

The Portobello REPORTER

The independent voice of Portobello

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Your Community Newspaper produced by local people.

“NO” TO OIL TRANSFERS IN FIRTH

SURFERS Against Sewage joined the Scottish Green Party on Saturday 24th March to stage rallies at North Berwick and Portobello beaches, to highlight the strength of public opposition to proposals by SPT Marine and Forth Ports to transfer large amounts of crude oil from ship to ship in the Firth of Forth.

Since the Donaldson Report, commissioned after the 1993 Braer disaster in Shetland, only three sites in the UK are considered suitable for ship-to-ship oil transfers and the Firth of Forth is not one of them.

Local councils around the Forth (Edinburgh, East Lothian and Fife), environmental NGOs, community councils, individuals and businesses also oppose the transfers, and the council leaders met the Chief Executive of Forth Ports on 29th March to



Photo by Margaret Munro

Some protesters think the plan is barking! express their opposition.

The Scottish Green party has campaigned against this proposal since it was first mooted in 2004, arguing that the habitats and species of the Firth, and the numerous businesses that depend on the local environment, should not be put

at risk of a potentially huge and devastating oil spill.

It now seems likely that legislation to stop the transfers, first proposed three years ago by Scottish Green MSPs, will be considered by the new Scottish Parliament.

BM

NORTH WEST MASTER PLAN CONSULTANTS APPOINTED

THE regeneration of North West Portobello is a step closer with the appointment by City of Edinburgh Council of urban design consultants Cadell2 Wisniewski Thomson Architects, who will draw up a Master Plan and Urban Design Framework for the area. The principles of the Framework were agreed by the Planning Committee in October 2006 and, following the promised public consultation, the consultants will produce detailed plans.

The area concerned covers a number of sites, largely in private ownership, on either side of the west end of the High Street, between Sir Harry Lauder Road and the Promenade. These are mainly light industrial and residential, with some retail, commercial and leisure sites, and areas of open space, and include the Scottish Power, Power League 5-a-side and the Fun Park sites. No planning applications for this area will be considered until the Framework has been completed.

The consultants are working closely with local people and landowners, to generate ideas and gain support for the development of the area. The first stage was a Fact Finding Workshop on 24th May for residents, members of community groups and others concerned, to discuss ideas. This will be followed by a public exhibition of initial proposals and options at Portobello Library from **Monday 25th to Friday 29th June**, when a consultant will be on hand to answer questions and gather feedback. A final Framework will be presented to the Council in the autumn.

A ‘WONDER’ ON THE BEACH

CELEBRATED Scottish artist Hill Jephson Robb has been commissioned to create a large Public Art work for Portobello beach. As well as exhibiting internationally, Jephson has produced ‘Golden Age’, a permanent piece for the Pittenweem Arts Festival, 2006. Some of his work is also in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Speaking about the work, Jephson said: “The landscape of Portobello beach will be transformed by the presence of the ambitious temporary art work ‘WONDER’, which takes the form of three large pyramids created from thousands of hessian sandbags, one for each Portobello household. The pyramids represent the past, present and future of Portobello”. Since 21st May he has been working on the beach between John Street and Pittville Street, where members of the public were invited to help with filling the sandbags.

The official opening of the work, to which everyone is invited, will take place on Thursday 21st June from 6.00-8.00pm. The pyramids will remain in place until 21st December.

‘WONDER’ was selected from 33 submissions by a group of local people who recently completed the first Public Art Commissioning Course in Scotland. Enrolment starts now for the second course which begins at the end of August and is free. Anyone interested should contact Caroline Muirhead, Public Arts Development Worker, at caroline.muirhead@yahoo.co.uk

‘Wonder’ is funded by the Scottish Arts Council, Big Lottery Fund and City of Edinburgh Council. For more information on this work see www.bigthingsonthebeach.org.uk



Photo by Margaret Drysdale

HOPE FOR MEADOWBANK?

THE Independent Working Group, set up by the previous City of Edinburgh Council to investigate the plans for Meadowbank Stadium, have taken submissions from interested parties and will present an interim report to a meeting of the new council on 28th June. The Save Meadowbank group are heartened that, despite what was said in 2004, there now seems to be a willingness to review the decision to demolish the existing stadium and re-consider refurbishment.



Photo by Lou Hardless

THIS HUGE Ferris wheel that towered over Portobello High Street in April was part of a visiting fun fair which received a mixed reception. Some people enjoyed the rides, while people living nearby were upset by the noise.

FLATS PROPOSAL CAUSES CONCERN

LOCAL PEOPLE concerned at plans for a 5-storey block of flats on the Fun Park site on the Promenade have formed a Fun Park Action Group in association with the Kilns Neighbourhood Watch Group, to oppose them. This would be the largest single development on the Promenade, stretching from Bridge Street to Pipe Lane and, they fear, would cast a shadow over the Promenade and beach, be out of scale with the courtyard housing development at Harbour Place, and result in greatly increased traffic in the area. They also fear the pottery kilns would be dwarfed by such a high building so close to them and would no longer be visible from the Promenade to the east and west.

This area is included in the NW Portobello Masterplan (see above) and council officials have said no decision will be taken on the flats until public consultation on the Masterplan is completed and the final Framework submitted.

PORTY PROFILE No. 26 BERTHA BARCLAY

Bertha Barclay, otherwise known as the 'Hat Lady', could often be seen at a stand outside Portobello Town Hall, selling her fabulous homemade woolen hats for the small price of £3.00 each. Although a welcome sight on a cold winter's day, few know the story, dedication and conviction behind the lady and the hats.

Since the early 1970s, Bertha has had a variety of hat stands throughout Edinburgh, which have raised funds for orphan children in India, helping many to access a good education, and a safe place to eat and sleep.

When Bertha was 26, she decided to leave Scotland, her home, and a good job in accounts and book keeping, to volunteer as a house mother with the 'Dr Graham's Homes', based in Kalimpong, North India. After intensive training, she set sail for what was to be the first of two terms there. She gave nine years in all to this Christian charity, before returning to Scotland due to ill health, which led to the shocking news that she would not go back. "I was shattered. I thought I'd be there a lifetime", she said.

Undeterred, she was inspired by the experience of her wonderful years in India to devote her time to fund raising. She realised that the knitting she was doing for family and friends could assist in raising the funds so desperately needed elsewhere in the world.

Bertha has made and sold thousands of hats, and all the profits raised have gone to charity. She has sourced materials, such as ends of wool from wool mills, and donations; she has paid for wool and a trader's licence, and given a huge amount of her time and effort to the making and distribution of these wonderful hats.

At the fair age of 78, Bertha has decided that it is time to stand down and retire from hat making. She will undoubtedly be sorely missed by many, but says she will remain a committee member of 'Dr Graham's Homes', and continue to help raise the funds needed for this worthy cause.

Lou Hardless



Photo by Lou Hardless

ON THE BEAT

AT the Community Council meeting on 30th April, the subject of youths congregating in the Portobello area, and associated antisocial behaviour, was raised with me. I am aware that, since the beginning of April, there has been an influx of youths, which is reflected in the increased number of calls received.

Since that meeting, our Youth Action Team has concentrated solely on this area and has found that the attraction for the young people, ironically, is that it is a safe place to be. Arrangements to meet are made through websites or word of mouth at school, and the many buses to Portobello bring them in from all over the city and down the coast.

A number, fuelled by alcohol, lose self-control and commit senseless acts of anti-social behaviour, some of which get out of hand and stray into criminality. We take alcohol most of which they bring with them, away from under-age youths and they are then taken home, which means that two officers are off the road for a couple of hours, reducing our resources even further, but the knock-on effect should help discourage others.

By and large, shops in the area are conscientious about whom they sell alcohol to, although youngsters can still acquire it, often by persuading older people that a 3 litre bottle of cider will do no harm! We have also found that they decant spirits into plastic bottles of soft drinks, which they drink openly, confident that they will evade detection.

We will continue to Police this problem. There is always competition for our limited resources, but I would urge everyone to continue to phone in about antisocial behaviour, as without a true picture of what is happening, I am unable to ask for extra resources.

Insp. Norman Ward

OUR NEW ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

IN the Local Council Elections on 3rd May, 14 candidates stood for three seats in the new Portobello/Craigmillar ward, more than in any other ward in the city. The elected councillors are Michael Bridgman, Scottish National Party (SNP); Maureen Child, Scottish Labour Party; Stephen Hawkins, Scottish Liberal Democrats (Lib-Dem).

The new Duddingston/Craigmillar Ward was contested by 11 candidates, and those elected are Ewan Aitken, Labour; Gary Peacock, Lib-Dem; Stefan Tymkewycz, SNP.

The new MSP for Edinburgh East and Musselburgh is Kenny McAskill, SNP. He replaces Susan Deacon, who decided not to stand again and has been appointed Professor of Social Change at Queen Margaret University.

The Lothian Region (List) MSPs elected are Fiona Hyslop, SNP; Robin Harper, Scottish Green Party; Margo MacDonald, Independent; Ian McKee, SNP; Gavin Lindberg Brown, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party; Stefan Tymkewycz, SNP; George Foulkes, Labour.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

NEECAG: The North East Edinburgh Care Action Group/Portobello Older Peoples Forum meet in the Baptist Church Hall, Portobello High Street on the last Tuesday of the month at 3pm. Speakers and discussions are arranged on topics of interest: healthy living, transport, heating support, pensions and benefits. The group is for men and women, generally over-50s, and carers are also welcome. There is no membership cost, just 30p/50p for tea and coffee. On Tuesday 26th June, Jan Souter will talk about the Edinburgh Care & Repair Project. For more information, email annemunro@btconnect.com

SKITTLES: On Saturday 7th April, Portobello Burns Club beat The Trotters Club 705- 640 in their annual game of skittles. For the first time in six years Portobello Burns Club name will be engraved on the Sharpe Trophy, which is on display in The Sheep Heid Inn, Duddingston.

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL will hold its 250th meeting on Monday 25th June and previous members are invited to attend and join in a small celebration afterwards.

All meetings are held at the Baptist Church Hall, Portobello High Street, at 7.30pm. and the following meeting will be on Monday 27th August.

PORTOBELLO Bowling Club wish to thank the Scottish Bowling Fellowship for the gift of a wheel chair to be used by disabled bowlers. The Fellowship are a charity who help bowlers in need. They build up funds by an annual sale of badges.

The Bowling Club, in Lee Crescent, are hosting the East Edinburgh BC finals on Friday 24th August at 6.15pm, and the East Edinburgh Knockout on Friday 31st at 6.15pm. Please come and support these events.

Anyone wishing to learn how to bowl can contact Charlie Bain on 669 0316, who will be happy to help.

TOWN HALL PARKING: Drivers should take care when parking at the Town Hall. The "20 minutes" sign is placed within the area of one of the disabled bays, which can be misleading, and parking wardens are not open to discussion. The Council has been informed but the confusing signage is still there.

PORTOBELLO AMENITY SOCIETY AGM will be held on Wednesday 20th June at 7.30pm in St Mark's Church. The guest speaker will be Archie Foley, who will give an illustrated talk on *Early Photographs and Photographers of Portobello*. The meeting is open to the public.

Work is almost complete on the restoration of the three Coade stone pillars which form the focal point of the new community garden on the Prom. A new top for the larger pillar is being made by PAS member and local potter, Alison Robinson, while an information board detailing the history and restoration of the pillars will soon be erected beside them. The temporary wooden fence will be removed once the grass is sufficiently established.

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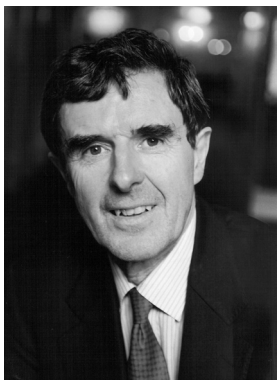




Photo by Archie Foley

NEW Edinburgh Lord Provost George Grubb’s first official engagement was to attend the 115th Annual General Congress of the Scottish Cooperative Women’s Guild in Portobello Town Hall on Friday 18th May. National President May Barker is on his left and Vice-President Jan Woolard on his right.

“ONE HEAD GOOD, TWO HEADS BETTER”

THAT’S what twin sisters Helen and Morna Mulgray say when it comes to writing a novel. They have lived in Joppa all their lives, and their first book, *No Suspicious Circumstances*, is set in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Fife with Portobello also getting a mention!

“We set out to write a crime novel, but the violence is always tastefully done, no nightmares! Suspense mixed with light humour, that’s what we like” the twins told the *Reporter*. The heroine is DJ Smith, an investigator for HM Revenue & Customs with her



trained sniffer cat Gorgonzola who are on the trail of a heroin smuggling ring.

‘People are always asking us how two people go about writing a book together. Well,

it’s easy when you’re a twin – same way of thinking, same ideas, same style. It isn’t a case of taking turns to write a sentence, a paragraph, or a chapter. One types on the laptop, and both make suggestions, of a word, phrase, or sentence – all mulled over till mutually agreed!

“At the moment we’re working on another novel in the series – this time set in Madeira. We’ve certainly caught the writing bug”, they said. *No Suspicious Circumstances*, published by Allison & Busby, is available in hard-back for £18.99

MAD ABOUT ANIMALS!

IF you are mad about animals, and children’s books about animals, you will especially enjoy coming to the library this summer holidays. As soon as you are free from school, we will kick off on Monday 2nd July with ‘Zoolab’, where you can handle some real animals and find out all about them. Over the summer we will be drawing and colouring pictures of beach animals, making a wild animal frieze or mobile, reading animal stories, and lots of other fun events, like Animal Masks and Recycling for Animals. We will also be singing to small babies about big wild animals - in The Big Wild Sing at Wednesday Rhymetimes.



There will be a van-load of new books for reading too, and we invite everyone to join our Big Challenge to read at least six Big Wild Books over the summer holidays. Medals and prizes are guaranteed!

All events will be free, and advertised locally in advance.

P.S. What’s dangerous and lives up a tree? - A monkey with a machine-gun! (We need some better animal jokes, don’t we?)

See you in summer - From all the library staff.

BOOK GROUP: The adults Book Group will continue to meet during the summer, on the first Tuesday of each month at 6.30pm in the upstairs room. For details of books please contact the library on 529 5558. New members are always welcome.

EASY-TO-USE LITERARY WEBSITES

ASK OXFORD - www.askoxford.com

It should go without saying that authors, budding or otherwise, should be aware of the meaning and correct use of words. The Oxford University Press reference website not only allows searches of its famous Dictionaries and Thesaurus but also offers advice on better writing and grammar problems in its Ask the Expert section. The site is easy to navigate but the Games pages, all to do with words, are addictive and certain to hold up your search should you stray on to them.

ARTS & LETTERS DAILY - www.alddaily.com

This monster of a site covers more than just books. There are also links to articles on philosophy, arts, criticism and, intriguingly, disputes and gossip. It looks daunting at first but navigation is relatively easy by means of the special media links down the left side of the page or the column headings at the top.

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MOUNT CHARLES

MOUNT CHARLES was one of a number of mansions built during the last quarter of the 18th century between the Figgate Burn and what became Bath Street. Standing where the Scotmid supermarket is now, 19th century maps show that its extensive grounds fronted Bath Street from the present Scotmid entrance to the Bingo Hall. The property also comprised a piece of ground on the north side of the High Street with two houses, wash houses and drying greens. The original building had been replaced in the 1860s by the owner Mr David Dickson, who was Provost of Portobello from 1840 to 1843. William Baird described the new building as a "quaintly picturesque ... elegant mansion" which can be seen in this photograph.

In 1900 the house had come into the possession of Dr Charles Frederick Knight, formerly of Straiton Place. He and his family had come to Portobello from Ireland and he described himself in the 1891 Census as a "General Practitioner and Medical Tutor, Professor of Medicine and Pathology and Hospital Physician." Dr Knight seems to have been a man of ambition as he converted Mount Charles into a medical college where he sought to train young persons to be doctors. Large as it was, Mount Charles must have been bursting at the seams at the time of the 1901 Census, with 12 medical students from Scotland, England, Ireland and India living there in addition to the five members of the Knight family and



Picture Postcard photograph sent as a New Year's Greeting by Dr and Mrs Knight.

three servants. In this census Dr Knight is shown merely as "Lecturer, Registered Physician"

Mount Charles is shown as a Medical College in the Edinburgh and Leith Directory up to 1914, but the enterprise does not seem to have been a financial success for the Knights. The records show the property being used as security for a number of loans and the disposal of much of the ground belonging to it for development as housing and shops. Matters came to a head for them in 1914. Messrs Douglas and Smart, Auctioneers in Portobello advertised the sale of the furniture, household goods and contents of Mount Charles, including a collection of old china and pottery, on 29th and 30th July of

that year, and on 17th October notice was given that Dr and Mrs Knight, "both lately residing at Mount Charles, Portobello", had granted a Trust Disposition on behalf of creditors to a chartered accountant in Edinburgh. The trustees took ownership of the house and made it over to a private company called Mount Charles Limited who administered it for the next 12 years until it was purchased by the Roman Catholic Diocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh. Mount Charles Limited went into voluntary liquidation in October 1926 with all its creditors being paid in full, according to a notice in *The Scotsman*.

St John's Roman Catholic Church in Brighton Place had no hall at that time and Mount Charles served in

that capacity for a number of years. It was known as the Guild House and its rooms hosted youth groups such as the 11th Boy Scouts, dances and the many other social events associated with church organizations, wedding receptions and billiard and snooker tables. However, as the author of the booklet celebrating the centenary in 2006 of the building of the church puts it "by the late fifties [Mount Charles] had outlived its usefulness as a building" and in 1966 it was sold to Portobello Cooperative Society Limited. Through various mergers possession came to the Scottish Midland Cooperative Society Limited [Scotmid] and we have the supermarket on the site of Mr Dickson's mansion.

Archie Foley

PORTOBELLO'S LAMPLIGHTER

– name wanted



Photo by Archie Foley

Chick Jack with Brenda Molony (l), editor of Portobello Reporter, and Margaret Munro, secretary of Portobello History Society.

CHICK JACK from Edmonton, Alberta not only featured in an article about his Portobello forebears in our March issue but also made a visit in person to his native town during which he was welcomed at a meeting of the history society. Chick recalls the days when Portobello streets were illuminated by gas and the men with long poles who went round lighting the street-lamps, but needs help to remember the name of Portobello's last lamplighter. Contact the *Reporter* if you think you can supply it.

The Portobello Reporter is produced by volunteers, with contributions in this issue from 38 local people. If you have something to publicise or would like to advertise call 669 3466 or email us at portyreporter@btinternet.com

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PORTOBELLO OLD PARISH CHURCH WAR MEMORIALS

PORTOBELLO Old Parish Church celebrates its bicentenary in 2009 and in the run-up to this members have been looking at various aspects of the church's history. One of these is the War Memorials of which there are four, two Old Parish, one Windsor Place and one from the Portobello Working Men's Institute.

It is our intention to produce a book recording as much information as can be gathered on each of those named. This book would be kept in the church and would be made available to anyone interested. The passage of time has meant that, to many of us, the names on the memorials are just that – names; there is no known record in the church of who they, or their families, were. This applies in particular to those on the 1914 - 1919 memorials.

Basic research, particularly on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's web site, has given us a good start but there is still a way to go. A number of those listed are interred in Portobello Cemetery while others are mentioned on family grave stones. For example Lt. W T Urquhart, who was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal in World War One while serving with the Australian Imperial Forces at Gallipoli, and was later killed in action in France while serving with the Sherwood Foresters, is mentioned on the family stone. Closer to home, from World War Two, we have Harry Paterson, Fireman (Auxiliary Fire Service) of Melville Street and Joseph Watson, Home Guard, of Milton Crescent.

Anyone who has information about any of those named on the memorials is asked to contact me. It is impossible to list all the names here, but the church is open Monday to Friday, 10 am to 2 pm during which times the memorials may be viewed.

Bob Robinson (0131-669 2766)



The Urquhart family memorial in Portobello Cemetery.

Photo by Archie Foley

PORTOBELLO GOLF CLUB HISTORY

IT MIGHT be a surprise to many to learn that Portobello Golf Club was founded as long ago as 1856. Member Chester Kruk has begun compiling an account of the club from its inception over 150 years ago. He has access to its comprehensive Minute Books and records, but is looking for material to augment them so that his book will be more than just a dry record of champions and trophies won. Both men's and women's sections will be included in the book and anyone who has photographs, postcards, press cuttings, memorabilia or stories and memories to contribute should get in touch with Chester.

Tel: 552 2466; Email: czesla.kruk@hotmail.co.uk (or via club members)

PROGRESS ON THE KILNS

IT is heartening to be able to report that progress is being made towards restoration of the collapsed kiln and repairs to its neighbour. The architects and structural engineers got initial access into the 1909 kiln and have now produced a plan for safely breaking into it and removing all debris and other materials to safe storage for reuse. Based on this, the project safety coordinator and the contractor have developed a method for carrying out the investigatory works not only to the 1909 kiln but also to the 1906 kiln. The project safety coordinator and the appointed contractor are developing

this plan. The structural engineer and contractor had a pre-start meeting on site on 10th May and investigatory works, weather permitting, are due to commence shortly.

Once safe access has been established and the debris removed where appropriate, the architects and engineers can then formulate proposals for both the 1909 kiln and the extent of maintenance works required to the 1906 kiln. At that time, all interested parties, including local groups, will be advised of what was found, the condition and the proposed way forward.

Archie Foley

PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

AS another year of talks draws to a close, it is heartening to report the continuing popularity of our meetings, with the hall close to its capacity.

In March, Winnie Stevenson used original equipment to entertain members with a striking collection of glass slides in her talk Phantasmagoria – The Traditional Magic Lantern Show. Images ranged from views of Portobello to animated cartoons, displaying the versatility of this early technology. Dr Chris Fogwill enlightened members about the risks of global warming in his presentation In the footsteps of W.S. Bruce. Working in the Modern Antarctic Survey. Scientists in the Antarctic use equipment today very similar to that used by Bruce, particularly the tents. Chris's slides showed a harsh, but beautiful environment, threatened by the practices of mankind. A welcome return visit to the Society was made by Archie Blyth in May. In his talk Edinburgh Lost and Found, Archie explored areas of Edinburgh frequently overlooked by residents, and widened our knowledge of our native city.

Our annual outing took place on Saturday, 12th May. We drove round the East Neuk of Fife to Anstruther to visit the Scottish Fisheries Museum. This was followed by a delicious high tea at the Craw's Nest. Although it was a cold and windy day, we all had a most enjoyable time.

Our AGM will be held on Wednesday, 6th June. Following cancellation by our speaker, members are invited to bring their Portobello treasures for others to see. Artefacts and documents from the Society's archive will also be available for members to examine.

The June meeting is the last on the programme; the new season will commence on Wednesday, 5th September. Meetings will be held, as usual, in St. John's Church Hall, Brighton Place and will begin at 7pm sharp.

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JUMPING FOR JOY

PORTOBELLO's trampoline centre at Orcadia in Windsor Place was jumping with joy on Thursday 19th April, at the opening of the refurbished colourful trampoline room with its six floor-trampolines and bouncy castle.

There was much to celebrate for Orcadia's special needs students as they entertained invited guests, and their special friends from Halifax Bank of Scotland, who gave £5,000 towards the refurbishment. They know that children's parties at the centre raise funds that enable them to continue their classes in art, animation, music and movement. Students and staff also hung a special friendship banner, created for HBOS staff who had worked hard painting the outside of the building and planting flowers and shrubs in the garden.

As a registered charity for children and adults with special needs, Orcadia relies upon its special friends and welcomes new ones. Pop into the Centre for a cup of tea and book your children's birthday party -you will be warmly welcomed - or call 669 1075.

Barbara Stott

WHAT'S ON

EDITH BUDGE, JAZZ SINGER: In Concert at St Philip's Church, Joppa, Fri 22nd June, 7.30pm. Tickets £7, £5 conc, £3 child - includes refreshments.

POD EVENT: Sun 19th Aug in the afternoon: Porty Picnic on the Prom. This family event will include live music, with the main attraction being a dynamic Puppet Show. Remember to Bring Your Own Picnic. (BYOP). For further details see www.the-pod.org

SWIMMING LESSONS at Portobello Swim Centre. For details visit www.edinburghleisure.co.uk or call 669 6888.

WATER FESTIVAL SUCCESS

THIS Festival, organised by the Portobello Council of Churches Peace and Justice Group on 24th March in St Philip's Church hall, was opened by Gavin Strang MP. He welcomed the churches' initiative and drew attention to some key issues of water provision, especially the fact that one billion people have no access to clean water and two billion die because of this.

Several organisations publicised their roles in addressing these issues, at table stalls and in discussions, including Water Aid, Scottish Water, Christian Aid, Practical Action and World Development Movement.

Local artists displayed a variety of work, many with a water theme, and some donated the proceeds of sales. A bookstall, with a range of relevant literature, was provided by Portobello Library.

Entertainment on the theme of what water means to us all was presented in drama and song by St John's Primary School pupils, the Halyoch choir, Old Parish Church Drama Group and Duddingston Church Sunday Club.

Over £470 was realised from donations, the sale of refreshments and the generosity of artists, and this will be donated to water-related causes. Many who attended remarked on the outstanding quality of the event and for the organisers, it proved very worthwhile.

David Turner

SWRI - 90 YEARS ON



THE Scottish Women's Rural Institutes were started 90 years ago in Longniddry and to celebrate this, the Rural flag is being taken around Scotland. The Portobello Institute, which is in its 15th year, was honoured by one such historic visit at their meeting in St Philips Church Hall on 30th April. Elizabeth Drever, Portobello President (left) is seen here receiving the flag from Helen Baxter (centre), Chairwoman of the Midlothian Federation.

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS

Summer programme

AFTER a very busy spring at the Centre, we are now in a position to run Summer Workshops:

Kids Art Workshops -On Wednesdays, 3.30-5.00pm, starting 30th May we are running a four week block of (£20.00 including all materials).

Summer Mosaic Workshops -Tuesday Evenings – from 15th May – 7.00-9.00 p.m. £5.00 plus some material costs, depending on the size of completed work.

Summer Pottery Classes to celebrate the installation of the kiln at the Centre a series of 5 day-long classes, from 10 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 4 pm, in different pottery techniques – you can sign up for one or all of them:

Thursday 28th June, Pottery basics, clay, hand building, throwing etc.

Thursday 5th July – working with 'paper clay'

Thursday 12th July making a press moulded plate

Thursday July 19th – Ceramics and Print

Thursday 26th July – Grande Finale – a Raku firing day.

Fees £10 for each day (+£5 for materials and firing costs) or £40 (+ £10 materials and firing costs) for the complete five days.

Enjoyaball Whacky Weeks – weeks beginning Monday 23rd July, Monday, 30th July and Monday 6th August – for more information contact Enjoyaball on 554 2790

What else is new –

Last Saturday of month a table sale in aid of Greyhounds in Need 10.00-12.00

Don't forget – all our usual programmes, puppy and dog training, karate for kids, line dancing, advanced sequence dancing and coffee mornings run through the summer.

For more information on these and all our courses please contact Maggie on 669 8275.

CHRISTIAN AID FORTH BRIDGE CROSS

IF you are looking for a day out with a difference, which would help to improve the lives of some of the world's poorest people why not sign up for the annual sponsored walk across the Forth Road Bridge. The Forth Bridge Cross raises an amazing amount, £70,000 last year, and over the 35 years since the first crossing it has raised about one million pounds for projects all over the world.

This year's event is on Saturday 23rd June and to find out more contact Shirley Brown at shbrown@christian-aid.org or telephone 220 1254.

SIGN UP FOR THE 'SUB'

THE Edinburgh South Suburban Railway closed to passengers in 1962, but the line is still open and used by freight trains. The Portobello Station site is on this loop. Capital Rail Action Group has launched a campaign in support of a petition to the Scottish Parliament for the re-opening of the 'South Sub'. To sign the petition go to www.reopenthesouthsub.org.uk and click on the link.

Councillor
STEPHEN HAWKINS
Liberal Democrat

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YOUNG CONSUMERS ARE TOPS



A TEAM from Portobello High School are the new Scottish Champions in the Young Consumers of the Year Competition. In a thrilling quiz final held on Monday 26th March at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, they overcame stiff competition from Holy Cross High School (South Lanarkshire), Linlithgow Academy and Dingwall Academy, and won £300 for the school donated by the water company United Utilities.

Mark Melrose and Calum McKenzie (S6) and Dennis Henderson and Jamie Hendry (S5) won by nine points from runners-up Holy Cross. They are pictured here with Angela Blair of Consumer Direct, the main Scottish sponsors. Both schools will now represent Scotland at the UK Final in June, at the annual Trading Standards Conference in Manchester.

The competition is organised by the Trading Standards Institute and tests young people on a range of topics covering their responsibilities and rights as consumers.

Congratulations to Portobello High School who have been awarded their third Green Flag in the Eco Schools' Programme, in recognition of their work in this field. It is the only secondary school in Scotland to have been awarded a third flag.

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

'INSPIRED LUNACY' is a 5-piece rock band, who have recently exploded onto the Edinburgh music scene. The band has a highly charged on-stage dynamic, and the history among the members is obvious in their tight performance. "Amazing musicianship - super impressed!" said Paul Boyd, head of Polar Flame. Lead singer, Lewis Roy (18) has lived in Portobello all his life and is an ex-St John's pupil. He attributes many of his lyrics to his experiences growing up here. The band recently won 'The Battlefield', a battle of the bands competition, against 16 others. The prize of recording time has allowed these young rockers to hit the recording studio and produce their first EP 'Speaker-Insomnia'. Keep an eye (and an ear) open for these exciting new performers: Catch them on www.myspace.com/inspiredlunacyuk

INSPIRED TOWERBANK WRITER WINS AWARD

IMOGEN Reeves, aged 7, who attends Towerbank Primary School, impressed a panel of judges in a writer's competition at the National Gallery of Scotland earlier this year with her award-winning story 'Hector and the Mountain'. She was inspired by Peter Graham's 1878 painting of shadows on a mountainside, entitled 'Wandering Shadows', which is part of the Gallery's collection. Imogen received a certificate, and her story was read by a speaker from the English Speaking Union Scotland at an awards ceremony at the Gallery on 19th April.



DUDDINGSTON KIRK PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP



THIS lively group was set up over 30 years ago and is still going strong. It provides an opportunity for local parents and carers to meet for coffee and a chat. The children benefit socially too, making new friends and learning play skills such as sharing and taking turns, which helps them prepare for nursery and school.

Retired nursery teacher Myra Farrell runs the group with the help of Marie, who keeps the tea and coffee flowing and Katherine, who plays the piano at music time. Myra is delighted that their meeting place at the Kirk Hall has recently been refurbished. "The hall is so light and airy now", she says. "It's a super place to meet and a great space for the children to play in".

The group, which is for children from newborn to 3 years old, attracts up to 20 members a week, and new faces are guaranteed a warm welcome. It meets every Wednesday from 9.30-11.30am at Duddingston Kirk Hall, Old Church Lane (car park entrance on Duddingston Road West). For details, contact Myra Farrell on 661 1026.

Karen Combe

HOLYROOD PUPILS SUPPORT SELF HELP

DURING Lent pupils and staff at Holy Rood High School raise funds to support people in need and this year most of the money will support two groups of young people.

The first group used to live in an orphanage in Siret in Romania, where the conditions were appalling. Some of them are now living in group homes and working on a farm, and the money will be used for a new chicken-rearing project to replace the birds wiped out by bird flu last year.

The second group are in the Kilimanjaro District of Tanzania, where over 60% of young people do not have the chance of secondary education. There the money will be used to help set up a workshop and training centre where they can learn a trade. Holy Rood has had connections with young people in these areas for some years, with visits made to both places by pupils and staff.

The money was raised from daily class collections and special events, and from a sponsored silence and all-night 'Sixth Year Stay Awake' on the school's Charities Day on 29th March.

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JOPPA TENNIS SUMMER 2007

FOLLOWING a year that saw him rise into the world’s top ten and become one of the very few players to defeat World Number One Roger Federer, British number one Andy Murray continues to delight, inspire and attract kids into tennis. At Joppa we are looking forward to a busy season this summer, cultivating our own home- grown talent for the years ahead.

Joppa courts, in Joppa Grove, just round the corner from the Driving Test Centre, offer an opportunity for all to play, not just budding young hopefuls, but also those whose racquets might be a bit rusty!

Our ‘play and pay’ policy means that anyone can play under supervised conditions over the summer holidays, but be warned, pre-booking is advisable, especially round Wimbledon time! Alternatively, consider joining. A family membership is £50 and gives year-round access to the courts. There are also rates for individual and junior members,

To find out more about what’s happening, including social events planned for the season, check the notice board at the courts, or go to www.porty.org.uk.

These are exciting times to be involved in tennis in Scotland, when the profile of the sport has never been higher. We are always on the look out for fresh ideas and energy, and welcome hearing from anyone who might like to get involved in developing the facility.

Marjorie Shepherd

SCOTLAND CAP FOR STEFFANIE

FOOTBALLER Steffanie Malcolm, who attends Portobello High School, was recently capped for the Scotland U-15 squad and is the only select from the East of Scotland. In her first three games with the squad, Scotland lost 4:0 to Belgium, beat Wales 2:0, and lost 1:0 to Ireland.



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THE main idea of organic gardening is that if you look after your soil, it will look after your plants - and this is borne out in a dry summer. If you mulch your plants, moisture is retained and the extra water-holding capacity maintains plant health. If you can manage it, try to weed as best you can before the longest day and mulch at the same time. Then you can enjoy the rest of the summer just pottering without having a major weeding job to do.

Supporting plants that may topple over in high winds is a priority, and I’ve found that the best things to use are old tights, cut to make large individual rubber bands from the waist or smaller bands from the toes upwards, and you can cut them open if you need a length. These stretch and don’t chafe if used to support trees or shrubs and are remarkably strong. I’ve also used wire coat hangers snipped at the base of the hook and bent into a large L shape, with the hook used to interlock three or four together, around delphiniums, for example, with great success. Recycle in the garden: have a look at anything that’s being thrown out to see if it could be used in some way.

More tender plants can go into the garden now, such as pumpkin, squash, etc. These also include soya, which you may remember I’ve been growing as an experiment and have started to build up a small supply year on year. Each plant yields about 10 seeds - enough to add to a casserole, but promising considering Scotland’s weather.

Get the kids to sprinkle some cress seed onto a piece of kitchen towel kept moist on a saucer, and trim off with scissors after four or five days, then encourage them to make an egg and cress sandwich and they’ll have the start of a mini picnic.

GARDEN OPEN DAY: Susan and Mike’s remarkable organic garden at 39 Nantwich Drive will be open on Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th July from 2-5 pm. Entry £1, concess.50p, with proceeds to the organic association Garden Organic. Pick up some tips and leaflets. See also the website www.gardenorganic.org.uk

GROWING ORGANIC

with Susan Burns

LOCAL GIRL PLAYS HOCKEY FOR SCOTLAND

LOCAL girl Amy Brodie has played in the Scotland U16 hockey team for the past two years and has now been chosen for the Scotland U18 team which will play in the Eurohockey Youth Nations Championships at Peffermill in July. She has also been chosen for one of the two Scotland teams which are part of the GB development squad.

Travelling to training sessions and matches is very costly and Amy would greatly appreciate any offers of sponsorship. Would anyone able to help please call 07775821907.

BEACH VOLLEYBALL

FOLLOWING the success of last year’s one-day event, the first two-day event to be held in Portobello will take place at the foot of Bellfield Street on Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th June, starting at 10am.

It is part of a Scottish Tour and will feature women’s and men’s 2-a-side 1st and 2nd division matches, boys’ and girls’ junior events and a 4-a-side recreational event. Over 200 participants are expected. For more information see www.scottish-volleyball.org/beach.

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