

# The Portobello REPORTER

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**The independent voice of Portobello**

Your Community Newspaper produced by local people.

## CROSSRAIL SERVICE FROM BRUNSTANE STARTING SOON

A HALF-HOURLY service from Edinburgh Waverley to Brunstane and Newcraighall Stations on the Edinburgh Crossrail line is due to commence on 3 June 2002, making this the first passenger mainline reopening with stations anywhere in Britain since privatisation. Another new station at Edinburgh Park (between Saughton and Newbridge Junction) is programmed to open in the first half of 2003.

The Crossrail service extends the existing Dunblane to Bathgate service through Edinburgh Waverley on to Brunstane and Newcraighall. The Monday to Saturday services from Edinburgh Waverley to and from Newcraighall will be half-hourly from 6am to 8pm then hourly from 8pm till midnight. The proposed Sunday service will run half-hourly from 10am-8pm.

The plans for Brunstane station include security cameras, lighting and improvements to the paths into the Magdalene estate and to Asda, B&Q and Big W. There is a park-and-ride facility at Newcraighall with approximately 600 parking spaces.

In the future, the Waverley Railway Project aims to re-open the line from Edinburgh Waverley to Galashiels and is being promoted by The City of Edinburgh, Midlothian and Scottish Borders Councils. The project has been given £1.8 million from the Public Transport Fund to develop the scheme up to the granting of statutory powers. The Waverley Railway Project in effect starts from where Crossrail terminates, at Newcraighall, and continues onwards to Galashiels.



Photo by Peter Ross

## PROMENADE PAINTING BACK ON PUBLIC VIEW

A PAINTING of Portobello Promenade by local artist Aidan Bremner was recently rescued from obscurity in a cupboard and can now be seen at Portobello Library. It was originally hung in The Refreshment Room at Portobello Baths and was taken into storage when the Baths were refurbished. Aidan has now made a loan of it to the Community Council for public display: 'I hope it finds a place where it can be seen in Portobello', he said. 'The Library would be great'.



The eight foot long watercolour painting/collage was created by Aidan in the early 1990s and features a fascinating collection of aspects of our seaside - the Promenade with its buildings, such as the Baths, the old power station, the Ferris wheel and the kilns and children playing on the sands; Aidan's alter ego, Buskar Willie, the one-man band, also makes an appearance at the left-hand end.

Although Aidan still has links with Portobello he now lives in Lagos, Portugal, where he produces paintings and sculptures for an exhibition each October: last year's exhibition featured fish and fishermen, landscapes and portraits of agricultural workers. He is also painting at a zoo, which he says 'has an especially nice environment for primates'.

On summer nights Aidan draws caricatures of tourists and locals in Lagos city centre, as pictured here. On the back of the sitter's chair is the slogan 'English spoken - American understood' which he says he took from a well-known postcard seller on Princes Street, Harry Tanter, another Portobello resident.

B.M.

## CROSSING OVERDUE AT MOIRA PARK

THE RECENT tragic death of an elderly partially-sighted lady on Portobello Road roughly halfway between Moira Park and Craightenny Avenue has naturally revived demands for a light-controlled pedestrian crossing at Moira Park itself.

Many - including myself and Gavin Strang MP - have long argued the case for a crossing here, instead of the refuge islands. The latter only aid safe passage across this main road;

the former should guarantee it.

This location is 33rd on a list of over 100 requested such crossings, after taking account of the doctors' surgery and sheltered housing immediately adjacent. Even the recent fatality will not move it far enough up the list to enable it to be funded from our current budget. I am not happy about the situation and I know this feeling is widely shared!

I will try everything possible to improve the position. It has

been a fruitless struggle so far, but I have the backing of other local councillors; indeed, Cllr Ewan Aitken lives almost opposite the site of the recent accident.

A report on this matter will go before the next meeting of the East Local Development Committee in the nearby Royal High Primary School on Tuesday 5th March at 7pm., which I hope will allow us to find a way of making progress.

Cllr Lawrence Marshall

## DOGS TO BE BANNED FROM PART OF BEACH

AS A first step towards the City of Edinburgh Council's planned submission to Keep Scotland Beautiful for a Seaside Award (Yellow Flag status) for part of Portobello Beach, as reported in our June 2001 issue, a pilot ban on dogs is to be imposed on one section this summer. A dog-free area is one of the requirements for an award. Following a survey of public opinion last year, which showed almost 100 per cent in favour, including many dog owners, the ban will apply in the summer season, from May 1 to September 30, on the stretch of beach from Bellfield Street to John Street, and appropriate signs will be installed.

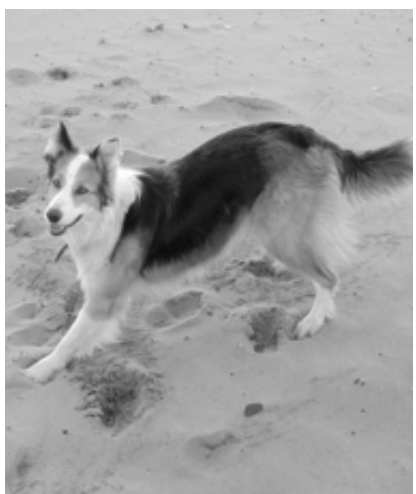


Photo by Peter Ross

The submission, which was to have been made this year, for Yellow Flag status by summer 2003, has unfortunately been deferred. It was not possible to confirm that lifeguards would be in place for the season, but it is hoped that this problem will be resolved in time for a later submission, which could see Yellow Flag status granted for the 2004 season.

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS DUE

ELECTIONS for seats on Edinburgh's 36 Community Councils, which take place every three years, are due on May 30. Portobello Community Council, one of the most effective in the city, comprises 20 representatives of local groups and 20 individual members, so if you or your group would like to stand, the relevant forms are available from the Library and must be returned by April 29.

The Community Council is the place to find out what is happening in your area and take part in discussions and decisions on matters such as Promenade improvements, planning issues, litter, crime, local celebrations and lots more.

Over the last three years Portobello CC has collaborated with Portobello Amenity Society and others in many projects, including torchlight processions; the provision of information boards along the Promenade; additional Christmas lights in the High Street; the Sir Harry Lauder Garden and concerts; consultation on John Street paddling pool site, the refurbishment of the Promenade, and the proposed Seaside Award application; negotiations with City of Edinburgh Council to have Joppa Tennis Courts upgraded; and arranging hustings for elections of our MSP and MP. It is hardly surprising, then, that its 1999 entry won the Calor Gas Urban Community of the Year Award for Portobello, and its 2001 entry received three commendations.

Groups registered as members of the CC, but with no nominated representative attending meetings, include two local churches, political parties, and a youth organisation; please check whether this applies to your group. Apart from these, all other local community groups should consider whether they want to make a contribution to, and be involved in, wider local affairs. One Monday night a month is all it takes to keep up to date and have a say in what happens in Portobello.

Tom Smith, Chairman

## BUS SERVICES TO NEW HOSPITAL

PHASE 1 of the new Royal Infirmary at Little France, the Orthopaedic Unit, opened on January 27 and Phase 2, the Simpson Maternity Unit became fully operational on March 4. Lothian Buses service 32/52, which covers the Portobello area, are now being diverted from Gilmerton Road via Moredunvale Road, to Old Dalkeith Road and the new Hospital. It will then go on to Cameron Toll, where it will resume the existing route. This service will not initially enter the Hospital campus, but will stop outside.

**THIS ISSUE** of *The Portobello Reporter* includes contributions from 27 people and organisations. If you too would like to be a contributor, then we would like to hear from you. Your story could be written for you if you wish.

**PORTY PROFILE No. 9**  
**DICK LEE**

**MUSICIAN** and composer Dick Lee moved from Stockbridge to Regent Street three years ago with his 11-year-old son Tom and his wife Anne, also a musician, and thinks Portobello is 'a great place to live'.

Dick studied at Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities, Birmingham School of Music and Amsterdam Conservatoire; he has lived in Edinburgh since 1980 and taught wind instruments at several schools before becoming a full-time composer in 1997.

As a performer on recorder, saxophone and clarinet, Dick plays all kinds of music from 20th century classics to folk, latin and jazz, and has played soprano sax with Highland piper Hamish Moore. He formed a swing band in 1980, now called Swing 2002, who have played at the Malt Shovel Inn, Cockburn Street since 1984, every Tuesday at 9pm.

Since winning the BBC Radio 2 National Big Band Competition with a programme of his own compositions, Dick has released several albums and been commissioned to write music for TV and film, dance and concert. His latest recording is with the traditional music band Bag o' Cats: *Out of the Bag* features inventive reeling rhythms from the Himalayas to Cairngorm.

In January 2002 he was one of 14 of Scotland's leading artists to receive a Creative Scotland Award from the Scottish Arts Council. The award will enable him to write a large-scale piece for four bagpipes (small pipes) and orchestra, in five movements representing the north, south, east, west and heart of Scotland. He will spend time in each area, gathering musical impressions and playing with exponents of traditional music, giving performances and holding composition workshops. 'I'm delighted to receive this award, which is in effect a commission', he said. 'It gives me security for a year or so to concentrate on producing something big and worthwhile'.

Full details of Dick's work can be found on his website: [www.dicklee.org.uk](http://www.dicklee.org.uk) along with samples of his music in mp3 format. CDs featuring Lee and Moore and Bag o' Cats are available on the Greentrax label.

B.M.



Photo by Peter Ross

**RECOGNITION FOR DEDICATED CARER**



Photo by Peter Ross

Amanda and Daybreak House residents George and Charlie.

**AMANDA HEPBURN** of Bellfield Street has won the Keith Matthews Memorial Award for outstanding diligence and excellent personal contribution to the caring profession. As Care Home Manager of Daybreak House in Marchhall Crescent, she has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of people with mental health problems.

The award is named after Keith Matthews, who ran care homes in England and who died in 2001. Nominations were received from all over Britain, but Amanda's dedication and professional practice left no doubt that the award should come to Scotland. Amanda received the award from Claire Rayner in London.

**MAGNIFICENT SUM RAISED FOR MAGGIE'S**

A **BIG** 'Thank you' comes from Malcolm Sutherland to everyone who helped to organise the ceilidh in aid of Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres on December 29 at the Town Hall, and also to the band 'Flaming Nora' who provided the music. 'I wish also to thank everyone who came along, who helped to create a great atmosphere and made it a great success on the night; it raised just over £1800, including some very generous donations - a fantastic amount', he says.

Including income from two coffee mornings and other donations, Malcolm, a former Portobello High School pupil, has raised a total of more than £3500, well over the £2500 for charity needed to enable him to take part in a walk along the Great Wall of China in his gap year before university. 'My thanks to everyone who supported me in this whole project', he adds.

**REDUCING BREAK-INS THE PRIORITY**

**THE MAIN** priority recently has been to reduce the number of break-ins: in December, 13 houses and nine businesses were broken into, and there were several cases of theft by slip-in, when criminals enter by unlocked doors while the family are at home. Teamwork by local officers, the Crime Patrol, CID and the specialised 'Magpie' team, plus additional uniform and plain clothes patrols in the worst affected areas, has resulted in a solve rate around 52% for January, well above our target of 32-36%.

Officers have delivered warning leaflets in hot spot areas, providing advice and offering free crime prevention surveys. Leaving a light on at night when the house is empty, locking doors even when the family are in, and reporting suspicious callers are all good practice. Breaking into and theft of cars is still a problem: park in your drive if possible, or in well-lit areas, and don't leave valuables on view.

Youth-related calls now account for 30% of all calls and of these, some 65% report youths being noisy or kicking a ball in the street. I am introducing a screening policy to enable officers to respond promptly when a crime is being committed or is likely; where noise alone is involved, details will be passed to the Community Team who will attend when available to liaise with residents and youths to try to deal with the causes of the problem.

Officers are also working with Community Education and other agencies to find a positive direction for our young people and reduce the level of anti-social behaviour.

Bob Hope, Station Inspector

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:** The next meeting will be on Tuesday March 5 at 7pm at the Royal High Primary School.

**THE ROYAL AIR FORCES ASSOCIATION** is a leading Service membership charity whose aim is to care for and look after the whole Air Force family. Membership is open to serving and ex-service RAF personnel and ex-members of the Royal Observer Corps. The Edinburgh Branch is looking for new members. If you are eligible, and would like to become a full or Associate Friend member, please write to or phone Royal Air Forces Association (EHP), 20 Queen Street, EH2 1JX - Tel. 225 5221.

**MEADOWS YARD PROTECTED:** After a great deal of work by the local community, a hidden haven for wildlife in Portobello has been recently designated a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) by the Council's planning committee. Meadows Yard, Fillyside Road, is one of five designated LNRs in Edinburgh, all of which have legal protection under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949).

Councillor Lawrence Marshall expressed his pleasure at this development after eight years of community effort in conjunction with the Council and Scottish Natural Heritage. 'It's great that we've got this far', he said. 'Thanks are particularly due to Susan and Mike Burns and the other members of the Meadows Yard Management Group. I'm looking forward to the public declaration of the site as a Local Nature Reserve in May'.

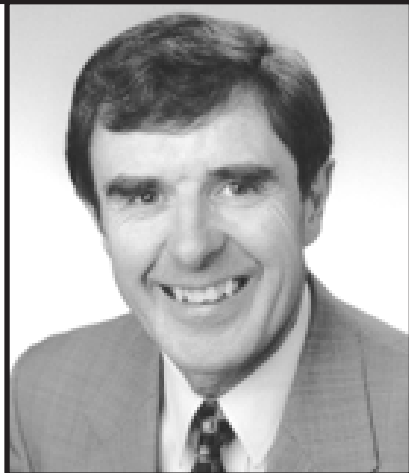
**NEW PORTY CAR CLUB:** Under great new management, the Edinburgh City Car Club is ready to put cars in Portobello and Joppa, but they need to know there's enough interest locally. If you want to register your interest, or find out more about the benefits without the bother of owning a car, contact Judith Bolton at 466-8172 or talk to local members Nick and Maureen Child at 669-2184.

**PORTOBELLO ONLINE:** The 'Portobello Online' project to set up a community website continues to make progress and we aim to go 'live' by the summer. The site is produced by local volunteers and provides a free platform and unlimited web space for all local non-profit making groups. As well as contact details we are happy to publish minutes, agenda, forthcoming events or any other information you want to share with the public. It's your space, it's free and there are no catches!

We still need local people to help out with the site. You don't need experience in any particular field as long as you are enthusiastic and can spare some time. Perhaps you have some good digital photographs we could use? Maybe you could write an article or fancy yourself as a columnist? Our ethos is that everyone has something to contribute. To find out how you can get involved in this very worthwhile and exciting project email us at [portyweb@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:portyweb@blueyonder.co.uk) or tel 669 1918. Bob Jefferson

**CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU:** 191 Portobello High Street is open: Mon, Tues, Thurs: 9.30-3.30; Wed, 9.30-12 & 6.30-7.45. (Closed Fri.) For an appointment phone 669 7138 / 9503 or call in.

**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](mailto:gillana@parliament.uk)  
You can also visit his website: [www.gavinstrangmp.co.uk](http://www.gavinstrangmp.co.uk)

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## EDINBURGH GETS GREENER

A FREE paper and cardboard pickup service for businesses has been successfully running since the early 1990s and is currently recruiting ten new businesses in Edinburgh each week. All material collected is recycled. If your business is interested in joining the scheme, contact Ben Ridder at Edinburgh Recycling on 468 8671.

Edinburgh Recycling has also resumed its talks to schools and community groups, from church groups to Scouts. If your class or group is interested, contact Michelle on 538 7942.

'TOO GOOD TO WASTE', an A to Z guide to recycling, is available from Waterstones and City Libraries; it can also be downloaded from Edinburgh Recycling's website at [www.leep.org.uk](http://www.leep.org.uk)

**CASH FOR CANS:** A 'Buy Back Centre' is now open at the LEEP warehouse at 36 Newhaven Road, where aluminium cans can be sold over the counter. At 40p-50p per kg, depending on weight, this could be a good source of funds for non-profit making organisations. Opening hours are 10am-4pm on weekdays and 10am-1pm on Saturdays. For more information contact Bed Ridder on 468 8671.

**NEW SACKS FOR OLD:** Many readers will remember the fortnightly paper sack uplift of the 70s and early 80s, when old newspapers were put out in hessian sacks for collection by Lothian Regional Council.

Now a 'new initiative' is to be launched towards the end of March, when plastic sacks for newspapers will be supplied to pilot areas and uplifted on a fortnightly basis. The first areas in our district will be Mountcastle, Duddingston, Willowbrae and parts of Craightenny and it is hoped the scheme will soon spread further.

## READ MY LIPS?

DO YOU use, or maybe need, a hearing aid? Do you sometimes feel a bit isolated or left out of conversations because of hearing loss? Is background noise a problem?

If any of this applies to you, why not go along to a lipreading group? This Community Education service is free for people with acquired hearing loss. Groups meet once a week for two hours, with a qualified tutor, and as well as lipreading skills, members learn about hearing aids and relevant organisations, and discuss coping strategies for managing better in everyday situations. Most people find the groups are friendly and fun, and help them to regain confidence and communicate better with family and friends. Before joining, there is a chat with the tutor to discuss hearing loss and related difficulties.

There are several morning and afternoon groups in the city centre, and an evening group at Jewel & Esk Valley College, Milton Road. For more detailed information contact Aileen Paterson at South Bridge Resource Centre, 6 Infirmity Street, EH1 1LT (tel. 558 8222 / fax. 558 9355).

## LIBRARY NEWS

**THE BOOK GROUP**, which meets at Portobello Library every month, recently passed its second birthday. Book group members were keen to pass on their 'tips' for good reads - so here they are.

Without question, the most popular book has been *Last Orders* by Graham Swift - others must think so too, as it has recently been released as a film. Runner up was the first book read by the group - *The Woman who Walked into Doors* by Roddy Doyle.

Also popular were Tracey Chevalier's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* set in Rembrandt's Holland; J.M. Coetzee's hard-hitting South African tale *Disgrace*; Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain* - an odyssey through America with a slow burning love story; Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music* - a contemporary story with lots of good tunes for quintets - (a CD is now available too); and for sheer wacky irony, Magnus Mills' *The Restraint of Beasts* - a gang of fencing contractors dealing with empire-building farmers.

Some books have been unpopular - however, it is the good reads that stay in the mind! There are plenty more books out there - if you like books, and want to read more, the group is informal, with frequent laughter and cups of tea. Meetings are at 6.30 on the first Tuesday of the month - ask at the Library for details.

'**RECYCLING IN EDINBURGH**' is a recently produced leaflet to encourage recycling of materials wherever possible. As indicated, libraries can accept hardback and paperback books in prime condition, for re-use in the local, or other city libraries. So if you have ever bought a new paperback for the plane, read it, and then wondered what to do with it, why not take it to the library?

'**FIDDLE STICKS**': Younger children (under 12's) are welcome to come along to Mairi Campbell's 'Fiddle Sticks' childrens' string class in the Library. It is on Thursdays from 3.45 - 5.00p.m. in the Community Room. Just come along on a Thursday to try it. Joyce Campbell

## THE BOTTOM LINE ON NAPPIES

**GET REAL**, an exhibition promoting the use of reusable nappies, was on show recently at Portobello Library, created by local resident Jane Lewis as part of her Millennium Award-funded project to set up an Edinburgh Real Nappy Network (ERNN). 'I used real nappies on my own child, and was inspired by real nappy projects elsewhere helping to reduce nappy waste,' she explains.

Disposable nappies are used by 85% of UK parents, resulting in a staggering 8,000,000 being thrown into landfill sites every day and taking from 200 to 500 years to biodegrade. As well as being good for the environment, real nappies are good for your pocket! Buying and washing these yourself can save over £600 for your first baby, and using a nappy laundry service costs about the same as disposables, but without the hidden costs to the local authority.

Modern shaped and fitted nappies in trendy styles, with Velcro and poppers (no more pins!) are convenient and easy to use. They are free from the chemicals present in disposables, and carry no greater risk of nappy rash.

ERNN is a small community project providing information on all aspects of real nappies. To find out more, ring 669 5591, email [info@ernn.org.uk](mailto:info@ernn.org.uk), or visit the website at [www.ernn.org.uk](http://www.ernn.org.uk)

## PADDLING POOL SITE

**THE COMMUNITY** Council have applied for a Council grant on behalf of the local group who are taking this project forward. They are confident of securing a Local Development Committee grant to employ professional help to get the plan costed and provide information on site about what is proposed and how this is progressing.

There is provision in the Council's capital budget to enable the project to go ahead and there will be further consultation with local youngsters about the design of the part of the area intended for them. They know that their ambitions to have a full scale skateboard park or basketball court on this particular site are not realistic, given the constraints, but we are looking at other sites further afield. Cllr Maureen Child

## TOWN HALL

**Sat. March 9, 2.30-3.45pm:** Happy Gang Singalong (details on page 6).

**Fri. March 15, 7-10pm:** Lyndos Dance Show.

**Wed. April 3, 7.30-9pm:** Floral Art Club.

**Sat. April 6, 1-3.30pm:** Spring Fair.

**Sat. April 27, 10am-2pm:** Sale of nearly new children's clothes and equipment, for National Childbirth Trust.

**Wed. May 8, 7.30-9pm:** Floral Art Club.

**Tues. & Thurs, 6.30-9pm:** Kick Boxing.

**Every Tues. 1.30-3pm:** Keep Fit.

## PORTOBELLO CENTRE

**COLOUR CHOICES** - What does this mean? Come along to free sessions on the first Monday of each month - for info. and bookings call Maggie on 669 8275.

**STEAMIE CLUB** - A group for older people, Weds. 2.15-4pm.

**ART** and design for all ages, Weds. 6-8pm.

**YOGA FOR WOMEN**, Fri.. (free crèche).

**BELLY** dancing, Tues.

**CHILDREN'S FRENCH CLASSES**

**AND ART WORKSHOPS**, Sat. mornings;

**DRAMA** workshops for 5-8s and 9+, Mon.

## THE REPORTER REUNITES OLD FRIENDS

**WHEN SANDY** Sutherland, who lives in Bellfield Street, agreed to be our Porty Profile for December, he little imagined that it would lead to him meeting up again with a school friend from Golspie, not seen for about 40 years! That friend is Bob Glaister, who now lives little more than a stone's throw away in Seaview Terrace. 'Thanks to reading your article in the Reporter, he discovered my address and phoned me up and the rest, as they say, is history', said Sandy. 'Many thanks from both of us'.

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# HUGH MILLER BICENTENARY

**Hugh Miller** was born in Cromarty on 10th October 1802 and by the time of his death by suicide in Portobello on Christmas Eve 1856 had become one of Scotland's most influential men. 10,000 people attended his funeral at the Grange Cemetery.

He was a renowned geologist and published hugely popular works on the subject but also wrote extensively on folklore and social and political issues. Miller became the first editor of *The Witness* newspaper in 1840 and was a leading figure in the events that led to the Disruption in the Church of Scotland and founding of the Free Church in 1843. He bought the small mansion of Shrub Mount in Portobello and moved there in summer 1854. Although the house and large garden have been absorbed by late 19th century development remnants exist between numbers 76 to 82 Portobello High Street.

William Baird writes in the *Annals* that Hugh Miller was a well-known and popular personality in Portobello and a regular member of the congregation at the Free Church in Regent Street. The workshop and museum he built at the rear of his house contained many specimens from Joppa Quarry, Niddrie coal pits and the brick clays and he delivered a number of popular local lectures on his work to large and appreciative audiences. An exhibition and a number of events are being mounted in Portobello as part of the countrywide celebrations to honour Hugh Miller's legacy.

## Exhibition: **The Lives of Hugh Miller**

29th April 2002 to 2nd June 2002 at Portobello Library, 14 Rosefield Avenue (tel: 0131 529 - 5558)  
An illustrated exhibition about the many lives of Hugh Miller - Cromarty boy, travelling stonemason, self-taught geologist, author, journalist and Portobello resident. The exhibition will feature recent photographs, never seen in public before, of what remains of Shrub Mount, Miller's tragic last home.

## Talk: **"Hugh Miller's Scotland" by George Rosie**

Wednesday 1st May 2002, 7pm at St John's Church Hall, Brighton Place, Portobello.  
Portobello History Society is very pleased that journalist, broadcaster and author George Rosie has been able to accept its invitation to deliver this talk, which is open to the general public, as part of the Portobello programme of Miller events. Mr Rosie is the author of *Hugh Miller, Outrage and Order* (Mainstream Publishing, 1981).

## Talk: **"Great Geology! Gemstones and Giants" by Matt Dale**

Wednesday 8th May 2002, 2pm to 3pm at Portobello Library  
This is an illustrated talk for schoolchildren about fossils and dinosaurs. Matt Dale is the manager of Mr Wood's Fossil Shop in Edinburgh.  
Location: Portobello Library

## Talk: **"Stan Wood - the modern Hugh Miller?"**

Wednesday 8th May 2002, 8pm to 9pm at Portobello Library.  
Stan, like Hugh Miller, is a self-taught geologist, whose extraordinary knowledge and success in locating rare fossils has led to fame, fortune and friends all over the world Even if you know very little about geology you will be enthralled and entertained as he tells the story of his extraordinary career.  
Location: Portobello Library.

**PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER SMOUT, HISTORIOGRAPHER ROYAL IN SCOTLAND**, will unveil a commemorative plaque at the site of Shrub Mount in Portobello High Street.

Monday 13th May 2002, 11am at 82 Portobello High Street.  
Location: 82 Portobello High Street.

A **RECEPTION** for invited guests will follow the unveiling of a fossil sculpture, created by Alison Robinson, in Portobello Library. This sculpture will have a permanent position in a refurbished entrance to the library.

Monday 13th May 2002, 12.30pm at Portobello Library.  
Location: Portobello Library.

A **MAJOR HUGH MILLER EXHIBITION** opens at the Royal Museum, Chambers Street on 9th March and information about this and events in Cromarty and elsewhere in Scotland can be found on the Hugh Miller website [www.hughmiller.org](http://www.hughmiller.org).  
Archie Foley



*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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**OBITUARY**



**Mary Anderson Armistead**  
The death has taken place in Perth on 2nd January 2002, at the age of 103years, of Mary Anderson Gillon, loved wife of the late George Armistead. Her daughter Mrs. N Stevenson of Musselburgh has sent us the following note:

" Mary was the last family member of the Gillons (Fishmongers), 9 Brighton Place, Portobello, who lived and traded in Portobello for about 50 years. After being widowed in 1951 she assisted in the shop until her sister, Chrissie Gillon retired.

She remembered clearly all the details of young days spent in Portobello as well as her time as a conductress on the cable tramcars running from Joppa to the GPO during the First World War.

Mary lived with her son and his family for over 30 years and went with them when they moved to Perth. Even after losing her sight 5years ago she was a happy and contented lady and is sorely missed by all her family".  
N. Stevenson

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

Dear Porty Reporter,  
I was really pleased to read Cllr Maureen Child's article in your Autumn edition. Residents in Milton and Eastfield had successfully petitioned and lobbied to stop a mobile phone mast from being erected on Milton Road East. Local people are to be given their chance to have a say, which has to be a good thing.

There's a mast on the top of Porty High School though, and many pupils and parents don't even know it's there, let alone have their say about it. There could be serious health implications for people working near a mobile phone mast, and children are likely to be amongst the most vulnerable. Whilst any doubt about safety remains, it seems to me that on top of a school is the last place a phone mast should be. I'd be interested to hear what others think.

Cathie Rowan, by email

**Local History Fair - 11th May**

This has been arranged as part of Local History Week to raise the profile of local history in and around Edinburgh. The venue is the Thomas Morton Hall, Ferry Road, Leith and there is also a Local History Exhibition in the Community Room at the adjacent Leith Library. Admission is free.

**GARDENS WITH A DIFFERENCE**



Photo by Peter Ross

A garden that is clearly influenced by its close proximity to the sea. Beach-combing can provide interesting features.

**PRESERVING PORTOBELLO PILLARS**

**MANY WILL** remember the three ornate pillars - actually sections of ornamented chimney pots similar to ones at Dalmeny House - that used to stand in the garden of Argyle House in Hope Lane. They have been stored in pieces for many years in a yard at Granton having been entrusted to the care of the then Edinburgh District Council when the nursing home was extended.

Now a local committee is investigating the possibility of getting a grant to renovate them and bring them back to a suitable site in Portobello, although because of damage caused by years of wasteful neglect probably only two will return.  
Archie Foley



**PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS**

**THE GUEST SPEAKER** at our meeting in February was Gavin Booth whose talk certainly lived up to its title, *A Transport of Delight*. Gavin charted the development of public transport from the 19th century first in the national context and then brought it down to local level before ending with a display of his own slides showing some of the many buildings in Edinburgh that are examples of its transport archaeology.

At the time of writing we are looking forward to the meeting on 6th March, which is a Members' Night. This will be an opportunity for some to entertain and inform their fellows about topics of their own choosing and we know only what two of the topics are - *William McGonagall and Portobello Pier*. (Although unplanned, there is a connection between those two subjects). We will also be making final arrangements for our group visit(s) to Trinity House in Leith at this meeting and selling tickets for the Irving Berlin presentation on Wednesday 3rd April. This will be held in St Mark's Church and will begin at 7pm.

*Come on and Hear* is the story of the life and times of Irving Berlin told in words and music. Annabelle Meredith is the narrator and Robert Simans on piano, provides the music. There will be ample opportunity for audience participation and for those who don't know all the words to *Alexander's Ragtime Band, Easter Parade* etc song sheets will be provided. Tickets cost £3.00, which includes a buffet, and can be got at Portobello Library.

On 1st May we are back in St John's Church Hall for a very welcome return visit from author and journalist, George Rosie. The subject of his talk will be Hugh Miller and there are more details elsewhere on this. Please note that this meeting begins at 7pm and is open to the public. Admission is free but voluntary contributions are welcome.

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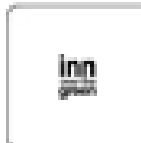
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Copy deadline for the next issue is **2nd May 2002.**

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or put them in the box provided at Portobello Library, or call Brenda Molony on 669 3466 or e-mail: [portobelloreporter@talk21.com](mailto:portobelloreporter@talk21.com)

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# NEW VOICE FOR ASIAN WOMEN

A NEW active citizenship group was launched on January 6 at the Portobello Muslim Centre. AWAZ, A Voice for Asian Women, currently has 15 enthusiastic members who are keen to learn about the Scottish Parliament and how to bring their particular concerns to its attention. The group is for women of all ages and backgrounds from all over Edinburgh and would welcome other Asian women to join them.

This group is one of five supported by the Scottish Parliament Project, which is part of Edinburgh University Settlement's 2nd Chance to Learn programme and is designed to work with groups of adults to stimulate community awareness and active involvement in Scottish politics.

A celebration cake was cut at the launch by Susan Deacon MSP, who said: 'I'm delighted to see a group like this coming together and encourage them to make their voices heard'. A cheque for £250 in support of the group was presented by Sue Garmany of the Royal Bank of Scotland.



Photo by Margaret Drysdale

## INFORMATION BOARDS UP-DATE

THE INFORMATION Board on the Promenade near Straiton Place has been removed for repair. It had to be removed in October because it was hanging loose from its stand due to attempted theft by anti-social persons who had clearly gone along with the necessary tools. It will be reinstated as soon as possible. If you see anyone interfering with any of these boards please do contact the police.

Meanwhile, look out for new bronze plaques on the Baptist Church and the Police Station, which were Portobello's town halls in the 19th century.

## CHRISTIAN AID EVENTS

THE 17TH ANNUAL BURNS SUPPER held on January 26 in Portobello Old Parish Church Hall raised £705 for Christian Aid, bringing the grand total over the years to £10,869. Rev. Neil Buchanan addressed the haggis with style, and Rev. Calum Macdougall gave a very humorous Immortal Memory.

Musical entertainment was provided by piper John Horn, and singers Maggie Hewitson and Kenneth Taylor, accompanied on piano by Martin Strachan.

A FAIR TRADE CAFÉ takes place on Saturday March 16, 11am-3pm, in St John's Church Hall, Brighton Place, during Fair Trade Fortnight. There will be a stall selling Fair Trade goods and a bakery stall using many of their ingredients. Proceeds from the coffees and bakery will be divided between SCIAF and Christian Aid.

you can contact the PORTOBELLO REPORTER to advertise or contribute, our email address is portobelloreporter@talk21.com

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## CHRISTMAS IN CROATIA



Craig with children from the Cetrva Osnova Primary School in Vukovar, Eastern Croatia. THE SIMPLE idea of filling a shoebox with gifts and wrapping it in Christmas paper appealed to 10,018 people in Edinburgh, Fife and Lothians as part of Operation Christmas Child's Annual Appeal to send 'Love in a Box' to children in Eastern Europe. Local man Craig Paul tells of his part in the operation:

'I travelled to Vukovar, Eastern Croatia, in December and helped distribute over 4,000 boxes to children in schools, hospitals and orphanages who had suffered as a result of war. With unemployment at 99%, they would be the only present many would receive. I was privileged to watch the children open their boxes and express their delight: a brand new toy to play with; gloves to keep their hands warm in the bitter months ahead; chocolate – normally only seen on the black market and never tasted; a book and fountain pen to practise their school work with pride.

Many would share or swap an item with a friend. One teenage boy rushed over to his girlfriend in class and offered her his chocolates – he had never before been able to give her a gift. A football scarf would bring cheers from the boys who idolise our western teams.

In the orphanage, one boy showed me a photo of the person who had sent him a box last year. The kind stranger was his 'family' and gave him hope'.

Over a million boxes were collected in the UK and distributed to such children at Christmas 2001. To take part in the 2002 project later this year, please send a S.A.E to Craig Paul, 9 Meadowfield Court, EH8 7NA or call 07932 663 118 or email to craigpaul1@hotmail.com

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## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

A SHARP-EYED Reporter reader came across the following entry in a music reference book about a one-time local band: 'The Valves, formed in Portobello in 1977 by Dee Robot, G Dair, Ronnie MacKinnon and Gordon Scott – This quirky fun-punk/rock act were the first band to have a record – the double-sided 'Robot Love' & 'For Adolfs Only' - issued on Bruce Findlay's 'Zoom' label (he subsequently signed 'Simple Minds'). The Valves

... managed to squeeze out another 45 before the year was out, namely 'Tarzan of the Kings Road' & 'Ain't no Surf in Portobello'. However, it took eighteen months to deliver a third 'Don't mean nothin' at all', although by this time the punk/new wave scene had gone down the tubes'. Where are they now?

(From: *The Great Alternative and Indie Discography* by Martin C. Strong, Canongate Books, 1999 Canongate Books, 1999).

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### YOUNG CHEFS' MASTER MENUS



Photo by Peter Ross

L-R Margaret Ritchie, Calum McKean, Christiane Kelegher, Chloe Ponton & John Coughlin. **THIS YEAR'S** S2 Masterchef competition at Holy Rood High School was won by Christiane Kelegher with her 'Hook, line and sinker' menu. John Coughlin, assistant manager of St Mirren FC, and Margaret Ritchie, chair of the Holy Rood Association, judged the menus prepared by the finalists, four boys and four girls.

Second place went to Chloe Ponton and third was Calum McKean. Organiser of the event Deborah Wilson said: 'We have had more pupils apply for the competition than in previous years and the standards are very, very high'. The judges were 'immensely impressed' by their efforts. 'I was impressed by the number of guys taking part', said John Coughlin, who clearly enjoyed the tasting.

The winning menu was a fish casserole with prawns and smoked haddock, followed by Christiane's speciality Golden Steam Pudding. 'My family is absolutely mental for my steam pudding', she told *The Reporter*. P.R.

### LIBRARY COMPETITION

## 'NO POLLY'S, PLEASE!'

**YOUNGER CHILDREN** who visit Portobello Library, know that Jim's parrot is happy, healthy, and doing very well living under the counter – but nobody knows what to call him/her! Please pick a name – or he/she will think we don't care!

Children (under 9's) can hand in their suggestion for a name at the library, to win a very special prize – a unique Parrot T-shirt.

The Competition starts on Easter Weekend, and the winner will be chosen at the end of the Easter School Holiday, and notified by phone or post. J.C.



Photo by Peter Ross

## SUNDAY SCHOOL'S HAPPY GANG

**FOR OVER** a year now the older children of St James' Parish Church Sunday School have run a very successful Fairtrade stall in the hall on the last Sunday of each month after the service. They and the teachers have also made craft/food items for sale.

Fairtrade ensures that the people in the developing world who produce crops get a fair return. It also supports a number of projects to help specific families and children and, to raise funds for such projects, the Sunday School children are hosting a Happy Gang Show at Portobello Town Hall on Saturday March 9. Please give them your support.

**THE HAPPY GANG LITTLE RED WAGON SINGALONG** will be at Portobello Town Hall on Saturday March 9, 2.30-3.45pm, tickets are £4.50 from the Just World Shop, Kitcheners Deli, Oop! Café or St James' Church Hall, Sundays, 11am-12.30. Or call Julie on 669 3564 or Elizabeth 258 5076.

## ON THE PORTOBELLO TRAIL

**ON JANUARY 30th**, P6C went on a Victorian trail round Portobello. It took an hour and 40 minutes. The first thing we did was look at how old our school is. It was built in 1908.

The Tower was and still is a big tower. It was shaped like an octagon. It was built before the Victorian times. There was a Victorian extension though. The Tower was originally built as a summer house for tourists and the extension was cleaned up and someone lives there now.

After that we went to the bottle kilns and we read the information and sketched a bit of it. It told us how the kilns worked and what type of people it needed to keep it running smoothly. We were told there used to be a harbour round about Harbour Place.

Then we went to Sir Harry Lauder's house to see when he was born. He was born in 1870 at No.3 Bridge Street. Harry grew up to be a comedian – a very famous one at that.

When we got to Adelphi Place we looked at the brick workers houses. Funny all the houses were made out of brick. The managers made them out of bricks that the factory made, then they supplied them to the workers.

Rosefield Avenue was where the middle class people lived. We saw a garden which is now part of a big park.

I liked this trip very much and I would like to do something like this again. Jamie Burns, P6C Towerbank Primary School



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[www.greenchoices.org](http://www.greenchoices.org)

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## AN EVEN BETTER GO4IT

### PROMISED

**IN DISCUSSIONS** I have had with youngsters of all ages in Magdalene and Portobello, they make the argument very strongly that they need constructive, challenging activities for their free time that don't cost them and their parents an arm and a leg. In modern times, and in Edinburgh's urban environment, we can no longer have free- ranging youngsters testing their limits out of sight and sound of intolerant adults or under the watchful eye of caring ones. The bulk of that is the responsibility of parents and carers, but the whole community also has a role in raising everyone's children.

This year there will be an extensive programme of Easter and summer holiday activities for Edinburgh's youngsters, from S1 upwards, building on last year's highly successful GO4IT summer programme; and there will also be a PLAY4IT summer programme for Primary 4-7 children. Information leaflets will be available at schools, libraries, community centres and some cafes. Cllr Maureen Child

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# BIRD WATCHING AT JOPPA ROCKS



Photo by Peter Ross

RSPB SCOTLAND held a free birdwatching session at Joppa Rocks on Sunday February 10 to introduce us to the wildlife of the Firth of Forth - 'a magnificent spectacle right on our doorstep' as the publicity leaflet rightly said. They provided telescopes, binoculars and information, and RSPB warden Pete Gordon was pleased that, in the first hour-and-a-half, despite doubtful weather, about 50 people took advantage of the chance to see eider ducks, longtail ducks, velvet scoters, purple sandpipers, oyster catchers and grebe - great crested, Slavonian, and red-neck.

Around 25 different species of seabird can be seen here throughout the year and one that always catches people's attention is the cormorant, that large black bird that perches on the groynes and poles with its wings outstretched.

## BBs CAR BOOT SALES

THE 41st Edinburgh Boys' Brigade Company are returning to the Dordogne this year for their annual camp and are having two car boot sales to raise funds on:

- Saturday 27th April 2002  
10am - 12 noon  
Royal High Primary School, Northfield Broadway
- Saturday 4th May 2002  
10am - 12 noon  
Royal High Primary School, Northfield Broadway.

Cars £8 entry: arrive for 9.30am. Refreshments available.

The proceeds will be used to reduce the cost of camp for each boy.

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**ALTHOUGH MULCHING** around shrubs and plants can be carried out at any time of the year, it does most good in late spring. Fork or hoe the ground before spreading the mulch. If you have acid loving plants in your garden, such as rhododendrons or azaleas, avoid using spent mushroom compost. Although high in organic matter, it also contains lime, which will cause severe damage to these plants.

To create a pleasing effect when planning a flowerbed or border, just follow two simple rules. First, put most of your tall plants at the back of the borders or in the centre of island beds; this will offset smaller plants at the front. Don't be too rigid though; a couple of taller plants amongst the small ones can give a striking focus and add extra depth.

Second, always group an odd number of plants together; groups of three, five or seven will give a much more natural effect than two, four or six.

Gardens can look pretty dull at this time of year, so pop in some primroses now to brighten up your borders and, again, don't be too rigid in your design.

Have a good gardening season.

**tips from the potting shed**



with Bill Thomson

## CITY TEAMS THROUGH TO CUP FINALS

**PORTOBELLO-BASED** City of Edinburgh Basketball Club are through to four Scottish cup finals at Meadowbank on March 23 and 24, after a thrilling series of semi-finals, four of which were played at Portobello High School.

A packed Games Hall witnessed two splendid victories when coach Danny Costello's Edinburgh Kings men defeated Troon Tornados 75-67, in a repeat of last year's final, in revenge for a league defeat the previous weekend; then the City women, coached by Graham Gunn, upset the favourites St Mirren 66-55 to reverse the results of both league encounters this season. The men will meet St Mirren in the final and the women their local rivals Polonia Phoenix.

It might have been three on the day as the cadette (under-16) women put up a terrific fight to pull back to 42-42 against St Mirren only to go down 47-43 to bigger and older opponents.

Coach Brian Findlay's junior women travelled to Ayr to become the third cup final team, and the next Saturday the under-21 men qualified to meet Troon by beating Falkirk Fury 94-57. S.S.

# PORTOBELLO PROMETHON

**THE 2002 ANNUAL PORTOBELLO Promethon** is a 4 mile race, under Scottish Athletics rules, run along Portobello Promenade, from the Dog and Cat Home at Seafield to Joppa Rocks and back. This year's race, the 16th, attracted 201 entrants who ran in good conditions for the time of year - dry and frosty with just a light wind. The proceeds of the event, just over £600, were this year donated to Maggie's Cancer Care Centre at the Western General Hospital.



Photo by Peter Ross

Results: Men: 1, Phil Mowbray, Hunters Bog T, 19.25; 2, Colin Meek (Vet), Lothian RC, 19.44; 3, John Ross (V), Mizuno RC, 20.04. Women: 1, Janette Stevenson (SV), Falkirk Vic.H, 23.34; 2, Sharon Ramage (V), City of Ed, 24.51; 3, Susan Atkinson, EZ Carnegie, 25.04.

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## HOPE AT LAST FOR TENNIS COURTS

**THE COMMITTEE** is optimistic that, at long last, funding can be found to resurface the courts, repair the fencing and improve the landscaping of the site, but final details have still to be put in place.

It is also hoped that coaching will be on offer and negotiations are underway with the Scottish Lawn Tennis Association on this front. Members will be kept in touch by newsletter, and anyone wishing to join should look out for notices locally soon.

Cllr Maureen Child said: 'I am delighted that the Council has secured a substantial sum to match the heroic fundraising efforts of the local community and enable the courts to be resurfaced this year. The tennis courts committee are to be warmly congratulated and supported by all of us in their efforts to retain this facility for everyone to enjoy, keep healthy and develop their sporting skills'. M.T.