# tobella

# Quarterly: Spring 2023 Delivered in and around Portobello; circulation 13,000

Also available online on www.porty.org.uk

- Porty Pride is back Р3 New book - Trudy & Me **P**5
- Nature notes woodpeckers P7
  - Portobello rugby P8

The independent voice of Portobello Your Community Newspaper produced by local people since 1980.



Portobello's Atlantic Body and Soul team successfully completed the 3,000 mile Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge in 39 days. Matthew Callis; Cal MacAninch; Alec Martin; Ed van der Ven and Sean Watters were fundraising for charities The Junction and Body and Soul. At the time of going to press they had raised £33,795.50. You can donate at donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/atlantic-body

# **20-MINUTE PORTY**

CITY OF EDINBURGH Council aims to create 20-minute neighbourhoods across the city to ensure daily needs can be met within a 20-minute round trip. Residents in Portobello are being asked to take part in a survey to gather views on whether the streets, public spaces, local facilities and amenities that exist in Portobello look and function as well as they would like.

The survey, 'Portobello - Living Well Locally' can be found at: https:// consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/ portobello-town-centre. Paper copies are also available in the library. The closing date for submissions is Friday 14th April.

You can share your views and ideas on specific parts of Portobello town centre using a map tool, which will allow you to drop pins onto a map alongside your thoughts and ideas.

Councillor Scott Arthur, Transport and Environment Convener said, "We know our town centres like Portobello have many of the essential local facilities and services we value, but could be much more liveable and pleasant places for both residents and visitors. We want to work with the local community and businesses to develop a plan that will encourage people to access the high street via active and sustainable travel and increase the quality of public spaces in the area.

"This all ties into our plans to reshape our transport network in order to cut congestion and reach net zero by 2030. Portobello town centre provides vital local services to communities across the east of Edinburgh and beyond, and we want to hear from everyone who uses the area. This is an initial opportunity for people to work with us and make sure their views shape the approach on how the town centre could be better for them, however they use it."

Annette Gann

#### **PORTOBELLO TIMEBANK** A DECADE ON

SINCE launching in early 2013, the Timebank has grown its presence across the local community and beyond. Membership has risen to almost 200, connections with local organisations have broadened and we have been successful in the essence of Timebanking – members sharing their time, skills and produce. We are very excited to celebrate our first decade and will unveil several new events and initiatives in 2023.

We welcome members from all walks of life. We have younger members taking interview practice from retired HR managers, members with young families short of time benefitting from others with time, members who just want some DIY done, but are not quite sure how. A wide variety of 'produce' is exchanged, from leftover paints to surplus apples, while services are even more varied, with massage, gardening, dog walking or bicycle servicing being offered. Special interest groups have formed that play Mahjong, appreciate art, enjoy crafting or just like going out for tea or coffee and cake. The variety of swaps is astounding, and we hope that any request or offer will be taken up, either directly or indirectly through the community at large.

Importantly, members also benefit from volunteering. Any member can earn four Timebank hours per month for volunteering in the community, helping at Bellfield for example, litter cleans, guerrilla gardening or working with the Community Fridge, and those hours can be used to access the many offers from the whole Timebank membership.

We look forward to welcoming new and existing members to our events and to see new initiatives in 2023. Follow us on Facebook and at www.portobellotimebank.co.uk

James Carver



Spring 2023 - 2 -

#### **PORTY PROFILE No. 83**

## MARIANNE WHEELAGHAN

AUTHOR Marianne Wheelaghan says she remembers coming to Portobello as a child from her home in Leith with sixpence for chips, and



Napier and worked as a marketing manager in London. Her husband Marc's teaching work took them to Papua New Guinea where Marianne taught English and drama to children from the country's many tribes. They returned to London after five years, but another job opportunity took them to the Republic of Kiribati, "a Pacific Island of palm trees and beaches", and the inspiration for one of Marianne's Scottish Lady Detective mysteries. "We could have stayed, but thought if we do that we might never come back," she says.

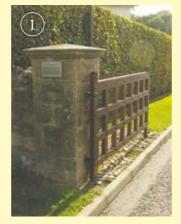
Germany before studying languages". After graduating, she

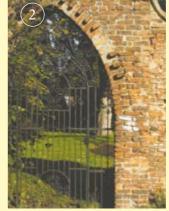
taught in Spain before completing a degree in marketing at

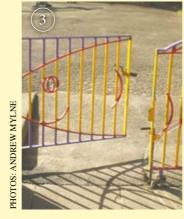
Returning to Edinburgh, they bought a guest house in Pilrig Street. "The guest house allowed us to do our own thing and be there for our children," she says. She studied creative writing, lectured and established an online writing school with Marc which they ran together for the next decade."

Marianne says she always advised her students that writing needs time, and eventually decided to close the busy school to make time for her own writing. Accompanying Marc to Fiji for a year-long work contract gave her the peace and quiet she needed. She packed up her research notes and went to work on The Blue Suitcase, set during WW2 and based on correspondence between her mother and her aunts. Now refreshed from a break in writing, Marianne says a follow-up set in Argentina is under way.

# WHERE AM I?









Try to identify the places where these gates are Answers on page eight.

#### **POPP SEEKS TRUSTEES**

THE Portobello Older Peoples Project SCIO (POPP) seeks three Trustees to join its Management Committee. POPP is a small lunch and social club for older people which aims to reduce isolation and support physical and psychological wellbeing, giving them the opportunity to take part in various activities and share a hot meal. Enquiries are welcome from those with an interest in older people and from a variety of backgrounds. For more information contact Rose White, Project Organiser on 07472 646262.

# What's On

**PORTOBELLO** JOPPA DRAMA GROUP:

present the musical western, Calamity Jane: Wed. 22nd-Sat. 25th March, 7.30pm, in the Church Hall, Brunstane Rd North. For tickets priced £16 adults, £8 children/ school students, pjpcdramatickets@gmail.

com or phone 07780 687174. **PORTOBELLO** 

MARKET: First Sat. of the month, Brighton Park. For details of stalls, see: portobello. market@live.co.uk

#### **PAMOJA FASHION:**

Quality Clothes/Accessories: First Sat of the month, 10am-1pm, St John's Church Hall, Brighton Place. Supporting partnerships between schools and communities in Scotland and Tanzania.

#### **COMMUNITY FRIDGE:**

Saturdays, 10.30-11.30am, Baptist Church Hall, Portobello High St. Surplus food from shops available free, to combat food waste. A chance to donate to food bank from 11.30am.

PARKRUN: Saturdays, 9.30am, Figgate Park. 5K, free to enter. See parkrun.org.uk/ portobello

#### Karen Combe

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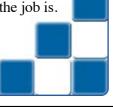
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#### The Portobello Reporter

is produced by a team of local volunteers with contributions from 25 people. If you have any news or

would like to advertise email

portyrep@gmail.com

### **PORTY PRIDE IS BACK FOR 2023**

WE ARE excited to Geoff from the Town Hall announce that on Saturday

8th and Sunday 9th July we will be celebrating our L G B T Q +community for this year's Porty Pride. Building on our success of last year, 2023 is offering more

events following growing interest from local businesses and community groups. A notable addition this year will be a party at Portobello Town Hall on the Saturday.

committee said: "We are looking forward to

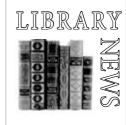
> hosting **Porty** Pride which expected to be the earliest major event in PTH."

If you want volunteer donate contact us:

portypride@ protonmail.com, @ portypride or go to our website www. portypride.com

Kate Gillwood

WE are looking forward to the Easter school holidays in the library and are already hard at work planning our Easter holiday activities for children. For more information on what we are doing in the library over Easter ask a member of staff before the holidays, or check us on Facebook. Whatever we plan it is likely there will be eggs involved!



If you know anyone aged between five and eight who loves stories why not bring them down to our Storytime on Tuesdays at 4pm? Ian will be here, entertaining us all with a brand-new batch of magical stories.

We are delighted to announce that our new Chatterbooks Book Group for 8-10 year olds is now up and running. If you are between eight and 10 and love books and reading this could be for you! The group meets on the fourth Saturday of the month at 2pm. We also have a long-standing Book Group for grown ups which meets on the first Monday of the month at 6.30pm. If you are interested in joining or finding out more about our book groups, have a word with a member of staff.

Are you elderly or disabled, love reading but struggle to visit the library? Do you know someone who is? We might be able to help you with this. We have a fortnightly service that will bus you into the library for books, tea, and a chat. We can also deliver books to your home. If you are interested, give us a call on 529 5558 and ask about our Library Link and Housebound services.

Followus on our social media, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PortobelloLibrary and on Twitter @PortyLibrary

Lesley Mayes





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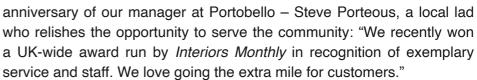
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SPRING is the main seed-sowing time. Ensure you get peat-free compost and experiment with extra grit, perlite or vermiculite for drainage. Don't sow into the ground until the weeds are romping away, usually around mid-April, and more tender seeds like sweetcorn, pumpkins or morning glories can wait until May.

I've always grown dahlias and have learned to start them off in the greenhouse in February, so they can be hardened off, which is very important, and planted out in late April. This gives earlier flowering, but have fleece handy for May frosts.

Any weather is possible, so be prepared for extra cold, heat, wet or dry spells. It is difficult when plants can succumb so easily, but knowing your soil type and microclimate can mitigate some failures. Cover seedlings if frost threatens, shelter a pot temporarily under a hedge if very wet, stand a pot in a bucket of water or, if very warm, be prepared to water twice a day. If you kill a plant, don't fret, as it is all about experience and being adaptable to conditions.

My favourite things last year were: Chilean guava berries, a perennial kale cutting from a friend, quince vodka and baby newts in the pond.

WE'RE at the first anniversary of the Community Fridge Group, who gather surplus food from local supermarkets and shops to limit waste. Several



tonnes of perfectly good food have been saved by the dedicated team of 70 volunteers. Collection, wherever possible, is done by bike ready for doors opening at 10:30am on Saturdays in the Baptist church hall for people to collect.

This is an initiative supported by Portobello Baptist Church, which provides the premises, and PEDAL which gives some background support, but is mainly the work of local people coming together to help to address the problem of food waste. Who would have thought that a surfeit of broccoli could inspire such inventive recipes for its use?

The annual wassailing celebration took place in late January at the Donkeyfield Community Orchard where the singing and blessing of the trees was led by the Portobello Community Choir. A great crowd around the fire were warmed by spiced apple juice, enjoyed the plentiful home baking and wished the trees well for a bountiful harvest.

Does the wassailing work? Maybe, but making a connection to the celebrations of our forebears and the environment we look after for the future helps sustain our community and make life worth living.

Stephen Hawkins

#### **Porty Pennypincher**

AS FOOD prices continue to rise, we still need to eat. There are still some ways to save money in the kitchen though.

Slow cookers are making a comeback. Popular in the 1970s for busy families, you just throw everything in the pot and turn it on. Seven hours later and you have a tasty stew or whatever. The beauty of the slow cooker is that it uses very little electricity – around the same amount as an old-fashioned 100w light bulb.

Electricity still costs more than gas, so your electric kettle is one of the most expensive things to run in your kitchen. Overfill it, and not only does your water take longer to boil, you are literally wasting money. Much better to boil what you need. If you have a jug kettle, then you can boil as little as a cup in there. Use the measuring guides inside to check, or just pour in a cupful of water. If you have a kettle that goes on the gas hob, so much the better, as although it may take longer to boil, it costs less than an electric version, provided you only boil what you require.

#### A BOOK THAT CELEBRATES DIFFERENCE

A LOCALLY produced book is now in print thanks to a successful Crowdfunder campaign. Set in Portobello, Trudy & Me shares the perspective of Patrick (aged four) big brother to Trudy (aged two) who has Down's Syndrome. Written and illustrated in watercolour by Bridget Campbell, with images of the children by photographer Jo Tennant and design input from Craig McIntyre, all Portobello residents, it is a joyful book about siblings, accepting and celebrating difference.

Trudy and Patrick's mum Lauren Eliott Lockhart became aware of the lack of representation of children with disabilities in books and passionately wanted this to change. "We want to get our message out there and through the generosity of donations we are able to gift copies to libraries and to charities. We will also be distributing to schools across Edinburgh when we launch the book at the Head Teacher Conference in March, which is really exciting," she said.

Trudy & Me is available in the Portobello Bookshop. For more information see www.trudyandme.co.uk







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FROM THE ARCHIVE BY MARGARET MUNRO

# PORTOBELLO SWIM CENTRE



A TREASURE trove of photographs has been found in Portobello Swim Centre, known to most locals as 'the baths'. Now, the student who found them would like to know if anyone can provide information about this retirement photograph as part of her research project.

The student, who works at the baths, found the picture, along with other photos of retirement celebrations, under some papers in a filing cabinet drawer. The hand-written text on this black and white photograph says 'Presentation by staff to Mr. T. Murray, who retired in June 1969 after 50 years service including five years war service.'

What post Mr Murray held in the baths is unknown. There are many

with the wording 'Crunch with Crimpy' written on them. Perhaps they were some kind of snack and it looks like they were very popular. The pictures

were taken by Jack Fisher, who was a well-known Portobello photographer for many years, capturing local events and family celebrations. We have tried

Jack Fisher for permission to use the photographs. If anyone has any contact details for them, please let us know.

The black and white logo for the baths also came to light. It was on a fax document cover dated 2005. The student believes this logo was in

boxes on a high shelf in the background use from the centre's reopening after refurbishment in 1998 and could have remained in use until as late as 2008, when a new logo came into use. If anyone has a document with this

> logo on it or can provide information on the colours used for it, please do get in touch.

> It is hoped that in the future all the images

unsuccessfully to contact the family of will be uploaded to a page on the Edinburgh Leisure website. It may also be possible to show how some parts of the baths building have changed during various refurbishments. If you have information regarding any of the above, please contact us at portyrep@ gmail.com

# **EDINBURGH DOG AND CAT HOME**

EDINBURGH Dog and Cat Home (EDCH) has been nominated for two major awards in this year's Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Business Awards. It has been nominated for 'Employer of the Year', as well as for service excellence, reflecting its community outreach work. EDCH was the first company in Scotland to recognise pet poverty, providing pet food to food banks. The service now extends to more than 80 food banks across Scotland. The winners of the awards will be announced next month.

Derek Stewart-Brown



## **COLLAPSED** WALL

A BOUNDARY wall has collapsed at the east end of the Christian Path. If you see a wall or building that looks dangerous, you can contact the City of Edinburgh Council to alert them. They may place a statutory notice on the property to ensure that it is repaired and made safe. Other problems that might need this action include unsafe chimney stacks and crumbling plaster in a common stairwell. Call 0131 529 6778 or email esrs@edinburgh.gov.uk



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WE ARE delighted to announce that The Wash House now hosts a warm space on Thursdays, 10am to noon for anyone wishing to come along for tea, a chat, or

a quiet read and a cosy room. Our new Friday knitting group for children is going well, and space bookings are increasing. It was lovely to finally host the first ceilidh in the hall again on 5th February, with Fun Fiddle celebrating its twentieth anniversary. We are looking forward to Spring and getting some tree planters outside. Any help with joinery for this is welcomed. www.thewashhouse.org

Gica Loening

#### **PORTY CENTRAL**

Portobello Central launched a Crowdfunder campaign in mid-February to raise £25,000 for expenses to open the Town Hall. The charity will agree with the City of Edinburgh Council a lease to run for 25 years from 1st April 2023. Lawyers and surveyors are working on this, funded by the Architectural Heritage Fund. Many booking enquiries are coming in, running well into 2024. The first couple of months will be cleaning and getting to know the place. By late May, real events should be possible and there are solid bookings, starting with a grand ball for Porty Pride on 9th July. Although the exterior is now properly wind and water tight, we will need volunteers for cleaning, painting and minor repairs. Donate at www.portobellocentral.org/donate

Geoff Pearson

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## AMNESTY - LOCAL NEWS

**AMNESTY** International's Portobello Group may be small but it punches above its weight in terms of campaigning and fundraising. Recent activities have included meeting our MP, Tommy Sheppard, to discuss what is effectively a system of apartheid enforced on the people of Palestine by the Israeli authorities. Mr Sheppard raised the issue with Lord Ahmad, the UK Government's Minister of State for the Middle East.

Other activities receiving a heartening public response at our monthly market stall included 129 signed cards expressing seasonal best wishes and solidarity to prisoners of conscience in Bangladesh, Cameroon and Russia, as well as 136 postcards to the High Commissioner for Singapore, protesting at continuing use of the death penalty.

On a lighter note, February saw the group resume its annual Pub Quiz at the Artisan Bar, a good-humoured event which this year raised a useful £257 for Amnesty.

The group's other major fundraiser takes place on Saturday, 15th April, with its ever popular Book Sale and Coffee Morning, once again at Bellfield Community Hub from 10am to noon. Those wishing to donate books should contact Jim Gilchrist at **gilchrist767@btinternet.com** 

The group meets at 7.30pm on the second Monday of the month in Portobello & Joppa Parish Church. All welcome. Contact: **theresa.mcmurtry@gmail.com** 

Jim Gilchrist

TRIBE Porty is a community coworking and creative events space in Portobello. If you are interested in hiring Tribe Porty for an event or workshop you can enquire by emailing more@tribeporty.org. We offer free tours and day passes which are

bookable on our website. By becoming a member, you gain access to social events like our Coffee Morning on the first Tuesday of every month and our Social Lunch every Thursday. We host free monthly Tribe Talks which are open to the public. When a Tribe member speak about their work or interests. It's a great opportunity to learn and to network. To keep up to date with our events, find us on social media @Tribeporty.

Alice Hudson

#### **ACTION PORTY**

**BELLFIELD** is full of classes and community events, as well as parties, weddings, and other life transition events. For us, this includes creating safe, inclusive and caring spaces where those who are grieving can feel seen, heard and supported. Action Porty's annual Absent Friends winter beach event is part of this. Now there will be a Wednesday evening Absent Friends Space in Bellfield: "A grief club that understands

one of the loneliest journeys a person can go through. After a funeral, people are often expected to just pick themselves up and 'get on with it'. People are often grieving many years after bereavement."

Separately, we have a new art therapy group offering a safe, confidential and creative space to explore thoughts and feelings through the art making process on Friday mornings.

Justin Kenrick

# SCREEN PORTY

Screen Porty began with a Porty Talk in 2021 and a well-attended meeting which indicated there was a keen appetite for

community cinema.
A small group of us formed

for med to move this idea forward. We joined 'Cinema For All', receiving training in how to set up and run a community cinema. We held two successful screenings in 2022. We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join us to establish a community film presence in Porty. For more information, and updates on

future screenings, follow

us on Facebook, Instagram

or on our web page:

www.ScreenPorty.org

Lesley Milloy

#### **PCC**

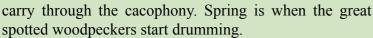
#### PORTOBELLO

Community Council meetings are held on the last Monday of each month at 7.30pm, except in July and December. They are held either online or in the Baptist Church Hall, Portobello High Street. See www.portobellocc.org

#### LIMERICKS RAISE CASH

THE author of the booklets Life and other distractions in and around Portobello present and past in 200 Limericks and its sequel ... in 400 Limericks, published in 2021 and 2022, is delighted to report that together they raised £2,080 for the foodbank charity the Trussell Trust.

It is, of course, a time of year when birdsong becomes more obvious, with songs ranging from the electronic call of the dipper, to the beautiful, varied serenade of the blackbird, competing for space. However there's one bird that has an altogether more percussive approach to getting the attention of a mate, and it's a sound that can



The usual call of this thrush-sized bird is a simple affair, a short and repeated basic 'cheep'. This call is utterly distinctive after the first time hearing it, but it's when they start knocking on wood that they become unmistakeable. To recreate the sound, it's like when you hold a wooden ruler against a table with the flat of your hand, and 'twang' the other end.

They like to find dead wood, hollow inside by preference,



which causes the sound to reverberate and carry across a huge distance. The great thing for searching them out is that they tend to find a perch they like, and drum. And drum. And drum. Follow the sound and you should be rewarded with a sight of the black coat and tails and white shirt. A red nape means it's a male.

Any wooded area is fair game: Figgate Park, along the Christian Path, back gardens. A headbanger you'll be more than happy to listen to.

Anthony Robson

### **CAB CALL FOR HELP**

WITH the cost of living crisis hitting hard, the Portobello Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) needs more volunteers to join its local team of advisers reception workers. A recent recruit said: "It's such a rewarding way to help people in our community. You'll be given comprehensive training and you can help in a way that suits both your skills and the time you have to spare." To find out more about what's involved, either pop into the Porty CAB (8a Bath Street) on a Monday or Thursday between 9.30am and 4.30pm or email recruitment@ cabedinburgh.org.uk.

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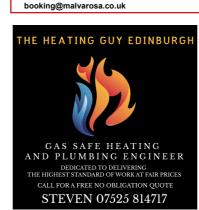
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#### **JOPPA TENNIS**

WE ARE delighted to report that evening tennis has become a reality at Joppa with the installation of floodlights. The Tweener system is manufactured in handful of clubs in the UK France and the technology allows optimal lighting using LED strips which are directly attached to fencing, eliminating the need for unsightly pylons and concrete. It also minimises light spillage. LED is a highly energy efficient lighting system, using far less energy and lasting much longer than

traditional bulbs, making it much more affordable to run in these times of high electricity costs.

We are one of only a to have this state-of-theart technology and huge thanks go to a handful of committee members whose perseverance and hard work has made this possible.

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Monday 27th February at the King's Manor Hotel.

Marjorie Shepherd

#### IN THE SADDLE

- 8 -

PORTOVELO'S winter season began with a well-attended Christmas night out at the Espy, together with an awards ceremony. Gordon Muir was named club member of the year for 2022, principally to acknowledge his role in creating our popular Wednesday intermediate ride, and leading it on many occasions. Amongst the other awards were adventure cyclist of the year (Roy Buchanan), best-dressed cyclist (Chris Bonnar) and 'tube of the year' for a questionable ability to fix punctures (Bruce Kidd). BG Cycles was awarded bike shop of the year, and Tyninghame Smithy won café of the year.

Sunday rides have now shifted to the earlier 8am start that applies throughout the summer months. Four different groups means plenty of choice, and we continue to welcome new riders - on Sundays, on Wednesdays and on alternate Saturdays for our popular gravel rides. We've also booked Tomintoul youth hostel for our 'weekender' in mid-June.

If you are interested in taking part, please check our website (porto-velo.com) or contact us for more information (contact details are on the website).

Andrew Mylne

#### **PORTOBELLO RUGBY** TAKES THE LEAD

**DOES** Portobello have a rugby club? Yes we do! The membership, club has been in its current location since the 1960s and offers opportunities for boys and girls from P1 to S6, as well as seniors' rugby.

on Duddingston Road West and our clubhouse is open events. During the summer months we run touch rugby for all abilities, and you may see us on Porty beach strutting our stuff.

We have a strong social regularly meet for games and also offer social memberships for non-players. Sounds like something you would enjoy? Find out more on Home is Cavalry Park Facebook @Portyrfc, or join us on match days. Our 7s tournament is back on on match days, Six Nations Saturday 8th April and will days, and can be hired for be a great day for rugby and fun. Details will be available on our Facebook page closer to the time.

> Darren Crowther (Head of Minis Rugby)

#### SPRINGING INTO REGATTA SEASON

for 'social' rows, while lighter nights also allow for increased training for regattas. The Portobello rowing regatta returns on 20th May, co-hosted with Eastern Rowing Club. Boats from local coastal clubs will compete



**IN THE** coming weeks rowers will be out in various races; some serious and some less so (as per photo of blindfolded race from Eastern's last regatta in 2019). Save the date to watch from the beach!

> The 1st April brings the start of a new season for Portobello Sailing & Kayaking Club. Look out for beginner sailing courses for adults and kids, which give newbies or returners the skills needed to join weekly Sunday afternoon sessions. Kayaking beginners and improvers coaching sessions will resume on a weekday evening in later

> To find out what's on, visit www.facebook. com/pskcedinburgh Membership fee is £40 for adults, £20 for young adults and £10 for kids.

> > Alison Jeffrey

#### **LADIES GOLF CLUB**

**PORTOBELLO** celebrated the season's end with a lunch and prizegiving in November. Our first full get together since 2019!

Fourteen trophies were given out at the lunch and our club champion for 2022 is Mrs Diane Crolla. Well done Diane!

Our new season starts in March and new members are welcome. Interested? Contact Yvonne Hooper, Secretary on 07748 900785.

Morag Cosford

Portobello High Street 3: Towerbank Playpark 4: Episcopal Church, 1: Brunstane Mill Road. 2: Rosefield Park ANSWERS TO WHERE AM 1?

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