

# The Portobello REPORTER

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## WONDER

WHAT HAS THE COMMUNITY MADE OF IT?



Photo by Margaret Drysdale

**THE** three pyramids built of sandbags on Portobello beach in July certainly created wonder as well as a lot of wondering. Commissioned on behalf of the community by the local group Big Things on the Beach, and realised by Scottish artist Hill Jephson Robb, this conceptual piece of temporary public art attracted attention from far and wide during its lifetime. Although it did not last as long as was first anticipated, its evolution will definitely stick in the collective memory.

It could be argued that as a piece of 'temporary public' art it more than fulfilled its design specification. Just as the community was encouraged to get together to help build the pyramids, the many crea-

tive and fun ways in which they were 'deconstructed' also had the effect of bringing art and community into direct contact. After all, the notion of the people working together in the past, present and future to build their communities was implicit in the initial concept of WONDER, and it seems the community did indeed connect and generate a sense of fun as they interacted with the work, ultimately returning it to the beach from which it came.

However, there was also frustration at the seeming lack of respect for the art work. Not only did the police have to be called on occasion to deal with vandalism during the construction of WONDER, but the speed with which it was dis-

mantled by curious promenaders, children and even some parents, has given rise to debate on the meaning of public art and its relationship with the community.

Damian Killeen, chairperson of Big Things, says: "We were delighted that so many people worked with the artist and, as a temporary art work, we knew it wouldn't last. But it became a real talking point, locally and further afield, and also highlighted the need for some kind of creative facility for people to engage with". The group are planning an event in November to give people an opportunity to explore the future possibilities for public art in Portobello.

Eilidh Bateman

## VOX POP

**THE REPORTER** sent Lou Hardless out to find out what some of the people who use the Promenade think of cyclists using it as a cycle route. Here are some of the responses she gathered.



Robin and Dauphine Kirby from Salisbury had been staying in Portobello for six days, visiting the Prom and beach every day. Robin said: "Lots of elderly people walk their dogs. I've seen them jump, and their dog moves out and could be hurt by a bike passing". Dauphine said: "I think it's a good idea, but they must let people know they are coming, because cyclists are very quiet".



Pat Conway (left) and Murdoch Chambers of Mentone Avenue, Portobello walk on the Prom up to four times a week. Pat said: "For about 350 days of the year there's nobody on the Prom. Cycling should be allowed, but cyclists should be responsible when it's busy". Murdoch doesn't mind them "as long as they are not going fast".



Chris Winton and Nicola Hutton, both from Craigtintny, use the Prom up to four times a week. Chris was "not bothered", and Nicola said "I think it's good, and better than cycling on the streets".



Subrida Devi (left) and Abhishek Kumar from London were visiting the Prom for the first time. Subrida said: "If people are thinking or meditating and a bike goes by, they can be put off". Abhishek said: "People can get disturbed when walking. It's very narrow, the Prom".



Davie Locke of Ramsey Place, Portobello who walks on the Prom every day said: "I think it's brilliant".

Photos by Lou Hardless

## CONCERN OVER MASTERPLAN

**FOLLOWING** a Fact Finding Workshop for around 70 community representatives and others in May, draft plans for the regeneration of North West Portobello were displayed in the Library from 25th June to 7th July. Hundreds of people scrutinised them and wrote comments on the cards provided; Portobello Community Council and Amenity Society and others wrote detailed comments to the city planners.

The main concern for many is the proposal to build a new Library and Community Centre beside the Indoor Bowls Centre, away from the main road and bus routes, where it would be difficult for older people, mothers with young children and school pupils in particular to get to them. Many people also shop when they go to the Library and Community Centre and these changes could have a detrimental effect on local shops; they could also affect the numbers using the new Library and Centre.

Over 200 residents of NW Portobello have formed a Portobello Masterplan Action Group (PMAG) to keep people informed and encourage them to respond. Group spokesperson Caroline Hosking said: "We cannot stress enough the huge impact this Masterplan, in its current form, will have on residents. We are extremely worried about the suggested height of many of the proposed blocks of flats, ranging from 10 storeys next to the Baileyfield Road cottages, to 5 and 4 storeys next to existing 1 to 3-storey homes. The proposed 5-storey flats on the Funpark site would hugely overshadow the Promenade and the Kilns". The Group, like many other people, are also concerned about the proposed move of the Library and Community Centre; the extra traffic likely to be generated by the density of the proposed housing; the apparent lack of social or affordable housing; the impact on existing social and public services; and proposals to build on the Bowling Centre and Bridge Street car parks, that would further reduce Portobello's already scarce parking.

PMAG urge everyone concerned about the draft plan to contact their local councillors to press for the promised public meeting, for wider discussion; the Community Council has made this request to the city planners. To contact PMAG, call 669 5262 or email [hoskingcaroline@hotmail.com](mailto:hoskingcaroline@hotmail.com)

## WASTE TRANSFER CREATES A STINK

**A PLANNING** application is about to be submitted for a waste transfer site at the former freightliner terminal on Sir Harry Lauder Road. The site would have the capacity to handle up to 350,000 tonnes of domestic, commercial and industrial waste per annum, which would be loaded from lorries into containers, inside a large building, and transferred by rail to a landfill site at Dunbar. Viridor, the company concerned, say they already have enough private contracts to make the site economically viable. They would also be expected to apply for the Council contract for the 150,000 tonnes of Edinburgh's domestic waste currently handled at the Powderhall site, if it eventually closes.

Millerhill has long been proposed as a more appropriate site; it is closer to the city bypass, away from residential areas and on a rail line. Concerns about the Portobello site include: congestion, noise and pollution from several hundred extra lorries a day; vibration from extra trains affecting nearby properties; smells and noise; vermin and health hazards.

Following a public meeting in June, attended by around 150 people, local residents formed a campaign group to fight the proposals. The campaign, appropriately named PONGS (Portobello Opposes New Garbage Site), has the support of local councillors, Kenny MacAskill, MSP and Gavin Strang, MP.

Diana Cairns

## HOVERCRAFT TRIAL



Photo by Margaret Drysdale

**MORE** than 32,000 passengers used the Forthfast service between Kirkcaldy and Portobello during the two-week trial in July. Commuters, tourists, cyclists, wheelchair users and families with children tested the 20-minute crossing, and many motorists ditched their cars in favour of a hovercraft and bus journey from Fife to Edinburgh city centre or Leith, and back. The results of the trial will now be analysed, to see whether a regular service would be viable. If so, it should give a boost to tourism and businesses on both sides of the Forth, as shops in Portobello, Leith and Kirkcaldy reported new customers and an increase in sales during the fortnight. Concerns have been expressed, however, about the noise of the hovercraft, parking problems around the operation site, and the possible effect on seabirds.

**PORTY PROFILE No. 27**  
**ALLAN GUTHRIE**

Photo by Mary Regan



**CRIME** writer Allan Guthrie and his wife Donna moved to Portobello three years ago, seeking a room with a view and plenty of space for their growing book collection. Allan says "I grew up in Kirkwall in Orkney where you can see the sea from almost any window. I can't imagine not living on the coast."

Allan believes that Portobello is a creative environment for a writer and helps him think but, he says, "the discipline of sitting down and practising, essential for writing, comes from my musical background". Allan started writing as a child but was also a gifted

musician, and it seemed as though music would be his chosen career. However, in 1986, at the age of 21 he decided to cut short his classical music studies after a year at Aberdeen University. Later, he was able to pass on his piano-playing expertise to a Chopin-loving character in his first novel *Two-Way Split*.

A career in IT then took shape at Waterstone's, where he discovered a passion for crime fiction, particularly the American 'hard-boiled' school of the 1920s, and was inspired to write *Two Way Split* followed by *Kiss Her Goodbye*, both set in Edinburgh.

Allan received countless rejections from publishers, but kept positive because, he says: "Nobody said I couldn't write". His perseverance paid off and both books were published in America; he now has a three-book deal with Polygon, with a further novel *Savage Night* out next April.

Portobello provides the backdrop for his latest novella *Kill Clock*, whose central character Pearce, despite being a convicted murderer is, says Allan, "extremely moral in his own way". It was commissioned by Barrington Stoke, who publish books for dyslexic and struggling readers. "It has the same dark and violent adult content of my other books - but with larger print on off-white paper, it is easier to read", he says. "It's amazing the number of people who ask if I am anything like my characters", he adds. "The answer is definitely no, except perhaps for my sense of humour."

Allan's study overlooking the Forth must be a hive of activity, because as well as being a full-time writer he is a literary agent, commissioning editor, web master and screenwriter. He recently won the 2007 Theakston's Old Peculier Crime Novel of the Year for *Two Way Split* and said he was "overwhelmed to receive the award".

The sea air in Portobello seems to have been good for Allan and his characters but he does say: "I wonder what Pearce would make of the hovercraft." Perhaps we'll find out in a future novel.

Karen Coombe

**TIME TO GO FOR ESCARGOTS**



Photo by Archie Foley

**THIS** summer's heavy rain brought with it an unwelcome increase in the already overlarge snail population in local gardens. There are harrowing accounts of the destruction wrought as they munched their steady way through the first succulent young shoots or rows of newly planted seedlings. In the face of largely ineffectual traditional methods this might be a good time to consider a radical alternative measure to reduce snail numbers; one that might be termed the ultimate biological and organic control. Why not harvest and eat them? *Helix Aspersa Muller*, which is the species commonly found in our gardens, is edible, and collecting and consuming them in large enough quantities early in the season before they start to breed could have a dramatic effect on damage to plants.

Is this possible in Portobello or Joppa? Well, two years ago at an al fresco evening reception in Rosefield Park members of the Brightons Residents Association enjoyed snails in garlic butter that were harvested locally and prepared by Laurent Haquin. Laurent has kindly agreed to divulge the traditional Haquin family recipe that he learned as a child in France to readers of the *Portobello Reporter*.

"Gather snails that you are sure have not been exposed to chemicals such as herbicides and pesticides. Feed them on a diet of lettuce, preferably home grown, for a week to cleanse their systems and then for a further week on bread to fatten them. After this two weeks the snails in their shells should be cooked in a bouillon that includes onions and bay leaves and then taken out of their shells to remove the end bits (contain snail poo). Stuff the empty shells with clean snails plus garlic and parsley butter and re-heat in the oven. Serve hot as a starter. It is, all in all, incredibly time consuming but a small price to pay for such an exquisite dish".

All you require to get started are a standard household bucket and a pair of tights. Stretch the tights over the top of the bucket, knot the legs together near their tops, cut off the redundant lengths and you have a container for 20 to 25 adult snails. The recommended season for snails stretches from April to September.

AF

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**BRUNSTANE BOWLING CLUB** held their annual June Cup on 23rd June, and despite bad weather that cut the event short, still raised £559 for St Columba's Hospice.

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS:** Northfield/Willowbrae CC will meet in 2007/2008 on Wed.17th Oct, 19th Dec, 20th Feb, 14th Apr, 12th June (AGM). Meetings are held at Northfield/Willowbrae Community Centre at 7.30pm and are open to the public.

Portobello CC will meet in 2007 on Mon. 24th Sept, 29th Oct, 26th Nov. in Portobello Baptist Church Hall, 193 Portobello High St. Meetings are open to the public.

**REPLACEMENT OF ROUNDABOUTS PROGRESSING:** Work to replace the Milton Link roundabout with traffic lights is now complete and traffic flow there is back to normal. Work at the Duddingston Park junction should be completed by the first week in September, and similar work on the Kings Road roundabout is expected to start towards the end of January and take four months to complete.

**CALLING OLD SCHOOL FRIENDS:** Does anyone remember Bill Prentice who went to Portobello Secondary School from 1934-37? Bill says: "I was in Class 3a (non-Latin) and was a class monitor. The register teacher was Miss Cope and the Headmaster was Dr Hamilton Birrell. I lived in Craigmillar, like a lot of other pupils, and was a member of the 6th Portobello Scouts, who met in Duddingston Church Hall. Two of my special class mates, Jimmy Laurie and Willie Adamson, were killed in the war. They were both aircrew in the Royal Air Force. I would be delighted to have a call from an old school friend". Bill can be contacted via The Reporter on (0131) 669 3466.

**BOOK SEARCH:** *Memories of a Newcraighall Miner's Daughter* by Marianne Holligan (Tuckwell Press, October 2001). Does anyone have a spare copy of this book by a lady who was well known in Portobello? All efforts to get it through the book trade have failed. Contact 669 0184 or alfoley21@aol.com.

**OLDER RESIDENTS IN BLOOM**



Photo by Brenda Molony

**RESIDENTS** of Coillesdene sheltered housing complex took part in a container planting competition this summer, organized by support worker Alec Hislop, to encourage their involvement in the community and enhance their own surroundings. Local horticulture expert George Anderson judged the entries and presented prizes on 4th August. Pictured (l-r) are: Mary (3rd prize), Winnie (1st), Sandy (4th) and May (2nd).

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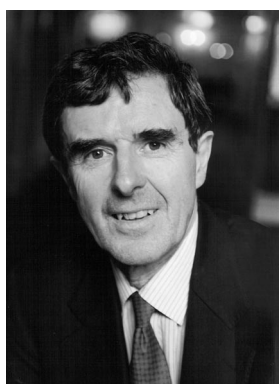
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## CUT THE CARBON MARCH

**THE** Cut the Carbon march organised by Christian Aid is an 11 week 1,000 mile trek across the UK. It started in Bangor, Northern Ireland on 10th July and will end at the London Stock Exchange on 2 October. The team of 22 'core' walkers from rich countries and poor, spreading the cut the carbon message to companies and politicians, reached Portobello on Monday 23rd July. They and supporters were welcomed at St Mark's Episcopal Church for a soup and sandwich lunch and a meeting with Dr Gavin Strang, MP. He answered questions and coupled good wishes and support to the walkers with cautious optimism that an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 could be achievable with the aid of improved technology.



The marchers being welcomed into St Mark's

Photo by Archie Foley

The walkers were welcomed and sent dancing on their way by the jigs and reels of the strings of the Capriccio trio led by Bridget Blackmore.

Follow the march at [www.pressureworks.org/dosomething/act/290307\\_march.html](http://www.pressureworks.org/dosomething/act/290307_march.html)

R C M

## SCOUTING'S SUNRISE CEREMONY

**SUNRISE** on Wednesday 1st August was designated the moment when the Scouting movement reached its centenary. There were sunrise events throughout the country on that day, and in Edinburgh the occasion was marked on top of the seven hills.

Locally, the members and Leaders of the 14th Portobello Scout Group, who meet at St. Christopher's Church Hall in Craigentenny Road, survived a stay-awake which began at 10pm on 31st July. The Leaders managed to keep everyone awake and at 5.15am on the 1st, 25 Group members assembled on Portobello Promenade awaiting the sunrise.

Unfortunately we were unable to see the sun, but at official sunrise we repeated the Scout promise, and gave the 'Craigentenny yell'. We also had a surprise visit from Alan Willoughby, Secretary of Edinburgh Area Scouts, who turned out in full uniform, including his kilt. The youngsters then returned to the Church Hall, and were served a full cooked breakfast before going home for a good sleep.

Colin MacDonald, Group Leader

## FUN EVENTS PLANNED FOR CAR-FREE DAY

**EVERY** year, people around the world get together in their neighbourhoods to remind themselves that there is an alternative to our car-dominated society, and on Sunday 23rd September, the local group PEDAL (Portobello Energy Descent and Land Reform) is organising a Car-Free Day in Portobello.

Cars contributed to around 2000 deaths from accident and pollution in Scotland last year; transport also accounts for a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions. At a time of increasing concern about climate change, Car-Free Day will give an up-beat glimpse of how things could be in Portobello if we relied less on our CO2-spouting menaces.

Planned events include: Films, live street music and theatre, storytelling, face-painting; a wild-food walk around Portobello; a stall for local producers of veg, fruit, honey, arts and crafts, baking, preserves; car or parking space-sized artworks; rickshaw rides; canoe instruction

For full details see [www.pedal-party.org.uk](http://www.pedal-party.org.uk) or look out for the programme, which will be widely available from 15th September.

Eva Schonveld (PEDAL)

**PORTOBELLO** Library staff have been entered for Edinburgh Council's 'Staff Awards 2007' in recognition of good teamwork resulting in the highest increase (12%) in annual book issues in Edinburgh over the past two years. There has been an even higher increase in Junior and Teenage issues (25%). We are very happy about this, as the national news usually emphasises falling library issues and children not being interested in reading. Well, not in Portobello! The team stand to win £300 - please wish us luck!



In July the Connect public computers in Edinburgh libraries were moved to a new network, which has caused some problems, for which we apologise. Unfortunately they could not be fixed by library staff as the system is a city-wide network. An improved Firewall was installed centrally on the 3rd of August to improve the internet speed; and there are occasional problems accessing web sites, which are being investigated. Thank you for bearing with us.

We have had a lovely German apprentice librarian, Nicole Willman, working with us this summer. Nicole has been gaining experience of community library service, and writes about it here:

"My name is Nicole and I work in an academic library in Germany. I have been doing work experience for four weeks in Portobello library and I came here with the European Program 'Leonardo da Vinci', which supports the trainee to work in another EU country. It's a great chance to improve my English skills. The library offers a wide variety of services for all members of the community. My favourite is the service for elderly people to take part in library life. While they enjoy tea and biscuits, the staff help to find suitable books. They come once a fortnight to this. It seems to me that people of all ages like to use the library. There is good teamwork in the staff which creates a good atmosphere and services. I could especially experience this during Rhymetime. This is an event once a week for parents with their children (age 0-5) to have fun and get contact with books. I've had lots of profit from my stay in Portobello Library in Edinburgh. Besides meeting nice people I got lots of new ideas to take back to Germany".

And finally - Sophie Ferguson, who has run a children's art class upstairs on Mondays, is going to further her career, so can't run the class any longer. A big thank you Sophie, we will miss you and the class.

Joyce Campbell

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# HAPPY DAYS



The cast of 'The Country Girl' in 1949. Dorothy is second from left in back row. Who are the others?

**DOROTHY ADDISON** (formerly Jenkins) who now lives in British Columbia, Canada has sent us some memories of when she lived in Joppa in the late 1940s and 1950s):

"Our family moved to Joppa in 1947. I was ten and my brother John was 13. It was an established community with very few young families. I think there was about only 15 kids ages nine to 12. Joppa then had about 16 shops. Several of them such as the two newsagents, three grocery stores and the dairy, all required delivery boys. None of the girls did this, but we gladly gave the boys a hand with their paper routes. The girls ran messages for neighbours and walked the local dogs, my favourite thing.

I lived at the corner of Joppa Road and Morton

Street above Sime and Wilson, the grocers. I left the area when I was a teenager, but there is hardly a day goes by now that I am older, that I do not think of all the happy days of my young life that I enjoyed in Joppa and Portobello, and all the people I knew.

I attended the kinderspiel, a young people's group in Joppa, twice a week and I always wondered where the name kinderspiel came from. The adults in charge organised a concert every year, in Saint Phillip's Church, Joppa. We had such a wonderful time and they were always a great success. I was in quite a few of the shows but unfortunately only have a photograph of one of them. It was called The Country Girl.

At Towerbank School we had a very good net-

ball team which I was a member of. Somebody, I don't know who, took a photograph of us in 1948. I only know the name of the girl holding the ball; she was Rena Taylor and I'm sitting next to her on her left. I can remember the name of the Headmaster. I don't know if that is a good sign or not. His name was Mr Allan.

In my early teens I got a job, along with my friend Dorothy, working at Charlie's Café on the promenade. She was Mr. Frank Cossar's step-daughter and she and I were inseparable. Mr Cossar was a local P.E. teacher. We were reaching 12 years of age and feeling pretty grown up, and desperate to earn some money. Charlie's Café was located right next door to where Mr Cossar lived with his family; at the foot of Bath Street, turn left and there

was Charlie's.

Dorothy's mother put in a good word for us with Charlie and before we knew it, we were hired for all of our summer school holidays as waitresses and anything else we were able to tackle in his shop. Apart from the kitchen staff we were the only two employees, and we loved it. Charlie was strict but very fair, He put up with no nonsense. He never said much, he only had to look.

The place was busy from morning to night. Our biggest selling specialty was boiling water from our dear old Ascot water heater in the front shop. The line up was non-stop from when we opened, all the way along the counter and out the front door. Every kind of container imaginable was presented to us for a fill up. We charged from six-

pence to one shilling and sixpence depending on the size. Anything to get that almighty cup of tea!

In the afternoon, Charlie would disappear to the back of the shop to make his home-made ice cream, and we knew better than to ever disturb him. When that was ready and was brought to the front it was gone in no time. It was so delicious, and the customers knew when to expect it each day.

I went to Canada in 1956 to marry my boyfriend Tom Addison who was from Granton. However, we decided to come back over for the wedding and we got married in St Phillips in 1957. After our honeymoon in Peebles we returned to Canada. About every second day now I spend time looking at the Edinburgh website run by Peter Stubbs [www.edinphoto.org.uk](http://www.edinphoto.org.uk) enjoying the photographs and people's recollections of the old days. It would be wonderful to see more photos of Joppa, maybe even a kinderspiel show, and school classes of when I was at Towerbank and Portobello Secondary".

Dorothy Addison (formerly Jenkins)



Towerbank netball team, 1948. Can we have more names?

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# A GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT



Dougald McDonald

WE are indebted to Susan McKean of Paisley for being able to publish this interesting postscript to the article in our Spring issue on the garden created by Charles Jenner at Queen's Bay Lodge. Susan's great-grandfather, Dougald McDonald was butler to Charles Jenner for many years and she discovered the two photographs and reference letter some years ago when going through old family papers.

The photograph of Charles Jenner was taken by local photographer William T Bashford, probably in the Prospect House, which was a wooden building in the garden that had a fine view over the Firth of Forth.

The reference is reproduced here in full:

"For several years Mr Dougald McDonald was known to me as the butler and personal attendant of the late Mr Charles Jenner. Through

visiting and also living in the house I had good opportunities of observing for myself and also of learning his master's opinion of him. What his master's opinion was can be inferred from his years of service and from the fact that he bequeathed to him an annuity of fifty pounds a year. But as many an old gentleman is hood-winked by servants I do not go by Mr Jenner's opinion alone, though I have known few gentlemen old or young, who had so keen an insight into character, and who was more ready to show forth prompt, sometimes merciless indignation towards selfishness, hypocrisy and humbug. Nothing that I ever saw in McDonald led me to doubt the soundness of his master's opinion of him. He was a silent undemonstrative but self-possessed kind of man going quietly through his routine work, punctual to the minute and always ready to appease his master in the many multifarious scientific and other pursuits in which he diligently spent the most of his waking hours, the greater part of these pursuits much more likely to try the patience of an average butler than to excite his intelligent interest. I think his faithful and devoted attention to my old friend contributed greatly to lengthen his life and I strongly recommend him as a man likely to discharge in a satisfactory manner any duties, however responsible and onerous that he may undertake to do. Wherever he may go he will carry with him my best wishes for his success.



Charles Jenner by W T Bashford

J C Smith LLD (Dundee, 20th June 1896)".

It is as glowing a testimonial as anyone could wish for but is particularly interesting for what it tells us about the character of the employer as well as the employee.

Rather surprisingly Dougald was not a live-in servant but lived in what is now Adelphi Place with his wife and five children. After Charles Jenner died the whole family moved to the east end of Glasgow where Dougald appears to have got employment as a stableman. Certainly, in the 1901 census he was in Anderston in Glasgow and working as 'head stableman'. He died on 4 Feb 1914 aged 66 years in Lambhill Street, Govan, Glasgow. His occupation on his death certificate was recorded as 'contractor's stableman'.

Archie Foley (with thanks to Susan McKean)

## MORE MEMORIES

WHEN I was two years old, in 1947, my parents moved from a single-end flat at Abbeyhill into a prefab at Coillesdene Avenue, Joppa. It had all the mod cons, an inside toilet, airing cupboard, fridge, washing boiler, larder and two good-sized bedrooms. Rations were still on up to, I think, 1952. Mum would take me to a little building just off Rosefield Avenue. Here we would get the cod liver oil, and a bottle of orange juice.

The trams were fantastic, way back then. At the terminus outside Coillesdene House, the conductors would change the electric conductor arms from one line to another. This arm transferred the power from the line to the tram's motor. Many a time you could hear the conductor coming out with a few choice adjectives. At that time it cost a penny to travel to Portobello and tuppence to travel to Edinburgh. Eventually, the fares went up.

After school in the summer we would go along the High Street in Portobello to the Tram Depot and watch them washing the trams. Next door was a farrier and we would watch him shoe the horses. The depot was directly across from Pipe Street. This was the street my Dad, also Archie, was born and brought up in, along with his two brothers and two sisters. They lived in number 15. My pals and I used to play football for St Philip's Church in the Church Football League. Eventually, I went to work in United Glass as an apprentice engineer. My dad was a manager there, as well. United Glass also had a football team called Portobello Primrose; I played for them from 1962 till 1967 when we were all made redundant

Archie Young

## PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

HOPEFULLY we all managed to get some sun this summer in between the showers. The new season of the Society begins on Wednesday 5th September and our first speaker of the session is Margaret Bennett with a talk entitled *Scottish Customs from the Cradle to the Grave*. Maybe Margaret will manage to enlighten us about some of the sayings and practices our grannies used to come away with.

Our speaker on Wednesday 3rd October is Christopher Fleet from the National Library of Scotland. The title of his talk is *Looking at Portobello and beyond through early maps and plans*, and those of us interested in the early establishment of Portobello, and how it expanded, should find this talk very informative.

Esther Sharpley visits the Society on Wednesday 7th November to talk about *Costumes through the ages*. For our more fashion-conscious members this should provide an insight into the trends of times gone by. Looking at costumes also helps illustrate the way in which photographs may be dated by the clothes the people in them are wearing.

The last meeting of 2007 returns to a local topic. On Wednesday 5th December Rev. Dr. Jim Jack will speak to members about Duddingston. The histories of Duddingston and Portobello are closely inter-linked, particularly through their churches, and Dr. Jack should provide us with evidence of our relationship.

Meetings are held in St. John's Church Hall in Brighton Place and begin promptly at 7pm. All are welcome. A donation to Society funds is appreciated. Membership of the Society is available for an annual subscription of £5.

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# WHAT'S ON

**PARTY ON THE PARK:** Sat. 8th September, 2-5pm organized by Portobello Park Action Group. Home baking, children's games and activities, music, refreshments.

**MEET THE AUTHOR:** Peter Kerr, who writes crime stories and about Spain, will feature at a Spanish Evening on Tuesday 11th September from 7-8pm at Portobello Library. Tapas and Spanish wine and orange provided.

**MUSIC FESTIVAL:** Sat. 22nd Sept. from 2pm at St Mark's Church, Portobello High St. An afternoon of classical, folk, jazz and Scottish music performed by local musicians. Also stalls, artwork, tea and coffee. FREE entry.

**ST JAMES ART GROUP:** 5th Annual Exhibition, Portobello Library, Monday 1st to Saturday 27th October. The group meet every second Thursday morning in the church hall. Anyone interested in joining should phone for further information to Evi Carmichael 669 6731.

**COFFEE MORNING** with bring-and-buy, home baking stalls, etc: St.Philip's Church Hall, Sat. 6th Oct, 10am-12noon.

**CHRISTIAN AID COFFEE MORNING:** Saturday, 6th Oct. Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield Street, 10am till noon -- £1.

**PROTECT THE HUMAN PARTY:** Sat. 6th October, 7-9.30pm, St Philip's Church Hall, Joppa. Entry £5 adults; children in fancy dress -free, otherwise £2.50. Refreshments, music, children's entertainments and competitions.

**SALSA CELTICA:** Friday 26th October, 7.30pm, Town Hall. Bar and snacks. Tickets £15, from Kitcheners Deli. Over 18s only. Salsa Celtica's are a vibrant 11-piece world fushion band, Salsa with its signature Scottish Folk sound. A salsa instructor will take anyone interested through their paces so you can dance the night away.

**CEILIDH** with The Belle Stars Band, Friday 30th November, 7.30pm, Town Hall, hosted by POD to celebrate St Andrew's Day. Tickets £8, £5 concessions, from Kitcheners Deli.

# AWARD FOR NEECAG



**NORTH** East Edinburgh Care Action Group were proud winners of a City of Edinburgh Council 'Get up & Go' Award on 19th July, in the category 'Encouraging the Participation of Older People. Bill Macrae and Andrew McKendrick (NEECAG Leith), and Charlie Grierson and James Anderson (NEECAG Portobello) were presented with the award by Council leader Jenny Dawe.

Anne Munro Community Worker- Older People said: "The older people at NEECAG work so hard to encourage others who are isolated, frail and housebound to come along and have their say. Their efforts have never been officially recognized and this award is long overdue. NEECAG members are 'unsung heroes' working in an area that does not normally attract any recognition".

NEECAG was formed in 1995 to give older people the opportunity to discuss Health and Community Care issues and make their views known to the relevant bodies.

# TELEPHONE CHOIR CONCERT

**THE** Edinburgh Telephone Choir will perform at St. Philip's Church, Joppa on Wednesday 7th November at 7.30 pm

The choir was formed in 1947 by Molly Scott, a lady supervisor in the Rose Street Telephone Exchange. Male singers were added in the 1950s, enabling a wider range of music to be sung. The choir have performed several hundred concerts in Edinburgh and surrounding areas and various charities have benefited from dona-

tions. The choir performs each month between September and March, and broke all records in May 2007 at its 60th Anniversary Annual Concert, when more that 1200 folk attended over four nights in the Churchill Theatre. Their repertoire is very varied, with something for everyone, so come along, sit back and enjoy 'music for you!'

Tickets £6.00 (incl. refreshments) from Lilian & Ian Warwick 669 4906 and Pat Knox 669 3765.

# PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS

**THE** Ups and Downs of life in a Community Centre! - We had started talks again with the Council regarding a new Community Centre/Library to be built on the existing sites, then along came the North West Portobello Master Plan which indicates a 'community facility' on the Bowling Centre's car park! Somewhere between the two, a report to Council is still going ahead on the possibility of a feasibility study on our proposals. Watch this space for more news. Meanwhile we carry on with classes and our new website [www.portobellocc.btik.com](http://www.portobellocc.btik.com) is in preparation.

## NEW CLASSES

Monday, 2-4pm from 17th September - Paper Crafts (cards, boxes, books, parchment).

Tuesday, 7-9pm, ongoing - Mosaic Workshop.

Wednesday, 2-4pm - Mosaic Workshop.

Thursday, 1-3pm - Telford Outreach Pathways: Introduction to Art and Design (free).

Thursday, 4-5.30pm - Make and Create Kids Art Workshops (£20 for 4-week block).

Thursday, 7-9pm - Pottery with Alison Robinson.

(All adult classes -£5.00 per session to cover materials, etc.)

Following the Arty Theme -

Monday, 7-9pm - Mike's Art Club is back.

Tuesday, 10am-12 - Jean's Art Class is back.

Look out for information on THE BIG DRAW in October, and we are holding another Arts and Crafts Christmas Market on Saturday 1st December 1.30-5.00pm.

All other classes are running as usual: Gentle Exercise, Sequence Dancing, Enjoyaball, Dog and Puppy Training, Yoga, Line Dancing, Capoeira, Taekwondo, Badminton and Karate. AND on Monday nights we could have Belly Dancing and/or Yoga - let me know what you are interested in.

The Youth Clubs are back after their summer camp in tipis at Yair: Junior Club 5.30-7.00 on Tuesdays, and Senior Club 6.30-8.00 on Thursdays.

For more information contact Maggie at the Centre - tel: 669 8275 or enquiries@portobellocc.cc. She is usually in the office mornings except Wednesdays.

# AMNESTY - LOCAL NEWS

**A POWERFUL** new photographic exhibition on the reality of human trafficking in the UK will be mounted in November at Portobello Library and possibly in schools. A petition will be available, calling on the UK Government to ratify and implement the European Convention Against Trafficking and to urge other Council of Europe member states to do so.

The Portobello Group took part in a sleep-out on 22nd June at St John's Church, Princes Street, to highlight the plight of asylum seekers, whose appeals have been refused but are unable to be removed from the UK, and whose financial support has been withdrawn, leaving them destitute. This is an on-going campaign to end this suffering.

The Group has begun a drive to involve more individuals in East Edinburgh in Amnesty's actions in support of human rights locally and worldwide. Meetings are held in the URC Church Hall or Vestry in Marlborough Street at 7.30pm on the third Monday of each month.

Visitors are always warmly welcomed. Enquiries to David Turner on 669 1308.

**Councillor**  
**STEPHEN HAWKINS**  
Liberal Democrat

Portobello and Craigmillar Ward

Will hold a weekly surgery on Wednesdays from 6.00pm At Portobello Library

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**Councillor**  
**MICHAEL BRIDGMAN,**  
SNP, Portobello & Craigmillar Ward

Will hold surgeries at: Portobello Library, 2nd Monday of each month, 6:30pm. Bingham Community Complex, 1st Monday, 6:30pm. St Francis Primary School, 3rd Monday (in school term), 6:30pm

**Councillor**  
**EWAN AITKEN**

holds surgeries during school terms at 7.15-7.45pm in: Piershill Library 1st Wednesday of each month. Craigtintny Community Centre 2nd Wednesday of each month. Duddingston Primary School 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Ewan can be contacted on (0131) 529 3261 or at [ewan.aitken@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:ewan.aitken@edinburgh.gov.uk)

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## TOWERBANK NEWS

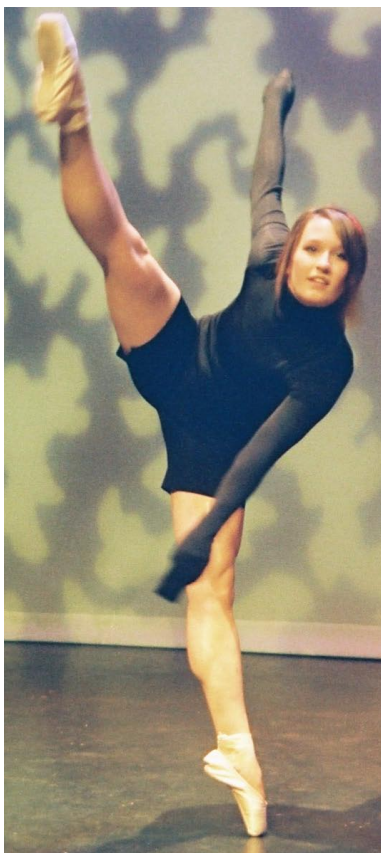


Photo by Brenda Molony

**PUPILS** from Towerbank Primary School had a beach cleaning week in June. Class P5b with Learning Assistant Mrs Jane Young are seen here with some of the rubbish they collected one morning. The school also held a very successful Open Day in the Town Hall on 23rd May, based on the school's Enterprise, Eco and Health Topic 'Respect'. All classes were involved in learning about respecting themselves, the environment and others. Our main focus was around Emotional Literacy and children produced some fantastic written work related to this. The school has now reached Stage 2 of 'Health Promoting Schools'.

Kirsty Rosie

## LOCAL GIRL DANCES TO SUCCESS



**FORMER** Portobello High School pupil Fiona Jenkins has achieved a graduate place at the world-renowned London Contemporary School of Dance. Fiona started dancing at the age of 3 at the Morag Alexander School of Dancing in Musselburgh, performing annually at the Brunton Theatre. After further training at Dance Base in Edinburgh, she spent three years at the Scottish School of Contemporary Dance in Dundee. Her mother Wilma Irvine, a PE teacher in Edinburgh says: "Fiona has been committed to her dancing for as long as we can remember and we're all terribly proud of her achievement".

## PORTOBELLO HIGH PUPILS WIN UK YOUNG CONSUMERS AWARD

**A TEAM** from Portobello High School clinched a hard-fought victory against 11 other teams at the UK finals of the Young Consumers competition, part of the annual Trading Standards Institute conference, held in Manchester on 27th June. Mark Melrose (captain), Calum McKenzie, Dennis Henderson and Greg Smith travelled to Manchester as Scottish Champions, a crown they won at the Scottish final at the end of March.

Their winning score was 53 points, with the other Scottish finalists, Holy Cross High from Hamilton, taking third place with 34 points. Their win sees Portobello High School follow in the footsteps of Boroughmuir High School, who last year became the first Scottish school to win the coveted UK award.

The trophy was awarded by the Coronation Street actress Samia Smith and each of the teams enjoyed an all-expenses-paid trip to Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United.

Portobello High's school magazine *Reportobello* won the category for Best Editorial Content and Team in a recent national competition - The comment of the judges was that the pupils had achieved "just the right balance of irreverence and fun"!

Two new S3 and two new S4 pupils came 1st by almost 100 points in the Enterprising Maths Challenge, competing against 44 schools from across the Lothians last term. Congratulations to Mischa Cleary, Katey Whyte, Struan Dow and Alan Henderson.

The schools's fundraising activities in the last year raised £8,700 for a range of charities. As well as raising lots of money, they had some fun along the way.

## DUDDINGSTON PUPILS GET FIT

**THE** Health Week organised at Duddingston Primary School from Monday 11th June was a great success. Each day started with a Shake 'n' Wake dance session in the playground for pupils and staff, and each class took part in a number of health-based activities. Class P4A are seen here enjoying a skipping session. Specialists came to the school to run club golf, judo, orienteering, tennis, football, mini-kickers, volleyball, hygiene talks and healthy eating workshops. In our mini-marathon every child ran as far as they could around the playground in half an hour, and when we counted up all of our laps, we had run all the way to Calais, France!



Photo by Archie Foley

The aim of Health Week was to kickstart healthy lifestyle choices and let the children experience new sports and activities. Part of this was making positive healthy eating choices and we saw a dramatic rise in children eating fruit, veg and other healthy snacks. It would be great if this could continue after Health Week as well.

Sarah Kinnaird

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## CITY COUNCIL SNUBS "EDINBURGH'S SEASIDE"

THE 2007/08 A-Z of Council Services was distributed recently and some people were very surprised when they looked at the back cover. It extols the attractions of Scotland's capital - "From stunning skylines to sandy beaches" - which is fine, except that the beach pictured is at North Berwick! This cannot be an error, as the photograph is credited "courtesy of East Lothian Council".

John Stewart, Chair of Portobello Amenity Society, has written to the Director of Corporate Services, the department responsible for the A-Z, asking for an explanation.

"I was astonished to see the photograph", he says. "I pointed out that Portobello has a beach that is very popular, particularly on sunny days, and that there are several angles from which to take a good photograph". Councillor Stephen Hawkins has written to the Council's Chief Executive in similar vein.

B.M.

### PORTOBELLO RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY

THIS Society is a small group which enjoys listening to a wide variety of music. They meet fortnightly on Sunday evenings at 7.30pm in St James Parish Church Hall, Rosefield Avenue, when some members as well as guests present the programmes. The new session starts on 30th September and new members would be most welcome. For more information call 661 2148.

### SCOTTISH CHINA PAINTERS ASSOCIATION

CLASSES are held in Portobello on Thursday evenings from 6.30-9.30pm and the new term will start on 13th September. New members will be welcomed. For more details call Nancy Gibb on 669 3945. Nancy says: "Anyone is welcome to come and see what our members can achieve". More information is on their website [www.scottishchinapainters.co.uk](http://www.scottishchinapainters.co.uk)

IT'S HARVEST time and also time to reflect on what did and didn't do well. Crops that didn't do well with me this year compared with last year were squashes, pumpkin, courgettes and sweet corn. New to me were minicucumbers for the greenhouse and I'll definitely grow them again. Figs, apricots and grapes in the greenhouse did well, and I suspect this was due to the ripening they got from the good summer last year. Staples like lettuce, peas, potatoes and all the berry fruits did well, as did the tomatoes; blight was in the area but, at the time of writing, has so far not affected ours. If you suspect blight, cut all haulms down to ground level and harvest the tomatoes right away; they may not keep but are worth making into soups in order not to waste them.

Harvest seeds on a dry morning and keep in an airtight container in the fridge. I add a silica gel sachet to keep them dry. I collect my own tomato seeds, (dry inside on paper towel), annual flower seeds like marigolds and poppies, and perennials like alliums and phlox - in fact anything that I fancy growing more of.

Dig up potatoes, dry off in the sun for a few hours and keep in paper bags, never plastic or they'll rot. Leeks, carrots, turnips etc can stay in the ground until needed. I freeze all the fruits in small batches, cooking them first so they can be used right away, when needed; I've even added them frozen to yoghurt for a quick dessert. Hiring a fruit press with friends (from homebrew shops) will quickly turn windfalls into juice that can be frozen in plastic bottles.

I don't clear up the borders in the autumn as I like to leave seed heads for the birds, and grasses look great. I do give some things a tidy, however, such as nasturtiums that go horrible and gooey once hit with frost. Wait until all leaves are down before collecting and putting in black bags, with a few holes punched in the sides, and water if dry - I like to do this on a wet, damp day so I don't have to add water. Store them until the following year and you'll get fabulous leafmould, perfect for mixing in with your own compost and some grit; I only use bought sterilised compost for seed sowing.

If you have barbecues or the odd bonfire, keep the charcoal remnants. I add this to my compost for hyacinths as it keeps the soil sweet and means you can plant in pretty containers without holes. Make sure you get your hyacinth bulbs into pots in the dark now for winter flowering. I finish my containers off with moss pulled up from the lawn, and if flower heads are top-heavy, chopsticks or old forks don't look out of place as supports.

Children can make Christmas presents from a few bottles of oil or vinegar with herbs in to infuse, such as rosemary, garlic, thyme, etc. (recycled sauce bottles are ideal, and maybe they could design a label to put on). A shake every few days for a month and they are ready to use or keep for Christmas.

Susan and Mike welcomed 70 visitors to their Garden Open days in July (publicised in our Summer issue) and raised £100 for the organic association Garden Organic.



with Susan Burns

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## MEADOWBANK STADIUM HERE TO STAY

THE CITY of Edinburgh Council has voted to keep the historic sports centre and have scrapped plans to build a replacement stadium at Sighthill.

It is good news for the 'Save Meadowbank Campaign', formed in March to oppose the former Labour administration's plans to demolish the stadium and sell off the land.

Kevin Connor, spokesman for the campaign, said: "All political parties now agree that

the facilities should remain at Meadowbank. The discussion is now whether that means refurbishment or a new build." The council is to commission independent consultants in the coming months, to inform their decision on the best option.

Funding for the project is still being debated and the council is being urged to lobby the Scottish Executive to ensure adequate funds are available for the city's sports facilities.

Karen Combe

## PORTOBELLO BADMINTON CLUB

THE Club are looking to recruit new members of all levels of experience. They meet on Thursdays at 7.30pm at the Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield Street and the new term starts on 27th September.

This is a friendly and sociable club, and a warm welcome will be provided, in addition to tea and biscuits at half time. For more information please contact Helen McDaid on 657 9375 or drop in on the 27th.

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