

THE Portobello REPORTER

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

HISTORIC AWARD FOR BELLFIELD CAMPAIGNERS

'Yes' vote in community ballot is needed to secure the right to buy

THE campaign to save Bellfield Old Parish Church and develop it as a community asset has received a huge boost. Action Porty, the community-owned company set up to purchase the buildings, has been awarded £647,500 from the Scottish Land Fund. The award is the first of its kind since both the Community Right to Buy and the Scottish Land Fund were extended to include urban areas. John Watt, Scottish Land Fund Committee Chair, said: "Today's award to Action Porty is a great example of what can be achieved now that the opportunity for community ownership has been extended to all parts of Scotland."

The money should be enough to contribute a significant amount of the cost of purchasing the buildings from the Church of Scotland. Action Porty's Justin Kenrick



The campaign continues to secure a majority vote in favour of the purchase of the church buildings in Bellfield Street.

says: "This is a critical step in ensuring that we retain and develop fully accessible, affordable community spaces that can enable our community to flourish in these changing times".

The next stage in the Community Right To Buy process will be a postal ballot. To ensure that the buy-out can go ahead there has to be a clear majority in favour of

community ownership.

Eligible voters living in the area approximately between Colliedene Avenue in the east and King's Road in the west and between the shore and Sir Harry Lauder Road will receive ballot papers by the end of March. Votes should be returned immediately in order for them to be counted. Action Porty have recently

appointed consultant Hazel Allen from Athena Solutions to help develop a business plan that includes projecting when the facilities can be re-opened and the phasing of the development of the property. Following a well-attended public consultation in December, a report on the financial sustainability and the use of the buildings by consultants Urban Animation will be published soon.

Once valuation of the property, which is expected soon, has been submitted Action Porty must raise the remaining money to purchase it. Board member Mary Campbell says: "We are exploring all avenues to fill the gap. These include submitting funding applications, identifying potential donors, crowdfunding, a community shares scheme and holding fundraising events."

Peter E Ross

LOCALS HELP TO SAVE THE REPORTER

THE Portobello Reporter team are very happy to be producing another issue of the paper. Following our last publication in September and the announcement that the paper may have to fold we have had a fantastic response from the community, and now have a number of new volunteers to help produce the paper. Neil Braidwood, Nick Finnis and Andrew Mylne have joined the editorial team and bring a range of skills and a wealth of experience that can only help secure the future of the paper. They join existing members Nigel Archdale, Karen Combe, Brenda Molony, Margaret Munro and Peter E Ross.

The company's directors have implemented some new business structures and redistributed the responsibilities for managing and producing the publication. Many thanks to everyone for their offers of help, support and encouragement and to our advertisers for their loyalty.

NEW 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT

THE City of Edinburgh Council agreed in 2015 to a city-wide scheme of 20 mph speed limits on most city streets, while retaining a network of arterial routes at 30 mph and above. This is being implemented in phases, and the new limits in Zone 3, which includes Portobello, came into effect on 28th February. Traffic using the main road through Portobello must now slow down from 30 to 20 mph outside the new Aldi supermarket and can only speed up again near the bottom of Joppa Road, at the junction with Joppa Park. The only remaining 40 mph limits in Portobello will be on the Sir Harry Lauder Road and on Milton Road East (east of the new High School only). The only other roads staying at 30 mph will be Baileyfield Road and Duddingston Park. The council argues that lower speed limits reduce the risk and severity of accidents, encourage walking and cycling, and make crossing roads easier.

LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTION

THE City of Edinburgh Council election will take place on Thursday 4th May 2017. The Portobello and Craigmillar Ward has increased in population since the 2012 elections and will now return four councillors rather than three. Another change since the last council election is that the minimum voting age has been lowered from 18 to 16.

Under the Single Transferable Vote system, voters can rank their choice of candidates by writing '1' against their most favoured candidate, '2' for their second favourite and so on, voting for as many or as few as they wish. As well as voting at polling stations, it is possible to apply in advance for a postal vote, or to appoint someone else (a proxy) to vote on your behalf.

Anyone not already registered to vote can register up to 17th April. This can be done online at gov.uk/register-to-vote. To check whether you are already registered, contact the Lothian Valuation Joint Board on 344 2500 or e-mail enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk.

As this paper went to press, the known candidates were Mike Bridgeman (SNP), Kate Campbell (SNP), Mary Campbell (Green), Maureen Child (Labour), Callum Laidlaw (Conservative) and David Walker (Labour).

CLOCK TO GO BACK?

AFTER prolonged discussions, the city council has agreed that the municipal clock, formerly on the Baptist Church building in Portobello High Street, is on the council Common Good Account and is therefore owned by them and is their responsibility.

Costings for the repair and reinstatement of the clock are being prepared by the council, and they will contact the church to discuss reinstatement and preparation of an agreement for council responsibility for the future maintenance and insurance of the clock. Portobello Heritage Trust and Portobello Amenity



The clock in place circa 1900

Society will continue to work with both parties to ensure the clock is put back where it belongs.

PORTY PROFILE No. 64

DAVID FRANCIS

DAVID Francis and his family used to visit Portobello from their Leith home. They saw families playing happily on the sand and it made his wife think that Portobello would be a good place to grow up, so they moved here in 2000. "The beach was our garden", he says and is still the focal point for family parties and bonfires.

David was brought up mainly in Dumfries, although the family also lived in Ayr, Irvine and Kilmarnock. "I felt like I had followed Burns around, which helped form my cultural background", he says. He graduated from the University of Aberdeen with a joint degree in English and Sociology and is currently studying there for a Masters in Ethnology and Folklore.

He works as a director of the Traditional Music Forum, which is a network of around 100 organisations across Scotland, and as Associate Director of Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland. He says he spends a lot of time in meetings. David is currently writing the lyrics for a piece of musical theatre, an early version of which was performed at the Fringe Festival in 2015. It is set on Noah's Ark and is based on a novel by Geraldine McCaughrean. It was originally written for a youth theatre company, requiring a large cast, and is being rewritten for a smaller professional cast.

David, who recently performed at the Presiding Officer's Burns Supper in the Scottish Parliament, is a story-teller, guitarist, and dance caller and a member of Bella McNab's Ceilidh Band. He has also compèred at the opening event of Portobello Book Festival. He wrote a song, with his wife Mairi Campbell, called *Portobello Sands*, inspired by the sand on the beach. It is about a mother whose son has joined the army, now posted to the desert in Iraq. She remembers him playing on the sand as a boy and wonders what has happened to him.

David has a walk most days and says that the prom is good for that, as it is different every day because the water and the views change. He says: "In a sense Portobello is almost a wee town on the outskirts of Edinburgh. On a Saturday morning in the high street bustle there is a strong community feeling. Portobello is a rich environment to live in."

Margaret Munro



Photo by Margaret Munro

ON THE BEAT

PC McPherson and I started as your local community police officers in the distant past of October 2016 and have enjoyed working with the community in various aspects of policing. We have been involved in high visibility and plain-clothes patrols, speeding and licensing checks and other measures to combat anti-social behaviour (ASB) and criminality.

We would like to urge local residents to call the police if they see any suspicious behaviour on 101, or 999 in an emergency. There are still the particular problems of sheds and garages being broken into, bikes being stolen, and the never-ending anti-social behaviour ranging from youth disorder to graffiti. We work closely with the city council to combat ASB and would encourage you to report any unacceptable behaviour to the police.

We can also assist with bicycle security and arrange for specialist officers to call at your home if you have been the victim of a housebreaking offence, and give appropriate prevention advice. We work hard to ensure that you and your property are safe, but we obviously encourage people to take steps to look after themselves and their property. We welcome anyone to come for advice to Portobello police station, or to our surgery on the last Friday of every month at Portobello library from 1pm.

PC David Love

TREASURED BIKE LOST AND FOUND

MY 20-year-old much treasured bike was taken from outside Portobello Library last November.

A number of people soon publicised its loss on Facebook, Porty Online and in the *Evening News*, then someone walking a dog found a bike in the Figgate Burn. Within less than 48 hours of its loss it was identified, despite it having been painted black, and returned to its grateful owner. Its green panniers were missing, but it was otherwise undamaged.

I would like to express my warmest thanks to all who contributed to the bike's recovery and to BG Cycles for a free check and new padlock. My deep appreciation also to the kind and caring people of Portobello who began raising money for a new bike, which was happily not needed.

David Turner



Photo by Brenda Molony

NEWS IN BRIEF

PORTOBELLO OLDER PEOPLES PROJECT is looking for a volunteer mini-bus driver. POPP is a small lunch/social club that gives older people the chance to enjoy a meal and socialise with others. You would be driving a minibus to take them from home to the club, and home again. You need to be aged 21 to 70, have a clean driving licence and be available between 9.15-11.30am and 2.00-3.45pm on Tuesday and/or Wednesday each week. For further details please contact Rose White on 07472646262.

A FRUITY CORNER: The Friends of Figgate Park are embarking on a new project this year to establish a community fruit garden, 'Fruity Corner'. They have already secured some funding and some industrial sculptural planters for the site, made from recycled bits from the Craigentenny train depot. If you would like to be part of the steering group and help to develop this project, please email volunteer@figgatepark.org.uk

PORTY 'SWEETBOX': A recent competition to estimate the number of Quality Street that could be fitted into the Porty Light Box, on the corner of Bellfield Street, was won by Lisa Anderson, who received a tin of the sweets. The answer was 'C' - approximately 62,948. The competition raised £173 which will pay for repainting the phone box.

LOOK OUT for Portobello's role in a new BBC One four-part thriller *Trust Me*, set and filmed around Edinburgh. Starring Broadchurch actor Jodie Whittaker and Edinburgh born actor Emun Elliot, the drama centres on a nurse who finds herself unemployed after whistleblowing. To make ends meet, she steals the identity of her doctor friend and will do anything to protect the advantages that this brings.

RE-SURFACING OF BRIGHTON PLACE has been postponed until after the replacement of gas mains in Portobello has been completed, to avoid further traffic disruption. That work is expected to be finished by the end of March.

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EASTER holidays start on Saturday 1st April this year and we are already hard at work planning our Easter activities for children. For more information ask a member of staff before the holidays, or check us on [Facebook](#).

Remember we only run one Wednesday Rhymetime during school holidays instead of the usual two; this is at 10.30am.

We are delighted to be hosting an event for the 2017 Puppet Animation Festival, *The Wonderful World of Lapin*, which is suitable for three to eight year olds and is a fun bilingual puppet show. Narrated in English with French sentences from the puppets, the show is a fun heart-warming piece of theatre that is very accessible to non-French speakers. *The Wonderful World of Lapin* will be on at Portobello Library at midday on Saturday 8th April. Tickets are free and available from the library. Ask staff for details.

French is not the only foreign language available for Portobello toddlers in the library. Our Spanish Rhymetime meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 10.30am. Non-Spanish speakers are welcome to listen and sing along to traditional, and not so traditional, Spanish children's rhymes.

If you know anyone aged five to eight who loves stories why not bring them down to our Storytime on Tuesdays at 4pm, when Ian will entertain us all with a brand-new batch of magical stories.

Are you elderly or disabled, love reading but struggle to visit the library? Do you know someone who is? If so, we might be able to help. We have a fortnightly service that will bus you into the library for books, a cup of tea and a chat. We can also deliver books to your home. If you are interested, give us a call on 529 5558 and ask about our Library Link and Housebound services.

From April the library book group will meet on the first Monday of the month and will be discussing the following books:

- 3rd April: *Six Poets, Hardy to Larkin* by Alan Bennett
- 1st May: *We Need New Names* by NoViolet Bulawayo
- 5th June: *This is where I am* by Karen Campbell

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

Paul Hudson



NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP PUBLIC SERVICES ARE CHANGING

LOCAL public services are changing to meet new challenges, including increased demand and fewer resources. Council, police, health and voluntary sector services, and colleges are re-assessing how they will work alongside the community, across the newly defined geographical areas.

On this side of the city, the Neighbourhood Partnership areas of Portobello and Craigmillar, Craigentenny and Duddingston, and Leith will merge to form the North East Locality. A new North East Locality Plan 2017-22 will be published in October.

We asked local people what is most important to them and identified five main themes: Children, Young People and Families; Employment; Community Safety; Health and Wellbeing; and Place (housing, environment, roads, parks etc.).

By the end of January we had received the views of over 1,500 people by various means, including online and street surveys, attendance at community events and Neighbourhood Partnership meetings. The information gathered will help shape the priorities to be included in the new Plan.

Mary Dunbar

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

IT has been a busy winter for the Community Council, with a number of consultations running at once.

The most significant was on a Barratt Homes planning application for permission to build 483 homes on the old Standard Life site. We received nearly 300 responses, which we have passed to the city council planning officer.

We also ran a consultation for the new owners of the old George Cinema on Bath Street. We received over 270 responses, with the overwhelming majority opposing their proposal for significant demolition of the original building and the construction of 20 apartments. Nonetheless, their application was submitted to the city council unchanged by the community's comments. A local group has been set up to look at alternative proposals for the space. You can find out more on their website - [thegeorge.org.uk](#).

At the request of the city's local parks team, we also asked you how a £35,000 donation from Scottish Power should be spent locally. The community favoured two new pieces of play equipment for Straiton Park, including an accessible swing, which it is hoped will be in place for this summer.

Mary Campbell

THE BIG FAREWELL

LOCAL public arts trust Big Things on the Beach invites everyone with an interest in the creative life of Portobello to 'The Big Farewell', to mark the dissolution of the charity and celebrate its achievements since it was formed in 2003. The event will take place at St Mark's Episcopal Church on Monday 20th March at 7.30pm.

The trustees have decided to bring Big Things on the Beach to an end because

of increasing difficulties in raising money for public art projects, a lack of responsiveness by the city council to its 'Public Art Strategy for Portobello Promenade' and volunteers' time constraints.

Join us for a lively presentation of our achievements, and the challenges facing public art today.

More information is on our website or contact: enquiries@bigthingsonthebeach.org.uk

Damian Killeen, Chair

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Peace, Love and Understanding

I DON'T know about you, but I'm a bit nostalgic and have kept most of the artistic creations painstakingly produced by my three aspiring sculptors, fine artists, and mixed media geniuses. Various well-crafted objects litter the house, the latest being a blue moulded-plastic pen holder reminiscent of Conran. The holes are a bit large for a Biro, but are perfect for Sharpies.

A small plaster bust of a random man sits on the landing window-ledge and has been there for about two years. He looks a bit like a creepy politician, so gets hidden behind the curtain, but the other day I noticed he had been turned to face the window. Thinking it was a joke, I absentmindedly turned him around only to discover he had been completely decapitated. I hastily put him down, imagining the potential conflict ahead.

Extensive investigations led by my youngest basketball-mad son yielded nothing of note and he came to the conclusion that someone had broken in, broken the man and left, leaving no trace. Some people think that the person who might be responsible is the one training for the basketball team, but they can't prove anything either.

No real harm has been done, the sinister decapitated sculpture is still where it was and it'll probably be there for a while. What I did notice is that, despite the breakage and lack of ownership, everybody wanted to keep the peace. No drama, no fighting, no blaming. I don't want to speak too soon, but oh my, that's what I call progress!

IT was great to hear the 'Donkeyfield' Community Orchard featured on Good Morning Scotland on Monday 30th January. The piece was about the ancient tradition of wassailing and was recorded on the

previous Saturday at our own wassailing event. Despite the cold and the rain, over 30 of us blessed the trees by singing to them and pouring cider round their bases. Happen it was the roaring fire that helped, or the hot spiced apple juice, or the excellent leadership of our choir Meister, but the singing sounded wonderful and lively. It sounded even better on the radio.

The hope is that by singing to the trees they will bring forth more fruit in the autumn, and certainly the crop has increased year on year. Most trees being old Scottish varieties, the apples will not be found in the shops. Whilst this local food initiative is relatively small, it is part of a wider community orchard movement throughout the country that helps reconnect to the sources of our food. It has also encouraged many to grow even just one tree in their own garden. No matter how much or what you grow - every little helps, or so they say.

Speaking of which, since the last greengrocer on Portobello High Street closed, there has been a reliance on supermarkets for fresh fruit and vegetables. Some corner shops have a limited range and, whilst veggie boxes and the monthly Portobello Market are an excellent way of getting greengroceries, it is not the same as having a shop on the high street for every-day shopping.

At a recent Portobello Market PEDAL was approached by someone who is interested in exploring the viability of a community shop, along the lines of a successful venture in Bruntsfield, and volunteers are sought to take this idea forward. If you are interested in helping in a venture that will sustain Portobello as a town centre, then please contact us via our website pedal-porty.org.uk or at the next market, or call 0777 804 5230.

Stephen Hawkins, PEDAL

SUSTAINABLE PORTY

GROWING ORGANIC



with Susan Burns



THE weather can be very changeable, so be prepared if you're hardening off plants. Tender plants just purchased can be covered in fleece, newspaper or net curtains overnight to protect them from frost, which can stunt or kill them. It's crucial to keep plants growing steadily to get larger healthier ones.

Start cutting grass now on the longest setting, lowering the height over a few weeks. If bulbs are planted in the grass, wait six weeks after they have flowered before cutting the grass, any less and they will weaken. If any edges are bare, cut out a square and skim off the top 2cm, turn the clod around so that the good grass is at the edge and the bare part will grass up again over a few weeks. Grass clippings are an important source of nitrogen for the compost heap, but need sprinkling in rather than dumping in one go. Some can also be used as a few inches of mulch; I use it under hedges as a weed suppressant and over potatoes as frost protection. It browns quickly so does not look untidy.

I sow annuals outside between early to mid-April and get a good show by August if the weather is fine. This is always a gamble, as some years they're early and sometimes late. So if you want a colourful border for June, plants started off in a warm greenhouse in February should be hardened off at the end of March and planted in April/May, still with the risk of frost until June. This would be labour intensive, but worth doing if it's for a wedding, say, for flowers on the table.

Spring is the great seed sowing time. I always have too many and like to share the extras with friends, but also like to risk a few experiments. Last year I grew cape-gooseberries (physalis) outside and they were very successful. I've grown these before in the greenhouse but, as they were successful outside and are big plants, I will grow them outside in future.

COMMUNITY IN ACTION

LIGHT FANTASTIC

CHRISTMAS 2016 could have been pretty dismal for the residents of Portobello, as the city council announced last November that there would be no festive lights due to "damage while in storage".

Luckily for the community, Gavin Scott, of Porty Hardware in the high street, decided to rig up a powerful spotlight from his shop to project revolving snowflakes onto a nearby gable wall. Within days Favours and Porty Exchange had joined in, and Christmas was saved.

Lynn Aitken of in-house design mobilised some other traders to sell 'Christmas Wishes', wooden decorations to hang on the community tree, to help cheer it up and raise funds for future Christmases.

Portobello traders are in talks with the city council to find alternative ways to illuminate the high street this Christmas and, although it sounds a long way off, there is talk of fundraising throughout the year, including crowdfunding, to make 2017 a Christmas to remember.

Neil Braidwood

IS THIS IDEAL FOR YOU?

THE environmental charity Changeworks is supporting a University of Edinburgh research project, IDEAL, exploring how smart technology can help save energy in the home. Edinburgh households (EH1-17) with a gas combi boiler can participate.

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energy use information, tailored advice from experts and, hopefully, saving money on energy bills.

For more information see: changeworks.org.uk/projects/ideal. To become involved email your name, address, and contact details to: IDEAL@changeworks.org.uk or call 0131 539 8610.

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Portobello & Craigmillar Ward

Cllr MAUREEN CHILD, Labour:

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or mob 07718666481 or email maureen.child@edinburgh.gov.uk
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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

SPRINGBOARD TO SUCCESS

A MEMORIAL plaque celebrating the achievements of Sir Peter Heatly has been hung in the Refreshment Room in Portobello Swim Centre. A member of Portobello Amateur Swimming Club (ASC), Sir Peter won many medals as an accomplished diver.



Peter's family came from Leith, where he attended Leith Academy, and he later studied engineering at the University of Edinburgh. When they moved to Portobello Peter made good use of Portobello Baths and taught himself to dive. He dominated the sport for over 20 years. He won the East of Scotland Championship in 1937, the first of many wins, and was Scottish champion from 1946 to 1958. Peter won medals in three consecutive Commonwealth Games: gold for the 10 metre platform and silver in the three metre springboard in Auckland in 1950, gold for the three metre springboard and bronze in the 10 metre platform in Vancouver in 1954, and gold in the 10 metre springboard in Cardiff in 1958, where he was Scotland Team Captain. In the European Games in Turin in 1954 he won bronze for the 10 metre platform. Peter also competed in the Olympic Games in London in 1948 and Helsinki in 1952. He always maintained his connection with Portobello ASC and was made a Life Member in 1949, and was President from 1952 to 1957.

Following his successful diving career, Peter moved into sports management and, amongst other roles, was Chairman of the Commonwealth Games Council for Scotland, Scottish Sports Council and Commonwealth Games Federation for various periods between 1967



Photos courtesy of Peter Heatly

and 1990. He was involved with the planning and design of the Royal Commonwealth Pool, which has an Olympic standard diving pool and is the only venue to have been used for three Commonwealth Games. He attended its opening for the 1970 Games in Edinburgh. A plaque has also been erected there and a meeting room renamed in his honour.

Peter was awarded the CBE in 1971, made

a Deputy Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh in 1984 and knighted in 1990. Sir Peter was inducted into the Scottish Sports Hall of Fame in 2002, the Scottish Swimming Hall of Fame in 2010 and, posthumously, into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 2016. An internationally recognised athlete and diver, Sir Peter died aged 91 in September 2015.

Margaret Munro

The Portobello Reporter
is produced by volunteers, with 39 local people contributing to this issue. If you have something you would like to see in print call **669 3466** or email us at portyreporter@btinternet.com
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What's On

PORTOBELLO COMEDY NIGHT: Fri. 17th March, 8.30pm, Stand Up with Stuart Mitchell, The Dalriada, Promenade. Tickets £10 from brownpapertickets.com and venue.

CAR BOOT SALES: (Rotary Club of Portobello). Sun. 26th March, 30th April, 28th May, 9am-2pm, Newcraighall Station car park. Cars arrive 8am, double pitch £10 - all fees to charity. Enquiries to 07789220583.

PORTOBELLO MARKET: Sat. 1st April, 9.30am-1.30pm, Brighton Park. Organic fruit, veg, plants, meat, bakery, crafts, coffee, snacks etc. For details or to book a stall, contact portobello.market@live.co.uk Future dates: 6th May and 3rd June.

PORTOBELLO HERITAGE TRUST, AGM: Monday 10th April, 7.30pm, Baptist Church Hall, 185 Portobello High Street, to be followed by a talk by Robin Jones titled *Portobello's Forgotten Pottery*. All welcome.

AMNESTY COFFEE MORNING & BOOK SALE: Sat. 22nd April, 10am-12noon, Baptist Church Hall. Contributions of books and baking will be welcomed.

POP-UP CRAFT FAIR, Sat. 29th April, 10am-2pm, Portobello Town Hall. Stalls with home-made jewellery, baby/bride hangers, cards and many more. A fundraiser for Walkthewalk, the cancer charity that organises the Moonwalk in Edinburgh. To book a stall call 0758 2609635

PORTOBELLO COMEDY NIGHT: Fri. 19th May, 8.30pm, Stand Up with Scott Agnew, The Dalriada, Promenade. Tickets £10 from brownpapertickets.com and the venue.

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY CHOIR: Weds, 7.15-9.30pm, Baptist Church Hall, 185 Portobello High St. £6/£4 concess. All welcome. For details www.portobellocommunitychoir.org

AFTERNOON DANCING: Ballroom, sequence, line dancing, with Duncan McBain, Weds/Fridays, 1-4pm, £3 incl. refreshments. Beach Lane Social Club.

THE SINGING GROUP, for people with dementia and their carers: Willowbrae Church Hall, 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, 2.15-4.15pm. For details call Helen on 0131 661 2344 or Katie on 0131 554 0213. email: SingingGroup@cma17.fsnet.co.uk

AMNESTY - LOCAL NEWS

SENIOR pupils and interested teachers at Portobello High School took part in our annual Greetings Card Campaign at the end of last year, sending over 150 cards of comfort and support to victims of human rights abuse in Peru, Turkey and Indonesia. The cards were also featured at the Amnesty stall at Portobello Market in December and, with 20 more from Quaker supporters, the eventual total sent was 317.

Contact made with Police Scotland, to express concern at its training of police and security personnel in countries with appalling human rights records, seemed re-assuring at the time. Serious concerns remain, however, after reports of such projects being pursued elsewhere.

In 2016 the group contributed £936.00 to the worldwide work of Amnesty UK. Our first fund-raiser of 2017 was a pub quiz on 10th February, which raised £250, and the next will be our coffee morning and book sale on Saturday 22nd April. [See What's On].

Why not come along and meet this vibrant group, considered by Amnesty Scotland to be among the most effective of Scottish groups? We meet in the vestry of Portobello and Joppa Parish Church on the second Monday of each month at 7.30pm and all are welcome, without commitment. For more information contact Theresa McMurtry at smiley.laughran@gmail.com or tel. 669 0295.

David Turner

LISTEN UP!

CAPTURING the sounds and stories of Portobello, Porty Podcast is a community project founded by broadcaster David Calder. From the first podcast featuring the Bellfield Church community buy-out, to interviews with Patsy Cook and Rev. Mike Marsden talking about the Basics Bank, to an insightful chat with MP Tommy Sheppard, each episode provides a fascinating insight into Portobello's dynamic community.

David says: "Podcasts are a great way of letting people

speaking for themselves. When you hear them talk about things that are happening in Portobello, you can hear the passion in their voices. Our plans for the future may involve the High School. I've already spoken to the Head Teacher about learners going out, finding interesting things happening in the community and recording podcasts about them. I'm really keen to involve the up-and-coming generation."

Find Porty Podcast at: porty.org.uk/news/porty-podcast

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AT THE WASH HOUSE

THE Wash House in Adelphi Grove, which is also known as Portobello Community Centre, has a brand new website, making bookings, enquiries and information much more accessible. See thewashhouse.org

Our volunteer management committee, which meets once a month on Wednesday evenings, would love some new members. Could this be you? Our job is to keep the Wash House a vibrant happening venue, with a range of activities for everyone. We welcome new ideas, collaborations, fresh energy and a willingness to play your part - big or small.

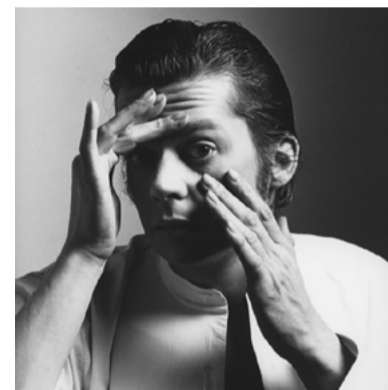
Get in touch to find out more through the website, or find us on Facebook (and please 'like' us). If you would like to pop in to The Wash House, you will find Val, our facilities co-ordinator there on a Tuesdays and Wednesdays, from 8am-5pm. For details of all classes and activities see the website or call 0131 669 8275.

Gica Loening



SCOTTISH PORTRAIT AWARDS

THE first Scottish Portrait Awards are open for entries from fine artists and photographers aged 18 and over and born, living or studying in Scotland. The winner of the SPA in Fine Art will receive £5,000, the winner of the Richard Coward SPA in Photography will receive £2,000, and other major prizes include a £3,000 portrait commission from the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland.



Self-portrait by Richard Coward

The SPA in Photography is held in memory of esteemed photographer Richard Coward, late of Portobello, who is especially known for his iconic black and white portraits from the 1960s, 70s and 80s - see richardcowardphotography.com.

Entries cost £10 per work and must be submitted in digital form by 31st May. For full details see the Scottish Portrait Awards website. Up to 60 of the best entries will feature in an exhibition in Edinburgh in November.



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NEW PORTOBELLO HIGH SCHOOL



THE pupils' pride in their new home is evident. Head boy Roy Urquhart, head girl Pippa Watson and other members of the S6 leadership team took time out from organising a non-uniform day, which raised £812.29 for Water Aid, to explain why they are delighted with their new school. "In the old school everyone was on different floors and it was difficult to share ideas and to mix with those not doing your subjects. Now we have space to learn outside the classrooms," said Roy. Pippa added: "Now that we have a cafeteria inside the school we don't have to walk down into Porty for lunch any more". It is named Rusty's Diner, in memory of the late janitor Graham Peacock, who lived and worked at the old school



Members of the S6 Leadership Team: Alexander Fraser, Roy Urquhart, Cameron McCowan and Pippa Watson

for 30 years.

Deputy head boy Alexander Fraser was delighted that the music teaching space has been doubled and says the new recording studio is about to prove a great hit with many students. Classrooms are equipped with the latest teaching aids and every pupil from S3 up is issued with an iPad.

Depute Head Teacher Margaret Williamson is a former pupil and has taught at PHS for many years. She looks back on the old tower block with a fondness for its contribution, but is excited by the opportunities that one of the most stunning schools in the country is now providing for Portobello's secondary pupils.

Nigel Archdale



AS well as providing community co-working spaces, Tribe Party hosts a variety of classes and workshops, listed here, to help you find time to lose yourself in what you love.

We believe that everyone should value themselves - why don't you come to our workshops Exploring What Matters, starting 22nd April.

Take care of your body, quiet your mind, and learn how to deal with stress as well as setting realistic goals, by joining in one of our yoga, Pilates and Alexander Technique classes. Look after your little ones by coming to baby and child First Aid training workshops.

Give yourself and your creative side a go at the monthly Fiddle Circle on the first Saturday of the month, and Flute Fling on the third Saturday; up-cycle some furniture on 25th/26th March, or dance your soul out at Tribal Bellydance on 25th March, 15th April and 27th May.

Come to the monthly Life Circle meet-ups, view things from a different perspective in a handstand workshop on 8th April, get help when you need it at the Timebank meeting on 29th April, get involved at TEDx Portobello in May, but most importantly of all ... surround yourself with good people. Find your Tribe here. And don't forget our Sunday Tribe Party Youth Theatre. See: tribeparty.org/events for further details.

Dani Trudeau
Tribe Party

NEW HEAD FOR TOWERBANK

MR Alasdair Friend was a head teacher of two schools in Hackney, before his 11-year headship of Leith Primary. In January 2017 he took over Towerbank and is greatly enjoying leading Edinburgh's only seaside school of 730 pupils.



Photos by Nigel Archdale

This term P7 pupils hosted an excellent Burns Supper. Lily, a P7 pupil carried the haggis and said: "I was glad that I did not sneeze on it!" Fellow pupil Rory said: "I liked watching my friends performing poems, dances and songs."

Other exciting events this term have included a visit from The Scottish Cup Trophy Tour, an expedition to Stirling Castle, swimming competitions and a residential camp at Loch Tay.

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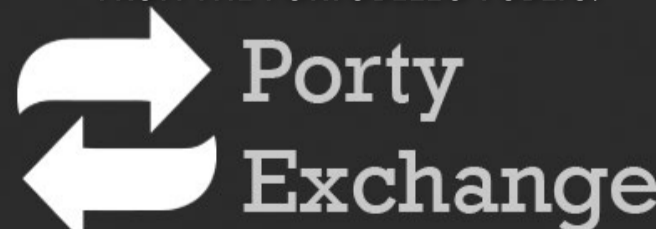
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IN THE SADDLE



LOCAL cycling club Portovelo has remained active over the winter. From November to February, our Sunday rides started later, at 9am rather than the usual 8am, which also meant they were generally a bit shorter. Many of us put away our lightweight 'summer' bikes in late autumn and switched to something better equipped for winter conditions - some even venturing out on single-speeds. The pace was a bit more relaxed, and the café stops a bit longer.

Since New Year we've

had a big surge in attendance, with groups of over 30 gathering at the bandstand. While most have come on the faster 'fitness' rides, many of our new recruits have been attracted by our 'intermediate' rides - and to meet the demand, we've been doing these every week instead of just monthly as we did last year.

For more information about forthcoming rides, and how to get involved, check our website porto-velo.com - New riders are always welcome.

Andrew Mylne

OPPOSITION BUILDS TO 5-A-SIDE PITCHES SELL-OFF

THE city council has put the Powerleague 5-a-side pitches and car park at Westbank Street on the market for development. The proceeds would go partly to the company, which holds the remainder of a 99-year council lease, and partly towards the redevelopment of Meadowbank Sports Centre. When the disused open-air pool was demolished in 1988, the council gave an undertaking that the site would remain in use for leisure, in perpetuity. Over 1,000 people signed a Change.org petition to the council opposing the sale, set up by local man Bob Jefferson. "Like everyone else who plays here, I'm devastated to learn that the council has put the site up for sale", he says. "With Scotland's obesity levels, we should not be closing important sport and leisure facilities like this".

ROWPORTY TO HOST REGATTA

ROWPORTY is to host a regatta on Saturday 10th June and teams from around the Firth of Forth are being invited to take part. The club chair, Emily Inglis, says: "The aim is to combine the two functions of a regatta - that everyone should have fun and there be lots of competition".

The community rowing club, based at Portobello Sailing and Kayaking Club, is hoping to combine these functions by holding a number of fun races. Plans are afoot to mix up the teams and 'rescue' a teddy bear from the buoys around which the boats will race, as well as for traditional team races organised by age, gender and a mixture of both.

"There is something for everyone", Emily says, "and we hope to attract passers-by to stop and have lunch or a cup of tea and a piece of cake at the boatyard, which is at the bottom of Bath Street".

There is still time to get involved. Go to rowporty.org and sign up for two free rowing sessions on a Sunday morning, and you could find yourself staffing a tea tent, on the start line setting the racers off, or even being a racer yourself.

Nick Finnis

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY FOOTBALL ACADEMY

FOR the last ten years, Portobello hasn't been represented in youth football, but thankfully this has now changed with the emergence of our club Portobello CFA. Formerly Edina Hibs CFC, the club transferred in August 2016 in preparation for the move to our new home at Portobello High School.

Our club has been hugely successful, with players going into the professional game, and in the last five years we have reached three Scottish Cup finals winning two, 33 local cup finals, and have won seven league titles, including five division one titles. This tradition has continued this year with both the under 16s and under 13s sides reaching the Scottish Cup semi-finals, so an excellent chance of making it Scottish Cup title number three!

We are delighted to be the community club that will represent Portobello using the school's excellent new facilities and becoming part of the local sport hub, giving the kids of the area and wider community a club to take pride in. The idea of the local sports hub is to have one main club representing Portobello and will include sports such as football, basketball, rugby and swimming. The facility is used by other groups and teams but each sport has a main team that is the priority user.

These are exciting times in terms of youth football for Portobello and we are recruiting across all age groups from aged 5+. You can find us on Facebook at Portobello Community Football Academy or contact Scott Bonar on 07863 104 344.

John Griffiths, Coach

Gemma's Gym

I HAVE to start by saying it is great to be back writing this column. It is amazing to be part of this community paper, and my aim is to continue to inspire and give helpful tips, not only on using gyms but on how to live a full, healthy and active life.

Recently I have been looking into how to make best use of my time by planning my day the night before, so that when I get up I don't have to think about what I am doing. This will create a habit which will help me achieve what I set out to do each day.

Once you make exercise part of your daily routine, it is amazing how soon you will start to feel the benefits. Feeling more energised is a key motivator as having more energy will make you more productive, and by the end of the day you will feel a sense of great achievement as you look back and see what you have done.

It is also crucial to reflect on the day's events, so that if some things didn't get completed, you don't dwell on them, but put them on tomorrow's list. That voice in your head is so powerful that you sometimes need to remind yourself of how great you are and that tomorrow is a brand new day and a fresh start.

Gemma Hopewell

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