

Helensburgh's 2012 celebrations — a great day!

Written by Stewart Noble - Last Updated Tuesday, 07 May 2013 16:11



WEREN'T we lucky with the weather!

The weather forecasts in the days running up to the Comet Bicentenary celebrations in Helensburgh were for a strong risk of thundery showers — and the forecasts were right.

However on the afternoon of Saturday August 4 2012 during the actual celebrations, organised by Helensburgh Heritage Trust, the sun shone all the time.

Then, at 5.30pm, once the celebrations were over, a torrential thunderstorm took place, which unfortunately meant that the barbecue at the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club at Rhu had to be moved indoors.

But first things first. The weekend started off on the evening of Friday August 3 when an

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exhibition on Henry Bell and the Comet was officially opened in Helensburgh Library in West King Street. It will remain open until October 31.

Doris Gentles was the person behind this and she had a lot of help from Eleanor Mackay of Argyll and Bute Council in putting it together.

Some 40 people attended the opening ceremony, and these included two descendants of Henry Bell's brother, Thomas.

A surprise guest of honour was in attendance the following day — Henry Bell himself!

In the morning he performed the unveiling of an explanatory Sea Lochs Trail board on Helensburgh's West Esplanade at the foot of John Street. This had initially been put up some 10 years ago, but the writing and pictures on it had weathered so badly that it was no longer legible.

He then went on to greet passengers arriving off the paddle steamer Waverley. The Henry Bell obelisk at the foot of James Street had been decorated with signal flags, and an attractive display of flower tubs had been set up along West Clyde Street.

At almost the same time a trailer arrived at the east end of the Esplanade bearing the painted plywood replica of the Comet Archway — minus its posts — which would have been erected at the foot of Sinclair Street, had Argyll and Bute councillors not rejected it.

It looked most colourful and attracted a lot of favourable comments from the public — all we need to do now is find a new home for it!

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