

The Portobello REPORTER

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The independent voice of Portobello

Your Community Newspaper produced by local people.

A DATE WITH THE 'STARS OF PORTOBELLO'



Photo by Brenda Molony

ONE OF this Christmas's must-have items is the 'Stars of Portobello' calendar, produced to raise funds to help the Portobello Campaign Against the Superstore fight the planning application at the public inquiry next March. It was launched on 13 November by Susan Deacon MSP, seen here with (r-l) Diana Cairns and Steven Hawkins of PCATS and Sheila Scott of Portobello Traders. It is available at the bargain price of £5 from all the shops displaying the publicity poster.

'Stars' refers to the calendar's film theme, featuring local traders in wittily posed shots, as they will never be seen again: Williamson's Fishmonger poses as 'The Godfather', the Dragon Way restaurant re-enacts 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon', Allan's Chemist is depicted as 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' and so on. The real stars, of course, are the traders themselves who have served this community so well for many years.

The photographs were taken by Jack MacDonald, one of Scotland's leading social photographers, who used to work with *The Portobello Reporter* and had a studio at VIP in the High Street. Jack donated his services "as a thank you to the Portobello community for their support in the early years".

As well as raising funds, we hope the calendar will showcase the quality and variety of the shops in Portobello and help people realise what we stand to lose if this development goes ahead, and why it's worth fighting for. It would be nice to think there might be at least one of our calendars on each continent by the end of the year, so if you are stuck for Christmas present ideas for your friends and relations in faraway places, here's the perfect solution.

Diana Cairns

CLOSURE OF JOPPA PO

DESPITE all objections and arguments against, Post Offices Ltd decided to close the Joppa and Seafeld POs from Tuesday 7 December.

Denys and Kirsty Taylor have run Joppa Post Office for almost 30 years and Denys told us: "We have seen a few changes over the years, notably in 1982 when the original post office at 34 Joppa Road was demolished [due to subsidence] and we spent a year in Mr Guthrie the chemist's storeroom before moving across the road to number 31. The decline in post office business followed by the transfer of pensions/allowances to the banks was the final nail in the coffin for Joppa Post Office and for many others in the City. We would like to thank all our loyal customers for their support and friendship

through the years, and for their good wishes since they heard the news. We are more than sad to go, and would like to wish everyone well for 2005".

Denys and Kirsty are keeping the shop open until the end of the year, and the postbox is to remain in place.

Customers will now be expected to use the POs in Portobello Scotmid or Adsa at the Jewel instead. One issue raised was the unacceptable levels of queuing at these POs and Post Office Ltd say they will take it up with them, which should mean more staff on duty at peak periods. If this does not happen and there is excessive queuing, customers should complain to the helpline 08457 22 33 44 and/or direct to the store managers.

SUPERSTORE UPDATE

A RESOLUTION of the superstore planning application seems no closer. Miss Janet McNair, the Scottish Executive reporter appointed to hear the public inquiry, held a pre-inquiry meeting on 4 October to determine the timetable and arrangements for the inquiry, which is due to begin on 1 March.

Duddingston House Properties, the developers, and City of Edinburgh Council will both be represented by QCs. Portobello Campaign Against the Superstore, Portobello Traders Association and Portobello Amenity Society will be represented by Ms Siobhan Samson of Friends of the Earth Scotland. Individual members of the community will also speak at the inquiry.

It became apparent at the meeting that the Council are no longer including in their case against the superstore the retail impact on local shops; they felt that this was the weakest part of their case and could undermine it. The PCATS group expressed their surprise and dismay at this decision, and now need to increase their fundraising to pay a retail expert to present that part of the case.

The inquiry is likely to last nine days, with closing submissions during the week beginning 14 March, and members of the public will be able to attend on an informal basis. It had been hoped that the inquiry would be held in Portobello Town Hall, but that will not be possible as the hall is already booked. Another venue is being sought and at the time of going to press this had not been announced. A copy of all the papers relating to the inquiry can be examined by members of the public at Portobello Library, until the inquiry begins.

Margaret Munro

Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
to all our Readers and
Advertisers

ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME FOR PORTOBELLO VIDEO



Photo by Peter Ross

Some of the older generation who appear in the video, (l-r) Mary Olsson, Ina McNama and Ray Lang, with youngsters Robbie and Olivia.

THE TOWN HALL buzzed with excitement and anticipation just after noon on Friday 19 November as invited guests began to arrive for a reception to launch Portobello History Society's video and booklet "It always seemed to be sunny". *Memories of Portobello*. Many of those present had been filmed and interviewed for the production and were impatient, and a bit apprehensive, to see the results.

In her welcoming remarks Society Chairperson, Margaret Munro thanked all those who had helped over the summer months to bring the project to a successful conclusion, including actor Paul Young and film maker Mike Shepley who gave their time and a professional gloss to the production.

Any apprehension was soon dispersed as the film was shown. Gasps of recognition, spontaneous laughter and singing along punctuated the screening. There was the Open-air Pool with the waves and Sean Connery as a young life guard; Ned Barrie emerging from the sea; dancing at the bandstand; the first Gala Queen in 1950 and the Gala Procession of 1952. Clips from home movies showed the Victorian Weekends and children's races in Abercorn Park, and sandcastle competitions on the 1995 Portobello Festival Day.

Susan Deacon MSP recalled her own visits to the Pool as a girl and complimented all concerned for producing an enjoyable film and a valuable social resource. Afterwards everyone stayed to exchange memories while enjoying the excellent buffet supplied by the Portobello Seaside Cooperative.

The video and booklet can be bought (Price £12.99) at Portobello Stationers, Projections, Mulberries - all in Portobello High Street - and Joppa Newsagents in Joppa Road

PADDLING POOL SITE



Photo by Peter Ross

ALTHOUGH the Council has committed £100,000 to the redevelopment of the old paddling pool site at the foot of John Street, the extra £300,000 needed from other sources, such as the Lottery Fund, has not so far been obtained, despite the efforts of Portobello Amenity Society and Community Council. Fundraising attempts will continue, but the Council's contribution must be spent in this financial year; it is enough to clear the site and landscape it, which it is hoped will leave future options open. So many derogatory comments have been made about this major eyesore on the Promenade by visitors, as well as local people, that any opportunity to improve the area must be grasped urgently and the work started before the money disappears again.

**PORTY PROFILE No. 15
GEORGE HAGGERTY**

GEORGE HAGGERTY is an unashamed enthusiast about, and an expert on, ceramics, particularly Scottish pottery and in recent years the results of his researches have completely changed previously held beliefs about the nature and type of early pottery made in Scotland.



Photo by Peter Ross

George did not become a 'recognised authority' by any conventional route. He was brought up in Greendykes and by his own admission was a reluctant scholar. "I had no time for education", he says. "I got the belt a lot and skipped off a lot. I stopped going to school at all some time between age 14 and 15." He worked at the Distillers Company Limited where he became an active trade unionist and says that it was through meetings with senior management that he became aware of how little he knew. So he asked his trade union to arrange classes for him and recalls: "Basically, I went to night school four nights a week for about five years and took almost everything on offer."

Then he decided to travel and worked his way around Europe for three years. He found that work on archaeological digs was plentiful in most countries and so got the passion for archaeology and ceramics that still persists with him. Back home again he continued organising digs across Scotland, working with professionals from museums and other institutions, coupling this with primary research among thousands of documents in various archives.

Somehow he found time to run a series of successful Edinburgh antique shops from which he recently retired. Now he is concentrating on his research, writing it up and making his results available to the world. "What we've found at our digs in places like Musselburgh, West Pans, and Portobello too for that matter has changed old views about Scottish pottery but they aren't worth anything unless we get them into the public domain. Publication, that's what I'm passionate about."

George's most recent excavation was at the site of the old Figure-8 Railway on the promenade and his ambition is to bring out a comprehensive history of pottery production in Portobello. "I love it here", he says. "It's a real community with a great mix of people. I won't move from here."

Archie Foley

WHERE ARE YOUR CHILDREN TONIGHT?

AS parents, guardians or carers, do you know where your children were last night or even tonight, and what they were doing? No? Then let me perhaps help you.

In mid-September we embarked upon an initiative to deal with the increasing number of calls received about gatherings of youths across the whole of the Craigmillar and Portobello area. Time and again your local police officers were being sent to Piersfield, Northfield, Bingham, Magdalene, Mountcastle and Portobello High Street to deal with the inappropriate and, in my view, completely unacceptable behaviour of youths.

On occasion they found youths who were drunk, some carrying weapons and others acting aggressively towards members of the public whose only error was to be in the vicinity.

This behaviour has to stop – NOW! But we cannot tackle this alone. We need you, the parents, guardians and carers of these kids to take on responsibility. We have recourse to the law, including Anti-Social Behaviour legislation. You have recourse to instilling respect and discipline in their minds and letting them know what is tolerable and acceptable.

I am acutely aware that the Council also has a role in this and we are grateful for the excellent team of councillors and MSPs who serve the greater area. They too are gravely concerned and, together with my sector Inspectors at Craigmillar and Portobello, we have regular discussions on how we can tackle this blight on OUR community.

I have asked my officers to deal with problem youths firmly, fairly and robustly. They will do that, but we need you to help us. Don't be the one who gets a knock at your door to find your son or daughter accompanied by one of my officers.

Jim McBrierty, Chief Inspector.

Local Police Commander for Portobello and Craigmillar

The *Portobello Reporter* is a community newspaper run by volunteers and dependent on contributions of articles and photographs. The deadline for your contributions to the Spring Issue is 7th FEB 2005.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

GPs, OUT OF HOURS: All 132 GP practices in Lothian have now opted out of providing 24-hour primary care services to their patients, so make a note of the telephone number 08454 24 24 24. It's the number for NHS24, to be used especially in the evenings and at weekends when your GP practice is closed. However, if anyone has a life threatening illness or injury then 999 is still the number to call.

ADULT EDUCATION: THE new term at Leith Academy starts on Monday 17th January with a wide range of popular subjects, and an exciting new opportunity to learn more about different countries, cultures and customs, with an introduction to the language. These are 6-week courses in: Arabic, Chinese, French, Gaelic, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Punjabi, Urdu, Russian and Spanish. Learn your first 100 words and impress your friends! Book early by phone or post or in person. Call 553 2810 for information and enrolments, see www.leith.edin.sch.uk or www.communityschools.org.uk for course descriptions, or pick up a booklet and programme from 20 Academy Park, EH6 8JQ.

FIRST AID TRAINING: St Andrews Ambulance Association will soon be running a Standard First Aid course, leading to a certificate valid for three years. It starts on Thursday 13 January, from 6.30-9.30pm, at the Royal High Primary School, Northfield. To book a place, call 669 6995.

GRANTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION: Forward Scotland is operating three community grant schemes available until March 2005: Small Grants – up to £1000 for environmental projects; Transforming Waste – £20,000-£300,000 for recycling projects, and Transforming Your Space, similar sums to help communities transform their environment in several ways. For more info, call 0141 222 5600 or email to; enquiries@forward-scotland.org.uk

COMMUNITY ACTION VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

IN recent years I have taken part in a number of clean-ups: Rosefield Park, Brighton Park, the Figgate Burn and the beach. It is a rewarding way to spend an hour or two when you see that your efforts have made a real difference to the local environment. It's also a great way to meet people and make new friends.

Recently, an untidy area at the top of Marlborough Street was cleared by local volunteers. The owner has been encouraged to apply for a Town Scheme grant to re-instate the railings and the local church has also offered assistance. It's a great example of what can be achieved with a little co-ordination and community spirit.

Would you like to help with our next project? Get in touch and we will add you to our distribution list. Litter pickers, protective equipment etc provided. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Contact portyevents@blueyonder.co.uk

Bob Jefferson



Gavin Strang MP and Susan Deacon MSP wish all their constituents a

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Gavin Strang MP and Susan Deacon MSP for Edinburgh East and Musselburgh hold regular interview sessions across the constituency.

For details write to

54/56 Portobello High Street, EH15 1DA

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Susan Deacon MSP 0131 669 6446

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OUR popular community online forum has provided a platform for discussion since November 2002. We now have over 250 registered members and more than 11,000 messages have been posted.

Stephen McIntyre, local businessman and forum member, came up with a brilliant idea to promote the web site: as a member of Friends Reunited he realised the potential benefit of contacting the 5,600 ex-PHS and 471 ex-Holy Rood pupils who are registered with FR, to make them aware of Portobello Online. He recruited a large team of volunteers to assist with this mammoth task.

Local people, as well as ex-pats, are joining our friendly online community on a daily basis. Some even have the T-shirt to prove it! What's all the fuss about? - Find out for yourself at www.porty.org.uk

NARROWED LANES ON MILTON ROAD

TWO wide abnormal loads headed east through Portobello with Police escort towards the end of August, and in reply to an enquiry from Portobello Amenity Society, asking why the Portobello bypass had not been used, the Police Traffic Management Department gave the reason as the weak railway bridge beneath Milton Road, east of Milton Link roundabout.

Work needs to be done, in conjunction with Network Rail, to strengthen the bridge, but this is unlikely to happen before 2007/08. Temporary measures have, therefore, been put in place to reduce the load on the bridge underneath, with solid barriers creating narrowed lanes and taking traffic away from the edges of the road. Heavy vehicles over 40 tons and very wide loads will have to be diverted through Portobello High Street for the next three or four years, until the bridge is strengthened.

PORTALOO FOR PROMENADE

A NEW toilet is to be sited on the Promenade beside the grassed area at Straiton Place, in addition to the facilities at the Joppa end and Pipe Street. Cllr Robert Cairns, Executive Member for Environmental Services said: "This new Adshel toilet will be cleaned and maintained daily. It will greatly improve the facilities at Portobello Promenade and I'm hopeful it will help our entry to the Seaside Awards and the Designated Bathing Surveys".

AMID all the national gloom about dropping library issues, we're happy to say that Portobello Library showed a healthy increase in book and music issues this autumn. We have an enthusiastic team buying stock and are responding to as many customer comments as possible. There is a board at the gate for these and we encourage more customers to use it.

The December Diary is pretty full with seasonal events: Local artist Rose Nimmo is having a 'Private View' at lunchtime on Saturday 4 December, with paintings on sale for three weeks after. This is a good chance to pick up an 'original' Christmas present.

The Teenage Book Group will discuss 'The Opposite of Chocolate' on Monday 6 December, and the Adult Group will talk about 'Drop City' by T.C. Boyle on Tuesday 7. As it's Christmas, Santa may well provide some seasonal refreshments too.

There will be a Kids' Christmas Crafts Session on Friday 17 December. Come along at 2.30 -3.30 and make something crafty for your house!

The Computer Drop-in is going strong, and on Friday 17 at 10.30am and Monday 20 at 2.00 pm there will be mince pies and sherry for all Drop-in customers.

Sunday 19th will be the last 'OK Computer' Children's Drop-in for this year; these are very popular sessions and booking is necessary.

The Adult Book Group meets on the first Tuesday of each month at from 6.30 to 8pm in the Community Room. Discussion is informal and friendly and new readers are welcome. The January choice is 'Notes on a Scandal' by Zoe Heller; for February, 'Astonishing Splashes of Colour' by Claire Morrall; and for March 'Under the Skin' by Michael Faber. Books are available from the Library.

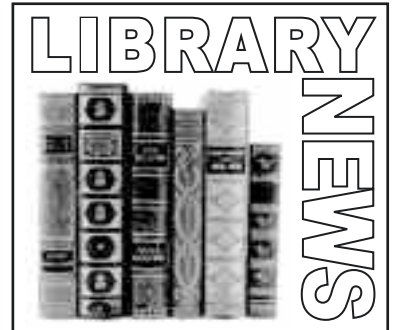
A 'Chatterbooks' Children's Book Group will start on Saturdays from 27 January - look out for posters. There will be a selection of books to choose from and everyone will get a chance to tell the group about their choice. There will also be fun activities and refreshments. If you are around age 8-10 and interested in coming along, please ask Tori or Vanessa on a Saturday.

Our Library Link bus, driven by Robert with invaluable assistance from volunteers, Margaret and Jennifer, has faithfully delivered our housebound customers all year, and we would all like to thank them. The last visit this year will be on Tuesday 14 December, with Christmas Carols at 2.00 and a wee party to follow. We're also inviting our Home Delivery Service volunteers, Marcia, Bob, Joyce, Dorothy, Lesley, Pat, Ian and Steven, who take books every fortnight to library members temporarily at home or housebound. Thank you from the library and customers for all you have done over the year.

After years of "No drinking", tea, coffee and hot chocolate are now allowed in the library! Our local deli's price list is on display and we are installing a state-of-the-art hot drinks machine, so you can bring in a coffee or buy from the machine.

And finally ... it wouldn't be Christmas, without our extravaganza of a window display, this year with the added incentive that we are competing with other libraries for a prize! So look out for the Nativity there, and the 'Panto' display inside, and come in on the 22nd for 'Winter Wonderland' Nursery Story-Time with Heather and Anna, from 10.15- 11.15.

With best wishes for the Season from all staff at Portobello Library



A GOLDEN DAY



WHEN members of the 'Library Link' Housebound Service made their regular visit on 5 October to Portobello Library they did not expect to be treated to a surprise party.

Richard and Ruby Banks celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in September and on the first trip to the library in October they were greeted with festive balloons, a cake (supplied by Ruby's daughter) and buck's fizz. There was even 1950's music! They were so busy enjoying a little dance and a small spread with their fellow 'linkers' that they almost forgot to choose their library books for the next fortnight.

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ESTABLISHED IN 1830

ONE of the oldest, if not the oldest, organisations in Portobello voted itself out of existence at a public meeting on 24th November. The Portobello Benevolent Society was founded in 1830 to look after folk in need in the community before Portobello had become a Burgh. Now after almost 175 years of helping thousands of individuals and families with food, fuel, housing and much else besides, the current Committee decided this year that it was time to bring its good works to an end.

Chairman Bob Aitken explains why the decision was made, "Basically the Society relied on potential beneficiaries being made known to it. This could be done by the local churches or any other body but in recent years fewer and fewer names were being put forward. In 1951, 71 households were given help at Christmas; last year the number was down to 12,



An original society Window Notice displayed in local shops in the mid nineteenth century

all pretty elderly. The Committee doesn't have the resources to seek out deserving cases. Really, we've been overtaken by changes in society."

Some years ago the late David Bayes, a former Secretary of the Society, wrote a short piece about it for the Portobello History Society and the following is

a part of his account:

"Today, happily, there are excellent relations between the Christian Churches in Portobello, and all major denominations actively participate in the co-operative efforts of the Portobello Council of Churches. There is at least one organisation in

Portobello, and probably its oldest, which marks civic and Christian co-operation that has been going on since 1830.

Clearly at that time before Queen Victoria's reign there was poverty in a small and growing community like Portobello, and in particular there existed a clamant need to help the sick and housebound and homeless and to protect the poor against cold, disease and personal misfortunes.

So it was that the Portobello Destitute and Sick Society was established. Its first Secretary was also the first Rector of St Mark's Episcopal Church, Rev G W Drummond, many of whose parishioners were families of workmen in Portobello's pottery, glass and paper industries. Thus started a Society that depended on the voluntary donations of the better-off and from the start, needy and deserving people were identified and assistance given with the purchase of fuel and

provisions.

The rather dated title of the Society was changed to the 'Portobello Benevolent Society'. Its function in the Welfare State is quite modest, but within its limited resources, it continues to give help in cases of emergency or pressing need, particularly where other agencies are slow to act and where other resources are inadequate. The geographical area for rendering assistance has always been congruent with the boundaries of the old Burgh of Portobello, but has recently been extended to include the Magdalene area.

Successive office-bearers and committee members coming from all the Portobello churches, continued to co-operate in the unassuming voluntary work. Even today, the Steering Committee comprises lay members of the different Portobello Churches, though not being official representatives of them."

At the final meeting, fittingly held in St Mark's Episcopal Church, it was decided that the Society's funds should be distributed among organisations serving the Portobello community whose aims are broadly similar to those of the Society.

Archie Foley

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The Portobello Reporter is produced by a group of volunteers, with contributions in this issue from 38 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

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maureen.child@edinburgh.gov.uk

Book Review:

THE TREE THAT GREW IN ST JAMES SQUARE

LOUISA JENKINS lived in Straiton Place from 1968 until she moved to Musselburgh earlier this year and she has family connections with Portobello stretching back to when she was a girl growing up in St James Square in Edinburgh. The tree of the title is her own "family tree" for although her book is written as a novel it is obviously autobiographical and the main character, Susie, is Louisa herself.



Photograph: Lew Jenkins

Her account of family life in a tenement in the Depression years is vividly and often movingly told. The events and episodes she describes will be familiar to many readers; school concerts, rolling eggs at Easter, peevers and other street games and as a teen-ager graduating to going dancing at the Palais.

In an early chapter she describes the pleasure and excitement of a day trip to Portobello starting with the journey on a crowded tramcar from Waterloo Place. Enjoyment changes to anxiety when little brother, Jamie, gets lost but then turns to relief when he is found safely with a policeman, licking an ice-cream.

Portobello was where the children's Uncle John and Aunt Annie lived, and not only in the book. John and Annie Thompson were relations of Louisa's on her mother's side. They lived in Pipe Street and she remembers that at one stage they kept a goat in the garden. Louisa would very much like to know more about them. John Thompson was dark skinned, perhaps from his reputed Italian ancestry, and was a photographer. She asks anyone with any information about John and Annie to contact her through *The Reporter*.

To illustrate that it never too late, the manuscript lay in a drawer for 15 years before being published, and Louisa has just sent her memoirs of service in the WRNS to the publisher and the book will be out next year.

The Tree that Grew in St James Square (ISBN: 0-595-32537) is published by iUniverse, Inc. and priced at £10.93. It is not available over the counter in bookshops but information on how to buy it can be found on-line. Go to www.diaadembooks.com and follow the links.

AF

Portobello's Nap Hand



Photograph courtesy Bill Patterson

THE gentleman on the bottom left of this unusual photograph is Thomas Patterson and the five servicemen depicted as a hand of cards are his sons, William, Samuel, Thomas, Robert and Joseph. The photograph belongs to Mr Bill Patterson, whose father is the Guardsman in the centre of the group. He believes that it hung for some years in the Working Men's Institute in Bath Street, where it got the name Portobello's Nap Hand. The hand holding the cards is thought to have belonged to a Sergeant Garvie, or Jarvie of Portobello Police Station.

What we do know about the photograph is that it was taken by a professional photographer in Musselburgh on 25 December 1914, the first Christmas of World War One. The date is written on the reverse but unfortunately the name and address of the photographer are unreadable. Bill's father came home safely in 1918 but two of his brothers did not.

Bill may well belong to the longest established family in Portobello. He himself was born in Wilson's Park in 1921; his father was born in Bridge Street in 1887 and his grandfather in Pipe Street in 1856. Samuel Patterson, Bill's great-grandfather, saw the light of day here in July 1815. He was the son of Robert and Ellen Patterson and, although we do not know the exact location, evidence from parish registers and the census shows that it was in Portobello.

Is there a family out there who can equal or surpass Bill's family history of almost 200 years in Portobello?

AF

PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

THE SOCIETY has had an encouraging start to its current session. The speakers at all three meetings so far have attracted excellent and appreciative audiences from which we have gained a significant number of new members. We don't keep attendance records but the 50-strong audience for Dr Graham Ritchie's illustrated talk on the Archaeology of Edinburgh must have been one of the largest in the Society's history.

We have our usual break with no meeting in January and start again on 2nd February 2005 with a talk by Allan MacKinnon of the Registers of Scotland. Scotland has one of the oldest and most comprehensive property registration systems in the world and increasing use of it is being made of it by researchers such as family historians. Allan will outline the history of the records, illustrate some of its peculiarities and explain how it can be used by even amateur researchers.

Unfortunately, if not unexpectedly, we have to report a second successive defeat at the hand of the Trotters in the by now traditional skittle match at the Sheep Heid Inn, although it was not as calamitous as last year. Our players are hopeful that the tide may now be turning and are resolved to do better next year.

There is a report on the launch of our video and booklet package elsewhere in the paper along with information about where it can be bought. Here, the Society wants to say thank you to all the people and organisations that helped in the production. We hope the others won't feel upset if we make particular mention of the group from the Portobello Older People's Project who submitted themselves to the ordeal of being interviewed and recorded in their homes and filmed in heavy rain in the playground of Towerbank Primary School.

Portobello History Society meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm in St John's Church Hall, Brighton Place.

Archie Foley

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SUNSHINE CLUB GETS 'KEY OF THE DOOR'



Photo by Peter Ross

A SPECIAL Dinner Dance was held in September to celebrate the 21st Anniversary of the Sunshine Club, the social and dancing club for older people formed in 1983 and still going strong. When it started, tap-dancing and keep fit were popular, but members now prefer the slightly more sedate Old-Time and sequence dancing.

The club received a grant from the Local Development Committee for this special occasion, which was greatly enjoyed by 95 members and friends. A late Christmas Dance will also be held, on 19 January

The Sunshine Club meets at St James Church Hall, Rosefield Place on Tuesdays and Fridays from 1.30-3.30 and new members are very welcome. Just go along or call Bernadette on 669 3624.

PUPILS MEET AFTER 50 YEARS



THIS photograph of Class 3A1 was taken during session 1950/51 at Portobello Secondary School. After a gap of 50 years, Alistair Gillies (front row, 2nd right) who now lives in the USA, met up again via the internet with Dennis Anderson (front, 2nd left). They arranged a meeting in 2003, which was also attended by Margaret Hutton (third row, 4th left) and Bobby Robinson and Alistair Blacklaw (back, 4th and 5th from left). This year, Alistair Gillies, Bobby Robinson and Dennis Anderson met up with Mollie Ramage, USA (3rd row, 2nd right), Madeleine Blacklaw (3rd row, 3rd left) and Ann Robertson (3rd row, 5th left).

Another reunion is planned in 2005. Would anyone from the original class photograph who would like to attend, or who knows the whereabouts of other class members, please contact Dennis Anderson on 0131 669 6825 or email portobelloreporter@talk21.com

WHAT'S ON TOWN HALL -

EDINBURGH DOG & Cat Home Christmas Fair. Sat. Dec.4, 10am-1pm.
CAROL SINGING on the steps by pupils from Towerbank, Duddingston and St John's Primary Schools. Fri. Dec. 10, 10am-noon.

FUND-RAISING Christmas Fayre with Santa and stalls. Sat. Dec.11, 10am-noon.

PCATS Burns Supper. Sat. Jan. 29, 7.30pm. Look for posters in Kitchener's Deli & Findlay's Butcher.

JUMBLE SALE for East Edinburgh Liberal Democrats. Sat. Feb. 5. 10.30-noon.

ELSEWHERE -

THE COFFEE Morning and Sale on 23 October at Portobello Old Parish Church raised £523 for Christian aid, and Rev Neil Buchanan's famous pancakes were a special attraction.

OPEN SKITTLES NIGHT at the Trotters Club: Sat. Feb. 5 at 7.15pm at the Sheep Heid in Duddingston Village. Entry free - All welcome. For info. call Jim Macdonald on 660 9243.

BURNS SUPPER for Christian Aid, Sat. Jan. 22, 7pm: Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield St. Tickets £12. Call Bert McCall on 669 8040.

PORTOBELLO BURNS CLUB Fri. Jan. 28: Burns Supper, Woodside Hotel, Musselburgh. For tickets call 669 4238 or 9404.

LEARN SALSA LOCALLY WITH NICK. Just turn up at these easy-going classes every Tuesday evening at 7.30pm-9pm at Maggie's Dance Studio by the Jewel Miners Institute on Duddingston Road South. No partner needed. Men especially welcome! £2 goes to help the youngsters in Maggie's other classes. Get fit, support local kids, and have fun. Contact 07803097727 for details. Starts again 11th Jan.

CAFÉ/LOUNGE POPULAR

THE Portobello Old Parish Church Café/Lounge in Bellfield Street has become a landmark meeting place during the past six years. It is open from 10am to 2pm on weekdays and provides refreshments, including Fair Trade goods, in a friendly atmosphere. A short Act of Worship is held at noon each day, with meditation and prayers, and visitors are welcome to attend. Regular visitors come from all over Edinburgh to enjoy this facility, so pop in for a snack when you're shopping on the High Street and you might also make new friends.

CHRISTIAN AID CARRIES ON THE GOOD WORK

PORTOBELLO Christian Aid offer a regular uplift for single cans or packets of food to assist the Fresh Start charity, which enables people to set up a new home under the guidance of The Ark Trust Homeless Project. (Furniture Initiative, Space 44, Sox in the City and Edinburgh Council, among others, share concern for people setting up new homes after living in unsettled circumstance). Contact Bert McCall on 669 8040 or

leave contributions at the Church Café, Bellfield Street between 10am and 2pm on weekdays, or at any church on a Sunday morning.

The annual Service of Carols and Readings, conducted by the Reverend Peter Webster, will be held at St James' Church on Sunday 12 December. A medley of carols will be played by the organist from 7.15pm and people are encouraged to join in and sing as they arrive. The minister

will welcome the congregation and begin the service at 7.30 pm.

Coffee, tea, mince pies and biscuits are on offer in the hall afterwards. Of course, this is an enjoyable evening with a purpose as it gives us an opportunity to help suffering people elsewhere in the world. This year Christian Aid will be sending the proceeds of the collection to relieve hardship in Palestine.

LETTERS

Thanks to POPP.

Dear Ed, I am one of the fortunate 'Old Codgers' picked up on a Tuesday and taken to the Baptist Church Hall in Portobello.

May I, through your columns, say a very big "Thank you" to everyone concerned with this excellent scheme - the Portobello Older People's Project, especially Mrs Rita Aitken, our convener. Rita does a most excellent job organising entertainment and outings, too many to mention here.

Sitting looking at four walls for weeks on end isn't the most exciting pastime. So, needless to say, my Tuesdays out are the only thing I have to look forward to. Many thanks again.

Bill Urquhart, Northfield.



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SCHOOL UNIFORM A SUCCESS

UNIFORM was re-introduced at Portobello High School on 13th August after consultation with parents and staff. All 1500 pupils voted for their favourite design of tie and we now have three, indicating the pupils' year groups (S1-4, S5 or S6) and Houses (Abercorn, Brunstane, Crichton or Duddingston). As a token of our gratitude to the pupils and our commitment to uniform, we gave each pupil a tie free.



Photo by George McMillan

Pupils now wear a white shirt or blouse, black trousers or skirt, tie and black shoes and have accepted the change of attire without much grumbling. Many have even praised the policy: Head Girl, Gaynor Boggon, commented on how smart everyone looks; Grant, S2, said that he liked the fact that "they all look the same, so no-one makes fun of you"; Jamie, another S2 pupil, said wisely: "It makes us feel a part of something special."

Thanks to the support of parents, over 99% of pupils are wearing full uniform and our image in the community has been vastly improved: one elderly lady reportedly said, "I'm usually a wee bit afraid of teenagers, but they look so lovely and approachable in their uniforms that I don't mind talking to them."

George McMillan

TOWERBANK PARK SMART CAMPAIGN

PUPILS demonstrated outside Towerbank Primary School gates every morning for two weeks in November because they are concerned about parent/carer drivers using the school zigzag markings as a drop off point. This is a real hazard as it "blocks vision for oncoming cars and means pupils have to walk between parked cars to get across the road," said a worried P5 eco-rep of the school. We feel it is an accident waiting to happen and hope the campaign helps discourage this illegal practice.

P3-7 pupils held up a banner on the zigzag lines and were delighted with the results: "Nobody has parked on the zigzag lines when we are campaigning" exclaimed a delighted P7 child. Posters and leaflets were handed out and local police have offered their support. We would like to thank parents for their cooperation and hope this continues when the demonstration is over!

Kirsty Rosie, DHT

MBE FOR TOWERBANK HEAD

MRS Joyce Gilmore, Headmistress of Towerbank Primary School, recently received an MBE for her services to education. She went to Buckingham Palace to receive her award, which was presented by Prince Charles who, Mrs Gilmore claims, said that the dress she was wearing was very nice indeed. Well done Mrs Gilmore! We are very proud of you!

Carla Rae & Sean Gray, P7B

NEWS FROM DUDDINGSTON PRIMARY

P7 PUPIL Christen Lauder is the surprised recipient of a Blue Peter Badge.

While on holiday, Christen noticed a dog that looked like the Blue Peter dog Meg. She took a photo of 'Meg' and sent a letter and the photo to the popular children's programme. To her great surprise, the TV cameras, with presenter Konnie, knocked on her classroom door on Wednesday 10th November and presented her with the precious badge. Christen spoke about her surprise award at assembly later that day. She is thrilled with her badge and will be keeping an eye on Blue Peter in the coming weeks.

Well done also to Conor Scott, another P7 pupil, who has been selected for the Edinburgh Area Schools Football side. Considering the large number of pupils who attended the original trials, it is quite an achievement.

David Wright

ARTWORK AT THE BASE

LAST year the Alternative Education Department at Portobello High School held an Art Exhibition of work produced by pupils who attended The Base, working with teacher Nick Guise. Items for sale, including jewellery, stained glass mirrors, sculptures and Christmas decorations, raised £500, of which the pupils donated £200 to the local support organisation 'Womanzone'.

Another exhibition will be held at the beginning of December, with a strong emphasis on work in glass produced by S4 pupils on the Lothian Step Up Programme.

The Base is a unit, unique in Scotland, that works with pupils with a wide range of problems who need support in school.

ST JOHN'S LOSES POPULAR HEAD

AFTER 24 years as Headteacher, Ted Brack left St John's Primary School at the end of September. He will continue as a Headteacher, but rather than being attached to an individual school, he will be based in the City of Edinburgh Council Education Department and will provide support to schools where required.

Mr Brack came from St Margaret's Primary School in South Queensferry and says: "I was happy at St John's from the minute I came into the school and I knew that I would stay for a long time, but I'm not sure I realised I would stay for 24 years! I will miss it greatly."

The school has achieved a lot in that time: the Schools Curriculum Award in 1990, an excellent report by HM Inspectors of Schools in 1992 and successful School Review by the Council Education Department in 2000. In 1994, part of the playground was converted into a garden that is still well-maintained, the school newspaper The St John's Special won The Scotsman Primary School Newspaper of the Year award on a number of occasions, and football and basketball teams have had many successes in local schools' competitions.



Photo by Peter Ross



www.mtv.co.uk

A superb site, filled with a variety of music to suit all tastes from rock chick to bubble gum boy. Information on every band in the charts and on MTV's shows, such as Cribs. Suited for anyone who likes their music.

www.bbc.co.uk/radio1

Everyone loves national Radio 1. Every type of music is accessible. Find out who is number one in the top 40, or who is number 32. You can even listen online to the chart show! You can also listen to Chris Moyles at 9pm on a Saturday. The site is user friendly, and there are many games and activities to do - extraordinary fun.

www.forthone.co.uk

If you want something closer to home with specific Edinburgh details then Forth One is for you. Easy to navigate and fun-filled, the Forth One site gives details of playlists, shows and the Scottish chart.

Catriona Howson

BOOK REVIEW

'The Bunny Bunch Meet the Christmas Bunny' by Stanley Sutherland.

I'm Thomas, age seven, from Portobello and I'd like to recommend this book.

I think it's absolutely brilliant. The characters are cool and funny. They are bobtail rabbits and they live in Old Dosh Meadow. They are named after old British coins (Tupenny, Thrupenny, Tanner, Florin) and have astrological signs on their clothes, because their characters are linked to the planets. The rabbits have a lot to do for Christmas and need help of the magic kind. I think it's great and Mummy agreed with me. She thinks it would make a good Christmas present.

Thomas McCathie-Arthur (Stanley Sutherland is a new author, from Leith, and this is his first book in the series to be published. Available from Browns the Stationers on the Bridges or Clan House, Grove St, or order online at stan@thebunnybunch.com or tel. 657 5265).

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PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS

IT seems to be a little known fact that, apart from the Library (where you have to book a space) there is another way to access computers, the internet or e-mail without having to pay. That's right - it's FREE.

At Portobello Community Centre in Adelphi Grove, every Thursday afternoon from 1- 4pm, there is free access to these services. Our own computer expert will advise you, whether you want to learn to install Windows 98, or you just want to know how to use a computer and have never done so before.

There is no need to be intimidated; those who use the service range from first-time computer users to those who come along and use the service for email/internet/writing letters, in fact anything relating to computers. So, don't be a square! Get down there!

ALSO starting soon -

New Gentle Exercise Class on a Thursday morning.
Digital Camera Workshops starting after Christmas.

If anyone is interested and wishes to register please contact Maggie at the Centre.

All our other activities can be seen on our website www.portobello.cc

JOPPA TENNIS ENJOYS MORE SUCCESS

JOPPA TENNIS has had another successful year with family memberships at over 50, professional coaching sessions and the Summer Play and Play programme proving popular.

Some of Joppa's young tennis hopefuls have already had some success when the Portobello High School team of David Schofield, Kyle Bryceland, Benny Dawson and David Greig won the Edinburgh City Schools championship at the

Meadows.

Due to the success and popularity of Joppa Tennis the nets will remain up, and given enough good weather, members should be able to enjoy some winter tennis.

Volunteers are sought to help in the renovation of the now aging clubhouse, the outside of which needs painting, a job too large for the members alone. Urgent repairs, some painting and a cleanup have already been undertaken.

WINTER BIRDS OF THE PORTOBELLO SHORE

AS the year moves to a close, the Portobello shoreline plays host to many seasonal visitors.

The tidal sands attract a variety of Gulls and form an important feeding ground for many migratory wading birds. The noisy, piebald Oystercatcher can be seen in large numbers, sorting through the tide-wrack for shellfish to prise open with their strong orange beaks. They are joined by the nervous Redshank, and the smaller, urgent Turnstone, flicking through the flotsam in search of tiny invertebrates. The distinctive Curlew, with its long curved beak, probes the mud for juicy lugworms, also sought by the graceful Bar Tailed Godwit, which, like the Turnstone, summers on the barren tundra of the high Arctic.

On the sea, parties of playful Eider Ducks, raised in colonies in East Lothian or Fife, dive for molluscs; other sea-ducks include the Red Breasted Merganser, a Scottish resident that catches small fish with its saw-like bill, and the compact Goldeneye, a Scandinavian nester. The dark coloured Velvet Scoter and the exquisite Long-tailed Duck share the Eider's taste for molluscs; both are Arctic breeders.

Sleek Red Throated Divers, a signature bird of highland lochans in the summer, fish skilfully in the surf alongside Cormorants, Great Crested Grebes, and sometimes the smaller scarcer Slavonian Grebe.

Sean Jacques

COMPOST heaps can be very easy affairs: toss everything into a pile and wait a year until it is rotted just enough to use as a mulch (called a cold heap), which is the method I use. In more elaborate systems everything is stored, then put in layers and monitored daily and, if too dry, water is added to mix in newspapers, etc. This is great if you can do it, as it heats up a lot and kills pathogens, but not many people manage it due to laziness, lack of energy/ability/time, so I take the easy option. The top layer of my heap, being the newest, is pushed aside between October and February and, as the borders are tidied, the compost is taken from the bottom of the heap and spread on the soil. Again, this the easiest way, as this mulching is worked into the soil by worms over the winter. The top unrotted material is then at the bottom of the heap and new stuff, such as weeds, is added throughout the year. Next October you start again.

Once leaves start to fall onto grass areas, cut the grass and the leaves together and pack into plastic bags, wetting the mix if dry, and store under hedges or out-of-way places. This is a two-in-one job: the grass is cut and the mix of leaves and grass makes great leaf mould in about a year. I top-dressed my rhododendrons with this after a dry year in 2003 and they perked up brilliantly. It can also be used to make up your own potting compost in place of peat, which no-one should be buying nowadays anyway as there are plenty of alternatives - ask at the garden centre.

Clear herbaceous perennials that look untidy, but keep some hollow stems. Let children use secateurs, under supervision, to cut a variety of stems into 10cm lengths and tie them in bundles to make bug nests, then poke the nests under bushes or hang in trees. This will help predatory insects like ladybirds and lacewings to survive the winter so they can control insect pests, such as greenfly, next year without the use of pesticides.

Tidy up as much as you can. It is a compromise between the garden looking good and leaving seed heads for birds to enjoy - only you can decide.



PORTOBELLO AUTUMN AQUATHON



2004 Aquathon Series Prize Winners;

THE TRIATHLON Scotland Youth Aquathon Series reached its climax on 24th September when a sunny Portobello was host to the final race in the nine-race series, during which over 200 young people took part. The first race also took place at Portobello and both events were a complete sell-out, with entries closing some weeks beforehand. Portobello had been the first race in this season's series and like that race this too was a complete sell out with entries closing some weeks before the race. Local athletes were well represented in the final positions with Joppa girl Ellen Morton winning the series title for under 9's. and Cameron McPhail of Portobello Amateur Swimming Club taking the under 10 title.

A very well organised final event organised by Edinburgh Racing Cooperative thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part or just watched.

CANADIAN HONOUR FOR PORTOBELLO FP



BROUGHT up in Joppa, 28-year-old Alan Freeman played rugby for Portobello FP until 2001 and also coached mini-rugby. He now lives in Toronto, where he plays for Toronto Scottish RFC. He captained the team this year and lead them to victory in the League and Cup. Alan was recently voted Toronto Rugby Union Player of the Year.

Portobello Stationers

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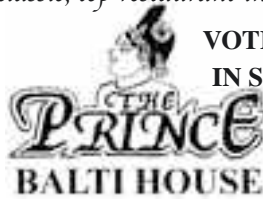
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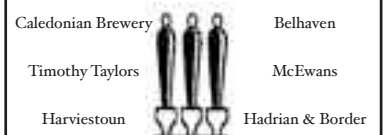
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