

THE **Portobello** REPORTER

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The independent voice of Portobello

Your Community Newspaper
produced by local people since 1980.

LOCAL HERITAGE TRUST PLANNED

A SUCCESSFUL partnership involving Council officials, architects and the community Kilns Working Group has ensured that restoration of the kiln at the foot of Bridge Street will begin in January 2010. Then an innovative new collaboration between the Council and the community to safeguard the future of both kilns will begin.

The Kilns Working Group suggested that a local trust be set up to take responsibility and work with the Council on future maintenance. Council officials accepted the idea and so, once a few legal formalities are completed, the Portobello Heritage Trust will come into existence.

Brian Sibbald, Property Conservation Manager within the City Development Department, played a prominent part in the discussions about the future of the kilns and told *The Reporter*: "The formation of the Trust and its future responsibilities are very important and, as far as I am aware, probably unique in the City of Edinburgh Council. Given the difficult economic decisions to be made in the coming years by the Council, there is merit in giving communities an increased sense of responsibility and



The kiln photographed in 2005 with plants growing out of its structure. Work on rebuilding is due to begin in the new year.

commitment to local items such as the kilns".

Securing the future of the kilns will be the Trust's first priority, but its aims are much wider and include all of Portobello's historical, architectural and landscape heritage.

Kiln Development Ltd has very generously provided storage and other space for

the heritage trust in its redevelopment of the former Fun Park site, so the trust will be established in Portobello's rebuilt and revitalised historic centre.

As Brian Sibbald hinted, Portobello may well be showing the way for others to follow.

INQUIRY INTO WASTE SITE POSTPONED

THE start date for the Public Local Inquiry into the planning application for a waste transfer station at Sir Harry Lauder Road has been postponed until the week beginning 8th February 2010. This will give the Joint Action Group more time to prepare its case and raise the necessary funds. Fundraising is reported to be going very well, with events being well-supported and donations still coming in.

The group has produced a calendar featuring stunning shots of Portobello by local photographers. It will be on sale, priced £5, at PONGS fundraising events, and is also available by e-mailing pongs@portobellopongs.com or calling 669 4981.

The Grand Raffle was drawn at the St Andrew's Night benefit concert on 27th November. A full list of winners is published on the PONGS website www.portobellopongs.com and posted on the community noticeboard.

PONGS say there has been a fantastic response to the appeal for funds in previous issues of *The Reporter*, for which they are very grateful. They ask anyone else who would like to make a donation to send a cheque payable to PONGS, c/o 12 West Brighton Crescent, EH15 1LU, or to donate directly to the account: a/c no. 06002278, sort code: 80-18-31.

To keep up to date with arrangements for the public inquiry, visit www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk or call 01324 696400, quoting reference number PPA-230-1061.

PORTY LOVES BOOKS



Photo by Margaret Drysdale

Norman Chalmers, local musician, reads from Angus McIntyre's *Ceilidh Collection* on the opening night of the first ever Portobello Book Festival.

PORTOBELLO'S first Book Festival on 9th and 10th October was a great success. From the packed opening shindig in the Dalriada to the epic book quiz at the end, hundreds of people participated in one way or another.

Local author Alice Thompson held a full house in thrall as she talked about her experience of becoming a writer, and read from the manuscript of her new book, set in Portobello. Author D A Nelson charmed a small but enthusiastic group of children into producing their own storyboards. Des Dillon, author, poet and now stand-up comedian, lived up to his reputation for strong language and laughs, while Richard Moore delighted a largely cyclist audience with his tales of intrigue in the cycling world. The over-subscribed literary walking tour surprised participants with the richness of Portobello's literary past and present.

A list of Portobello authors and Portobello related books is available at the library.

After canvassing readers in schools, community groups and all 12 pubs in a search for Portobello's favourite books, reading was found to be alive and well and, although diversity was the most impressive feature of the list, the top three favourites were:

Adults :

1. Khaled Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*
2. Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible*
3. Daphne Du Maurier, *Rebecca*

Young people:

1. Stephanie Meyer, *Twilight*
2. Louise Rennison, *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging*
3. Terri Woods, *Angel*

Many people just named favourite authors. Ian Rankin topped the bill, followed by J K Rowling, Alexander McCall Smith, Margaret Atwood and Michael Horowitz. The favourite style of fiction seemed to be crime!

Thanks to all who helped make the book festival such a success. If you would like to be involved next year, or have ideas to share, please leave your contact details with Joyce Campbell at Portobello Library or email portobellobookfestival@gmail.com

Mae Shaw

The **Portobello Reporter** wishes

a Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year

to all our Readers,
Contributors and Advertisers



PORTY PROFILE No. 37 SANA SADOLLAH

DURING her career with the Scottish Refugee Council and the Minority Ethnic Health Inclusion Project (MEHIP) Sana Sadollah has contributed much to the development of successful policies for the care of refugees and asylum seekers in Edinburgh and beyond.

Born and brought up in Kurdistan, Sana met and married her husband after leaving high school, and followed him to the UK when he came to study at Birmingham University in the mid 1970s. The couple decided to leave a dangerous Kurdistan believing they could return after completing their studies. "Saddam Hussein was in power and the persecution of the Kurds was really horrendous. They were subjected to all kinds of torture, use of chemical weapons and ethnic cleansing, and the threat of the army was always present" she says.

First they lived in Aberdeen, then Edinburgh, and in 1989 they settled in Portobello after falling in love with a run-down house on the Promenade which they restored and turned into a B&B.

While Sana studied for her MSc she worked at the Scottish Refugee Council and brought up her daughter and two sons. Her dissertation on the mental health needs of refugees informed much of her work promoting access to health care, housing and education for asylum seekers and refugees. She established a drop-in centre and a befriending scheme for them and was co-founder of The Welcoming Project, as well as organising events for Portobello's Kurdish Club.

Sana describes herself as someone who "loves change" and so was delighted by an invitation from MEHIP to join them as a health advocate in 2001. Working alongside doctors at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital's River Centre she translated harrowing stories of victims of torture and trained health professionals. "Staff were puzzled; patients would complain of headaches stomach-ache or back ache, and they couldn't sleep. Underneath all these symptoms people had been severely tortured, mentally and physically, they had lost everything."

In 2006 Sana decided it was again time for a change and nowadays works as an interpreter and health coach. Although she misses her family and friends and the heat of Kurdistan, she says they have been happy living in Portobello: "I love my home, the sea and the beach and walking on the Promenade. We have a very good neighbourhood with loyal Scottish friends who have supported me through thick and thin."

Karen Combe



Photo by Karen Combe

ON THE BEAT

IT'S now that time of year when, although the temperature has dropped and the nights have drawn in, people are still out and about enjoying what Portobello has to offer. Halloween and Bonfire Night were a success, with few incidents being reported to the Police. Prior to, and on both days the Police worked closely with other agencies, including the Council, Fire Service and local schools, to carry out early intervention work such as school talks, shop visits and the uplift of dangerously-situated flammable material. This all helped create a safe environment for the public to enjoy. It was a pleasure to see so many families on the Promenade on Bonfire Night thoroughly enjoying themselves, although a small minority of individuals slightly disrupted the festivities with their anti-social and extremely dangerous behaviour. However, acting quickly on information from people in the area, officers on the Fireworks detail traced the group responsible and a youth was charged with offences relating to the inappropriate use of fireworks.

As always, I will take this opportunity to remind people of opportunist criminals in the area, and would ask everyone to remain extra vigilant in the run-up to Christmas and the New Year, when housebreakings are more easily carried out on dark evenings, and thefts are more prevalent. Please don't leave presents in open view in your car, and take care of valuables on festive evenings out.

PC Sarah Potter, Community Beat Officer



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER saw the first meeting of the new Portobello Community Council which at present consists of 26 members, 15 individual members and 11 group representatives. A full list of members and Minutes of meetings are available at Portobello Library and on the community website www.porty.org.uk

Several long-serving members of the Community Council have just stepped down, including Tom Smith, a past secretary and chairman, and Kathleen Hart our treasurer. We are very grateful for the hard work they have all done to help improve Portobello.

The Community Council meets on the final Monday of each month, except July and December, at 7.30pm in Portobello Baptist Church Hall, 185 Portobello High Street. Members of the public are welcome to attend and to raise issues which they think are of general concern to people living in the area.

Agendas vary, with some meetings being centred round a specific topic. Topics suggested for future meetings include a discussion of local traffic issues, how the Community Council could become more proactive in improving Portobello, new planning legislation, a Public Art Plan for Portobello, the Neighbourhood Partnership and the refurbishment of the swing park on the Promenade in front of Towerbank School.

Portobello has one of the largest and most active community councils in Edinburgh and to do its job properly it needs to know what local residents are concerned about. So, if you want to find out what we do, and to tell us which issues we should be discussing, then please come along to our next meeting

John Stewart, Chairman

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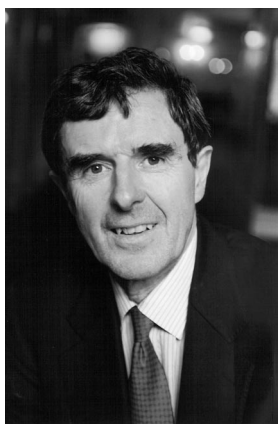
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If you have a problem or issue you would like to
raise with your local MP please contact Gavin at

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NEWS IN BRIEF

THE trek to Everest Base Camp in October by local woman Jo Spiller and her friend Liz raised over £14,000 for the charity RP Fighting Blindness. They want to thank everyone who supported them.

COMPUTER VIRUS WARNING: This one is genuine and could arrive more frequently in the pre-Christmas period. If you receive an email saying that DHL wants to deliver a package and you should open the attachment to enable delivery, DON'T! The package does not exist and the attachment is a virus.

THE BADMINTON CLUB at Portobello Old Parish Church are looking for new members of all levels of experience. This is a friendly and sociable group and a warm welcome will be given, plus tea and biscuits at half-time. They meet in the church halls in Bellfield Street on Thursdays at 7.30 to approx 9.30pm, and the first meeting after the Christmas break is on 14th January. For more information please contact Helen McDaid on 657 9375 or drop in to the club.

HELP WITH ENERGY COSTS: The Government's energy assistance programme aims to help those most vulnerable to fuel poverty, without adequate heating, and is being run through the Energy Savings Trust. Local advisers will help with benefit and tax credit checks, and advise on social tariffs giving cheaper energy and how to make homes more energy efficient. It could mean free loft insulation and central heating, depending on people's circumstances. For more information call 0800 512 012 or see www.energyassistancepackage.com

PHONELINK: This is a free morning and evening telephone check call service, for anyone in the Portobello and Craigmillar areas who feels the need for a daily reassuring call, every day if needed. This includes the elderly, the disabled, those with long-term illness, the lonely or isolated, and those with special needs. For more information call the Phonselink Project on 659 2920, 2924 or 2925.

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PORTOBELLO LIBRARY is being refurbished inside to give it a new, open and welcoming look, with facilities ready to meet the demands of the 21st century.

The exciting design incorporates suggestions made by customers during the consultation exercise in September and the recent children's survey, and put in the Ideas Box. The most popular were a café, brighter decoration, a cool teenage area, more seating, a computers area, and a safe area for babies, toddlers and carers. These have all been included.

The library closed on 11th October at the end of the very successful Portobello Book Festival, and staff moved into the mobile library parked outside, while packing up 13,000 books inside. We were loaned the mobile library by Access Services Team in Edinburgh Libraries, and we would like to thank them very much. We received generous and cheerful help from many staff in the East Neighbourhood Partnership Team, based in Niddrie Mains Road, especially with sorting out and the hard physical work of packing and moving the books.

Normal library book services have operated from the mobile library, and we thank all our customers for coming to the van; it was very busy, with 1600 books being issued in the first two weeks.

All our regular events such as Rhymetimes, Storytimes and the Book Group continued in the Town Hall, the Childrens' Mobile Bookbus (parked near the Town Hall on Friday afternoons) and the Community Centre, respectively. We would like to thank these organisations, and St James' Church, for their help. The regular Library Link service for household customers was operated from Craigmillar and Piershill Libraries and we thank them for this.

We hope to re-open in mid-December. Please check the date with staff in the mobile library; details will also be publicised on the Edinburgh Library and East Neighbourhood Partnership web pages.

We can't wait to show our customers the new services, so come in soon and see the hundreds of new books, new seats and shelves, feature book display areas and new gallery area, a new Information Desk, and self-service issue desk too.

In our customer survey, many people wanted more events in the library, so now we are working on a programme to suit all ages. Portobello Library may still (just) be under wraps as this item goes to press, but once it is opened, it should be a present to please everyone.

Joyce Campbell.



CREDIT UNION TO EXPAND

THE East Edinburgh Credit Union is expanding beyond its previous boundaries. It has an office at 2 Niddrie Mains Road, once the Luca's Ice Cream shop on the corner, and a collection point in Portobello is planned in the New Year.

It will be in a better position to attract many more members, thanks to a grant of £5000 from the Portobello/Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership. A further £10,000 grant from the Scottish Government Third Sector Fund will provide members with a new Credit Union bill payment account, one of the first in the UK, available from the end of January 2010.

The Credit Union is a financial co-operative, owned by its members, and complies fully with the Financial Services Authority's regulations. It's easy to join: just take along photo ID, proof of address (e.g. a utility bill) and your first small cash deposit.

A group of Portobello people are helping develop the Credit Union, which aims to double its membership and become self-financing, but more people are needed to give 2-3 hours a week to help run the collection point. Once you have joined, you can volunteer and very useful training opportunities are provided. Contact Margaret Evans on 661 9942 or email her at craigmillararcu@googlemail.com

For information on opening hours and how a Credit Union works, call 661 9942 or visit the website www.craigmillarcreditunion.co.uk

IMAGINE PORTY PROM

BIG Things on the Beach, the local arts trust, is opening its doors to the public on Friday and Saturday afternoons from 1pm-5pm until 12th December. The Public Art House, at the foot of Kings Road, hosts the Imagine Porty Prom project that brings locals and visitors together to imagine how they would like their local seaside to be.

As part of the project, three temporary public artworks are being commissioned for 2010. The first of the artists, Simon Grennan of duo Grennan and Sperandio, recently visited the area to engage people in the development of an 8m high inflatable sculpture that

will capture the spirit of Portobello, asking: "If Portobello were a character, what character would it be?"

The artists' previous works can be seen at the Public Art House. Past projects, ideas for how Porty Prom might look and designs for future artworks will be on display into 2010, for comment and feedback. So come on down, and please get in touch if you would like to get involved in Imagining Porty Prom, either through group workshops or as an individual. Visit: www.bighingsonthebeach.org.uk

Susan Grant,
Participation Worker

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

THE Portobello/Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership continues to meet. It has a complex architecture of eight sub-groups dealing with areas of policy from housing to health to economic development. As a way of getting local officers from various services to work together it may be effective. As a way of enthusing local people it is less effective. There are regularly fewer than 10 members of the public at meetings.

It is also not very democratic. I can see no reason for the recent failure to consult community representatives about whether a bid for funds to repave bits of Portobello High Street was the community's top priority. It's good that officers were able to get funding for the project, but if they can't be bothered to ask the people who represent the community what it needs, the whole point of Partnerships becomes much less clear. The ward councillors were consulted, and there is no need to have a Partnership to do that.

There are two community councils in the Portobello/Craigmillar area. A more efficient use of everyone's time would often be to use those meetings to consult the community.

It might also be useful to replicate some of the best ideas from elsewhere. In Leith there was a successful meeting on health and alcohol, and they're planning a party for youth organisations. I'll be proposing these ideas for future meetings. I hope it'll make the process more worthwhile. It might even attract some members of the public.

Peter McColl,
Community Representative.

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Local Shopping is Hot Stuff

Saturday mornings usually start with a mad dash to get two little ones to ballet. Today was a holiday though. Ballet was shut. I now had three kids and a husband in tow. A little trip to Porty could be the answer. Hubby could go off with two of our little angels to the Post Office and DIY shop. The sausage lover could come with me to the butchers.

With our Porty Shopper in hand, the veg shop is our first stop. A sword fight with carrots and chasing a few tatties across the floor gets the locals smiling and our shopping is left for pick up later. The friendly green-grocer loads it into my car.

My five-year-old loves going to the butcher. Munching the 'try before you buy' plates of sausage is his idea of heaven. However, he is also always right, so he wasn't going to back down when asked if the chorizo he had just snatched was hotter than his little palate could handle. Neither could he back down when forewarned that the explosive piccante his wee fingers were about to grasp would be a smidgin hotter. We all stared aghast as he grabbed the dangerous delicacy and shoved it in "Is that not too hot?" I asked? "Naw. It's fine!" he replied.

How Porty beats a super-market trip!

HANDY HINTS
tips for a green Christmas

IF you've been diligently recycling all year and break out in a cold sweat after absentmindedly lobbing a tin into the wheely bin instead of the blue box, the thought of even more recycling over Christmas may loom like a dark angel. But it makes sense, after all that messy paper and sticky bottle sorting, to buy recycled Christmas cards and wrapping paper and exchange a few experience gifts, perhaps a dinner invitation, theatre tickets or a football season ticket, to cut down on packaging waste.

Alternatively, arm yourself with a Porty Shopper and have a wander around the town for unique vintage gifts - think retro chic rather than second-hand. The high street is an Aladdin's cave of antiques, books, vintage clothing, jewellery, china and toys, and although it takes a little more time to hunt out the perfect brooch or bag, the result will be a distinctive present with maximum green credentials.

After you've packed up your last LED Christmas light and paper-chain in January, pop your cards into your nearest Woodland trust box and leave your Christmas tree out for recycling. Make yourself a well-earned cup of tea but remember, don't chuck the teabag in the bin. Put it in your composting box!

Karen Combe

THE CAR FREE DAY on 20th September was very successful, with lots of people taking part in the bike parade, the street market and a children's eco-comedy about what happens on a Scottish island when the oil runs out.

THE PEDAL CHALLENGE: Three people are signed up to try and live without a car for one month and two more free bus passes are available for people who would like to take part, probably in January. Contact PEDAL if you'd like to be one of them. The recipients will be asked to report on the tribulations and benefits of using public transport/ cycling/ other mode of transport, and contribute to a blog on their experiences and to a feature in the *Evening News*.

COMMUNITY ORCHARD: We have planted 11 fruit trees at the Donkeyfield community orchard and aim to plant more during the autumn/winter season. We have also been the lucky recipients of funding for a path which has been installed by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. This means that the orchard is now accessible to all.

CLIMATE CHANGE FUND: We are applying for money to employ a full-time manager, an energy worker and a food worker to take forward the orchard, a farmers' market and the insulation campaign, and investigate the potential for renewable energy in the area.

TENEMENT WANTED to pilot an energy efficient system to cut heating bills. We are involving Changeworks in an insulation hotspot campaign. Let us know if you would like to take part.

You can contact PEDAL by e-mail: info@pedal-porty.org.uk or tel: 657 2555.

Justin Kenrick

GROWING ORGANIC



with Susan Burns



HARDWOOD cuttings root easily at this time of year, especially dogwood or willow, so try making a living structure - I made an astronomy dome. Take the leaves off 15-20 2m lengths of willow and push them 30cm into the ground every 30cm to form a semi-circle. Then bend them over and tie together at the top. You can buy lengths by mail order or ask someone who has a willow. When the structure starts to grow weave the side shoots along between the uprights and in a few years it will be covered in. Thereafter, it needs constant tying in and trimming every year unless you want a huge tree in the garden, and don't plant near a drain or close to the house. Children would love this, and if it's still a bit see-through for their games throw some old bedsheets over it.

You can also use red, orange or green dogwoods to make tunnels; they don't grow as tall and you could end up with an igloo! Use your imagination.

It's always worth trying to grow more of anything you really like, such as blackcurrants, gooseberries, buddleia, lavatera, weigela or even roses. For these I take 30cm 'sticks' stripped of their leaves and push them into a spare bit of ground up to 2/3rds their length. Don't be tempted in spring to see if they've rooted; wait until autumn when they will have made enough growth to be moved to a permanent site.

Take time in the winter to plan what you wish to grow next year; don't buy more seed than needed, but add a few new varieties.

Then go around the garden and tidy up; the backs of greenhouses always seem to magically accumulate 'stuff'.

Try to re-use, reduce and recycle as much as possible. For example, I use old toothbrushes with a little soapy liquid for scrubbing my vine, once the leaves are off and it's dormant, to get into the cracks and crevices where over-wintering bugs may hide.

If you have old feather cushions, pillows or downies, soak them in water, rip open and mix into the compost heap. This helps heat the heap and adds nitrogen. But beware, if you don't soak them you'll be covered in feathers and the neighbours won't know what to think!

HEALTHY EATING: QUICK & EASY BORSCH

This winter warmer tastes as good as it looks. (Serves 6)

750g (1lb 12oz) raw beetroot, 1.25 litres (2 pts) veg. stock, lemon juice
1 large clove garlic, plain yoghurt or sour cream & chopped parsley

Finely grate the beetroot, stir into boiling stock and boil for 7 mins. Make a paste with the garlic and 1/2 teasp. of salt and add to the soup. Add the juice of half a lemon. Liquidise if preferred, put into bowls, swirl in a spoonful of yoghurt or cream and sprinkle with parsley.

JOHN WILLIAMSON
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FROM THE ARCHIVE



WE would be delighted to receive any information about this appealing group of schoolgirls. Were they dressed up for a school concert? We think it was taken at St. John's Primary School in the 1950s, but you may know otherwise. If you recognise yourself, or can fill in the details, please contact Margaret Munro, tel: 657 2866 or email munroporto@hotmail.com

THIS photograph from the Portobello History Society archive shows a wonderful Portobello float as it receives its final touches before joining the Festival Cavalcade. It is parked in Market Street, under a span of North Bridge. It was taken in the late 1970s or early 80s. If you can provide further information, please contact Margaret Munro.



Photo courtesy of Margaret Scott

READERS RESPOND

WE received two responses to the sandcastle competition photograph in our last issue. The gentleman in the suit was identified as George Davidson, a member of the family of local coal merchants whose lorries were often decorated as floats in Gala Day processions. Thanks to those who contacted us.

PHOTOS FOR OUR ARCHIVE

IF you are enjoying the series of photos from our archive, please remember that we are always keen to add to this. We are able to scan originals and make copies. So, if you have any photographs, postcards or letters relating to Portobello in any way that we could copy, or any objects you would like to donate, please contact Margaret Munro.

SHARE YOUR MEMORIES

DO you have any memories of Portobello in the 1930s, 40s or 50s that you would like to share with our readers? Perhaps of a special day at the seaside; the day a donkey ran away with you; of an impromptu concert on the beach or a special treasure that you bought for your Mum or Granny on a day visit. We would love to hear from you. Contact Margaret Munro.

PORTOBELLO HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

OUR meetings this session are proving to be as popular and well attended as ever. John Scott's talk on *Charles Jenner of Easter Duddingston*, on 7th October, was an excellent presentation covering not only Jenner's time in Portobello but also much of his life. It was a fascinating story about the man who created beautiful gardens in Portobello and left us such a wonderful city-centre building.

David Gavine's talk on *Sundials*, on 4th November proved what an under-rated addition sundials are to our local history. He explained that many sundials appear not to work properly because they are not set up correctly and told us that "awfy hard sums" are needed to ensure they tell us the correct sun time. With examples of many different sundials, some in Portobello, David ensured that we will appreciate these, often neglected, sun clocks in future.

Our talk on 2nd December is by Annie Scanlon on 'A toe in the water' - 100 years of swimsuits. Perhaps some of our members may offer to model the costumes she brings along, although it will probably be too chilly to test them in the water!

As usual, there is no meeting in January, so our next talk is on Wednesday 3rd February, when Jim Scanlon brings 'Greetings from Leith' Postcards from early 20th Century Leith. Our neighbouring community has a long and fascinating history with massive changes to the waterfront now taking place. A reminder of Leith's past will accentuate the recent changes.

Simon Green makes a welcome return on Wednesday 3rd March. On this visit he will talk about *Dumfries House*, a building he is closely involved in researching. This promises to be an informative and arresting talk, delivered in Simon's own inimitable style.

I would remind readers that our meetings are held in St. John's Church Hall, Brighton Place and begin at 7pm sharp. Latecomers will not be admitted. All are welcome with non-members asked to make a donation to the society.

May we wish everyone a peaceful Christmas and a healthy and happy 2010.

Margaret Munro

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CHRISTMAS AT ST MARK'S

ST MARK'S Episcopal Church, Portobello, extends a warm welcome to local residents during Advent and Christmas. There will be a number of special services, which we hope will appeal to all ages.

From Mon 30th November to Thursday 24th December, Morning Prayer and time for meditation at 9.30am; Sunday morning services during Advent at 8.30 and 10.30; Sunday 20th December at 6.30pm, Lessons and Carols; Christmas Eve at 4pm, a popular Crib Service for children and families; then 11pm, Midnight Mass; Christmas Day, 9.30am, Christmas Eucharist. Check the church's new noticeboard or go to www.stmarksportobello.org for further details.

BOOK REVIEW

The Island of Whispers by Brendan Gisby

THIS is the story of a colony of rats living on an island under the Forth Rail Bridge. Ruled over by an 'inner circle' of evil fat rats, and in fear for their lives, a group of lowly 'watchers' attempts to brave the stormy waters and scale the giant bridge in a bid for freedom. But celebrations for the bridge's centenary are about to begin... will they make it? A story of oppression overcome, fierce loyalty, dreams and devastation. Grisly to the end, but with heart. You'll never look at the little islands in the same way again.

Blackleaf Publishing, 2009. £8.99. Suitable for 11+

Eilidh Bateman

OUR FRIENDS FROM LOMBETTA

AT the beginning of the school year at Holy Rood High our families volunteered to host guests from our partner school, Lombeta Secondary in Tanzania, on the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro. Fredy, Calvin, Jacqueline, Judith, Rosina and Irene arrived, with their head teacher Victor, on a very warm Friday in September, wearing winter jackets which they couldn't be coaxed out of. At dinner, Julie offered warm jumpers to the two girls staying with her. They took off their jackets, put on the jumpers and promptly put the jackets on again!

Many of the things that we take for granted were a great culture shock to them. For instance, Jacqueline was very confused as to why any family would keep a hamster in a cage in their home, and even more baffled that there was a shop which sold hamsters and other small furry animals. There are so many things we could write about the visit - like our shopping trip to Asda, searching for the right kind of cornflour to make ugali, a kind of porridge.

They loved to sing. You may have heard us heading home along the High Street singing merrily and very enthusiastically! Fredy would walk into the kitchen, put music on, turn it up and sing along; then Calvin would come in and turn it up a bit louder. They introduced us to some great East African music on YouTube and loved listening to our music on the i-Pods.

Of all our technology, the computer was the biggest attraction. At school we raised money for computer equipment for Lombeta and have set up an internet connection, which is great for keeping in touch since they returned home, especially as we are hoping to make a return visit next summer. It was an exciting four weeks. We had lots of laughs together and discovered that we have much in common.

Lois Collins, Andrew Connarty and Julia Kinane.

HOLY ROOD CELEBRATION

THE new Holy Rood High School in Duddingston was officially opening on the evening of Monday 14th September. The original school opened its doors in 1971 and the night was a fitting tribute to what had gone before, a celebration of the present school community and a positive step towards what the future holds for the young people of Holy Rood.

The invited guests included pupils, staff, parents, representatives from Laing O'Rourke and the architect, Jonathan Yates. The speakers for the evening were Councillor Marilyn MacLaren,

Convener of Education, Children and Families and His Eminence Keith Patrick Cardinal O'Brien.

The school was particularly pleased that pupils and staff from their sister school in Tanzania, Lombeta High School, were present. Holy Rood's pupil Gospel Choir produced some truly uplifting music and the evening ended with tours around the school and the unveiling of a plaque to mark the occasion. It is to be hoped that with such a successful and inspiring opening ceremony the school continues to improve and grow.

Lorraine Legrix, Headteacher

AMNESTY - LOCAL NEWS

THE Portobello Group's 'Protect the Human' party and ceilidh, held on 3rd October in St Philip's Church Hall, was attended by a record number of people, aged from 5 to over 80 years. Socially, it was a huge success and raised a record £1,111. This was sent to Amnesty International for its worldwide support of people whose human rights have been violated.

At the heart of our programme this year is the Greetings Card Campaign. Our members will be visiting Towerbank, St John's and Portobello High Schools to present Amnesty's human rights role and encourage pupils to write cards of comfort and hope to prisoners of conscience and their defenders in a number of countries.

Human Rights Day will be marked on 5th December at a Tree of Hope stall near the Town Hall, where the public will also be invited to send cards.

As 2009 draws to an end, we reflect thankfully on a highly successful year of campaigns and fundraising for human rights, with appreciation of the support of Portobello Churches and the community in general.

The Group presently meets on the third Monday of each month in the PEDAL office, 90 Portobello High Street at 7.30pm. Any enquiries will be welcomed on 669 1308.

David Turner

JOIN 'THE WAVE'

ON Saturday 5th December a large group from Portobello will be jumping onto buses at Portobello Town Hall and heading through to Glasgow to add the community's sizeable ripple to 'The Wave'. Due to be the biggest environmentalist rally in Scottish history.

World leaders are meeting in Copenhagen in December for last chance discussions to try and agree action to limit climate change. The rally is seen as Scotland's final opportunity before the meeting to make plain its concern to have something done.

Tom Ballantine of 'Stop Climate Chaos' (the umbrella group for organisations representing over 2 million Scots looking for action) said: "We are seeing a big interest in the trip. People understand the seriousness of the problem: they are determined to see Portobello do its bit in getting leaders to address climate change before it is too late. This is going to be a family friendly, fun occasion centred on a march through Glasgow. It has been fantastic to see all sides of the community come together, with support from whole families, church groups, PEDAL and other organisations."

For more information on joining 'The Wave' call Tom Ballantine on 669 0582 or email: Ballantinehome@tiscali.co.uk

COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES

Portobello & Craigmillar Ward

Cllr MICHAEL BRIDGMAN, SNP:

Portobello Library, 2nd Monday of the month, 6.30pm.
Bingham Community Complex, 1st Monday, 6pm.

Magdalene Community Centre, 1st Monday, 7pm.

St Francis Primary School, 3rd Monday (term-time) 6.30pm.

OR call 529 4233 or email michael.bridgman@edinburgh.gov.uk

Cllr MAUREEN CHILD, Labour:

Portobello Library, most Mondays, at 7pm. To check availability or make a different appointment,

call 529 3268 or email maureen.child@edinburgh.gov.uk

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Cllr STEPHEN HAWKINS, Liberal Democrat:

Portobello Library, each Wednesday, from 6pm.

OR Tel. 529 3262 or email stephen.hawkins@edinburgh.gov.uk

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Or email: kenny.macaskill.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

AFRICA WEEK AT ST JOHN'S



Back row: Judith, Mr Tillya, Charlie, Calvin and Jacqueline. Front row: Rosina, Sarah, Head Teacher Ms Barbara Service and Irene.

IN September, St John's Primary School celebrated 10 years of friendship with Legho Primary School in Tanzania and to mark the occasion St John's pupils prepared a 'friendship box' containing small gifts and symbols of that friendship. The Africa Week celebrations included an East African study, maskmaking, traditional storytelling, singing, and a range of colourful art and craft activities designed to explore and appreciate the richness of the culture. From the start, the relationship between the two schools has been aimed at fostering mutual respect and an openness to learning from each other.

Both Legho and its local secondary school, Lombeta, are situated in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro. Lombeta is twinned with Holy Rood High School and pupils have made several exchange visits. During this year's visit in September, Mr Victor Tillya, Head Teacher at Lombeta, visited St John's with a group of his pupils. St John's pupils were delighted to learn some new Swahili songs from him during their African Assembly. P7 pupils, Sarah Hutton and Charlie Smart interviewed the guests to find out about education and job prospects for young people in Tanzania as well as what they like to do for fun and games.

Linda McGee

TOWERBANK SUPPORT FAIR TRADE

TOWERBANK is the first primary school in Edinburgh to achieve Fairtrade status. Following a talk at assembly last session by a speaker from the Fairtrade organisation, Jules Lawrie, then a P7 pupil, suggested starting a fair trade healthy tuck stall. It proved so successful, that we decided to continue it, with the help of parents, every Friday at break time, and to have a stall at school fairs. The children are enjoying various fruits and smoothies, and home baking made with Fairtrade ingredients.



Jules at his Tuck Stall

Earlier this year pupils took part in Fairtrade Fortnight and came to school dressed as their products, or dressed in yellow with the theme 'Go Bananas for Fairtrade!' The school is now involved in various fair trade activities, making posters, inviting more guest speakers and doing research in classes. The nursery have been baking goodies, using Fairtrade products where possible.

A committee of P6 and 7 pupils is planning events for this session, which included a celebration of our new status on 14th October, and we are in the early stages of becoming Global Partners with a school in Ghana whose community sell Fairtrade cocoa.

Kirsty Rosie

STAR STRUCK

IN OCTOBER our class visited the Royal Observatory. First we went to the dome that had the telescope and our guide Will told us about star constellations and we learnt that the only ones that look like the real thing are Orion and Leo. We got to see the spectrograph (rainbow maker) and found out that there are many different types.

We went into the Deep Space Gallery to look at asteroids, meteors and meteorites. Will showed us a small meteorite; it felt much heavier than a stone. There are five tips to help identify a meteorite: it's burnt on the outside, it's very magnetic, it has chips of metal inside, it looks like rusty metal and has patterns running through it.

Finally we had lunch in the gallery room and said goodbye, and headed back to school after an amazing day. We learnt a lot about how complicated space is and would recommend the trip because it was so cool.

By pupils of P6 Parson's Green Primary School

THIS is the Year of Astronomy, and it would be great if future generations could see the Milky Way from the city. So Susan Burns suggests writing to your local councillor and MSP asking that the lights be changed to reduce light pollution - the newer ones point downwards. They're cheaper than the old polluting sodium ones too.

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BOOK COMPETITION WINNERS



Photo by Brenda Molony

THE winners of our competition were (l-r) Ryan Kelly, Aidan Holligan and Mary Thomson, seen here with Ted Brack, who presented the signed copies of his book *"There is a Bonny Fitba Team: 50 Years on the Hibe Highway"* at Portobello Library on 10th October. Ted will also be signing copies of his book at the Hibs Club store on Saturday 5th December from 11am-12noon.

LOCAL KARATE CLUB KIDS ARE WINNERS

MEMBERS of a local Karate club won an array of medals for Scotland at the 37th European Wado Cup held at Meadowbank Stadium at the end of October. Rachel Scotland won an individual bronze and a team gold, Darren Blyth won an individual bronze and a silver in the team event, Barry Douglas won an individual bronze and a team silver and Katie Blaine won a bronze medal and a team gold.

Rachel Scotland, who helped Scotland's girls win the team gold, came up against a Hungarian girl who was both taller and heavier, but Rachel won against the

odds. "It was fantastic to win. I felt brilliant but shattered after it. and I couldn't believe I'd won" Rachel told *The Reporter*.

The medal winners are all members of the CEK club at Portobello Community Centre. This year members of the club have won 250 medals. "I am so pleased with the kids. Each year they get better and better", said coach Chris Ewing.

The club is currently looking for sponsorship so the karate kids can travel further afield in their search for medals. For information call Chris on 07828859960 or see www.chrisewingkarate.com

RUGBY REPORT: Porty top the table

THE Portobello 1st XV sit at the top of East Division 1 at the half-way point in the season, and if they can hold on to the top spot they will move back into the national leagues.

Skipper, Chris Thomas says: "It has been an interesting season so far. Porty began with a terrific run of results, winning their opening five matches. After a slight drop in form, when they lost two matches, they re-discovered their winning mentality to make it back to the top of the league. Porty's 2nd team are also sitting at the top of their league after some fantastic results over tough opposition, including Edinburgh University."

Chris thinks both teams deserve their league positions. "As captain you get an interesting insight into all the effort behind the scenes", he says. "We have so many volunteers working away for the good of the club and the wider community. We have successful teams throughout the club, from the micros (lower primary) all the way to the seniors. It's great to be part of a club on the up. In terms of the 1st XV, I know we deserve our league position, and come Easter time we could be back at Murrayfield in the cup and back in the national leagues".

Training is on Tuesday and Thursday nights at Cavalry Park. Please call Chris Thomas on 07772779956 if you are interested in playing at any level.



Photo by Stewart Fraser

Porty on the charge!

FUN AND GAMES WITH ACTIVE SCHOOLS

ACTIVE SCHOOLS activities in the Portobello cluster of primary schools have been developing over the past few months. Activities on offer for pupils include Hockey, Gymnastics, Basketball, Dance, Girls Football, Rugby, Nursery Mini-Kickers, Skiing, Snowboarding, Gaelic Football, holiday sport/activity camps and curricular support introducing fitness activities into the classroom setting. These activities are designed to support children in moving towards the recommended 60 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week.

How can you help? If you are interested in volunteering in primary schools/local clubs or if you are involved with a club that is interested in boosting numbers by linking up with the local primary schools in Portobello, I would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact Colin McMillan at Active Schools on colin.mcmillan@ea.edin.sch.uk or 07884216213 for more details on any of these opportunities.

WHAT'S ON in Portobello

CHRISTMAS FAYRE: Parsons Green Primary School, Sat. 5th Dec, 10am-12pm. Stalls, refreshments, raffle (top prize £100), Santa's Grotto, and much more.

WILLOW AND PAPER LANTERN WORKSHOP, Sat. 12th Dec, 2.30-5.30pm, Portobello Community Centre, Adelphi Grove, led by Barbara Middleton of POD. The Town Hall will be decorated with these fabulous lanterns for 'A Winter's Night' concert on 19th Dec. Sangstream (Edinburgh's folk choir) will throw a few songs into the mix! Tickets £3. Children must be accompanied by an adult

CAROL FESTIVAL for Christian Aid, Sun. 13th December, 7pm in Portobello Old Parish Church, Bellfield Street. Join voices to fight poverty on this 'Big Christmas Sing' Weekend.

'A WINTER'S NIGHT', Sat. 19th December, 7.30pm, Portobello Town Hall. Get into the true Christmas spirit with songs and stories of winter, Christmas and Yule. Featuring Mairi Campbell, Dave Francis, David Campbell, Hamish Moore, and Towerbank school choir, and hosted by Sangstream, Edinburgh's folk choir. Tickets: £8 adults, £3 children available from Mica (Woodwares) and Kitcheners Deli and at the door. Mince pies and mulled non-alcoholic drinks.

BURNS SUPPER for Christian Aid: Sat. 16th Jan. 2010, 7pm, Portobello Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield St. Immortal Memory by Dr Donald Smith, Netherbow Scottish Storytelling Centre. Tickets £12. Call 669 5251.

PORTOBELLO BURNS CLUB Burns Supper, Woodside Hotel, Fri. 22nd January, 7.30pm prompt. Immortal Memory by Kenny MacAskill MSP. Tickets £20 from Marjory Taylor (669 4471) or David Scott (669 4664).

PORTY'S GOT TALENT: 29th Jan, 7.30pm, Community Centre. Lighthearted talent show, auction and disco. PONGS fundraiser. Tickets on 669 4891.

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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Mon to Sat 11am to 12 midnight
Sun 12.30 pm to 11pm
AN EVER CHANGING RANGE OF CASK-CONDITIONED ALES
Caledonian Brewery Belhaven
Timothy Taylors McEwans
Harviestoun Hadrian & Border
OVER 60 MALT WHISKIES
35ml measure
FILLED ROLLS & SNACKS AVAILABLE