

The Portobello REPORTER

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The independent voice of Portobello

Your Community Newspaper produced by local people.

COMMONWEALTH GOLD FOR JESSFIELD BOWLER



Photo by Peter E. Ross

BOWLER John Robertson, a member of Jessfield Bowling Club in Rosefield Avenue, received a great reception there on Tuesday August 6 on his return from the Commonwealth Games in Manchester with the Gold Medal he won in the Triples event for players with a disability, partnered by bowlers from Fraserburgh and Glasgow. John, who bowls from a wheelchair, said: "It was a great thrill for us to win Gold. We just played our usual game and hoped it would see us through", a strategy that clearly paid off. Club Secretary Ricky Lacey told us: "The members are all over the moon. This was a great achievement for John and puts the club on the map".

Although this is John's greatest success to date, his record of sporting achievement is impressive: a Bronze Medal in the Wheelchair Bowls Pairs, South Africa, 1998 and British Singles Indoor Champion, 1996 and 1998. He also has Caps from his earlier sporting career for fencing, table tennis, weightlifting, field sports and basketball - "Everything", he jokes, "except the high jump and long jump"! B.M

BRIGHTON PLACE CLOSURE

MAIN ROADS in Portobello have been in a state of upheaval this summer as rusty old water pipes were replaced. In Brighton Place, the Council decided to take the opportunity to relay the worst patches of setts at the same time, and whilst this was all vital work that should not be needed again for decades, Portobello's traders suffered a sharp decline in business as their customers in Duddingston, Brunstane, Durhams, Magdalene and Christians had to either get two buses to the High Street or shop elsewhere.

Expressing her concern, Cllr Maureen Child said: "I felt very sorry for the Portobello traders while Brighton Place was closed. The work was finished as soon as reasonably possible and we are looking at ways to boost shopping sales in Portobello and bring the customers back to the High Street. Portobello has a lot to offer in local shopping that helps to make it a vibrant place to be, so a little extra support for them in their leaner times will repay us all in supporting a good quality of life in our urban village."

Cllr Lawrence Marshall concurred: "I've been very conscious of the real inconvenience this closure has caused and the significant downturn in local trade," he said. "I did try to see if it would be possible to at least allow buses to use Brighton Place, but in the end this proved to be impossible for the very health and safety reasons that prompted closure in the first place".

With the north-south bus link re-opened, however, Portobello was busy during the Edinburgh Festival and the better weather, and *The Guardian* gave it a mention in its daily Festival listing as a place worth a visit for the Swim Centre and beach, and in its own right.

DANCING FOR 50 YEARS

PORTOBELLO Scottish Country Dance Club celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year. When dancing commenced on October 9, 1952 in the Inchview Ballroom, Tower Street, membership had to be limited to 120 and a waiting list drawn up. The first big event, a Coronation Ball, was held in Portobello Town Hall on June 6, 1953, with an annual ball thereafter until falling membership put an end to them in 1968.

When the ballroom was demolished in 1978 the club moved to Portobello Secondary School Annexe, then to Duddingston School and finally, in 1993, to the United Reformed Church Hall in Marlborough Street. Members have always danced to live music, currently provided by accordionist David Sturgeon, from Eskbank.

To mark the 50th Anniversary a dinner has been arranged for Friday October 4 at 7pm in The Quayside, Musselburgh, to which all former members are invited.

This is a small friendly club, which meets on Thursdays from 7.30-9.30pm, and would welcome new members. Anyone interested in joining, or in attending the celebration dinner, should contact the secretary Mrs Linda Middleton, tel: 669 4769.

PUBLIC MEETING ON COMMUNITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

A **PUBLIC** Meeting will be held on Wednesday September 25 at 7.30pm in Portobello Community Centre to report on the outcome of the community consultation process (Portobello 21st Century Centre) that took place over the summer.

There were over 700 responses, overwhelmingly in favour of a radical expansion of provisions and services for the local community. Three options were considered: relocating to a refurbished and extended Town Hall, linking with the Library to provide a community campus, and refurbishment or rebuilding on the existing site.

Centre Chairperson Gillian Dunn said: "We have been greatly encouraged by the response of Centre users, local organisations and, particularly, local people during our canvassing on the High Street. It is clear that local people feel the area deserves first class community facilities. We hope as many people as possible will attend the Public Meeting and give their support to our 21st Century Centre campaign."

There will also be presentations from the architects involved in the Feasibility Study, Iain Abbot and Richard Atkins. Everyone is welcome to attend and contribute to the discussion on the best way forward. Local Councillors and Council Officials will be in attendance. M LeMay

'GOLDEN DAYS' FESTIVAL



Photo by Margaret Drysdale

THE AIM of this festival on June 15 was to promote Portobello - Edinburgh's Seaside. Based on the theme of music, dance and culture of the 1930s to the 60s, it was funded by the City of Edinburgh Council, Radio Forth and Jewel & Esk Valley College, and organised by a team of enthusiasts including some local people.

Events started on the Promenade at 12.30pm with performances in the garden of Bedford House Hotel by the 30s swing group 'Swing 2002', crooner Craig McMurdo, Hillbilly from England's 'Ski-prats', and a 60s set from local favourites 'The Monuments'.

The nearby line-up of over 20 classic cars was a great attraction, and an exhibition of 1953 fashion, memorabilia and photographs at the Swim Centre was well attended, with the old photographs attracting the most interest. Further along, children enjoyed pony rides.

Demonstrations and lessons in Leroc, Swing and Lindy Hop at Straiton Place were especially popular with the younger generation, and deck-chairs on the beach were occupied by people enjoying this novelty and the music.

At the Town Hall in the evening Julian Grant of Forth 2 presented the swing and jump jive outfit 'The Big Heat' and the Rockabilly band 'Hi Voltage'. Demonstrations by Scotland's top jive and swing dancers were introduced by Craig McMurdo with rock'n'roll devotees of all ages, suitably attired, joining in.

This was a promising start to what is to be an annual event, with more activities on the promenade and more local involvement. If you have any comments or suggestions and/or would like to join the team for 2003, please call 538 7086. Gordon Mackay

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU
Copy deadline for the next issue is 2nd November 2002.
Send your contributions c/o The Editor, 9 Bedford Terr, Edinburgh, 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

PORTY PROFILE No.11
ANDREW BISSELL

SOFTWARE Entrepreneur Andrew Bissell graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 1989 with a degree in Computer Science. He straight away founded his own company, Voxar, developing innovative 3D medical imaging software that uses X-rays to allow doctors to see inside patients better in 3D. The company has achieved international success and is now a world leader in the field and, at 36, Andrew is Chief Executive Officer. Voxar Ltd has headquarters in Edinburgh, with offices and representation across North America, Asia-Pacific and Europe. It was recently voted the company with the best technology in Europe at the annual 'Upstart Europe' conference in Amsterdam, where Andrew was presented with the Tornado Insider's 'Winning Technology' award at a gala dinner.



Born in the Midlands, Andrew went to schools in Italy and Switzerland, where his father was a headteacher at English schools, and is fluent in several languages, making him well placed to lead the company's multinational expansion.

Andrew met his wife, Susan, who was born in Edinburgh, just after he had finished at university and was starting the business; they now have two children and came to live on The Esplanade in Joppa about five years ago. "This is somewhere we really wanted to live", says Andrew, "and we kept looking out for houses coming on the market. It's great to come back home after work and find the sea and the beach at the front door".

HAS ANYONE SEEN OUR CAT?

PORTIA, a 5-year-old, female cat, was lost on the night of the 26/7th June from Lee Crescent, Portobello. She is a dark tabby, i.e. black/brown stripes, with a dark bushy tail and distinctive white nose, legs and chest. She is medium haired and kitten-like for her age, and timid. She has a microchip tracer and we are offering a reward for her return. If anyone has seen her please contact Mr and Mrs Trewin, tel. 669 0968.

GAVIN STRANG, MP for Edinburgh East and Musselburgh, is available to meet constituents at the following interview sessions:



On the 2nd Friday in the month; between 11.00am and 12noon in the YWCA, 198 Restalrig Road South, or between 7.30pm and 8.30 pm in the Portobello Town Hall.

On the last Saturday in the month between 9.00 am and 10.00 am in the Brunton Hall, Musselburgh, or between 10.30 am and 11.30 am in the Craigmillar Community Centre, 63 Niddrie Mains Terrace.

You may also make an appointment to discuss a problem or raise an issue with Gavin Strang: Please phone 669 6002 or write to

Gavin Strang MP
Constituency Office
54 Portobello High Street,
Edinburgh EH15 1DA

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

N26 ALL NIGHT LONG
LOTHIAN BUSES have recently revamped their night bus network and the 26 is in effect now a 24 hour bus service, with the night bus N26 running from Clerwood to Prestonpans via Haymarket, Princes Street, London Road, Portobello Road, Portobello, Joppa, Musselburgh and Wallyford (and vice-versa).

Night services from the bus stops by Waverley Steps now run at a quarter past every hour, without a break, from 0015 to 0415. Returning to town from Portobello, the N26 leaves Eastfield at 0057, 0157, 0257 and 0357 and King's Road at 0101, 0201, 0301 and 0401.

The great advantage for folk living in Portobello and Joppa is that the bus now serves these areas directly from town rather than via Musselburgh. I used to try to stay awake for a journey that could take 40 minutes, but now Waverley Steps to King's Road takes only 9 minutes, to Eastfield only 13 minutes.

(Cllr) Lawrence Marshall

SAVE ENERGY-SAVE MONEY

THOUSANDS of older people will benefit from free energy saving light-bulbs and advice in a new project to help ensure the elderly are living in warm, energy-efficient homes.

Care and Repair, a subsidiary of Age Concern Scotland, is one of 35 organisations signed up to help deliver Edinburgh Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy; Scottish Hydro Electric, who have donated the light-bulbs, are also signed up. Care and Repair staff and the volunteer Handyperson service, who assist elderly clients with house repairs, will install four energy saving light-bulbs and give energy saving advice on house visits. Using four bulbs can reduce fuel bills by £40 per year, and grants for such measures as insulation could save up to another £250.

If you are over 60 and would like to take advantage of the Care and Repair services, get energy saving advice or find out if you qualify for the free light-bulbs or a grant, call 228 5705.

MAJOR EXHIBITION FOR LOCAL ARTIST

WELL KNOWN local artist/photographer Calum Colvin is to have a major exhibition at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery from October 4 to February 9, 2003. He was awarded a Creative Scotland Award from the Scottish Arts Council in 2000 to enable him to produce work for the exhibition and a Leverhulm Trust Fellowship that allowed him to take time off from Dundee College of Art. The exhibition, entitled 'Ossian - Fragments of Ancient Poetry', will consist of a series of digital prints featuring sculpture, painting, photography, electronic imaging and installation. All the work has been produced in Calum's studio in Portobello, where he lives.

Some of his earlier work, 'constructed photographs' combining painting and photography, are on regular display in the National Portrait Gallery and the Gallery of Modern Art. Calum has exhibited widely in Britain and abroad and was awarded an OBE in 2001 for services to the visual arts.

B.M.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

PORTOBELLO CAB is looking for volunteers to train as Advice Workers. The work is varied and challenging and can enhance personal and employment skills. A daytime training course will start at the end of September. If you are interested please call at the Bureau at 191 Portobello High Street or phone 669 7138/9503. The Bureau is open Mon, Tues, Thurs, 9.30-3.30; Wed, 9.30-12pm and 6.30-7.45; closed Friday.

THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE will increase on October 1: for workers aged 22 and over - from £4.10 to £4.20 per hour; for workers aged 18 to 21 inclusive - from £3.50 to £3.60 per hour. People under 18 are not entitled to the Minimum Wage.

GARDEN COMPETITION CANCELLED: This summer's bad weather has resulted in the cancellation of the annual Garden Competition organised jointly by Portobello Amenity Society and Bill Thomson, but they hope to be able to hold it again next year.

LIBRARY TO OPEN WEEKENDS: Portobello Library has been chosen as one of three in Edinburgh to be opened for eight extra hours at weekends from 21 September to 27 October, as part of a pilot project to assess demand and plan for an even better service. It will open on Saturdays from 9am-5pm (instead of 1pm) and Sundays from 1-5pm.

U3A (University of the 3rd Age) now holds its monthly meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of each month in St Peter's Church Hall, Luton Place. For more information call 337 2922.

A CLEAN SWEEP: The road sweeper with his brush and barrow who appeared in Portobello this summer has made an enormous improvement in the cleanliness of our streets. Lots of people have commented on this and Task Force Manager, Robert Davidson, has promised that he is here to stay.

DOG BAN POSTPONED: People have been wondering when the expected signs on the Prom indicating a ban on dogs on the beach between the Swim Centre and John Street would appear. The Council have apparently had problems producing the signs, which will also include 'No Cars', 'No Cycling' etc, so it has been decided to postpone the ban until next year, when a Seaside Award (a Yellow Flag) could possibly also be achieved.

DEDICATED DECORATORS WANTED

AN AWARD-WINNING project in North Edinburgh is recruiting volunteers to support families who have been homeless. Shelter Families Project provides practical help when families move into a new home and volunteers are needed to help with painting and decorating. A 4-day training course starts on September 19. For more information contact Claire Wheeler on 553 4999 or write to Shelter Families Project, 60-62 Newshaven Road, Edinburgh EH6 5QB, or email to ClaireW@Shelter.org.uk

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CROSSRAIL PICKS UP

THE LOCAL rail service is picking up more passengers than expected and becoming a travel habit for city centre commuters, particularly from Brunstane Station. With the opening of the South Gyle Station in Summer 2003, and through trains, even more people are likely to make the switch from car to rail. These are just two of the improvements in public transport happening whether or not congestion charging goes ahead several years down the line.

About a dozen people keep the Council in touch with how the service works for them, and their comments and complaints led to an improvement in service when a meeting was arranged between our head of public transport and Scotrail in July.

If you want to make comments direct to the company, the contact is Steve Montgomery, Divisional Operations Manager, Network Services, Caledonian Chambers, 87 Union Street, Glasgow G1 3TA (Tel 0141 332 9811). If you send a letter, please copy it to me at the City Chambers. Alternatively, contact me by e.mail: maureen.child@edinburgh.gov.uk and we can pass it on.

(Cllr) Maureen Child

(Cllr Marshall adds: "Finishing work at 23:15 last night (August 16) I thought I'd see what a Festival Friday last train to Newcraighall looked like in terms of passenger numbers. I found 63 folk waiting for the train - 12 of whom got off at Brunstane. So, after a reasonably slow start, it appears to be picking up nicely").

CAR CLUB ON THE STREET SOON

THE EDINBURGH City Car Club has got two club cars lined up for use in Portobello from the end of September. They will be based in St Mark's Place/ Hope Lane and somewhere on Portobello High Street.

Joining the club gives all the benefits of car ownership without the hassle or cost. For a fraction of what it costs to keep your own car standing mostly unused in the road, you can use and pay for only what you need, then you're freer to use public transport too. All the club cars around the city are accessible to members and you can book on the internet or phone up to 15 minutes before you need one. Members can also get cheap and simple car hire with cars delivered and taken back from your door. Register your interest now by contacting Jill Bennett, the CCC Project Manager, on 466-8171. Find out more on edinburgh@smartmoves.co.uk

Nick Child

WEB DESIGNERS NEEDED FOR NEW PORTOBELLO SITE

A WEB SITE for Portobello is being developed by a group of volunteers. It has a great home page and lots of information, but more volunteers are urgently needed with experience in web design, preferably with 'Dreamweaver', to help complete the project. Anyone interested should call Bob Jefferson on 669 1918 or e.mail him at portyweb@blueyonder.co.uk

ORCADIA CENTRE TO EXPAND

OVER THE last five years the Orcadia Creative Learning Centre in Windsor Place, known locally as the Trampoline Centre, has become increasingly important to children and adults with special needs, providing a wide range of expressive arts experiences. Demand now makes it important to make changes and, sadly, the trampoline parties have had to end.

This unique centre at the heart of Portobello is undergoing major development to create new spaces to enable its valuable work to develop, and to give greater access to everyone, locally and in Edinburgh at large.

First, the trampoline room will be replaced by a large flexible studio space for a greater range of physical, creative play, and performance activities, which will be extended into after-school and weekend sessions open to all. A large new coffee bar and catering area, craft spaces and exhibition area will follow.

Barbara Stott

COMMUNITY LEARNING PLAN FOR EAST EDINBURGH

THE CONCEPT of Community Learning Plans originated from a Scottish Office paper, 'Communities: Change Through Learning' published in 1998. Since then, each local authority in Scotland has established a Community Learning Strategy based on the key principles of active citizenship, widening participation, inclusion, the chance to learn at every stage of life and consultation.

The East Edinburgh Plan takes in Lochend, Portobello, Duddingston, Restalrig, Piershill, Meadowbank, Craightonny, Northfield and Willowbrae and, as these communities have differing learning needs, we aim to undertake wide-ranging consultation to establish priorities, gaps in provision and possible duplication in community-based learning. This should include, for example, health promotion, vocational training, work with children and young people, recreational activities and adult education classes.

This exercise is being undertaken by the Portobello Lifelong Learning Forum, supported by City of Edinburgh Council Community Education. If you or your organisation wish to contribute to the Plan, or be involved in its development, please phone: Linda Kelly, Community Education Worker, 657 2607; Kenny Pringle, Senior Community Education Worker, 661 7463; or Portobello Library, 529 5558; or call at the Library, for further information.

We would particularly encourage participation from groups representing people with disabilities, the minority ethnic community or other individuals who may feel disadvantaged, marginalised or under-represented.

K Pringle

DIRECTORY OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

THERE ARE 45 Portobello organisations listed in the informal Directory, a copy of which can be seen at the Library, from Amnesty to the Woodcraft Folk. There may be others, so it would be helpful if members of local clubs and associations would check the list and add the name of their organisation and a contact name and telephone number.

We will occasionally feature some of these, starting with Jessfield Bowling Club in Rosefield Avenue, beside Portobello Library. The club has been in existence for over 100 years and has 112 members who pay an annual fee of £40; more are welcome. There is also a junior section of 22 boys and girls aged from 8 to 13 who receive coaching on Tuesdays. Playing hours are 1-4pm and 6-9pm, Monday to Friday, and by arrangement at the weekend. Members of the public are welcome to play for £2 per game. For more information call club secretary Richard Lacey on 669 7045.

TOWN HALL

OCT: Fri.11: Scottish band 'Hotel California' Tribute concert - 'The Eagles Story', 8pm. Tickets £10 from Assembly Rooms, tel 220 4349

Sat.26: Jumble Sale for Inverleith Swimming Club 2-4pm.

NOV: Fri.1: Portobello High School Ceilidh - 7.30pm. tickets from School, Kitcheners Deli or tel 657 1243

Mon.18: Blood Donor Sessions from 2pm.

Sat.30: Christmas Fair Edinburgh Dog & Cat Home, 10am.

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HUGH MILLER, THE PLAY

AN AWARD-WINNING play on the life of Hugh Miller is coming to Portobello. Tweed Theatre from Peebles will be performing Stewart Conn's powerful one-man drama *Hugh Miller, 1802 - 1856*, which is set on the night of Miller's suicide in an upstairs room of his house on the High Street. It requires Scott Noble, who plays Miller, to hold the audience for an hour while he reflects on his life from his days in Cromarty to the years of controversy in Edinburgh. During this he speaks out on the issues that concerned him, the Highland Clearances, the plight of women, patronage in the Church and Evolution versus Creationism. Speaking about the demanding role, the play's director, Ros Taylor said, "it requires someone with the capacity to learn - and remember - so many lines. Scott has proved he can do this, and hold an audience."



Since its first production at the Netherbow Theatre in 1988, when it won a *Scotsman* Festival Fringe First award, the play has been performed in venues from Peebles in the south to Miller's birthplace, Cromarty in the north including a well-received revival by Tweed Theatre on the Fringe two years ago. The performances in Portobello are being presented by the Community Council and mark the climax of our local bicentennial celebrations.

Although born in Glasgow and raised in Ayrshire poet/playwright Stewart Conn has lived in Edinburgh for the past 25 years and a number of his plays have been premiered at the Royal Lyceum Theatre. On 1st June 2002 the City of Edinburgh Council appointed him to the honorary post of "The Edinburgh Makar" for a period of three years. Makar is the old Scots word for writer and while in the post Mr Conn will act as the "poet laureate" for Edinburgh.

Venue: Baptist Church Hall, Portobello High Street

Date: Wednesday, 9th October & Thursday, 10th October

Time: 7.30 pm Tickets: £5 (inc. refreshment) from Portobello Library and Kitchener's Delicatessen.

HUGH MILLER'S HOUSE

The Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies, at Edinburgh College of Art, offers a postgraduate diploma course in architectural conservation, which attracts students of different disciplines (historians, artists, architects, geologists). The first project teaches a team of five or six students to produce measured survey drawings of a building and to research its

history, materials, state of repair, possible new uses, etc. Though primarily a teaching vehicle, the project's final report can be a useful spin-off to support bids for greater statutory protection or for conservation grants.

Looking at the Hugh Miller exhibition in Portobello Library last spring, it struck me his house would be just the right size and complexity

of building for our students, an impression later confirmed by a site visit with Archie Foley and Eddie Davidson. So, from October to December our students will be busy investigating the house and perhaps taking the next step towards its renaissance.

Ian Campbell (Reader in Architectural History and Theory, Edinburgh College of Art)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

KIWIS GET IN TOUCH

OUR SUMMER issue featured a message from the Napiers who had visited Portobello, near Dunedin in New Zealand, that the locals would like to get in touch with us. We sent an e-mail to the contact there, Sherryl Charles at the Portobello Village Tourist Park (portobellop@xtra.co.nz), and received the following reply:-

"Hullo Portobello - I received a copy of your newspaper from Sue and Ken Napier and it is really exciting to see your community in print. I have received contact from two of your readers and I am hoping we can establish an ongoing link, as it is very exciting to have a sister-ship, so to speak!

Our Portobello is quite small in comparison to you, as we were more a farming community. However, in the past five years we have blossomed into more of a tourist community, as the Otago Peninsula is home to many varied and some rare wildlife - the Royal Albatross and Yellow-eyed Penguins, many other birds and seals. There are also a lot of walks and some nice beaches. We have a store, hotel, garage and restaurant, and a lot of interesting characters who hopefully will get in touch. I have left a copy of your newspaper in the store and highlighted your e-mail address. I have also contacted our local primary school and I know they will want to become involved with your local children. - Kind regards, Sherryl Charles"

Perhaps more readers will make contact, and the Portobello Community website (soon to be launched) will also help people to keep in touch.

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OBITUARY

DREW KENNEDY 1930 -2002: AN APPRECIATION

DREW KENNEDY was well known in Portobello. Brought up in Craighentilly, he was a member of Portobello Swimming Club, training in all weathers in the outdoor pool, and representing the RAF at diving during his National Service in the 1950s.

After National Service he performed on stage as an acrobat and appeared in circus on the Continent, and in 1955 he performed in the aqua show in Bournemouth, where he and Sheila were married. He then got the job of pondmaster at North Berwick, putting on aqua shows that included a trampoline act in which volunteers took part, and that was how the idea of the Trampoline Centre was born. It opened in Windsor Place in 1965 and ran as a successful family business until 1997.

In 1999, shortly after retiring, Drew received the devastating diagnosis that he had motor neurone disease. After being so fit and energetic this was a great shock, but he kept his humorous and positive outlook and, although not religious, he had a great belief in the afterlife that helped him cope. In fact, Sheila said, he had many visitors because he cheered them up, although he was ill.

After being given two years to live, he proved the doctors wrong by lasting for three and a half and died peacefully at home on July 10, aged 72. Drew had planned his own funeral which was conducted by Ronnie Browne, a great personal friend of many years and, as might have been expected, it was an occasion for laughter as well as tears. The family – Sheila, Lynn, Craig and Cindy – were very pleased to donate £532 collected at the funeral to motor neurone research.

C.M.



DAVID LAING PLAQUE UNVEILED

THE LATEST building plaque in the series being erected by Portobello Community Council and Portobello Amenity Society was unveiled on the Promenade at the corner of Ethel Terrace and Laing Terrace on Wednesday 4th September. It commemorates David Laing, (1793 - 1878), antiquary and historian, who lived at East Villa, Portobello, from 1845 until his death in 1878. Although most of his house has long been demolished, part still exists as 1a, Laing Terrace.

The plaque was unveiled by Naomi Tarrant, Treasurer of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, who welcomed the recognition being given to Laing, who can be credited with saving and publishing a huge amount of material of immense importance to the history and literature of Scotland.

Generous donations from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, The Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet, the University of Edinburgh, and Dr. Murray Simpson, of the National Library of Scotland, have enabled Laing's contribution to saving Scotland's history to be recognised by the people of Portobello.

By profession a bookseller, Laing was also an antiquary, an historian and a scholar who, for over 50 years, worked tirelessly for the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. He was also a highly esteemed librarian to the Society of Writers to H. M. Signet for over 40 years. On his death, he left his huge collection of manuscripts to Edinburgh University, a gesture that has benefited many thousands of students of Scottish history for over a century.



PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

OUR NEW SESSION began on Wednesday, 4th September when Dr Murray Simpson, Keeper of Special Collections at the National Library of Scotland gave an illustrated talk on the bibliophile, collector and antiquary, David Laing. William Baird suggested that Laing's contribution to Scottish literature was perhaps second only to that of Scott and Dr Simpson gave the audience ample evidence to show that this was no exaggeration. Laing lived in Portobello for over thirty years in a house, long-since demolished, at the foot of James Street. He died there in 1878 and all the premises on the High Street had their blinds drawn as his cortege passed along on its way to Edinburgh. Laing Terrace is named after him.

Meetings continue on the first Wednesday of each month until December with guest speakers giving talks on a variety of topics. The meetings will be in St John's Church Hall in Brighton Place and start at 7 pm. Non-members are welcome at all meetings. There will be no pressure to join but a donation to our funds would be appreciated. The full programme of meetings is displayed in the library and elsewhere round the district but a note of those up to December is given below.

On 2nd October Dorothy Baxter who was a member of the World War 2 team that worked on the Enigma project will tell of her experiences in a talk titled *Y before X - Enigma and ATS*. Joyce Miller's doctoral thesis was on healing and magic in 17th century Scotland and we are very fortunate to have her as guest speaker on Wednesday 6th November. Her illustrated talk is called *Magical Healing Practices in Early-modern Scotland*.

SHELF stands for Self Help in Edinburgh, Lothians and Fife and is a project dedicated to collecting and record material that shows how people in communities came together for their mutual benefit. On 4th December three team members, David Anderson, Margaret Munro and Caroline Lancaster will give a presentation called *History on the SHELF* to show what the project is all about. They will also display material, some of which was obtained locally, that has been discovered and recorded. David is from the East Lothian Museum Service and Margaret and Caroline are both members of Portobello History Society.

Archie Foley

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THE WITNESS

THE WITNESS is the title of a major 3-part series on Hugh Miller on BBC Radio Scotland written and presented by George Rosie and produced by Billy Kay. The first part will go out at 11.30 am on Monday 7th October with a repeat on Tuesday 8th October at 11.30 pm. Subsequent parts will be broadcast on 14/15th October and 21st/22nd October at the same times.

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DIG FOR HISTORY

ONE UNFORSEEN benefit of the mains renewal work in Portobello High Street was the discovery in the vicinity of the tall flats of a large underground brick-built void. This has various sections, all of reasonable height, and it was at first thought that it might be changing facilities connected to the old tram depot that stood on this site. Current thinking, however, is that it's probably an old wartime air raid shelter. I've left copies of some photographs, taken by the contractors, in Portobello library. A full survey is likely to take place towards the end of the year.

If anyone has any useful information about this, please contact the city archaeologist on 558 1040.

Lawrence Marshall

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WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT REFUGEES?

THIS QUIZ was submitted by the Portobello Amnesty group. They hope your answers will give them an indication of public perceptions of the asylum seekers situation.

1. What percentage of people who come to the UK are found to be refugees by the Government's strict guidelines? - A. 5%, B. 25%, C. 50%.
2. Why have most asylum seekers come to the UK? - A. To get a better job, B. To flee human abuses like torture, the death penalty, persecution, and even death, C. To make use of the UK's welfare system.
3. What percentage of the world's refugees does the UK receive? - A. 50%, B. 25%, C. 1%.
4. How many countries spend more of their national wealth on refugees than the UK? A. None, B. 38, C. 77.

Send your entries to David Turner, 7 Straiton Place, EH15 2BA. Tel. 669 1308, stating A, B or C against each question number. The first three correct responses will win a prize. Remember to give your name and address or phone number.

CHURCHES INFLUENCE HOMELESSNESS ISSUE

AT THE JUNE meeting of the Peace and Justice Group of the Portobello and District Council of Churches, Alastair Cameron, Co-ordinator of the Scottish Churches Housing Agency, spoke on the churches' 100 years tradition of responding in various ways to the miseries of homelessness, and of how the Agency, an ecumenical body of eight years standing, is building on and extending that work. SCHA publicises and promotes over 100 projects initiated or run by the churches, including Starter Packs, Fresh Start, Rent Guarantee Schemes and Befriending Schemes; it has also seen its campaigns to influence decision-makers come to fruition in the report of the Homelessness Task Force, now largely accepted by the Scottish Executive, which is committed to ending homelessness within ten years. The churches have played a vital role, within which the Agency is one important strand, in moving the process this far.

David Turner

REV. JOHN WEIR COOK TO RETIRE

ON OCTOBER 31 the congregation and parish of St Philip's, Joppa will say farewell to John Weir Cook, MA, BD, who is retiring after 40 years in the ministry. The last 15 years have been spent in Joppa, where he has become a well known and respected figure in the community, and has been active in the instigation of the Covenanted Churches of Portobello.

Born and educated in Greenock and graduating from Glasgow University, John served for seven years in Calcutta before being inducted in 1970 to Henderson, Kilmarnock. In February 1988 he came to St Philip's and soon took up the challenges of a new charge. During his time here there has been no greater challenge than the rebuilding of the church after a devastating fire in December 1998. Restoration took three years, during which John showed remarkable skill and determination in continuing the worship, day-to-day life of the congregation, and support to the community, especially when his own health was affected by the resulting stresses and strains. It is to his credit that he leaves St Philip's in good order, both materially and spiritually.

The congregation will be sad to say goodbye to John, but will rejoice and celebrate with him as he nears completion of his 40 years. We wish him well as he ventures into retirement, where he can enjoy his interests and hobbies.

Elize Rutherford



SEND A CHRISTMAS GIFT TO A CHILD IN CROATIA

OUR SPRING 2002 issue included an article by Craig Paul about his trip to Croatia with Operation Christmas Child to distribute gift-wrapped shoeboxes filled with gifts to children who had suffered as a result of war. These were the only presents many children would receive and they were delighted with them.

Craig returned there in July for a Christian Youth Camp and met some of the children again. "It was nice to see them in a different environment", he says. "At Christmas, they were wrapped up to keep out the bitter cold and many endured harsh living conditions. It was great to see them at the camp in the sunny countryside, able to play in total safety. I led various activities, including 'parachute games' which the children thoroughly enjoyed, and I left the parachute as a gift from my Boys' Brigade group at Duddingston Kirk."

This year Craig is co-ordinating the collection in Edinburgh, and has asked Portobello Library, the Police Station and Woodwares Mica Hardware if they will stock information leaflets (from mid September) for those who want to take part in the scheme. Filled boxes can be handed in to Kwik Fit in Portobello High Street from November 5 to 20 and to Woodwares from mid October to November 20 (see the shop at 222-8 Portobello High Street for details).

For more information see www.samaritanspurse.org.uk or call 0870 011 2002.

WHAT'S ON

COFFEE MORNINGS: Every week on Wednesdays from 10-12 noon in St James Church Hall, Rosefield Place, with tea, coffee, juice and bacon rolls - all ages catered for; and on Fridays from 10-12 noon at the Baptist Church Hall, 185 Portobello High Street.

AN EVENING WITH A DIFFERENCE: Come to a Silent Auction on Monday September 30 at 7.30pm, in Portobello Old Parish Church Hall. Tickets (£1 incl. refreshments) from Church Café (Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm) or at the door.

QUAKER MEETINGS

A **QUAKER** Meeting for Worship is held on the first Sunday of each month at 7.30pm in Portobello Old Parish Church, Bellfield Street. All are welcome. Enquiries to David Turner (669 1308) or Alastair Cameron (669 5129).

CHRISTIAN AID EVENTS

A Feast for Lent in St John's Church raised £206, shared with SCIAF, the Summer Mission Musical in the Old Parish Church raised over £700, and

Duddingston Kirk's sponsored walk round Holyrood Park in May raised £1200.

The Portobello door-to-door collection in May raised £8150 (including Gift Aid commitments), nearly £1,100 more than last year. Sincere thanks to everyone.

A Table Sale will be held on October 26 in the Old Parish Church hall for which contributions of bric-a-brac would be appreciated. To book a table at £5 call 669 8040.

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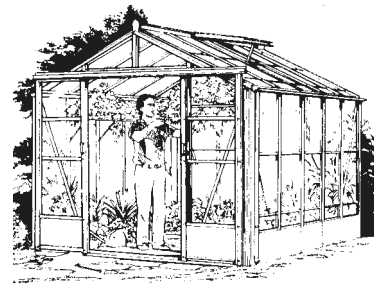
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BLAST OFF TO READING PLANET

THIS SUMMER 134 local children signed up at Portobello Library for the journey to 'The Reading Planet', a nationwide reading promotion for children, which proved to be immensely popular. The children each had a Collector's Card to record six books read during the holiday, and collected stickers along the way to make up their own planet picture. After reading the books, they collected a platinum medallion, pencil and certificate, with entry to a city-wide draw for larger prizes.

Stops along the Portobello planetary way included a visit to the Starlab (from the Royal Observatory), a dressing-up Craft workshop (using recycled materials from Borders Scrap Store and lots of help from the library staff), and the 'Alien Ball' with local disco DJ Derek Miller who provided an out-of-this-world atmosphere, with cool tracks for stardust dancing. A highlight of the dancing was 'Simon Says' led by the Library's own Simon Radcliffe! The children's fancy dress was so good that each won a prize, so all went home happy.

We would like to thank our local primary schools for helping us to promote the scheme, our lovely holiday relief staff, Everisto, Hannah, and Laura, and the children, for making it work so well. Now it's down to earth again and back to school - until we dream up something for next summer!

Lauren, age 7, of Portobello, at the "Reading Planet" in fancy dress at Portobello Library in July.

Joyce Campbell, Portobello Library

E-MAG IS VERY TASTY

I FIRST HEARD about the website at a party. Through the blare of music and talk in the background I heard someone jabbering on about his 'tasty spoon'. That person was Martin Downes and his 'tasty spoon' is a magazine website dedicated to young people, written by young people.



The site (www.tastyspoon.com) currently has a small cult following but Martin is ambitious for its expansion into a better known, more openly used site. The site allows anybody to join in and post their own articles, read other people's work, join in with chat or play games.

Martin has just finished his 6th year in Portobello High School (where he helped out on the school website) and is going on to study Astrophysics at Edinburgh University. He created tastyspoon.com in May this year with the 'tech guy' behind the site James.

At first serving no purpose it soon became a site aimed at giving its users what they wanted from a website; an outlet for young people to have a voice and a network for them across the country. Whether you wish to post a humorous tale, a question to its readership or an essay on politics, tastyspoon.com is free for all willing to co-operate with the site rules and have a good time.

Eddie Ross



www.egfl.net/headgear

Cartoon characters Ed and his cat Frank host this site which gives information, help and advice about drugs and alcohol in an interactive, entertaining and friendly way. Headgear was designed with the help of students from Broughton High School.

Peter E. Ross

www.detrutus.info

This site accompanies a new futuristic multi-media advert to encourage young people not to drop litter, now appearing on TV and cinema, in which super-hero 'Max Hygiene' saves humans from the 'Litter Mechs'. The website contains interviews with the 'stars', story plots, games and quizzes.

www.harrypotterfans.net

With 'The Chamber Of Secrets' about to hit our screens in November this unofficial Harry Potter site has all the info on books, films and the whole Harry Potter universe that fans could ever want. The site includes quizzes and a chat room where avid Harry fans can discuss the latest Harry gossip.

Peter E. Ross

ST JOHN'S PARTNERSHIP WITH LEGHO, TANZANIA

IN RECENT years St John's Primary School has established a strong partnership with the village of Legho in Tanzania. Depute Headteacher Linda McGee and class teachers Susan Christopher and Mark Burgess run a Legho Club in school, which is well attended by pupils who learn about life in Tanzania and correspond with the pupils of Legho Primary School. Linda, Susan and Mark have visited the village on a number of occasions and have taught in the school, and members of the village community have come to Portobello and have visited St John's.

Recently, the Legho Club raised funds to enable electricity to be installed in Legho Primary and our PTA has given them an overhead projector, which is well used. Holy Rood High School also has strong links with Legho Village and its secondary school.

The life of our school has been enriched by the friendship and kindness shown by our African friends. We hope that Seraphin Mbuya, Headteacher of Legho Primary School, and two of his colleagues will visit St John's this term and we are very excited at the prospect of this notable event.

Ted Brack, Headteacher

HOLY ROOD HEAD TO MOVE

MR PATRICK SWEENEY, Head Teacher of Holy Rood High School, is moving at the end of September to take up the post of Head Teacher of St Margaret's Academy in Livingston. When he was appointed in 1994 Holy Rood's school roll was 589. It is now 1047 and is expected to rise to around 1200 over the next few years.

The school's exam results have improved steadily, and this summer saw the best results ever, with 20 pupils achieving 5 Higher passes. There are now over 80 teachers in Holy Rood, double the number in 1994, many being attracted from far afield, including Canada, Northern Ireland and south of the border. "The quality of teaching is very high", says Mr Sweeney, "and this has been frequently recognised in inspection reports and in reviews by City of Edinburgh Council."

As he looks back on his time at Holy Rood, Mr Sweeney speaks with appreciation of the fine young people who have passed through the school. "We have had great achievements in drama, dancing and sport, and senior pupils especially have made a huge contribution to building the ethos and spirit of the school."

TOWERBANK'S ATHLETES SHINE

ON TUESDAY 4th June a team of 28 boys and girls went to Meadowbank Stadium to take part in the Interscholastics with all of the big schools in Edinburgh.

Towerbank did very well in the 600m races, with Kirsty Myles winning a bronze medal and Thomas Drouge a silver, having been narrowly beaten in the last second.

Zara Jenkinson did very well in the cricket ball throw, winning gold with a throw of 42.4m. The P7 boys relay team made it into the final, and Dale Gilmour made the final of the P6 80m sprint. Congratulations to all those who took part. Ross Jamieson (P7B)

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41st BBs ACTIVITY CAMP IN FRANCE



Liam Adair up a vertical crag.

FOLLOWING the tragic accident in August 2000, in which one of our dear friends and members was killed, the boys and staff made the trip to the Dordogne area of France again this summer.

We were met with a great welcome at the campsite, where we spent a week taking part in a range of activities that tested our trust in the instructors and our own self-confidence, including water sports, climbing and abseiling, pony trekking, archery, rifle shooting, mountain biking, raft building and initiative exercises. We also took part in an overnight bivouac, which was an experience in itself!

The BB leaders, instructors, weather, and the company we shared as a group, all contributed to an extremely successful and enjoyable camp, which will leave us with many happy memories. May I take this opportunity to thank everyone at Duddingston Kirk and the local community for their continued support.

Liam Adair

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COMMUNITY CENTRE ACTIVITIES

Singing Group (Sing Out in Portobello), Tuesdays from September 3, 10-11.30 a.m. Singing is powerful and makes you feel good. For more information contact Eileen Penman on 657 1369.

Scottish Women's Rural Institute, next meeting September 17, 2-4 p.m. All women welcome.

Yoga for Women with free crèche, Fridays from August 30, 10.00-11.00am

NEW; Children's Multi-Sports Programme - Thursdays 5.45-6.45 - for over 8's. No name yet for this group which will provide ball skills development (volleyball, basket ball, badminton, football, etc., warm ups, cool-downs, nutrition). £1.50 per session. To book a place contact the Centre.

Coming soon - public access internet computers. Contact Portobello Community Centre, Adelphi Grove, for a full programme of activities. Tel: 669 8275 or e-mail portobelloc@btconnect.com

YOU KNOW, a great way to save on garden maintenance is to let part of your garden grow more freely. "My garden is like that already", I hear some say! But by just spending less time mowing the grass, you can let a flower-spangled meadow or a natural-looking woodland area develop. Nice thought, although not really practical for the average garden in Portobello, and what would the neighbours say? But seriously, when freed from competition with grasses and other vigorous plants, wild flowers in a border can give a wonderful display.



with Bill Thomson

Plant primroses, sweet violets, oxlips and cowslips under deciduous shrubs. Foxgloves and evening primrose look great in a cottage garden border, as does thrift - an ideal edging plant. For a dry bank or rockery, yellow flowers such as toadflax, horseshoe vetch and birds foot trefoil make a striking contrast with red valerian, maiden pink and bloody cranesbill. But don't take plants or seeds from the wild - specialist suppliers stock both seeds and plants.

To encourage seeds of primrose, cowslip etc. which need a period of cold before germination, sow in autumn and put the trays outside. Or you can trick the seeds by placing in a polythene bag, mixed with damp sand, and leaving them in a refrigerator for six to eight weeks. Good luck!

LOCAL GARDEN IS A HIDDEN TREASURE

THE FRONT of Susan and Mike Burns' house in Nantwich Drive gives no hint of the delights to be discovered on going through a gate into the large back garden, but on July 13 and 14 they opened it the public in aid of the Henry Doubleday Research Association, which promotes organic gardening, and over 50 visitors took the opportunity to see what they have achieved in the last 14 years.

There are few straight lines and every twist and curve leads to something different: herbaceous and shrub borders run down each side, with a tall leylandii hedge at the end; in the middle are another herbaceous bed with tall flowering plants, a small orchard, rose bed, lawns, and a small wooded area with a twisty narrow 'woodland walk'. Behind the wood is a large pond and summerhouse, and back at the house are a conservatory and green house. As this is an organic garden, a large compost heap and a worm bin are tucked away in corners and no chemicals are used on pests. "We won't be making many changes to the garden now", says Susan, "although I may scatter some different seeds around, but we hope to make the open days an annual event".

Both Susan and Mike played a large part in the creation of the Meadows Yard Nature Reserve at Filleyside, and Susan has been a driving force behind the fight to save the Telferton Allotments site from development. Brenda Molony

PROM RACE WINNERS

THE FIRST man home in the annual 4 Mile Prom Race on June 20, organised by Portobello Running Club, was D Naylor (Hunters' Bog Trotters) in 19min 28sec; second, J Mareque (unattached) 20.08; third, J Heep (HBT) 20.46. The first woman was A Mudge (Carnethy) 21.56.

A WICKED NIGHT

ON SATURDAY 7th September local band Jack Easy, with friends, played their socks off at Newcraighall Miners' Welfare Club for Wicked World Tour; a brand new organisation based in Portobello which aims to raise money to adapt a bus so that disabled people can travel the world.

Visit their website: www.wickedworldtour.com or phone 0131 669 3684; and come to: Family disco, 2nd November, Sweethope House Hotel, Inveresk.

PADDLING POOL SITE

PORTOBELLO Community Council has completed the plans and costing for re-landscaping the Paddling Pool site to provide a multipurpose area for all the family to enjoy as part of Edinburgh's seaside experience. It includes an informal basketball area for youngsters with a multi-top surface, made from recycled tyres. All existing materials on site will be re-used, including the stone walling and gates.

The plans were drawn up after wide consultation, with the professional expertise of Ralph Ogg and Partners, assisted by an East Local Development Committee grant from the Council. The scheme will cost in the region of £250,000 and the group hope to have sufficient money and the work started in spring 2003; sources of possible funding include the Sports Lottery, the Scottish Executive, and landfill tax for elements of the proposals.

BANISH THE BACK-TO-WORK BLUES

WEEKEND Hill-walking trips, advanced driving skills, Egyptian belly-dancing and child psychology are some of the diverse adult education classes on offer this year from the city's Community Education Service.

The official programme is available from libraries, leisure centres and arts venues. There is also a website with full listings at <http://communitylearning.egfl.net/> and a help-line is open in office hours on 469 3250.

Most non-vocational classes start the week beginning Monday 23 September and fees range around the £45 mark with concessions as low as £7 per term for students, pensioners and people in receipt of benefits.

HAGGIS CHAMP IS TV HERO!

LOCAL BUTCHER Joe Findlay is to appear in a new series made by TV chef Rick Stein. 'Food Heroes' celebrates small food producers all around the UK who put quality first, and Joe caught the attention of Rick Stein after being named East of Scotland Haggis Champion last year. "We're terribly excited about this, although filming for the programme was nerve-racking", said Joe. Filming of the haggis production process took place in the shop in July and the episode will be shown on October 24; 'Food Heroes' is showing now on BBC2 on Thursdays.

TENNIS CAMPAIGN REWARDED

JOPPA TENNIS COURTS: The energy and persistence of the supporters of Joppa Tennis Courts has paid off and the courts have been refurbished this summer so they can be better used as a community resource. There has been a tennis facility here for as long as anyone can remember and, for the last twenty years, it has been run by Portobello Community Council. This new investment has been made possible by the community's own fundraising efforts, the Council and the Scottish Executive.

DOORS OPEN DAY 2002

LOCAL buildings open to the public on Saturday September 28 are Duddingston House, 105 Milton Rd West, a classical villa of 1763 (10am-5pm); the Christie Miller Mausoleum, Craiginny Crescent (10-5); St Margaret's and St Triduana's Aisle, Restalrig Rd S'th (10-4); Robin Chapel, Thistle Foundation, Craigmillar Castle Ave (10-5); Leith School of Art, 25 N'th Junction St (10-5); Alien Rock, 8 Pier Pl, Granton, indoor rock climbing centre (10-5). The full list of Doors Open is available from libraries or see www.cockburnassociation.org.uk

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