

THE Portobello REPORTER

Quarterly: Summer 2023
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The independent voice of Portobello Your Community Newspaper produced by local people since 1980.



PHOTO: ANDREW MYLNE

The tournament in full swing

BEACH VOLLEYBALL SEASON OFF TO A GREAT START

EDINBURGH Beach Volleyball Club's first 'UK Beach Tour' tournament took place on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th May, welcoming teams from all over the UK.

The club has more than 100 members and regular non-members, with ages ranging from 10 to 58 years. There is a range of membership options available and a variety of sessions and classes for all abilities.

The 'Changing Lives through Sport' approach uses sport and physical activity as a way to improve the lives of local people by removing some of the barriers that people face.

For further club details, events and to follow the club on social media visit: www.edinburghbeachvolleyballclub.com

Annette Gann



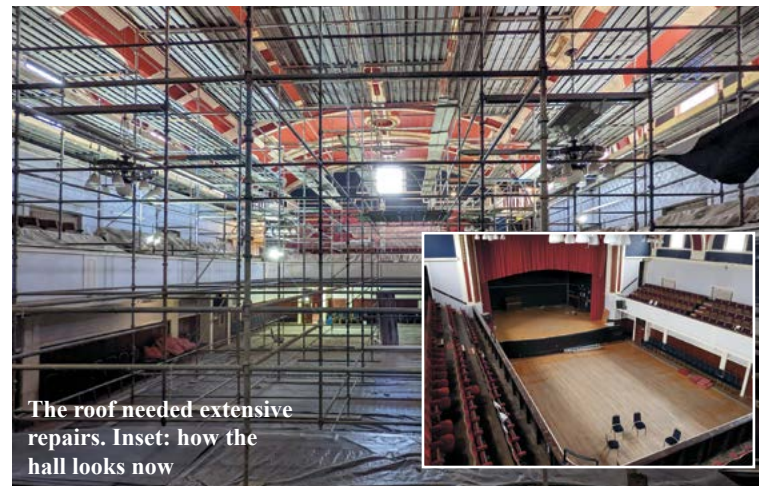
BOWLING THEM OVER

JESSICA Young, aged 15, a 4th year pupil at Portobello High School, pictured left, was Junior Champion at Brunstane Bowling Club for the last two years. She represented Edinburgh last summer at under-17 level outdoors, and now also plays for the under-25s. She recently won the under-17 indoor Midlothian singles and pairs at Dalkeith.

Brunstane Bowling Club said: "We welcome young persons under 18 to try the game, which is fun and can be competitive, if you wish. There's no need to be athletic, just enjoy the company of members like Jessica and perhaps emulate her success!"

If interested, contact us on 657 4417 or Keith on 07748 346186.

TOWN HALL REOPENS



The roof needed extensive repairs. Inset: how the hall looks now

A **25-YEAR** lease with City of Edinburgh Council on Portobello Town Hall runs from 1st June this year, so the building is now entirely the responsibility of the group of volunteers who run Portobello Central SCIO, just a few weeks short of four years since it was closed.

Bookings have been rolling in since March, running well into 2024, including a grand ball for Porty Pride on 9th July. The recent highly successful Crowdfunder appeal enabled the appointment of a venue manager who will make bookings easy: for parties, markets, music and dance. The first actual event will take place in late June and, as when taking over an old house, there's a lot of work still to be done.

Now that the outside is wind and water-tight, a lot of inside preparation needs to be done: exploring, cleaning, sorting, testing and paperwork, for which more volunteers are needed. They will play a big part in the venue's success, which will make it even more part of the community than before.

To book an event or offer to help, contact: hello@portobellocentral.org

The building of the Town Hall was part of the agreement made with the Edinburgh city council when Portobello was amalgamated into the city in 1896. It opened on 30th October 1914. The swimming baths on the Promenade were agreed at the same time.

Geoff Pearson

PORTY PROFILE No. 84

RICHARD WISEMAN



PHOTO: GUY HINKS

PORTOBELLO is home to Britain's only Professor of the Public Understanding of Psychology, Richard Wiseman. With over two million subscribers and 500 million views on his YouTube channel, and having written several best-selling books, Richard is internationally renowned for his research, including magic, the paranormal, superstition and luck.

Born in Luton, Richard became interested in magic at a young age and then took a degree in psychology at University College London. A chance meeting with a friend resulted in him coming to Edinburgh University to study for a PhD in magic and the paranormal at the Koestler Parapsychology Unit. Here he met his future partner, Caroline Watt, now the Professor of Parapsychology at the University.

Following his PhD, Richard went to work at the University of Hertfordshire, where he currently continues with his research, teaching and talks. His interest in the paranormal has led him to conduct lots of strange studies, including teaming up with the Edinburgh Science Festival to investigate ghostly experiences at Edinburgh's Underground Vaults!

Richard and Caroline bought a flat on the Prom in 2020 and enjoy a magnificent sea view. They love living in the area, with Richard explaining that "research shows that being by the sea boosts wellbeing, the area has a wonderful sense of community and it's a great place to watch the world go by".

Richard has become fascinated by the strong connection Portobello has to the history of magic, with magicians around the turn of the century often playing to huge audiences. "In the early 1900s, thousands of people flocked to the seaside and local magicians like Andre Letta and Harry Marvello became household names." If anyone has information about these performers, Richard would love to hear from you, and can be contacted via his website.

Patricia Scotland

WHERE AM I?



PHOTOS: ANDREW MYLINE

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

What's On

LOCAL GARDEN OPEN: Sun. 23rd July, 2-5pm. 14 East Brighton Crescent. £5 entry (children free), for The Trussell Trust and Scottish Gardens Scheme charities.

CAR BOOT SALES: (Rotary Club of Portobello): Last Sun. of month, Newcraighall Station car park. Sellers arrive from 7.30am, buyers from 8.30am. Cars £12, large vans £18, no pre-booking. Enquiries to 07708 796737/07523 689839.

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

LOCAL HISTORY NETWORK

ON 10TH May two directors from Portobello Heritage Trust attended the launch of the Edinburgh Local History Network (ELHN). This has been established to enable local history and heritage groups to work together and support each other with events and projects. The City of Edinburgh Council's Edinburgh 900 celebrations in 2024 will mark the foundation of Edinburgh in 1124. It is hoped events will be held by local groups across the city.

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is produced by a team of local volunteers with contributions from more than 25 people. If you have any news or would like to advertise email

portyrep@gmail.com

THE POWER OF PORTY

AT SOME point in early June last year a group of young people were overheard talking to each other on Portobello High Street. A couple of them were supportively saying to a friend: "Look, that's for you." They were talking about the Pride flags. This is what Porty Pride is all about. On the 8th and 9th of July, we will bring together LGBTQ+ people and our allies to celebrate the inclusive nature of Portobello. The visibility of Porty Pride including the support from across Portobello is



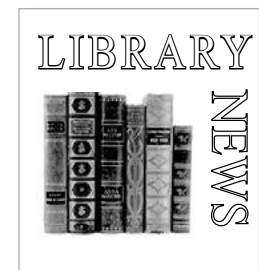
powerful. It helps people feel a comfortable belonging in their neighbourhood and demonstrates to visitors that we are a welcoming and accepting part of Edinburgh.

This year we have more on offer including our favourite prom dog walk, a ball at the Town Hall with some surprises, poetry and a crafting session to make your own Pride wreaths. Please come along and join in the fun, everyone is welcome.

Information can be found on www.portypride.com

Kate Gillwood

PREPARATIONS for the 2023 Summer Reading Challenge are well under way in Portobello Library. The challenge encourages children to read six books over the summer holidays to win prizes and is a fun way for them to keep up their reading. This year's challenge is 'Ready Set Read' and has a sporting theme, so expect sporty activities and crafts promoting it.



We have recently moved our Macmillan Information Point to a more prominent location. If you or someone you know is looking for information on dealing with cancer, the library hosts a Macmillan information station with leaflets and information designed to inform and support people affected by cancer, and trained Macmillan volunteers will be available in the library every Monday from 11.30am to 1.30pm.

Whenever one of our staff is on the Promenade we notice how many dog owners there are walking their dogs and we have been looking for safe ways to welcome dogs into the library. We have now introduced Dog-Friendly Thursdays, when well-behaved dogs and their owners are very welcome. Information on dog-friendly Edinburgh libraries, including on doggy etiquette, is available on www.edinburgh.gov.uk/using-library/dog-friendly-libraries.

For up-to-date information about what is on in the library over the summer, visit us or check our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PortobelloLibrary and Twitter at [@PortyLibrary](https://twitter.com/PortyLibrary).

Lesley Mayes

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	- Conquer Gravity	(Baptist Church Hall-Live)	- 19:45 - 20:35hrs
Wednesdays	- Mat Class	(The Original - Live)	- 18:15 - 19:25hrs
	- Mat Pilates	(The Original - Virtual)	- 20:00 - 21:00hrs
Thursdays	- Mat Pilates	(The Original - Virtual)	- 09:30 - 10:15hrs

Magic Circle Pilates (Virtual) 2023:
Fridays - 9:30-10:15am - 9th June, 11th August & 8th September

Trigger Point Pilates (Virtual/Live) 2023:
Saturday - 9:30-10:30am - 24th June, 26th August & 30th September

THE PILATES STUDIO Address: Tribe Porty, 19, Windsor Place, Portobello
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IF YOU lost plants during the winter, treat yourself to something new, but try to ensure any new plants have been grown in peat-free compost. I've used it for decades, but you do need to watch the watering as some retains water almost too well. A finger poked into the compost will tell you how wet it is. Add more drainage such as perlite or sharp sand if required.

Container plants will need a feed and comfrey or nettle tea is easy to make. Collect leaves in a bucket, cover with water and leave for four weeks, then dilute to the colour of weak tea before use. Although expensive to buy, I also use seaweed liquid if I know I'll have visitors, as the homemade liquid does stink.

Remember to deadhead throughout the summer, especially annuals like marigolds and cosmos, perennials like dahlias and bedding like verbena.

Keep sowing a pinch of lettuce, carrots or peas every fortnight to ensure a continuous supply without a glut, but if you do have extra, a food bank will welcome fresh veg.

Our garden at 39 Nantwich Drive will open under Scotland's Garden Scheme from 2-5pm on Saturday and Sunday, 5th and 6th August. Funds to SGS and Garden Organic. No wheelchair access. £5 entrance fee.

THE apple blossom in the community orchard has been resplendent and points to another bumper harvest. The seasonal glut needs to be managed and one way is the production of Portobello apple juice. Another is pickling the apples as chutney, which is then sold on the PEDAL stall at the monthly market in Brighton Place, on the first Saturday of the month from 9.30am to 1.30pm.

The market supports the council initiative of a 20-minute neighbourhood where, by travelling on foot or by bike, local services can meet most of our needs. For example, Portobello Community Fridge collects most of its food by cargo bike. Also, did anyone catch the news about Portobello resident, Professor Jim Scobbie, who has ditched his car and now commutes to Queen Margaret University by e-bike?

Not all of us want to totally eliminate the car for all travel but we can walk and cycle more and we must preserve our good bus connections. Personally, I think we should push for a tram extension along Seafield to Portobello during the Masterplan consultation that is being developed. How about it?

Stephen Hawkins

SUSTAINABLE PORTY

Porty Pennypincher

HOW much do you spend on clothes? Chances are you are spending more than you need to. The fashion industry is reliant on people buying new clothes every season – but in the middle of a cost of living crisis, that is unsustainable.

Try buying secondhand. There are plenty of charity shops in Portobello and most clothing sold is in very good condition, clean and a fraction of the price of new items.

Mending clothing is a good way to get some more life out of your garments. Try darning socks and jumpers (there are YouTube videos to help you). Local dressmakers can repair damaged clothes or even turn them into something different if you ask them. A good cobbler can resole your shoes and help you revitalise your footwear. Fed up with the colour of that top? Try dying it to change the colour into something you'd rather wear.

Army and Navy stores used to be a common sight on high streets, selling ex-military clothing at knockdown prices. You can find these online now, selling everything from underwear to raincoats – much of it never issued.

PHOTO: ELLEN GRUNEWALD



PORTY COMMUNITY BIKE LIBRARY

WERE you one of the 365 'bums on bikes' who borrowed a bike from the bike library trial in the Tumbles car park container?

The good news is Porty Community Energy has funding to make the bike library a regular feature of Porty life. Three e-cargo bikes are available to borrow NOW from the Keep Porty Tidy offices on Portobello High Street (the old Favours shop) via www.portycommunitybike.myturn.com.

Could you do the weekly shop without a car? Moving stuff but not got a car? Can the school run be more fun? Come and talk to us. Our friendly 'librarians' will sort you out. Gift vouchers available too!

TOMMY SHEPPARD MP
EDINBURGH EAST

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FROM THE ARCHIVE BY MARGARET MUNRO

GOLD DIGGERS



IT IS 20 years since the nostalgic Golden Days event, a celebration of long, hot summer days and crowds on the beach. There was a lot happening with “Fun for Everyone on the Prom & Beach”. The accuracy of the programme map is questionable, as the Bedford House Hotel, later the Dalriada, has been marked east of Morton Street.

Bill Barclay, a well-known comedian of that era, performed for an hour at ‘The Old Pier’. Radio Forth (Forth 2) had an outside broadcast on the prom featuring music from the 40s and 50s from 2 til 5.30pm. Later, they hosted The Golden Days Show: A musical

TIME	BEDFORD HOUSE HOTEL	JUNIOR CENTRE	PROM	THE OLD PIER	CHILDREN'S STAGE	BEACH PROM
12:30pm						
13:00pm	Ace & Six	Festival		Pop	Vintage Music & Film	Ed Mule-Tun
13:30pm		Information		The Blues Station	Chorus the Chorus	Play Ride, Beach Volleyball, Free
14:00pm	Blues Inc	Collective	Classic	Rock 66	Ace & Six	Ed Mule-Tun
14:30pm			Vintage	Dance Class	Ed Mule-Tun	Play Ride, Beach Volleyball, Free
14:45pm		Fair	Slow	Patrick's Kids	Comedy from Bill Barclay	Ed Mule-Tun
15:00pm				Edinburgh Swing Dance Society	Chorus the Chorus	Ed Mule-Tun
15:15pm	Hi Village	Cafe		Dance Class	Vintage Music & Film	Ed Mule-Tun
15:30pm				Vintage Music & Film	Ed Mule-Tun	Ed Mule-Tun
15:45pm				Vintage Music & Film	Ed Mule-Tun	Ed Mule-Tun
16:00pm				Vintage Music & Film	Ed Mule-Tun	Ed Mule-Tun
16:15pm				Vintage Music & Film	Ed Mule-Tun	Ed Mule-Tun
16:30pm				Vintage Music & Film	Ed Mule-Tun	Ed Mule-Tun

journey through the 40s and 50s in the town hall from 7.30pm til 1am. “The UKs Best Rock ‘n’ Roll Bands” performed, with tickets to either dance or watch the show available. There were many options throughout

the day to keep all ages entertained and amused.

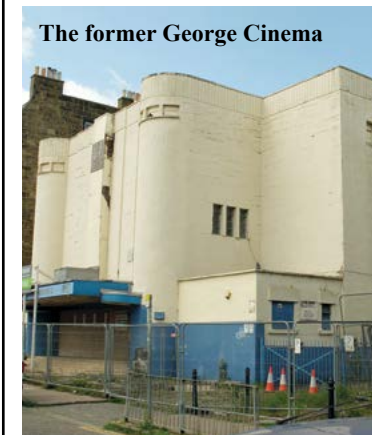
Local volunteer guides and drivers helped make this day a success. Their reward was a free lunch in the Swim Centre cafeteria and a pair of complimentary tickets for the evening show. Portobello Community Council and local councillors lent their support to the event. Funding came from City of Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh & Lothian Tourist Board amongst others. It just goes to show that the popularity of the prom and beach has never really waned, even if the type of events being held has changed.

EDINBURGH DOG AND CAT HOME

EDCH met MSPs at the Scottish Parliament in April to highlight the growing issue of pet poverty. The event was hosted by MSP Christine Grahame, a keen advocate of the Home’s work. As well as more owners using pet food banks, there have been a record number of calls to the Home from owners about surrendering their pets – a total of 526 over 6 months.

The Home continues to provide pet food to 88 food banks across East and Central Scotland, feeding more than 3,500 pets a month. Information on how and where to donate money and food can be found at www.edch.org.uk.

Derek Stewart-Brown



GEORGE FOR SALE

THE former George Cinema on Bath Street is on the market again. Plans to convert the Art Deco style Category C-listed building into flats were rejected by the Council’s planning committee in 2018. Campaigners aiming to save the George propose re-purposing the building into a publicly-accessible cinema and cultural venue. Their plan, “A Positive Vision for an Iconic Community Landmark”, is available at www.thegeorge.org.uk



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IT HAS been a busy few months for the Wash House, as bookings have been on an upward trajectory. We are hoping to run a first aid course for all users of the centre, and install a defibrillator. Heat Hack will be visiting us shortly to look at our energy use. We are making plans to turn the garden tucked away at the end of the building into an urban wildlife haven and encourage local involvement. We are looking at becoming a Fringe venue, with all the theatre infrastructure in place and ready to go, and are collaborating with Screen Porty for film nights. Our piano is tuned, repainted, and ready for 'Pop in and Play' sessions – more info on this soon! We are working on a new website encompassing everything that's happening at the Wash House, along with a simple booking system.

www.thewashhouse.org

Gica Loening

AMNESTY – LOCAL NEWS

PROFITIOUS mid-April sunshine favoured Portobello Amnesty International Group's annual Book Sale and Coffee Morning at Bellfield. Home baking was devoured, books changed hands and patrons were serenaded al fresco by a folk band, with an admirable £862 raised – some £100 more than last year – to help the essential global work of Amnesty International.

In the meantime, the Portobello Group continues to do what we can to assist in that work and local support is frequently heartening. Our stall at May's Portobello Market, for instance, attracted an encouraging 180 petition signatures in support of Zhanargul Zhumatai, a Kazakh artist and activist, currently detained for the second time without trial by the Chinese authorities for campaigning on local authority corruption and the land rights of Kazakh herding communities.

As a manifestation of plain human decency such a response is heart-warming – and honourable mention must go particularly to the doughty bunch of Towerbank P6-ers who grabbed some of our petition sheets and hared round the market, gleaning numerous signatures for Zhanargul's case from stallholders and others.

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

Jim Gilchrist

SCREEN PORTY

After the success of our first three screenings, we are considering our next moves. We have some exciting conversations happening and look forward to putting on more fantastic stories on the big screen for the community!

www.screenporty.org

Lesley Milloy

MOUNT LODGE GREEN

RESIDENTS of Mount Lodge Place have gained support from the City of Edinburgh Council and Edible Estates (a community interest company) to develop their 'green'. The rectangle of mown grass with four trees has, for years, been underused and largely inaccessible. Following a community-led survey, which identified biodiversity as the priority, residents developed a plan that includes space for vegetables and wild flowers. A gardening workshop in March got things under way, and foxes and hedgehogs have been spotted.

PCC

P O R T O B E L L O Community Council meetings are held on the last Monday of each month at 7.30pm, except in July and December. See www.portobellocc.org

ACTION PORTY

WHEN conserving the past gets in the way of making sure there's a future for our children, what do we do? We make sure people have a chance to discuss with us any impact that any redevelopment at Bellfield may have, but we also don't give up on trying to do our bit to help rescue our society from a car-dependency that causes severe ill health and may be a roadblock to a liveable future. Action Porty has recently been granted planning permission to build an ecargo bike storage shed within the grounds of Bellfield, Ref no: 22/05805/FUL. We are now looking to find any parties with a legitimate interest in the burial ground (lair or memorial stones) as lair-holders and ask them to contact Action Porty at friendsofbellfield@gmail.com by 14th July 2023.

Justin Kenrick

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YOU ARE invited to our Community Summer Party and Fundraiser! Join us at Tribe Porty on 10th June from 2pm for family fun. Grab some delicious food from Nice Times Bakery, The Falafel Stop, or Pizza Geeks. Pop by the Mini Makers Market and stay to watch a musical performance from Brass Blast at 4.30pm. Throughout the day, Edinburgh Tool Library will be running Robot Making Workshops for the wee ones, and for the parents there are mini treatments from Portobello Natural Health.

As well as this being a day full of fun, we are fundraising for Jay. Jay was born with Cerebral Palsy which significantly affects his mobility and communication. Jay requires a life changing, specialist piece of kit which costs £29,000. To find out more or make a donation, please head to our website: www.tribeporty.org. Free entry, all welcome.

Alice Hudson

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NATURE NOTES

ONE swallow may not make a summer, but there's no doubt this showy, streamer-tailed acrobat signifies warmer days ahead. By the time the (unrelated) swifts join them, higher up, screeching an announcement of their presence, you can be sure it's not far off having to reach for the sunscreen.

However I have to confess that there's an underdog cousin of the swallow that I find myself scanning the blue skies for. I have a whole Caravan of Love for the house martin.

A touch smaller than a swallow, the effect is accentuated by the lack of tail streamers, its tail instead a stubby wedge. From above it is a dark metallic blue, with a white rump patch, while underneath, as it turns hunting small flying insects, it flicks the light switch, showing a perfect white body.

They bring to mind small fighter jets, a little delta shape carving the sky. As the name suggests they are strongly associated with people, migrating every year from Africa, and building nests out of mud under the eaves of houses.

They have in the past been falsely accused of trapping



House martin

sparrows inside those mud nests, sealing the entrance when the intruder seeks to destroy or take over the nest; but overall they lack the myth and legend of their fellow summer travellers (though five did appear on Richard II's coat of arms).

Look for them over water especially, though they'll happily seek their prey over gardens, where the BBQs and G&Ts being indulged in definitely do make a summer.

Anthony Robson

GET IT TOGETHER

A NEW network of community groups and organisations in Portobello is being set up to help them support each other and work together. A shared calendar of special community events is planned, to prevent clashes of dates where possible and enable shared publicity. It is also hoped to set up a directory of the groups to enable residents and people moving into the area to find out what is available locally. Information will be posted on www.porty.org.uk

Any community groups or organisations that would like to share and collaborate with others in the area would be welcome.

For more details contact portycommunityenergy@gmail.com

PHOTO: ANTHONY ROBSON

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JOPPA TENNIS

THE new season started at the beginning of April and we welcomed more than 50 new members to the club, bringing membership up to 210, an all-time high for our little club. These consist mainly of family memberships, as well as some individuals. A series of beginner social coaching sessions is running over the summer to provide an opportunity for new and old members to meet and practise their skills. The grounds are looking splendid with last year's bulb planting project (carried out with some of the

junior members) rewarding us with a beautiful display of flowers.

League matches have begun and our two men's and one women's team continue to perform well in their respective promoted divisions, despite strong competition from bigger clubs. The now annual Joppa Tennis Camp at Kilconquhar Castle took place on the 12 May, with around 40 families spending the weekend building teamwork skills, improving their tennis and generally having fun.

Marjorie Shepherd

IN THE SADDLE

OVER the summer months, local cycling club Portovelo has an expanded range of rides on offer. As well as the usual choice of Sunday rides (leaving at 8am) and a sociable Wednesday morning ride (leaving at 9), we've also added a fast-paced Wednesday evening training ride (leaving at 6pm), which will continue to September. Saturday gravel rides, which take place fortnightly, now start at the later time of 9.30am.

For this year's 'weekender' in mid-June we're heading to Tomintoul in the Cairngorms where we have block-booked the village youth hostel as a base. The rides on Saturday and Sunday are likely to be quite challenging, and if that wasn't enough, some are already planning to ride there on the Friday from Aviemore or Dundee. It's also the social highlight of the year, with a restaurant booked for Saturday evening.

New riders are always welcome on our rides. You can find out more about the club and its activities, and get details of how to contact us, on our website, www.porto-velo.com.

Andrew Mylne



Touch rugby sessions at Cavalry Park

RUGBY FOR EVERYONE

PAPA John's Tartan Touch is Scottish Rugby's fun, simple and social version of non-contact rugby. Join in the fun and get fit at our Portobello hub this summer. Papa John's Tartan Touch Sessions run at Portobello Rugby Club, Cavalry Park, each Thursday until 6th July 2023, from 6.30pm to 7.30pm.

So far we have seen over 60 adults and kids joining in each week. Touch rugby is not only great for your physical wellbeing, but is also a great way to make friends and have fun. Please join us at Portobello Rugby Club. #Proudtobeporty.

*Darren Crowther
(Head of Minis Rugby)*



Kayaking in the Forth

WATER SPORTS FOR ALL

WIDENING participation in water sports is one of the core aims of Portobello Sailing & Kayaking Club (PSKC). We're keen to demonstrate that water sports are accessible to everyone. This aim is behind our decade-long partnership with Castlebrae High School, where we offer students the opportunity to learn to kayak and sail as part of their coursework. This June will see a fresh batch of students on the beach, developing new skills and learning about water safety, which will build their

confidence both on and off the water.

'Water sports for all' also means for all ages, shapes, and sizes. We're proud that our membership demographics show an equal gender balance and a wide range of ages, including active members in their 70s.

Whether young or old, new members are always welcome. No previous experience is necessary. The club can provide training, boats, kayaks, equipment, and safety gear to get started.

Alison Jeffrey

ANSWERS TO WHERE AM I?

1: Portobello Town Hall on Portobello High Street. 2: Tumbles on the Promenade. 3: Portobello Swim Centre on the Promenade 4: The Hats Promenade above The Beach House cafe on the Promenade.

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