscriptions are automatically paid – so thank you!

Gift aid. If you are a UK taxpayer, the Heritage Trust can reclaim an additional 25% of your subscription. This gives a welcome boost to our funds. On the other hand, given the tax changes which have been taking place in recent years, there is the possibility that you may no longer be a taxpayer, in which case the Heritage Trust should not be claiming gift aid. Consequently, if you are no longer a taxpayer, can you please let me know?

Website. If you have been looking at the website since the middle of March you will have noticed a change in its appearance. Donald Fullarton and Jim Chestnut have worked hard to change the website so that it can be more easily viewed on smartphones and tablets. More and more people are using these to access the Internet, rather than personal computers and laptops.

As always, there is a wealth of information about Helensburgh and its people to be found on the website, as well as a great number of fascinating photographs – so once again many thanks to Donald and Jim for their hard work.

Store. Nearly 6 months ago we were able to move out of the very cramped and expensive storage unit which we had into a facility which is very much more suitable and also very much more affordable – with the added advantage that we should be able to retain it for many years. However as with any removal, the next stage is to try to put all the items which we hold into some form of order which will enable us to find things speedily – we are never short of things to do!

Displays in the Civic Centre. The display in the main hall is about the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club. Recently mounted on a wall in the main hall is a plaque commemorating the two local hospital matrons who were killed by a car in the 1920s. This plaque belonged to Argyll & Bute Council but was on loan to the Heritage Trust, and we are pleased that it now has a home.

The displays inside the link corridor cabinet have not changed but, if you look above the cabinet and then also high up on the other side of the corridor, you will see the portraits of past provosts which have come from the Municipal Buildings. Other pictures from the Municipal Buildings can also be seen at the seaward end of the main hall.

Lastly, an attractive circular plaque which was given to Alistair Paterson when he became

Helensburgh's one and only freeman in 1968 is mounted on the wall of the link corridor close to the display cabinet. This is an appropriate location for the plaque, as the former Clyde Street School had been designed by his father, the architect Alexander N Paterson.

Displays in the Library. Unfortunately these are no longer in one single location. The display about Henry Bell and the Comet is still at the entrance to the Library, while the Library's own televisor and the Heritage Trust's replica TV kit are both on display upstairs on the balcony. The balcony also contains displays on war hero René Taverne, old bottles, and china with the Helensburgh coat of arms.

On various locations around the ground floor you can see displays about John Logie Baird, Jack Buchanan and Deborah Kerr.

Hermitage Park. Work on its renovation is proceeding apace and the contractors are due to return shortly to give the park its finishing touches.

Unfortunately items in the park have been vandalised and – perhaps even worse – some trees have been stolen. These have included trees donated to the park in memory of local people. The Friends of Hermitage Park would like to be able to have a comprehensive CCTV system in the park, and the renovation has already included all the cabling for this. However to supply the full number of cameras, etc will cost around £50,000, and so donations are sought for this. If you wish to support this cause you can do so either online at www.justgiving.com/friendsofhermitagepark or by sending a cheque to the Treasurer of The Friends of Hermitage Park, 2 East Montrose Street, Helensburgh G84 8EP

Pier. Marine craft are still prohibited from berthing alongside the wooden section of the pier, and so it has just been announced that Helensburgh will not be served by the Waverley this Summer. Instead a bus service will be provided to connect with its calls at Kilcreggan.

Geilston Gardens. As I'm sure you all know, the Hill House is not the only local property which belongs to the National Trust for Scotland. Geilston Gardens just outside Cardross are also well worth a visit and in addition they are planning a series of events this summer. If you wish to participate in any of them, you can find details at www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/geilston-garden/events

Scottish Submarine Centre. It has recently been announced that the Submarine Centre has been shortlisted for the "Innovation of the Year" award in the 2019 UK National Award for Museums + Heritage. Five other Museums have been shortlisted and these include the Natural History Museum and the Royal Museums at Greenwich, and there were hundreds of entries for the awards.

Duchess Woods. From August 2020 a new maintenance strategy will be required for Duchess Woods Nature Reserve as Argyll & Bute Council will be ending its role in the reserve's management. An information event about this is being held on Thursday 25th April between 1400 and 1800 in the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre. Please attend if you are interested in becoming involved.