

THE Portobello REPORTER

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

ALDI STORE AND HOUSING FOR BAILEYFIELD



The derelict site looking north with a former Scottish Power building in the background.

PLANNING consent was granted in December for Aldi's application for a store with 1,254m² of floor space on the former Scottish Power/Baileyfield site at the west end of Portobello High Street; the application for 94 car parking spaces is twice as many as stipulated in the council's parking standards, and is still to be decided.

The Development Management Sub-committee also approved in principle an application by Cruden Homes for a mixed development of 219 residential units on the rest of the site, with parking and landscaping. Details of the heights and

materials of the units will be decided later.

This joint application gave rise to a great deal of public interest and a total of 658 responses to it were received by the planning department. Portobello Community Council ran a consultation on people's views last October, partly funded by the developers; the result of the 400 responses, which was forwarded to the planning department, was "about 49% in favour to 42% against, with 9% neutral". When the 258 additional responses sent direct to planning were included, however, the result was 58.5% (385) against the

application and 35.6% (234) in favour, with 39 general comments.

Most of the objections related to the store: the potential traffic problems and negative impact on the high street and traders. Members of Portobello Amenity Society spoke to the planning committee on the proposed design and materials and the traffic issues, and a PAS business member spoke for the traders.

The store is expected to be built first. A residential retirement block will follow and then the rest of the residential units - the time scale for these is uncertain.

GENERAL ELECTION 2015 - Candidates List

THE election for the Westminster Parliament will take place on Thursday 7th May 2015. The candidates selected for Edinburgh East are:

Conservative and Unionist - James McMordie
Scottish Green Party - Peter McColl
Scottish Labour - Sheila Gilmore
Scottish Liberal Party - Unconfirmed at time of publication.
Scottish National Party (SNP) - Tommy Sheppard
United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) - Otto Inglis.

The Returning Officer will publish an official list of candidates on 9th April.

You must be a British, Republic of Ireland

or qualifying Commonwealth citizen and 18 or older on Election Day to be eligible to vote. Other EU nationals cannot vote.

First time voters, anyone who has moved house since the Referendum or changed their name will need to register again by phoning 0131 344 2500 or going to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. Your National Insurance number is now required for registration.

The deadline for voter registration is 20th April. It is also possible to get postal and proxy vote application forms before 5pm on Tuesday 21st April from the Electoral Registration Office.

FRACKING AND THE FUTURE OF OUR FORTH

OVER 150 people attended Our Forth - Portobello's (OFP) meeting about fracking and unconventional gas extraction (UGE) in the Town Hall on Saturday 31st January. Speakers Robert Gatliff, local geologist and Director of Energy and Marine Geoscience at the British Geological Survey, Dr Janet Moxley, an independent environmental scientist, and Professor Andrew Watterson, Director of the Centre for Public Health and Population Health at the University of Stirling, made presentations explaining their different perspectives on fracking and UGE.

Starting from an historical perspective on the shale oil industry in east central Scotland Robert Gatliff went on to give detailed accounts of the geology and the different techniques proposed for the industrial extraction of oil and gas from shale and coal formations in the area. Dr Moxley discussed some of the relevant legal and statutory framework governing fracking and UGE and highlighted some of the potential environmental dangers, including: greenhouse gas emissions from leakages, seismic activity and chemical pollution of the water table. Finally, Professor Watterson strongly challenged as inadequate the current arrangements for creating risk assessments and public health impact assessments by the authorities and suggested that there are not only local but national and global issues at stake.

At the meeting, OFP also launched its consultation on the development of a local mandate and charter which they are modelling on Falkirk's Community Mandate and Community Charter. In Falkirk residents from various communities came together to form Concerned Communities of Falkirk when in 2012 Dart Energy submitted an application to build 14 well pads and 22 coal-bed methane wells with all its industrial infrastructure.

Our Forth's charter, like Falkirk's, will they say be a document that details the things in the area that the community claim, as a right, to be fundamental to the present and future health and well-being of the area and its people. Paul Lambie of OFP said: "Portobello is changing and we can either watch it change or shape the way that it does. I want Portobello to be clean and safe and sustainable. A community charter is a chance for me to say that. We'll all have our own priorities and we all get to have our say." Gillian Cummings added: "Creating this charter will be an incredible experience for Portobello. As a completely open process, everyone will be welcome and actively encouraged to contribute to its development. It will bring us, as a community, closer to understanding what it is about Portobello that we genuinely value the most...and then give us the means to protect it."

The next meeting of Our Forth - Portobello will be at The Dalriada on 18th March, 7-9pm. Take part in their online survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/ourforth. For more info see www.ourforth.org/charter/ or email them at contact@ourforth.org

Peter E Ross

MORE DANGER TO GREEN BELT

THE City of Edinburgh Council has deferred a discussion and vote on its Local Development Plan 2, until after the General Election in May. The plan proposes the designation of areas of Green Belt as suitable for housing, as required by the Scottish Government; this includes land in the Brunstane area. Despite the council having received a huge public response

to its proposals, the delay means that no amendments can now be made to the plan before it is due to be considered by the Scottish Government's reporter, which is the next stage in the planning process. In the meantime, developers might take future proposals for the development of current Green Belt land straight to the Scottish Government, by-passing the planning system.

**PORTY PROFILE No. 57
ANNABEL MEIKLE**

ANNABEL MEIKLE is one of only a handful of female whisky tasters. “When I first started tastings”, she says, “people seemed to be expecting a large bloke with a beard, wearing a kilt, but were pleasantly surprised when they realised that I knew what I was talking about”. Her first taste of whisky was on a “cheeky pinkie” dipped into her father’s evening dram when she was sitting on his knee at story time, and she clearly liked it.



Photo by Brenda Molony

Annabel grew up in Eskbank and went to St Margaret’s, Newington, before going on to take an MA Hons course in Textiles and Ceramics at Crewe and Alsager College in Cheshire. After graduation she set up her first business, making garden pottery in her parents’ dining room, then took up the position of artist in residence at the Green Gallery in Aberfoyle.

“But after being a potter for about nine years”, Annabel says, “I felt I needed a complete change, and having always been passionate about good food, I started working for Valvona and Crolla”. It was while working there that she was introduced to someone from the Scotch Malt Whisky Society. “I moved to the SMWS and trained in its ‘whisky school’, and my career went on from there”, she says.

Annabel stayed at the SMWS for six years, then went to work for the parent company Glenmorangie as global ambassador for the brand, travelling all around the world for four years, before returning to SMWS as manager.

In July 2013, she decided to go it alone and set up her own business as a whisky consultant, “which involves all things whisky”. This has resulted in her being asked to contribute on a regular basis to magazines and newspapers which, she says, is a quite unexpected development and something she enjoys.

Annabel came to live in Portobello in 1999, buying a flat overlooking the sea. “I remember waking up on my first morning in a cold and bare flat, opening the shutters and seeing race horses training on the beach. I knew I’d made the right move and I still really love this place”, she says. Although she has moved on from making garden pottery, there are several examples of her creativity dotted around her garden.

Brenda Molony

ON THE BEAT

AFTER ensuring that we respond appropriately to all crimes and incidents reported daily, our aim is that officers should prioritise the issues that people tell us most concern them. These are included in our local ward plans and cover housebreaking, drug dealing, violent crime and antisocial behaviour.

Between April 2014 and January 2015 overall reported crime fell by 11% (212 fewer crimes); reductions in housebreaking, vehicle crimes and assaults were key contributors to this. We have provided additional patrols at key times, working with and visiting licensed premises to tackle antisocial behaviour and assaults are down 11% (49 fewer victims).

Faced with an increase in housebreaking last year, we created a specialist team to carry out detailed investigations, and in September 2014 Police Scotland purchased property-marking kits to combat break-ins. These involve the use of invisible solutions which fluoresce under ultraviolet light and each solution is unique in composition to the house it is registered to. Areas in the Grange and the Durhams were selected for deployment of the kits and officers visited 1100 houses to distribute them and give crime prevention advice. This has resulted in a 90% reduction in break-ins in the Durham area compared to the same period last year. These kits are just one of a range of measures being used; others include stop and search measures to target known criminals and pro-active enforcement of court-imposed bail curfews to disrupt offending. These measures have resulted in a 32% reduction in house break-ins (61 fewer) in East Edinburgh. Our detection rate is presently 50%.

For information, advice and updates on the Multi-Member Ward Plan visit the Police Scotland website and click on Your Community. We also have a local community policing twitter account @EdinEastPolice

The Community Policing Team

NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

TWO empty buildings and two sites in Portobello are to be put to residential use.

Planning applications have been lodged for the following: conversion of Phoenix House on Portobello High Street (formerly the DSS offices) to 26 two and three-bedroomed flats, six of them affordable; and conversion of the former Towerbank Annexe in Bath Street to four flats in the front part, two houses in the rear

part after demolition of the connecting link, two on-site parking spaces and a further four on the road in front of the building.

An application has also been lodged for a 60-bed care home on the former Land Rover garage site at the corner of Inchview Terrace/Wakefield Avenue.

Planning consent has been granted for five flats on the long-empty gap site on the west side of Bath Street.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NEW TRADERS GROUP: A group of Portobello traders have recently formed Positive Porty Traders and welcome any other local businesses who wish to join. They are working to promote our high street, to encourage people to shop locally and to entice people to come to Portobello from further afield. See their Facebook page.

ST JOHN’S: Following consultations carried out last year with parents, staff and the local community, the Council has announced that a new £11m St John’s RC Primary School will be built on part of the existing Portobello High School site. An area of open space will be created on the remainder of the existing combined schools site.

MARIE CURIE DAFFODIL APPEAL: If anyone is able to help collect in Edinburgh during March, please call 0131 470 2291, email fiona.beaton@mariecurie.org.uk or visit www.mariecurie.org.uk/collections

PHOTOS OF SCHOOLS WANTED: If anyone has photos of St John’s Primary or Portobello High School, Geoff Pearson would be pleased to receive them, to make a record of these buildings before they are demolished. He would also be interested in reminiscences. Contact Geoff by email at gspearson@bopenworld.com. Prints returned on requested.

DRIVER NEEDED: Portobello Older Peoples Project at 185 Portobello High Street needs a volunteer driver for their mini-bus on Tuesdays or Wednesdays. They would collect the bus from the nearby LCTS at 9.30am and, accompanied by the organiser and a volunteer, take the older people from their homes to the hall, drive them home at 2pm and return the bus to the depot around 3.15pm. Would anyone interested please contact Rita on 01620843484 or mob. 07780758250.

PASS IT ON WEEK, 7th-15th March: Why not donate things you no longer want to charity or swap with friends, and try second-hand goods? Zero Waste Scotland is encouraging individuals, businesses, schools and charity shops to organise swapping events, repair workshops and upcycling sessions. For more info www.passitonweek.com

Sheila Gilmore MP
Your Member of Parliament in Edinburgh East

MONTHLY SURGERIES
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Due to the scheduled dissolution of Parliament on 30th March 2015 I will not hold surgeries in April

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EASTER holidays start on 4th April this year and we are already planning our Easter activities for children. We will be getting right into the spirit of things by decorating egg cups and designing Happy Easter cards. For more information on what we are doing in the library over Easter ask a member of staff before the holidays, or check us on Facebook. Please remember that we only run one Wednesday Rhymetime over school holiday periods instead of the usual two; this is at 10.30am.



We are all looking forward to World Book Night on 23rd April, when volunteers will give out books in their communities supplied by the World Book Night charity. Once again three Portobello library staff have signed up to be book-givers and intend to give away our books at the library. Hopefully all three of us will be selected and we will have three very different titles to give away on the night. We are also a collection point for anyone who would find it convenient to pick up their books at the library. You can find more information on www.worldbooknight.org

Did you know that brisk walking for just 30 minutes a day, five days a week has recognised health benefits? With the warmer spring days coming in, this could be the ideal time to get walking. To help you with this we now have a collection of pedometers for loan. If you are wondering where to walk, ask staff for the *Medal Routes* leaflet that has three short walks round Portobello, starting at the library.

Local author and former Advocate John Mayer will talk about his book *The Trial*, on Tuesday 31st March at 6.30pm, all welcome. See the review on page 7.

If you know anyone between ages 5 and 8 who loves stories, why not bring them down to our Storytime on Thursday afternoons. Ian will be here every week, entertaining us all with a brand new batch of magical stories.

The Portobello Library Book Group meets on the first Tuesday of every month when we will be discussing the following books:

- 7th April – *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Adichie
- 5th May – *Mrs Robinson's Disgrace* by Kate Summerscale

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

Paul Hudson

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL REPORT: Brighton Place Resurfacing

AS residents will know, Brighton Place road surface has deteriorated significantly. The City of Edinburgh Council is therefore assessing options for its replacement. At the November PCC meeting, Sean Gilchrist of CEC stated that existing policy is to retain setts in Conservation Areas, but given the considerable cost and disruption in re-laying them, the Council had set up a working group to assess other alternatives. Three options are proposed:

1. Lifting and relaying existing setts, costing £1.3m, taking 56 weeks in 2-3 phases, with life expectancy of 25 years.
2. Replacing setts with tarmac, costing £400k, taking 16 weeks in 1-2 phases, with life expectancy of 20 years.
3. Laying tarmac over setts, costing £200k, taking four weeks, with life expectancy of five years.

The following points were made at the PCC meeting: Brighton Place is within Portobello Conservation Area; existing surface repairs lasted less than 10 years; closing all or part of the road could cause considerable inconvenience to local residents and be damaging to our high street retailers; the poor surface, the volume of traffic and size of vehicles is believed to be causing vibration in nearby homes. The surface is often raised as a concern by cyclists.

PCC consulted residents on its website www.portobellocc.org and at the library, and has submitted the results to the Council. Sean Gilchrist stated that when CEC makes its decision, "the results of all consultation will have to be taken into account". The decision is expected in May.

Clare Slifer

AFTER PCC began its consultation, the CEC roads team gave different figures for the life-span of the three options to Portobello Amenity Society (PAS): option 1, 40 years; option 2, 20-30 years; option 3, 10-15 years. They say that any figures are general estimates, dependent upon traffic volumes etc., but that if the setts are relaid the road will be put on the roads register and future repairs by other bodies will be monitored. PAS, Portobello Heritage Trust and Brighton and Rosefield Residents Association have consulted members, based on these different figures. PCC stand by those quoted above. Given this confusion, how can the Council give equal weight to "the results of all consultation"? (Ed.)

YOU DECIDE!

GIVING local people more say is important to us, and this year you can decide who gets a Neighbourhood Partnership Community Grant by voting on the applications we receive. The closing date for bids from community groups with a good idea for a new project/event to help their community is Thursday 2nd April. The main 'You Decide!' event is in the East Neighbourhood Centre, 101 Niddrie Mains Road on Saturday 23rd May. You can also vote on all the bids when they are displayed in Portobello and Craigmillar libraries for two weeks during April, or ask for a postal vote. The bids with the most votes will receive awards of up to £1,500. Call 529 6374 for more information.

The Neighbourhood Partnership wants your input and you can attend any of our meetings, or why not join one of the sub-groups which help drive progress by developing more effective local solutions. Contact us by phone, e-mail, social media or through your local councillors or community council.

Mary Dunbar,
East Neighbourhood Team

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Cup of Ambition!

AFTER a career break, I'm hoping to return to work and it might be a cliché, but looking for work is definitely a job in itself. In fact I'm sure I could have penned my bestseller (plan B) by now, as it takes so much time to trawl through job sites, write CVs and fill in application forms. And like most aspiring writers, I could probably paper a room with all my failed applications, or even ghostly rejections - sometimes I just have to guess I'm not in the running.

Some of my interviews have been memorable to say the least. One was interrupted by a fire alarm going off and we had to evacuate the building. I got a second interview, but sadly crumbled under the good/cop bad cop style interrogation. I knew I wasn't in with much of a chance when, before another interview, the HR assistant said: "Nice to meet you, but I probably won't see you again". She showed me into the boardroom where you could have cut the atmosphere with a knife. One of the interviewers had clearly fallen out with the other two and glared at me and everybody else, so I didn't take it too personally. At the last interview, I was shown into a boardroom, with a desk so long and intimidating, I thought I'd wandered on to the set of *The Apprentice* and it went downhill from there.

On the positive side, I've got three referees at home who know I can make perfect American pancakes, delivered on time, within budget and to a consistently high standard. They keep me on my toes, but it is all part of the job!

THE new growing season is almost upon us and we have exciting news on the growing spaces front: the doctors' practice on Portobello High Street has kindly agreed that we can create a community garden on land adjacent to the surgery. There are already a couple of areas in our town centre that have been converted from under-used derelict land to an area of food production and this type of initiative contributes to sustainability while making Portobello a more attractive place in which to live.

This new project has lots of potential and we are lucky to have a blank canvas to work on. We have plenty of ideas, just one of which is to design a plot that will attract bees. We will shortly be holding meetings to plan the project, after which we will get started with planting the garden. Willing volunteers would be most welcome to join in, so if you are interested please e-mail info@pedal-party.org.uk to find out more.

Local food production was also celebrated at the Wassailing event held in the community orchard at Brunstane, where the fruit trees were encouraged to be fertile next year by singing to them, pouring apple juice around them and tying bread to the branches. All of this ritual is meant to ward off evil spirits, but who knows? At least it's good fun. Hot spiced apple juice and home baking were enjoyed around a roaring bonfire by over 50 participants and their children. Many thanks to Jane Lewis and the Portobello Community Choir for leading the singing.

The orchard is open to anyone at any time; it's just opposite Brunstane railway station. But if you want to help, workdays are held on the last Saturday of every month. Look out for posters.

And finally, after many years, we have electricity at the monthly market in Brighton Park, which will mean that a greater selection of traders can now participate. The market is held on the first Saturday of every month, except January, from 9.30am to 1.30pm. Come along and sample the great range of local produce and crafts.

Stephen Hawkins

SUSTAINABLE PARTY

GROWING ORGANIC



with Susan Burns



DON'T rush to get seeds in too early. In sandy soil or a raised bed you can probably get away with sowing in early April, but in clay the beginning of May is better unless seeds can be started off inside on a windowsill or greenhouse. Remember to warm compost before planting seeds, and get the best peat-free compost (if it isn't good, complain to the manufacturer); use clean trays and tools, and water with a spray gun. Sterilize pots by washing them in hot soapy water, and run a lit match along any blades or edges used for cutting plant material. Keep plants growing steadily, watering with tepid water, and harden off before planting out. Even the hardiest annual raised in a greenhouse is still a tender plant until acclimatised to the outside.

If chopping down a tree or shrub make sure it is replaced, if not for yourself, then for future generations. We always buy time when buying plants, so if a tree or shrub is expensive it is usually because it has taken a long time in the nursery to get to the size ready for the garden...Local nurseries are best for buying a specimen.

If any snowdrops are still showing 'in the green', take a clump and split them. Put them around trees and along path edges, a few inches under the soil or grass. Try to remember next year where they are, so that you don't walk over the little points that will be pushing up even before Christmas, and hear that little crunch...I do it regularly when I don't have my glasses on, but although the foliage may be slightly damaged, they still flower.

I keep bubble wrap over newly-raised seedlings in the greenhouse, until they are a bit sturdier and don't need protection from stronger sunlight, usually sometime at the end of April, otherwise they can get scorched. I know - you can't win; they either freeze or fry to death. It's always a balance. It's the same with watering: a day away and seedlings can easily die, so leave them on an old soaked towel or blanket, or a pile of wet newspapers. Keep a bit of fleece handy for the plants you bought that aren't quite frost hardy, so they aren't lost overnight. Even May can be very cold at 3am.

Why not set up or buy a worm bin. These are vermin proof, and require only small amounts of input to produce good compost; on the downside, they may not look great unless you've got good DIY skills. Sieved, with some added grit, the compost is perfect for adding to pots, and there is no need to buy any.

For something new, I tried shitake mushroom pre-drilled logs, kept under the greenhouse bench. They were great and yielded a supply of mushrooms over six weeks.

SHARING OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY Interest Company Breadshare has recently relocated its bakery and cafe from Lamancha in West Linton to its new site on Seafield Road East. Established in 2011, Breadshare is a non-profit distributing company and aims to promote the benefits of eating "real bread" as well as providing people with the opportunity to get involved and learn traditional bread-making skills.

The bakery is a hive of activity, employing 10 part-time workers and has 12 volunteers who work in the bakery, café and market. A group from the home-

lessness charity Rock Trust are also regular volunteers, learning to bake and gaining valuable work experience. They currently have a student from Edinburgh College on a 10 week placement and hope to become affiliated with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme in the future. Business development manager Debra Riddell says: "We chose Portobello because we thought that it had the kind of community Breadshare could fit into and the support we have had since we opened in January has far exceeded any expectations we may have had."

Karen Combe

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SCHOOL LIFE DURING WWI

HAVING discovered that Portobello High School had a log book recording entries during World War One, I was given permission to read it in the school library and spent an interesting day finding out how the war affected the school. This is an overview of the entries.

When the log began on 20th May 1910, the school was called Portobello Higher Grade Public School and taught Infant, Juvenile and Higher Grade pupils. In the years preceding the war many of the entries referred to the number of children absent due to infectious diseases: diphtheria, scarlet fever, ringworm, chickenpox, whooping cough and impetigo. The school was frequently disinfected, as it had been when it re-opened on 5th January 1914, after the Christmas holidays. These illnesses continued throughout the war.

There is no mention of the outbreak of war. On 7th October 1914 it was recorded that 'In connection with the war the following Roll of Honour has been placed on the school notice board'. The



Photo courtesy of Portobello Heritage Trust

names of former pupils were given, with an additional list detailed on 17th November. These can still be seen in the school. Former pupils who 'received war honours' and those who were killed in action were named in the log.

In November 1915, an 'Intimation [was] received that a class for the instruction of soldiers in cookery will be held in this school ... probably for about six weeks'. On 7th May 1917, 'The ordinary classes in

cookery for the pupils will be discontinued while the practical demonstration lessons for parents are being given'. These 'Demonstrations on War-Time Cookery' proved very popular, with hundreds of parents signing up for them.

Teachers and pupils contributed to Red Cross funds, comforts for wounded soldiers, the Belgian Relief Fund and Xmas Gifts to our Soldiers and Sailors, and gave two concerts in Portobello

Town Hall for funds to help furnish the YMCA hut for soldiers billeted in the neighbourhood.

There were problems keeping the school supplied with coal and teachers and janitors were 'urged to use the utmost economy in the use of all school material and apparatus'.

On 23rd June 1916 it was intimated that 'from Monday, 26th June, the pupils of Towerbank will be taught here. Towerbank School is now in posses-

sion of the military', then 'This school will meet from 9 to 1. Towerbank from 1-5 - the arrangements continuing for the remainder of the session. At the end of a fortnight Towerbank will meet in the forenoon and Portobello in the afternoon. The HG classes meet for a full day and their timetables have been only slightly modified'. There were repeated complaints about the curtailed classes and several pupils were removed. There is no mention of when the pupils returned to Towerbank, although I checked the entries until 1920.

By May 1917 all the male teachers had gone to serve their country, beginning to return from February 1919. There is no entry marking the Armistice on 11th November 1918, as the school was closed from 31st October until 27th November because of an influenza epidemic.

I was surprised by the lack of detailed entries regarding the war. Did this reflect the minimal impact it had on day-to-day life in the school, or was the aim to keep up morale in what were difficult times?

Margaret Munro

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What's On

PORTOBELLO MARKET: Sat. 7th March, 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. 4th April & 2nd May.

Portobello & Craigmillar **ST PATRICK'S DAY PAGEANT**, Sun. 15th March, leaving The Dalriada at 2pm for a short stroll along the Prom. Fun for all - local groups, churches, schools, shops and families. Last year several local groups took part, along with Irish dancers, pipe band and jazz band. If you or your group would like to take part this year, email: office@edinburghsfestivalofireland.org or call 0785 528 5207.

AMNESTY COFFEE MORNING & BOOK SALE: Sat. 21st March, 10-12, church hall, Bellfield St., with Woodcraft Folk stall, music, raffle for Fairtrade hamper, stalls. Donations of books, bric-a-brac and bakery welcomed. If uplifts needed, contact David Turner on 0131 669 1308.

CAR BOOT SALES: (Rotary Club of Portobello). Sundays 29th March, 26th April, 31st May. Newcraighall Station car park, 9am-2pm. Cars arrive 8am, double pitch £10 - all fees to charity. Enquiries to 07789220583.

PORTOBELLO COMEDY NIGHTS: March 13th, with *Father Ted* legend Michael Redmond, tickets from brownpapertickets.com; April 24th with Phil Differ, tickets at £10 available from the bar. Both shows 8.30pm at The Dalriada.

SING IN THE CITY V: Performance on Sat. 9th May, Portobello Town Hall, doors open 7.30pm. Tickets £8, available locally. Look out for posters.

EXHIBITION OF QUILTS by The Milton Quilters, Fri. 15th/Sat. 16th May, 10am-4pm, Bellfield St. hall: a variety of designs and sizes. Craft and sales table, trader table, cushion raffles. Raffle of quilt in aid of Poppy Scotland. £3 incl. refreshments.

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, 1-4pm, £3 incl. refreshments. Now in Portobello Masonic Hall (behind Police Station).

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Portobello & Craigmillar Ward

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

Preventing Homelessness Misery

HOMELESSNESS continues to be a major issue in Scotland, with over 29,000 households assessed as homeless or potentially homeless in 2013-14. For people in south and east Edinburgh who are over 16 and feel they may be at risk of homelessness, help is at hand from the Homelessness Prevention Service.

This service provides advice and support for up to six months to people who need help to keep their home or move towards secure and settled housing. The service is available for council and other social or private tenants as well as homeowners, people living in temporary accommodation, and those who have had a notice to quit or have

recently become homeless. The service can also give help to people fleeing from abuse, domestic or otherwise.

The Homelessness Prevention Service was set up by a consortium of charities and offers financial advice, benefits and welfare rights advice and advocacy, help with tenancy issues and exploring housing options. It also offers a wide range of support such as with physical and mental health issues, befriending and peer support.

If you feel you could benefit from this service you can connect with them by phoning 475 2558, emailing hps@cyrenians.org.uk, and on [facebook.com/cyrenians](https://www.facebook.com/cyrenians) or twitter.com/cyrenians1968.

DIG PORTOBELLO'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

LAST summer's very popular community archaeology project *Dig Portobello*, hosted by Portobello Heritage Trust, uncovered a number of artefacts that shed some new light on Portobello's past.

In order to share this new found knowledge and to show what was discovered the Trust has organised some events for the dig participants and other interested people.

What You Found will be presented by AOC Archaeology at the Trust's AGM on Thursday 16th April at 7.30pm in the Baptist Church Hall, 185 Portobello High Street. Admission is free.

The *Exhibition of Finds from Dig Portobello* will be held at Portobello Library from 30th March to 24th April. Also on display again, the popular kilns posters.

AMNESTY - LOCAL NEWS

OUR Greetings Card Campaign in December resulted in 193 cards of comfort and support being sent by the public and the pupils of four classes at Portobello High School, to three victims of serious abuses in China, Guatemala and Turkey. Our relationship continues with the school's Youth Section Amnesty Group, led by teacher Kate Ford and involving two members of our Group.

Special actions in recent months have included representations on behalf of a Bahraini teacher and trade unionist unjustly imprisoned and tortured, and the total ban on abortion in El Salvador, which affects thousands of women each year. Appeals have been made to US authorities to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and review cases of prisoners, serving life sentences without parole, who were children at the time of offending.

An ongoing action, which involves contacting David Martin MEP or Alyn Smith MEP, concerns EU Export of Torture Equipment legislation that has too many loopholes for rogue traders.

Our annual Coffee Morning and Book Sale will take place on Saturday 21st March. For details see What's On on this page.

The Group meets on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm, in the church hall in Bellfield Street. We welcome visitors to all our meetings. For information please call 0131 669 1308.

David Turner

Fair Trade Fortnight, Past and Present

TWO years ago, in Fairtrade Fortnight 2013, Scotland became a Fairtrade Nation, one of the first in the world to achieve such an accolade, as all its cities and many of its towns are Fairtrade friendly. Portobello has been a Fairtrade Town since 2012.

This year's Fairtrade Fortnight runs until 8th March and the organisers are highlighting producers of all Fairtrade goods, but particularly cocoa, sugar and tea.

Towerbank Primary, the first Fairtrade School in Edinburgh, held a competition to

design the best 'Buy Fairtrade' poster. Jim Baird, Chair of the Portobello Fairtrade Forum, addressed their assembly and the children have been finding out where Fairtrade products are stocked in Portobello.

Portobello High School, shortly also to become a Fairtrade School, held its monthly Fairtrade stall on 26th February, and Holy Rood High School pupils started their fortnight raising awareness among the staff by making them cakes using Fairtrade sugar and cocoa.

Kathleen Byron

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'IMAGINE PORTOBELLO'

BIG THINGS on the Beach invites you to 'Imagine Portobello' on Saturday 30th May from 11.00am at the Church Hall, Bellfield Street. The day will celebrate both the 10th anniversary of the organisation and Portobello's cultural life and aspirations.

There will be contributions from local groups and specialist speakers, with discussions over tea and cakes, interlaced with live music, songs and poems from local performers, plus a film and photographic exhibition featuring public art in Portobello.

Experience shows that the Portobello Book Festival, Village Show, PEDAL Market and artistic commissions of Big Things on the Beach, amongst other cultural activities, enrich our lives and have the potential to attract visitors to Portobello, benefiting the local economy.

The day will identify current challenges and explore future possibilities for developing arts and culture in the area and for raising the profile of Portobello as a visitor destination.

Big Things on the Beach is grateful to the Portobello and Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership for funding this event. Free event - no booking required, programme to be available on www.bigthingsonthebeach.org.uk in the library and local cafés.

For more info contact: enquiries@bigthingsonthebeach.org.uk

BOOK REVIEW:

THE TRIAL By John Mayer

WRITE about what you know. That's the advice often given to new fiction writers, and in his first novel *The Trial*, local author and former Advocate John Mayer unquestionably makes use of his background to create a story full of forensic detail and drama.

The Trial opens the formidable doors of Parliament House on the Royal Mile allowing the reader to step inside a world of tradition, power and corruption. The central character Brogan McLane, a Scottish lawyer, is accused of murdering crooked Judge Lord Aldounhill who is found dead by his housekeeper, wearing purple lipstick and little else. McLane's trial forms the core of the story and each character connected to the case is vividly depicted from Big Joe Mularkey to Professor Nadine Suilleman, McLane's despair while he is on remand is well portrayed and as the story unfolds, you begin to root for him hoping that justice will prevail.

Karen Combe

(Kindle edition: free ASIN: B00SYZR12)

POETRY CIRCUS

THE Portobello Poetry Circus, a self-funded spoken word organisation, aims to present poetry performances, competitions and workshops. Organiser Max Scratchmann says: "We want to encourage the Portobello community to get their poetry on! Our next events will be on 22nd May at The Dalriada and 23rd at the Library. We're always on the look-out for experienced performance poets, but anyone who would like to write and perform should get in touch with us for details of our beginners' workshops." For information, see www.poetrycircus.co.uk or you can email max@poetrycircus.co.uk

THE Wash House is as busy and vibrant as ever, with a programme of something for everyone. It is also a great venue for theatre and arts events.

After the Mark Thomas coup during the last Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the potential of the building is now being recognised, and all sorts of exciting possibilities lie ahead in terms of a happening arts centre in the heart of Portobello.

Fun Fiddle held a sell-out family St Andrew's Ceilidh on a dark Sunday afternoon in November, and the Christmas Portobello Pantomime *Sinbad* was a sell-out for its three-day run, with the fantastic support and involvement of Towerbank primary school children.

Classes and groups started up again in January, with activities ranging from hands-on art classes, to puppy and dog training, a range of fiddle classes for adults and children, tai chi, badminton, Zumba, and a full programme of Enjoy-a-ball for children.

The youth club offers a weekly programme of creative activity for the younger age-group on Tuesday evenings and the older group on Thursday evenings.

For more information see the website www.thewash-house.org.

Gica Loening



PORTY LIGHT BOX

UNDETERRED by the vandalism that befell Porty Light Box during the festive period, in which a large number of panes were smashed, a new exhibit has been installed.

Celebrating International Women's Day on 8th March: the women's photo collective 'Not Finished Article' present a new work called *Exquisite...#MakeItHappen*.

A homage to significant older female members in the family, this is a way of remembering, celebrating Grandmothers and Great




Aunties on International Women's day. 'Not Finished Article' are: Nicky Bird, Alicia Bruce, Caroline Douglas and Sylwia Kowalczyk.

POD FILM News

AFTER our Silent Movie Weekend in February, POD Film's next screening at the Wash House will be the wonderful *What We Did On Our Holiday* (12) on Saturday 14th March, a heart-warming, uplifting comedy starring David Tennant and Billy Connolly. Tickets will be on sale at Popeye's Sandwich Bar from Saturday 7th March.


On Saturday 11th April we will be showing the multi-award winning film *The Imitation Game* (12).

Mark Tweedie



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IN THE SADDLE



Photo courtesy of Porto-Velo

DESPITE some very cold winter weather, local cyclists have managed to get out every Sunday morning for fitness rides with local club Porto-Velo. The start-times have now gone back to 8am, and we're planning a mixture of longer and shorter rides for the spring and summer. Family rides for children and their parents will also resume shortly.

This is also the time to plan summer excursions. Many members have entered sportives and other challenge rides in the past, including the Étape Caledonia, the Bealach (Scotland's most fearsome climb, in Applecross), the Étape du Tour (riding a stage

of the Tour de France), and the Paris-Roubaix challenge on the route of the spring classic, notorious for its brutal cobbles (even worse, it is rumoured, than Brighton Place!). More such trips are planned for 2015, including to Brittany and the Pyrenees.

But the mainstay of club activity will remain Sunday rides, with a focus on enjoying the great scenery and terrain on our doorsteps (and some great cafés), encouraging local cyclists at all levels, and getting our children out on their bikes. To find out how you can join in, check our website www.porto-velo.com or follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/porto-velo) or [twitter](https://twitter.com/porto-velo).

Andrew Mylne

ON THE GREENS

THE new season for most bowling clubs in Portobello will start on either 11th or 18th April and all have vacancies for members of all ages. Anyone wishing to join Portobello Bowling Club can do so by calling 669 0316 or by calling in at Lee Crescent.

The new President of East Edinburgh Bowling Association is Ivor Steel of Willowbrae Bowling Club. The Retired Men's President is Eric Jefferson of London Road Foundry. The President of Willowbrae BC is Richard Dimelow and the Lady President is Frances Wood.

Hariet Nicol of Brunstane BC has been appointed Hon. Lady President of the Scottish Bowlers Fellowship, a charity that helps bowlers in need.

Bowling is a sport for all ages. Please contact your local club and give them your support. You will be made very welcome.

Alex Skirving

FIXED COURTS FOR BEACH VOLLEYBALL

THE Scottish Volleyball Association (SVA) wants to develop beach volleyball in Scotland from a grass roots level. The City of Edinburgh Council and SVA are looking at locations across the city and are hoping to secure funding for permanent beach courts. Following the huge success of the qualifying round matches for the 2016 Rio Olympics held on Portobello beach in September 2014, Portobello is their preferred location. The courts could be situated either on the beach or in Straiton Place Park, but concerns over tides and beach cleaning operations make the park a more likely choice.

The courts would be available to the local community and schools to encourage new people to play, as well as to established players. They would also increase the sporting attractions of an area that already has a popular sailing, kayaking and rowing club.

Responses to a recent consultation by the Community Council showed 144 people in favour of the idea and nine against.

ROWPORTY

ROWING has continued throughout the winter when weather conditions have permitted.

Plans are in hand for the new season and the annual regatta, but the main concern at the moment is a search for new premises for boat renovation and maintenance. At the moment the club has a workshop on the site of the

forthcoming Aldi store and housing development, but will now have to move out.

RowPorty would be delighted to hear from anyone who has an old garage, lock-up or other suitable space that would be available at an affordable rent. If anyone can help would they please contact Bill on 0131 669 4283.

WATER POLO NEWS

PORTOBELLO Portobello men's team is again competing in the British Water Polo Championships. In their latest game on 21st February they played London Polytechnic at home, winning 11-7, and their last home game will be against City of Manchester on 11th April, in the Commonwealth Pool. They are currently tied in first place with Bristol and Manchester and hope to reach the finals in May, in Lancaster.

Portobello men also play in the first division of the British Water Polo League, coming third this season.

Portobello Ladies played their first competitive games in Scottish competitions in 2014. Some of the team play for the combined Scottish team Caledonia, which came fifth in the British Women's Water Polo League.

Training is on Tuesdays at 8pm at Portobello pool and new players are always welcome. See www.polo.portobelloasc.com

Kathleen Byron

Gemma's Gym

SO how is the year going so far? Are you feeling motivated to keep up with your New Year's resolutions, or has January's wishful thinking disappeared? Do you find yourself making the same resolutions every year, then being disappointed when you don't succeed?

Being realistic can be difficult, as we tend to be very hard on ourselves and set our sights too high. Starting small and celebrating small achievements will help achieve the bigger goals. While I would encourage you to push yourself out of your comfort zone, you should still look after yourself physically through exercise and by eating well, but also by looking after your mental health. Exercise has been proved to help with this; just take a minute to say "well done" and give yourself a pat on the back.

The gym can be daunting, especially when it's busy with everyone trying to carry out their own New Year's resolutions. Remember, everyone is there for the same reason: they all want to achieve something. It's not a competition, so don't think about others, just concentrate on your own performance. Having a gym programme can really help you to focus. Because you have a plan to follow, you don't have time to look at others.

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