

# The Portobello REPORTER

The independent voice of Portobello

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE	• Coade Stone Pillars	P2
	• Porto Bello Medal	P4
	• St John's Centenary	P5
	• MasterChef	P7
	• Pod Party	P8

Your Community Newspaper produced by local people.

## HELEN HOPEKIRK CELEBRATION

ONLY a handful of people in St Mark's Episcopal Church on Friday 19th May had even heard of her before the concert was announced, but no one who went away at the end of the evening is likely to forget the name of Helen Hopekirk, born just streets away almost exactly 150 years before.

The well-known writer and broadcaster John Purser opened with a lively talk, illustrated with slides and recorded excerpts, which introduced us to the musical world of mid-nineteenth-century Edinburgh and the names of composers such as John Thomson, Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, and John Donaldson. Turning to Hopekirk herself, he cheerfully admitted plundering the research of the American pianists Gary Steigerwalt and Dana Muller, who almost single-handedly have plucked the composer from obscurity and (with the enthusiastic assistance of some local residents) made this performance possible.

On stage, Gary and Dana treated us to a selection of impressive solo piano pieces. Soprano Alison Beck demonstrated the flair of Hopekirk's vocal writing, and violinist Mairi Campbell, better known as a traditional fiddle player, was perfectly chosen to bring out the Scottish folk idiom that weaves in and out of these pieces that owe so much to the European Romantics.

St Philip's Children's Choir took the floor, in a splash of colour that almost outdid the lovely flower arrangements, with a selection from Hopekirk's large catalogue of Scots song arrangements.

The performers were rewarded with bouquets as well as generous applause from the audience, which included guest of honour William Hopekirk, the composer's grand nephew, whose presence crowned the occasion.



Photo by Peter Ross

Alasdair Pettinger

Scottish Music Centre <http://www.scottishmusiccentre.com>

The Scottish Music Centre in Glasgow houses an extensive collection of sheet music and recordings by Scottish composers, including some photocopies of original printed editions of Hopekirk's piano pieces, and Dana Muller's PhD dissertation on the composer. In the wake of this concert, SMC hopes to help spread the word about Helen Hopekirk, acquire more of her music and provide assistance to potential performers.

## NEW SITE SOUGHT FOR WASTE TRANSFER STATION

THE CITY of Edinburgh Council has to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill, and now that the Powderhall plant is becoming unfit for use, other options for location and handling have to be considered. Some, though not all, would require two waste transfer stations, one on the west and one on the east side of Edinburgh, where Portobello Freightliner Terminal could be a possibility.

Cllr Robert Cairns, Executive Member for the Environment, told the Reporter: "These are not waste treatment plants, but buildings where waste is transferred into containers for transport to a treatment plant. As one of the landfill sites is at Dunbar, with a rail connection, and as this is

also a possible site for a treatment plant, council planning officers want to safeguard sites with a rail connection. A transfer station would probably not be required if Millerhill were the chosen site for the treatment plant. We will consult fully on any proposals, but there are many issues to be resolved before we can do so".

There is great concern, however, that if Portobello is chosen, the number of refuse lorries involved would have an enormous impact on traffic levels and noise. John Stewart, Chair of Portobello Amenity Society, said: "Such a plant should be placed well away from housing, on the edge of the city, and not near a conservation area. Millerhill

would be a far more suitable site".

Cllr Lawrence Marshall is concerned that use of the Freightliner site would narrow the options available for the re-build of Portobello High and St. John's Primary School. "This site is the obvious place to move Lothian Buses' Marine Depot to," he said "whether to allow a new High School to be built there or the City's 'Boardwalk' proposal to go ahead. The Freightliner site could also itself accommodate a new High School. There could be a large opportunity cost in terms of school provision and waterfront regeneration from siting a waste transfer station there".

BM

## CONCERNS OVER JET SKIERS

CONCERNS have been growing over the past few years about the danger and nuisance caused by jet skiers, quads and motorbikes on the beach and in the sea at Portobello.

In an attempt to separate jet skiers from swimmers the council has put buoys out in the sea situated between Pittville Street and Bath Street. The Community Council and locals are looking into ways of further controlling the jet skiers, including an electronic petition to the Scottish Parliament which you can sign at [epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/viewpetition.asp?PetitionID=98](http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/viewpetition.asp?PetitionID=98)

The police will be running Operation Apricot again this year with the aim of making the prom, the beach and seaside a safe and inviting area for the summer. They are taking a hard line on motor bikes and quads, invoking anti social behaviour legislation to impose fines and, potentially, seize vehicles (more on this on page two).

The beach is a community resource, enjoyed by lots of different users, however to avoid confrontation users should show consideration for and tolerance of others, so that everyone can benefit from Edinburgh's seaside.



Photo by Peter Ross

## NEW SCHOOLS: THE DEBATE WIDENS

A REPORT outlining proposals for a new Portobello High School and St. John's Primary School was presented to the full Council on 4th May. Deputations were also heard from Portobello For New Schools (PFANS), Portobello Park Action Group (PPAG), Portobello Golf Club and pupils from the High School. The report, which had been delayed to take account of the volume of representations from the community, included the following:

Whilst refurbishment or re-building on-site are deemed to be poor value for money, the Council will commission a report from an independent architect on the possibilities.

Three other greenfield sites, in addition to Portobello Park, are now identified as potential locations for a new joint campus, although, at a publication briefing, council officers suggested that St. John's does not have to be part of the proposals. The sites, all council owned, are: Cavalry Park at Duddingston, Bingham Park and the Jewel Park. Each has advantages and disadvantages, but most of the debate so far has focused on Portobello Park. However, an amendment by the Liberal Democrats, asking for brownfield sites to be included, was accepted.

Although the recommended site size for a school with 1400 pupils is 17 acres, including sports pitches, it is not mandatory, and the council considers that 11.1 acres would be the minimum desirable.

If Portobello Park is selected, the area remaining after the school and houses have been built is not assured, neither is it certain where the development would be sited. This option would be funded by housing on the vacated site and part of the Brunstane area earmarked for a new golf course, as well as on the park, but there would still be a deficit. At the publication briefing, however, council officers suggested that this could be made up by money from the Scottish Executive, the Council's capital investment programme or market lenders.

Commenting on the report, Jackie Brock, chair of PFANS said "We are delighted that the council has recognised the urgent need for the replacement of both schools. We look forward to working with them and the community to make sure that our children get the fantastic new schools they deserve".

Ros Sutherland, chair of PPAG said: "We are pleased that councillors have listened to the views of so many local people and have recommended that a wide range of site options be considered. There is a real opportunity here to make sure that schools in Portobello meet the needs of both the current and future community. We need to ensure, however, that this significant investment does not result in the loss of amenities which can never be replaced".

Detailed plans will be presented to the Council in August, followed by formal consultation in September. A planning application is expected in November, followed by further consultation. Considerable debate is anticipated, with the possibility of a public inquiry, and the final decision on any relocation will be taken by the Scottish Executive. It is therefore predicted that building would not begin for several years.

Significant local debate has already taken place and the strength of feeling is evident. Finding a solution acceptable to all will be a mammoth task.

Margaret Munro

## SMOKERS GET BREATH OF FRESH AIR

ON 26th March 2006 a new law came into force in Scotland making it illegal to smoke in enclosed public spaces and the inimitable image of the Scottish public house – a place to drink and smoke – changed forever. In the months following, Portobello publicans and punters have been getting used to their smoke-free pubs.

In The Ormelie Tavern, Assistant Manager Jacky said business had not been affected, and the only drawback is having to sweep up cigarette butts at the front door. Bar staff Valerie added: "It's better not going home stinking at the end of the night." However, some locals were keen to point out that they can feel ostracised having to smoke on the street, and that even non-smokers find that disruptive to conversation.

In The Dalriada, publican, Terry, said: "We want everyone to feel welcome, smokers and non-smokers", and smokers are still coming and sitting in the beer garden. As a family-orientated establishment serving food, Terry is pleased that customers comment more frequently on the smell of the food and coffee. Drinkers also pointed out that having to go outside for a cigarette can lead to new friendships.

At the Foresters Arms, Sharon, the Manager, said there had been no impact on sales and bar staff feel confident carrying out the ban. "On the odd occasion, a customer has lit up without even realising, but there's been no trouble asking them to take it outside", she said.

Although special environmental wardens have been charged with enforcing the new law, it seems, in Portobello at least, that the pubs and their clientele have well and truly got to grips with it.

One unforeseen outcome, however, is that groups of smokers outside pubs can sometimes seem intimidating.

Eilidh Bateman

**PORTY PROFILE No. 23**  
**ROSE NIMMO**

Rose Nimmo is an artist and singer, well known to many in Portobello as Rosy Blue. She has exhibited widely and performs regularly with her bands.



Photo by Brenda Molony

Rose, who was born in Leith, moved to central Portobello in 1993 with her husband Tom and their two sons and daughter. She loves it here: "Portobello is such a vibrant creative community that doesn't lose sight of its roots", she says, "and whenever you go out, you meet someone to talk to".

When her daughter started school, Rose decided to go back to education and enrolled at Portobello High School for Art and French. After years of hard work, including Highers, A Level Art and SYS French, then a year at Telford College and a degree from Edinburgh College of Art, in 1997 she became an art therapist for Barnardo's.

Many of you will have seen her art exhibited in Portobello Library and some of you may own some of it, but Rose has also exhibited in many prestigious galleries, including the Royal Scottish Academy and the Gymnasium of the Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh. She has been invited to exhibit by the Society of Scottish Artists and the Royal Society of Watercolourists and has also exhibited internationally. She has worked in many different media and her art reflects her varied interests.

At the new millennium, however, with her appetite for learning and creativity still unsatisfied, she gave up her job and went back to college, this time to study music. Rose had never considered herself to have a particularly good voice until, at a karaoke party, she impressed her friends so much with her singing that they encouraged her to take it more seriously and she went on to train with local singing coach and fellow musician, Polly Phillips (Porty Profile No. 19). Rose joined Resurrection then Amazon before forming her own band Rosy Blue and the Rosy Blue Jazz Trio in 2003.

Rose is now studying guitar and harmonica, and writing original material with plans to produce some CDs so, unsurprisingly, she is not painting as much. "Developing my music is my big passion", she says. (See her website: [www.rosyblue.co.uk](http://www.rosyblue.co.uk))

To contact *The Portobello Reporter* you can telephone 0131 669 3466 or email [portyreporter@btinternet.com](mailto:portyreporter@btinternet.com)

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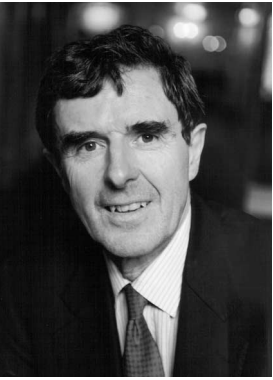
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Please phone 669 6002 or write to

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Edinburgh, EH15 1DA

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**THE COADE STONE PILLARS**



Photo by Celia Butterworth

**FOLLOWING** an award from the Heritage Lottery Fund, work has started on the restoration of the three ornamental Coade Stone pillars which formerly stood in a garden by Portobello High Street. The pillars, stored as sections, are in a conservator's work-shop being cleaned of the paint and dirt of ages, to reveal the relief sculptures of fleur-de-lys, roses and lions (seen here) in all their glory. The pillars are expected to be installed in the autumn at the back of the new Community Garden (former paddling pool) on the Promenade. The history and restoration of the pillars is on display in the Library window until at least 8th June.

On the afternoon of Sunday 13th August, as part of the POD event on the Prom, a display related to the pillars will be mounted in the garden.

**ON THE BEAT**

**THERE** has been a recent spate of overnight break-ins to privately-owned and business lock-ups; there is a positive line of enquiry, however. The warmer weather encourages people to bring out garden furniture and even lawn mowers, so make sure at the end of the day that sheds and lock-ups are well secured. The perpetrators are stealing anything, but particularly motorbikes and tools.

We also had reports recently of individuals riding motorbikes on the beach. Fortunately, our two traffic officers, trained to ride off-road motorbikes, were in the area and the offenders were apprehended and dealt with

under the anti-social legislation. Parents whose families have a small off-road bike or mini motorbike should be aware that riding on the Prom or the beach will not be tolerated. Legislation will be enforced to the full, ultimately involving fines and seizure of the offending vehicles.

A 'Pub Watch' was launched in the Portobello area on 29th May: if any individual or group cause bother in a bar, the staff will phone round other bars and warn them, and if anyone is barred, they could be barred from all pubs in the area. The aim is to create a safe environment for staff and customers.

Insp. Norman Ward

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**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**NEW MINISTER WELCOMED**  
ON Sunday 30th April the Rev. Andrew Patterson, who preached as sole nominee for the vacant charge at Portobello Old Parish Church, was accepted overwhelmingly by the members. His induction took place on 31st May, when the congregation welcomed him to Portobello and wished him a happy and fruitful ministry.

**NEW GATES FOR THE PROM**  
The council have installed gates to prevent vehicles accessing the promenade which should radically reduce the number of vehicles driving there. Residents whose only access to their property is from the promenade, and those with legitimate need to drive along the promenade can get keys from council officers.

**FUNDS GROW FOR AFRICA TRIP:** Hazel and Louise are delighted to report that their Silent Auction raised £678 towards their four month conservation and education project in Kenya, thanks to everyone who donated items or placed bids. Hazel will also hold a fashion show at Mackays at Cameron Toll on Monday 17th July, and a Quiz Night in Willowbrae Bowling Club on Saturday 5th August. For further information and tickets please call 669 7222.

**KILNS UPDATE:** Funding for the repair of the bottle kilns has not yet been secured, as, according to Paul McAuley, Conservation Officer, his senior colleagues in the council have not yet allocated the budgets. The Scottish Pottery Society is also greatly concerned by the condition of the kilns, as they are the last extant buildings in the whole of Scotland from a large Scottish pottery industry. The society also intends to campaign for urgent repair work to be undertaken.

**BUSINESS AS USUAL IN HIGH STREET**  
**THE** works in Portobello High Street being undertaken by City of Edinburgh Council are well underway, with improvements to pedestrian and vehicular safety, and accessibility to shops around the Town Hall. Bus and parking lay-bys are complete and footway renewal on-going. Despite some early delays the works are still intended to be complete in July. The new trees will be planted in November, after the growing season.

The shops are open at their usual times during the construction works and the Council wishes to stress the importance of residents and customers continuing to use both shops and businesses during this period. The Council and their contractor also apologise for any inconvenience caused to residents, customers, shopkeepers and local businesses.

If you wish to comment on any aspect of this project, please contact the Council's Project Manager, Stuart Smith on 0131 529 3423.

Cllr Lawrence Marshall

## HEATHER & JIM TO HIKE THE WALL

READERS may know Heather and Jim Morrison, who work in the Library, and some of you may also know that Heather has been living with breast cancer for a number of years; unfortunately it has returned and a new round of treatment options approaches.

Heather and Jim have decided to take part in a big challenge to keep them focused on something positive and to raise money for Maggie's Centres, who provide help for cancer sufferers and their families across Scotland who have been diagnosed with cancer, and their families. They hope to hike a remote part of the Great Wall of China, with a group of fellow fundraisers, for nine days in September and need to raise £3,000 each to take part.

There will be a number of fundraising events over the next few months, including a Promises Auction on Tuesday 25th July at 6.30pm in the upstairs room of Portobello Library. They also hope the people of Portobello will help in raising money for this valuable cause.

To donate, please visit <http://www.justgiving.com/heathermay> or <http://www.justgiving.com/jimmorrison> or make a donation in the box in Portobello Library.

## BOSTON SUCCESS FOR YOUNG PORTOBELLO MUSICIAN

YOUNG Portobello singer and harpist Maeve Gilchrist graduated from Berklee College of Music in Boston, USA, on Saturday 13th May. Maeve, who has developed her own distinctive brand of folk-jazz fusion, gained her Bachelor Degree in Professional Music after three years at the prestigious modern music college, where she has been studying with major help from a Dewar Arts Award, the scholarships established to commemorate Scotland's first First Minister.



This is a doubly special time for Maeve, as she is about to release an impressive debut album, *Reaching Me*.

Maeve, who is 20, went to the Boston college - whose previous alumni have included well-known Scots jazzers Tommy Smith and Laura MacDonald - when she was just 17. Before that she attended the City of Edinburgh Music School at Broughton High, where she was taught by the Edinburgh harpist Isobel Mieras and by Edinburgh jazz chanteuse Sophie Bancroft. Last year Berklee College gave her its Performer of the Year award, and she has also enjoyed assistance from the Scottish International Education Trust.

Maeve was home in April to perform and teach at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival and returns in August with her trio - Marcelo Woloski on percussion and Andres Rotmistrovsky on bass - with a gig at the Acoustic Music Centre at St Brides on 11 August and a concert at the Torphichen Summer Nights season on 6 August.

Maeve's performance credits have included Glasgow's Celtic Connections - where she won a glowing review for her singing in the widely-acclaimed Unusual Suspects folk-jazz big band. While in the United States, she has recorded with Meshel Nedegio Cello, Kathy Mattea and Jamey Haddad and Matt Glaser.

Maeve started playing clarsach, or Scottish harp, when she was nine and "just fell in love with it", taught mainly by Isobel Mieras, with input from contemporary players such as Wendy Stewart, Corrina Hewat, Savourna Stevenson, Patsy Seddon and Mary McMaster.

THE following events will take place for children in the summer holidays, as part of our annual reading scheme, which this year has the theme 'The Reading Mission'. Mission refers to spies! So all the events have a mystery, spying or detective theme and should be great fun to take part in, both for us and the kids. All are free and tickets will be available 2 weeks before the events.



1. Detective Storytime plus Spy Pillar Crafts. Tues. 4th July, 2-3pm.
2. Quizzes and Puzzles for 8-11s, plus Scooby Doo colour-ins etc. Tues. 18th July 2-3 pm.
3. Detective Disguises! Nose moustache, glasses, fake ID, guns, ID photos from our machine. For school-age kids. Tues. 1st August 2-3 pm.
4. Mystery guessing game at counter - to run all summer.
5. Youth Services' Spy Event (details available soon).
6. Famous Five Picnic and Medal Ceremony for all - Friday Aug. 11th 1-2 pm.

### TEENAGE BOOK GROUP

THIS group meet once a month on a Monday. Everyone reads the same book and discusses it at the meeting, along with a plentiful supply of Pringles, juice, Jaffa Cakes and grapes! These are essential equipment! The meetings are good fun and any other teens who want to come along will be welcome. Here the group give their verdicts on a recent read, *'Tithe: a modern faerie tale'* by Holly Black.

The plot: When 16 year old Kay returns to her childhood home, she thinks she is much too old and wise to see the fairies who had once been her playmates. Little does she know that there is intrigue in the world of Faerie and Kay is right in the middle of it. She must stop the warring courts of the fey from taking over the human world.

'The best book ever! A fantasy, romance and thriller, it leaves you wanting more. The suspense of the story makes you want to read it to the end. 10/10.' (Ishbel).

'Amazing book. A bit confusing because I didn't get the ending, but still very good and exciting. 10/10.' (Hannah).

'I really enjoyed this fantastically magical story. It has made me interested in fairies again. I loved the characters and the wonderful ending. Fantastic!!!' 10/10.' (Cathy).

'I liked the characters the story and the theme. 'Tithe' is a complicated but good book, one of the best. 9/10.' (Robbie).

Joyce Campbell

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# ADMIRAL VERNON'S VICTORY AT PORTO BELLO COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL

WAY back in the 1950's one of my hobbies was coin and commemorative medal collecting. I subscribed to Seaby's numismatic lists which arrived by post at regular intervals. Over the years, I found myself becoming less interested in coins and more interested in commemorative medals. I loved the way a historical event was brought alive by holding in my hand a medal that had been struck at the time.

Great was my excitement, when one day I spotted among the items offered for sale, a medal commemorating Admiral Vernon's capture in 1739 of Porto-bello on the Isthmus of Panama. I can't remember now how much I paid for it, but it can't have been much as I was still at school and pocket money in these days was not on the generous scale it is now. I sent off my money order and waited in an agony of suspense in case someone got there first. I needn't have worried. The Admiral Vernon medal duly arrived, and I'm holding it in my hand looking at it now.



Photo by M. Mulgray

One side features a hatless Admiral Vernon - a jaunty figure in 18th century garb. He is brandishing in his right hand some kind of weapon, possibly a short sword. In his left he seems to be holding a rolled-up nautical chart or perhaps a telescope. At his feet is a cannon, behind him his three-masted sailing ship. Inscribed round the edge are the words: "The British Glory Revived By Admiral Vernon".

On the other side, six English sailing ships take pride of place in front of a scene of buildings lining a little harbour, at its entrance two forts with a fearsome array of cannons.

The wording reads: "He Took Porta Bello With Six Ships Only. Nov .22 1739".

A quirky little touch is that the engraver had difficulty with the letter N which appears reversed in every case!

I'm getting on a bit now, and wouldn't want this interesting medal to disappear without trace. In the hope that one day it might be displayed in a Portobello museum, I would like to donate the medal to Portobello in order that its future may be safeguarded.

Morna Mulgray

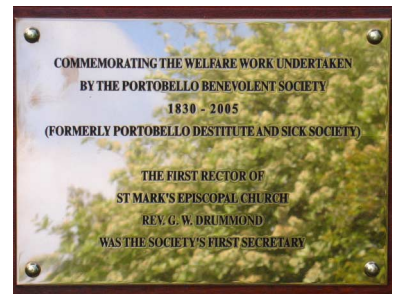
The capture of Portobello was the most noteworthy incident in the oddly named and, as far as Great Britain was concerned, discreditable War of Jenkins Ear. This grew out of the commercial rivalry of Britain and Spain in the Americas and the incident that gave the name to the war occurred in 1731 when, according to Robert Jenkins, master of the ship Rebecca, he had his ear cut off by Spanish coast guards who had boarded his ship. Jenkins was a scoundrel and, like

most of his compatriots, no more than a smuggler. He told his story in the House of Commons in 1738 and caused uproar by the showing of his ear, carefully preserved in a glass jar. Resentment at exclusion from the Spanish colonial trade had increased over the seven years since the alleged incident and parliamentary pressure and angry public opinion forced the reluctant Sir Robert Walpole to declare war in October 1739. The hostilities with Spain up to 1741 were marked only by the naval engagements of Admiral Edward Vernon in the West Indies.

When the news of Vernon's success reached Britain there was great rejoicing and ringing of bells and hundreds of different commemorative medals were struck. Readers who want to find out more should look on [www.coins-of-panama.com/vernon.html](http://www.coins-of-panama.com/vernon.html). Miss Mulgray's medal has been accepted by Portobello History Society and it is hoped to put it on display in the local library later this year.

Archie Foley

## PORTOBELLO BENEVOLENT SOCIETY



A PLAQUE was presented to St Mark's Episcopal Church by the Committee of Portobello Benevolent Society following its dissolution after 175 years of service to the less fortunate in the community. The plaque records that it was the first Rector of St Mark's, the Reverend George Drummond, who was the driving force behind the founding of the society, then known as the Portobello Destitute and Sick Society, in 1830. It is hoped that the plaque will remind future generations that much can be achieved by goodwill and voluntary effort.

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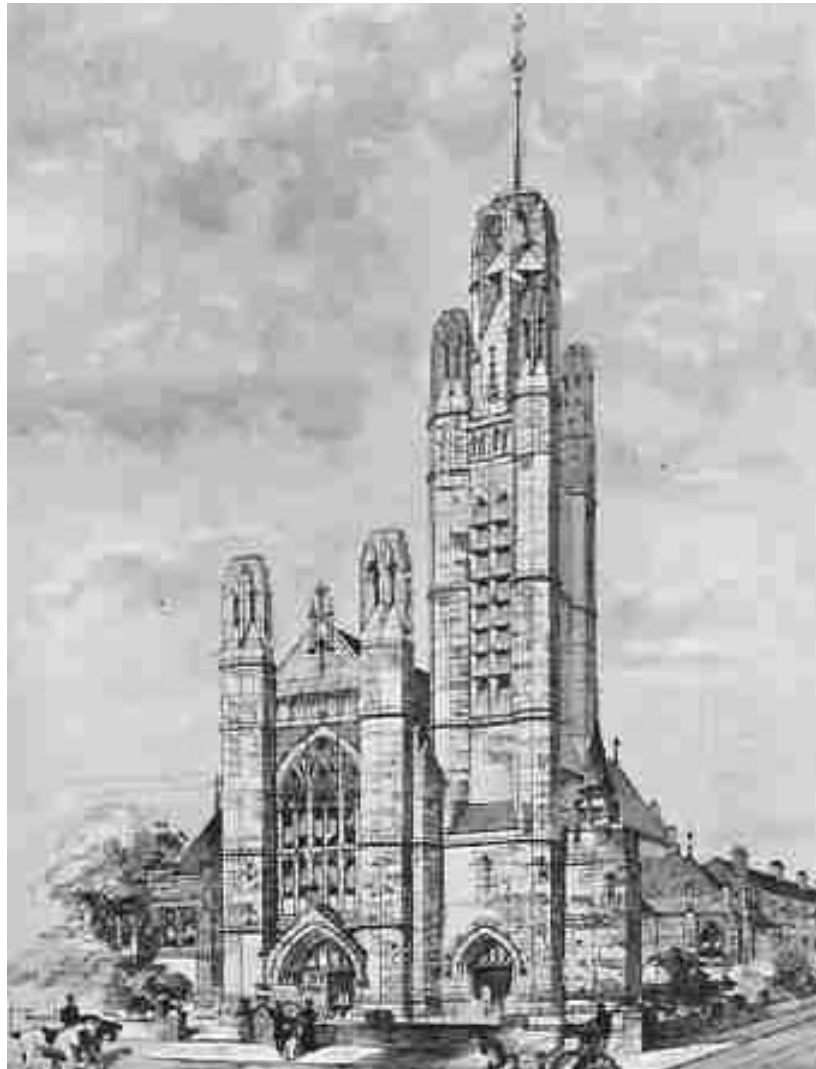
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# ST JOHN'S CENTENARY

ONE hundred years ago the Roman Catholic Church of St John the Evangelist in Brighton Place was opened for public worship, and the congregation's celebration of the event will culminate with a Mass to be offered by Cardinal Keith O'Brien on 11th June, Trinity Sunday.

The commemorative booklet issued to mark the occasion shows that there has been a church on this site since 1825 when an Episcopalian chapel was consecrated by Bishop Sandford. This was bought by the Catholic Church some ten years later and subsequently extended in 1877, almost doubling the original seating capacity of 200. A congregation which continued to increase in size led to the decision to build a new church. The architect was J T Walford, who lived in Joppa Road and the builder was a local firm, John Smith and Sons. The foundation stone was laid in October 1904 and the building opened for worship in February 1906. A stone at the top of the distinctive tower contains a tin box, which, wrapped in strips of canvas dipped in liquid pitch, was sealed into the stone with a slate. That box contains the following information: "This tower was built entirely by four brothers named Flockhart, sons of the foreman, James, Archibald, Alexander and William, along with their assistant, William Mooney, in the year 1906; the builder, John Smith & Sons; architect, Mr Walford; and the priest, the Rev. Father Donlevy, all of Portobello".

Along with that document went a copy of the *Edinburgh Evening News* and some coins subscribed by the masons. A small Maltese Cross cut in the stone marks the spot where the box was placed. At the



top of the tower is another stone commemorating "Dad" Higgins, wine and spirit merchant, and James Forsyth, baker, at that time the oldest members of the congregation.

Some years ago, in anticipation of the centenary, the Fabric Committee of the church set about a programme of work to ensure the continuing viability of the building. Preliminary costings indicated something in the region of one million pounds would be needed but since St John's is one of the very few Grade A listed buildings in Portobello substantial assistance became available

from Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund. However, although the final cost fell just below the earlier estimate, a significant amount still had to be raised by the congregation whose enthusiastic response has cleared the debt.

Perhaps the most eye-catching of the social events to mark the centenary is the flower festival which is being arranged by one of the parishioners, Ann O'Brien and presented by the Portobello Floral Art Club. This is being held in the church from Thursday 8th until Saturday 10th June and everyone is welcome. V.K.

## RARE OLD PHOTOGRAPH



THIS photograph of the Free Church in Regent Street was taken by William Kyles whose studio at the time was at 34 Bath Street. The overwhelming majority of Kyles' photographs were of people taken in his studio and it is extremely uncommon to come across an outdoor shot.

The photograph must have been taken before 8th November 1874 because on the evening of that day, a Sunday, the church was all but destroyed by a disastrous fire. The interior was gutted, the roof and bell tower fell in but the four walls were left standing. The Free Church congregation decided to build anew on a different site and this led to the opening in October 1877 of the church now known as St Philip's in Joppa.

The Regent Street building was rebuilt and reopened as a place of worship by the United Presbyterian Church and eventually in 1929 became a charge of the Church of Scotland. In 1954 the congregation joined with that of the Old Parish Church and the building was renamed the Thomson Hall. It was demolished and replaced by a block of flats some years ago.

Archie Foley

## PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

THE 2005/06 session of the society is drawing to a close, and once again we have had speakers covering a variety of topics. Our speaker in April was Bob Gatliff, a local resident who works for the British Geological Survey, who spoke on *Climate Change in Portobello*, using evidence from data gathered during many years of research. It was fascinating to see the way landmasses have moved over millions of years and learn that Portobello was once situated on the equator. Shall we ever experience such weather again?

Colin Warwick MBE, a society member who retired from the "Dick Vet" last year, delivered an informative and illustrative talk on *Edinburgh's Three Veterinary Colleges*. Whether the future history of veterinary medicine in Edinburgh will be as fascinating once its base has moved to the Bush, near Penicuik, remains to be seen. The last meeting of the session is on Wednesday 7th June, when, after the business of the AGM, Brenda Molony talks on *Portobello Reporter: the first 26 years*. This meeting is being held in St. Mark's Church, Portobello High Street at 7p.m., as St. John's Church Hall is unavailable due to their centenary celebrations.

The society's annual outing was held on Saturday, 13th May, when members visited Paxton House in Berwickshire, followed by High Tea at Peebles Hydro Hotel. Paxton House is a comfortable family home, albeit with a history of personal and family tragedy. The weather was sunny, but cold, and members enjoyed their day on the banks of the river Tweed.

It has been a successful year for the society, with membership numbers rising to 80, with an average of 60 attending each meeting. Our speakers have had capacity audiences, with many commenting on the attentiveness and interest shown by members. The 2006/07 session begins on Wednesday 6th September, when the speaker is Neil Cochrane on *Leith Storytelling*. Membership of the society is £5 and subscriptions are payable at this meeting. New members and visitors are most welcome. Meetings are held in St. John's Church Hall, Brighton Place, on the first Wednesday of the month, from September to June, excluding January, and begin at 7p.m. MM

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## WHAT'S ON

### PORTOBELLO HIGH SCHOOL, 1982 - 84, INFORMAL RE-UNION:

On Sat. 1st July, 2.00 - 5.30pm at Portobello Rugby Club, Duddingston Road West.

Open to all Former Pupils who were in 4-6th year and all teachers at PHS during that period. Come and meet some old mates. Bar & BBQ. Admission Free. Kids Welcome.

For further details contact: douglasjapotter@hotmail.com or follow the link at www.portyrugby.com

### MITCHELL'S BUILDING RE-UNION:

A re-union of former residents is planned on 27th August. If you would like to join us (the more the merrier) call John Tracey on 669 8593 for information. It will be great to go over old times, so don't be shy. Bring any photos.

Jean Leatham

**COFFEE MORNING** with book and plant sales to raise funds for Maggie's Centre: Saturday 10th June, 10 am-12 noon at St James Church Hall, Rosefield Place.

Donations of baking, plants or books would be appreciated - please call 669 4981.

**COFFEE MORNING** 10am / **JUMBLE SALE** 11.30am on Sat. 10th June at Community Centre, to raise funds for PortyYouthScene camping expeditions. Please bring any jumble to the Centre on Tues. 5.30-7, or Thurs. 6-8 p.m. or call 661 7463 if stuff is too big.

Donations of baking and raffle/tombola gifts would be appreciated

**CONCERT:** Music on a Summer Evening, with 'Page One'. Tues. 27th June, 7.30pm. Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield St. Tickets £5 incl. refreshments.

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## PORTOBELLO AMNESTY

HOW many readers of this column know that fish and chips were introduced into this country by refugees? That the founder of Marks and Spencer came to the UK seeking refuge from persecution? That Prince Philip fled from Greece as a refugee in 1923? And that refugees to this country include 18 Nobel Prize winners?

To mark Refugee Week, 19th-25th June, members and groups of Amnesty International, Refugee Support organisations and other agencies in Edinburgh will highlight the contribution refugees have made, and continue to make, to life in the UK. The Portobello Group will host a Poetry and Music Evening in the Evergreen shop, on 20th June at 7.30pm.

The Group will also mount a display in the window of the Library from 12th-24th June focussing on Amnesty's worldwide campaign 'Stop Violence against Women'. This aims to raise awareness of the extent of suffering caused by domestic violence, rape, trafficking and other abuses, and to put pressure on authorities in all countries to legislate for the protection of women and girls.

David Turner

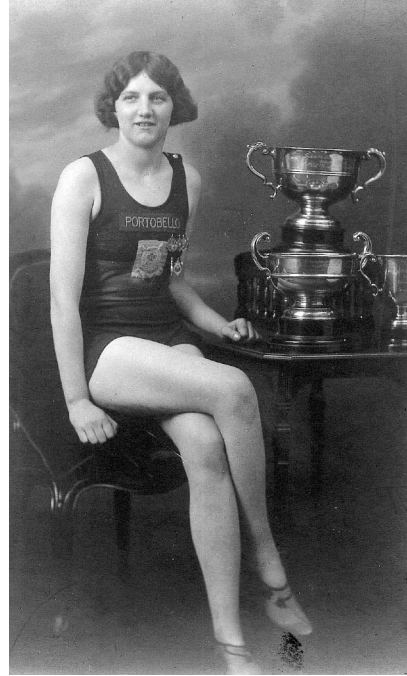
## ETHEL TWEEDIE - An appreciation

AT the grand age of 97, Ethel Helen Tweedie (nee Whyte) died peacefully at Viewpark Care Home on 9th April. Born at Rabbit Hall on the Promenade in 1908, Ethel was best known locally as an accomplished swimmer, and as winner of the Scottish High Dive Championship in 1928; also for opening one of Portobello's first cafés, which, with characteristic wit, she named the 'The Whyte Rabbit' (in premises now occupied by Mullberries).

Having trained as a cordon bleu chef, Ethel worked at a prestigious hotel in Stratford on Avon, before being called back to master-mind the massive task of setting up and managing canteens for WWII troops in Edinburgh and throughout the south of Scotland. After the war she became one of the first 'occupational therapists' rehabilitating the war wounded, and eventually ran a respite care home for people with learning disabilities in Blackpool. There she was reunited with, and married, her childhood friend Andrew Tweedie, and they enjoyed five years together until Andrew sadly died soon after retiring from the police.

Ethel then returned to Rabbit Hall to care for her sister Dorothea, who died in 1985. She loved to talk about her family, of whom she was very proud, especially of William Hay, on her mother's side, the architect of Rabbit Hall who also renovated St Giles Cathedral. Ethel will be warmly remembered as a modest, caring person who had a dry wit and a capacity for being outrageously funny, she will be much missed.

Jan Killeen (friend and neighbour)



## VANDALISM IN ROSEFIELD PARK

IN February this year a local family paid to have a tree planted in Rosefield Park in memory of their daughter, who died suddenly last year aged just 38. They scattered her ashes beneath it and looked forward to visiting it as it grew, but on 27th February they found it had been destroyed by vandals, which was very distressing for them.

A family member told us: "As the damage was apparently done during half-term, it is likely to have been done by school children and we would like to urge all children and young people to respect our parks and the trees and plants in them. They are living things and are there for all of us to enjoy, and this sort of behaviour spoils them for the whole community."

## ST MARK'S RESTORED

THE congregation of St Mark's Episcopal Church, Portobello have finally removed the buckets from inside the organ in celebration of the completion of a £100,000 repair project that has made the building watertight for the first time in living memory. Passers-by may notice the difference made to the church's landmark dome, which has been restored to its original glory after five decades covered in asphalt. The project received major funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland, with generous contributions also from the Allchurches Trust Ltd, Artemis Investment Management, the City of Edinburgh Council, Diocese of Edinburgh and the Scottish Churches Architectural Heritage Trust.

Linda MacMillan

## BOOKS OF INTEREST

'WALKING ON WHEELS: 50 WHEEL-FRIENDLY TRAILS IN SCOTLAND' by Eva McCracken.

Published by Cualann Press at £10.99.

This is a guide for wheelchair and electric scooter users who wish to enjoy the Scottish countryside. It will be promoted on Friday 9th June at 2pm at Borders Books, and can also be obtained by tel. on 01383 733 724 or by email at cualann@btinternet.com For more information see www.cualann.com The book is in aid of a charity, of which local people Gus and Heather McDonald are trustees.

'WILDLIFE TRAVELLER: SCOTTISH MAINLAND' and 'WILDLIFE TRAVELLER: SCOTTISH ISLANDS' by Richard Rowe

Published by Pocket Mountain at £6.99.

Local man Richard Rowe has produced these two books in response to the growing interest in Scotland's wildlife among tourists and holidaymakers. The books highlight places where you can observe, among others, dolphins, whales, otters, eagles and the vast amount of bird species in Scotland. For local people there are entries on Aberlady Bay, Bass Rock, St Abb's Head and the Isle of May. So whether travelling to the western isles or a day trip to east Lothian there will be somewhere interesting to go and see Scotland's rich abundance of wildlife.

## NEW COMMUNITY COUNCIL

PORTOBELLO now has a new Community Council with 10 fewer seats, as the area it represents has been reduced. It now comprises 15 individual members and 14 group representatives, with the loss of some familiar faces and the addition of some new ones. The reduction is due to the changes in City Council ward boundaries and voting methods that will take effect in 2007.

Meetings are held on the last Monday of the month in the Baptist Church Hall, Portobello High Street at 7.30pm, and members of the public are welcome to attend. Minutes can be seen in the Library and on www.porty.org.uk

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# MASTERCHEF FINAL 2006



Ian Davidson with (l-r) Naomi McConnell, Richard Chalmers and Reggie Foreman.

**THE** final of Holy Rood High School's annual MasterChef competition was an exhilarating event at which the eight finalists each created a meal for a restaurant lunchtime menu. Top chef Ian Davidson from Telford College judged the competition and was very impressed with the standard of cooking and the level of dedication and confidence of the competitors.

The competition was close, but after much deliberation Reggie Foreman, 2S, was declared the winner with his mouth-watering dishes of stir-fried chicken with lime and coconut, followed by a feather-light sponge filled with raspberries and marscapone cream. Second was Naomi McConnell, 2S, with a dish of mackerel and oatcakes, followed by a melt-in-the-mouth steak with stir-fried vegetables. A succulent chicken with red and green peppers, followed by pear and apple crumble gave Richard Chalmers, 2R, his well deserved 3rd prize.

# BASKETBALL SUCCESS

**FIFTEEN** S1 teams took part in this year's BAA Youth Games at Meadowbank on 4th May. In the girls' competition, a close round robin saw Portobello once again victorious, winning all six of their games, with James Gillespies winning the boys tournament for the first time.

In the Primary League

final, Towerbank rounded off the perfect season by winning the play-offs of the Portobello cluster primary leagues on 5th May. Eight schools took part and Towerbank beat a spirited St John's team in an exciting final. Following the play-offs, all the children took part in an NBA 2Ball shootout.

# MSPs CYCLE TO DUDDINGSTON

**ON** Wednesday 8th February Duddingston Primary played host to a group of Members of our Scottish Parliament. The visit of the group, all on bicycles, was intended to promote Healthy Lifestyle and encourage everyone to consider alternative ways of travelling to school. Mr MacMahon, Mr MacMillan, Mr Wright, Gavin Pinkerton, Rachel Dickson, John Macdonald and Amy MacDonald cycled from school and met the MSPs on the cycle-way at the back of Duddingston Golf Club. Then they all cycled back to school for cakes, tea, coffee and juice. Our P7 pupils had some interesting discussions and raised some challenging issues with the MSPs.

In school we are looking at ideas to make our community a safer and more environmentally friendly place in which to live, work and play. We have formed a 'Safe Travel To School Group', which aims to create a School Travel Plan with ideas to encourage alternative ways of travel, to reduce the volume of cars on local roads and help the environment.

Rachel Dickson, P7a

# A TRIBUTE TO 'JANNY EMBLEM'

**'THE Janny'** - Mick Emblem, Janitor of Duddingston Primary - sadly passed away earlier this year.

Every now and again, if you're lucky, someone special comes into your life. I consider myself to be lucky, because 18 years ago I met Janny Emblem and soon came to understand what an amazing man he was and why everyone loved and respected him. The first thing I did each day as I arrived in school was to pop into his office, and that's when the fun began. We always shared a joke, a bit of news or some football story. We sorted the world out and I went on my way laughing and

feeling so much better.

Last September we held a football night to honour him. Hundreds of former pupils and parents wanted to join in and say a big THANK YOU and it was a magical night. A wee while ago he gave me an old pair of his overalls, and just above the pocket the name MICK was written in scratchy, white ink. I put them on the other day and felt about 10 feet tall.

The world will be a sadder place without Janny Emblem, but he wouldn't have wanted sadness, so let us celebrate and smile because we have been privileged and lucky to be part of his life. That's what he would have wanted.

D. Wright  
Depute Head

# YOUNG BOWLERS MAKE GOOD BUDDIES



Photo by Brenda Molony

Seen here are L-R: Back row: J Millar, R Randell, C Marshall; Front row: P Byrne, J Moorham, D Imrie.

**ON** 25th April at Jessfield Bowling club, young blind and sighted players were presented with cups and medals by Mr Eric Miller, director of the Scottish Association for Blind Bowlers (SABB): SABB season's champion Ruir Randell; runner-up Jonathan Millar. Insight champion Paul Byrne; runner-up Douglas Imrie. Jessfield Juniors champion Christopher Marshall; runner-up Jo Moorham. The SABB bowlers team up with Jessfield juniors as 'Blind Buddies' and are coached by head junior coach in Edinburgh, Mr Jackie Craig.

# WHAT'S ON IN THE HOLS

July 10-14: **CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HOLIDAY CLUB:** returns to Portobello Old Parish Church hall. For information call Nell on 669 4351.

**GO4IT & PLAY4IT:** The City of Edinburgh Council's summer activities programme for children will take place between Monday 17th July and Friday 11th August. Look out for events in our area, from scuba diving and surfing to kite making, cheerleading and picnics. Full details are online at [www.go4itedinburgh.com](http://www.go4itedinburgh.com) or you can pick up a brochure from your school, local library, or community centre.

**ART COMPETITION:** Sat. June 24 (afternoon). Make a totem pillar, at the Community Centre. Info. sheets from Library.

The **COMMUNITY CENTRE** will be running a week of morning activities for children from Tues. 7th Aug.

See also tennis on page 8 and library activities on page 3.

# SCOUTS FUNDRAISING

**THE** 5th Portobello Scouts hold a sale for their funds on two Saturdays each month in the Evergreen Shop in Portobello High Street, as well as regular carboot sales, for which they would greatly appreciate donations of books, videos, records, CDs, toys and games. Anyone who can help should call 661 9570 to arrange for their donations to be collected.

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## POD PARTY PARTY

**THIS** year's Party Party, organised by Portobello Open Door, will take place from 12pm on 13th August on the Promenade, at the bottom of Marlborough Street. With an eclectic mix of local talent and acts from the Festival Fringe, the event promises, as ever, to be entertaining, lively and fun for all the family. There will be musicians, street performers, dancers and children's entertainers, as well as stalls, refreshments and prize give-aways. The Party Party follows the Portobello Open Water Sprint Triathlon which also takes place on that day. See [www.the-pod.org](http://www.the-pod.org) and [www.edinburghracingcoop.co.uk](http://www.edinburghracingcoop.co.uk)

## VICTORIAN WALK REVIVED

**AS** the Reporter went to press, POD were looking forward to their Victorian Walk on the Prom on 3rd June, timed to coincide with the official opening of the new Community Garden at the foot of John Street by Councillor Maureen Child.

A number of people, dressed in Victorian style, were expected to take part. Among the planned attractions were a Victorian tea tent complete with resident pianist; Victorian figures painted by artist Barbara Middleton, through which people could look and have photographs taken; children's games and entertainment; barbershop singers and the Melville Music Hall Company.

The walk was a popular summer event in the 1980s and its revival was the idea of POD member Molly Cogle, whose family often took part.

**THE** amount to do in the garden just now can be overwhelming, but the most important jobs are late seed sowing and weeding. You can't really catch up if you've left the sowing late, but you'll have a great garden later in autumn, even if you do miss out on earlier tastier crops and extra months of flowering. Make it a habit, whenever you pop out into the garden, of always pulling out a few weeds, especially the ones that offend you. Don't let any weed you don't like self-seed - I like feverfew, teasels and herb Robert, but I know people who hate them.

An aid I've found particularly useful is a plastic sledge; it is light and gives a wide area for transporting stuff around the garden, such as trays of plantlets that are not very heavy but you don't want them one on top of the other. This also saves time walking back and forth with each batch of plants. Remember to take the watering can too and the job can be done in one go.

This year I'm experimenting with old pastry cutters around my cucumbers and will water outside the rings, as these plants hate water sitting around the base of their stems.

Sew bits of net curtain (from charity shops) into bags and use clothes pegs to attach them to plants when hardening off, to protect from frosts. Make sure they're firmly attached, in case a breeze comes up during the night; I've gone out some mornings and found the nets draped over hedges and around the garden.

Yucca or agaves are great structural plants but the points are like needles, so I always nip them off just enough to blunt them, in case I knock against them. Safety is very important in the garden, and if you're using electrical equipment ensure you use an RCD residual current device.

Prune flowering shrubs immediately after flowering, but if you need to do this when they're flowering (some jobs just have to be done when you're ready to do them) cut big sprigs for the house.

An Asian friend of mine suggested leaving radishes to go to seed, as they can be used in cooking; so if you haven't got round to harvesting or have too many, let them go to seed and enjoy a peppery and crunchy addition to salads.

(Susan and Mike's organic garden at 39 Nantwich Drive will be open to the public on 5th and 6th August from 2-5pm. Admission is £1/50p with proceeds to the organic association Garden Organic. Pick up some tips and information leaflets. See also [www.gardenorganic.org.uk](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk)).



with Susan Burns

## 2006 EDINBURGH MARATHON

**THIS** year's race will take place on Sunday 11th June, starting at 9am, on Princes Street. Around 15,000 entrants are expected to take part in the Marathon, the Team Relay and The Big Half, with around 100,000 spectators. The route around Portobello is on the home stretch: Promenade, James St, High St, Brighton Pl, Mouncastle Dr, Northfield Rd, Willowbrae to the finish in Holyrood Park. For further information see [www.edinburgh-marathon.co.uk](http://www.edinburgh-marathon.co.uk)



Photo by Archie Foley

## CALLING ALL SHUTTERBUGS

**THE** Reporter is planning to publish a photo spread of some of the best pictures taken by local people of the varied and interesting activities which take place on Portobello beach. All photos sent to us will also be exhibited in the Library.

You can send your digital images to [portyreporter@btinternet.com](mailto:portyreporter@btinternet.com) or prints, no larger than A4, to The Editor, 9 Bedford Terrace, EH15 2EJ by 10th August.

## JOPPA TENNIS

**THE** courts will be open to the public during the school holidays for 'Pay and Play Tennis'. This year there will also be morning sessions - details on the Club notice board. Please note that juniors cannot play unsupervised.

A Junior Tournament will be held from July 19th-22nd, open to all under 18s and all ability levels, with prizes for all and a BBQ at the end. Cost - £10. Contact [davschodufc@hotmail.com](mailto:davschodufc@hotmail.com) for more information.

Family memberships at £45 are still available - call 01875 811183.

Plans are progressing with the repainting of the Clubhouse and it is hoped that electricity will be installed this year.

M.T.

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