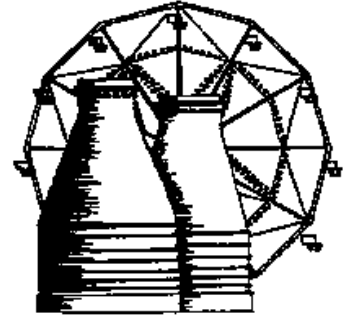


# PORTOBELLO AMENITY SOCIETY

Newsletter - Winter 1999



## Information Boards

The pottery information board “Portobello Potteries”, described in previous newsletters, was unveiled in May by Mr. W. Thomson, chairman of A W Buchan and husband of the great-grand-daughter of the founder of Buchan Potteries, which operated in Portobello until 1972 when the factory moved to Crieff. At the same time, a display of Portobello ware was mounted in the library window by Arthur Jeffrey, a former thrower at the Portobello pottery. The board, illustrated in the summer 1999 “Portobello Reporter”, is placed between the two old kilns behind the Fun-Park on the Promenade. Please go and look at it.

Design and manufacture of the remaining projected five boards is well underway, stimulated by the presence of the necessary cash in the Information Board account. The geology board, designed by Robert Gatliff of Joppa and the British Geological Survey, should be erected at Joppa Pans in November. The geology board uses aerial photographs of Joppa Rocks, as illustrated on the left, taken by Aerographica of Musselburgh. Two “horizon” boards illustrating and indicating features of the horizon as viewed from the Promenade at

the ends of King’s Road and John Street, should be in place before the end of the year. Art work for these boards has been skillfully executed by Shand Hutchison, a member of the information board sub-committee.

Design of the other two boards, on Portobello as a Seaside Resort and on the Natural History of the Seashore, is underway and we hope these two will see the light of the Promenade in the year 2000. Manufacture of the boards and their supports is by McRobb Display of Edinburgh. The Bird Board has suffered some vandalism and the edging has not worn well: we are considering how best to remedy these defects.

## **GARDENING**

We hope that everyone will have read the article about the Annual Garden Competition in the current edition of The Portobello Reporter. This competition has been run for several years now, as a joint venture between the Portobello Garden Centre and the Amenity Society, and covers planted containers as well as domestic gardens - which means you don't need to have a huge garden to enter, just a piece of ground that is well kept. We have been disappointed at the small number of people entering this competition in the past, for we know, just by peering over garden gates, that many of you have beautiful gardens. So do think again about entering next year.

The Amenity Society will again plant another 1000 Tete-a-tete bulbs in the West border of Brighton Park. This sweep of miniature daffodils is certainly a very cheerful sight in the spring. This Autumn we will also be replacing the almond tree that was blown out in the garden triangle in Morton Street.

The hanging baskets at the Easterly end of the High Street have had mixed fortunes, being quite badly affected by the wind at times. We are very grateful to Mr. Anthony Mancini for his continued regular watering of these.

It has been a continuing saga of disappointment regarding the landscaping at the Joppa Pumping Station. We had hoped that it would be upgraded before the summer season, now we hope that this will happen in the Autumn. The shrub area will be covered with slabs to match the rest of the area, dead trees will be replaced and tree guards repaired. It is hoped that the area will then be well maintained. P.A.S. will certainly be keeping an eye on it!

## **Window Alterations in a Conservation Area**

The City Planning Department tells us that, although they inform window replacement companies of Council policy on window alterations, the companies, surprisingly, are not obliged to pass this information on to customers. Some do not, leaving the onus on property owners to determine if planning permission is required - a case of 'buyer beware'!

All replacement windows should match original proportions, appearance and materials, and while appropriate timber sealed-unit double-glazing is normally acceptable, PVC frames are not. A suggested alternative for improving the performance of existing timber frames is to repair them and then fit draught-proofing and internal secondary glazing.

The Planning Department can insist that any breach of the regulations is rectified, and a prospective buyer can ask a seller for proof of planning permission for any alterations to a property, so it is wise to get advice. A call to Planning will be helpful (tel. 529 3595) and they can also provide a leaflet on this whole subject.

## **Portobello Toilets**

A recent planning application to site an automated public toilet on the High Street at the foot of Rosefield Avenue was turned down as not being appropriate on such a prime site in the middle of a conservation area. Strong protests were lodged by both P.A.S. and the Community Council, both groups preferring to see the existing toilets in Bath Street either manned or fitted with an automatic pay-in system.

Despite the rejection of this application, the Environmental Services Committee is still looking for an alternative site in Portobello to install automatic toilet facilities, thereby allowing them to close the Bath Street facility and presumably sell the site to private developers. One wonders whether members of the Environmental Services Committee would themselves wish to queue in public, in a busy street, in the

pouring rain, outside such a facility?

Meanwhile, Joppa toilets remain closed, having opened for one day only, for the Raft Race on August 1st. It's good to know they are still in working order. Let's hope the same can be said for visitors to Portobello in dire need of "spending a penny", something the council seem unable to do when necessary!

## **Portobello Post Office**

On hearing that Scotmid has bought the current Post Office in the High Street, P.A.S. has written to Post Office Counters Ltd., arguing the necessity of retaining the Post Office in the High Street and not removing it to inside the Bath Street store. A thriving high street needs a post office and, in a similar way, a post office benefits from a high street location. Post Office Counters Ltd., have written back assuring us that if a move is to take place, then local people will be consulted. Strong concerted local pressure is needed to retain the post office where it should be - in the High Street.

## **Cable Boxes**

The society has been in correspondence with "Telewest Communications", who are responsible for the cable boxes at the junction of the High Street and Pittville Street. At present these boxes are most unsightly, with peeling paint and the remains of shredded posters. We have suggested, and they have agreed, that the boxes should be cleaned up, and repainted with special anti-flyposter paint, coloured to match the near-by wall. Congratulations to "Telewest Communications". We look forward to seeing the renovated boxes.

## **Windsor Place Embankment and Christian Path**

In June, P.A.S. instructed a lawyer to serve notice of intent on Edinburgh District Council, threatening legal action regarding the council's repeated failure to keep the embankment from the end of Christian Path to the parking area opposite Mountlodge playground, free of rubbish and litter.

For a considerable length of time a huge mass of dumped rubbish, including rotting mattresses, builders' rubble, kitchen worktops, children's toys and rotting vegetation built up on the embankment. Repeated requests to the council to clean up this area were either ignored or responded to in a most unsatisfactory manner.

The Environmental Protection Act of 1990 makes littering a serious offence and obliges local authorities to bring an area up to grade A standard within two weeks or be liable to be subject to an application for a litter abatement order. No one in Scotland has yet applied for such an order.

For over five years, the society has made numerous complaints to the council about the deplorable state of the area and has twice cleaned up the embankment at its own expense.

Within five days of receiving the letter threatening legal action, Environmental and Consumer Services uplifted nearly all the dumped material from the area. Although the clean-up was not as perfect as it might have been, there was a vast improvement in the state of the area. As a result, P.A.S. decided to withdraw the threat of legal action on this occasion.

Since then however, rubbish has again started to accumulate and P.A.S. members have phoned the council Rapid Response phone-line on several occasions requesting dumped items to be removed.

It is a strong condemnation of our council that it takes the threat of legal action from a group like P.A.S.

to make it carry out its statutory duties to keep areas under its control litter free.

## **John Street Paddling Pool**

P.A.S. has been in touch with the Recreation Department concerning the present deplorable condition of the John Street paddling pool and its future. The department says it recognises the problems facing this area, in particular the deterioration of the windbreak and the safety issues this causes. They have decided the windbreak should be removed as quickly as possible and be replaced with a one metre high fence, as the ground level inside is higher than the prom surface. They are also willing to consult with local people concerning the future use of the enclosed area.

Unfortunately they say there is no money available at present to carry out these works although the department says it is “optimistic” that money will be found soon. Meanwhile the present structure continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate while the safety issues increase at an equal rate.

Local pressure is needed to get the windbreak removed as soon as possible. P.A.S. members are urged to lobby both the council and the Recreation department asking that this is done.

## **Local Business Support For P.A.S.**

Please use our excellent local businesses, especially those which help the society to make Portobello a pleasant place to live and to work. The society is very grateful to the following businesses for their continued support as associate business members: -

Allan's, Chemist; Robin Bond, CA; Boots, Chemist; The Citizens' Advice Bureau; Findlay Meats; Brian Forde, Optician; Gordons, Butchers; Joppa Food Store; H.S.Kidd, Chemist; The King's Manor Hotel; Kitchener's Delicatessen; Kristoffersen Carpets; Lapland Gems; McAlpine's, Jewellers; McIntyre Lewis, Solicitors & Estate Agents; Nazim, Newsagent; J & S Penman, Vets; The Portobello Garden Centre; Portobello Library; Jas. Scott, Funeral Directors; Shapes Hair; Sibbald Travel; Thomson's, Ironmongers.

Our especial thanks also go to McIntyre Lewis, and J & S Penman, Vets for their generous donations towards our planting projects throughout Portobello.

Please support our local businesses, especially those who themselves support our local community.

## **P.A.S. Monthly Meetings**

Would you like to find out more about what is happening in Portobello? Would you like something done about Portobello's traffic and parking problems? Are you interested in protecting and enhancing Portobello's many listed buildings? Would you like to see the amenity of Portobello improved and environmental and landscaping projects carried out?

If the answer to any or all of the above questions is yes, then you are most welcome to come along to any of P.A.S.'s regular monthly meetings to air your views and to find out just what the society is doing to improve Portobello for everyone who lives and works here. For details of meetings, please phone **John Stewart** on **669 6466**.