

# The Portobello REPORTER

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**The independent voice of Portobello**

Your Community Newspaper produced by local people.

## BIG THINGS ON THE BEACH 2005

THE second public art project by Big Things on the Beach was unveiled on Portobello Beach on Sunday, 31st July and will remain in place until the end of October.

Artists Euan Harvey and Malcolm Hosie have created an installation, 'Progression', based upon the industries which contributed to the growth of Portobello over the past century. The five giant banners (in the form of windsocks) erected along the beach use designs derived from architects' symbols representing, from west to east, clay, glass, brick, paper and salt. Reaching to a height of eight and a half metres, these dramatic and colourful banners will be visible from many parts of the coastline from Musselburgh to Leith. The project is supported by the Scottish Arts Council and City of Edinburgh Council, with practical support and advice from the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop. (See also <http://www.bigthingsonthebeach.org.uk>)



Photo by Peter Ross

Big Things on the Beach is a local arts trust in Portobello, formed by a group of residents in 2003/04 to explore the potential of the beach as a site for the creation and display of public art works by established and emerging artists in Scotland. At the end of October the trust will hold a major exhibition and event in Portobello Community Centre to encourage creative thinking about the area. 'Imagine Portobello', which will be open to everyone with an interest in Portobello, will highlight a range of imaginative perspectives on the future of the area. The event will also launch a proposal for a major community-led bid to the Big Lottery 'Living Landmarks' Fund for Re-aPier, a re-interpretation of Portobello's historic pier for the 21st century.

Damian Killeen

## PORTOBELLO HOST TO SCOTLANDS TOP TRIATHLETES

THIS year's Triathlon included the Scottish Sprint Championship, which resulted in the largest field ever assembled, a record 250 entrants, featuring some of Scotland's top triathletes.

The event started with a 750m swim from the foot of John Street. With a high tide, the sea was calm and clear, but with the temperature at 14°C, wet suits were the order of the day. The first group into the water consisted of all the women entrants, including Scottish Internationalist Alice Hector, and males over 40. The second consisted of males under 40, including race favourites Fraser Cartmell (Stirling Triathlon Club) and Steve Clark (East Fife TC).

After the swim, the athletes mounted their bikes to navigate the technically demanding 20km course round the streets of Portobello, including the hairpin bend at Eastfield. Then came the 5km run along the Promenade, from Joppa to the Dog and Cat Home and back.



Photo by Peter Ross

Cartmell came in first in a time of 00:59:00, beating Clark by five seconds, and Michael Cunningham (Edinburgh Triathletes) by 20 seconds, with the first seven men finishing within 60 seconds of each other.

Alice Hector won the ladies race in 01:04:48, with Fiona Lothian (E.Fife TC) second in 01:07:47 and Beth Sadler

(Edinburgh RC The Bicycle Works) third in 01:08:44.

Race Director, Stuart Young, summed things up: "We had a terrific day of racing with one of the closest finishes seen for a long time, which set a great pace for all the other athletes", he said. "Hopefully, this is just the start of many big races to come to Portobello".

## 'PORTY PARTY' LIVES UP TO ITS NAME



Photo by Margaret Drysdale

"AN extravaganza of local and international talents" was promised on the publicity leaflet for the entertainments organized by Portobello Open Door (POD) on the afternoon of Sunday 14th August, and that was what they delivered.

Hundreds of people came down to Portobello Promenade to enjoy the show, "boogie to the free entertainment" and meet and talk with friends.

There were five hours of performances, starting with 'Beyond the Pale' a 5-piece klesmer band playing a varied set of Central European Jewish wedding music, followed by some mesmerizing Egyptian belly-dancing. Later on, Orchestra del Sol, a 12-piece Gypsy brass band, played sunshine music from around the world, accompanied during one number by a juggler who performed to the music.

The ceilidh band 'Clutching at Straws' encouraged some lively dancing on the Prom and the African drummers 'Waa Sylla' rounded things off with some foot-stomping rhythms.

Portobello Rotary Club set up amusement stalls, including a coconut shy, face painting and fortune telling, while a bouncy castle and a fire engine provided more children's entertainment. There were also dragon puppets and a circus skills workshop. 'Party Planet' donated two raffle prizes of a trip in a Limo around Edinburgh, which were well sought after.

It was, as promised "a great day out for all the family" and a superb community event and, as a bonus, the sun shone all afternoon.

For more information on POD, see [www.the-pod.org](http://www.the-pod.org)

B M

## SEASIDE AWARD CLOSER?

PORTOBELLO Beach was recently highly recommended for its excellent water quality in the latest Good Beach Guide, and regular enforcement work by Council Environmental Wardens is helping to improve the cleanliness of the beach and prom. They carry out twice-weekly patrols, making regular use of a mobile CCTV unit, and over the past 12 months they have issued 25 fixed penalty notices for dog fouling and nine for littering.

This has led to a marked improvement which has been shown in recent independent cleanliness surveys carried out by Keep Scotland Beautiful. Cllr Maureen Child says: "The presence of the Environmental Wardens has definitely made a difference. Those who use the beach are very aware of who the Wardens are and regularly give them information with regard to offenders."

A planned dog ban on a part of the beach will not now go ahead, however, as the new Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 presumes in favour of access for all. This would not prevent the beach from achieving a Seaside Award, as Keeping Scotland Beautiful, who administer the scheme, have amended their criteria accordingly.

A section of the beach has also been adopted by Portobello High School, Towerbank Primary and the Woodcraft Folk, who will take part in regular clean-ups and carry out litter monitoring.

**PORTY PROFILE No. 20**  
**DAVID TURNER**

David Turner and his wife Ida have lived in Portobello since 1991. As a member of the Religious Society of Friends, better known as the Quakers, David believes strongly in social justice. He is a Trustee of EverGreen, a local group which, while operating as a volunteer-run goods exchange shop, enabled vulnerable adults to gain skills and develop self-esteem. He is also secretary of the local Amnesty group, which holds assemblies and interactive classes with pupils at the local secondary schools. As convener of the local churches' Peace and Justice Group, David is involved, alongside Christian Aid, in promoting social justice and examining the causes and consequences of conflict. Once again, he is fundraising for the Rock Trust, which supports young homeless people, by taking part in their annual Sleep Out, held in November.



Photo by Margaret Munro

David is also a campaigner against nuclear weapons and their proliferation and has been arrested while taking non-violent action against them.

Although he began his working life in Glasgow as a painter and decorator, David re-trained as a probation officer, later working in Galashiels as a social worker and training officer. He then moved to Nairn to work with the Church of Scotland as supervisor of their residential homes in the Highlands and Islands, where he aimed to change working practices and how staff viewed their jobs. Four years before retirement, David and Ida decided they did not want to stay in the Highlands and moved to Queensbay Lodge in Joppa, where David was officer in charge. He described this as "a very satisfying job and one I wished I had taken earlier, as it gave me a great sense of fulfilment".

In addition to all his other commitments, he is a member of Portobello Community Council, which he thinks "gets on with the job", and says he feels a sense of belonging in the community of Portobello. He relaxes by working on his allotment, growing organic fruit and vegetables.

Margaret Munro

**The Portobello Reporter is produced by volunteers, with contributions in this issue from 40 local people. If you have a story to tell or an event to publicise, or would like to advertise, call 669 3466 or email us at portobelloreporter@talk21.com. Deadline for the next issue is 7th November.**

**GAVIN STRANG MP**

is available to meet constituents on the second Friday of the month in PORTOBELLO TOWN HALL between 7.30pm and 8.30pm.

You may also make an appointment to discuss a problem and 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 email: [gillana@parliament.uk](mailto:gillana@parliament.uk) Website [www.gavinstrangmp.co.uk](http://www.gavinstrangmp.co.uk)

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**NEW ONLINE FACILITY**

THE latest addition to the 'Portobello Online' Forum is 'pBay'. To be honest, it is more of a 'ring and buy' affair than an online auction, but we just couldn't resist the pun! If you

have any items you would like to buy, sell, swap or just give away then this is the place for you. Maximum value is £100. Available at [www.porty.org.uk](http://www.porty.org.uk)

Bob Jefferson

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL LOOKS TO THE FUTURE**

THIS year the Community Council has drawn up an outline plan with over 50 ideas for improving Portobello. Some are straightforward (supporting Neighbourhood Watch schemes, the recent Triathlon and the Porty Party, restoring the Police Station clock). Others are more difficult (a continuous coastal path, reopening Portobello Station).

The 'bigger picture' for Portobello involves looking at the whole area: What is best for the Scottish Power site? Should a new Library be built on part of the 5-a-side site? Can we improve the Promenade towards Seafield? Can we preserve Portobello Golf Course and other leisure facilities? A PUBLIC

MEETING will be held at the Town Hall on Wednesday 12th October at 7pm (doors open 6.30pm) to discuss some of the key issues affecting Portobello in the next few years.

Meetings are held on the last Monday of the month at 7.30pm in the Baptist Church Hall in Portobello High Street. Members of the public may attend and issues of local concern may be put on an agenda for discussion by calling 669 6823 or by e-mailing [N.Stroud@ed.ac.uk](mailto:N.Stroud@ed.ac.uk). Minutes can be seen at the Library, the CAB, in the noticeboard on the Town Hall railings or on [www.porty.org.uk](http://www.porty.org.uk)

Robert Gatliff, Chairman

**BEWARE BOGUS CALLERS**

WE have recently had reports of bogus officials operating in the area. I would like to take this opportunity to remind our senior residents of the need to be vigilant when visited by any unexpected callers, male or female, who purport to be from the likes of utility companies or other official bodies. If the visit is out of the blue, about a water leak or burst, or faulty electrics, for example, or from the Social Services, then householders should insist of being shown identification. If you have the slightest doubt, before letting any caller in, check with the organisation they claim to represent through the main switchboard of Scottish Power, Scottish Water, Edinburgh District Council, for example, all of which can be found in the yellow pages. Genuine representatives of these companies will not mind waiting a minute or two.

On a lighter note, Portobello now has a new Chief Inspector, Donnie MacKinnon, replacing Jim McBriety who has moved on to pastures new. Donnie was the Inspector at Drylaw Mains Police Station along the coast, is well versed in the ethics of community policing, and is relishing taking up the reins of the East Local Policing Area.

Insp. Norman Ward

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**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**GARDEN AID:** This Council service is available from late March to late October to help elderly and disabled people to maintain their garden if there is nobody in the household over 16 and able to help. The service is for residents over 80 years old, and those over 60 or with a disability who are in receipt of housing and/or council tax benefit. To apply, write to Garden Aid, City of Edinburgh Council, Culture and Leisure Department, 23-25 Waterloo Place, EH1 3DH, phone 529 7865 or e-mail [sandra.creamer@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.creamer@edinburgh.gov.uk)

**MARIONVILLE FIRE STATION TO CLOSE:** Lothian and Borders Fire Service are re-organising to enable them to increase their community safety work and their capacity to fight fires. They say there will be no change to the time they take to attend and put out fires. The re-organisation will include the closure of the Marionville Fire Station, which has caused a lot of local concern. The full plan is available on [www.lbfire.org.uk](http://www.lbfire.org.uk)

There is a 90 day consultation period, from 1st August, and comments can be sent to L&B Fire Service HQ, Lauriston Place, EH3 9DE, or to [enquiries@lbfire.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lbfire.org.uk)

**THE SUNSHINE CLUB** would like to thank everyone who responded to their appeal for a music centre, in the last issue of the Reporter. They are now up and dancing again!

**THE ROTARY CLUB** of Portobello raised £800 on the amusement stalls they ran as part of the 'Porty Party' on the Prom on Sunday 14th August. The money will be donated to Mercy Ships and local charities.

**BEACH CLEAN:** Portobello Woodcraft Folk, Towerbank Primary and Portobello High School have adopted Portobello Beach under the Marine Conservation Society's 'Adopt a Beach' scheme. They have arranged a clean-up for Saturday 17th September and all members of the community are invited to take part. For more information call Jane Lewis on 669 5591, email: [jane@gn.apc.org](mailto:jane@gn.apc.org) or see [www.adoptabeach.org.uk](http://www.adoptabeach.org.uk)

**BOOK GROUP:** The book group meets in the community room at the library at 6.30pm on the first Tuesday of each month. The book chosen for October's meeting is *Vernon God Little* by DBC Pierre; for November, 'e' by Matt Beaumont; and *The Time Traveller's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger for December. All books are available at the library.

## UTILITIES LEAVE US IN A HOLE

UTILITIES companies have a legal right to dig up our roads and pavements, to repair or renew equipment, but their contractors don't always leave them in the condition in which they found them. These companies are increasingly ignoring their responsibility to ensure the work is done properly.

In 2004/5, over 200 holes a week were dug. Core samples taken at repair sites showed Scottish Water and Scottish Power had a pass rate of just 20.3% and 29% respectively. This means that between these two alone, 1190 holes dug were likely to end up as potholes or sunken parts of the pavement. And that's just one year's bad workmanship.

The Council has put more resources into core sampling and inspection to try to ensure these people do their job properly and to recover Council costs when they don't.

Neither the Police nor the Procurator Fiscal is keen to prosecute companies, even though they are breaking the law by failing to reinstate surfaces to the right standard. The Council is therefore taking this up with the Scottish Executive, alongside other Councils, to get a change in legislation and give them more powers to hold utility companies and their contractors accountable.

Cllr Maureen Child

### LETTER

Dear Editor,  
I received my last 'Reporter' and sent it on to my son, who is meeting up with me in Joppa in September to see his Mother's home town again.

Hats off to the group that is trying to kill a supermarket in

the Kings Road area.

We are doing the same thing here in a lovely little area outside St Catharines, only this is a 20 storey condominium complex. 600 people gathered last night to 'state their views'. It's the same the world over!

Cheers!

Doreen Jukes, Ontario, Canada

## ENJOY THE ART OF CHINA PAINTING

CHINA painting has always had a considerable following in Scotland, but in the late 1970s lack of supplies, firing facilities and teachers put it in the doldrums. Late in 1981, however, it was revived by porcelain artists from all over Scotland, led by Margaret Beaumont, a teacher in Callander. This group formed the nucleus of the Scottish China Painters Association, with its base in Stirling. The Association aims to share knowledge and ideas to promote interest in the craft of hand-painting china, and meetings and seminars are held across Scotland.

The Portobello branch meet at Moira Park and the new winter term will run from 15th September to 8th December. An exhibition of their work will be held in Portobello Library from 12th to 26th September.

New members are always welcome. For more information call 669 3975.

## PORTOBELLO'S CHIMES ARE BACK

THE restoration of Portobello Police Station has been completed and the building has emerged from its veiling in sparkling form. The work entailed the replacement of a great deal of stone and lead-work, much of it detailed and ornately designed.

At the same time, the clock was refurbished and the chiming mechanism reinstated, so for the first time in living memory, the clock now chimes on the hour. This was partly funded by Portobello Community Council, with the aid of a grant from City of Edinburgh Council's Local Development Committee.

Dating from 1877, the building was designed by the architect Robert Paterson. It was Portobello's second Town Hall (the first Town Hall building is now occupied by Portobello Baptist Church), and in addition to the Council Chamber, it contained Council Offices and a Police Office.

After the amalgamation of Portobello with Edinburgh in 1896, the present Town Hall was built, opening in 1914. The upper part of the second building then became Portobello's library, a function it served until the present library in Rosefield Avenue was built in the early 1960s. Since then, the police have occupied the whole of the building.

Bob Jefferson

**WEDDING BELLS!** Have you heard? Library staff members Jim and Heather will tie the knot at Portobello Town Hall on Saturday 17th September. All their colleagues, family and friends will be there at the happy ceremony, followed by a ceilidh. We all wish them the very best for their future.



**BOB THE BUILDER** – Our compulsory Access Improvements to the building will be almost completed when this paper comes out, and we will have a lift, automatic doors, and a new disabled WC upstairs. Thanks to all libraries staff, Town Hall keeper Andrew Craig, customers, and contractors for bearing with us. The automatic doors will help busy mums and dads with pushchairs to get in, and the new lift will help many people who couldn't get upstairs before. The Book Groups, computer sessions, Kumon classes, Monday Toy Library, and Weight Watchers sessions will soon be re-starting up there; details of dates and times will be on display in the library.

WE were sorry that the school holidays went by when we were in the Van; we certainly had fewer children over the summer as a result. However, 140 of the most stalwart crew joined our "Reading Voyage" and won their gold medals, well done to them.

**A NEW LIBRARY?** Many customers have been asking us how we feel about the suggestion that a new library might be built on the former Powerleague 5-a-side site in the High Street. The present renovations have provided improved access, but the building itself does not offer scope for modernising services. If a new building goes ahead, we would be able to offer a larger, modern and improved Children's library, essential to attract our future customers. We would also have a new purpose-built local history resource, to be shared by interested local groups, and a bigger and better computer study area. There would also be comprehensive investment in new stock and fittings. As a professional library service we would strongly advise our local community to happily accept a brand new library if it is offered. Plans and documents drawn up for public consultation would be on display in the library to allow everyone to make their views known.

Joyce Campbell  
Portobello Library

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# LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND

Hi Folks,

In 1969 while a schoolboy, I spent a lot of time on a friend's farm north of here where I live in Taranaki, New Zealand. One day while looking through a very old woolshed I discovered a sea chest. Of course I naturally had to peek inside, and it contained clothes and photo albums, receipts and personal belongings and all seemed to be intact and undisturbed. My friend's very elderly father told me it had belonged to a neighbour who had left it there with his parents for safekeeping when he left for Egypt in 1914. The man's name was Henry Roger Farmer, and he was killed in Palestine in 1917. Even at an early age I resolved to try to find out about this man and if any relatives were still alive in Scotland. Well a lot of years have gone by and my story on this man's life here is nearing an end. His father was William Farmer of Stirling who died in 1899. Henry's mother was Mary Jane McBeath Craig Farmer, who shifted to Portobello from Stirling around 1904 with her youngest son Charles to live with her eldest son William Sydney Farmer at 8 Park Avenue. William Sydney Farmer was a court solicitor who in the First World War was an officer in the 4th Battalion Royal Scots. He married Flora Eunice



Photo courtesy of Graeme Duckett

Henry Farmer in relaxed mood

Harmer of Portobello in 1917 and died in 1936. Charles became an office clerk, and by 1920 is recorded as a first class clerk for the Scottish Board of Health. He was by 1932 recorded as the head of the branch of the Department of Health for Scotland. He married Prudence Ford of Duddingston Crescent, Portobello in 1920. He died in 1932 aged 45.

Henry Roger Farmer was the middle son of William and Mary. In 1903 he emigrated to Australia to stay with his aunts and cousins and have a look around but later sailed to our east coast via Auckland and decided to look for

work. Times were tough here at that time, and the only work he could find was contract work which was cleaning drains and ditches and fencing. As luck would have it, he knocked on the door of an old Scotsman who seemed to instantly take a shine to him, and he was taken under his wing and given lodgings. Here he worked the farm with the Scotsman's three sons where he learnt all the necessary jobs a pioneer needed to know when farming new ground. He then moved to Taranaki on the west coast where I live. It's a very fertile region and now famous worldwide for dairying. Land was up

for ballot, and going for a reasonable price. Henry balloted and got a 250 acre block of free standing virgin bush. It was so dense that he had to cut his way in and clear some ground to pitch a tent. By 1912 he had cleared 75 acres of it. Henry was to ballot for and get another 250 acres by 1913. All this time Henry had to work where he could to pay back the Advance to Settlers mortgage to the Government. He laboured on the road building scheme, working for the local contractor, with whom he eventually left the sea chest, and felling trees for farmers.

In 1914 he enlisted for the war and this is where my story ends. Lance-Corporal Henry Roger Farmer of the New Zealand Mounted Machine Gun Squadron died, aged 32, on 7th November 1917 after service in the Dardanelles and the Palestine and Sinai Campaigns. He is buried in the Kantara Military Cemetery in Egypt.

What I'd dearly love to find is anyone in the Portobello and Edinburgh areas who may be related to the people I've mentioned, to share his story with. Henry must have relatives still living who know nothing of his life. Any information will be gratefully received.

Regards  
Graeme Duckett.

## GALA DAY PHOTOGRAPH

WE received the following response by e-mail from Canada to our request for information on the Gala Day photograph published in the last issue of the paper:

A friend of mine sent me the 25th edition of "The Reporter" and I was thrilled as a former resident of Bath Street. I believe that the year was 1952 but cannot be sure as to the first Gala Day (just know I was there). I'm the one on the extreme left of the photo holding the shield (Betty Kirk) and I don't know if you have had any replies but we think as follows:

L-R: Betty Kirk, Jeanette Holligan, -?-, Anne Hutson, Margot Swinton (Queen), Ella McCaig, Norah Marshall, Ruth Nicolson, -?-

Behind: -?-, Rosalind Curie  
Not sure if these names are right but do recognise all the faces.

I really enjoyed reading this issue of the paper and congratulations on your 25th edition. We used to call Portobello "Scotland's Riviera" or "the Home of the mystery tours". I have many many happy memories of all the buses parked at the "Figgie Burn" (as we called it) and how busy Porty used to be during the Glasgow Fair, the fishwives on the corner of Tower Street selling "buckies" (ugh) and "the shows".

Last time I was home it was the year 2000 and did find it changed, yet not changed. I could still find my way about. Hope this has helped and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,  
Betty Robertson (nee Kirk)

## Wm Morrison (Portobello)

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### INTERVIEW SESSIONS



Susan Deacon will be available;  
on the **last Monday of each month**  
**6pm - 7pm in PORTOBELLO TOWN HALL**  
and on the **first Thursday of the month**  
**6.30pm - 7.30pm in PIERSHILL LIBRARY**  
She also holds regular interview sessions at other locations in her constituency.  
For details please contact 0131-669 6446

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# SCOTTISH COOPERATIVE WOMEN'S GUILD

THE Portobello branch of the Scottish Cooperative Women's Guild is one of the oldest organisations still active in Portobello. It was formed in the decade before the First World War when the movement was growing very rapidly. The first branch had opened in 1892, born from the idea that working class women were being denied a say in the running of the cooperative movement in Scotland despite being its mainstay through the money they spent in its stores in cities, towns and villages all over the country. The guilds offered members a forum where they could discuss events and issues of the day and an outlet for their thoughts and opinions, and also had a strong social aspect.



Syllabus from Membership Card of late Elizabeth Durkin who was a guild member from 1920 to 1970.

In the October 1927 to March 1928 session members of the Portobello branch turned their attention to a variety of subjects at their Thursday evening meetings in the Bath Street Hall. They discussed the need for a Scottish Parliament, employment of married women, the work of the Royal Infirmary and the Edinburgh water supply. There were also a Burns Night, a number of social evenings and a Whist Drive and Dance in aid of old age pensioners.

Portobello is now one of a mere handful of branches left in Edinburgh and the Lothians after the movement went into rapid decline all over Scotland from its peak of 484 branches and 43,000 members at the end of the Second World War.

Archie Foley

# ST ANDREW'S AMBULANCE CORPS PORTOBELLO TOWN COMPANY

WATCHING the Victory Celebrations on television prompted me to try and write a little tribute to the stalwarts who founded the Portobello Town Company of the St Andrew's Ambulance Corps.

Before war broke out in 1939 many preparations were made to equip communities for any incidents. Training classes for Air Raid Wardens and classes for First Aid were organised to which the community responded well. Local doctors contributed their time and knowledge in training and local authorities organised the venues. By September 1939 Portobello Town Hall was the main First Aid Post and continued as such until the war ended. Dr Elizabeth Baxendine and local GP colleagues organised the training of First Aiders and agreed in 1941/42 to form a company of the St Andrew's Ambulance Corps to be known as the Portobello Town Company. The First Aid Post was manned 24 hours a day and much experience was gained from injuries treated at the post.

In 1945 the meetings were transferred to the community hall in Pipe Street. Classes were well attended and not only did the members carry out duties in Portobello but

were to be seen in uniform at theatres, cinemas, football matches citywide. One regular duty in Portobello during the summer months was a First Aid Post manned by volunteers in the evenings and on Saturdays and Sundays in the Toddlers' Hut. When the weather was good they were kept particularly busy as many lost children were brought to the post until their anxious parents arrived to claim them.

Changes in meeting places have taken place over the years and the company currently meets in accommodation rented from St Philip's Church.

We owe so much to the doctors, particularly Dr Baxendine, who kept an unfailing interest in the company, and her colleagues Dr Wright and latterly Dr Elizabeth Laird. Many members of the community will remember the service they gave to the community.

CWC

**BOOK SIGNING:** Margaret Munro and Archie Foley will be signing copies of their new book *Images of Scotland, Portobello and Duddingston* at the Dalriada Bar/Restaurant, 77 The Promenade on Wednesday 23rd November from 7.30 pm. Copies will be available for purchase on the night.

# PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

THE new session got underway on 7th September with an illustrated talk by Simon Fairnie. The title was *Fisherrow - Story of a Fishing Community* and, as a member of a long established Fisherrow family, it was a story that Simon was well qualified to tell.

There is no guest speaker on Wednesday 5th October as the society is presenting a slideshow, *Images of Portobello and Duddingston*. This will illustrate life, work and leisure in days gone by in both communities and will include many pictures from a soon to be published book compiled by Margaret Munro and Archie Foley for Tempus Publishing's *Images of Scotland* series.

Local resident, George Anderson will be the speaker on 2nd November. George has recently retired from a senior post at the Royal Botanical Gardens and has titled his talk, *A Life in Horticulture*. He is President of the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society and also appears on BBC Scotland's Beechgrove Garden.

The last speaker before the Christmas and New Year break is archaeologist and authority on Scottish Pottery, George Haggarty. George, who also lives locally, will describe with the aid of slides, how recent finds while excavating in Portobello and East Lothian are changing long held views about the early history and nature of Scottish East Coast pottery. This talk is on Wednesday 7th December and George will be happy to view pieces brought on the night.

All the meetings are held in St John's Church Hall in Brighton Place and begin at 7 pm. They are open to non-members but a donation to society funds would be appreciated. The annual subscription to join the society is a mere £5.00.

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# FOCUS ON GROUPS

## PORTOBELLO BOWLING CLUB

**THE** club, in Lee Crescent, Portobello, was established in 1872, and after 128 years of male-only membership, it opened its doors to lady members at the start of the Millennium. Now, five years later, the enthusiastic lady members held their first championship tournament, the Ladies Championship Cup, on a glorious summer's day in July, playing each other in a round robin over eight hours. The winner was Jeanette McIlwraith, with Grace Henderson the runner-up. The Cup was donated and presented by Tom King, past President of the club and one of the oldest playing members. The event was well supported by the male membership, who covered all the duties required on the day.

The club also runs a very successful junior section, with some of the young members now playing with the senior teams. We are always looking for new junior members, ages 7 to 16, and would welcome any other new members to the club.

For more information call 657 1822, or 316 7416 in business hours.

Jack Level

## BOOK REVIEW

**PORTOBELLO BATHING POOL** features on the cover and as a case study in a new publication by English Heritage. *Liquid Assets: The Lidos and Open Air Swimming Pools of Britain* by Janet Smith is a well-researched and fascinating study of the development of these outdoor facilities, and contains many illustrations and photographs in black and white, and colour.

Tracing early developments from Georgian and Victorian times, the 1920s and 1930s, when Portobello pool was built, are cited as the zenith of the building of lidos and pools across Britain. The 'cult of physical fitness', the growing belief that sunlight and fresh air produced healthier bodies, and the acceptability of mixed bathing that allowed families to swim together, encouraged their construction. Post-war, the vagaries of the British weather and the advent of cheap foreign holidays contributed to the demise of open air bathing in Britain. Lidos and pools increasingly needed large subsidies to remain open and local councils found them uneconomic.

The case studies detail the history of pools around Britain, including Stonehaven and Portobello in Scotland. Stonehaven is still operational, run between Aberdeenshire Council and the Friends of Stonehaven Pool. Portobello was an outstanding example of Art Deco design and incorporated many unusual features, in particular its wave-making machine and remarkable grandstand. For those who remember Portobello 'pond', this chapter is a poignant reminder of what was lost; for those who are too young, it provides an illustrated in-depth description of a popular recreational facility. The assistance of Portobello History Society and Archie Foley is acknowledged.

Although Portobello Bathing Pool has been lost, various lidos and pools have been saved and the fight to preserve others continues. This book provides ample evidence for saving those still in existence and at £14.99 is excellent value for money.

Margaret Munro

(Smith, Janet: *Liquid Assets. The Lidos and open air swimming pools of Britain*. English Heritage 2005. £14.99 ISBN 0954744500).

## 65th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

**BRUCE** and Jean Chalmers of Portobello have just celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary. A church wedding could not be arranged, as Bruce was on short leave from the Royal Navy, so they were married on 3rd August, 1940 at the manse of Rev. Archie Morrison at 11 Royal Terrace. A reception had been planned in Portobello, but the Germans decided to bomb the Power Station and the area was evacuated. The food and drinks had to be left behind, but Bruce persuaded the War Warden to let him get his accordion for the entertainment. He unloaded it, filled the case with as much drink as he could carry, and the party moved to a safer location.



The newly-weds made a pact that if Bruce returned from the war, they would celebrate each special anniversary with a party.

This year's celebration was extra-special as Bruce and Jean's daughter and son, grandchildren and great-grandchildren travelled from California and Perth, Australia to attend a party at the Masonic Lodge in Portobello.

Julie and Brian Smith

## PORTOBELLO AMNESTY GROUP

**THE** Group's display in the window of Portobello Library in July highlighted the conferring of the Freedom of Edinburgh on Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of Burma's National Democratic Movement, with a special feature on her unyielding but non-violent opposition to the brutal military regime, despite many years of house arrest and the imprisonment of thousands of her supporters. A stand in the foyer giving information on Refugee Week was well patronized, and about 20 people wrote messages of support for refugees' rights.

The Group also wrote to the President of Iraq reminding him of Amnesty's concerns that the new constitution should respect human rights, guarantee equality for women and exclude the death penalty. Letters were also sent to Iran

and Turkey concerning the execution of children, and to Gavin Strang, MP on ratification by the UK of the Convention on Human Trafficking.

In November, an exhibition will be mounted in the Library of images of the effects of the global arms trade, to raise public awareness of the need for an international arms control treaty.

This is a critical time for human rights defenders worldwide, as some of the most valued rights come under scrutiny in the name of security. In the words of a Chilean man, tortured by General Pinochet, "Surrender, anywhere, of painfully won human rights empowers the enemies of these rights everywhere".

David Turner

## WHAT'S ON

**'POEMS & PINTS'** nights are restarting at the 'Dalriada' restaurant/bar on Portobello Prom (formerly the Bedford House Hotel), at 8 p.m. on the last Wednesday of each month from 28th September. There will be a token payment of £1 on the door for the local community arts charity Portobello Open Door. Bring your own and/or anybody else's work to read, or just sit and listen. It will be a very relaxed atmosphere with regular breaks for drinks...All welcome.

**EXHIBITION** by Milton Quilters, Saturday 8th October, 10am - 4pm, Portobello Old Parish Church Halls, Bellfield St. Admission £2.

**ART EXHIBITION** by the St James Art Group, Portobello Library, Monday 5th to Friday 30th September.

**EXHIBITION** by Portobello Branch of Scottish China Painters Association, Portobello Library, September 12th-26th.

## TOWN HALL

**SEPT:**  
**TAI CHI WORKSHOP**, Fri 9th, 10am-9pm. For info. Call 666 1877.

**OCT:**  
**PORTOBELLO FLORAL ART CLUB** new season starts, Wed 7th, 7.30pm. All welcome.

**PUBLIC MEETING** on key issues affecting Portobello in the next few years, Fri 12th, 7-9pm (doors open 6.30pm).

**NOV:**  
**COFFEE MORNING & SALE**, Brunstane Bowling Club, Sat. 19th, 10am-12noon.

**BLOOD DONOR SESSIONS**, Wed 30th, 2.30-4.30 and 5.30-7.30pm.

**KICK BOXING** every Tuesday & Thursday, 6.30-8.30pm.

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## BOWLED OVER BY YOUNG TALENT



Photo by Brenda Molony

Portobello Outdoor Bowling Club juniors beat Jessfield Bowling Club 44 shots to 18 to win the East Edinburgh Junior Crime Prevention Shield on Sunday 14th August. PC Kenny Owen of Portobello Police is seen here presenting the shield to team skip Philip Harper.

## PUPILS' ART PROJECT WINS AWARD

PORTOBELLO High School were runners-up to Drumchapel High, Glasgow, in the final of the Scottish Education Awards held at Glasgow Pacific Quay in June. Over 500 secondary schools entered.

Portobello's submission in the 'Schools for All' category was from the Alternative Education Department, where pupils on the Lothian Step Up programme worked with teacher Nick Guise to plan an Art Exhibition and a sale of their work. The pupils learned about working with adults and improved their communication skills and employability. The sale raised £911 and donations were made to Magdalene, Northfield and Portobello Community Centres.

Drumchapel High, a designated school for asylum seekers, formed a 'Buddies Club' where pupils can make friends, share interests and discuss problems.



Photo by Peter Ross

A GROUP of children who attended the Portobello Churches' Summer Holiday Club in July, proudly display some of their artwork. The club was held in Portobello Old Parish Church Hall.

## HOLY ROOD PUPILS VISIT LOMBETA



A GROUP of 10 senior pupils and four members of staff have just returned from visiting Holy Rood High School's partner school, Lombeta Secondary, in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro. They spent a week living with families in Legho, a nearby village with which St John's Parish is connected. The following week they stayed in Lombeta, meeting and sharing with pupils there. The relationship between Holy Rood and Lombeta began in 2001 and this is the third group to travel out.

As the group returned to

Scotland, six former Holy Rood pupils arrived at Lombeta to help out in the present teacher shortage in English, Physics and Maths. After this experience of textbook and equipment-free teaching they will climb Kilimanjaro.

Four Lombeta pupils will travel to Holy Rood in November to join classes and experience the life and culture of Scotland and Portobello.

The Pupil Council at Holy Rood has set up a company, 'Lombeta inc.', to market products ranging from

personalised computer mice to artworks. The production side is complemented by 'Lombeta Events', a branch of the company which offers discos and themed evenings.

Mike Knox

## TODDLERS WALK

THE Portobello Toddlers Hut would like to say "thank you" to all our friends, family and the local community, who have given their support in making this year's Toddlers Walk a great success. Seven adults and 20 children walked along the Prom, up Bellfield Street, along the High Street, down the side of the police station and back to the Toddlers Hut in Beach Lane. Through sponsorship and donations we managed to raise the fantastic sum of £447.00, the single largest amount raised since the Toddlers Walk was established 25 years ago. Well done toddlers! And well done Portobello!

The Toddlers Hut is a parent-led play group who are always looking for volunteers. If you have either experience in fundraising, or perhaps would like to be part of the committee, or have a talent that is waiting to be discovered, then contact the Portobello Toddlers Hut on 669 6849.

Gill French, Secretary.

## MR TOAD'S SEASIDE HOLIDAY



Photo by Brenda Molony

MR TOAD'S visit to Portobello beach in August was arranged by sand sculptors Esculturas de Arena, who have constructed lots of other amazing sculptures on beaches around the world. Martin Palek and Milan Starovic from the Czech Republic were assisted by Antia Puentes Corral from Spain.

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## PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS

AT the AGM in May we introduced revised plans for the rebuild on the Adelphi Grove site. Details are in the Centre; drop in and see them and make your comments.

AFTER a busy summer we are now looking forward to the Autumn programme, with many old favourites, and some additions: The Pension Service will run on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month - 2.30-4.30 for advice on pensions. Just call in.

On Thursday afternoons Stewart will help with computer queries, and independent computer access is available 9.30-1.30 each morning, except Wednesday.

Bevs Babes is continuing, so if you want to find your 'get-up-and-go' again, come along to this noisy Gentle Exercise class.

Yoga for Women, Fri.10-11am, £3 per session. Free creche.

For full details of the Programme, or more information contact Maggie at the Centre on 669 8275, enquires@portobello.cc, look on the website www.portobello.cc or just turn up on any morning except Wednesdays, when you can speak to her in person.

## OUR MAN AT THE WORLD MASTERS

LOCAL musician Colin Hepburn (on the right) won a gold medal in the Men's Doubles badminton event at the World Masters Games in Edmonton, Canada, in July. He competed with over 800 others to win the 55 to 60-year-old category with partner David Barr from Glasgow, in straight sets. This was remarkable as he was only two weeks short of qualifying for the 60-65 category.



Colin takes up the story: "The World Masters Games is the biggest 4-yearly international multi-sports festival, with three categories in each discipline and 5-year age groups from 35 to 85. This year it attracted over 21,000 participants from over 100 countries. Given that there are 100 million Chinese and badminton is their main sport, it's not exactly a walk in the park to win something

When we arrived an International BBQ was arranged to meet each other, and after a few beers, someone suggested I roll out the piano we spotted earlier and let them see a good Scottish knees-up. Every country now has karaoke, so they all knew the words in English, and I'm now known as 'Mr Piano Man' in international sporting circles.

My partner is good, so I sneakily thought we might do well, until I saw all the Asian countries in the hall. But we just got stuck in. We beat the New Zealanders in the semi-finals and an Indian/Chinese pair in a very nervy final. The sport was tremendous and just to be there was a wonderful experience. Next World Games is in Sydney, 2009. If you're a sport nut like me, you'd love it.

AUTUMN is a good time to assess what's been good and bad and to make notes for next year. I didn't grow enough night-scented stock, so that's first on my list for next year, and I won't be growing lettuce over my asparagus again, because I forgot exactly where the clumps were and knocked off a few of the new spears.

It's been a good year for vegetables and fruit. My biggest success has been my crop of apricots and figs, both grown in the greenhouse. They are easy to grow and, because they're exotic, they seem especially delicious. No pesticides, herbicides or artificial fertilisers were used, so they can be picked fresh for breakfast straight from the tree and warmed by the sun - what a treat.

Keep harvesting vegetables like courgettes, peas and beans while still young, as they are more tender then; if you can't eat them at the time either give them away, freeze, or as a last resort compost.

The therapeutic benefits of gardening are well known, especially for older and less able members of the community: the gentle movements involved help maintain a healthy brain as well as body. I am disabled and am positive that the garden has helped me to continue to recuperate, but I have had to find ways of doing things differently. As I don't have a good grip I find kitchen scissors are ideal for light jobs such as cutting back chives and deadheading flowers with light stems. It's quicker and easier, except for roses where I resort to very small light secateurs. Many jobs can be split into little bits, and if it takes all week to prune a shrub, so be it. Another of my favourite new tools is a very lightweight wheelbarrow which can be wheeled easily to where you're working, and mine has lots of pockets for bits of string, scissors, and so on. I use a small watering-can rather than a large one and split the watering into certain types, tomatoes every day, geraniums every week, for example. So, whether you can't garden because you're older or less able, or just have a busy lifestyle but love gardening, you'll find a way.

If you can't, or don't feel gardening is your passion, hire a gardener for the heavy jobs (husbands/wives/partners are good substitutes) and keep those you enjoy; or let a friend have your garden, letting you have surplus flowers or vegetables. If all else fails, let it go wild or move house!



with Susan Burns

## PORTOBELLO OLYMPIAN BACKS LONDON 2012

JIM McCOLL is a walking, talking icon of sporting memorabilia, residing with his wife Kathleen in a quiet corner of Joppa - and I discovered him quite by chance when we travelled together on the Brunstane to Waverley train!

Jim is one of the few surviving Scots who participated in the 1948 Olympics in London and one of an even rarer breed who have played football for Great Britain, when the Queen's Park right-back and six of his clubmates, including Lisbon Lion, the late Ronnie Simpson, joined seven Englishmen, four Welshmen and three Northern Irish in the 21-strong squad who reached the Olympic semi-finals.

None cheered louder than he



Photo by Brenda Melony

when London were awarded the 2012 Olympics and he cannot believe that Scottish players would not want to be part of the Olympic football tournament: "Of course we should be participating - get

involved," he urges. "Concentrate on Scotland as much as possible - we have the stadia - then it will be Britain's Olympics, not just London's."

A life-long Hibs supporter - his father James played centre-forward for Celtic against Hibs in the 1913 Scottish Cup final and later became Hibs' trainer - Jim began his football career at Holy Cross Academy, played for Leith Schoolboys, went on to Hutcheson Vale and, after one season with Polkemmet when they reached the semi-finals of the Scottish Junior Cup, took Rangers' legend Sammy Cox's place in the right-back slot at Queen's Park.

After the Olympics, Jim McColl played professionally for Queen of the South and Falkirk. Sandy Sutherland

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