

The Portobello REPORTER

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The independent voice of Portobello

Your Community Newspaper produced by local people.

CAR-FREE DAY NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

"WE SPEND AROUND NINE DAYS [a year] sitting in a car and three days walking" according to the Environmental Transport Organisation. We all know how easy it is to jump into any available car for even the shortest journey, whether to the shops, school or even church. Although, for some the car is a very important and necessary aid to mobility and independence, for others it becomes an essential extra; life would be unimaginable without one sitting at the front door ready and waiting to save a few minutes here or there.

On Saturday September 22, many cities, towns and villages across Europe will hold events to celebrate the 4th European Car Free Day and drivers will be asked to leave their cars at home. Previous years' campaigns successfully raised awareness of the problems of traffic pollution and noise levels in towns and, at the same time, promoted viable alternatives and car-free areas. Unfortunately, Edinburgh City Council feel unable to participate this year, due to insufficient planning time, but will hopefully organise something for 2002. That shouldn't prevent us, as individuals, however, from supporting the campaign by leaving our cars at home for at least a part of the day.

Particularly at weekends, Portobello's streets are inundated with cars, with road-side parking causing traffic congestion, the slowing down of public transport and, at times, restriction of pavement use. Are all these journeys necessary? Is there a viable alternative? Work done by the Porty 4 the Planet group at Portobello High School has begun to raise awareness of these issues within the school. 80 per cent of High School pupils are bike owners and money was raised to renovate and secure bicycle sheds.

On the morning of the 22nd, the group will leaflet car users in Portobello and will carry out a survey to begin to try to answer some of these questions, and on a lighter note, local musicians will do battle with the hum of traffic on the steps of the Town Hall to help publicise the campaign.

The problems of traffic congestion and the potential danger to children have been highlighted during safety campaigns organised by Towerbank School PTA's Safer Routes to School Group. On 2nd October, as part of International Walk to School Week, parents will be asked to walk



Photo by Peter Ross

with their children to school or drive part-way and walk the rest. This should keep the school area traffic-free and provide a much safer environment for the pupils. At the same time children in countries spread as far apart as Chile and Brazil, and Australia and New Zealand will hope to achieve the same result.

Catriona Young
& Lewis Waugh

BUS WARS ARE BACK

AFTER a period of relative stability, following the upheavals of deregulation in the 1980s and 90s, I'm afraid to say the bus companies are at it again - bus wars are back in town! Bye-bye 15 and 12. Hello again 15 and 45. Bye-bye 87 and 129. Hello and bye-bye 67. Bye-bye 66, except on Sundays. Hello again 129. Where does the 32/52 go now? - And these are only the more recent changes! No wonder you can't get an accurate bus map of our city - unlike in Europe or America. Timetables, too, change with increasing frequency. Are mine up-to-date? How do I know?

Whilst deregulation may have initially produced more new routes than the old regulated services, these have now all but disappeared. The legacy of reduced evening and Sunday services remains, and pity help you if you live off the main

routes. Bus services in London were never deregulated. They are tendered, with competition occurring not on the street, but in bidding for contracts. One pass covers all services and the Tube, and the result is a stable network.

Recent research by the Scottish Executive showed that, in Scotland, the loss of passengers on buses has been double the UK average over the last five years. Bus use has declined by more than a third in 10 years. Deregulation has had 15 years to deliver, and it has failed. Let's create an organised transport service where one ticket can be used on all operators and there is no need to change bus routes and times more than twice a year, as happens on the railway. Oh, and can the 32/52 return to its original route, please?

Cllr Lawrence Marshall

BRUNSTANE TRAINS ON TRACK FOR 2002

IF ALL goes according to timetable, Portobello people should be able to hop on a train from Brunstane Station to Waverley next Summer. Minister for Transport, Sarah Boyack, announced that the funding gap would be filled by another half million pounds from the public transport fund and work will begin in October, costing a total of £9 million.

There will be a train in each direction every half hour from 6am to 8pm, and an hourly service between 8pm and midnight; the journey will take about 5 minutes. The scheme includes a park and ride facility at Newcraighall Station, which gives a real alternative to car commuters: they can leave their cars at the edge of town rather than drive through an increasingly congested Portobello.

Cllr Maureen Child

SIR HARRY LAUDER MEMORIAL GARDEN



Photo by Peter Ross

THE NEWLY created garden was opened on 4th August, which is the anniversary of Harry Lauder's birth in Bridge Street in 1870. Mr Gregory Lauder-Frost (centre), grandnephew of the world famous entertainer performed the ceremony and in his speech revealed that the Lauder family link with Portobello was much stronger than generally thought. Mr Lauder-Frost's researches show that Sir Harry's grandfather moved here from Edinburgh and lived at number 2 Ramsay Lane for twenty years with his wife and family, which included Sir Harry's father.

Mr Tom Smith, Chairman of Portobello Community Council, welcomed the guests, which included Mrs Angela Logan, widow of the late Jimmy Logan. Mr Smith pointed out that it was the labours of a large number of people that had helped transform the piece of ground where they were standing into such a lovely little garden and all had to be thanked for their efforts and contributions. He wanted especially to point out, however, the wooden bench that had been provided by Portobello Rotary Club, the twisted hazel tree, gifted and planted by Bill and Ian Thomson of Portobello Garden Centre and the planters donated by Mr James Ralph of Ralph Plastics and acknowledge the work of Mr Scott Thomson of Edinburgh Parks Department. He also read out a letter from the Queen Mother, who shares her birthday with Harry Lauder, expressing her delight at the completion of the garden.

The opening ceremony was followed by a reception in the Town Hall where local individuals, businesses and organizations that had contributed to the memorial fund were joined by those from further afield including representatives from the Scottish Music Hall Society, which also gave invaluable assistance with the variety show on 1st September as well as donating to the Fund, Edinburgh City Council and the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

Archie Foley

SUNSHINE STARS IN THE MAKING

THE LADIES of the Portobello Sunshine Club recently took up an interesting offer made by film director Christeen Winford of Portobello-based Cormorant Films: they were asked to appear in a film called 'Saved' alongside Eileen MacCallum and Edith MacArthur. The script called for them to be frail and confused hospital patients, which did call for acting skills, as the Portobello Ladies, despite being older, live life to the full with their dancing, day trips and regular outings.

Bernadette Heron, Jimsy Laidlaw, Ellen Mackie, Edith Somerville, Cathy Garvin, Irene Alexander, Kitty Laird and Ann Miller kept everyone's morale high on set, entertaining cast and crew with dancing and singsongs. They had the pleasure of seeing their work when it was premiered at the Filmhouse. 'Saved' made its public debut during the Edinburgh International Film Festival and will be shown on TV in November as part of STV's 'Newfoundlands' series.

Lindsay Souter



Photo by Alan D Crumlish

LOTTERY GRANT FOR THE REPORTER

THE Portobello Reporter production group are delighted to acknowledge a grant of £799 from the Community Fund of the National Lottery Awards for All programme for the purchase of desktop publishing software to enable

them to produce the paper 'in-house'. The design and lay-out have previously been carried out by the printers, Scottish County Press, who have done a very good job, but the group will now have full control over the presentation of the

paper and will be able to make additions and changes to a later deadline. It is encouraging that the Awards Committee considered Portobello's community newspaper to be worthy of support.

Brenda Moloney

NEW TASK FORCE IN OPERATION

THE OPEN Space Task Force manager for the Portobello and Milton Wards, Robertson Davidson, took up his post at the end of July. He has an enforcement background and will work closely with the police, community groups and the general public and will take a pro-active role in helping us all to Keep Porty Tidy. He will deal with problems relating to litter, dog-fouling, verge, fly-posting, shrub, parks and beach maintenance and can be notified of any such concerns at his Baileyfield office on 657 4815.

PORTY PROFILE No. 7
MARGARET JACK

ONE OF Portobello's sunniest personalities, Margaret Jack, has been absent from the scene recently due to a road traffic accident in May, but, fortunately, she is now on the road to recovery, thanks mainly to her positive thinking and cheery disposition. Many of us know Margaret through her jobs in a local chip shop and at Portobello High School, and through St Johns Church, but it is her friendly smiling face and remarkable ability to remember everyone and always say 'hello' that make her so well known.



Photo by Karen Finnie

A keen line dancer, strutting her stuff for six years now, Margaret regularly attends workshop displays in Blackpool and Newcastle and is involved in the world championships. Using her dancing talents, she has raised money for around 10 different charities and combines this with acting as a line dancing co-ordinator for Edinburgh.

When not dancing Margaret is busy with her family: her eldest daughter Samantha, 27, has given her two beautiful grandchildren and combines being a mother with studying at Falkirk College. Natasha, 24, is serving as a peace keeper in Macedonia, and youngest daughter Anouska is studying science, politics and economics in Glasgow.

We wish Margaret a full recovery and hope she is fit enough to get back into her great passion - her line dancing - as soon as possible!
Karyn Finnie

PORTOBELLO ONLINE?

ARE YOU interested in helping to set up a community web site for Portobello? Would you like to contribute your ideas and opinions? Would you be willing to attend meetings to discuss the function and format of a local web site?

The aim: a community web site designed and maintained by local people and run on a non-commercial basis; a free platform for all non-profit making local clubs and groups; to encourage local people to participate within the community.

If you would like to participate, please register your interest at r.jefferson@blueyonder.co.uk or by telephone on 669 1918. The success of this project relies on the participation of the whole community, so please get involved. A meeting will be arranged in the near future. Bob Jefferson



GAVIN STRANG, MP for Edinburgh East and Musselburgh, thanks everyone who voted for him in June elections.

Gavin holds regular interview sessions as follows:

- Portobello Town Hall, on the 2nd Friday in the month, 7.30-8.30 p.m.
- Brunton Hall, Musselburgh, on the last Saturday in the month, 9.00 - 10.00 a.m.
- Craigmillar Community Centre, 63 Niddrie Mains Terrace, on the last Saturday in the month, 10.30 - 11.30 a.m.

You can also contact him by writing for an appointment to:
The Labour Rooms, 54 Portobello High Street,
Edinburgh EH15 1DA
or by telephoning 669 6002 for an appointment.

You can e-mail him at: gillana@parliament.uk
And visit his website: www.gavinstrangmp.co.uk

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PERRIER PRIZE FOR PORTY COMIC

LOCAL COMEDIAN Eddie McCabe made good by winning the Perrier Award for Best Newcomers, the comedy version of the Oscars. Eddie and his partner Garth Cruickshank had the judges in stitches with their anarchic show 'Lets Have A Shambles'.



Photo by Peter Ross

Eddie has lived in Portobello since he was fifteen and has worked locally in the Brighton Nursery, was youth worker at the Royal High Primary After School Club and with adults with learning disabilities. However Eddie is sure to hit the big time having won this prestigious award and will no doubt have to give up the day job.

Eddie's proud mum Jaquie told The Reporter, "He's always made us laugh, he gets it from his Glaswegian dad". The best joke of the all was on our rival publication *Scotland On Sunday* who published a one star revue of Eddie's show the day after they won the award. Now that's what I call news!
Peter Ross

FIRST PROBUS CLUB IN ITS 25th YEAR

THE FIRST Probus Club of Portobello celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. The fortnightly meetings are held in Portobello Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield Street, on Thursday mornings from September to May, and take the form of coffee, a speaker and question time. The 25th season commenced on September 6 with the first 'conversation piece' from an interesting and varied programme.

While not actively engaged in fund raising, the club makes charitable donations from surplus funds, and this year's recipients were the Portobello Monday Centre and Portobello Older People's Project.

Probus is a world-wide organisation for retired professional gentlemen. Anyone interested in joining the Portobello club can find out more from current President, Mr D M Chalmers on 669 3842.

CSV-RSVP 'GET ACTIVE WEEK'

ARE YOU over 50? Have you heard of RSVP? Can you spare a few hours a week? The Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme 'Get Active Week' starts on 10th September to promote a wide range of volunteering activities. Opportunities in the Edinburgh area cover a range of projects from schools, primary health care, office duties (RSVP), helpline advisors for local charities and organisations, environmental and, we, hope many more. As well as helping organisations with limited resources and using your skills to benefit others, this is a great way to meet new friends and keep active.

For more information about becoming an RSVP volunteer please contact Liz Hendry/Angela Howard at Wellgate House, 200 Cowgate, Edinburgh EH1 1NQ; tel. 622 7766/fax 662 7755 email info.csv.rsvp@connectfree.co.uk

MOBILE PHONE MASTS

RESIDENTS in Milton and Eastfield were a deal more successful in stopping the erection of a mobile phone mast than those in Ravelston, who hit the headlines. Their petition, direct lobbying of BP Cellnet and judicious parking of vehicles were low key, but persuaded the company not to force the issue at 305 Milton Road East.

Putting up 45 foot masts was permitted development, requiring no consultation with local people or their representatives, but Scottish Parliament legislation is now in force which means that each location has to go through the planning process. This at least gives local people a chance to have a say, and means that this proposal will now have to go through the planning process, along with many others.
Cllr Maureen Child

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NEWS IN BRIEF

LOCAL DECISIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL: The next meeting of the East Edinburgh Local Development Committee will be held on Tuesday September 11 at 7pm at Duddingston Primary School. Go along to hear your local councillors discussing local issues, and raise your concerns with them.

NEWBATTLE ABBEY College in Dalkeith, Scotland's only adult education residential college, is keen to recruit people who want to do something new with their life. The majority of students have few or no qualifications, but after completing a one-year Diploma course, go on to university, other forms of training or employment. Grants and tuition fees are available. For more information on funding and courses call 663 1921 or visit their web site - www.newbattleabbeycollege.co.uk

'YOUR GUIDE To Learning in Edinburgh and the Lothians' is a helpful, pocket-sized guide to adult education opportunities. It includes advice for first-time learners and contacts and information on types of learning available: getting started, basic education, college and university courses, community high schools, community based opportunities, and many other useful tips and contacts. Copies are free and available from libraries, colleges and universities or by calling Edinburgh's Lifelong Learning Partnership direct on 317 3770.

HOW WOULD you cope in an emergency - if a child was choking or someone had a heart attack? The St Andrews Ambulance Association is running courses of First Aid training, starting this month, covering these and other emergency situations.

The 10-week courses, leading to a Standard First Aid Certificate, are held at The Royal High Primary School, Northfield, on Thursdays from September 6, and at the Harlaw Hill Day Centre, Prestonpans, on Mondays from September 10. The 2-hour classes start at 6.45pm and the cost of the course is £45. There is still time to join.

For further information contact Jim Davidson on 669 6995.

WHAT'S ON IN THE TOWN HALL

SCOTTISH Body Builders Championships, Men and Women: Sun. Oct. 7, 12noon-9.30pm.

MODEL Railway Exhibition: Sat/Sun. Oct. 13/14, 9.30am-5pm.

JUMBLE Sale by Inverleith Swimming Club: Sat. Oct. 27, 2-4pm.

FLORAL Art: Edinburgh Floral Art Club: Wed. Oct. 31 7 for 7.30pm. Demonstration by Lillias Hoskins "Windmills Of Your Mind". Tickets £7 from 552 5462.

CHRISTMAS FAIR by Duddingston Church: Sat. Nov. 24, 10am-3pm.

POLISH-Scottish Evening with dance, music and song, followed by a ceilidh: Sat. Nov. 24, 7.30pm. Tickets at £7 available from the Adria Hotel, 11 Royal Terrace, 556 7875.

CHRISTMAS FAIR by Friends of Edinburgh Dog & Cat Home: Sat. Dec. 1, 10am-1pm.

LETTERS

LOCAL SHOPS - As a resident of Portobello for some years now, I and some other people would like to see a shoe shop or a baby shop, as there are a few empty premises and it would be good to see them in operation again. I enjoy reading The Portobello Reporter and the adverts are good. Good luck with the Sir Harry Lauder project.
Mrs Stone.

TELL ME IF YOU CAN - Can anyone tell me where the Portobello Amateur Rowing Club Roll of Honour from the 1914-18 War has been placed after the club's building on the Promenade was demolished? The photograph of the memorial is included in Margeorie Meki's photograph album on Old Portobello.
Thank you.
M Goodall (669 4586)

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU
Copy deadline for the next issue is 2nd November 2001. Send your contributions c/o 9 Bedford Terr, EH15 2EJ, or put them in the box provided at Portobello Library, or call Brenda Molony on 669 3466 or e-mail: portobelloreporter@talk21.com

CEILIDH FOR AMNESTY

THIS YEAR Amnesty International celebrates its 40th Birthday and there will be a celebratory note in all the Portobello group's activities as we approach Human Rights Day in December. The group is being supported by the Musicians Union in holding a Ceilidh on Saturday October 27 from 7.30pm at Portobello Community Centre.

Please come along and help us make this event a great success - for a great cause!
Tickets at £4 (concessions £3) are available from: The Traidcraft Shop at 54 Portobello High St; Evergreen at 232; Kitchener's Deli, 127-29; Portobello Centre, Adelphi Grove; David Turner (669 5968); Judith Fisher (669 5968).

As part of the group's continuing campaign, a street stall at the Town Hall on Saturday September 22 will highlight the appalling extent of torture, routinely used in 60 countries to terrorise opponents of the government, and by some guerrilla groups. The stall will provide ideas on what ordinary people can do to help.
David Turner

DOORS OPEN DAY

WHILE THERE are no buildings open in the Portobello area on Saturday September 29, there are some interesting opportunities in Leith:

Trinity House, Kirkgate, founded in 1555 as a hospital for mariners: magnificent interior with paintings, models and artefacts of Leith's rich maritime history. Open 10am-5pm.

Sikh Temple, Sheriff Brae, formerly St Thomas's Church, has a converted eastern interior and an exhibition on Sikhs in Edinburgh. Open 12noon-2pm only.

Claverhouse Training Centre, 8 Granton Square, built in 1838 as the Granton Inn to cater for ferry passengers. Open 10am-5pm.

Forth Corinthian Yacht Club, 1 Granton Square: conducted tours of the historic harbour area, 10am-5pm.

Caroline Park House, Caroline Pk Ave: Fine late 17th century house built by Sir William Bruce for Viscount Tarbet, PM of Scotland 1685-92, incorporating 16th century East Granton Tower. Guided tours 2-5pm.

A brochure giving details of all 64 buildings open in Edinburgh is available from Libraries and Tourist Information offices.

PORTOBELLO ROTARY NEWS



Photo by John A. Sowrey

FRED PRAIN, President 200-01, handed over the reins to Jack Powell on July 1. Fred had a very successful year as President, increasing the membership by four, including two ladies and organising with Duncan Anderson the Annual Art Exhibition, the club's biggest fund-raising event. The club are very grateful for all his work during his year.

Following in Fred's footsteps, Jack Powell inducted two more young lady members in July: Jackie Bright and Lisa Mackay (photo) - both ex-Rotaract members.

The club's stall on Fringe Sunday, with face-painting and family games, raised £1200 to be divided between The Sick Kids, Edinburgh; The Bus Appeal, Findlay Ward, The Eastern General; Wilson House, Portobello; and the Rotary Young Leadership Awards.

LIBRARY NEWS

PORTOBELLO LIBRARY has had a busy summer, with our younger users participating in the Reading Carnival, many of them reading and reviewing six books and collecting prizes. We were visited by 'Mr Bones' whose anarchic puppetry and story telling went down a treat, and we made a frieze which is on display in the Children's section. We also hosted an exhibition by local artist Kevin Brotherton, whose work, reflecting his life, was featured in the Evening News.

The Book Group meets on the first Tuesday of the month. *October Sky* (also known as *Rocket Boys*) by Homer Hickam will be discussed on October 2. All are welcome.

Planning is under way for the Hugh Miller Bicentenary celebrations, when, in conjunction with the National Museum of Scotland and Portobello History Society, the Library will host talks and exhibitions to celebrate the many lives of this stonemason, geologist, journalist and Portobello personality.
Joyce Campbell

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THE FABULOUS FIFTIES

I WAS A PROMENADER or, to be more precise, a West End Promenader. I was brought up in a tenement on the sea front in front of the power station, just beside the bathing pool.

All my friends in the stair of my age group had part time jobs either as paperboys or milk boys; very few of the girls were taken on in those days by any of the local shops, don't ask me why. I worked for the grocer cum dairy on the corner of Lee Crescent; I think it was called McWilliams, so my Granny got me up at 4.30 every morning. At 5 am I met the Murchie's lorry at the top of Rosebank Lane and looking back on it now I was conned into helping the lorry driver deliver to various dairies along the High Street like "Jessie Melrose" and the one that was opposite Phoenix House, someday will remember the name, before finally delivering to McWilliams. On completing my round it was home for breakfast and then I was free to open up the deckchair store and using a special barrow take the deckchairs down from Bridge Street to the stance at the slipway at the foot of Rosebank Lane for the lady who hired them out to visitors. The family who owned the deckchair concession was named Clark and lived at the foot of Bath Street. There were four in the family, Benjamin, Luke, Zebediah and Naomi. Luke was an engineer and in his spare time did all the repairs to any broken deckchairs, of which there were quite a few each week. My daily pay was five shillings, two and sixpence for bringing the chairs out in the morning and the same for taking them back each evening. (25 of today's pence per day.) I was a millionaire! I had another little job in the summer holidays, working for Laurence Cassidy who, as well as a fishmonger's business in the High Street, had Sheddan's Restaurant at the foot of Bath Street and the concession for the cafeteria, restaurant, shop and kiosks in the open-air pool. My onerous task was to make sure that the kiosks were stocked with crisps, ice cream and lemonade, the shop had supplies of Portobello Rock and the restaurants were stocked with fresh fish from the shop and loads of potatoes had been put through the automatic potato peeler. All this took the good part of the morning but the bonus was that I could go into the pool in the afternoon with my friends after being given my lunch in the cafeteria.

The summers definitely are remembered as being sunnier and it was still exciting to get new sandals or white plimsolls to see you through the season. Great crowds of people came through from the West and hundreds of buses parked in Bridge Street, Fishwives' Causeway and Baileyfield Road. The local kids trawled the beach to collect empty lemonade bottles to exchange for tuppence each at Mr. Doig's shop at the foot of King's Road or at Mrs. Goar's or Mrs. Caskie's. Bottle territories were jealously guarded to stop rival gangs from Pipe Street or Mitchell's Buildings nicking "our" bottles. With our ill-gotten gains we could treat ourselves to a poke of buckies or some mussels from the fishwives who had their stalls at the foot of Tower Street (Figgate Street) or Pipe Street or there was Andrew Webber's lorry with all sorts of fruit parked at the foot of Bridge Street.



At the foot of King's Road Mr. Riddle had his pony rides on the beach and if you were lucky enough to get a summer job with him then you had to lead the ponies back to their stables in Ramsey Lane each evening, brush them down and give them their feed. This was a job that the girls went for and competition was so keen that jobs were handed down from sister to sister.

There were all sorts of entertainment on the beach especially during the Glasgow Fair. Various seaside missions set up their stands and had the kids singing numbers like Climb, Climb up Sunshine Mountain. The one-man band would perform in his military jacket, tartan trews and the most dismal face I can remember seeing on anybody. There were Punch and Judy shows and, of course, the Salvation Army band. By today's standards it was all very passé but enjoyed by all in the early fifties.

All this was in the summer and when everything closed down in the autumn it was just the milk and paper rounds and back to Gunner Brown's gym club in Towerbank School, the BBs, Scouts or Guides. There were also visits to the County, George or Bungalow cinemas. The Victory was known as the "Bungalow" and was notorious for the attendant walking down the aisles spraying disinfectant over the customers. No wonder it was commonly referred to as the "bug house"!

It all seems so long ago and fairly mundane but I remember my childhood summers with great affection and would not have wished for anything better.

Drew Strachan

PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

THE NEW SESSION began on 6th September and continues on the first Wednesday of each month, excepting January, until June 2002. The meetings will be held in St John's Church Hall in Brighton Place at 6.45pm. There is an attractive programme of guest speakers and full details can be got at the library.

Over nigh on 15 years the society has made a valuable contribution to local community life but needs new members if it is to continue doing so. We want to get back to being able to put on an exhibition, produce an occasional booklet of local history articles and make oral history recordings. If you can help, come and join us.

Archie Foley

CLEANING UP NEWHAILES

HISTORIC NEWHAILES House in Musselburgh has been undergoing conservation by the National Trust for Scotland and, if all goes well, will open to the public next summer.

Now that the building work has finished, there is an urgent need for volunteers to help remove builders' debris, clean floors, walls and mirrors, furniture and china and lift furniture. Training will be given in all aspects. Volunteers should contact conservator Gille Schofield on 665 1546.

Volunteers are also needed to help clearing the grounds, and volunteer guides to conduct tours when the house opens. More information is available on the above number.

The Portobello Reporter is always looking forward to hearing from you. If you have something you would like to share with the community please write to;

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W E HENLEY - LONG JOHN SILVER

'TREASURE ISLAND', the amusement arcade on the corner of Bath Street and Straiton Place, is no more, but before we forget it, let me tell you about the Portobello connection with Long John Silver!

The pirate first appeared in a story by Robert Louis Stevenson, 'The Sea Cook', written in 1881 to entertain his 11-year-old stepson while they were on holiday in Braemar. Stevenson's friend, W E Henley, had chronic TB in the bone and had his left leg amputated when only 16 and still at school. When he was 23 the infection recurred in his right foot and amputation was recommended; appalled, he fled to Edinburgh where he was treated by Joseph Lister, leading surgeon at the Royal Infirmary, then in Infirmary Street, who was pioneering the use of antiseptic.

While in hospital, he was visited frequently by Stevenson, and they later collaborated on writing stories and plays. Stevenson confessed to his friend that Henley's 'maimed masterfulness' gave him the germ from which Long John grew. They remained close friends until Stevenson's wife Fanny 'stole' a story by a mutual friend, changed it a little, and published it under her own name. Henley thought this was cheating, and said so; Stevenson could bear no criticism of Fanny and broke with Henley.

But the Portobello connection? When Henley came out of the Infirmary, remaining leg saved and a long literary career ahead of him, he went to Portobello to convalesce, staying at number 4 Straiton Place. He wrote to a London friend: 'This is the seaside. I am within thirty yards of the Firth of Forth. When there ain't a mist you can see the Fife hills quite plain with the naked eye on the other side'.

The cottage is only a stone's throw from the former 'Treasure Island', which didn't exist in Henley's day, and the haer still comes to haunt us. Next time it rolls in from the sea, go down Bath Street and listen for the sound of a crutch stomping along the Prom, and an echo of a big man cursing like a sea cook!

Alix Gaffney

Record Find

WHEN PORTOBELLO amalgamated with Edinburgh in 1896 one unfortunate outcome was the disappearance of the burgh council Minute Books and other records. They had obviously been available to William Baird when he wrote his Annals of Duddingston and Portobello - published in 1898 - but subsequent historians have long been frustrated at not being able to consult the original documents. Now at last Edinburgh City Archivist, Richard Hunter, has unearthed one small fragment of written evidence from Portobello's independent existence. This is an account book in which is recorded in meticulous detail the income and expenditure of the council over the first twenty years or so of its existence. No evidence of extravagance or junketing is to be found in its pages, which are a record of fiscal frugality and good housekeeping. In them one can see what was spent on stationery, on administration - including the rent of offices, provision of utilities and law and order. In modern terms it was not very much and was probably modest even by the standards of the mid-19th century.

The council did have a problem that it shared with the other Parliamentary Burghs created in 1833. There was no mechanism for raising revenue through rates or the equivalent of the Council Tax. This not only meant a constant struggle against financial difficulties but also numerous complaints that the costs of administration were not evenly distributed. Until this anomaly was put right in the 1850s the burgh council had to resort to asking for voluntary contributions from its prosperous residents. The names of the subscribers with the amounts paid by them each year are duly recorded in the account book.

"It is remarkable that after a century this item has surfaced. It is a tragedy of even greater proportions that the Minute Books for the Burgh of Portobello that Baird used in his book seem to have vanished altogether," lamented Richard Hunter.

Archie Foley



Photo by Peter Ross



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CANON RAE CELEBRATES GOLDEN JUBILEE

SUNDAY JUNE 3, 2001 was the 50th Anniversary of the ordination to the priesthood of Canon James Rae, parish priest of St John's Church, Brighton Place, for the past 20 years. To mark the occasion, a special Mass was celebrated at St John's on June 2 by Archbishop Keith O'Brien. This was followed by a ceilidh in Portobello Town Hall in the evening, attended by Canon Rae's family, friends and parishioners.

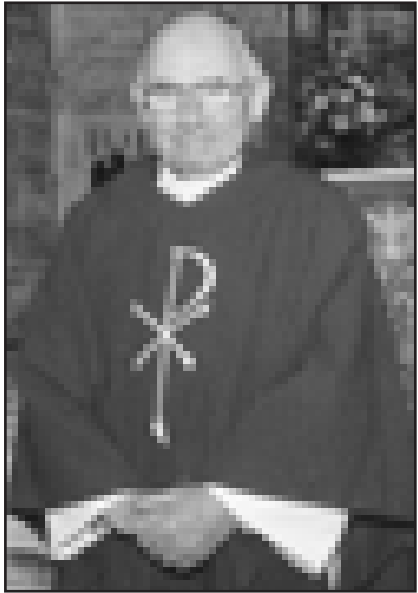


Photo by Peter Ross

'When people ask me what it feels like to be 50 years a priest', he says, 'I can only answer - Absolutely amazing'.

After 10 years at Oscott Seminary he was ordained in St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, in 1951; his first appointment was as curate at St Mary's, Stirling. He was later appointed parish priest at St Peter's, Edinburgh, then to the parishes of Currie, Balerno and Ratho, before succeeding the late Canon Hugh Gordon at St Johns.

Canon Rae is a keen golfer, so keen that in 1951 he spent the whole of his first annual salary of £80 on a set of Ben Sayers golf clubs. 'I never regretted the clubs', he says, 'but I did regret the resulting penury'. He also enjoys painting, singing and playing the piano.

TRADE FOR LIFE CAMPAIGN



Photo by Barbara Young

Pictured here are (l-r): John Rostron, representing St Mark's; Gavin Strang; David Turner; Ann McKenzie, United Reform Church; Morag Baird, Duddingston Kirk.

DAVID TURNER, Convener of the Peace and Justice Group of Portobello and District Council of Churches, handed 175 'Trade for Life' pledges to Gavin Strang MP on June 10. The pledges, signed by members of local churches and the public, are in support of Christian Aid's campaign which calls for a change in the rules on international trade, in favour of the world's poor.

David said more pledges were expected and that the Peace and Justice Group would not give up until things changed. Gavin Strang agreed that it was 'an extremely important issue' and promised to pass them to the Prime Minister before the G8 Summit in Genoa in July.

NEW MUSLIM CENTRE OPENS IN PORTOBELLO



Photo by Peter Ross

LOCAL BUSINESSMAN Khalid Mir, JP, who has worked tirelessly for the establishment of the new Portobello Muslim Educational and Cultural Centre in Fishwives Causeway, welcomed many Muslim guests, and representatives of the Portobello Community to the Inaugural Ceremony on May 31.

Mr Mohamed Aslam, Chair of the Pakistan Association of Scotland, His Lordship Yousaf Inait, OBE OIA JP, honoured Patron of the Centre and Mr Jalal Choudhary then addressed the gathering on the importance of education and the successful adoption of the gathering on the importance of education and the successful adoption of the east Asian community into our east Edinburgh district, the best of their values equating with the best of ours - a diligent work ethic and strong family values.

A commemorative plaque was then unveiled by Gavin Strang MP, seen here with (l-r) Cllr Maureen Child, Mr Mohamed Aslam, Mr Khalid Mir, Susan Deacon MSP, Lord Yousaf Inait and Mrs Shamim Mansoori.

ST PHILIP'S RESTORATION NEARS COMPLETION

THE RESTORATION work started last December should be completed by the week ending November 25, seven weeks later than originally estimated. The main central roof and west isle roof are now complete and alterations to the internal gallery are well advanced. The new lining boards in the main vaulted ceiling are stained and looking very impressive and high level plasterwork is ready for painting. The majority of the electric and sound cables are in place and, once the central scaffold is removed, the under-floor heating system can be installed. Further details will be posted as the work progresses.

SUSAN DEACON

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ROYAL HIGH QUAD TRANSFORMED



Photo by Peter Ross

THE CREATIVELY refurbished Quadrangle at the Royal High Primary School was officially opened on June 6 when Cllr Brian Weddell unveiled a commemorative mosaic plaque.

A dull and under-used space has been transformed into four different areas with an attractive gazebo at the centre. A sensory garden area with scented plants, textured surfaces, solar fountain and wind-chimes was created for the Millennium and funded by the PTA and a grant from the Grounds for Awareness Scheme. There is also a pebble beach with canoe, driftwood, windlass and sandbox; and a woodland area with bark surface, seats, planter and trees, both funded by a Royal Bank of Scotland Supergrounds Award. A picnic area has benches and tables with umbrellas, but is still covered in the old tarmac. 'Decking would be ideal here' said Head Teacher Mrs Joan Braer, 'but another good fairy would be needed to provide it!'

The pupils were all clearly delighted with their new quad, and some of them are pictured here enjoying the beach area.

DANISH CAMP FOR BB'S THANKS TO EU

THANKS TO A GRANT from the European Union through Connect Youth International 12 boys and 5 staff from the 25th Edinburgh Boys Brigade based at St Phillips Church, Joppa were able to attend the National Camp of the Danish Youth organisation FDF in July. The camp was hosted by our Danish sister company 1st Aalborg FDF. We celebrate the 10th anniversary of our twinning agreement in 2002.

The camp held at Sletten, near Silkegorg is based on pioneering principles which means the camp has to be built from scratch, including everything from benches and tables to kitchen and toilet facilities.

There were 15000 participants from Denmark, Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, Finland and Tanzania. To help cope with such large numbers the camp is split into 7 villages, each having a different theme. Our village theme was curiosity, others included force, passion, hope and wisdom. All the activities were based around these themes.

The highlight of the camp was a visit by Queen Margrethe II for the Sunday Service. Visitors and guests for the day swelled the number at camp to over 22000 and the service was broadcast live on Danish television.

After the camp the boys spent a few days in Allborg with our hosts before heading to Copenhagen where we attended a reception at the British Embassy and were given a tour by Peter Cook, son of the Rev. John Weir Cook, minister at St. Phillips.

All the boys and staff had a great time and are looking forward to renewing friendships when we host our Danish friends in 2003.

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HOLY ROOD HITS 1000

HOLY ROOD HIGH School is now officially full to capacity. The 240 pupils who joined in August brought the total roll above the 1000 mark for the first time in decades. The intake has now been capped and a waiting list established. The First Year includes pupils from 30 primary schools.

Head Teacher Patrick Sweeney is in no doubt about the reasons for this: 'The greatest strength of Holy Rood is the high quality of teachers and support staff. At every level, teachers at Holy Rood are prepared to 'go the extra mile' for pupils. An example of this is the ambitious programme of Supported Study offered. These classes take place after school, and we have been impressed by the generosity of staff in giving up their time and by the enthusiasm of pupils. I am sure that this has been a major factor in helping pupils to improve their exam results'.

SCOOT TO SCHOOL

A CAVALCADE of well-dressed scooters zoomed along the Promenade on May 25, in a 'Scoot to School' organised by Towerbank PTA's Safer Routes to School group. The riders of the best-dressed scoots were judged by Cllr Maureen Child to be Rachel Simpson-P6, Jessie Bonner-P4, and Jack Bowmaker-P2.

Towerbank Primary School is top of the Council's long list of priorities this financial year for traffic calming measures to impose a 20mph limit and ensure a safer route to school for local children. £7000 is earmarked out of the £227,000 allocated to Edinburgh from the Scottish Executive for cycling, walking and safer streets, and a box junction has been put in at Bath Street to discourage drivers from encroaching on the crossing, endangering pedestrians trying to cross.



Photo by Peter Ross

YOUNG MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR

THE ROTARY CLUB of Portobello would like to hear from young people, aged from 12 to 19, who are interested in taking part in the local Young Musician of the Year Competition, which takes place on Tuesday November 6 at 7pm at Holy Rood High School.

The categories are Young Instrumentalist and Young Singer of the Year, and entrants must be proposed by teachers or tutors and live, or go to school, in Portobello.

They must also provide a copy of their score for use by the adjudicator, and arrange their own accompanist.

For details of how to enter the competition, please write to: Mr Ken Hart, Portobello Rotary, 100 Milton Road East, Edinburgh EH15 2NW. Applications must be received before October 10.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the competition on November 6.

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AFTER THE FIRE

ON November 6, I went to bed as usual, only to be woken at 1am by my mum yelling, 'Amy, wake up. There's a fire!' She didn't even let me get my hamster. We ran across the landing to my friend's house and while her dad was phoning the Fire Brigade, we heard everyone else in the block running down the stairs, knocking on doors, yelling 'Fire!' The smoke was black and thick, with no air. It was even worse outside. It was wet and cold. A man grabbed my hand and took me up the street. People came out to see what was happening and some were taking people in. Luckily, my mum and me, and my friend and her family were taken in by a woman and her husband. We were all very shaken and scared.

At about 4 or 5 o'clock a fireman came in and told us that my hamster had died, and that my friend's house was fine but mine was badly damaged. We had to move into a rented flat for about six months, and when we moved back everything was new and different. There are things I still miss and will never have again, but it has made me realise that things don't matter, as long as you and your friends and family are fine.

Amy Kenmure

YOUTH CLUB RE-STARTS

'PORTY' Youth Club has started again, after the summer break. The club is for young people of First Year secondary school age and upwards, and is held on Thursday evenings from 7-9pm at Portobello Centre, Adelphi Grove.

The organisers are part-time youth workers employed by Community Education, who are keen to plan a programme of activities through discussion with club members, but there is also a pool table, music, videos and table tennis. The cost is 50 pence per week, with an annual membership of £1, payable in September/October. So go along and have fun - make 'Porty' Youth Club your club and have your say on the activities planned. For further information contact Linda Kelly at Portobello Community Education Office, Towerbank Annexe, Bath Street: tel. 657 2607.



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PROM RACE RESULTS

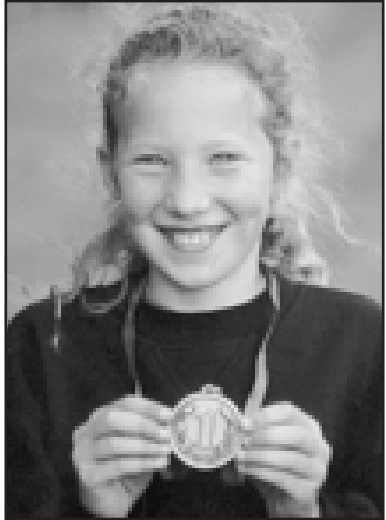


Photo by Peter Ross

THE ANNUAL Promenade Races organised by Portobello Running Club took place on Thursday June 14 in dry, but cold and windy conditions. The proceeds of the event will be donated to the Cleft Lip and Palate Association.

Results: 4 Miles: Men: (1) John Heap, Hunters Bog Trotters, 20min.00sec; (2) Colin Meek, vet, Lothian Running Club, 20.29; (3) Alan Robson, vet, Mizuno, 20.51. Women: (1) Susan Ridley, vet, Edinburgh Woollen Mill, 23.42; (2) Marietta van Linden, City of Edinburgh, 24.20; (3) Nicola May, Pitreavie, 24.38. (4) Janet Laing, Portobello RC, 25.11.

Becca Allison aged 10, winner of the junior 2 Mile race is seen here with her medal.

SITUATIONS VACANT

IF YOUR evenings need a bit of life injecting into them, then the perfect opportunity has arisen! The 2nd Portobello Scout Group are looking for new leaders to run the Scouts and Beavers. Founded before World War 1 as the 2nd East Edinburgh, the group, which is based in the Old Parish Church hall in Bellfield Street, is one of the oldest in this part of the city. It became a Sea Scout group in the early 1960s, and for a long time was one of only 100 Scout groups in the UK recognised by the Royal Navy. It can also claim the proud achievement of having taught thousands of young people new and useful skills.

Unfortunately, a number of leaders have left the group over a period and have not been replaced. The Scout Troup and the Beavers are currently suspended and the future of the Cubs looks to be in danger. The group are looking for enthusiastic leaders and helpers to save the situation, offering a very satisfying opportunity to help the people currently involved.

Full training will be provided, so you only need good ideas and a positive attitude! If you have any spare time to help your local group, please write to Kenneth Ingram, Group Secretary, 2nd Portobello Scout Group, "Sunny Cottage", 35 Walker Terrace, East Linton, EH40 3AL. Or telephone:- 07803 043 840 (H); 0131 245 2944 (W)

Catriona Young

GRAVEL BEDS are becoming more common nowadays as busy people seek to create low maintenance gardens. Specimen plants such as low growing or spreading conifers, together with hardy heathers in groups of three, will look good against a gravelly base. Consider also alpines: Eriophyllum Lanatum, for example, for ground cover in dry sunny areas, with silvery grey leaves topped with orange daisies in early summer, or the prostrate stems of Blue Spurge (Euphorbia Mirsinites) with rosettes of lime green flowers in spring. Gypsophila Rosenschleier forms a cloud of tiny, pale pink, double flowers in mid summer - trim it after flowering and it will bloom again in autumn!

To prevent thirsty or newly planted shrubs from drying out apply a 2-3 inch mulch after watering. A wide range of materials can be used. Bark chips are most ornamental; now available in a range of colours, they conserve moisture and suppress weeds. Gravel is a more permanent mulch, and is also available in a variety of colours.

HOT TIP: Take an empty, two litre plastic bottle, such as a lemonade bottle, cut the bottom off, unscrew the cap then plunge it, neck down, into the soil alongside your thirsty plants, topping up as necessary. Happy gardening!



with Bill Thomson

WINNING GARDENS



Photo by Peter Ross

MRS JEAN KERR, above, of Mountcastle Drive South, was the winner for the third time of the Tubs and Containers category of the annual Garden Competition organised by Portobello Amenity Society and Portobello Garden Centre. Judges John Stewart and Bill Thomson considered her magnificent display of plants to be better than ever.

The winner in the Domestic Gardens category was Mrs Bobbi Wood of Meadowfield Avenue whose garden, which included a pergola, water feature, tree, planting and lawn, was, said Bill Thomson, 'a delight to enter'.

LOCAL BASKETBALL STAR



Photo by Karyn Finnie

CONGRATULATIONS to talented basketball player Drew Costello of Park Avenue, Duddingston, who recently returned from competing in the UK Special Olympics with a shiny silver medal. The 22-year-old travelled to Cardiff on July 24 with his team 'Forth Valley', to play against some of the best in the country. This is the third time this skillful player has been called upon to play in his position as 'shooting guard', having already travelled further afield to Luxembourg and Switzerland.

When Drew is not busy training hard and shooting hoops, he works full time as a car valet in his uncle's busy yard at Meadowbank, only a mere dribble from some other basketball courts! Drew's main goal for the future is to represent Britain at his sport. Karyn Finnie.

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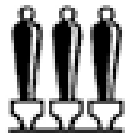
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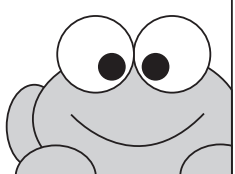
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