

The Portobello Reporter

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Here we are. Or, here we are AT LAST, we should say. We have been learning from scratch how to organise ourselves for headlines and deadlines. Some of you will know just how long we have taken to produce this first edition of our local community newspaper — the PORTOBELLO REPORTER. So first an apology to those who have been waiting patiently or impatiently, and to those who can no longer go on thinking it would never appear. We apologise to those who carefully replied to our requests for notices of forthcoming events which are now long past. We regret we cannot (yet) answer letters individually, but we thank you for all the interest and support we received.

The PORTOBELLO REPORTER has been produced by a group of local people. The PORTOBELLO REPORTER is meant to serve the interests of people who live in Portobello and its neighbouring areas — that means you and us. It is not going to be profit-making. We have no formal links with any political or other organisation.

We, the editorial board (as we grandly call ourselves), are individuals who like Portobello as a place to live in, and (if possible) to go on living in. A lot of other people seem to agree. We felt there was an unnatural gap in our community. We hope the PORTOBELLO REPORTER will fill it.

We will report on the people and events in the news locally. We will bring you Portobello's history and reminiscences. We will publish other articles of interest. Time and again we hear of the need for public communication that is more effective than word of mouth — everything from the next disco' to the reports of some meeting or organisation. The PORTOBELLO REPORTER offers its services. We will be grateful for the support of those who have offered to advertise with us.

But there's more behind our determination to get the PORTOBELLO REPORTER produced. We believe that Portobello should stay alive and flourishing. We feel that crucial decisions are now being made which may have serious consequences for us. We think Portobello stands at the crossroads. We all need to know which turning to take.

The PORTOBELLO REPORTER aims to keep Portobello informed of the important plans that might affect us all one way or another. We shall open our columns to all those who have views to express, whether we agree with them or not. We do not necessarily agree amongst ourselves, but in any case we are not going to be able to keep filling the pages on our own. Nor do we wish to.

You have news, views, and memories.

You belong to clubs and organisations with meetings and activities to inform people of. So let us have your reports and we'll put them in, as long as space permits. If you are able to offer more than this — we are particularly in need of people who have spare time — we will welcome your offers to work with us.

This is your paper, but it's not like other papers — you will need to do more than just read it. And we don't mean using it for the fish supper! Please support the PORTOBELLO REPORTER and the PORTOBELLO REPORTER will serve you.

The present editorial board are: Nick Child, Bill Davidson, Dinah Pountain, Hazel Reid, Sylvia MacDonald, and Paddy Ross. Contact us at our temporary address: 191-3 Portobello High Street (and we thank CAB for the use of it).

LOCAL PLAN PROPOSES NEW ROADS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PORTOBELLO

The local plan produced by the District Council Planning Department proposes widespread changes to the face of Portobello. The proposals include the construction of the Leith Docks Approach Road which will affect several residential areas, an industrial estate to be built behind the Ramsay Annexe in Baileyfield Road, the demolition of houses in Kings Road and a new 'Portobello East' industrial estate of 20 acres stretching from behind East Brighton Crescent up to Argyle Crescent.

LEITH DOCKS APPROACH ROAD

Despite the opposition of many local groups the District proposes to grant planning permission to the Region for the construction of this road. The alignment will stretch from the ASDA intersection at Milton Road along a route behind houses in Brunstane Road, Argyle Crescent, Windsor Place, the Georgian area of the Brightons and on to Baileyfield Road. There are two main fears over the road proposals. The first is that it

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We'll miss all the excitement when they build the new road.

INFORMATION REQUESTED

We are sure that there are many regular meetings, clubs and groups. For example, we hear that there is a Portobello Burns Club, and we noticed that there was Old Time Dancing at the town hall. But what about the details of what you do, where and when you meet, and how those interested get involved? We will include such information in future issues. When we find out how often the PORTOBELLO REPORTER can be got out, then we should be able to notify particular meetings in advance.

On Monday, 19th of May I went into the Police Station to find out how they thought they had succeeded in quelling the expected violence between the punks and the mods. It was a very hot, sultry day. There were some clouds and spots of rain and the day was very close. There were hundreds of people in Portobello that day, plenty of children down to enjoy the sea and the sand, but no punks or mods bent on fighting. Was this, perhaps, because the last two times the Police had been very much in evidence, making it obvious that they were there to stop any nonsense that might have happened? I wanted to ask the Police what their opinion was, but when I got into the office I had to wait, and watch one Police-woman coping with the normal things they seem to have all the time.

There was a very upset and worried lady there, who had managed to lose her keys and her money, and seemed to have no-one to phone for help, and the telling of the story made her even more worried, and her plight even worse, to the point of tears. This went on for some ten minutes or so, while the Policewoman calmed her down, and when one of the people waiting gave her the bus fare she went, all smiles again, all problems solved.

The next problem concerned another woman who was frightened that her husband was going to get drunk and break up the happy home. After another ten minutes or so she too left. Someone had listened sympathetically and had given her hard realistic answers, and she seemed much less worried and desperate than before.

Then two women and five children tumbled into the office, which seemed to shrink! I didn't wait, I had no problems. All I would have done was waste time, and the Policewoman looked as cool, calm and sympathetic as she had at the beginning.

Portobello Freezer Centre

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The Y.S. is the youth wing of the Labour Party. There is a thriving organisation in East Edinburgh which organises a number of activities from political discussions to social events such as discos. The Y.S. are currently active in opposing the policies of the Thatcher government with regard to the effects they are having on young people. Unemployment is the main worry — many thousands of young people in Lothian Region are leaving school with no chance of finding work. The dole queue seems the only answer for many of them. The Y.S. regard this as a waste of human resources and are working towards policies that will commit the next Labour Government to guaranteeing a 'right to work' for young people. In March the Y.S. joined with the Labour Party and Trade Union and Community groups in East Edinburgh in organising an activity day on youth unemployment. This was highly successful and among the speakers were our local M.P. Gavin Strang and Eric Heffer M.P. For further information on the Young Socialists or on the youth unemployment issue you should telephone 665/2067 any weekday morning after 10.00 a.m.

Portobello for the Under Threes

If you have a toddler or a baby and live in Portobello, what facilities are open to you? Portobello has excellent nurseries and playgroups but what if your child is too young for them? How do you meet mothers in the same position as yourself? If you have a child aged under three years of age then the Scottish Pre-School Play Groups Association at 30 Frederick Street, Edinburgh, can give you information about groups in your area. In Portobello a number of Mother and Toddler groups are in operation, these are:

PADCA Mothers and Toddlers — Thursday 9.30 to 11.30 a.m. at the Community Centre in Adelphi Grove.

St. Johns Mothers and Toddlers group — St. Johns Centre, 48 Portobello High Street, Tuesdays and Thursday 9.30 to 11.30 a.m.

Abercorn Home Group — Wednesday afternoons. Contact Mrs Mathieson 661 5749.

Northfield Group — Royal High Rugby Club, Portobello Road. Wednesdays and Thursdays 9.30 to 11.30 a.m.

Brunstane Group — New group, contact the Brunstane Community Centre.

Meadowbank Stadium has a creche every week day with a charge of 22 pence for each child, and if you are looking for a registered child minder in the Portobello area then the Craigenfinny Social Work Area Office in Loaning Road will give you a list.

All the groups are run by mothers themselves and they differ from nurseries and playgroups in as

much as equal emphasis is given to the mother and the child. The child benefits from play and contact with other children of similar age and mothers can find others in the community to talk to, share anxieties and problems and ease the tension that comes with the demands that toddlers make on mothers.

The most recent group in Portobello is the PADCA Group and there is a need for toys for them, particularly large toys or educational ones. If you can help by donating toys please contact: Lorna Davidson at 669 7109 or call into the Community Centre in Adelphi Grove.

Another service for the under fives in PADCA centre is the new Toy Library, also on Thursdays 10-11.30 a.m. Handicapped children of **all ages** can also use the library. Come and borrow a variety of toys for a small fee!

Kings Road — Rumours Abound

For the past few months rumours have been circulating about the future of Kings Road. Some say that it is to be knocked down completely. If there is any truth in these rumours then the District Council ought to be ashamed of itself. Portobello needs more houses, not less. It would be a crime to knock down these fine tenement flats. Even if there is subsidence in that area surely a housing action programme would be better than demolition? Where would all the people who live there go? Many of them are elderly, they do not want to be rehoused. What would happen if Kings Road did vanish? Obviously it would become another West End gap site and would become part of the overall development planned for the area. (See lead story for more.) We hear that you King's Road people have been active recently. Could you let us know what has been happening? And so could any other group in trouble as well — Ed.)

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Lunch Club

The lunch club meets every Tuesday and Thursday in Marlborough Street "Congregational". The meals are prepared at the Jack Kane Centre and the seventy members can enjoy a two course lunch for 15 pence. The club has been running for 11 years and when our reporter visited it there was a hive of activity with Madge Wells, one of the members, doubling as a waitress! Mr Jackie McKirdy at the age of 91 is one of the oldest members and, members tell us, a marvellous singer. Our reporter listened in to Mrs Dick and Mrs Anderson recalling the "old days" in Portobello — the Marine Gardens with the Zoo, the Speedway, the midnight shows on the Pier, and the trams laid on to take the later revellers home.

Last year the club had outings to Kirkcaldy and Crieff with the Hammliton Lodge acting as host for tea and their annual Christmas Party. Mrs Curzon, the organiser, expressed her thanks to the local traders, hoteliers, shopkeepers and shop assistants for their generous support and kindness over the years. Any retired person wanting more information about the club and its activities should contact Mrs Curzon.

PORTOBELLO QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

During the Summer the Promenade Association organised a questionnaire to measure the response of local people to thirty-odd local issues. This report on the results of the survey is contributed by Paddy Ross.

It was interesting to see the various responses.

SHOULD THERE BE MORE FOOTBALL ALLOWED IN THE PARKS?

SHOULD AN ARMY ASSAULT COURSE FOR TEENAGERS TO PLAY ON BE AVAILABLE LOCALLY?

All the respondents answered "yes" to these two questions. Two people qualified their answers by demanding strict supervision and suggesting that the Park at Joppa Quarry should be used. One writer argued that by the time children became teenagers the damage had been done anyway and that army assault courses and more play facilities would not decrease vandalism, only more parental control would. The majority suggested one large adventure playground for Portobello

VANDALISM

Many suggested that the "Birch" and "Severe Punishment" would solve the problem of vandalism in Portobello. Some suggested that vandals should be made to join in a community effort to build an adventure playground and should be forced to keep it clean and maintain it. A "teenage cafe" on the Promenade was suggested as a healthy alternative to the public houses and amusement arcades that many teenagers hang around. More policemen on the beat was favoured by a large majority of writers. The police themselves did not agree — one Panda car, they argued, could arrive at the scene of a crime much faster than one man walking, and more ground could be covered by the Pandas. One mother believed that violent films on television led children to act out

COMMUNITY EDUCATION — ITS ROLE IN PORTOBELLO

By Dinah Pountain

People are often unsure of what community education is. Briefly it means involvement in the provision of a wide variety of out-of-school educational activities. It aims to encourage the idea that learning is a lifelong activity, in a variety of informal or formal ways. Community Education runs a wide programme of adult education classes in such diverse subjects as floral art and car maintenance. In this Region, around 25,000 people take part in one or more of these classes each year. The service is also responsible for the provision of staffing of community centres in local areas, and works with community and youth groups of all types. It can also help with financial support for voluntary organisations on the basis of annual grants to cover various running costs. Your local community education office is at Castlebrae High School in Greendykes Road, and the staff there can offer a variety of services — they can provide an information service for those who require information; an advice service for groups or their representatives, offering advice and assistance on specific or general matters; a photocopying service at cost for community groups; an equipment loan scheme, e.g. film and slide projectors, tape recorders.

fantasies, and so television was a major factor in the increase in vandalism.

OTHER POINTS

One response came from the heart of a lady in Kings Road who asked:

"Can anything be done about the drivers who rev up their engines when the traffic lights are at red. This happens in the small hours of the morning and we can't get sleeping!"

The response to the questionnaire was good — the *Portobello Reporter* would like all readers to let us know their views on any local community issue. Please write us at 191 High Street, and we will publish another sample of matters of concern in the local community.

The 'Portobello Reporter' was started by a group of residents. As well as keeping you informed of the latest news on the major issues and community events in Portobello, it gives all those living in the area the chance to express their opinions, and to advertise any events of interest to the community. It is also hoped to publish reminiscences of old Portobello which will be of nostalgic interest to newcomers and long-stay residents alike. A community newspaper is a good opportunity for Portobello, and I hope it will be well supported with many contributions from local people.

Apart from servicing the various community groups in the area, I am also interested in developing adult education in Portobello.

The Community Education service provides adult literacy tuition on a one-to-one basis or in small groups for anyone with reading, writing or spelling problems. A referral point to match up students with tutors locally has been set up at the Job Centre in Portobello High Street. If you know of anyone who has trouble in reading and writing tell them to drop in at the Job Centre.

Hopefully, this year, if there is a demand locally, a short series of workshops on citizens' rights will take place in the area, for all people interested in finding out more about their rights, and about where to seek help for any problems they may encounter.

If you want information or advice about community groups or community education in this area, contact Castlebrae Community Education Office, telephone 661-7463.

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Portobello Remembered

by Hazel Reid

Mrs Young is a bright eyed lady with white hair who lives in a pensioner's flat in the large block on the High Street. As we sat in her living room, with two chirping budgies in the background, she began to tell me about Portobello when she was a girl. She was born on December 25th 1893, so she had a lot of memories.

She remembers that between Fishwives Causeway and Adelphi there were 2 public houses, a paper shop, a butcher, a farrier, a baker and a 'sweetie shop'. The owner of the Sweetie shop also made and sold potted meat, which is an unusual combination. Near where the power station was sited there was a large stable and farriers to shoe the horses that pulled the trams to and from Portobello and Joppa.

Early days

Her mother was a midwife but, as was the custom then, she had no formal training and her father worked on the railways. Her mother also helped at a dairy farm which lay just behind the Fishwives Causeway and Mrs Young and her brother used to deliver milk in the mornings. She remembers that she worked seven mornings a week (and she was 'hard cawed' in the Winter months) for 2/6d (12½p) which she had to share with her brother. She had three sisters and the whole family lived in a room and kitchen in Pipe Street. She attended Towerbank School (the same building that stands today) and remembers that it was run by three sisters who taught the ninety odd children that attended. She stayed at Towerbank until she was 14 years old.

Trouble at the Mill

Her first job was in the paper mill which was in Bridge Street. The grass used in paper making was stored in a large shed also in Bridge Street. Her hours were from 6 am to 5 pm and the work was hard — she had to heave heavy reams of paper from area to area. The wages were 5/- per week (25p). Mrs Young began to laugh as she remembered a strike that had taken place at the paper mill. She could not remember what had caused the strike but she remembers walking about Portobello all day rather than having to go home and face her mother and tell her that she was on strike.

Edwardian Night Life

It had not been all work and no play. There were plenty of places to entertain you in Portobello then. Mrs Young was very fond of dancing and there were plenty chances for this. She thought that the Glasgow Fair time was the high point of the year with the best dances being held on the Pier (the 'gaff') and in the Marine Gardens. She remembers Harry Marvello and the Geisha Entertainers as the best entertainers. A boat could be hired at the harbour for one penny a day and she often spent the day out on a boat watching the steamers taking trippers over to Fife.

Married Life

At the age of 28 Mrs Young told her mother she was going to get married and her mother replied 'you will rue the day'. But on December 25th 1922 she married the man she had been courting for ten years and they went to live in a house in the High Street. When Mrs Young's own

daughter was a toddler, a neighbour had been drying clothes too near a gas fire and the fire spread through the tenement burning down Mrs Young's first home — so she moved back to Pipe Street where her mother still lived and where her three sisters had also rented houses. But the Pipe Street community was broken up in the name of progress and Mrs Young had to move to her present home in the High Street. Mrs Young has not seen the new houses built on the old Pipe Street site but she hopes the same sense of community can develop in modern times as existed in Edwardian times. Mrs Young has spent all her life in Portobello and when we finished our chat I asked her to sum up what she thought of the town. This was her reply:

"It was the last place God made and he has not finished yet."

EAST EDINBURGH YOUNG CONSERVATIVES

East Edinburgh Young Conservatives are in the middle of a recruitment campaign which is part of a national membership drive initiated by the Scottish Young Conservatives. The YC's are the youth wing of the Conservative Party and they play a vital role in the life of the party at all levels.

Local activities range from cycle races and discos to political study weekends. Anyone between the age of 15 and 30 is eligible for membership.

Miss Karin Dodds, the Chairman of the East Edinburgh YC's said:

"It is our intention to set about dispelling the false image so many people have of the Conservative Party. The most important point to get over to young people is that politics can be good fun, and that the youth of today can have a say as to what sort of country they live in. They can help shape the future of the nation themselves."

Anyone interested in finding out more about the YC's should contact Karin Dodds at 178 Portobello High Street.

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might cause planning blight in some of the best residential areas of Portobello. The second is that in the absence of any planning application by Lothian Region for a City Bypass the new route will become a major bypass for all Edinburgh traffic, bringing about more traffic in Portobello not less. In any event the high amenity of some of these areas will be destroyed.

WEST END DEVELOPMENT — KINGS ROAD DEMOLITION?

The District Plan states that in 1979 approval was given for the demolition of 315 houses and the improvement of 580 in East Edinburgh. The plan states:

"Most of the proposed demolition is in the Kings Road area or in and around Abbeyhill."

The plan also shows that the Regional Council has applied for planning permission to develop an industrial estate on the coal stacking yard at Baileyfield Road.

Taekwondo — The Art Of Hand And Foot

A club meets on Tuesday nights at the PADCA Community Centre — the Taekwondo Club. The writer of this article was at a meeting at the PADCA centre one Tuesday when he heard strange oriental noises coming from the main hall. He decided to investigate further. The noise seemed to be coming from a group dressed in white and they claimed to be practising the art of Taekwondo. Fine, but what on earth is it?

Apparently the art began with a group of young Korean soldiers many centuries ago. Although Karate and Kung-Fu are widely practised not a great many people know about Taekwondo, which is the most powerful style of all the martial arts. It is used by many of the world's armed forces to train their crack combat teams — the Royal Air Force trains men in it. Because Taekwondo is a martial art, and not a sport, Steven Parry Donald the Portobello organiser tells me that competitions are difficult to arrange because of the high risk of injury to competitors! A great deal of self discipline is needed! If you are interested contact Mr Donald at 669 9006.

No firm proposals are made with regard to the Power Station and Pool sites but the plan does say they "offer scope for comprehensive redevelopment" and indicates that the redevelopment could be of some tourist value to the town.

THE NEW PORTOBELLO EAST INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

One of the key features of the plan is the new industrial estate proposal. The plan states that there is a large amount of land zoned for industrial and railway purposes "much of which is disused and awaiting new development". With the construction of the new road access to the land lying behind East Brighton Crescent, Windsor Place and Argyle Crescent would exist and the plan is to develop a 20 acre industrial estate.

PORTOBELLO AT THE CROSSROADS

The next ten years are vital for the future of our town. Planning decisions on new roads and industrial development are obviously going to affect the whole face of Portobello. The people of Portobello and the local community association need to keep a close eye on the situation. The plan will have an affect on many properties in Portobello. The people of our town need to be the ones who decide on its future, not the planners who do not have to live with the consequences of their decisions. What happened to the West of Edinburgh must not happen to the East. Copies of the plan are available from the District Council or from the PADCA Community Centre. Let the 'Portobello Reporter' have your views.