

THE Portobello REPORTER

Quarterly: Spring 2012

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The independent voice of Portobello

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SHIFTING SANDS

AS regular promenaders will no doubt have noticed, the beach at Portobello has changed in formation since the remedial shifting of sand last summer following the March 2010 storm, as part of the flood prevention scheme.

The shape of the beach has frequently changed in recent months, creating sand banks, trenches and troughs, covering parts of some of the groyne and revealing structures below the tide-line which had previously been largely hidden. Instead of its previous gradual slope into the sea, the beach now suddenly falls away abruptly in places.

Although sand is constantly on the move due to winds and tides, the present beach formation is unusual. A Council spokesman said the most likely causes are high winds from the west since the remedial work, with smaller waves that move sand in a different way.

The City Council monitors the beach and measures sand

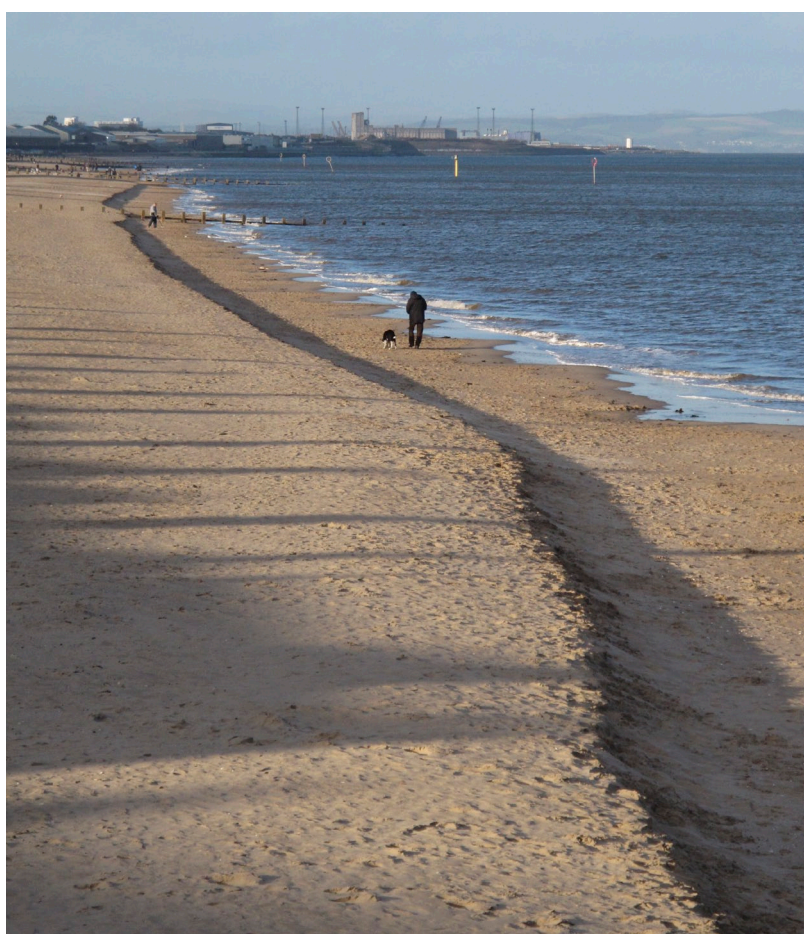


Photo by Margaret Drysdale

levels twice a year, and will take action if enough sand is lost to make the promenade vulnerable to flooding. As part of its on-going commitment to flood prevention in Portobello, the most easterly groyne is due for repair

this year and it is hoped that approval will be given for the work to be done in the summer. The council anticipates "acceptable" disruption to beach lovers, as the location of the groyne has easier access than last year's works.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS DUE

THE local council elections are to be held on Thursday 3rd May. As a first time voter, I will be taking part as the results will affect my everyday life. In 2007 only 54.5% members of the electorate turned out in the Portobello/Craigmillar ward. The Lothian Joint Valuation Board is aiming to get as many people as possible onto the electoral role. To be eligible to vote in the local elections, you must register by Wednesday 18th April. To find out how to do this, visit www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk or by telephone 0131 344 2500.

Councillors will be elected under the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system, which is a form of proportional representation (PR) Instead of putting a cross against one

person, voters should number their choice in order of preference, to a maximum of three, and seats will be allocated on a directly proportional basis. Putting a cross will invalidate a voting paper. Even if you only want to vote for one candidate, you must put the number one, not a cross. Councils will be issuing full instructions in the coming weeks.

For further information on STV see www.electoral-reform.org.uk

In each of our two local wards, three councillors will be elected. As this newspaper went to press on 24th February, the known declared party candidates standing locally were:

Portobello/Craigmillar Ward:

Maureen Child (Labour),

David Walker (Labour), Michael Bridgman (SNP), David Manson (SNP), Martin Veart (Scottish Liberal Democrats), Henry Christian (Scottish Conservatives & Unionists), Peter McColl (Green Party).

Craightinny/Duddingston ward:

Joan Griffiths (Labour), Jason Lingiah (Scottish Conservatives & Unionists), Colin Williamson (SNP), Stefan Tymkewycz (SNP), John Palmer (Green Party).

Details of all candidates for all wards will be available from the Council's website www.edinburgh.gov.uk from 29 March, and will also be sent to local media.

Lewis Dick

RESIDENTS DISTURBED BY OVERNIGHT ENGINE NOISE

CONSTANT overnight engine noise and diesel fumes coming from a new maintenance facility on the rail tracks behind Stanley Street, are causing serious problems for residents of Stanley Street and the surrounding area.

Trains formerly maintained in Glasgow are now being maintained at the Craightinny rail depot, and the new facility has been built to accommodate two extra trains. Since December, maintenance has taken place every night, from 10pm until 6am, with the diesel engines running continuously. The operation will apparently run until 2018.

Despite numerous phone calls by residents to the depot, and e-mails to the Fleet Co-ordinating Manager at East Coast Railways, who operate it, the problem continues. Residents have received no satisfactory explanation of why it is necessary to run the engines throughout the night or why it takes eight hours to service two trains. The local manager has suggested that an acoustic barrier might be erected to help deaden the noise, but this would not deal with the diesel fumes.

The issue was raised at the January meeting of Portobello Community Council and the Chairman has written to the manager of East Coast at its York head office, requesting urgent action. Diana Cairns, Chair of Brightons and Rosefield Residents Association, who are affected by the problem, said: "Noise and air pollution pose serious risks to human health and it is unacceptable that residents should have to put up with this kind of infringement of their right to peace and quiet and clean air". She also has written to York, on behalf of the association.

The City Council's environmental health department is investigating how this problem can be alleviated, and are considering the need for legislation on idling diesel engines.

PORTOBELLO - FAIRTRADE TOWN?

PORTOBELLO has applied to become the latest Fairtrade Town in the UK, maintaining its standing as one of the most enlightened communities in Scotland.

At its October meeting, Portobello Community Council agreed to a request by The Just World Shop for support for an application to the Fairtrade Foundation for Fairtrade status for Portobello.

A Fairtrade Forum was set up to progress the application, comprising representatives from Earthy, the new food and goods store, Holy Rood High School, St Ninian's One World Group and The Just World Shop.

To qualify, a town must have a minimum of four retail outlets, two catering establishments and a suffi-

cient number of businesses, schools and churches using Fairtrade products. Fortunately in Portobello four of our six schools have Fairtrade status and five of our seven churches are committed to using these products, to help people in the developing world build their way out of poverty.

The Scottish Government is hoping to make Scotland a Fairtrade nation and is well on its way to achieving this objective. Portobello is making its own unique contribution to making this happen. All that is needed now is for a few more towns to sign up.

Look out for details of the Grand Launch, which it is hoped will be soon after Fairtrade Fortnight, which ends on 11th March. Jim Baird

PORTY PROFILE No. 46
TREVOR ROYLE

AUTHOR and broadcaster Trevor Royle specialises in writing about the history of war and empire. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and Honorary Fellow of the School of History, The University of Edinburgh. He has lived in Portobello for nearly 40 years.



Photo by Brenda Molony

Trevor was born in India, where his father was an officer in the Indian army and after Indian independence the family moved to present day Malaysia. When his parents' marriage broke up, he and his brother returned with their mother to England and Wales before settling in St Andrews when Trevor was eight. He attended Madras College and considered following his father into the army, but he also wanted to go to university. After weighing up the possibilities he applied to Aberdeen University and was accepted to read English and Philosophy.

After graduating in 1967, Trevor worked as an editorial assistant with William Blackwood in Edinburgh, one of the last independent publishers in Scotland. Three years later he moved to the Scottish Arts Council where one aspect of his job was to provide bursaries and scholarships for writers.

Trevor left the Arts Council in 1979 to concentrate on his own writing, which he says "would not have been possible without the support of my wife, Hannah, a very gifted doctor". He went on to write over 30 books as well as numerous scripts for documentaries and columns on international affairs for several newspapers.

In the early 1970s Trevor had become friendly with the poet Tom Buchan who lived in Pittville Street. He said it was a great place, so he and Hannah started looking at houses here and moved with their young family in 1973. "We got to know people very quickly and have lots of good friends here", he says, "and having lived by the sea in St Andrews, I was pleased to be back again at the seaside. Our children loved it too."

Trevor thinks the Portobello Book Festival is "a wonderful innovation" and was delighted to be asked to open the first one in 2009. He admires the work of Robert Burns and has given the Immortal Memory at the Portobello Burns Club Supper and the Burns Supper for Christian Aid at the Old Parish Church.

"I love Portobello", he says. "I wouldn't live anywhere else".

The Portobello Reporter is produced by volunteers, with contributions in this issue from 32 local people. If you have something you would like to see in print call **669 3466** or email us at portyreporter@btinternet.com
 JUNE DEADLINE 6TH MAY 2012

Sheila Gilmore MP

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ON THE BEAT

BEATING THE BOGUS CALLER

MANY of us are thinking of home and garden repairs after the recent spate of high winds. Unfortunately, another type of hazard has blown in – the bogus workman.

They arrive unannounced, with the intention of tricking their way into your home or offering sub-standard work at exorbitant prices. They can be plausible, persuasive and persistent. They want YOUR money!

Check who is at door before opening. Use a chain or spyhole; ask for ID; contact the company by phone. Don't let them in. Don't let unknown workmen do work in your house or garden. Don't keep large sums of money in the house, or a chequebook and card together.

If you think a bogus caller has called at your door, report it to the police immediately - dial 999. The operator will ask for a description of any persons or vehicles used. Look out for your neighbours and contact the Police if you see suspicious people in your area. The earlier police know that bogus callers are in the area, the quicker they can investigate.

Don't agree to any work without an estimate and cooling-off period. If any is done, get a guarantee, and don't go to the bank with anybody to withdraw money to pay them.

Lothian & Borders Police and City of Edinburgh Council are working together to reduce this type of crime. For more crime prevention advice log on to Lothian and Borders website or follow us on Twitter @LBP_Police

Sgt J Young,
 Community Safety Team

OUTFOXING MR FOX

CATS sometimes just disappear. Usually they return, but sometimes they don't and this is apparently more common in the months April to July. A Joppa resident, whose cat disappeared last May, had heard that Mr Fox could be the culprit, so she contacted a pest control company and spoke to someone with knowledge of fox behaviour.

He told her that since wheelie bins replaced plastic sacks a few years ago, food available to the urban fox has

been greatly reduced. He said a vixen will have five to six cubs, which are born in April and remain with the parents until late July, and the dog fox may sometimes take a cat, if necessary, to feed them.

His advice to cat owners was to keep their pets indoors at night during this period.

The Joppa cat eventually came home, to its owner's delight. It had been shut in a coal shed and was thin and hungry, but soon recovered.

NEWS IN BRIEF

HOVERCRAFT LINK PLANS REJECTED: Following a site visit in November, City of Edinburgh's planning committee rejected Stagecoach's application for hovercraft landing and passenger facilities at Portobello, just weeks after Fife Council gave permission for a similar development at Kirkcaldy. The reasons for rejection were the visual impact of the proposed ramp, and noise, transport and parking concerns. Stagecoach does not intend to appeal the decision.

PPAG COURT ACTION : A petition for Judicial Review of the decision by the City of Edinburgh Council to build a new Portobello High School on Portobello Park, lodged by the Portobello Park Action Group, was heard in the Court of Session on 5th and 6th January and continued on 1st February. PPAG were challenging the Council's right to build on Common Good land. The Court's ruling is expected shortly.

BURNS SUPPER: This year's Burns Supper for Christian Aid was enjoyed by 115 people and raised £892 for the charity, bringing the total raised since the first event in 1986 to £22,150.

CYCLING ON PROM: New signage giving advice to cyclists and pedestrians on sharing the Prom should be in place within the next two to three months.

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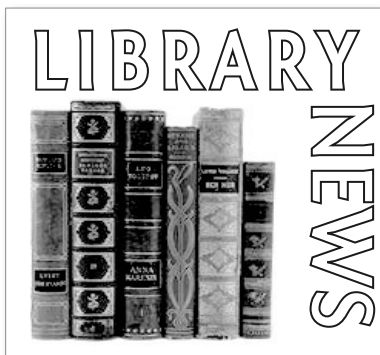
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WE ARE well on our way with preparations for World Book Night, on the evening of Monday 23rd April. This is a celebration of books and reading, when people gift books within their communities to spread the joy and love of reading. We are a delivery point for World Book Night books and would be more than happy if book givers chose the library as a place to give out their books.



For more information see www.worldbooknight.org

The Easter holidays start on 6th April and we are already planning our Easter themed activities for the school holidays. Check in the library for details or have a look on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PortobelloLibrary

Ever fancied trying your hand at writing short stories? Local author Caroline Dunford will be running a series of workshops at the library on Monday evenings starting on 19th March. These will cover everything from basic plot concepts to word building. By the end of the sessions participants' work will be displayed in the library. If you are interested contact library staff for details.

We have a number of fascinating exhibitions in our gallery this Spring: The Creative Party Art group will display their work from 5th-18th March; Rowenna Anderson will display her jewellery from 2nd-15th April; and Annette Tate is returning with her Textile Sculptures from 16th April to 7th May. From 21st May to 4th June, Jenny Martin will be displaying her excellent screen prints of Portobello.

Does anyone remember "It always seemed to be sunny"? This fantastic video of memories of Portobello, produced in 2004, has been re-released as a DVD by Portobello Heritage Trust. Copies are available from the library at the very reasonable price of £10.

The Portobello Book Group meets on the first Tuesday of every month from 6.30 - 8pm, and will be discussing the following books:

6th March - *Mr Chartwell* by Rebecca Hunt

3rd April - *Naming the Bones* by Louise Welsh

1st May - *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett

All books will be available from the library. If you are interested ask staff for details.

Paul Hudson

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

HIGH STREET SHOPS: One item on the agenda for the January meeting was Portobello's shops. It was introduced by Eva Schonveld of PEDAL, who was keen to make the most of a project to promote the shops, organised by the Council's Town Centre Manager, Sarah Woodford. Several traders present spoke of the problems they face with customer pick-ups by car and traffic wardens keen to do their job. A survey of major local issues, recently carried out by the Community Council, indicated concern and support for the High Street. It was felt that the three main challenges faced by local shops were accessibility, variety and cost. With nearby supermarkets offering working families an easy option, lowering prices alone was not enough to counteract this. The Community Council agreed to do anything it could to help local businesses and has set up a working group to examine the best ways of doing so.

THE TODDLERS' HUT: Local architect Kieran Gaffney gave a presentation on the rebuilding of The Toddlers' Hut on the Promenade. Opened in 1929, The Toddlers' Hut is thought to be the UK's oldest independent childcare service. As the current building is difficult to heat and to keep wind and water-tight, it is proposed to replace it with an eco-friendly building at the north end of the site, overlooking the Promenade. Consisting of two storeys, probably brick below and timber above, it would use solar energy for heating. The architects are embarking on a scheme of public consultation, prior to launching a campaign to raise the £250,000 needed. The Community Council welcomed the proposals and offered to support the project in any way it could.

PCC meetings are held on the last Monday of each month except December and July at 7.30pm in the Baptist Church Hall, Portobello High Street. To contact the Community Council see www.portobellocc.org More information can also be found on the website or at its display area in Portobello Library.

John Stewart, Chair.

KEEP SCOTLAND BEAUTIFUL AWARD APPLIED FOR

THE City of Edinburgh Council has entered Portobello in this year's Seaside Awards.

The award, which promotes cleanliness, sustainability, visitor information and safety management is run by Keep Scotland Beautiful.

The application has been made following a request by Cllr Child to look at how we might better promote Portobello, Edinburgh's Seaside, and follows last year's appearance in the Marine Conservation Society's (MCS) 'Good Beach Guide' which awarded Portobello Central (at James Street) the highest level award of 'MCS recommended'.

The awards will be made in time for this year's bathing season, which starts in June and lasts till September.

Sarah Woodford,
Town Centre Manager

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Food For Thought

I HAVE built up a fair collection of cookery books over the years, which you'd think would stand me in good stead, charged as I am with the task of creating over 200 covers (as they say in the trade) a month for my family. From Nigel to Nigella, I've got them all.

The thing is, I don't think I ever received the expected "wow" response from my customers that I fantasised about as I traipsed along the high street, wondering where on earth I could buy rose harissa paste to make a delicious pot of smoked aubergine soup.

In fact, most days, I feel as if I have accidentally invited a bunch of finicky food critics round for dinner. They dislike anything on the plate that's mixed up, and sit with their legs curled up underneath them staring sullenly at my culinary efforts, with the suspicious eye of Sherlock Holmes. Remember *Butterflies*, the 80s sitcom starring Wendy Craig as a mother whose culinary efforts were continually rejected by her family? Well that's me!

It's not all bad. I once received rave reviews for a meal I threw together in a matter of minutes. Smiley faces, three battered fish fingers and a spoon of sweet corn with a cheffy streak of tomato ketchup, artfully arranged on a white plate. "You're the best mum! Can we have that again tomorrow?" chorused the critics, aka my children. Maybe my motto when it comes to menu planning should be, as they say in the forces, KISS or Keep It Simple Stupid!

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PEDAL are proposing that Portobello joins the growing number of communities who have their own local money, with a "Portobello Pound"

SUSTAINABLE PORTY

which can only be spent in local shops, supporting local trade and strengthening the local economy. We hope Portobello can lead the way in this, and that communities across Edinburgh will see how well it works and join us to create a currency that can support businesses across the city. We want to find out what local residents and businesses think about the idea over the next few months. The currency would link with other initiatives aimed at supporting the High Street, such as a 'shop local' campaign that the Town Centre Manager is working on with Community Council support.

We're delighted to welcome well-known local figure Graham Kitchener as our new Portobello Market Co-ordinator. Graham has lots of experience as a retailer of quality food, having set-up and run Kitcheners Deli until 2006. He aims to bring a new look to the market, together with entertaining events each month and a growing number of stallholders. Graham will be re-launching the market on Saturday 7th April.

In December, PEDAL and Greener Leith competed with nearly 1000 other projects across the UK to win the Energysure competition. A huge "thanks" to all who supported us. The prize was £83,000 to take our proposed community wind turbine project to planning submission.

We are very disappointed, however, to report we may not be able to secure rights to build on the site at Seafeld Sewage Works. We began negotiating over access to the land with owners Scottish Water in February 2011. But the site is subject to a PFI contract for operation of the sewage works, and the organisation behind the PFI deal, a US finance corporation called MBIA, has now effectively blocked the project by insisting on conditions which neither PEDAL nor Scottish Water can meet.

We are particularly frustrated that Scottish Water has taken a year to identify these issues, during which time a huge number of volunteer hours have been spent on the project. We continue to try to find a way forward through negotiations and political pressure.

Tom Black

LET'S START A TIME BANK


TIME BANKING is a way of exchanging skills, knowledge and experience. It is an opportunity for all ages and backgrounds to give and receive all sorts of services, such as listening and visiting, gardening and form filling, sharing skills in music, knitting and using computers, or simple repairs, ironing and running errands. (Some services are excluded, such as childcare, babysitting and personal care).

It is based on the simple principle that for every hour of time a person contributes to help someone else they receive the equivalent in time credits,

which are stored and exchanged for services from others. If you help someone for an hour decorating their home, for example, you can 'buy' an hour of someone helping you, perhaps teaching you to knit.

Please come to a meeting at Portobello Library on Thursday 15th March at 6.30pm, upstairs in the Community Room, to learn more. To make this work we will need people prepared to be on a steering group and also, of course, people needing help from others and willing to share their own skills.

Laura Plumb



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GROWING ORGANIC



with Susan Burns



THERE ARE lots of little time-consuming jobs that don't take as long if prioritised and spaced out. So, for example, organise seeds into date sowing order, with a label attached, showing variety and date for sowing (try to get organic varieties, especially vegetables as you're going to eat these); a job to do inside when the weather isn't suitable for working outside. Make notes of other jobs that can be done outside when the weather is fine, such as pruning spring-flowering shrubs like forsythia once they have flowered, if needed to keep in bounds; these shrubs flower on one-year-old wood. Splitting jobs up saves time and energy (your own); and don't carry a "lazy man's load", as my Mum called it, which could result in broken pots or, worse, a sore back. I find changing jobs often also helps, so mix up kneeling, sitting, standing, and bending at one height then another.

If the compost heap hasn't been emptied, do it now so you have space to put the new season's crop of weeds. Compost is precious stuff, so I only use it on the vegetable beds and fruit trees. Keeping soil healthy promotes healthy plants.

Some weeds can be eaten. I use fresh nettle tops to make a herbal tea, and add them to soups if I have no other greens available - very good for you - and because I use organic principles I know they haven't been sprayed with anything. Cover dandelions with a bucket or pot to force and blanch them, and add them to salads too.

To help with the "hungry gap" when new crops aren't ready and last year's stored crops are finished, I let just a few plants of the cabbage family, especially kale, go to seed each summer. Then I always have a supply of soft, lush, kale leaves for sandwiches and the tougher ones go into stews and soups, before I pull them up and put them on the compost heap.

If any bulbs are coming up blind (with lots of foliage and no flowers), dig them up and split the clumps. I make a trench in the bottom of hedges, plant the bulbs with gaps of a few centimetres and back-fill, then I make a note to dig them up in autumn to replant. Over the summer I give them an occasional comfrey/nettle tea feed.

If you bought any PEDAL or other pear trees, keep a look out for pear midge which causes fruits to fall off prematurely and turn black. Place a sheet around the base of the tree to catch them, out to where the branches reach at blossom time, and when the little fruits are a few centimetres in size, remove any still on the tree that look mis-shapen and black. This disrupts the midge mating cycle. Burn them all or put them in your garden recycling bin; don't add to your compost heap.

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FROM THE ARCHIVE: HAPPY FAMILIES



Photo courtesy of Marjorie Brown

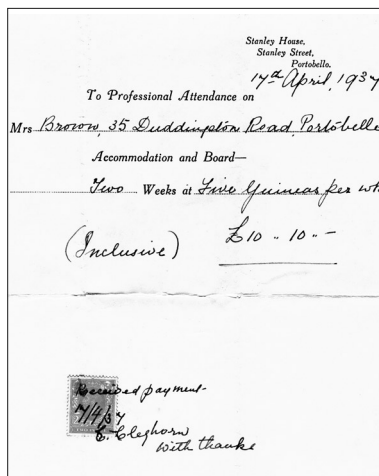
IN our last issue, we featured a photograph of Peggy Hume and extracts from her Domestic Science jotter. Peggy later married and became Peggy Brown. Here we see her, in 1937, photographed with her beautiful baby daughter Marjorie. Both look happy and well.

In 1937 pregnancy and childbirth were not always guaranteed to result in such a happy ending. Many women had home births, aided by female family members and experienced neighbours, with the midwife only called in cases of emergency. One of those present would meet the demand for "hot water and towels". No pain relief was available. Men were not allowed into the room

while the birth was taking place, although they were expected to help look after the other children in the family while the new Mum rested. Mums were advised to lie-in for two weeks, but for many this was impossible due to the demands of family life.

There was a Maternity Hospital at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, which was used to train midwives, but the maternal death rate in Scotland was high, with a peak of 651 in 1931. The Simpson Memorial Maternity Pavilion was not opened until 1st March 1939. Improved facilities at Simpson's meant better antenatal and postnatal care for mothers, with more women giving birth in hospital where infections were contained, which led to a decline in mortality rates. The establishment of the National Health Service in 1948 provided free medical care for all. Nonetheless, the BBC series *Call the Midwife*, set in the 1950s, illustrated the many problems that still beset pregnancy and childbirth. New housing improved conditions for families which, combined with better health care, allowed them to flourish. Women are once again

requesting home births and, with these improvements, their requests can be met, ensuring the safety of mother and baby.



Peggy was fortunate enough to give birth to Marjorie in a private nursing home. The invoice shows that she was born in Stanley House, Stanley Street, Portobello. Nurse Cleghorn ran this local nursing home and her signature can be seen on the invoice. It is worth noting that although the invoice is dated 17th April 1937, it appears to have been paid on 7th April. Perhaps payment in advance was required. Peggy at least got her two weeks to lie in.

Stanley House had formerly been a private school and an early home for Portobello Baptist Church. It is now a private house.

Margaret Munro

SALT PANS EXCAVATIONS

AT the invitation of Portobello Heritage Trust, John Lawson of City of Edinburgh Archaeological Services gave a talk about the excavations on 25th January. The severe storms of March 2010 caused the collapse of the sea wall at the Joppa Salt Pans site and, before repair work was begun, it was decided to excavate the site in conjunction with Headland Archaeology.

Salt production began at Joppa in the 17th century, using cheap local coal for heat for the evaporation process. Production here was one of the longest running on this coastline, continuing until 1953. Most of the buildings were demolished in the 1960s, with Rock Cottage and the Rockville Hotel the only buildings remaining. John commented that the demolition squad had done a good job and had destroyed the floor surfaces and chimney bases, with little remaining from the later buildings on the site. Brick arches and flues were revealed, however, and some bricks marked Hunter & Co Patent Portobello were found. These were made between 1873 and 1881.

John used photographs of the excavations to illustrate the findings, providing a clear picture of what was exposed. Although the excavations had to be covered over to allow the sea wall to be rebuilt, it is believed that significant parts of the salt pans may remain below ground further east. If funding for further excavations can be found some time in the future, we may learn more about the history of the pans.

Margaret Munro



Photo courtesy of City of Edinburgh Council

KILNS LATEST

THE Directors of Portobello Heritage Trust have had regular meetings with City of Edinburgh Council officials and the architects responsible for the repair and restoration of the pottery kilns and are optimistic that, following the disappointments of the past few years, the work will be finished later this year.

The Design Team consulted experts in the English Potteries on the design and maintenance of brick bottle kilns before drawing up their plans and the tender documents. Tenders are being sent out to selected contractors chosen because of their proven record in this specialised work. It is expected that the tender process will be completed by the end of March/beginning of April and that work will start in the summer.

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LETTER

Dear Editor,
I'm researching a PhD in the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, looking at the relocation of residents and businesses from the city centre to the fringes and beyond, in the great Scottish urban regeneration schemes of the post-war period up to the 1970s.

I am especially keen to hear from readers or their families who were once part of these city centre communities, who moved voluntarily, or were obliged to move, perhaps by the council or other landlord, to prepare the way for the demolition of their homes or businesses in Edinburgh or any other Scottish city, and who might be willing to have their experiences recorded and preserved in the School of Scottish Studies Archive.

Younger generations look at photographs of demolished tenements, shops, pubs and cafes and question how they could have been torn down. In my PhD I hope to delve inside these stone shadows and tell the stories of the people who lived, worked and thrived in these communities, in their own words.

I can be contacted at dj.johnstonsmith@gmail.com
D J Johnston Smith

OLD PARISH WEBSITE

A NEW website has been launched by Portobello Old Parish Church, Bellfield Street to provide information on all aspects of Church life, including youth activities, hall lettings etc. www.oldparishportobello.co.uk There is also an email address on it for enquiries.

ST COLUMBA'S CASH



Photo by Brenda Molony

A JAR of money collected for St Columba's Hospice by customers at the Three Monkeys pub in Portobello High Street was broken open on 28th January. The sum collected was matched by pub owner Craig Lauder, and a cheque for £296.40 was presented to St Columba's volunteer Andrew O'Donnell, seen on the left with pub customer William Pattie, a fund-raiser for the hospice.

SERVICES AT ST MARK'S

ST MARK'S Episcopal Church on Portobello High Street extends a warm welcome to visitors during Lent and Easter. There will be prayers at 9.30am Monday to Friday, and the usual Sunday services at 10.30am. In Holy Week, 1st-6th April, there will be services at 7.30pm and a commemoration of the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday evening. A 'Walk of Witness' will take place on Good Friday, leaving from St Philips at 10am, via St Mark's, to St John's. On Easter Day there will be a sunrise

service on the beach at 7am, then Easter Sunday Communion at 10.30. The Rector, Revd. Sophia Marriage, said: "This is a very special time in the church year and members of the local community will be very welcome to come and take part in our preparation for Easter. It has been a very busy period since I started in November and, having spent five years working in Gorgie, I am really enjoying getting to know Portobello".

For further information about St Mark's see www.stmarksportobello.org

MANIFESTO FOR PROMENADE

BIG THINGS On The Beach will launch its manifesto for the development of the Promenade on Sunday 18th March at 2.30pm, at the 'cakestand' at the foot of Marlborough Street. The manifesto will call for an integrated approach and the highest design standards to be applied to development of the Prom, and the group will be encouraging local residents, politicians and others from further afield

to sign up to it.

The manifesto will be used as a springboard for more detailed plans to be drawn up, using data collected from local residents over the last two to three years, especially during the year-long Imagine Party Prom public art project. Big Things' aim is to have a fully developed brief for the development of the Prom ready for when public money for such projects becomes available.

AMNESTY - LOCAL NEWS

THANKS to members of the public who stopped at the Group's Greetings Card stall on Portobello High Street on Human Rights Day, 10th December, and splendid support from Tow-erbank Primary and Portobello High schools, 188 cards were sent to prisoners of conscience in Yemen, Iran and Azerbaijan - a record for our Group. One of these, Jabber Savalan, was released in January, following a huge campaign of letters to the authorities in Azerbaijan and thousands of supportive messages from individuals. We celebrate this great success.

In 2011 the Group's fundraising enabled us to send £900 to Amnesty International UK for human rights work worldwide. Group numbers increased to 12, up by 50%, one outcome of which is the revival of the letter-writing sub-group which writes to authorities in respect of some of the prisoners featured in the cards campaign. It hopes to meet on the first Wednesday of each month from March until June, at 7.30pm in the Dalriada Bar.

We hope to have an Amnesty stall at Portobello Organic Market on the first Saturday in April and May.

Meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm in Portobello Old Parish Church Hall, when it is proposed to have a number of speakers on related subjects.

Everyone is warmly welcomed. For further information call 669 1308.

David Turner

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Magdalene Community Centre, 7pm
2nd Monday of month:
Portobello Library, 6pm
St Francis Primary School, 7:00pm
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:

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holds surgeries during school terms at 7.15-7.45pm in: Piershill Library 1st Wednesday of each month. Craigentenny Community Centre 2nd Wednesday of each month. Duddingston Primary School 3rd Wednesday of each month until 2nd May. 529 3261 ewan.aitken@edinburgh.gov.uk

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ST JOHN'S 'GARDEN GANG'

ANYONE who regularly passes St John's Primary School on Hamilton Terrace may have noticed some changes to the playground over the years. The school garden is now well established, providing a pleasant environment in which pupils can work and play.

Led by a member of the Learning Assistant Team, Miss Cath McTernan, the 'Garden Gang' of around 130 pupils are involved in maintenance and planning further developments, to promote biodiversity and encourage a love of the natural environment. Sixty small hedging trees recently delivered from the Woodland Trust will also be planted.

A number of bird feeders have been sited around the garden, and pupils took part in the RSPB Birdwatch at the end of January. Used car tyres act as planters and others mark pathways in the garden. The school received a Waste Action Grant which helped establish a composting area and wormery and aided the purchase of storage for garden equipment

St John's has an open playground which is available for use by the local community. Anyone interested in helping pupils with gardening and maintenance work (e.g painting our tyre planters), would be most welcome to contact the school on 669 1363.

Linda McGee, Deputy Head

VOLUNTEERING IN ECUADOR

KATIE CRAIG, a Portobello High School pupil, has been selected by the charity Latitude Global Volunteering to work with underprivileged children in Ecuador for six months, starting in August. She will teach English in a primary school and support children with a range of disabilities in an orphanage. This is a challenging but exciting opportunity for Katie who hopes to make a difference to the lives of the children she works with and to learn

from them. She will live with a host family to help her to become immersed in the Ecuadorian culture.

Katie must raise £4000 and has already raised £1000. She will be doing car boot sales, cake stalls, bag packing, working at weekends and a sponsored skydive to raise more. If you would like to sponsor Katie, or find more information, you can do so on www.virginmoneygiving.com/KatieCraig

PERFORMING GOOD DEEDS

THE Porty Performers, Portobello Old Parish's youth drama group, raised £617 with ticket and refreshment sales for their Christmas play, and youth leader Poppy Cooke and Roseanna Warren presented Linda Muir of the 'Make-a-Wish Foundation' with a cheque in January.

This charity "grants magical wishes to children and young people fighting life-threatening conditions". For the children and their families the Make-a-Wish experience can be a happy change from weeks of painful treatments and hospitalisation. The young people can live out their fantasy of being a princess or zoo keeper for a day, or of meeting a favourite celebrity. In years to come, the family can look back and remember that special time.

The Porty Performers have

done quite a lot of fund-raising in recent years. Last year two youth leaders spent six months in Dwerebease village in Ghana, working in the new school which had been built in partnership with the Old Parish. Funds to send Caitlin Campbell and Kate Cooke to West Africa were raised by the Porty Performers.

The Guides, Brownies and Rainbows of the Old Parish have also been busy, doing a sponsored walk down the Union Canal to the Falkirk Wheel to mark the Centenary of the Guiding organization. The money raised was used for a large beautiful, hard wood, inlaid cross for the vestibule of the kirk, created by sculptor Roger Hall. On the cross is inscribed the word LOVE.

It says it all, really!

Rev. Andrew Patterson

DUDDINGSTON RE-INSTATES HOUSE SYSTEM

PUPILS at Duddingston Primary School have established a house system for the first time in 30 years. Primary 7 pupils researched the historic system by interviewing parents, grandparents and former pupils. We found lots of interesting information, like the names of the houses, inter-house competitions and how you could win house points for good behaviour or hard work in class. Primary 7 then voted on new names for the houses. The theme of local parks was chosen and our four houses were named Brighton, Cavalry, Figgate and Rosefield. Strong election campaigns for Captain and Vice-Captain of each house were then fought, with pupils doing a fantastic job of convincing their fellow house members that they embodied the school's values and were good role models for others. Pupils are very excited about taking part in inter-house events and are now competing for the house cup each week.

Re-instating our house system has been an excellent way of connecting pupils with the history and traditions of our school community, while bringing the Duddingston house system into the 21st century.

House Captains/Vice-Captains.

BOOK REVIEW FOUR LINKS IN THE CHAIN

PORTOBELLO High School pupils have written, published and marketed their own illustrated historical account of the transatlantic slave trade. *Four Links in the Chain* is the story of four young friends, a girl and three boys, who were seized from their village on the west coast of Africa, put on a ship and sold into slavery. Their experiences and sufferings, and the final outcomes, are vividly told in four accounts in their own voices. The authors have used great imagination in building on their study of this abominable trade to create a very lively, readable and well-written book.

The book and the study which resulted in its production were completed with the support of author Mary T Thomson and the school's acting principal teacher of history, Mamie Philp

(Published by White Water Publishing Ltd at £6.99. Available in Blackwell's children's section and on Amazon. ISBN 978-0-9561368-7-9).

PARALYMPICS VOLUNTEERS

PORTOBELLO High School pupil Chris Sneddon, and Michael Burgess and Kelly Vaughan from Holy Rood High School, have been included in the only Scottish Young Game Makers team to volunteer at the 2012 Paralympics for seated volleyball events. They will travel to London several times to take part in training days and the schools staged a joint fund-raising event in February to raise money to cover their expenses.

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PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS

THE beginning of 2012 sees more change for your local Community Centre, with a new Chair, and a new Facilities Co-ordinator expected to be appointed soon.

We are also in the midst of a complete rewire, but most classes are still running and we expect to be fully re-opened by the end of March. There is a notice-board outside where we will keep you up-to-date with our weekly activities timetable and works progress.

We hope to decorate and further refurbish the Centre in the very near future. If you'd like to volunteer your time, money, materials, skill or muscle we'd love to hear from you.

Check our website www.portobellocc.org.uk for a full list of our activities and news, or call us on 669 8275. We have time slots and spaces available, for example Tai Chi on Wednesday and Thursday mornings, and are also taking bookings for arts and entertainment.

Our AGM will be held at the Centre on Tuesday 1st May at 7.30pm. All are welcome.

Sooz Glen, Chair

COMING EVENTS

STAGE SHOW BY TOWERBANK P5s, Thurs.29th March, 1.30pm & Fri.30th, 7pm. The children have worked with Lindsay Duncan and Gillian Downie, drama students at Queen Margaret University, to produce a show based on the history of Portobello, told through an alien invasion of the school. Tickets £3, proceeds to Malawi.

SINGIN' & FIDDLIN', with Portobello Fun Fiddle and Linton Adie, Sat.31st March, 4.30pm. Part of Edinburgh's Ceilidh Culture. Tickets £3, £4, £6 on the door.

MICHAEL MARRA IN CONCERT, Sat.28th April. (See What's On).

DOUBLE TRIUMPH FOR WATER POLO CLUB

PORTOBELLO Water Polo Club are celebrating a major triumph. They are now British Champions after defeating Manchester 8:5 on 19th February in their opponents' home city at the Manchester Aquatic Centre. To reach the final they defeated Bristol 9-8 the previous day at the same venue.

Earlier in the month they celebrated another triumph when

they also won the Scottish Cup, defeating Dunfermline 14-11.

The Portobello club have the only Scottish team in the premier division of the British Water Polo League, finishing the season in 5th place.

The club is a section of Portobello Amateur Swimming Club which celebrates its centenary this year.

RECORD ENTRY FOR PROMATHON



Photo courtesy roadrunners.com

THERE was a record entry of 384 in the 25th annual Portobello Promathon, a 4 mile race from Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home to Rock Cottage and back, which took place on New Year's morning.

The winner, pictured here near the start of the race, was Ross Houston, wearing number 52, of Central AC in 18min 53sec. His was the second fastest time since the race record of 18.27 was set by Ian Archibald of Edinburgh AC in 1989.

Ross Matheson (U20), Lasswade, was second in 19.16; third was Andrew Douglas, Inverclyde, in 19.25; the first woman home was Jill Knowles, Scottish Prison Service, in 22.54.

The race was first held in 1987 as a small local event and has taken place every year since, except for 2010 when it was cancelled due to very icy conditions on the Prom.

ON THE GREENS

AT THE Annual General Meeting of East Edinburgh Bowling Association, held at Brunstane Bowling Club on 17th January, A Skirving of Brunstane BC was elected President and F Neilands of Jessfield BC, Vice-President.

This year's competitions will be played in August, with the finals at Portobello and Jessfield Bowling Clubs. Competitions are open to

all members of clubs in the association, and we thank our sponsors McKenzie & Millar and Belhaven Brewery who make them possible.

Bowling is a game for people of all ages, and Portobello Bowling Club in Lee Crescent welcomes new members who wish to bowl in a social environment. Anyone interested can contact the club on 669 0316.

A Skirving

WHAT'S ON in Portobello

CHARITY CONCERT: Friday 16th March, St Philips Church Joppa, 7:30 pm, including performances by the Lothian & Borders Police Choir, and local supporting artists Alec Hodgson and Duddingston Players. Tickets £10. All funds raised will be given to: Richmonds Hope, a local charity working for bereaved children; Water Aid, a global charity; End Polio Now. The concert is organised by Portobello Rotary Club.

AMNESTY COFFEE MORNING & BOOK SALE, with the support of the Woodcraft Folk, Sat. 17th March, 10am-12 noon, Portobello Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield St. Donations of books, baking and bric-a-brac will be greatly appreciated.

MALECON MATINEE : Sun.18th Mar, 15th Apr, 20th May, 2-5pm with classes 1-2pm. Beach Lane Social Club, Portobello. £5/£9 combo.

CHRISTIAN AID SCOTLAND Poverty Over Roadshow, Thursday, 22nd March, 7-9pm, Portobello Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield St. Meet staff, find out more about Poverty Over and hear about the work of its partners in Sierra Leone.

CAR BOOT SALES (Portobello Rotary Club): Sundays 25th March, 29th April, 27th May. Newcraighall Station car park, 9am-2pm. Cars arrive 8am - double pitch £10 -all fees to charity. Enquiries to 07789 220583 or see www.portobellorotary.com

A PRESENTATION on the rebuilding of the collapsed kiln by Ross Buchan, Property Conservation, City of Edinburgh Council, and Andy Halford, Simpson & Brown Architects, at the AGM of Portobello Heritage Trust on Wed.11th April, 7.30pm, St. John's Church Hall, Brighton Place. All are welcome.

POD presents MICHAEL MARRA IN CONCERT, Sat.28th April, Portobello Community Centre, doors open 7.30. Tickets £12 from Woodwares or www.thebooth.co.uk Enquiries to info@the-pod.org.uk Concert ends 11pm.

ORGANIC MARKET, Brighton Park. 1st Sat. of each month, 9.30am-1.30pm. Organic fruit, veg, meat and more. For more info .or to book a stall contact market@pedalparty.org.uk

TEA DANCES to the sound of Duncan McBain, Weds/Fridays, 1.30-4pm, St James Church Hall, Rosefield Ave. £2.50 incl. refreshments.

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