

THE **Portobello** REPORTER

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The independent voice of Portobello Your Community Newspaper produced by local people since 1980.

COMMUNITY IN CRISIS

PORTOBELLO has a long and proud tradition of community, solidarity, activism and culture. In 1996 campaigners mobilised to save the indoor swimming pool and Turkish Baths, and in 1999 Portobello won a Scottish Urban Community of the Year award for "its exceptional level of community spirit". In recent years the siting of a superstore and a waste transfer site have been successfully resisted, by taking on major corporations with little more than the strength of local feeling.

Concern has now grown, however, over deepening rifts in the community, as the appeal by PPAG (Portobello Park Action Group) to stop the new Portobello High School being built on Portobello Park reaches a critical stage, and supporters for the new school PFANS (Portobello For A New School)

become increasingly angry at the deferment.

A Special Meeting of Portobello Community Council on 26th April was attended by around 250 parents, campaigners, and politicians in the Community Centre, where parents vented their frustration at the delay to the start of the new school's construction, and PPAG members maintained their democratic right to pursue legal action to its conclusion in the Court of Session. The Chair called the heated meeting to order when audience members heckled speakers.

PFANS leaders had petitioned the Community Council to ask PPAG to amend content of their website and withdraw their legal action. However, the Chairman stated that, as community councils have to take a balanced view of the concerns of their whole community,

he had decided that these requests could not be met. The views of those attending, however, would be listened to and passed on to the City Council. He had been advised that the issue of common good land should not be discussed.

On the same day as the meeting, City Councillors approved a report to allow work to start immediately after the appeal has finished and sign a contract with Balfour Beatty. The appeal was heard on 23rd and 24th May and a decision was expected soon.

Plans for a new Portobello High School have proved controversial over the last six years since the site on the park was chosen. Disparate campaigns have gradually evolved into two distinct groups, who have become locked into an acrimonious dispute played out on internet

forums, petitions and across the media.

This long-running dispute has brought to light the dangers in community politics and the lack of adequate systems of mediation. When passions run high and both sides are committed to their cause it is inevitable that conflict will occur. It is important that both sides keep their heads and don't allow the dispute to escalate beyond the bounds of politics in a liberal democracy.

It is probably too late for PPAG and PFANS to find common cause, and there will no doubt be long-term bad feeling between the people involved. It is imperative that the people of Portobello, their political representatives and the city council find mechanisms to prevent this kind of thing ever happening again.

LONG-LOST SONGS

RETURN TO THE FIRTH

FOR the first time in 100 years, 'dreg songs' will rise over the waters off Portobello Beach on 20th June. Historically sung by oyster fishermen as they rowed, towing dredges across the oyster scalps of the Firth of Forth, the songs nearly vanished when over-fishing ended the harvest.

Harbours around the Firth were visited in the 1930s by the American folklorist, James Madison Carpenter, in search of sailors' songs, ballads and other folksongs. His wax cylinder recordings and manuscripts contain many delightful songs, but none more intriguing than the dreg songs, which would "charm the oysters into the nets".

Rowporty, Newhaven Coastal Rowing and Boatie Blest from Port Seton are collaborating with scholars from the University of Aberdeen and the Library of Congress in the USA to recreate these songs on their home waters. American musician/folklorist Bob Walser says: "I'm thrilled at the chance to see and hear these songs on the water much as they would have been done a century or more ago!"

The event, which starts at 7.30pm near the Dalriada Bar, will include performances by the rowing clubs in their boats and additional music and displays along the Promenade.

In honour of the occasion, Terry Magill of the Dalriada has arranged with Inveralmond Brewery for a special Dreg Songs Ale to be produced.

For further information, contact Bob Walser at dregsongs@bobwalser.com

NEW UNIVERSITY RECTOR INSTALLED

PORTOBELLO man Peter McColl has been appointed Rector of the University of Edinburgh for the next three years. He was installed on 3rd April. The Rector chairs the University's highest decision making body, the Court. Previous holders of the post include Gordon Brown, Magnus Magnusson and Muriel Gray.

Peter is a campaigner for free, fair and funded education, more socially inclusive Universities and a better deal for Edinburgh students and staff. As the University is set to introduce fees of £9000 a year for those from the rest of the UK, he says: "I will fight hard to ensure that no one is excluded from University by their financial situation. Education is a social good and access should be on ability to learn not ability to pay. No fees are acceptable".

Coming from Belfast to study at the University, Peter obtained an MA in Geography and a Masters degree in Public Policy. He took a year out to serve as Vice-



President of Edinburgh University Students' Association, and later worked with former Rector Mark Ballard as the Rector's Assessor, a sort of deputy.

James McAsh, the fourth year student, who nominated Peter said:

"Students want a Rector who will ensure their voice is heard in the University and who is committed to free education. Peter's experience in dealing with the University and commitment to getting the best for Edinburgh students

means he can do a great job as Rector."

Peter McColl works as a public affairs manager for a charity and, at local level, is on the board of the environmental group PEDAL - Portobello Transition Town.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

PEOPLE OF PORTOBELLO,

There is no war like a civil war, no conflict so bitter as a family feud. It grieves me greatly to see the good folks of Portobello in their present state of discord. How has it come to this, that neighbour shuns neighbour, that harsh words and accusations are bandied about in so cavalier a fashion? We do ourselves no favours by criticising those who make some stand. When we suspect others' principles we merely betray our own cynicism.

Those who would save the park are accused of selfishness, as if they all have some financial interest in the status quo. Is there not some merit in saving a green space? Of course there is. Those who would build the school are accused of selling out the park for the benefit of their own. As if parents are to be derided for wishing the best for their children.

Let us acknowledge that people can and do take stands that are both principled and unselfish. People are often good and do good things for good reasons. Some would save the park and have no property, some would build and have no bairns.

The City of Edinburgh Council have cards to play that might yet bring forth peace. There are those who fight to save the park, that fight on a principle of loss of amenity, they battle to save Common Land throughout Scotland. If we were perhaps to have the Council concede that the building on a part of the park will result in a certain Loss Of Amenity then this might open other avenues.

We are in a small place and live a short time. By conceding a little all parties in this dispute might gain. Those who wish the school built will see it sooner, rather than later. Those who fought against a loss of amenity should know that sometimes it takes the bigger person to walk away and will have their position vindicated. Any "victory" this year may be hollow and overturned. Those friends and neighbours who are today estranged might yet dance. Let us remember that after the dust has settled we all have to live together. This year I'll be 142. It would do my old heart good if I might yet see hand outstretched to neighbour and smiles return to the faces of friends

Your old friend,

Sir Harry (aka Jim Morrison)

SHOP ON THE PROM

SOME of Portobello's favourite shops and shopkeepers have been captured on camera for a new arts installation outside Fun City on the Promenade. *Shop on the Prom* aims to improve links between the High Street and the Promenade by encouraging more residents to get to know their local shopkeepers and spend money with them. Sarah Woodford, Portobello's Town Centre Co-ordinator said: "We wanted to do something which

would show off all the great things that can be found on the High Street. We've a real variety of shops for people to explore and we had a fantastic take-up from everyone involved".

It is hoped that the installation will also encourage summer visitors to explore further afield. The initiative, which is part of the Council's 'Building Stronger Town Centres' programme, aims to support independent businesses in the area.

ON THE BEAT

AS summer approaches, with lighter evenings and better weather, we tend to see a rise in certain types of crime, especially anti-social behaviour, vandalism and opportunist thefts.

The annual Portobello promenade safety initiative, Operation Drift, will begin on 2nd July and run throughout the school holidays, to ensure both residents and visitors can enjoy Portobello in safety.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team, along with the Council Community Safety Team, will provide a continued presence patrolling the area, supported by CCTV, to deter and deal with any crime and anti-social behaviour. Police also liaise with HM Coastguard and Forth Ports authority to help keep the area safe. A police caravan will be located on the prom, with crime prevention leaflets available.

Identity bracelets will also be available, in an attempt to keep young children safe should they become separated from their parent or guardian, and reunite them quickly.

At this time of year pedal cycle theft often increases. Security marking and preventative advice will be available at the police caravan on advertised dates.

Crime prevention advice on a range of subjects is available on Lothian and Borders Police website www.lbp.police.uk

The Safer Neighbourhood Team will be speaking to residents and businesses in the community over the coming months about local concerns, so that these can be reflected in shaping local policing priorities. In doing this we will give a greater voice to individuals, families and community groups who want to improve their area.

Sgt John Young

THE LIBRARY AT NIGHT

THE Library at Night is the theme of the opening event of the 2012 Portobello Book Festival. A rich programme of poetry and prose is planned, with guest contributors from Portobello and beyond. There will be music too. The organizing group request your responses (in no more than 500 words please) on what "the library at night" conjures up for you, whatever your age

or background. It could be fantasy, comedy, opinion or based loosely on your own experience. Some of the responses will be chosen for a 'performance' at the opening event, by the author or somebody else. So have a go! You will be supporting the Book Festival and it could be fun. Send to heather.morrison@edinburgh.gov.uk by 15th September.

ACCOLADE FOR BEACH

EDINBURGH'S Seaside is celebrating after being awarded one of Keep Scotland Beautiful's Seaside Awards.

Steve McGavin, Head of Development and Regeneration said: "I'm delighted that Portobello has just been awarded 'Resort Status'. This Beach Award is a fantastic achievement for Portobello and one which will put the town firmly on the tourist map. I'm sure it will encourage people to explore all that Portobello has to offer - boosting local businesses in the process".

The award, which considers cleanliness, information and water quality, pays tribute to the hard work of all involved in helping to promote the beach and keep it clean and tidy.

NEWS IN BRIEF

CHARITY FUNDRAISER : £520 was raised for the Simpson Special Baby Care Unit at a Motown Night held on 17th March by Mums Catering, at Portobello Bowls and Leisure Centre.

THANKS FOR HELP : An elderly local gentleman had a bad fall on 13th February near the Town Hall. Two very kind young women helped him and called paramedics. He and his family would like to thank them, so if they would like to contact the *Reporter* on 669 3466 we will put them in touch.

BUSINESS SUPPORT: Cre8te Opportunities Ltd, a not-for-profit organisation founded in 1990, offers a support service for residents and businesses in Portobello and Craigmillar, to help people into employment and self-employment. They provide services for businesses, no matter what type or stage of development, and help to start up and grow a business. A range of units is available, on leases from just one month, for new start-up companies and existing businesses wishing to locate in the area.

Contact Cre8te on 0131 661 8888, email: info@cre8te.co.uk or drop in to Units 1-3, Castlebrae Business Centre, Peffer Place, Edinburgh EH16 4BB.

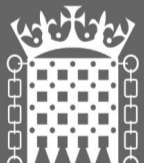
PORTOBELLO GOLF COURSE: In response to ongoing concerns about the future of the Golf Course, a motion was put to a Council meeting by Stephen Hawkins on 26th April, that it be adopted as a Jubilee Park as part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. This will be considered by the Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee.

ELECTION RESULTS: In the Council elections held on 3rd May, the following were elected in our area.

Portobello/Craigmillar Ward: Maureen Child (Scottish Labour Party); Mike Bridgman (Scottish National Party); David Walker (Scottish Labour Party). Turnout, 42%.

Craigtinny/Duddingston Ward: Joan Griffiths (Scottish Labour Party); Stefan Tymkewycz (Scottish National Party); Alex Lunn (Scottish Labour Party). Turnout, 45.9%.

As a result the new administration is a Labour/SNP coalition.




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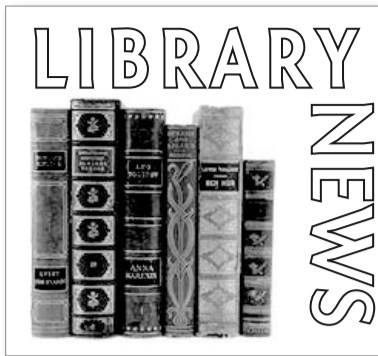
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THIS year we hope to make our Summer Reading Challenge the best yet. The Challenge will run throughout the holidays and is open to children between the ages of 4 and 11. All children will be invited to read six books to win stickers and prizes, including a special medal. The theme this year is Storylab. What is Story Lab? It's a five-sided hi-tech HQ that attracts stories from all over the world and sends them spinning throughout the city - and beyond! It's the place to read, collect, share, create, transmit and broadcast stories.



Library staff will be visiting all local schools to tell everyone about what we are doing in the summer, and we will be working hard to free the imaginations of all Portobello children to create new stories for Storylab. As usual we will be running loads of creative events for children over the holidays. For more information ask library staff for details or check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PortobelloLibrary

We will, of course, be exhibiting the creations of Storylab in our gallery area. Other exhibitions over the summer include what promises to be a fascinating display in June by the Portobello Heritage Trust on the history of Portobello as a holiday destination, and an exhibition of the work of the Musselburgh Camera Club at the end of July. Annette Tait will be exhibiting her beautiful textile sculptures in August.

Are you elderly or disabled, love reading but struggle to get into the library? Do you know someone who is? We might be able to help you with this. We have a fortnightly service that will bus you into the library for books, a cup of tea, and a chat. We can also deliver books to your home. If you are interested, give us a call on 529 5598

Our book group meets in the library on the first Tuesday of every month, when we will discuss:

On 3rd July: *The Crimson Petal and the White* by Michel Faber

On 7th August: *Alone in Berlin* by Hans Fallada

On 4th September: *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry

All books will be available from the library, please ask staff for details.

We also have a teenage book group that meets on the last Thursday of every month and a Chatterbooks children's book group that meets on the first Saturday of every month. If you would like to come to these please ask staff for details.

Paul Hudson

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

IN autumn of last year Portobello Community Council carried out a survey to find out the community's views on Portobello. 126 responses were received. The three things most valued were the beach, the local shops and the sense of community. When it came to improvements to be made the most frequently raised topics were improving the High Street and Promenade, tackling traffic and parking problems, and promoting Portobello.

A separate survey of Portobello High School pupils received 167 responses. Again the beach, the shops and the friendly community were most frequently cited as good things about Portobello, with the main concerns being litter and a shortage of bins.

Many other issues were brought up, as well as specific problems and suggested actions. Whilst the Community Council has no statutory powers, we will look to see what can be done to address the various matters raised.

The lucky winner of our prize draw for completing a survey was Jill Wright of East Brighton Crescent. Thanks to all who took part.

A full report on both surveys can be found on the Community Council web-site: portobellocc.org

TIME BANK PROGRESSING

DO some shopping for a neighbour, earn a time credit and use it to get a lift somewhere, it's that simple. After an initial meeting, a steering group is working to set up a Portobello Time Bank to be based at the library, where local people can sign up as members. They are looking

for a volunteer 'time broker' who will be based at the library a couple of hours a week and work as a sort of matchmaker, setting up exchanges. For more information or an informal chat please get in touch at portobellotimebank@gmail.com or phone the Volunteer Centre on 225 0630.

NEW LIFE FOR PHONE BOX

THE red phone box at the corner of Bellfield Street was due to be decommissioned and removed by BT. Communities throughout the UK have adopted their redundant phone boxes as part of BT's Adopt-A-Kiosk programme, and when approached recently by a local resident, Portobello Community Council agreed to adopt this one for the sum of £1.

The intention is to restore the phone box, an iconic example of British design, and preserve it as part of our local heritage and streetscape. Eventually it will be converted into 'The Light Box', a street art installation to project and highlight images and artwork drawn from all sections of the community, or whatever the community chooses. Other phone boxes have been converted into information hubs or book exchange points.

A small team of volunteers will be recruited to restore the phone box. If you want to get involved, or have some ideas for its use, please visit www.portylightbox.wordpress.com

Steve Wheatley

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Mum's got IT

I DON'T know about you, but I find keeping up with the latest technology is an on-going challenge. Fortunately, having three children up-to-speed with computing, social networking and gaming has its advantages. Thanks to them, I have a twitter account connected to my Facebook, I'm Linked In, I'm iTuned, I've got a Flipboard, and my phone does texts, apps and emails. As I get more confident they may have to apply filters to keep me safe.

One advance I do like, and that makes me nostalgic for my first Walkman, is having music on my phone. I have begun to notice, however, that when I'm out and about wearing earphones, I get a few double takes; mainly from young people wearing earphones. I'm no anthropologist, but I wonder if they think I am behaving outwith the norms of my social group. The solution I think is to wear a hat with the earphones incorporated into it. I'm not joking. If you see me around wearing a funny hat oblivious to the world, I'm not ignoring you, I'm lost in music.

Of course some people think the latest technology has a downside, but for my children it's perfect. They can check where I am, text me for lifts, send me links of their wish lists, and Facebook me supper orders from their bedroom to the kitchen. Overall, when it comes to technology, they are savvy and streetwise, except for the time when they ... Whoops! Sorry, got to go. COS (child over shoulder)!

SOME readers will have seen press coverage of the problem we're having over the land deal for the proposed community wind turbine.

Negotiations stalled after the private companies that manage the PFI contract at Seafeld sewage works demanded Scottish Water accept liability for any accidents involving the turbine. Although the risks involved are extremely small, Scottish Water, which is owned by Scottish Ministers, is not willing to accept liability. At the time of writing, Ministers were reviewing the options we've suggested, namely directing Scottish Water to indemnify the PFI contract holders from any risk, or creating a bond to cover any community renewable project on land subject to PFI (which could be paid for from the proceeds of projects that benefit). See more at www.pedal-party.org.uk

The City Council is offering free cavity wall and loft insulation to households, regardless of income, whether homeowners or tenants of private landlords. The offer also covers measures to facilitate the work, such as scaffolding or enlargement of loft hatches. To access the offer call 0800 512 012, text Warm to 81025, or e-mail freeinsulation@se.energysavingscotland.org.uk. Allocation will be on a first come, first served basis. Loft insulation alone saves on average £175 a year on heating costs.

Our monthly market has a new look, renamed Portobello Market with new banners. As well as fantastic produce, there is live entertainment, from music, face painting and hair braiding to dance exercise and woodland craft workshops. There's something different each month, so come and check it out. See What's On on page 8 for dates and times.

The Donkeyfield Community Orchard is now three years old and flourishing, with the trees becoming more established. There was a beautiful display of blossom this spring, which promises a great crop; let's hope we can hold onto more of it this year! The group has installed arch supports, around which a Scottish apple tunnel will be grown. This will create an interesting feature, a well-established example of which can be seen at Tynninghame House near Dunbar. Orchard Workdays are the last Saturday of each month, 10am-2pm. Come along and join in or just enjoy the space.

Tom Black

SUSTAINABLE PARTY

GROWING ORGANIC



with Susan Burns



WHEN pulling out weeds, throw them onto a path or stone so that they die in the sunshine, or collect even pernicious ones like dandelions and docks and put them in a covered bucket of water for a few weeks; they'll rot down and can be poured anywhere onto the soil. If you spy a single weed in the border and don't have time to do anything else, pull it out, roll into a ball and hide under foliage. If you have a particular weedy spot of, say, 30cm square, cover it with a thick layer of newspaper, then mulch. In a few weeks time, uncover and you'll have a perfect weed-free planting spot. I enjoy weeding, especially if it gives me another planting opportunity.

Grass clippings (when no pesticides or herbicides have been used) make a good mulch if spread about 5cm thick under hedges or around new plantings. They will soon turn a straw colour that's not offensive to the eye. Newspapers are also good, scrunched under strawberries instead of straw.

Only water plants if you really need to; if plants in containers wilt regularly, try different ones such as hardy stonecrops or alpines. Water is very heavy to carry, so think of ways of minimising the effort. Use a smaller watering can, with more frequent trips. I hurt my back by turning while holding a full watering can, so do the watering in little shifts, like digging - be back aware! I'm writing this in the hope that we get a lovely warm summer.

Even if you haven't planted any seeds yet there is still time for annuals - they'll come up later but you'll still get a show. The same with courgettes, pumpkins, etc. The growth rate is quick, which encourages children, as they see results in a few days. A few sunflowers with a few nasturtiums give a nice show, and children could eat the sunflower seeds and try the nippy leaves of the nasturtiums, if they're adventurous enough.

Our garden at 39 Nantwich Drive is open this year on Saturday and Sunday, 4th and 5th August, 2-5pm. Admission £1, 50p concessions. Refreshments available. Proceeds to the charity Garden Organic. Our new pond is now installed after various delays.

(For those to whom I promised seeds - they are now available - please call to arrange collection).

RECIPE

TOAST WITH TASTY TOPPING

3 large hard-boiled eggs
1lb grated Cheddar cheese
1 small onion, grated
1lb mushrooms, chopped and fried in a little oil till dry
Chilli powder. Salt and pepper.

Mix all together. Spread on toast and brown under grill. (This makes quite a lot of topping, but it freezes well).

CYCLING ON THE PROM

NEW signs relating to the joint use of the Prom by pedestrians and cyclists will soon be in place, after detailed consultation with Portobello Community Council and

others. Experimental chevron markings will also be painted on the ground at points where side roads join the Prom, to make access safer for pedestrians.

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FROM THE ARCHIVE: BACK TO THE FUTURE

AS there are plans to erect a new building for The Toddlers' Hut, it seems a good time to see how the original one came into being. After a lot of searching, I found the first Minute Book for the Hut, for the years 1930 to 1955, in the Museum of Childhood. A group of local ladies had formed a committee to provide a place to play for some of the less fortunate children in the community and the Minutes tell the story of how it was funded.

There were probably earlier unrecorded meetings, but the first recorded was held on Tuesday, 7th October 1930 and the Minutes show that "... the Town Council were willing that the open space of ground at the foot of Tower Street [now Figgate Street] should be given for the purposes of a playground with some necessary alterations to the shelter. Some discussion took place with regard to heating and sanitary arrangements and the matter was left over for further investigation." There was only £60 in the bank account, so fund-raising was discussed, such as bridge or whist parties, appeals to local churches and local doctors and their wives who had previously supported the committee.



The ladies decided that the shelter in the playground at the foot of Tower Street was not a suitable place, as it lacked sanitary facilities and had no heating. On 2nd December it was stated that: "The Leith Committee had built a Hut for themselves. There was a piece of ground at the foot of Ramsay Lane which the Town Council were willing to give the Committee. The draining and Tar Macadamming would cost £90 and £10 for repairing the wall. It was hoped the Town Council would bear the expense. The cost of the Hut would

be about £200. The Committee unanimously agreed that it would be better to go with the building of a hut. The Treasurer was instructed to open a new account at the Bank so that the Hut money would be kept apart from the working expenses." There had been little success with fund-raising.

On 20th January 1931: "A letter was read from the Depute Town Clerk stating that the Council would likely include in next year's estimates for the levelling etc. of the ground at the foot of Ramsay Lane. They

were prepared to lease the ground to the Committee for a period of five years at a nominal rent of £1 a year. It was left to Mrs Anderson and the Secretary to get information about the Leith Hut from the City Architect and if possible to get a plan." By now fund-raising had been more successful and there was £30 and 8 shillings in the Hut bank account.

In July, plans for the Hut were sent to local firms and, in October, Brown & Grieve's estimate of £260 was accepted for the building, which would be

heated by electricity and have a gas ring. It was to be insured for £300. There was now £169 and 6 shillings in the bank account, with £50 still to come. The Hut was opened on Saturday, 14th November by Harriet, Lady Findlay, on "an appallingly wet day".

By 2nd February, 1932, a piano had been bought for £4 and, after paying all the bills, which included buying kettles, chairs, a gas ring and paying the insurance, there was £286 4 shillings and 3 pence in the account.

Two months later: "The bills for electric light were considered heavy ... It was left to the Secretary to make a business arrangement with parties willing to rent the Hut. The Hut was to be assessed at £9, therefore it could be let". The Girls' Friendly Society and the Salvation Army rented the Hut, which helped pay the bills.

In March 1934, the Police asked if they could use the Hut in the summer as a shelter for lost children and a rental of £22 and 10 shillings was paid for nine weeks use. It was reported in August that the Police scheme had been a great success and that 365 lost children had been helped in July, including 70 lost on one Sunday. This shows how busy Portobello beach was, with children easily losing sight of their families in the crowds. The Police continued to use the Hut for many years.

It is to be hoped that those fund-raising for the new building will be as successful as these Portobello ladies were.

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ST JAMES' PARISH CHURCH CENTENARY

ST JAMES' Parish Church, Rosefield Avenue, off Brighton Place, is celebrating the Centenary of the Sanctuary and a special service will be held on 10th June 2012 at 11am, to start the Centenary year. The Moderator of the Church of Scotland will attend, as his predecessor did in 1912, and previous Minister, Rev Calum Macdougall, will also be present.

St James' was established in 1874 under the supervision of Duddingston Kirk. Services were conducted in the old Town Hall (now the Baptist Church) until 1893 when an 'Iron Church' (known locally as the 'Tin Kirk') was erected in front of Argyle House on Portobello High Street.

In July 1897, Duddingston Kirk Session agreed that a fund be started for the building of a stone Church. Building started in 1911 and the Church opened on 9th June 1912. The cost was stated to be "not less than £5,000" - a fortune at the time. It exceeded the original estimate, but the congregation responded superbly, holding a Bazaar in the Music Hall in George Street in October 1911, which raised over £500.

Everyone is always welcome at St James', but we extend a special welcome to the Centenary service to anyone with a previous connection with the church. You may have been christened or married at St James', attended Sunday School or one of the unformed organisations. We would love to see you.

Paul Mitchell

LOCAL CHURCHES FACE CHANGE

CHANGES are coming in the way the Church of Scotland operates in Portobello and Joppa. The congregations of St Philip's, St. James' and the Old Parish will come together to form a single congregation around 2014 to better use resources, buildings and talents to serve the local area.

A team of people from the three churches has been thinking about vision and mission, as well as more concrete possibilities for events and actions that will help draw us together.

We are looking at how we can best serve the area; we are trying as best we can to understand what God is calling us to do as a unified grouping and how we can build bridges and relationships between the churches and the community.

There will be updates, meetings and times for questions and answers. Please take the time to follow the process; it affects all of us (almost 70 community organisations use our halls) and will be both challenging and exciting. If you would like to share your thoughts or ideas, please contact one of the ministers: Andrew Patterson, www.oldparishchurch.co.uk; Peter Webster, www.stjamesparishchurch.org.uk; or Stewart Weaver, www.stphilips.co.uk

Rev. Stewart Weaver

AMNESTY - LOCAL NEWS

FOLLOWING our focus on Amnesty's 50th Anniversary, a significant increase in Group membership makes it possible to reach out more fully into the community with the message "Scotland Stands for Human Rights".

This year, the letter-writing sub-group has met in the Dalriada Bar on the first Wednesday of each month, from 7.30-8.30pm. So far over 40 letters have been written to the authorities in 17 countries, requesting prisoner releases, and human rights cases investigations including disappearances, torture and inhumane treatment.

At our stall at Portobello Market in April and May, 140 signatures were added to a petition on the devastating effects of Shell Oil in the Niger Delta, demanding that Shell "own up and clean up".

Our Coffee Morning and Book

Sale in March, with Portobello Woodcraft Folk, was very well supported and raised almost £400. The attendance of representatives of the Council, Holyrood and Westminster Parliaments, and *The Portobello Reporter* was greatly appreciated.

Monthly meetings have featured talks and workshops on the Arms Trade, Women in Afghanistan and the Global Fund to tackle HIV, Aids, all topics related to Amnesty's work worldwide.

The Group meets on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm, in the Hall of Portobello Old Parish Church. Please pay us a visit, with no commitment expected.

For more information call 669 1308 or email:

crawfordcathy@hotmail.com

David Turner



THE Community Centre is being redecorated and spruced up, to make it more welcoming for our many visitors. We are also saying "goodbye and a huge thank you" to some of our weel kent faces, and "hello" to some extra activities and classes and to our new Facilities Co-ordinator, Val Stokes.

We are very pleased to announce the renaming of the centre, and unveil our new logo. It was decided, in honour of the building's original use as the local 'steamie', and also as part of the centre's regeneration, to adopt the name The Wash House. We are also creating our own social history project based around the Wash House. If you have any memories or photographs of it in its heyday, please get in touch.

In recent months we have held some memorable events, and many people were surprised to see the main hall transformed into an entertainment or conference space. It is something we continue to work on and look forward to further events. We welcome volunteers and are on the look out for a new Treasurer.

Our Youth Theatre goes from strength to strength and will be performing 'Bugsy Malone' at the Wash House on Saturday 16th June at 5.30pm and Sunday 17th at 2.30 and 5.30pm. They will be performing again at the Fringe, at C Venues C2 (Main House) from 2nd-11th August at 11:45am. Please come and show your support.

Please check our website for details www.portobellocc.org.uk or join us on our Facebook page - [Party Wash House!](http://PartyWashHouse)

Sooz Glen

COUNCIL AWARD FOR POPP CHAIRMAN

SINCE Portobello Older People's Project (POPP) started 20 years ago, Jack Spiers has been Chairman of the Management Committee, with responsibility for arranging funding, complying with regulations and appointing Project managers. He has now decided it is time



to retire. At a special ceremony at the City Chambers on 7th June, the Council will present Jack with an Award given to people who are dedicated in helping local projects by giving their time and knowledge in any way they can.

Project Organiser, Rita Aitken, said: "Jack will be greatly missed. It has been a pleasure working with him over the last 11 years. I and everyone at the Project are delighted he is receiving this award and wish him a long and happy retirement".

COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES

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1st Monday of month:

Bingham Community Complex, 6pm

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:

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'From Straw to Gold'

"AN EXHIBITION in a box," is how local textile artist Linda Green describes the contents of a box at her Duddingston studio, full of pieces inspired by Duddingston Loch. Ready for exhibition at the Royal Botanic Garden in July, her collection includes delicate handmade papers, threads, woven tapestry and twines produced from a variety of water plants growing in the loch.



Photo by Bill Tait

Intrigued by Duddingston's history of weaving, Linda who is a volunteer gardener at Dr Neil's Garden, received grants to research the plants' potential to make fibres and textiles. During a year of research, harvesting, cataloguing and processing the plants, she discovered that the term 'Duddingston Hardings' previously thought to be a rough cloth woven from locally grown reeds was more likely to be a derivation of 'harden' a term associated with linen or hemp. Reeds were actually used to thatch the cottages in Duddingston Village.

With help from experts at the Royal Botanic Garden, Linda analysed the plants in detail and discovered that the cloth she had woven was startlingly similar to the microscopic view of the plants. She says "The loom was set to show off the threads and just by chance or magic, the structure resembled the cellular structure of the plants."

Linda says the project has set her textile work in a new direction and intends to continue her research into Duddingston's weaving history and the processes and methods employed.

'From Straw to Gold,' in the Library Foyer at the Royal Botanic Garden, Mon 23rd July-Thur 30th August (Mon-Fri only).

Contact Linda Green for details of her textile courses at www.studiogreen.me or linda@studiogreen.me

PUPILS LEARN BIKEABILITY

PUPILS at St John's Primary School are joining the growing numbers of young people in Scotland who are cycling to school. A group of parent volunteers, trained in the Bikeability Scheme, are teaching P7 pupils cycling skills which will keep them fit and healthy and ultimately lead to a reduction in the school's carbon footprint. Bikes

can be parked securely in the new bike shed, funded by the Parent Council and a grant from Sustrans. The project, voted "great fun" by our P7's, will be rolled out across other classes next session. A big vote of thanks is due to the parents who gave up their Friday mornings to train the next generation of cyclists.

Linda McGee

UEFA GRASSROOTS DAY



Photo by Paula Murray

PARSONS Green's P5 pupils went football crazy when they took part in UEFA's Grassroots Day at Festival Square, where former Heart of Midlothian FC and Hibernian FC players Jimmy Sandison and Keith Wright gave a coaching session. The event is held throughout Europe to raise awareness of the importance of football for young people and links the elite and grassroots levels of the game.

From L to R: William Combe, Ryan Rutherford and Jordan Ewing with Kenny MacAskill.

WASH HOUSE CONCERT CLEANS UP



Photo by Peter Ross

MUSICIANS of all ages gathered at the Wash House in Portobello to give a concert of fiddle music, flute and whistle playing and choral singing. Linten Adie provided the singing and the young fiddlers were a group from Fun Fiddle. Playing to a full house in the recently refurbished Wash House, previously the Community Centre, both performers and audience had a great time and the newly installed facilities helped make the event a huge success.

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ROWPORTY: CUTTING EDGE

THE Jolly Roger is back on the Joppa marker buoy to help keen rowers stay on course as they train for another successful racing season!

Rowporty are preparing for their third annual Regatta, taking place on the weekend of 28th and 29th July. They hope more visiting teams will participate this year, as the Scottish Coastal Rowing Project to buy a kit, build it and row a skiff has been taken up by nearly 50 communities around Scotland, from closest rivals Newhaven and Port Seton, to as far away as Stornaway and Islay.

So bring a picnic, camera, bucket and spade, and bring your friends to help cheer the competitors to victory- especially Portobello's own skiffs Icebreaker and Jenny Skylark. The main races take place on the Saturday starting at 10.30am, with fun races, rowing and sailing for all kinds of boats on the Sunday.

Over the winter months Rowporty have been working on boat repairs and the production of a new type of round oar that enables a 'feathering' stroke which, they hope, will give them the winning edge in races.

In 2013, Ullapool are hosting the first World Coastal Rowing Championships, as the popularity of coastal rowing has spread to Tasmania, Oregon, Maine and Florida, and the Scottish clubs hope to twin with their overseas cousins for the occasion.

Last year, Rowporty took over the collection for the Lifeboats on Portobello High Street, raising over £400. They were out again rattling tins on 29th April this year, and did even better with £525.

For further information see www.rowporty.org.uk



Photo by Max Blinkhorn

ON YOUR BIKES WITH PORTO-VELO



Photo by Steve Wheatley

ON recent Sunday mornings you may have seen a group of cyclists congregating at the bandstand, at the east end of the Prom. This is the new local, community-based cycling club, Porto-Velo.

Andrew Mylne, who established the club with other local cyclists, said: "Porto-Velo's aims are to promote cycling for fitness, fun and for families. The club caters for all abilities and fitness levels, novices, experienced riders, male and female, young and old".

The rides offer a range of options - longer or shorter, faster or slower - depending on people's abilities and what they feel they can do. "These rides are flexible and friendly", continued Andrew. "Nobody gets left behind and we usually include cafe stops. We're trying to cater for both experienced cyclists and those trying out group riding for the first time. We're striving to avoid the male-dominated, cliquey image that some other clubs have, and would particularly encourage more female riders."

In the coming weeks Porto-Velo will be organising family rides for parents and young children, and beginners' rides on Saturdays. The club also meets at The Dalriada on Thursday evenings. Sunday rides start at 9am. For more information see www.porto-velo.com.

ON THE GREENS

THERE are eight bowling clubs in the Portobello region, all of which enter competitors into the Bowls Scotland National Championship, the final of which is held in Ayr in July.

To qualify for the finals, bowlers in each discipline must win their local district final. These are organised by Bowls Scotland district secretaries, both of whom live in the Portobello area. There are 25 clubs in our district, from Davidson Mains to Brunstane.

Qualifying rounds begin in mid-May and District Finals are held at Craigenfinny BC on Friday 8th June at 6.30pm for the gents, and Willowbrae BC on Sunday 10th June at 1.30pm for the ladies. All are welcome to come along and cheer on friends and neighbours.

If you are interested in bowling, please contact your local club. Bowling can be enjoyed by all age groups - If you can hold a bowl you can roll a bowl!

Sheena Gibson (Willowbrae BC)/
Stewart McFarlane (Craigenfinny BC),
District Secretaries Bowls Scotland.

OLYMPIC MEMORIES

WERE you at the 1948 Olympic Games in London? Did you take part in the 1960 Games in Rome, or meet someone who won a medal at the 1980 Games in Moscow? Funny or sad? Celebration or commiseration? Home Instead Senior Care would like your memories of previous Olympic Games and photographs too, if you have

them. The best ones will be published this summer, to celebrate the London 2012 Games and raise funds for Alzheimer Scotland. Send them to 240 Portobello High Street, Edinburgh, EH15 2AU; call 0131 300 0599 or submit them online www.homeinstead.co.uk/edinburgh/848

WHAT'S ON in Portobello

GARDEN FETE: St Christopher's Parish Church Craigenfinny Annual Garden Fete, Saturday 2nd June, 1-3pm. Enjoy an ice-cream or cup of tea while listening to the Jazz Band and see what is on offer at a variety of stalls.

EXHIBITION, Portobello as a Holiday Destination, by Portobello Heritage Trust, Portobello Library, 6th to 27th June.

SUMMER FAIR: Sat. 16th June, 2pm, Queens Bay Lodge, 49 Milton Road East (opposite Kings Manor Hotel). Teas, burgers, raffle, tombola, bric-a-brac, baking, plant and book stalls, face paints, children's games etc. For info: 669-2828 or queens-bay@crossreach.org.uk.

MALECON MATINEE : Sun. 17th June, 15th July, 19th Aug, 2-5pm with classes 1-2pm. Beach Lane Social Club, Portobello. £5/£9 combo.

CAR BOOT SALES (Portobello Rotary Club): Sun. 24th June, 29th July, 25th August. 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

PORTOBELLO AMENITY SOCIETY AGM, Wed. 27th June, 7.30pm, Baptist Church Hall, Portobello High St. Guest speaker Ian Andrews will give an illustrated talk on *Birds of Portobello*. All welcome.

BIG BEACH BUSK, Sat. 25th August from 12 noon. Join in the fun at Edinburgh's biggest open-air open mic on Portobello Prom. Any kind of performance welcome - Past events have included traditional guitar playing buskers, inflatable tennis, Japanese drummers, samba, a brass band, breakdancing, body poppin and more besides. It's becoming Edinburgh's best beach day.

PORTOBELLO 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 info@pedalporty.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.

DUDDINGSTON KIRK Horticultural Society Annual Show, Sat. 1st September, 2 - 5pm and Sunday 2nd, 2 - 4pm, the Kirk Hall, Duddingston Road West. Fruit, vegetable, home crafts, handicraft, and floral art sections. Tea, coffee, soft drinks, home bakes also offered. Exhibitors and visitors welcome.

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