

The Portobello REPORTER

The independent voice of Portobello

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE	• Work on High St	P3
	• Mystery Photo	P4
	• It's Rubbish	P6
	• Young Achievers	P7
	• Climbing High	P8

Your Community Newspaper produced by local people.

HOME AT LAST!

PORTOBELLO Amenity Society has finally achieved the restoration and re-erection of the three ornamental Coade stone pillars which now form the focal point of the new Community Garden on the Promenade.

These listed structures, dating from the early 19th century, stood in the garden of Argyle House, Hope Lane, for at least 90 years until they were taken into Council storage in 1989, when an extension was built onto the house. They are made of an artificial stone, named after its inventor.

Since then, PAS, Portobello Community council and Portobello History Society have campaigned continually to have them re-erected in Portobello, and thanks to a successful application by PAS to the National Heritage Lottery Fund, this is now almost complete. The Lottery grant provided 80% of the cost, PAS and the Community Council each contributed £2,400, and the Council generously provided the rest.

Some related community projects, also funded by the Lottery, included the Coade exhibition in the Library window in the summer, and the children's cardboard pillars displayed and judged at the POD Prom Party in August.

The two smaller pillars are identical to the chimneys of Dalmeny House, near South



Photo by Margaret Drysdale

Queensferry, seat of the Earl of Roseberry, family name Primrose. The designs on these are taken from the family crest - a lion holding a primrose. The larger pillar has a hooped design of unknown origin.

How they came to Portobello is a mystery. The local Abercorn Pottery made garden urns in the 1830s, so perhaps they also repaired the Dalmeny chimneys. Some of the pillar sections are of different colours, so perhaps they were 'seconds' that got left behind.

A new crown top to one of

the pillars has been skillfully made by PAS member and local potter Alison Robinson, to match the one existing original. Copies of four lion motifs were made and attached by the conservators to two original plain quadrants, to complete a circle. See if you can spot these modern lions.

The entire project has been coordinated by PAS member Celia Butterworth, who well deserves all the credit for its success.

John Stewart, Chair, PAS

PORTOBELLO BEACH ACCESS PROJECT

A NEW project is under way to improve access to Portobello beach for local people and visitors with mobility problems. It proposes alterations to the steep entrance ramps to form a gentler gradient, and the installation of temporary pathways across the sand and down to the water.

The Portobello Beach Access project was launched by local artist Morag Edward, who says: "I wonder how many wheelchair users here just accept that Porty beach isn't the place for them and go somewhere else. There are wheelchair athletes who train around here and are so fit they can probably climb mountains, but even they can't



Photo by James Rose

defy Porty sand. Improved beach access will open up more than the freedom of the sand and sea. Community arts groups provide a variety of music, theatre, art, dance and festivals on the prom and

beach, and enabled access will increase opportunities, not just for attending these, but for contributing and performing as well."

The project is featured on the discussion forum on Portobello's community website www.porty.org.uk/forum where it has attracted a lot of enthusiasm and support. One message posted reads: "My child would just love to be able to take her wheelchair on the sand and then to go for a paddle in the sea. I can see her face now. As it is, we have to take the sand to her".

It is hoped that the Council will have the first of the trial pathways in place by the end of the year.

KILNS MUST BE RESTORED

AFTER the initial shock of the collapse of the 1909 pottery kiln, community groups and individuals alike are determined to ensure that it is reconstructed. Robin Adamson, Property Conservation Manager, responding to enquiries to the Council, said that failure to gain permission from Historic Scotland to undertake work on the kiln was "an unfortunate oversight and the circumstances are being examined by the department concerned." He went on: "An assessment of the current condition of major monuments in the city is planned", but any maintenance programme will depend upon the Council providing sufficient money.

A joint working group has been set up, including representatives from Historic Scotland, City Museums and City Development, the City Archaeologist and a Structural Engineer, with a conservation architect to be appointed. Structural engineers have already reported that the kiln was "potentially structural [sic] unstable", and the group will monitor the necessary conservation and restoration work. Salvaged bricks, which have been securely stored on pallets and shrink-wrapped, will be used along with sympathetic brick, in the reconstruction.

Sources of funds have not yet been identified and part of the architect's remit will be to cost the work, then an application will be made to the Council for the necessary money. A newsletter was promised to update interested parties, but to date has not been received.

A spokesman for Historic Scotland told Portobello History Society that reconstruction is their favoured option, but they were not expecting to give a grant towards it, although they would advise the Council. It is likely that the base will be stabilised and supported over the winter by internal scaffolding.

One positive outcome is that the Council have inspected the 1906 kiln and agreed to remove the vegetation and pigeon nuisance after an internal structural assessment to ensure that it is safe to do so. Steel doors will replace the bricked-up entrances of both kilns to allow regular internal checks. Had these taken place in the past, the collapse may have been prevented. It has been suggested to the Council that access to the kilns could also be made available to the public, perhaps on Doors Open Day.

The community must continue to put pressure on the Council to rebuild the kiln. Margaret Munro, secretary of the History Society, said: "Considering how long it took to secure funding for repairs, persistence and determination will be needed, but we must ensure that this landmark building is reconstructed as near to its original state as possible, unlike its neighbour." It was only due to the commitment of local groups that money for repairs was eventually allocated, albeit too late.

NEW SCHOOLS: THE DEBATE CONTINUES

PUBLIC consultation by the City of Edinburgh Council on locations for a new Portobello High School and St. John's Primary School closed on 30th October. Following this, the most likely recommendation appears to be the building of a new High School on the south side of Portobello Park, on an area now used as football pitches and recreational space. This would leave the Golf Course intact. St John's Primary School could then be re-built on the vacated High School site, with housing on the old St John's site helping to offset the costs.

At a public meeting at Portobello Town Hall on 11th October, Cllr Ian Perry and education leader Cllr Andrew Burns promised that the Council now had no intention of allowing housing to be built on the Park or the Golf Course to help finance the project.

It has now emerged, how-

ever that Portobello Park Action Group (PPAG) has received legal opinion from a leading planning QC, who told them he believes the land forms part of the common good, and that local residents would have a good chance of success if they were to take the Council to court to prevent them building on it. Common good land forms part of the Council's assets, which it holds for the benefit of the wider community.

Cllr Burns confirmed that this information would be considered with the many other comments received during the consultation period, before a report goes to the Council on December 21. The next step will be a planning application, followed by further consultation and possibly a public inquiry. The final decision will be taken by the Scottish Executive and any re-building would not begin for several years.

B.M

PORTY PROFILE No. 25
JANET FENTON

Janet Fenton grew up in Goldenacre and has "happy memories of coming to the open air pool as a child". She has lived in Portobello since 1985.



Photo by Brenda Molony

Much of Janet's working life has been in radical theatre and community arts: after drama school her first job was at the Lyceum in 1967, then in theatres throughout Scotland, London and Ireland. Returning to Edinburgh in 1983, she worked with Craigmillar Festival Society before setting up a small community arts workshop under what was then Alan's Record Shop on Portobello High Street. She wrote and directed Christmas shows and touring issue-based theatre-in-education at Theatre Workshop. All of this was achieved while looking after a growing family of seven, five of whom still live in Edinburgh. In the family tradition, son Colm McCarthy makes films in Dublin.

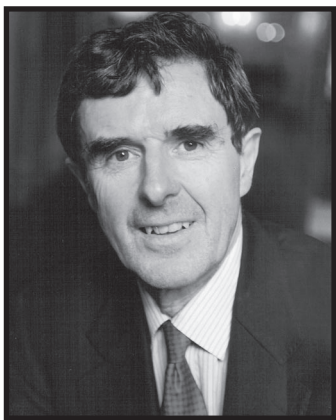
In the mid 1990s, when her last two children were very young, Janet undertook an HND in Arts Management, because she says "I had become a full-time mother, and I wasn't used to it". This led to establishing 'Ever Green' on Portobello High Street, initially for Cyrenians, a charity that supports homeless youngsters. Janet lives upstairs, so in 1997, when the shop owner was going to sell it to a mutton pie maker, she didn't like that idea, and decided to buy it herself and widen the remit. "I recognize the value to a community in a place where people can do voluntary work while recovering from mental health problems or dealing with isolation", she says "with the focus on acceptance of people as they are - everyone is creative at their own level".

'Ever Green' is still staffed by volunteers while Janet co-ordinates the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre, in the basement of St John's Church, Lothian Road.

Janet first joined CND aged 12. She now serves on the SCND executive, and is involved with Faslane 365 in actively campaigning against the replacement or retention of Trident. This Armistice Day, she and other Quakers were chained to a large white poppy at the Faslane Nuclear Base. "I'm an unashamed peace activist," she says, and, with reference to her family, "I am happy to have raised a few more!"

B.M.

To contact **The Portobello Reporter** you can telephone **0131 669 3466** or email **portyreporter@btinternet.com**



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

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

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

For details write to
54/56 Portobello High Street, EH15 1DA

Or Telephone
Gavin Strang MP 0131 669 6002
Susan Deacon MSP 0131 669 6446

ON THE BEAT

IN the first three months of the new Pub Watch scheme in Portobello and Joppa, five people were banned for life from participating pubs. Following the success of the scheme locally and in Leith, another one has been set up in Jocks Lodge and Northfield. If someone causes trouble in a bar, staff will warn others by telephone and the offender could be barred from all pubs in the area. Failure to comply with the National Smoking Ban on the premises will also be considered a breach of Pub Watch standards.

The extra hours of darkness at this time of year favour the housebreaker, who looks for the obvious signs that no-one is home, usually a house in darkness and apparently unoccupied. A simple timer switch on a lamp in the hall or front room is often enough to deter them. Security lamps operated by sensors, particularly for secluded gardens, are also a good deterrent.

Residents with gardens, particularly with trees and large hedges, may receive unsolicited calls at their door from individuals offering to trim and tidy up the garden.

The business practices of some of them can leave a lot to be desired and could be described as a double-edged sword: not only do they often charge more than legitimate businesses, who advertise in the press and phone directories, they invariably perform substandard work, leaving trees in a dangerous condition or so badly trimmed that they invite disease. They often make repeat calls, particularly on the elderly and vulnerable, so if you are approached with such an offer, I would suggest a polite but firm refusal.

Insp. Norman Ward

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NEWS IN BRIEF

LEARNING FOR LIFE: A new leaflet on lifelong learning in North East Edinburgh was launched at the recent Festival of Learning at Portobello Town Hall. Susan Deacon MSP paid tribute to members of Portobello Lifelong Learning Forum who produced the leaflet: "The map tells you at a glance where to go, and the list inside points to sources of further information. I commend the leaflet to all local people interested in learning opportunities," she said. Copies of Lifelong Learning: North East are available in local libraries.

BEFRIENDERS NEEDED: Bield Housing Association, a registered charity, seeks volunteers to befriend the older people living in its supported housing scheme at Milton Court in Portobello. They would visit tenants regularly for a chat and a cup of tea, or take them out and about and enjoy local activities. One tenant said: "I have no relatives left and have outlived most of my old friends, so the befriending project has been welcomed by me". People of all ages over 16 are needed, who enjoy working with older people and have a couple of hours spare each week or fortnight. Training and support will be given and out-of-pocket expenses paid. For more information contact Pat Donnan on 657 4567

MITCHELL BUILDING REUNION: Following a notice about this in our Summer issue, the organiser Jean Leatham (Tracey) writes: I had a fantastic response to my request for names for a reunion and am very glad to say that around 60 of us met on 31st August for a wonderful get together. People came from America, Australia, Wales, England and different parts of Edinburgh. The evening lasted for at least five hours and it was non-stop talking - "Remember this, remember that and who are you?" I would like to say a big "thank you" to everyone who came. It was great to meet you all again.

A GREAT POSTAL SERVICE: A former Joppa resident, now living in Ontario, recently wrote to the editor of The Portobello Reporter. On the envelope was the street name and number, then "Joppa EH15 2EI". - No mention of Edinburgh or even Scotland, and the postcode was incorrect, but the letter arrived three days after posting. Also on the envelope was the Canadian postal service's slogan: "From anywhere to anyone". Fully justified in this case! Well done to our local posties too.

'SUPERLOO' NOT SO SUPER

THE Adshel 'superloo' on Portobello Promenade was out of action for most of the summer, when the beach and prom were at their busiest for some time and lots of people may have been inconvenienced. Thanks to the persistence of Cllr Lawrence Marshall and local man Bob Jefferson, who kept sending the Council digital photos of the control panel showing CLOSED, the problem was finally resolved at the end of October - a wee bit late. It was apparently caused by faulty BT cabling.

No.12 BUS RE-ROUTED

LOTHIAN Buses has re-routed the No.12, which now stops at Kings Road instead of continuing via Portobello and Milton Road to The Jewel. As a result, people in Magdalene, Brunstane, the Christians, and the older people in Milton Court have no direct service to Portobello, in the run-up to Christmas, for shops, banks or doctors, and local traders are being badly affected. Cllr Maureen Child has been pressing for the restoration of a direct bus and Lothian Buses have now agreed to extend the No.69 Northfield 'shopper bus' as a partial replacement for the No.12 connection, taking in part of Milton Road. It will operate on a one-way loop, running every 30 minutes between 9.30am to 4pm, Monday to Saturday, from 21st January.

HIGH STREET IMPROVEMENTS NEARING COMPLETION

THE City of Edinburgh Council and their contractor apologise for the inconvenience caused to residents, customers, shopkeepers and businesses during the High Street improvements. The Council also wants to stress the importance of supporting local shops and businesses in the run-up to and during the festive season.

The work is now almost complete. Although it was expected to be finished at the end of July, a number of factors have extended the programme, including unexpected work by others, unforeseen ground conditions and the need to upgrade traffic signal equipment. Outstanding work includes re-levelling of paving to improve drainage and some replacement tree planting.

It is also now proposed to repave the area between Beach Lane and Figgate Street, but following consultation with local traders, this will begin after Christmas and New Year, to reduce disruption. This work, and the outstanding planting, will therefore be undertaken between January-March 2007.

There are now eight cycle racks on the south side of the High Street and two more will be installed outside the Police Station, once the pavement has been renewed.

To complement these improvements, the Council has produced a promotional shopping and services directory for Portobello, as part of its programme to support and improve local shopping centres. The traders have been involved in its development and it will be distributed locally during December.

If you have any comments on any aspect of these projects, please contact the Council's Project Manager, Stuart Smith, on 529 3423.

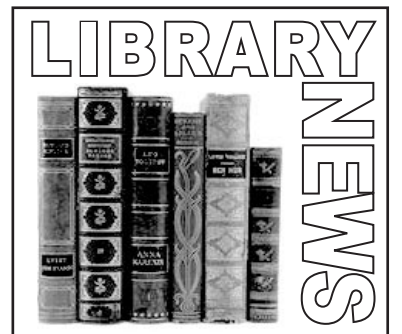
ADOBE: COMMUNITY SPIRIT BY DESIGN

ONCE again software giant Adobe has kindly supported the Reporter by donating the software needed to layout the paper. The volunteers involved in the Portobello Reporter greatly appreciate the generous support and recognition given by Adobe.

ROUNABOUTS TO GO

COUNCIL plans to extend bus priority lanes throughout the city include the replacement of two local roundabouts with traffic lights. Work on the Milton Road roundabout was expected to begin in November, while that at Kings Road will probably be replaced next Spring. Commuters can expect considerable chaos.

IN December Edinburgh Libraries will start using an upgraded computer system, which is more 'windows' based, and gives improved information. Customers are welcome to ask any staff member about this. The most visible improvement will be on the OPAC (public access catalogue) on the Council website. It will be possible to search your local library holdings as well as those of other libraries.



We have dreamed up some tasty Christmas presents for you to make for your loved ones, at very low cost. Come along to 'Christmas Truffles and Gingerbread' and make yummy presents. This event will suit adults and children and tickets are available at the desk. Come and light up our Christmas tree, at our Christmas Link party, with carols by Brunstane Primary School children, on Tuesday 12th December at 2pm. All customers are very welcome, and if you would like to bring food items they would also be welcome.



Photo by Brenda Molony

Get to grips with computers! The library recently held a computer class introducing people to various packages. We covered Email, Internet skills, 'Word', 'Excel', 'Mail Merge', 'Access' and Christmas Cards, and aim to cover more topics next year. Sessions are free, fun and informal, so if you want to learn new computer skills or refresh them, sign up for the new classes starting on Monday 8th January to 12th March, from 2-3pm. We also have a beginners' class on Fridays at 11am - please book at the counter.

Ever wanted to share what you think about the book you're reading? Dying to tell someone about a great read? Then come along to Portobello Book Group. We meet on the first Tuesday of each month, from 6.30-8pm, in the Community Room. Some of the group are seen here discussing the November book *Noughts & Crosses*, a teen novel by Malorie Blackman, which met with very mixed reactions! The January read is *The Wedding Officer* by Anthony Capella.

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The Bryces at Craigentenny Farm

THE Craigentenny estate, lying on both sides of the main Edinburgh road, stretched from Restalrig to the borders of the Abercorn family lands at Portobello. It was bought by the Miller family in 1764 and, although today is an area of typical suburban housing, its 652 acres once contained some of the best farming land in and around Edinburgh.

Craigentenny Farm, as it had become known by about 1890, at its peak, extended to 400 acres of arable land and employed six ploughmen, eight labourers and eight women. Although the fields have long since been built over the farmhouse still remains. Now named South Bank House, it stands at the end of a long drive off Portobello Road near Kekewich Avenue and the Wilson Memorial Church. It was in 1906 that the Christie Millers began developing their lands for housing and Bryce Avenue, Goff Avenue,



Sydney Terrace and Wakefield Avenue were built over the next four years. Of these only the first does not commemorate a member of the Christie Miller family being named for the estate factor Andrew Bryce.

The Bryce family appear in the Census of 1841 when Andrew Bryce, a ploughman, is recorded with his wife

and two daughters living at Lochend Cottages. In 1851 he is shown as having improved his station in life to that of a farmer employing 14 labourers and the family, now with six children, is living in the farm steading then known as Southside Bank Farm House. Over the years the number of children increased to 11. The oldest son Alexander went to

work at the Westbank Brickworks [see September 2006 issue] so it was the second son, also called Andrew, who succeeded his father and took over the farm. He it was who eventually became the Land Steward or Estate Factor for the Christie Miller family and had a street named for him.

This photograph was probably taken about 1910

and shows the two daughters of Andrew Bryce at the front of the farmhouse. Alice is the one sitting on the horse while her younger sister Andrée stands by. The girls did not have a brother and writing on the back of the photograph identifies the boy only as "Our Alex". The lady sitting on the bench is not identified and the young women standing in the doorway are probably servants. After Andrew Bryce's death on 4th November 1913 the family had to give up the farm tenancy and leave the farmhouse. They did not sever their connection with Craigentenny, however, and a granddaughter of Andrew Bryce still lives locally.

Archie Foley

(The development of the Craigentenny estate for housing over the years and the derivation of its street names are very well described in *The Place Names of Edinburgh* by Stuart Harris.)

WHERE IS THIS?

Andrew Jenkins lives in Lancashire and bought this Victorian photograph at a collectors' fair in England. He has no connection with Portobello but collects old photographs that are unusual and interesting. This is a Cabinet Print, which were popular from the late 1860s until around the start of the 20th century. The photographs measured about four inches by five inches and were mounted on stiff trade cards of slightly larger dimensions that usually had the photographer's name and address printed on the back. Sometimes, as in this case, they appeared on the front.

William Halkett appears to have begun business in Portobello in 1888 and had premises in Bath Street and the High Street. He was at first in partnership with William S Moir and in April 1891 a photograph by them of the Heart of Midlothian 1890-91 Scottish Cup-winning team was advertised in the journal *The Practical Photographer*. From 1900 he operated under his own name from number 180 High Street and on a bright day some of the letters of his name and the word 'Photographer' can still be made out under the black paint on the false window on the upper floor.

Like his contemporaries William Halkett specialised in taking photographs of individuals and family groups in his studio and advertised that he had costumes so that ladies could pose as Newhaven fishwives and men in Highland dress. Topographical scenes on Cabinet Prints are uncommon and this is a very rare example of Halkett's work. There is no writing on the back of the mount to identify the location so, was it taken in Portobello? It is very unlikely that Halkett would have strayed very far afield for outdoor shots but so far no one who has seen it has been able to hazard a guess. Can any reader help?

Archie Foley (with many thanks to Peter Stubbs)



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SEEKING AN OLD FRIEND

DOES anyone have any information about David Cassidy, who lived in Tower Street (Figgate Street) in the 1950s? He saw National Service in 1955-57 in Germany, with the 5th Company RASC. An old friend from that time, Mel Cook, would love to contact him. Would anyone who can help please call Bert on 669 1618.

H.S.KIDD

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SOME BURIALS IN ST MARK'S

ST MARK'S Episcopal Church was opened for worship on 19th May 1826 and consecrated on 21st August 1828. It is undeniably true that the church membership was drawn mainly from the upper reaches of Portobello society, with a large proportion of retired naval and army officers and colonial civil servants. However, the early records of the burial ground show that a fair number of persons from the working classes were interred there. At that time there were three classes of interment, purchased graves, those leased for seven years, and paupers' graves. The church made a point of insisting that its own mortcloths, batons and caps, bearers and ushers were used at any interment. Mortcloths cost up to one pound two shillings and sixpence (£1.12); grave dues two shillings and sixpence (12p); turf five shillings (25p); batons and caps four shillings (20p).

The burial ground was consecrated on 11th November 1828 and the first recorded interment, on 20th December 1828, was that of Miss Frances Nicholson aged 80, who had donated the first communion vessels to the church.

To read the early registers is to realise that behind each interment there is a bereavement that was just as real for those who lived and died more than 100 years ago as it would be for us today. -

Margaret Douglas, daughter of Lt. Colonel Douglas, died of "a decline" on 16th August 1834, her father "died of old age and grief" on the 21st.

Lady General McGregor, widow of the late General James Murray McGregor of the Bengal Cavalry. *(The Macgregor [sic] family memorial at the south east corner of the graveyard was erected by Catherine Wedderburn Dunbar in memory of her late husband, Major-General James Murray Macgregor and their two daughters, Barbara and Isabella. There is no trace of a memorial to her but there are number of broken stones in this area.)*

Rice Forsyth, proprietor of the popular line of stage coaches to Edinburgh, and all his family. *(The Forsyth family memorial is on the wall at the south west corner of the graveyard. The family also owned what became the Royal Hotel at the top of Bath Street. This was the terminus for the Forsyth coaches)*

Samuel Johnston, aged 28, died from the effects of injuries received on the Leith and Dalkeith Railway, 1845.

Clementina Wemyss, aged 27, who was the "relict (widow) of the late Hon. Sir James Dewar, Chief Justice of Bombay". *(Her memorial, on which her date of death is 21 January 1834, is on the west wall of the graveyard).*

John Henderson, of Glasgow, workman in search of employment, died of consumption in 1837, interred by the Glassmakers Guild.

Emma Gooding, from Bristol, died aged 34, in childbirth, "Interred free as her husband is perfectly destitute with six

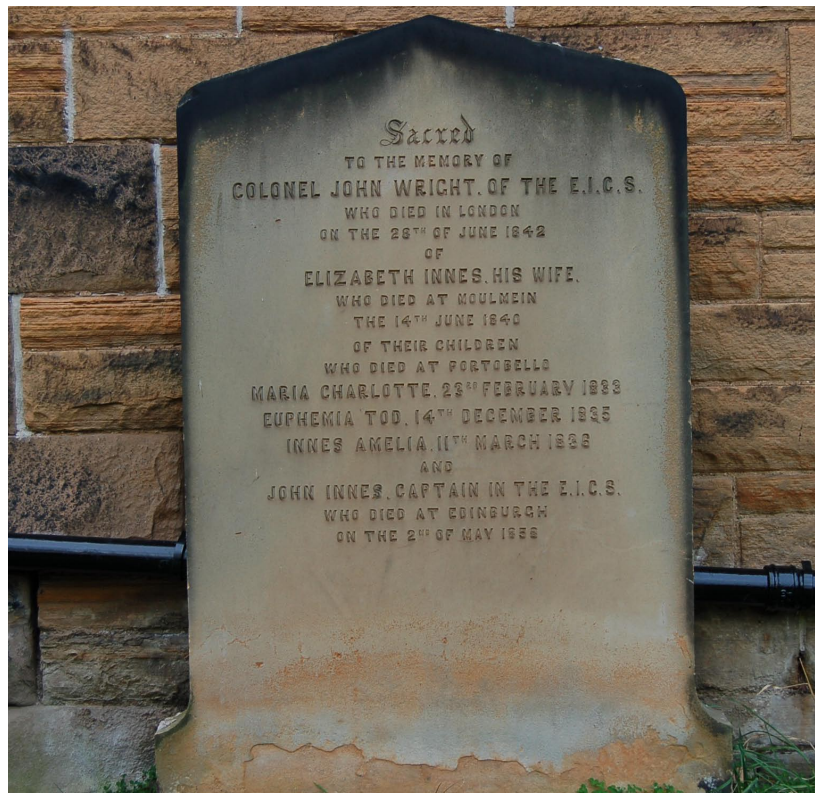


Photo by Archie Foley

young children."

Widow McKenzie, aged 80, from "the house" (poorhouse) a parish pauper

Charles Neelson, described as a Post Boy to his uncle, Postmaster Edinburgh, drowned by the sea on the night of February 12th, returning from Prestonpans.

The seven children of Robert Farmer, labourer, Easter Duddingston, born with monotonous regularity at 12 to 18 month intervals and all dead within a few months of birth, and the three sad little children of "Captain and Mrs. Wright, at present in India, from Mrs. Pine's lodgings." All three aged between 4 and 12 years died within 2 years of one another. *(There is a large memorial, in excellent condition, on the back wall of the church to Colonel (as he became) John Wright of the East India Company who died in 1842; his wife, Elizabeth Innes, died 1840 and their three children who died between 1833 and 1836.)*

All these, from Lady General McGregor down, deserve a decent and seemly setting for their earthly remains.

The bulk of this piece was researched and written by the late Gordon Cooper when he was Vestry Secretary at St Mark's and, since his time, the early Burial Registers have been transferred to the archives of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Insertion of dates omitted by Mr. Cooper has only been possible where a monumental inscription was found. Additional text, in italics within brackets, is by Archie Foley.

PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

THE 2006/2007 session of the society is proving to be as popular as previous years, with committee members having to make sure there are enough seats to accommodate the large audiences.

The October meeting saw the welcome return of Simon Fairnie, with a talk entitled *Fisherwomen*. Simon's knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, his subject make his talks vibrant and informative. He described fisherwomen's roles in the preparation of fishing lines and selling the fish around the country. His use of family photographs and personal tales brought to life the importance of women in the close-knit Musselburgh fishing community. He also took the audience round the coast with the herring gutters, illustrating the combination of hard work and camaraderie that made up these women's lives. Simon is preparing a new talk on herring, which we hope he will present at a later date.

Our November speaker took members on an entirely different journey. Dr. Chris Robinson spoke about *Exploring a Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*. The roots of the Scots language were explored, giving members an insight into the complexities of the language that many were told was slang or bad English. In her stimulating and thought-provoking talk, Chris showed that Scots is indeed a language in its own right that should be used and promoted with pride in our everyday conversations.

There is no speaker in January but, on Wednesday 7th February, Professor H.T. Dickinson from the University of Edinburgh will talk about *Thomas Muir and the 'Scottish Radical Martyrs'* of the 1790s. This is a welcome return of Professor Dickinson to the society.

Meetings are held in St. John's Church Hall in Brighton Place and begin at 7pm. Non-members are welcome, but remember to come early to make sure of a seat.

M.M.

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PORTOBELLO AMNESTY

THE Amnesty stall at the Festival of Learning in the Town Hall in September drew considerable interest, and a statement of commitment by men to the campaign on violence against women, attracted a lot of signatures.

Sandra McDonald organised a party in St Philip's Church hall for Amnesty's 'Protect the Human' week in October. There were a fancy dress competition and face-painting for children, a drumming session led by Brian Cope and musical by Eileen Penman and Alistair Cameron. A short film on Amnesty's work reminded everyone what the party was about. The Rev. Stewart Weaver, as MC, kept the programme flowing smoothly, and delicious food was provided by Sandra and friends. £411 was raised for human rights campaigns worldwide.

The Group will be on the High Street on Human Rights Day, 9th December, from 11am-1pm, with its Tree of Hope stall, which invites members of the public to send greetings cards to families and supporters of prisoners of conscience in many countries. We hope to see you there.

David Turner

WHAT'S ON TOWN HALL

JUMBLE SALE, for Inverleith Swimming Club: Sat. 9th Dec. 2-3.30pm.

SHOWCASE, a celebration of Indian music and dance: Sat. 16th Dec. 7.30-10pm. Tickets £5/£3 conc. Enquiries to 447 3908.

NEW YEAR BALL, Jive & Swing. Sat. 31st Dec, 8pm-1am. Bar, Cabaret, Class. Tickets £20. Call 445 7770.

BURNS SUPPER for Christian Aid: Portobello Old Parish Church halls, Bellfield St, 20th Jan 2007, 7pm. Tickets £12. Please call 620 2388.

Scottish Women's Rural Institute will meet on 16th Jan. and 20th Feb. at 2pm, in St Phillips Church Hall, Joppa.

Portobello Community Council will next meet on 29th Jan. and 26th Feb. at 7.30pm in the Baptist Hall, 185 Portobello High Street.

WHAT A LOAD OF RUBBISH!



THE Figgate Pond and Burn were cleared of a load of large items at the end of September. The 25 or so volunteers - local dog walkers and senior pupils from Portobello High School - removed shopping trolleys, bikes, traffic cones and signs, as well as bottles, plastic bags and other litter.

"The park is still a haven for wildlife", said volunteer Tom Forsyth. "On a good morning walk more than 20 types of bird may be seen or heard,

the species changing with the seasons. This year we had a kingfisher for several months, goosander, goldfinch, dipper, tree creeper and many others. The park is very welcoming to visitors who leave nothing but footprints and take nothing but photographs".

Tom is seen here with his dog in the middle of the group of volunteers, with the cage full of rubbish behind. What a way to spend a 71st birthday!

CHRISTIAN AID

THE Coffee Morning and Sale on October in Portobello Old Parish Church Hall raised over £707. Thanks to all of those who helped and those who came along to support. Irene Milligan and George Murray were joint winners of the Names Quiz and shared six bottles of Fair Trade wine.

The annual Carol Festival will be held on 10th December in St Philip's Church. Proceedings begin at 7.30pm but there will be community singing led by St Philip's Junior Choir and the Children's Mission prior to this while the congregation gathers. The Revd. Stewart Weaver will host the evening's programme; the Revd. Leslie Smith will speak on behalf of Christian Aid and the Revd. Andrew Patterson will give the Vote of Thanks.

There will be a collection for the work of Christian Aid and everyone is invited to stay for mince pies, hot drinks and good fellowship afterwards.



Bert McCall presents George Murray with his bottles of wine. Irene Milligan was unable to be at the presentation.

Photo by Joyce Foley

LOCAL PEOPLE KEEP EDINBURGH GROWING

AGAINST strong competition from across the city, Mr Ralph Balfour of Duddingston Park was the winner of the Front Garden section in the council's recent 'Keep Edinburgh Growing' competition, and the Hanging Basket/Container Display winner was Jean Kerr of Mountcastle Drive South.

The residents of Arran Place, off James Street, came second in the Small Street category. Their courtyard has several planted areas that were all in magnificent bloom, and Mrs Jean Thomson is seen here with her own pots and plants.

All the winners and runners-up won gardening vouchers that they will, no doubt, put to good use for next year.



Photo by JBrenda Molony

'WATER FESTIVAL' PLANNED

THE Portobello and District Council of Churches Peace and Justice Group is planning a 'Water Festival' for 24th March 2007, to raise awareness of this resource on which life depends, and which is increasingly under threat. It will be a stimulating event,

with activities for all, and will have a theme of celebration and hope, rather than 'doom and gloom'. Ideas for this are welcome. More information will appear in the next issue of this newspaper. For enquiries, please call 0131 669 1308.

David Turner

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS

WORK is almost completed on the new office and ancillary works. The kiln is in and waiting to be connected. New flooring should be in before Christmas, and so we start the New Year, our 16th as the Community Centre, with a range of new activities:

Pottery Workshops for adults and children, taster days and one-off day-long craft activities, i.e. textiles, jewellery, needle skills, stained glass, printing, etc. Register your interests by completing our on line form or call into the Centre for one.

Saturdays 10th & 17th February: **HOW TO** - A two-weekend course on using your digital camera and how to use your photos with DTP and Photoshop Elements. Maximum of 8 places. Booking essential.

Capeoira Classes for kids at 5.15 (£2) and Line Dancing at 7.30 pm (£2) are our latest Friday night activities.

Over 35 artists and makers were at the very successful Christmas Market on 2nd December.

Look on our website for all the usual suspects www.portobello.cc or call into the Centre and pick up a copy, and see me in my new office! Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Maggie Le May

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The Portobello Reporter is produced by a group of volunteers, with contributions in this issue from 40 members of the community. If you have a story to tell or an event to publicise call 669 3466 or email us at portyreporter@btinternet.com
Next deadline 7th Feb 07

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QUEEN'S AWARD FOR LOCAL SCOUTS



Pictured, from left: Mark Young, Ryan Duthie, Colum Fraser, Stephen Wilson, Kris McQueen, Richard Dixon, Ross Clark and Ali Fraser.

EIGHT Portobello Explorer Scouts recently gained their Queen's Scout Award, the highest award a scout can attain. Area Scout Commissioner, John Kennedy, made the presentations on 3rd October at Edinburgh's New Telford College. This was a great occasion, as it was the first time that so many Explorer Scouts from the same Unit in Edinburgh had been presented with the award.

LOCAL LAUNCH FOR HEALTHY EATING BILL

A MAJOR new Government Bill to promote healthy eating was launched in Portobello recently. On a visit to Towerbank Primary School, former Education Minister Peter Peacock said the aim of the *Schools Health Promotion and Nutrition (Scotland) Bill* was to ensure schools served only healthy, nutritious meals and snacks.

Pupils were delighted to welcome Mr. Peacock to their school and to discuss their very exciting *Healthy Eating* book which they put together last session, working in partner-

ship with IAS Smarts. The book includes a vast range of healthy eating ideas and is currently on sale at the school. All the children are continuing to encourage each other and their families to eat healthily.

Susan Deacon MSP said she was delighted the Minister had come to Portobello to launch a measure crucial to the future health and well-being of children. "I hope the Bill will help make healthy choices the easy choices of our youngsters while they are at school," she said.

TOP AWARD FOR HOLY ROOD

HOLY ROOD High School recently received the prestigious Director's Award for Outstanding Achievement at the Standard Life Edinburgh Achievement Awards, in recognition of the school's commitment to their relationship with Lombeta Secondary in the foothills of Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

Since 2001, groups of staff and pupils from Holy Rood and Lombeta have visited each other and worked in partnership to share their lives and cultures. Lesley Carroll, Headteacher, commented: "The communities of both schools are absolutely delighted with this award. Our project is a real team effort, with commitment from staff, pupils and parents."

Paul Iannetta (S4), Julia Kinane (S3), Mr Knox (Depute Head) and Miss Carroll were on hand to receive the award at the Hub.



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www.christmasarchives.com/santa.html

For those of you who want to learn more about Santa Claus' history there are lots of facts here.

DRUGS DVD LAUNCHED AT PORTOBELLO HIGH

A DVD for use by police involved in educating teenagers about drugs was given a national launch at Portobello High School, where head teacher Peigi Macarthur said everyone was excited about the new resource, entitled 'Get Real'. Deputy Justice Minister, Hugh Henry was among senior figures who watched senior police officers give the presentation to fourth year pupils on 13th September.

AFRICA WEEK AT ST JOHN'S

ST JOHN'S Primary School held a very successful 'Africa Week' in September to celebrate their friendship with the primary school in the village of Legho in Tanzania. Pupils took part in African Drumming workshops, tried out South African 'Gumboot Dancing', created an African hanging with a community theme and sang French-African songs. They heard traditional folk-tales, played traditional board games and generally had lots of fun learning about the African continent and Tanzania in particular. They followed

this up by joining in the UK-wide 'Song for Peace' on Thursday 21st September, when staff and pupils assembled in the playground to sing 'No Wars Will Stop Us Singing': altogether a very 'Global Week' for St John's.

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BRUNSTANE LADIES 'IN THE PINK'

ON 30th August the bowling green at Brunstane was turned pink as the Ladies' Section hosted a 'Pink Shorts and Shades Day' to raise funds for the Breast Cancer Care Scotland Appeal. Everyone joined in the fun, with Brunstane President Barbara Murray leading from the front in a natty matching outfit. The Jacks were replaced by small framed photos of pink fairies, which caused much hilarity on the green.

After a tea of pink sandwiches and cakes, and pink and white marshmallows and sweets, there followed a Pink raffle and other activities, which raised the grand sum of £210 for the appeal.

LOCAL MAN IS SUPER CLIMBER

LOCAL climber Oliver Metherell launched his 'Super7' project in 2004, with the aim of pioneering a new climbing route on each of the seven continents. So far, routes have been climbed in Europe and Australia and most recently in Asia, as he tells us:

"After a year's training, with trips to Mont Blanc and the Ecrins, we made the first ascent of an unclimbed mountain in the Miyar Nala area of India's Himachal Pradesh. We spent a day in a jeep getting to the roadhead, where we hired

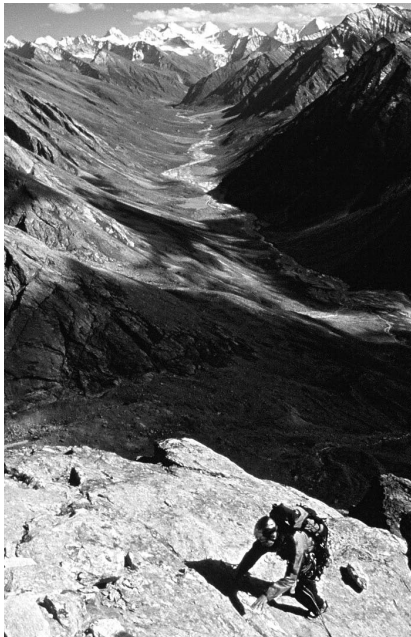


Photo by Oliver Metherell

10 local porters, then made a two day walk in to base camp at the snout of a glacier, in a place called Geyserinchup. The word means 'seven pools' and it is a renowned holy site for Buddhists. We spent a week acclimatising to the altitude and working out what to climb, finally deciding on the mountain above base camp, which rises to an altitude of 5,300m and looked like a fine challenge. We called it 'Goya Peak' as a tribute to the mistress of Salvador Dali. We began climbing at 10am and were at the summit by three in the afternoon, where we toasted our success with a flask of tea. We then made four abseils down and were back at base camp by last light.

Our thanks to The Business, Crux, Montane, Lyon Equipment, Patagonia and Pocket Mountains, and the Mountaineering Council of Scotland for their support". For more information see www.super7.co.uk

FIRST of all, many thanks to those who wrote in support of the *Scottish Planning Policy 11: Physical Activity and Open Space Consultation Draft* to include allotments: when communities want allotments this will give them some protection against development and secure them for future generations. Certain procedures have to be gone through to get this draft done and dusted and I hope to keep you posted until it is "law".

Over the winter, although there isn't as much to do outside, I make it a priority when the weather is fine to get into the garden. For encouragement I have a witch hazel, winter honeysuckle, daphnes and viburnums that perfume the winter air, and just a tiny bunch picked for an egg cup fills a room with scent. The days are short so make the most of the light at the weekend to tidy up: cut back any hardy perennials that look grotty; some just die disgracefully, others like grasses look great, but beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so you decide. I don't cut down anything that still has seeds attached for the birds, or anything that's very dry with hollow stems that can over-winter ladybirds; it's the wet soggy stuff that I clear away. Empty the compost heap and mulch everything, but don't leave it lying up against the stems of shrubs; any stuff from the top that hasn't rotted down can go into the bottom of the bin, with any new prunings on top.

Make sure any plants that are being kept frost-free have extra protection when it's very cold. A blanket, a bit of carpet over a cold frame, or even a candle in a bowl of sand/pebbles inside the frame can ward off small amounts of frost. Bubble plastic in the greenhouse is a pain to put up, but worth the effort to protect plants and eventually saves money, as many cuttings can be taken and over-wintered. I have an electric heater in there too, set only to keep frost-free, and use a min/max thermometer that shows inside and outside temperatures. If you only have a few pots of geraniums, for example, then a windowsill in an unheated room is fine.



with Susan Burns

NEW THISTLES TEAM

A NEW U-11 team has been formed at Portobello Thistle FC, directed by Billy Blackie, who has played semi-professional football for Dunfermline Athletic and Cowdenbeath, and two other experienced coaches. They started this season well, winning two of their first four games in the East of Scotland 'Soccer Sevens' U-11s League.

The club has been sponsored for new kit and equipment by N Watts & Sons, Warners Solicitors and Kristoffersen Carpets, and other local businesses have donated gifts for raffles, for which it would like to thank all concerned. For more information see their website [HYPERLINK "http://www.intheteam.com/portobello"](http://www.intheteam.com/portobello)

PORTOBELLO HORNETS

PORTOBELLO Rugby F.C is looking for new players from P3 to P7 to join their friendly Hornets team. Boys and girls of any ability are welcome. The team trains at Cavalry Park (next to Holy Rood High School) on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6.30-8pm and games are usually played on Sundays at 12.30pm, either at home or away.

The junior club is run by volunteers and all the coaches are SRU trained and disclosure certified. The P3 team are pleased to be sponsored by Castle Chem-Dry, who are providing them with new shirts.

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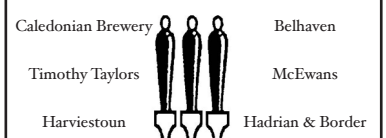
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