

The Portobello REPORTER

Quarterly: Spring 2004
Delivered in and around Portobello; circulation 12,500

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The independent voice of Portobello

Your Community Newspaper produced by local people.

CAMPAIGN HOTS UP

Party refuses to be gagged

THE campaign against the planning application to build a superstore on the former Scottish Power site is gathering momentum. Around 100 people staged a protest at the site on Tuesday 17th February, including Mark Ballard, Green Party MSP for the Lothians, who said: "This campaign deserves a fair hearing and I'm hoping the Council will be as concerned as I am that so many people are opposed to this development".

A petition supporting the campaign has been signed by 3,000 local people, and the Portobello On Line forum poll showed 92% against the development. Hundreds have also written or e-mailed to members of the Council Planning Committee voicing their misgivings.

The volume of objections appears to have struck a discordant note with some members, however. A reply received by one objector from Councillor Trevor Davies, the Committee Chairperson, reads: "... I would advise you, however, that there is just a possibility that by putting so much pressure on our members you might alienate people from your cause. It is worth thinking about- and I leave the matter entirely with you".

Chairperson of the Campaign Against the Superstore (CATS) Dickie Alexander stated: "The inference to be drawn here is that, by vigorously protesting to councillors, they may respond negatively and our case may be weakened. Do our elected members knock back or discount objections because they are annoyed by the volume of letters and e-mails they receive from objectors? Do they, when upset by democratic outcry, allow factors other than strict planning rules to influence their decisions? There is an important principle



at stake here".

Baileyfield Road resident Anne Ward commented: "Here we are facing a 24-hour nightmare at the foot of our gardens and we get this e-mail which is tantamount to telling us to shut up or else. We are exercising our democratic rights in numbers that put the turnout at the last local elections to shame. Mr Davies should come down here, if he knows the way, to see how democracy works".

The Reporter understands that CATS has written to Tom Aitchison, the Council Chief Executive, asking him to comment on the requirement for objectivity and disinterest on the part of the Planning Committee in the light of Councillor Davies'

.....
Meanwhile, on 22nd December, objectors were invited to review the Retail Impact Assessment (104 pages) and the Traffic Impact Study

(42 pages). Comments had to be made by 16th January and those of a more cynical nature may have felt that this time-span covered one of the busiest times of the year, and allowed people little time for reading complex, lengthy documents.

One notable omission from the Traffic Study was the effect that any increased traffic would have on the High Street/ Bath Street/ Brighton Place junction and the applicants were asked to rectify this. Unsurprisingly, both documents, which were commissioned by the developers, were in favour of the development, suggesting that it would enhance Portobello and be part of it. John Stewart, Chairman of Portobello Amenity Society, disagrees: "The superstore plan is totally out of scale for the area and, if passed, the life-blood would be sucked out of the community", he said.

A further application has been lodged to demolish the Jet

Garage, landscape the site and create another 30 parking spaces for the superstore. This would provide 92 more spaces than a development of this size would normally be allocated. A proposal to move bus stops to near the Kwik-Fit site was also made, which would result in further traffic congestion at the Fishwives Causeway junction.

The campaign is receiving support from many quarters. It is hoped that the due process of democracy will be allowed to proceed and that the Planning Committee will take their decision based on the case presented to them.

(The developers, Duddingston House Properties, were recently granted permission for another controversial retail outlet at Holy Corner, and have applied for permission to install a pub/restaurant at the Odeon Cinema in Clerk Street).

Margaret Munro

PASSPORT TO PORTOBELLO?

Superstore Proposal Highlights Lack of Democracy in Planning Procedure.

SHOULD we be building barricades and declaring Portobello an independent state? Many local residents think we may have to.

The proposal to build a superstore on the former Scottish Power site has caused many people to seriously question the degree of democracy in the present planning procedure. The massive block of flats being built on the Promenade at the foot of Bath Street is a strong case in point. Refused twice by the Council, the developer appealed to the Secretary of State and won, despite the building being clearly contrary to the Local Plan and the Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

At present, only applicants or developers can appeal against a planning decision if their application is refused. Individuals or communities can't appeal if an application contrary to the local good is granted, and many feel there is a pressing need for a Third Party Right of Appeal. The Scottish Executive is aware of this imbalance and is reviewing planning procedures but, for Portobello High Street, any changes will be far too late, should the superstore application be granted.

Several years ago, after the open-air pool was demolished, the opportunity arose to redevelop the site for the benefit of the whole of Portobello. Public meetings were held and the overwhelming view was for a multi-purpose sports centre. - Were local views listened to? The Council instead decided to build an indoor bowling centre, now often closed during the summer. This was a wasted opportunity for a development in this prime seafront location that would benefit both residents and visitors. We can't let the same happen to the Scottish Power site.

The Council recently decided to ban new retail development on the outskirts of Edinburgh, the only way that Princes Street can be regenerated, they argue. Portobello High Street also needs regenerating. It is Portobello's Princes Street and the supermarket proposal should be refused for the same reason. Indeed, should the Council grant the application, the word 'hypocritical' would surely come to mind. It must listen to what local people want and planning procedures must be made far more democratic.

So, next time you see people erecting barriers, stop and look carefully. It could be local people, fed up with the injustices of the present planning system, taking democracy into their own hands.

John M. Stewart,
Portobello Amenity Society &
Portobello Community Council

AND NOW SOME GOOD NEWS

JOPPA resident Joyce Freeman was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1988, and in our Winter 2000 issue we reported that, although her neurologist believed that she would benefit from deep brain stimulation treatment, there was no money available even for tests to be carried out. Characteristically, Joyce did not give up, however, and the good news now is that NHS funding became available last year, and in November she underwent two operations at the Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. The first was to implant neuro-stimulators in her brain and the second was to wire these up to an electrical pulse generator implanted in her abdomen.



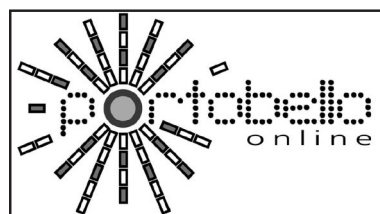
Photo by Peter Ross

The results are amazing. Before the operations, Joyce suffered from severe shaking in her right arm and leg, shaky speech and poor balance, and these are all greatly improved. She can do lots of things now that had not been possible for a long time, like going shopping in the city and making her own bread. "I wouldn't trust myself with a tray of my best china", Joyce says, "but my quality of life is enormously improved".

A COUNCILLOR'S ROLE IN PLANNING

SOME people feel that their Councillor should comment on planning applications before they go to Committee, but the Code of Conduct for Local Elected Members is explicit, as Councillor Maureen Child explains: "As a member of the Council's Planning Committee, which is responsible for setting policy and determining applications, I can listen to my constituents, read letters, and advise on the process and planning history. But if I were to indicate any bias one way or another, I would have to declare an interest and lose the right to vote at Committee".

Councillor Lawrence Marshall made the decision to speak publicly against the proposal, however, as we reported last autumn. "By making these comments I have forfeited my right to vote at Committee, although I can still speak to it", he said, "but I am thereby freed to speak out [beforehand] on behalf of Portobello on this very important matter".



Are you FOR or AGAINST the superstore? You still have

the opportunity to register your vote in the 'Portobello Online' poll, which has been extended until the end of March. Vote now at www.portobello-edinburgh.org.uk and contribute to the ongoing debate on this topic in our popular discussion forum.

PORTY PROFILE No. 16
MILLIE GRAY

ALTHOUGH storyteller and writer Millie and husband Bob have enjoyed living in Portobello for nearly 30 years she considers herself very much a Leither and the stories that she tells come from what she heard, observed and absorbed growing up there. She recollects that when they were re-housed to Restalrig from the condemned single end into which she was born her mother thought the new house was palatial: "We had four running water taps in the kitchen and a lavatory all to ourselves."



Millie left Norton Park Secondary School at 15, went to work in Leith and got married. The unexpected death of her husband suddenly left her with two small children to bring up on her own. "I had to get myself educated in order to rear them, so I sat three Highers at the age of 35 and later when I was working in Edinburgh Council I got a professional qualification." It was when she was working in the Police Department that she met and married Bob.

In 1992 she seemed to be dealt another blow when illness forced her to take early retirement. However, for Millie this was the opportunity to do what she had always wanted to do – write!

She began writing plays and now has had six published and five have been performed at the Netherbow Arts Centre. That was where she met Dr Donald Smith, who encouraged her along the path of storytelling, which now takes up most of her time, and her collaborator, Liz Hare, who has directed all her plays. She and Liz are the leaders of an exciting project called "Leith and Now" that aims to fuse the recollections and thoughts of elderly folk with contributions from school children that give a contemporary view on the community. It is supported by a grant from the Scottish Arts Council to the Citadel Arts Group founded by Liz and Millie to promote older people's drama work and storytelling. She finds working with older people very rewarding but she also entertains the children at Rachel House Hospice twice a month.

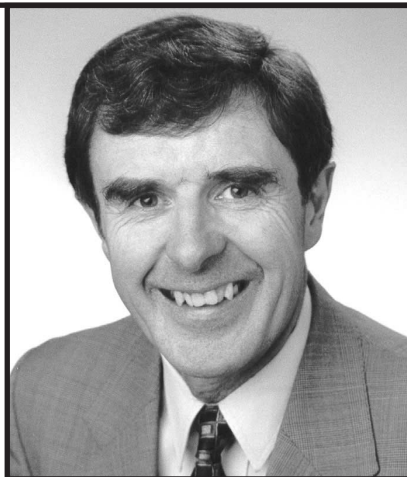
When she is not giving talks, writing, rehearsing and, in her own words, "occasionally lifting a duster" she likes to get away to the peace of Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides.

AF

GAVIN STRANG, MP is available to meet constituents on the second Friday of the month at

YWCA,
198 Restalrig Road South
between 11.00am and noon
and

PORTOBELLO TOWN HALL between 7.30pm and 8.30pm.



He is also available on the last Saturday of the month at
BRUNTON HALL between 9am and 10am and
COMMUNITY CENTRE, 63 Niddrie Mains Terrace
between 10.30am and 11.30am

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

NEW SIGNS AT BRUNSTANE BURN

MEMBERS of Portobello Rotary Club and ScotWays (the Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society) have joined forces to provide four new signs at the junction of the Brunstane Burn path and the path linking Milton Road East, Brunstane Mill and the National Trust for Scotland's property at Newhailes. The signs all bear the Rotary International 'cogged wheel' logo, and the Newhailes sign also bears the NTS 'crowned thistle' logo.



The 'topping out' ceremony was held at Brunstane Mill on 4th December, attended by Rotary President Will Farrell and fellow Rotarians Fred Prain and Bill Thomson, plus NTS Ranger Dan Watson, and Scotways' Secretary Tom Titterton and Field Officer Alistair Lawson.

POLICE WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

THE East Edinburgh Junior Crime Prevention Panel is going strong and members have some good ideas for the coming year, including another trip to the Police College at Tulliallan, to learn about training of recruits. They are also to donate a trophy or shield to be played for annually by the Junior section of the Jessfield Bowling Club, Adelphi Grove. Anyone interested in joining the Panel or finding out more can call on PC Kenny Owen or PC Paul Lundberg at the Portobello Police Station or telephone 669 0581.

Portobello Police, the Community Safety Department and other agencies have been developing Problem Solving Packages to examine ways of working with and for our young people. This is a difficult area, with suitable premises being a major headache, but for some months now, Brian Greatorex of CEC Community Education has been running various ventures from the Adelphi Place Community Centre. He has significantly increased the number of interested young people, though more are always welcome, likewise any budding adult volunteers.

An officer from Portobello has attended a Football Coaches Course, organised and accredited by the SFA. This will enable him to be involved with any clubs or organisations that may wish to use his 'newly honed skills' in the coaching of players between the ages of 5 and 18 years.

Insp. Bob Wardrop

PETROL DRIVEN 'GO-PEDS' AND THE LAW

THERE has been a significant increase in the number of Go-Peds in the Portobello area and there appears to be some confusion about where they stand in terms of the Road Traffic Law and their use on public roads.

A petrol driven Go-Ped is a micro-scooter and is a motor vehicle within the definition of the Road Traffic Act. Users require a driving licence, third party insurance and road tax disc; they must also be 16 years of age or over and wear protective headgear. Anyone found using a Go-Ped on the roadway without meeting these criteria is likely to be cautioned and charged with numerous road traffic offences

and risks the confiscation of the machine. Sadly this has happened on one occasion, and the parent of the teenager concerned said she was unaware of the legal requirements and felt that these had not been fully explained.

It should be emphasized that the main concern of the police is the safety of the young people using these machines, other children playing in the streets, pedestrians and road users. Further information can be obtained from Sergeant Kenny Brown at Portobello Police Station on 669 0581, who is pleased to answer any questions.

Insp. Bob Wardrop

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NEWS IN BRIEF

ONE-TICKET TRAVEL: You can now travel anywhere in Edinburgh and the Lothians on most buses and some trains, with just one ticket, taking as many journeys as you like. For more information call 225 3858 or visit www.one-ticket.co.uk

CROSSRAIL: The new Edinburgh Park station was officially opened by Jack McConnell on 8 December, marking the completion of Edinburgh Crossrail, which links passenger services between Brunstane and Newcraighall to Dunblane and Bathgate. There is also a bus link from Edinburgh Park to the airport, service 35, operating every 15-20 minutes. For times call 555 6363.

ENVIRONMENTAL WARDEN SERVICE: If you have concerns about abandoned cars, dog fouling, littering or fly-tipping, the people to contact are the Council's local environmental wardens. Email them at env.wardens@edinburgh.gov.uk (Tel. 200 2000), or contact Donald Clark, one of the East Environmental Wardens at donald.clark@edinburgh.gov.uk (Tel. 669 1389).

DOG FOULING FINES: Four local dog owners have recently received spot fines of £40, under the new Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act, for not cleaning up after their pet. They were caught on mobile cameras on the Promenade by Environmental Wardens.

CHRISTIAN PATH RESURFACED: A layer of crushed stone was laid on the path in January by volunteers from the cycling organisation 'Spokes', local residents and a work squad of students from Edinburgh University, known as 'the Dirty Weekendens'.

This will be greatly appreciated by the cyclists and Portobello High School pupils who use the path daily.

KEEP EDINBURGH GROWING: 'Edinburgh in Bloom' is a gardening competition run by the City Council for residents, businesses or community groups, to promote planting, cleanliness, sustainability and community involvement. Whether you have hanging baskets, a tiny front garden, an allotment, or help on a community garden, you have a chance to win one of the prizes sponsored by Dobbies Garden World.

Judging will take place in July. To enter, call 469 5196, fill in the on-line form on www.edinburgh.gov.uk/keepedinburghgrowing or e-mail karen.hay@edinburgh.gov.uk for an entry form and list of categories.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY: B&Q at Kinnaird Park are holding a free workshop on Sunday 28th March at 2.30pm, covering insulation, draught-proofing, heating and lighting for anyone interested in the money-saving benefits of energy efficiency measures. To book a place, call the Warmborough Unit on 538 7946.

NEW SPENDING PLANS: Milton and Portobello wards will share in the £22.2 million the Council will spend on projects in its capital programme over the next three years. Portobello Library is soon to be upgraded and work on disabled access and toilets at Portobello Town Hall will start during March. The centre of Portobello will get new lighting and pavements, and funding for the shop-front improvement scheme will continue. Promenade improvements will also continue, including re-landscaping of the John Street paddling pool site.

SAFETY IN PORTOBELLO CEMETERY: Some gravestones in the Cemetery are toppling over, so the Council plans to test them all for stability. Work has started, but anyone who has a relative or friend buried there may still be able to make an appointment to be present when the stone is tested. Call George Bell in bereavement services on 664 2891 for more details.

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We operate an organic veg-box scheme, sell on homemade or home-grown organic produce as available, free-range eggs and food from Green City (workers co-op), and organic bread.

We provide an outlet for local artists to show or sell their work, which includes CDs by local musicians. We provide a board for local poets to make their work available and have produced a booklet of some of these poems.

The exchange is staffed by volunteers, some of whom are recovering from mental health problems, have disabilities or are making difficult life changes. Some are referred, some are shop customers, but all work together to support each other.

We have many more strands to our aims, and are seeking more Trustees to join the Board to help us achieve them. If interested, please visit us at 320 Portobello High Street, phone 657 2257/ mob. 07952 608 513, or e-mail ever.green@blueyonder.co.uk

Janet Fenton

PARENT PARKING A DANGER TO ALL

ANYONE who drives along Duddingston Road at school opening and closing times will be aware of the dangerous situation created by those parents who park wherever they please, even on the yellow hatchings, for which they can be charged with a traffic offence.

This issue has been discussed at recent School Board meetings at Portobello High. Headteacher David Wright says: "Some parents feel the need to park as close to their children's school as possible, narrowing the road for other vehicles and even blocking the cycle ways. Those stopping on the other side also expose their children to the dangers of crossing a congested road. I regularly remind pupils about road safety at assemblies and in my next communication to parents I will be asking them to drop their children well away from the school. I will also advise that pupils should walk, cycle or get public transport to school instead".

St John's Primary Headteacher, Ted Brack, has repeatedly appealed to parents to park legally and safely and letters have also been sent by the Police, but a small number continue to double-park or park on double yellow lines. Even the Pupil Council has discussed the problem and Catherine Holmes makes this appeal on their behalf: "We think it is wrong that those parents who park unsafely will not listen to Mr Brack or the Police. So please, if you are one of those, take the time to find a safe parking space and keep the children of St John's happy and safe!"

Things should improve soon, however, as the Council is to paint single yellow lines outside all schools in the city. Then the traffic wardens will be out in force, giving out tickets.

B.M.

PORTOBELLO THE NEW HOLLYWOOD?

'BINGO' the latest film by Graham Kitchener which was shot in Portobello in July 2003, is nearing the end of its post-production and should be released sometime in April. The 15 minute short film is due to be seen on the festival circuit shortly after and will hopefully be shown at the next POD event.

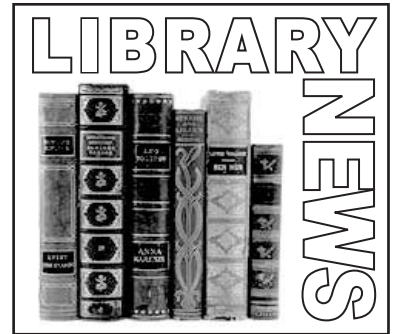
Those who have kept up to date with its progress will be pleased to hear that Graham met Kenneth Branagh in London on 12th February, as a result of sending him the script in November 2002.

Graham is very encouraged that Kenneth Branagh is now interested in seeing the script for a new feature film being worked on at present, and has offered his help in moving the project forward.

There is also to be a meeting in Los Angeles in April with producers from Paramount Pictures. So things are starting to happen, and it all started here, in our wee town of Portobello.

The Portobello Reporter is produced by a group of volunteers, with contributions in this issue from 37 members of the community. If you have a story to tell or an event to publicise contact the editor on 669 3466 or email us at portobelloreporter@talk21.com

REFURBISHMENT PLANS: It is 41 years since the Library opened in Rosefield Avenue; since then it has been well used and loved by Portobello folk, but is starting to look in need of repair. Plans are now available for the proposed improvements, which include disabled access, automatic doors, new public/disabled toilets, and a platform-lift to the first floor. The plans also include a new position for the Junior library, a Teenage section, an increased area for books and new shelving. To see the plans, please ask at the counter; there is an ideas/comments jotter, and we have already had several useful ideas, including coat hooks in the library, coffee, more soft seating and a place for mums and toddlers to read together. We look forward to a new-looking library by the end of the year, and then another 41 years of good looks at least!



WEEKEND OPENING: Many people find it difficult to get to the library during the week, so the good news is that Portobello Library will open on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from early summer. We think these afternoons will be very busy and additional books have been bought in preparation. It is quite a change for those of us who work in the library, too, so please come along and give us your moral support!

OUR BOOK GROUP meets on the first Tuesday of each month from 6.30 - 8pm, with informal discussion, plus tea or coffee. Recent titles have included *Chocolat* by Joanne Harris, and *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali. For April, it's Ian Rankin v Quintin Jardine, and the book for May is *Stone Diaries* by Carole Shields. All books are available from the library and new members are very welcome. (For reviews of books read by several Edinburgh groups, visit www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libraries and click on Reading Sphere).

A recently formed teenage group meets on the first Monday of each month from 4-5pm. Their reading has included *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli and *Mortal Engines* by Philip Reeve. Come along for food and fun!

THE FESTIVAL of Scottish Writing runs from 15th to 29th May. Annie Bell has been busy organising this, including our local event - Alexis Scott's Creative Writing Workshop on Saturday 15th May from 10-12.30. All welcome - please ask for details. The first ever Edinburgh Readers' Day will be held at MacDonald Road Library on Saturday 29th May, with Readers' Groups and Book Groups taking part, as well as established authors. Details and tickets will be available at local libraries for both events.

There are several important documents for Public Consultation in the library at present, including the plans for the Edinburgh Tramline and the Congestion Charge. If you would like to see these, we are open Monday to Thursday 10am to 8pm, Friday 10am to 5pm, and Saturday 9am to 1pm.

Joyce Campbell

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BURGH CHAMBERS TO BAPTIST CHURCH AND BEYOND

THE imminent conversion of the major part of the Portobello Baptist Church building into a block of flats is just one more change of use in the history of this landmark High Street property.

It was built primarily to be the Burgh Chambers and Town Hall for Portobello Council, but was designed also to fill the need of a suitable hall for public entertainment. Thanks to the researches of the late George Baird, as compiled in that invaluable work *Places of Entertainment in Edinburgh* and the Press Cuttings files in the library, we have information about some of the attractions that were mounted for the enjoyment of the folk of Portobello. Once again, it is exceedingly frustrating not to have access to the archive copies of the *Portobello Advertiser* of the period. (These are held in the British Newspaper Library in London.)

The hall was opened on 20th July 1863 with speeches and a dinner and the first public performance in it was a concert by the Edina Quartet on 25th July. *The Scotsman* newspaper reported that a well-selected programme was received with repeated rounds of applause from a crowded



Photo by Celia Butterworth

audience. On 22nd and 24th October 1864 there were appearances from the celebrated Scottish Vocalist Mr Kennedy. A press cutting of a 1930s article recalled performers and spectacles of the 1870s including concerts put on by the local temperance society. These

sometimes had a riveting climax: - "Occasionally variety was added to these gatherings by a half-hour's display of magic lantern slides. The tit-bit of each of these displays was a mechanical slide showing a man lying in bed and rats crawling over the bedclothes and disappearing into his

open mouth."

The writer reports that the celebrated Tom Thumb drew large crowds for two nights in the 1870s and if this was General Tom Thumb, P. T. Barnum's star attraction, it was certainly a coup for the hall's owners. By that time Charles Edward Stratton, to give him his real name, had become the toast of America and Europe, had met Queen Victoria and was extremely wealthy. He had married and lived in a large house in a fashionable area of New York, so on the face of it a two-night booking in Portobello seems unlikely. Exotic and unusual attractions seemed to have been popular as full houses were reported for appearances by The Aztecs and a troupe of Zulu warriors.

George Baird's researches showed that by 1901 the Town Hall had added the magic of moving pictures to its programmes of live entertainment. On 7th March 1913 it opened as a fully-fledged picture house named the Cinema Theatre, but it is a bit unclear how long it operated as such until the building was bought by Portobello Baptist Church in 1919.

Archie Foley

WANTED

PORTOBELLO History Society urgently wants photographs taken in and around work places in Portobello such as the Bottle Works, Potteries, Portobello Laundry and many others. These will be carefully handled, copied and returned where required. If possible photographs should be identified and dated. Contact 669 0184

FOUND!



THIS old photograph, which may have sentimental value for its owner, was found on the pavement at the corner of the High Street and Rosefield Avenue. It probably dates from WW2 as the windowpanes of the building behind the girl are taped up with brown sticky paper. Contact: 669 1918 (evenings)

The deadline for your contributions to the Winter Issue of *The Portobello Reporter* is **10th MAY 2004**

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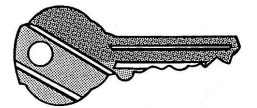
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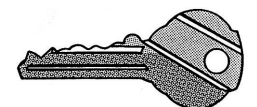
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OPEN AIR POOL

THE history society has been given some paper items salvaged when the pool was demolished following its closure. Three programmes for galas in 1946 and 1948, a small poster for the end of season Illuminated Gala in September 1948, a publicity photoprint for acrobatic high diver Roy Fransen with two copy letters referring to his appearances booked for July 1962, and a diary of events in Edinburgh swimming baths for that year are just the remnants of what must have been a mass of historical material heedlessly destroyed.



The pool opened on Saturday 19th May 1962 and last minute preparations began with the testing of the life saving equipment from the previous Monday to Thursday. The diary note for Wednesday 16th May records: "Pool in a shocking state with pebbles and sand." However, it did open but the temperature on the day was only 57 degrees, and it was raining. The first boy in the water was Allan Ashton aged 12 who "was at the Pool from 5 pm Friday." Fourteen-year-old Alison Lang took the honour of being first girl in the water, but she had waited only from 5 am on Saturday morning. Both of them would have been rewarded with a free season ticket.

The weather reports in the diary are mixed, as one would expect, and one or two events had to be cancelled due to rain. Friday 8th June, however, was exceptional, "4,000 admissions at Pool - very warm, 80 degrees, best Friday for years." A Gala appearance by Brian Phelps, Commonwealth Games Diving Champion, is noted on 14th July, but without comment.

Roy Fransen's Sensational Dive of Death in which he would be "set alight in a blaze of inflammable spirit and dive head first from a 70 feet tower into a small tank of burning oil at 55 M.P.H." was part of a Seaside Spectacular that included Scotland's Seaside Queen Contest, a Festival of Fashion and Aquatic thrills and comedy. The diary entries suggest that it promised more than was delivered: 21st July, "Cancelled (Rain)"; 28th July, "Poor Show - 423 paid"; 4th August, "Not so Good - 722 paid".

The diary records the closure for the season on Saturday 8th September but the writer does not give any indication as to whether or not it was a successful one. As noted earlier, this was just a record of events to be held in baths across Edinburgh and we have to be grateful for the extra tit-bits of information that we are given.

AF

POWER STATION



THE History Society was very pleased to be given this photograph showing workers at Portobello Power Station. Two members of this group from May 1933 have been identified. Geordie Foley is the man with the walrus moustache in the third row from the front and Michael McTernan is on his right.

BOOK REVIEW: 'NEED A BODY CRY'

FIVE generations of the family into which Dorothy Cavaye was born have lived in Portobello and she is the daughter of Robert 'Bertie' Cavaye and niece of the late Stanley Cavaye. She now lives in South Lanarkshire, having left her last address here in St Mary's Place almost 30 years ago, but always kept an interest in her family's history and the origin of its unusual name. In this book she traces the story of her family to Jamaica in the late 18th century and William Cathcart a Scottish merchant there. It is written as an historical novel but is no work of pure fiction. Mrs Kelly, as she now is, has made extensive use of family documents including letters and journals, not only to reveal the story behind the name, but also to recreate a picture of commerce and society in the Caribbean.

William Cathcart left Greenock for Jamaica in 1797 where he met a beautiful mulatto of French extraction named Clare Cavayé who became his long-term mistress. The two surviving sons of the liaison were named William and Robert and each bore their mother's name. Cathcart, who retired to Scotland, had a town house in Edinburgh and besides having the boys educated in Britain provided for them in his Will. After a distinguished military career, William retired to Edinburgh and Robert came to live in then rural Northfield after leaving school, both having dropped the final French acute accent on the last letter of their name.

The final chapter describes a family reunion in October 2000, held in a George Street restaurant that had once been William Cathcart's town house. All of the 150 persons present could trace their ancestry to one of his two sons.

(Librario Publishing Ltd, 14 Harrow Inn Close, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BP (01343 550 245) 330 pages £10.99 ISBN 1-904440-28-2)

AF

PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

GEOFF SWINNEY, National Museums of Scotland, attracted a large audience for his illustrated talk on William Speirs Bruce, the Polar explorer and scientist who lived for many years in the Joppa area. By the end of his talk, accompanied by a superb slide presentation, Mr Swinney had convinced everyone that Bruce was arguably Britain's most successful Polar explorer. When asked why he was not as well known as Scott and Shackleton, Mr Swinney said it could be that he was not a self-publicist and was just too successful. There were no disasters on his landmark Antarctic expedition of 1902 - 1904 or on any of his other trips and perhaps heroic failure makes a better story. (There is a commemorative plaque on number 10 South Morton Street where the Speirs Bruce family lived for most of its time in Joppa. The house is named Rosebank but he named it Antarctica.)

It was a busy and sometimes hectic evening on 4th February when the society and the Living Memory Association co-hosted a photograph scanning session allied with videos and an exhibition of photographs. It was all in aid of the LMA's Edinburgh Photographic Archive project and society members and others turned up in numbers with bundles of their family snaps. Miles Tubb and Lenny from the LMA were kept busy all evening scanning and logging well over a hundred images, "some absolute crackers amongst them," according to Miles.

This issue of the Reporter comes out after our March meeting, so take note that on 7th April Arthur Jeffery, who worked there, will be giving a talk and showing slides on Buchan's Pottery. Carmen Demarco will give the last in our series of monthly talks when she visits us on 5th May. The title of her talk is *An Immigrant's Story*. Carmen is a well-known tutor in adult education and a speaker much in demand, so we are very pleased that she is coming to end our season. Both meetings will be in St John's Church Hall, Brighton Place and begin at 7pm.

Archie Foley

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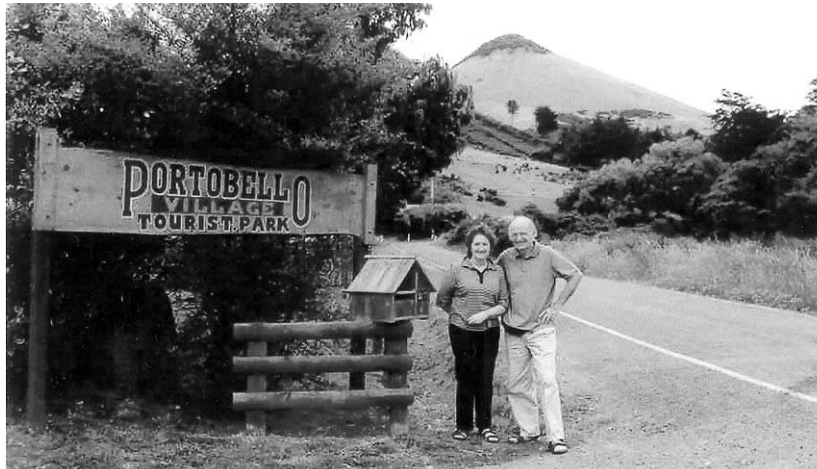
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PORTOBELLO – KIWI STYLE



HALF WAY along the 15-mile Dunedin Peninsula that forms one side of what is called Otago Harbour sits Portobello Village. It basically consists of a few houses, hotel, school, café, shops, aquarium, museum, a good craft shop called The Happy Hen, and a neat camping park. Following a visit to the park a few years ago by an Edinburgh couple, a link with our own Portobello was suggested, and Sherryl and Kevin Charles, who have run the Portobello Village Tourist Park since 1991, were the initial contacts. The village school now has links with St John's Primary here in Portobello. Local historian, Dennis White, pictured with Sherryl, recently visited the village during his trip to New Zealand.

CHRISTIAN AID

THE 19th Annual Burns Supper held at Portobello Old Parish Church on 24th January was another great success for the organisers. Local historian Ian Wood gave an original and informative 'Immortal Memory' and the Rev Neil Buchanan made a tremendous job of the catering. The magnificent sum of £1424 was raised for Christian Aid. Donation envelopes will be delivered and collected during the annual Christian Aid Household Collection Week of 9th to 15th May. Portobello householders donated over £9,000 last year. This included reclaimed tax so donors should be sure to fill in the appropriate box on the envelope.

TOWN HALL UNDER-USED

PORTOBELLO Town Hall has a big stage, excellent lighting and good facilities, so why are so few dramatic or musical performances staged there? There have been only two Festival Fringe performances in the last two years and no Pantomimes for a lot longer. So, why doesn't the Council promote it as a venue?

When this was put to the Arts Development department, they replied that "due to budget constraints, the Council cannot programme (i.e. arrange performances at) Portobello Town Hall, or the Church Hill and Thomas Morton Halls. It only programmes the Usher Hall". That is understandable, but the other halls are available for hire and should be better advertised. The only reference found to Portobello Town Hall in an internet search for halls and wedding venues appeared on the Council's own website and did not include hire rates; neither is it in Yellow Pages.

"Grants of up to £5,000 are available to local organisations when developing events in their community", we were told. Many groups and organisations do use the Town Hall, but it should not be left to them to keep such a fine venue in business. (Anyone interested in applying for a grant should contact Rebecca Peppiette, Arts Development, on 243 1447. Rates for the main hall for community events range from £19-£33 per hour, depending on day and time).

B.M.

PORTOBELLO AMNESTY'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY



Pictured with Gavin Strang MP are (l-r) Lily Grubb, Ian Fisher and John Rostron.

THE Portobello Amnesty Group held its 25th Birthday Celebration on 10th February attended by founding members, past and present members and representatives of other local Amnesty groups. Many congratulations were received and warm greetings came from Susan Deacon, MSP, who also gave a birthday gift. A framed testimonial to the human rights work of the Group was on display, given by Amnesty UK and signed by the Director, Kate Allen. Allison Cosgrove, Scottish Groups Regional Representative, expressed her appreciation and high regard for the Group's long history of campaigns.

Guest speaker Gavin Strang, MP, spoke of the importance he attached to Amnesty's work, and the value of being kept informed by the Group of issues and individual cases. Members expressed appreciation of his readiness to respond to letters and surgery visits, take up concerns with Government figures and forward replies.

Founder members Lily Grubb, John Rostron and Ian Fisher recalled how the Group began, initiated by Bill Mounsey, then a St. Mark's Church deacon, now an RAF Leuchars chaplain, who could not be present. Reminiscences followed of campaigns and fundraising, of particular prisoners of conscience supported, and the joy of successes, but also the painfulness of many stories and the frustration of not knowing the outcome of efforts to achieve releases.

Allison Cosgrove

WHAT'S ON

TOWN HALL - Sun. 28th March: 3pm-7.30: "Spring Thing": Portobello Open Door presents an afternoon of live folk, jazz and world music featuring some of Edinburgh's best musicians at Bedford Hotel, Promenade. Tickets at the door £3 (£1 concession). All proceeds to POD. Come early to get a seat! Children welcome.

APRIL Wed.7th : 7.30pm: Portobello Floral Art Club, all welcome.
Sat.10th : 10am: Spring Fair & Sale of Work by Postal Bowling Club.

7.30pm: Live music by 'Lazylife' a 6-piece pop/rock band,DJ and bar. Tickets £10. Call 07961 413771.

Fri. 23rd: 7.30pm: Cafe del Mundo - A Spring Ceilidh in Celebration of Our Many Cultures. A Portobello Open Door event - Tickets £7 (£4). Children under 8 £2.

Fri.30th: 7pm-1am: Fundraising Ball/Ceilidh for a Project Trust trip to Peru. Tickets £7.50. Call 077926 82325.

MAY Fri.7th : 7.30pm: Bollywood & East Fusion Festival of Music. Open to all. Pay at door.

Wed.19th : 7.30pm: A Concert for Spring by the children of the Duddingston Area String Orchestra. £2/£1 at the door.

ELSEWHERE CAR BOOT SALE; Due to public demand the 41st Boys' Brigade Annual Car Boot Sale at Royal High Primary School, Northfield Broadway will be held on two Saturdays, 24th April and 1st May, from 10am-12noon (cars from 9:30am). £8 per car. Bring your car or just yourself and enjoy a tea or coffee with some delicious home baking. All welcome.

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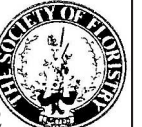
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Sun - Thurs Happy Hour x 1 <small>* Restaurant only, minimum two diners, i.e., one diner enjoys a 3 course Happy Hour Special Free!! (Food Only)</small>	Sun - Thurs Lunch x 1 <small>* Restaurant only, minimum two diners, i.e., one diner enjoys a 3 course Business Lunch Free!! (Food Only)</small>	Sun - Thurs Bottle of Wine <small>* For Restaurant only, minimum two diners, must order from A.L.A. Carte Menu, House Red / White Wine</small>
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Activities include annual camps held in the UK and abroad; various sports played both informally and inter-squadron; gliding and powered flying in dual controlled RAF training aircraft, with cadets handling the controls in a progressive series of exercises; Adventure Training and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

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Katherine Scotland, Holy Rood High School's 2004 Masterchef winner.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,
I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Towerbank Primary and Portobello High School for their support and positive attitude towards my daughter and myself during her recent hospital admission.

Rachel had to undergo major spinal surgery, which affected her life and disrupted her schooling, but we were delighted to experience a system that allowed her to be taught at home during her recovery. She missed three months of first year schooling, but support was always there for her.

Now that Rachel has returned to school, I would like to express my appreciation of the consideration and vast efforts of the teachers and support staff over these months.

Yours sincerely,
Louise Learmonth,
Joppa.

• • • •

Dear Editor,
On 16th December, the day of our Christmas Party, teachers and pupils from Portobello High School came to the Baptist Church Hall with 20 wonderful food parcels for the members of the Portobello Older People's Project. It was very kind of them and I think it is important that the community should know that our young people help our older people when they can. Everyone who came was so pleasant and I would like to thank them for their kindness to our members, and Marjorie Cook, Depute Head, for making it all possible.

Yours sincerely,
Rita Aitken,
Project Manager

BUDDHA AND THE BARRIER REEF - WICKED WORLD TOUR 2ND LEG

PATRICK, Ali and the team recently arrived safely back from the 2nd trip of their Wicked World Tour. After a short stop over in Hong Kong they flew to South Korea and Japan. In both countries they enjoyed the ancient sites like the Dosun Seowan Academy of Calligraphy in Korea and the world's biggest statue of Buddha in Japan.



In Australia one of the big highlights of the tour was that both boys were able to snorkel in the warm turquoise waters above the Great Barrier Reef and gaze down at 'Nemo's world' of coral, multicoloured fish, and other marine life. In Sydney the New Year Fireworks display was brilliant.

New Zealand comes out top for accessibility for disabled people on the tour so far. They share with us the philosophy that disabled people should and can enjoy the challenges of adventure activities. At Queenstown in South Island Patrick went jet boating at thrilling speed and Ali jumped out of a plane at 12000 feet on a tandem skydive.

Thanks to all our friends and supporters in Portobello and everywhere who helped to get us there. We are now fundraising for the last leg of this trip - We hope to travel to South Africa in April.

OATCAKES AND IRN-BRU

ON 28th January the Primary 7s at Towerbank School had their Burns Supper to commemorate the life of Robert Burns. There were poems, dancing and music, some of which was written by the pupils and of course the traditional meal of haggis, neeps

and tatties, to everyone's delight. Also there was Irn-Bru and oatcakes. For dessert there was delicious trifle. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and said it was a great afternoon.

Jenny Simpson and David Ward

HIGH SCHOOL CAREERS CONVENTION

PORTOBELLO High School held their annual Careers Convention on Thursday 26 February, organised by the Enterprise in Education (EiE) Committee with help from Careers Scotland. Over 40 organisations attended the day and evening sessions, including universities, colleges, private companies and skill-seeker providers. We were delighted to welcome new contributors Zot Engineering, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Edinburgh College of Art, Lloyds Bank, and Aberdeen and Abertay Universities.

Pupils in S4, S5 and S6 were the main targets, along with S2 pupils making course choices for S3/S4. The event was very successful, with positive feedback from contributors, who were impressed by our well-informed pupils, and from parents and pupils themselves.

The Committee would like to thank everyone who helped to make this such a worthwhile event, in particular our sponsors Western & Sainsbury's for their continued support.

Helen Wilson, EiE Co-ordinator

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GIFT OF COLOURS

JUST before Christmas, Primary 3B in Towerbank Primary organised a collection of coloured pencils to be sent to a school in Goboti, South Africa.

Nearly 3,000 pencils were sent and on February 13th, Jenny Quinn, who is just back from Goboti, came to talk to the children and showed them some photographs.

She also brought thanks from all the children in Goboti school to everyone who helped in any way.

LOCAL GUIDES AND BROWNIES

Rainbow, Brownie and Guide units meet in Portobello each week at St James' Church, Portobello Old Parish Church, and St Phillip's Church. For more information, contact Sandra Potter, District Commissioner on 468 0259.

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MIDNIGHT FOOTBALL LEAGUE

ARE you aged 12 to 16 years and interested in playing in an organised 5-a-side football league? If so, join the Midnight Football League at its centre on the all-weather pitches at Westbank Street. The leagues are run by the Scottish FA, and are sponsored by The Bank Of Scotland, and supported by Lothian and Borders Police.

The centre will run from Friday 5th March to Friday 7th May, from 8-10pm. Teams are open to boys and girls and players can enrol as a team or individually, and the good news is that there is no charge.

Pick up an application form from The Power League (Westbank St), Portobello Police Station, Portobello High School, Holy Rood High School or Leith Academy.

For further information contact Gordon Forrest, City Of Edinburgh/SFA Youth Football Development Officer, on 469 3390.

18TH ANNUAL PROMATHON

THIS year's 4-Mile event attracted 251 runners, 78 more than last year, which may have had something to do with the near-perfect conditions - it was dry and mild, with a light wind, compared with last year's cold driving rain. It was also good to see a lot more people than usual out to cheer them on.

The first three men were: 1) Iain Donnan (U20), Aberdeen AAC in 19min 33sec; 2) John Newsom (U20) Pitreavie, 19:47; 3) John Burke, London Irish, 19:52, and the first female home was 14-year-old Ashleigh Murray, Pitreavie, in 23:23.

Despite the predominance of young runners this year, there were also six veterans in the first 20. The course records remain unbroken, however: in 1989, Ian Archibald of Edinburgh AC ran 18:27, and in 1987, Yvonne Murray of the same club set the women's record of 19:59.

GET ready for spring by doing jobs that can be done inside now before everything starts to grow. When it is nice outside, prune roses, buddleia and dogwoods and, if diseased, keep for starting up the barbecue; if not, shred or smash with a spade and compost. That compost heap you made in autumn can be spread around the garden now or, if not rotted completely, dig a hole and cover over with 12cm soil - brilliant for growing sweetpeas or runner beans.

Try a worm-bin. They're easy to set up with an old dustbin: drill holes round the side, 15cm from the bottom, and in the lid, and place 10cm of gravel in the bottom with a circle or two of net curtain on top. Then put in kitchen waste, including all the things you wouldn't put on a compost heap that would attract rats, such as meat, cooked stuff, soiled paper napkins. Add a handful of brandling worms (from fishing shops or your compost heap) and place a thick layer of newspaper or material on top and keep moist. Keep a little box under your sink for more waste and empty in every day. Fix a tap near the bottom of the bin for draining off liquid feed, dilute it and use on all plants. Once full, scrape off the top 15cm with as many worms as possible and set aside, then use the remaining compost to top dress pots and feed anything that needs extra oomph, and no - it doesn't smell! Put the worms in their compost back in the bin and start again.

I collect plastic containers to use as seed trays, etc. Remember those saved seeds? Try sowing them in organic seed compost, preferably approved by the Soil Association or HDRA (the Organic Association), then you know it is OK, and see what comes up. I find a hand sprayer better for watering seeds and small seedlings.

Make some mini greenhouses by cutting in half some large soft drink bottles, then place 10cm of compost in the bottom and push one large seed, like a pea or sunflower, 1-2cm into it. Cover with the other half, with the cap on, and place on a windowsill. Once leaves show, harden off by removing the cap and eventually lifting the top off all day, before planting outside when weather improves. Great for kids, but remember that the plastic can be sharp.



with Susan Burns

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS

THE ADELPHI SINGERS (otherwise known as the Wash Hoose Wailers!) have been meeting in the Community Centre since September 2002. We are a small friendly group who love to sing, but we need more people to join us so we can make a BIG sound! The sessions run from 10.30am till 12noon every Tuesday and women and men of all ages and backgrounds are welcome. We learn from a wide variety of songs, from Burns to Gospel, in easy stages. Don't be shy - give it a try. Classes are £3. For more information please contact Eileen Penman on 657 1369, or come along any Tuesday.

TAOIST TAI CHI classes with the Taoist Society of Great Britain. Mondays, 7-8.30pm. For more information contact Jim Brown on 669 7217.

NEURO LINGUISTIC PROGRAMING: The life you are living now is a direct result of all the decisions you ever made...until now. Imagine how much better your life could be when you can make better decisions in the future? This approach is based on holistic mind-body principles incorporating the whole person by aligning their values, attitudes and beliefs with desired outcomes. Free classes on Tuesday March 9, 16, 23 and 30, from 1.30-3.30pm.

CHESS CLUB is back on Fridays, 7-10pm.

NEW ACTIVITY: The Women's Group, for women with learning disabilities - to let people talk and to listen to them - accessible to women with physical and sensory impairments. We will meet every couple of weeks. To join, contact Heather Ticheli, Aileen Fender, or Leona Slipper at Partners in Advocacy on 478 7723/4.

PEACE & ANTI-WAR VIDEOS will be shown by East Edinburgh Stop the War Coalition on Saturday 13th March in the Youth Lounge at the rear of the Centre from 10am-5.00pm, refreshments, free - donations welcome. For more info. call 07905 220 954 or e-mail eastedstw@fsmail.net

Portobello Community Centre, Adelphi Grove. Tel. 669 8275. e-mail: enquiries@portobello.cc - Website www.portobello.cc

NEW WAVE OF LIVE MUSIC HITS PORTOBELLO

THE Surf's Up Club is a regular 'Open live music night' with guest artistes. Held on the first Saturday of every month at the Seahaven Hotel, Joppa Road. Starts 9pm - 1am. Free entry.

Recent special guests have included, local band The Monuments, The Pinkie Hill Billy, country and western band 'Buckley's Chance' as well as Porty songsters, Stevie and Joe. Local musicians Andy McKean and Pat Hackett start the ball rolling and get into the groove with their own beats and tunes. Anyone who wants to join in should just turn up and bring their instrument.

You never know who is going to turn up, a recent surprise appearance from well known folk musician, Maggie Holland and 80's pop artist, Paul Haig wowed the crowd.

This real showcase for Porty talent is attracting musicians and interest from outside the area as well. Who needs to go up town for a great night out?

don't miss this gem on your doorstep.

SPRING AQUATHON

THE Portobello Spring Aquathon will take place this year on Sunday 4th April. It will consist of a swim section in Portobello Swim Centre, followed by a run held in the vicinity of the Prom. Roads will be closed to traffic for the duration of the events, making them suitable for juniors and children. The swim will start at 9am, with registration at 8am within the swim centre. Online entry is available at www.EntryCentral.net or for more information, contact Bruce Kidd, tel. 657 4716, email bruce.kidd@baesystems.com or Jim Leach, tel. 346 7226, email jim.leach@baesystems.com



Photo courtesy of LTA

LOCAL girl Emma Kate Devine won the LTA Robinson's Scottish Under 10 Challenge for 2003 at the age of eight, a tremendous achievement, and spent a day at Wimbledon in November when she met and played with Tim Henman. Emma is one of only four girls in the Tennis Scotland Development Squad, which considers only the best players in her age-group.

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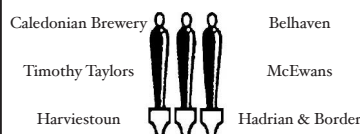
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