

THE Portobello REPORTER

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

OPPOSITION TO FRACKING GAINS MOMENTUM

PORTOBELLO opponents to fracking are campaigning to stop unconventional gas development in Scotland, following the award of test-boring licences by Westminster.

A survey by the British Geological Survey, commissioned by the UK government, identified the Midland Valley of Scotland, which includes Portobello, as an area that has the potential to yield reserves of unconventional oil and gas. An accurate analysis of the field's suitability for development can only be obtained by drilling test wells.

Portobello Group Against Fracking, now known as Our Forth - Portobello, lent their weight to an open letter published in *The Sunday Herald*, signed by 24 groups from across the country, calling on the Scottish Government to implement "a moratorium on all forms of unconventional gas development in Scotland."

The group are planning more events, including meetings and demonstrations and have begun to lobby politicians. Over 100 people attended the group's first meeting at Tribe Porty, Windsor Place in October and over 100 attended a Frack Off meeting at The Wash House on 14th November. Julianna Capes, who initiated the first meeting in Portobello said: "The undemocratic way that the government is going about helping this industry to establish itself disgusted me. Communities should be able to decide whether they want this in their midst and the onus should be on the industry to prove it is safe. Ultimately it's about who benefits and who bears the burden of risk."

In common with environmental groups across Europe and the United States, local campaigners are concerned about the safety of unconventional gas extraction because of the potential for increased seismic activity, air pollution and ground water contamination.

Hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' involves injecting water, sand and chemicals at high pressure into horizontally drilled boreholes, up to three kilometres below the earth's surface, causing sedimentary shale rock to crack. Resulting fissures are held open by the sand so that the methane gas from the rocks can flow up the borehole. In April, a Dallas jury awarded the Parr family \$2.9 million against Aruba Petroleum when it was proved that they had been exposed to harmful emissions of volatile organic compounds and toxic air pollutants.

Proponents of fracking cite energy security, reduced energy bills and economic and employment benefits as reasons for going ahead. They also argue that current legislation regulates hydraulic fracturing technologies to such an extent that it will be safe. Carah Johnson of Our Forth - Portobello said: "Since the companies involved can't prove that the extraction of unconventional gas is safe, we should oppose it all the way."

Multinational chemical company Ineos recently announced its intention to invest £640m in UK shale gas exploration. The chemical giant has been buying up licences to test bore across hundreds of square miles of the Midland Valley. It is also developing its plant at Grangemouth to become Europe's largest shale gas import facility. In a bid to calm community disquiet, Ineos has offered 6% of revenues from fracking to local householders and landowners in what Friends of the Earth have called: "a transparent attempt to bribe communities."

To get involved email ourforthportobello@gmail.com or frackoffscotland@gmail.com or for more information Our Forth - Portobello on Facebook and www.frackoffscotland.org.uk

LOCAL GREEN BELT UNDER THREAT

OVER 200 people packed a meeting on 25th September at the Kings Manor Hotel, called by Brunstane and Newcraighall residents, to put their objections to officials from the City of Edinburgh Council to its proposals to take a large area of land, south of the Brunstane Burn and north of Newcraighall, out of the Green Belt and designate it suitable for housing.

The Council needs to release more sites for future development and, in a new Local Development Plan, has identified South East

Edinburgh as one of four suitable areas; 595 houses are proposed in Newcraighall North and East, and up to 1330 at Brunstane Farm. A new access road would be required off Milton Road East, beside the cemetery, with new bridges over the burn and the main East Coast railway line.

Objections were made to the removal of the land from the Green Belt, which is at its narrowest here, as this would risk coalescence of Edinburgh and Musselburgh.

The impact of increased

traffic on Newcraighall village and the surrounding road network, and problems in establishing public transport links, were highlighted.

There was also concern that the settings of Brunstane House and Newhailes House, important A-listed country houses of great architectural and historical importance, would be severely compromised if this proposal went ahead.

The residents groups, Portobello Amenity Society and Portobello and Craigmillar Community Councils have formally objected.

HOUSING AND RETAIL STORE PROPOSED AT BAILEYFIELD

A JOINT application for Planning Permission in Principle has been made by Cruden Homes and Aldi Stores Ltd for a mixed residential development of 219 units and a retail store, with associated car parking and landscaping, on the Baileyfield (former Scottish Power) site at the west end of Portobello High Street. A public exhibition of the proposals was held on 18th June at Portobello Town Hall, when representatives from both companies were available for questions.

Portobello Community Council ran a consultation in October on what people thought of the planning application. "It was very successful", said Sean Watters of PCC. "5,000 leaflets were distributed across the local area and over 400 people responded to our online survey. The final results indicated about 49% in favour to 42% against, with 9% neutral. Thanks to everyone who took part."

We submitted a formal comment on the application to the planning department of the City of Edinburgh Council, highlighting the results of the survey, and included all suggestions and comments received from the public. A copy of the submission can be found in the PCC area in the library, as well as on our website: www.portobellocc.org where there is also a breakdown of responses.

We have asked that the developers consult further with the community, to address the concerns that have been raised about the proposals, and to help ensure a high quality development that would benefit Portobello."

Over 650 responses to the application were received by the planning department, which included those from PCC, an indication of the level of interest in the community in the development of this site.

A decision on this initial application by the council's Development Management Sub-committee is expected in December. If it is granted, a full application will follow and members of the public will be able to make further submissions. Details will be available on the council's website www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning

CHRISTMAS STREET FEST

MOST shops in Portobello will be staying open until 8pm on Thursday 4th December for the Christmas Street Fest event. Santa and his entourage will arrive in some considerable style around 5.45pm to switch on the Christmas lights from the Town Hall balcony, before taking up residence in his magnificent Grotto at Maddie and Mark's, venturing out occasionally to make guest appearances along the High Street.

Entertainment will be provided by Portobello Community Choir, Towerbank School Choir and Lothian Dance Academy, while local musicians are invited to add

to the carnival atmosphere by performing along the length of the High Street for a charitable cause of their choosing.

This is a wonderful opportunity to do some Christmas shopping at one of our many quality independent shops, and it promises to be a great event for the whole family. There are plans to film the event and children (and adults) are encouraged to dress up as elves and reindeer.

A list of participating shops and 'one-night only' special offers can be found on the Event page at <http://on.fb.me/1zocxAs>, or pick up a leaflet on the night.

Bob Jefferson

PORTY PROFILE No. 56 JIM GILCHRIST

JIM is probably best known for his weekly music column in *The Scotsman*, featuring traditional music and jazz. Jim says he stumbled into journalism and began in his home town of Milngavie, where he wrote for *The Milngavie and Bearsden Herald*. He then wrote for *Project Scotland*, a building trade paper produced in Glasgow. He says he went to university but, like many youngsters, wasn't really ready for it and left after a year.



Photo by Margaret Munro

He joined *The Scotsman* in 1975, initially as a supplements writer, then in production journalism while writing articles on the side, latterly working as a general features and arts writer and columnist. He has covered a vast range of human interest stories, history and science topics and the arts, particularly traditional music and jazz. Jim and his family moved from Stockbridge Colonies to Portobello in 1985. He says: "I like Portobello because it has a great sense of community. I like small towns. Portobello is self-contained and it is only 20 minutes into town. I like being close to the sea and there is always lots happening, for example the book festival." As a child Jim spent his holidays in the East Neuk of Fife, which he can now see from the bottom of his street.

He has contributed to the American magazine *Scottish Life* and Aberdeen University's magazine *Aberdeen*. Jim founded, and for some years edited, *Common Stock*, the twice-yearly journal of the Lowland & Border Pipers' Society of which he is a member. He can play the Scottish small pipes, but says he came late to piping. He also wrote the critically well-received Scottish section of *Celtic Music*, published in 2001. Earlier this year, he was involved in writing online stories of Scottish emigration for the website of the Struileag – Shore to Shore Homecoming project developed by composer Jim Sutherland (see www.struileag.com).

At the beginning of November Jim travelled to Stornoway for the launch of *Dolina: An Island Girl's Journey*, a book he co-edited with Stuart Eydmann. It relates the memoirs of Gaelic singer, actress, broadcaster and storyteller Dolina MacLennan and he says he really enjoyed the conversations it is based on.

Jim likes listening to all kinds of music, cooking and walking and can often be found "wandering aimlessly along the Prom". He has twin girls and a son. After more than 30 years on the paper, Jim took early retirement from *The Scotsman* five years ago, although he still writes his weekly music column. This was when Jim and his wife contemplated moving to the Borders. "But", he says, "we really like living here, and are so happy, that we decided to stay."

Margaret Munro

ON THE BEAT

AS winter approaches, everyone across Scotland is being encouraged to "think ahead" and be prepared for all kinds of severe weather. Whether at home, on the move, in the workplace or community, we all need to consider the risks. For information on being ready for winter visit www.readyscotland.org

Our main priority, after ensuring that we respond appropriately to all crimes and incidents reported daily, is to make sure officers prioritise the main concerns of local people. These are included in our local ward plans and cover antisocial behaviour, drug dealing, housebreaking and violent crime.

On a positive note, faced with an increase in housebreaking last year, we created a specialist team to carry out detailed investigations, and this has resulted in a significant reduction so far this year.

Local drug dealers are also a priority. Following excellent information and calls from the public, we have recovered several thousand pounds worth of drugs and ensured that the dealers are placed behind bars.

Anti-social behaviour has reduced over the past six months as we have worked closely with the CEC Community Safety Team, housing associations, education, other emergency services and youth providers. Our thanks also go to local people who work with us to ensure that this area of Edinburgh is a very safe place to live and work.

Information, advice and updates on the Multi-Member Ward Plan is available on the Police Scotland website - click on 'Your Community'. We also have a twitter account @EdinEastPolice

To contact us in an emergency always dial 999. For non-urgent crime, contact your local police office on 101. Our Twitter and Facebook sites are not for reporting crime and are not monitored 24/7.

The Community Policing Team

MORE SAY FOR COMMUNITY

THE Portobello & Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership has published its new Local Community Plan 2014-17; it can be viewed on the website www.edinburghnp.org.uk and copies of the summary version are available in the libraries.

We consulted hundreds of local people of all ages and the new plan is based on what they told us was important to them: health, the environment, community safety, and youth and children's work.

Giving the community more say is important to us and next year local people will be able to decide who should get a Community Grant. These decisions are currently made by the members of the Neighbourhood Partnership Board; the fund this year was just under £22,000. More details will be available in the next issue of this newspaper.

We welcome feedback and involvement. You are welcome at any of our meetings, or to join one of the sub-groups which develop more effective local solutions and help drive real progress. You can contact us by phone, e-mail, social media or through your local councillors or community council.

Mary Dunbar

NEWS IN BRIEF

TOILETS REMOVED: The automatic public toilet on the Prom at Straiton Place is to be removed, along with four others in the city. The council has not renewed the operator's contract. These toilets were vital for users of Radar keys, which open toilets with wide entrances and disability symbols. The nearest toilets will now be at the top of Bath Street, and the Pipe Lane ones which only open in the summer; and further away are those at east end of the Prom.

FREE UPLIFTS: Instead of hauling large items to the recycling centre, householders in Edinburgh can call the National Re-Use Phone Line to have them collected and taken to local re-use shops. This free service, run by Zero Waste Scotland, can be called on 0800 0665 820 Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm. Items picked up include sofas, washing machines, fridges, dining tables, chairs and desks. For more info see www.recycleforscotland.com

DR NEIL'S GARDEN in Duddingston has received funding for the last 15 years from the National Trust for Scotland, which has covered the gardener's salary. NTS have now withdrawn support, which puts the future of the Garden at risk, and the Garden Trust are looking for funding elsewhere. They are also forming a Friends of Dr Neil's Garden group, and say: "This is not so much to raise money, more to create a list of people who care about the Garden, will come to events, spread the word, and possibly on occasion volunteer assistance of various sorts." Membership is £10 a year. For an application form, please email drneilsfriends@hotmail.com

The *Portobello Reporter* wishes
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AS is becoming customary at this time of year, we would like to thank the organisers of the Portobello Book Festival for delivering another great event in October. We held a number of excellent sessions in the library, with the highlight for us being the opening event on Friday evening. All-in-all a fantastic book festival. Congratulations to all involved.



If you know of any 5 to 8 year-olds who love books and stories, why not bring them down to our weekly Storytime on Thursdays at 3.30pm. Watch Ian inspire and enthral a new generation of readers with stories old and new. Babies and younger children are also catered for at our Rhymetimes on Wednesday and Saturday mornings.

We are looking forward to our Christmas celebrations and are planning some creative crafts sessions. If you are interested, ask staff for details, look out for our posters and check our Facebook page.

We must never forget that Christmas is a time for giving. Portobello Library is now a drop-off point for foodbank donations. In conjunction with the Trussel Trust, we welcome the opportunity to help promote this worthy cause. If you have any canned goods, food in jars or dried goods that you would like to donate, please feel free to drop them in to the library and we will be happy to pass them on to the Edinburgh NE Foodbank. For further information you can e-mail info@edinburghNE.foodbank.org.uk or go to www.edinburghNE.foodbank.org.uk

We are delighted that local author Grahame Howard will be launching his new book *The Euthanasia Protocol* at the library with an event early next year. A departure from Grahame's previous work, this book presents a dystopian vision of what could happen in the future. The event, which is free but ticketed, will take place on Tuesday 10th February at 6.30pm. Tickets will be available at the library and from www.eventbrite.co.uk from mid-January.

The Portobello Book Group meets on the first Tuesday of every month; over the winter we will be discussing the following books:

2nd December: *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker.

6th January: *Never let me go* by Kazuo Ishiguro.

3rd February: *The Forgotten Waltz* by Anne Enright

3rd March: *The Bees* by Carol Anne Duffy

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

Paul Hudson

VILLAGE SHOW SCORES AGAIN

IT WAS another beautiful sunny day for the POD Village Show in Rosefield Park, with the 26 piece Dalkeith and Monktonhall Brass Band providing a spectacular fanfare to open the show. They and the Spurtle Ceilidh Band entertained the public with lively music and created a lovely ambience for all to enjoy.

Our competition tent was crammed full of exhibits which displayed the creative and culinary talents that prevail in abundance in Portobello. Likewise the stalls that provided an eclectic mix of produce and services for everyone to browse through while bumping into friends and catching up.

POD would like to say a big "thank you" to all the local helpers, who came along in the morning to set up the tents, tables and chairs and also cleared up at the end of the show. We simply would not be able to stage the event without their help on the day.

On that point, in order for the Village Show to take place again next year we need help with the planning and organisation. We are a small team that have put on this event for a number of years and are looking for new members and fresh ideas. If you enjoyed the show and want to help it continue, then please get in touch via our website www.the-pod.org or email us at info@the-pod.org

Joe Madden

NEW SCHOOL FOR ST JOHN'S

WITH work now started on the site for a new Portobello High School, the City of Edinburgh Council has proposed three options for a new St John's Primary School: refurbishment and partial new build on the existing site, a new building on the existing site, or a new building on the present High School site. Whichever option is chosen, it will deliver a larger school with no increase in pupil numbers. The remaining land will become recreational green space. Following a period of consultation a report was produced, summarising the points raised and the Council's responses, with recommendations for the next step. It is expected to be discussed at a Council meeting on 11th December.

BOOK FEST GOES WITH A BANG

PORTOBELLO hosted another successful and well-attended Book Festival this year, on the first week-end of October. We had 24 events including, for the first time, a 'fringe festival' for High School pupils in the school. Our Friday opening event was an evening of poetry, song and music, and for the next two days the library and church halls in Bellfield Street were a hive of activity and book talk.

It is a free festival and the authors and contributors give their time and talent willingly. We have minimal costs - travelling expenses for authors, hall, equipment and technician costs, for which we depend on donations and contributions from our audiences. Otherwise the event is organised, staffed, set up, taken down and generally done and dusted by the local planning group, friends and helpers.

We want to thank all the folk who came along, joined in, asked questions or just sat and listened to the wide variety of stimulating discussions and debates that ensued. Many thanks also to the library staff and the coffee servers at the church hall. We enjoy putting the festival on and appreciate the support and goodwill of the community. See you same time next year!

Bill Jameson

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Christmas Countdown

PEOPLE sometimes complain that as far as shops go, Christmas comes too early. But in our house it seems, as soon as the decorations have been put away in January, plans for the following Christmas are already being discussed. Ideas for where we should go, eat and sleep are put forward in a calm and diplomatic manner.

"Next year, I'm staying at home," says the youngest, in a loud voice. "So am I," says his dad through gritted teeth. Next on the agenda is anecdotal evidence about other families' Christmas plans. "My friend says he goes to a restaurant for Christmas lunch every year, but he says it costs thousands, so I suppose that means we can't go," says the middle one.

At this point, it's tempting to start pontificating about the spirit of Christmas, at least we've got a roof etc. but asking someone to put the dishes away has the desired effect and the subject is dropped until June.

"So what are we doing for Christmas, Mum?" asks the youngest, as I apply factor 30 to the back of his neck during a beach picnic. The truth is I don't know myself. I'm waiting for news via the grapevine and sometimes it takes a long time to come through.

Looking at old Christmas morning photos, I can tell the year by my scruffy old dressing gown, thanks to the photographer who insists on recording the event before I've made it to 'make up', and everybody looks happy wherever we are. That's all the evidence I need. This time I'll be ready for January's summit!

PEDAL was formed in 2005, following the campaign against the superstore, as a response to the need to tackle climate change, and was inspired by the land reform movement.

We want to focus our community's energy in a positive contribution to life in Portobello. As part of the transition town movement, we are working to create a vibrant, sustainable Portobello, combat climate change and reduce fossil fuel use. Part of this is to create a sustainable local economy, so that we'll all get more out of living here - and help the planet at the same time.

The community orchard is part of a local food-growing initiative, where Scottish apple trees, other fruit trees and bushes have been planted. The annual Apple Day was a great success, with over 80 people enjoying the freshly pressed apple juice, games and refreshments in the late autumn sunshine. It was especially great for the kids who came.

The monthly market in Brighton Park was started to encourage local food producers and suppliers to come to Portobello and complement the range of shops in the town centre, and has grown to include crafts and other services, such as the bike 'doctor' from BG Cycles. It is great news that by 28th November, after two years of negotiation, we will have an electricity supply thanks to a grant from the local Neighbourhood Partnership. Not only will it enhance the market but will also be available for other community groups and users.

Talking of electricity, the planning application for the wind turbine project has been submitted after discussions with three local communities south of Inverness and completion of a bird study, which showed no potential harm to birdlife, including a pair of ospreys. All along we have been sensitive to the fact that our community should not receive the revenue benefit from the turbine to the detriment of another community, be harmful to wildlife or unnecessarily intrusive in the landscape.

In Portobello we are constrained by the built environment, unlike those in Transition Linlithgow who are proposing their own distribution network of power from linked micro-generation schemes. We can only dream at the moment of something similar, such as generation on the former freight-liner terminal and the heat produced fed into local properties. But each community has its own solutions arrived at locally. Do you have any ideas that would contribute to Portobello's transition aims? If so, contact us on info@pedal-porty.org.uk

Stephen Hawkins

SUSTAINABLE PORTY

GROWING ORGANIC



with Susan Burns



ALTHOUGH it is nearly winter, there will be mild spells when any bulbs that are being forced need to be checked, as they dry out easily; also check stored potatoes, apples and so on, and use them immediately if any show signs of decay. Keep houseplants just ticking over on a cool bedroom windowsill with good light, and keep them very slightly moist. If they are leggy ('etiolated' is the posh word for it) they need light; if drooping, it could be due to over-watering rather than under-watering.

If you don't have access to a garden, try growing some cress, mung beans or peas on paper towels on a sunny windowsill, for something green on a sandwich. Winter lettuce will grow in a cold frame or greenhouse, albeit slowly, but worth the effort.

Now is a good time to clear up any crops and compost them, and to sow a green manure; whether on clay or sandy soil, mulch this with compost or cover with something - even cardboard, but throw some soil over to hide it a bit and, again, weigh down with bottles of soil or water. Covering stops compaction during heavy winter rains and stops leaching of nutrients.

Things get trashed during the winter, so make sure anything left outside is durable, especially now that plastic bags are recyclable and degrade quite quickly; I used to use black bags for leaf collecting, but now use a chicken-wire cage instead. Check for anything that could blow away or get damaged in high winds.

Grasses can look messy, with stems this way and that, so I tie bundles of them with honesty and/or coloured dog-wood or willow stems and stick them into borders - daft I know, digging a small hole for dead plants, but it does enliven a border through the winter - or poke them into evergreen shrubs so that they don't blow away. If very light, tie them to a plastic bottle filled with water to weigh them down. This also has the benefit of sometimes scaring cats - they don't like the reflections.

When ordering seeds, perhaps try something new. Store them in the fridge in an airtight plastic container with some silica gel sachets, ready for the spring sowing season. If starting plants off early, bring the compost in somewhere warm first to help germination, and pre-warm tap water before watering them.

RECIPE:

Apple and Mincemeat Meringue Pie.

Line a deep 20cm/9" flan tin with sweet or short crust pastry and blind bake. Cover the base with mincemeat and add about 700gm (1½ lbs) pulped, unsweetened Bramley apples. Top with meringue made with two egg whites and 110gm (4oz) caster sugar. Bake in a cool oven - 300o F/ 150o C for about 45mins, until very lightly browned. Serve cold.

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DIG PORTOBELLO

WE had a great weekend at Dig Portobello, the community archaeological dig held at the end of August. The weather was wonderful and around 60 volunteers dug test pits and 50 adults and children attended other events. The Prom was busy and the test pits on the grassy site near the amusements attracted a lot of attention from passers-by, some of whom signed up to join in!

Portobello Heritage Trust were awarded a Sharing Heritage grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund which funded the whole weekend. AOC Archaeology were employed to oversee the dig and excavated in the paved square in Bridge Street, where the discovery of a tarred road underneath the decorative brick surface meant that a small digger was needed to break through it. Digging revealed several walls dating from different periods, possibly as early as the 1800s, which were measured, photographed and recorded. These finds generated a lot of discussion between the archaeologists and passers-by about what may have been sited there over time.

Those digging on the grassy site discovered many pottery shards and pieces of



Oscar Urwin proudly shows off his find, thought to be a piece of a ceramic dog.

glass. A rubbish dump was excavated late on Sunday afternoon, discovered by Oscar Urwin, aged "nearly six", who was digging with his father. He was very excited when he dug up glazed yellow pieces, possibly from a ceramic dog. These were later dated to the early 1800s and are the earliest of this type found from Portobello potteries.

As the hole deepened, an experienced archaeologist took over and dug to about 1.5 metres, exposing a huge amount of pottery. Unfortunately, there was no time to fully dig out the dump as all the pits had to be filled in and the turf replaced before the end of the day. The site of the dump was marked, however, and provides the ideal excuse to have another go!



Digging on the Prom attracted a lot of interest from passers-by with some signing up to join in.

Other test pits revealed wooden struts resting on bricks. Various suggestions about their purpose ranged from sleepers for rails for bogies to run on, to the foundations for wooden beach huts. Several families also dug in their gardens and discovered pottery shards, and brick walls previously unknown to them.

The spread of shards over all the sites confirms that broken, unwanted pottery was used all over Portobello as infill and that much more remains to be found.

The Wee Pottery Workshops for children were particularly popular. Children and their parents enjoyed

themselves decorating tiles and making pottery bowls and animals. Volunteers washed the many finds and Portobello's George Haggarty, a renowned ceramics expert, was delighted at the number of early finds which show that Portobello was producing fine work earlier than originally believed. He declared that the weekend had exceeded his greatest expectations.

The full report on the dig will be presented at the Trust's AGM next year. More photographs can be seen at www.portobelloheritagetrust.co.uk

Margaret Munro

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Thank you for all your support, come and celebrate with us our Fourth Birthday this January. Enjoy any of our tapas any day any time from the 12th to the 25th for £4.00. And we would like to wish you a fantastic Christmas and a wonderful year 2015.

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The Portobello Reporter
is produced by volunteers, with contributions in this issue from 37 local people. If you have something you would like to see in print call **669 3466** or email us at portyreporter@btinternet.com
MARCH DEADLINE 6TH FEB.

What's On

TABLETOP SALE: Sat. 29th Nov, 10am-12.30pm, Portobello & Joppa Parish Church Hall, with a variety of stalls, teas and coffees, and Santa's Grotto.

ST ANDREWS PORTY CEILIDH, Featuring Fun Fiddlers and Belle Star Band: Sun. 30th Nov, 3.30-5.30pm, The Wash House, Adelphi Grove. Tickets £6 adults, £4 children (under fives free), from the Wild Flower Shop, 90 Portobello High St, or on the door on 30th Nov.

PORTOBELLO MARKET: Sat. 6th Dec. 9.30am-1.30pm, Brighton Park. Organic fruit, veg, plants, meat, bakery, crafts, coffee, snacks etc. For more information or to book a stall, contact portobello.market@live.co.uk Future dates: Sat. 7th Feb. & 7th Mar. 2015.

THE PORTOBELLO PANTO - SINBAD: Fri. 12th Dec. 7pm; Sat. 13th, 2pm & 7pm, The Wash House, starring comedians Billy Kirkwood and Steven Davidson, and featuring Towerbank choir and dancers. Tickets £8 adults/£6 children from COVE, Portobello High St, or online at portypanto.bpt.me (£2 from each ticket to Towerbank School).

BURNS SUPPER FOR CHRISTIAN AID: Sat. 17th Jan. 2015, 7.00pm, Portobello & Joppa Parish Church Hall, Brunstane Rd Nth. Immortal Memory by Kenny MacAskill, MSP. For tickets costing £15, call 0131 669 5257 in early January.

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY CHOIR: Weds, 7.15-9.30pm, Baptist Church Hall, 189 Portobello High St. £6/£4 concess. All welcome. Sing in harmony in a fun and relaxed environment. www.portobellocommunitychoir.org

AFTERNOON DANCING: ballroom, sequence, line dancing, to the sound of Duncan McBain, Weds/Fridays, 1.30-4pm, St James Church Hall, Rosefield St, £2.50 incl. refreshments

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Cllr MAUREEN CHILD, Labour:
Portobello Library, most Mondays, at 7pm. To check availability or make a different appointment, call 529 3268 or mob 07718666481 or email maureen.child@edinburgh.gov.uk
Receive regular Reports by email or view on www.porty.org.uk

Cllr DAVID WALKER, Labour:
2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at Magdalene Community Centre, 5.30-6.15pm
Cllr Walker may also be contacted at: City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1YJ, tel: 529 4972, or e-mail: david.walker1@edinburgh.gov.uk

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

AMNESTY - LOCAL NEWS

IN the run-up to the referendum the local group displayed a banner in various venues, carrying the message "Scotland Stands for Human Rights" to local politicians and the wider public. Sheila Gilmour MP and Kenny MacAskill MSP agreed to be photographed with the banner. They were also given a booklet outlining policy areas of national and international relationships, which are critical for tackling human rights abuses. Those who endorse these principles, but ignore them in practice, will be held to account by Amnesty.

Each month the group focuses on cases of abuse, which have recently included "disappearances" in Syria, and serious ill-treatment in detention of a Bahrain teacher. We also make written representations on issues such as asylum seekers' destitution, and measures at UK government level to safeguard women human rights defenders in Afghanistan, both of which have been taken up by Sheila Gilmour.

Our annual Greetings Card Campaign is under way. At Portobello High School, teachers who lead the school's Amnesty Group are holding sessions with three classes, when pupils can show their concern over victims of abuse by sending messages of hope and comfort. Members of the public can do likewise at the group's stall at Portobello Market on 6th December.

Our Letter-writing group meets in the Dalriada on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm and welcomes everyone. Our group meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm in Portobello Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield Street. They are open to all, with no commitments involved. For more information, call 0131 669 1308.

David Turner

POD FILM

THE last film of the season is *A Christmas Carol* (PG 2009) starring Jim Carrey. Screening at 7pm on Saturday 6th December at the Wash House. Tickets on sale from Popeye's Sandwich Bar on Saturday 29th November.

For our 2015 spring season we hope to screen an old silent movie, with some live music.

If you are interested in film and would like to be involved email to info@the-pod.org
Mark Tweedie

PHOTOS UPDATE

THE display of found railway photos in Portobello Library brought visitors from all over the city and as far afield as Morpeth.

The library reported a steady flow of visitors to the exhibition, many of whom left information useful for future displays such as that in Edinburgh Central Library from 1st December.

Australian photo blogger Dr Marcus Bunyan noticed the exhibition and posted a selection on tinyurl.com/olfc2tj

IDEAS TO PROMOTE A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY PORTOBELLO

HOW can we improve life for people with dementia in Portobello? A massive 26 ideas were put forward by 60 participants attending an afternoon of discussions, film and talks on Living with Dementia in Portobello on 25th October at the Wash House.

People with dementia who attended are keen to find a dementia-friendly café where they can meet regularly; other ideas included awareness raising for shops, businesses and schools; also clear signs for public buildings and toilets. A new leaflet, *Creating Dementia Friendly Portobello - how you can help* was launched and is available from the library.

The Dementia Friendly Steering Group, who organized the event, would like to hear from anyone in the community who is interested in getting involved. For more information, contact Teresa Straczynski, Dementia Adviser Alzheimer Scotland on 0131 662 1204 or at tstraczynski@alzscot.org
Jan Killeen

SALVATION ARMY IN PORTOBELLO

MAJOR Heather Elliot is the new Salvation Army Officer in Portobello. She says she has been "sent to increase involvement with the community".

New activities will include an Advent sheep trail for children in shop windows, and a Family Carol Service in the charity shop on 17th December at 7pm. In addition to the current parent and toddler group, there will be groups for parents and babies, older people, women, and primary-age children, informal all-ages worship, and coffee mornings, all in the Hall in Bath Street.

NEW LOCAL CHURCH

HOLYROOD Evangelical Church, which is new to East Edinburgh, holds services each Sunday at 6.30pm and Families Together on the first Sunday of the month from 4-5pm, both in Portobello Town Hall. All are welcome. For details see www.holyroodevangelical.org and the church's Facebook page.

CAROL SERVICE

THIS year's annual Christian Aid Carol Service will be held on Sunday 14th December at 5.00pm in the Baptist Church, Portobello High Street, led by Rev. Andy Scarcliffe. There will be a mixture of traditional carols sung in a contemporary way and readings from different parts of the Christmas story. Members of all the Portobello churches will share in the service. All welcome - those of any faith or no faith. The Baptist Church has its own 'Carols By Candlelight' service on Friday 19th December at 7.30pm.

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EAT HEATHILY THIS CHRISTMAS

EVERY year people comment on how much weight they seem to gain during the Christmas period, especially in December. It's cold, so people tend to eat more to keep them cosier, and this gives them a little thicker layer of fat to protect them from the wintry wind of Scotland. When January arrives, gyms and fitness classes are packed with people trying their hardest to get rid of the weight gained by eating too many pies and puddings.

Here we have a situation: what could we do to help us be more mindful before we decide to finish that pack of chocolate biscuits or mince pies in the cupboard on Boxing Day? We could start by thinking about what we had for breakfast, and try to swap the sugary treat for a sugar-free snack or a lighter bite for lunch. In December, we do have a great selection of green vegetables and salad that we can use in our healthy snacks.

We should also do more exercise, whether in the gym or walking along the Prom. Let's start building the mentality to eat for nutrition and exercise for health, so that our first priority in January will no longer be the need to lose weight.

Sabrina Forno

RECOGNITION FOR MONDAY CENTRE

PORTOBELLO Monday Centre Convener, Nell Graham, was one of three volunteers short-listed for the Carer of the Year Award in the second series of RBS - Finding Scotland's Real Heroes.

Members of the public were invited to nominate people or groups who they thought deserved to be recognised, and Nell was nominated by the carer of a member of the Centre. After an overwhelming response a panel selected shortlists in 11 categories. The awards ceremony was broadcast on STV on 14th October.

The Monday Centre is based in the Baptist Church Hall, where a team of 18-20 trained voluntary helpers offer friendly informal day care every Monday for 10 people with mild to moderate dementia and respite for their carers. Nell, who has volunteered at the Centre for 15 years, says: "We all feel privileged to have been chosen". The Centre can be contacted any Monday on 0131 657 4264.



Photo by Brenda Molony

TOWN HALL 100 YEARS ON

PORTOBELLO Town Hall was opened on 30th October 1914 by Lord Provost Inches and that evening staged a concert in aid of war charities. Since then, of course, it has played a significant part in the cultural and social life of Portobello, hosting a variety of attractions from opera to jumble sales.

However, it is obvious that the number of bookings, including those by local groups, has dropped markedly over recent years. Should we be questioning why this is so and asking whether the building is being used to the best advantage of the community?

Portobello Community Council may be moving towards doing this. Sean Watters, for PCC, said: "We are examining the availability of community spaces across Portobello, partly in light of the Church amalgamation. The Town Hall hadn't been singled out, but we hope that by raising awareness of the issues we might be able to facilitate some sort of community trust to take on their management, if a group was formed for that purpose."

How the Town Hall might be used by the community in the future should be part of any investigation, and it is to be hoped that the community council takes this forward as quickly as possible.

Archie Foley

IF THE SHOES FIT



Alison's platform stilettos, second-hand 2011.

PORTY Light Box has been transformed into 'Porty Shoe Box' by local photographers Margaret Drysdale and Peter E Ross. They invited a variety of Portobello people to have their oldest pair of shoes photographed and displayed for all to see in the Porty Light Box at the junction of Bellfield Street and Portobello High Street.

The photographers see old shoes as having their own personality but also as somehow reflecting aspects of people's identity and life experience. Some of the shoes are from the 1980s and some from just this year and every one of them suggests its own little story. "It's just a bit of fun really", Maragret said, "but interestingly it has captured peoples imaginations and has sparked off some interesting conversations about shoes."

The inaugural exhibition 'Beach Delights' by Marion Preez was this time last year and since then there have been a number of displays including the most recent 'Power to Communicate', which was one of a series of exhibits throughout the city by Outlook Project students as part of the Scottish Mental Health Art and Film Festival.

The site specific artwork 'Porty Shoe Box' was intended to be on show throughout December and January but the Light Box was vandalised on the night of Friday 5th December by someone smashing a large number of panes. "It's a shame that some people are so negative that all they can do is be destructive", said Peter E Ross, one of the Shoe Box creators, "but we won't let that stop us from bringing a bit of extra colour to life in Portobello."

The Porty Light Box is a community art space that shows local artists work. If you are interested in displaying work in the Porty Light Box contact Steve Wheatley through www.portobellocc.org



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THE ROAD TO RIO IN THE SADDLE



Photo by Peter E Ross

PORTOBELLO was the lucky host of Scotland's first international beach volleyball tournament on 19th to 21st September. The Pool B second round matches in the 2014-16 Confédération Européenne de Volleyball (CEV) Continental Cup were between men's teams from Eire, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Slovakia, and women's teams from Eire, England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The CEV represents 44 National Associations and the Continental Cup is one of the routes to qualification for the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016.

Although the weather on the Friday was not good, Saturday and Sunday were better and, with the courts, TV cameras and spectators, our beach could have been confused with a foreign resort.

Robin Miedzybrodzki of Scotland men's team said: "It is amazing to be playing an international beach volleyball event at Portobello. Edinburgh is my home town and it was on the sand here that I first started playing beach volleyball."

In the men's final, Scotland beat Slovakia 2:1 and go through to the third round in 2015. Slovakia also progress as runners-up. In the ladies' final England beat Scotland 2:1 and both go through to the third round.

Kathleen Byron

ON THE GREENS

PORTOBELLO Bowling Club in Lee Crescent is one of the oldest Edinburgh clubs. It has a good green and a comfortable club house, and its membership ranges from juniors of nine years of age to senior members aged 90. Age is no barrier if you want to bowl, and a warm welcome awaits at Lee Crescent. The 2014 men's champion is Brian Sinclair and the ladies' is Betty Haig.

Next season's President of the East Edinburgh Bowling Association should come from the Willowbrae club, and the President of the Retired Men's League from London Road Foundry.

Congratulations to Stuart MacFarlane of Craigentiny BC on becoming President of Bowls Scotland.

For information on outdoor bowls in Scotland, see www.bowlsscotland.com

A Skirving



Photo by Scott McInyre

OVER the summer, Porto-Velo fitness rides have ranged far and wide, including trips to Dunbar, Lauder, Biggar and Linlithgow, with distances typically around the 65 mile mark. As the leaves started to turn, I realised it was the last chance to fit in a century ride before the days became too short. So in early October, we set off to Gifford, then up the steep climb of Redstone Rigg and over the moors to Longformacus. After a café stop in Duns, we pushed further south, almost as far as Kelso, then by back roads into Lauder for more refreshments, before heading north again towards home. Some quick calculations later, and realizing the distance might be slightly short, we diverted east for an extra loop by Pencaitland, just to get the mileage up to the magic 100.

At the other end of the scale, the last family ride of the season involved a gentle pootle to Musselburgh to pick brambles - and in between, some short leisure rides aimed at people newer to cycling or just looking for a more gentle pace.

Sunday rides will continue through the winter (weather permitting), but starting at the later time of 9am. Full details of all the club's activities can be found on our website: www.porto-velo.com.

Andrew Mylne

Gemma's Gym

HERE we are again, with the party season upon us, along with Christmas shopping and to-do lists as long as your arm. Even if you feel you have no time to spare, it's very important to give yourself some time to fit in physical activity, even if it's only for 10 minutes.

Managing life's stresses is so important and being active is the number one way to help. Being active can include a number of different activities; even just giving yourself 10 minutes to practise some breathing techniques can be a great help.

Maybe you would benefit from a 20 minute walk round the block or going for a run, cycle or swim. Whatever your activity, make sure you prioritise it at this time of year.

The most common barrier to exercise I hear mentioned is "I don't have time", but this can be overcome by being realistic with your lifestyle and what you plan for the day.

Looking after your mental health is also crucial. There's no point trying to push your body through gruelling exercises if your mind is not clear. Practising breathing will give you a minute to collect your thoughts and decide what you have to do that day. The last thing you want is to feel overwhelmed at this time of year, so please think about planning out your time and making time to look after your mind and body.

Lastly, Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.

Gemma Hopewell

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