

THE Portobello REPORTER

Quarterly: Winter 2019

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

LOCAL TRAFFIC CONTROL PROPOSALS



The road blocks at Brunstane Road are set to be removed once the Brighton Place sets replacement works are completed.

THE re-opening to traffic through Brighton Place has been delayed a few days as the works were extended to include resurfacing of Southfield Place, which was not in the original contract. Lothian Bus services can revert to their original routes on Monday 9th December. Congestion approaching the King's Road junction for traffic onto Sir Harry Lauder Road should ease, and the longer easterly diversion via Eastfield to Milton Road will be removed.

Four weeks into the Brighton Place closure, residents in Brunstane Road were informed by the City of Edinburgh Council that their road would be closed at the railway bridge, under an emergency traffic order, for health and safety reasons. Vehicles of all sizes were causing gridlock in Brunstane Road and extensive tailbacks into Milton Road. This congestion was also significantly impeding traffic at the Milton Road/Sir Harry Lauder Road/A1 junction.

During the unexpected closure of Brunstane Road the council invited the residents of Brunstane and Coillesdene to an information event, held last month, which was very well attended. Most of the local councillors also met separately with residents in both Brunstane and Coillesdene. The council used this consultation to hear the views of a large number of residents from across the 'Joppa Triangle', the area bordered by Milton Road, Joppa Road and Eastfield, and Brunstane Road, which includes all the roads within Coillesdene.

The council is now reviewing all the issues that have arisen from this consultation, as part of a city-wide initiative to calm the passage of all vehicles and reduce the impact of pollution in the interests of everyone's health and safety, whilst also recognising the popularity of Brunstane Road as a link road within Portobello.

The temporary closure of Brunstane Road will cease when Brighton Place is fully reopened.

FIRST WORDS ... LAST LINES



FROM the first words to the last lines, Portobello Book Festival 2019 was a great success with over 1,500 attendances at its 27 events. The first words set up the opening night of performances by Dave Francis, Jo McFarlane, Alex Callaghan, James Spence and composer and musician Gareth Williams, who is in the photo with cellist Justyna Jablonska, and who played his specially composed songs on the theme of *First Words ... Last Lines*. The last words were a fascinating discussion on the theme of *Shifting Sands? Making change make sense*, with contributions from Brendan McGeever, Lesley McAra and Arek Dakessian, chaired by Ian Martin.

EDINBURGH EAST CANDIDATES

THE UK General Election takes place on Thursday 12th December. The following are candidates for the Edinburgh East constituency: Sheila Gilmore, Scottish Labour Party; Claire Miller, Scottish Green Party; Eleanor Price, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party; Jill Reilly, Scottish Liberal Democrat Party; and Tommy Sheppard, Scottish National Party.

Hustings organised by Portobello Community Council will take place on Thursday 5th December at 7pm in the Baptist Church on Portobello High Street. All five candidates will take part.

'PITZ' LATEST

IN 2017, the City of Edinburgh Council announced its intention to sell the 'Pitz' Powerleague site at Westbank Street for development. The council was to receive about two-thirds of the proceeds, which would go towards the re-development of the Meadowbank Sports Centre site, with the balance going to Powerleague, which has a long lease on the 'Pitz' site.

Public consultation on the proposal, under the Community Empowerment Act, was led by local group Action Westbank and the community's preferred options were relayed to the council.

Powerleague has recently invested in improving the facilities, with new energy-efficient floodlights, a brand new 7-a-side pitch and a replacement 5-a-side pitch.

The council's Spatial Policy Manager, Will Garrett, said: "The Council appreciates the investment that Powerleague has made in the site. However, the Council is still considering its options for the site and is committed to working with the local community to achieve the best outcomes for Portobello".

COMMUNITY IN ACTION

'GUERRILLA gardeners' have taken over a patch of land near the bridge in Brunstane Road, and the triangular patch in Morton Street. It was all started by local man Chris Cowie, who says:

"Soon after I retired two years ago I started on the Brunstane Road patch. Some neighbours came to help, others donated

plants and the project grew from there. When I'm working there people say how much they admire it when they're going to work or walking the dog.

"Then just over a year ago, after painting over graffiti on the police box at the Morton Street triangle, I was planting daffodils when a neighbour came along with some bulbs.

She contacted other local people and the result was a big 'plant in' with lots of local residents, from children to grannies. Passers-by have offered seeds and flowers, shrubs and cuttings have been offered on Porty People and Grow Porty and Portobello Amenity Society has donated £50 for more bulbs.

"A local man gave us an old mower, so we can cut the grass, another made wooden slats for the big bench and someone else donated a smaller one; they now sit either side of the rose bed.

The difference made to both sites by the neighbourhood coming together is tremendous. My personal thanks to all".

PORTY PROFILE No. 74 MARGARET DRYSDALE

ART-PHOTOGRAPHER, arts and creative learning development worker and founder of the photography collective Women in Focus in Edinburgh (WIFIE), Margaret Drysdale has lived on the Prom with her partner Peter for over 25 years. Their home is full of examples of Margaret's unique inventive work, using scanners and collage to create delicate images reflecting her connection with the environment.



Photo by Peter E. Ross

Margaret grew up with her brother and sisters on a smallholding in Strathyre, where she says she had a wonderful childhood. "We had cows, hens, ducks and eventually horses once we twisted our fathers arm enough," she says, "but if you grew up in a small village then you are going to leave".

Margaret came to Edinburgh to study photography at Napier where she met Peter. They established a photography business and were also photographers for the Edinburgh International Film Festival. Margaret began to teach photography to women's groups, eventually leading to a career in community education. She worked for the council as a community worker based at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for over 20 years where, she says, she developed art projects to raise awareness of mental health issues and address stigma. In her current role, based in South West Edinburgh, she works with isolated people on projects such as Bikes for Refugees.

While studying for a degree in Community Education, a placement at the Adult Learning Project (ALP) gave Margaret an idea. "I was teaching Asian, African and mental health groups, but was keen to see if there was a need for women's groups without all these different labels". After much research, she founded WIFIE. "My aim for WIFIE was a space for women from all walks of life to have a voice". Seventeen years on and the collective has had many exhibitions raising awareness of women's issues through photography. They exhibited *Stop Trafficking* in the Porty Light Box in 2016 and are currently planning another installation as part of Passion 2020 Easter. "WIFIE also provides me with a space to be creative. On our website you can see *Flowers Don't Cut It*, which is quite typical of my work", she says.

One of Margaret's favourite ways to unwind is hill walking, and she enjoys taking visitors up Ben A'an in the Trossachs. "It's a tough climb, but when you get to the top you get fantastic views." She says that in a way Portobello reminds her of her upbringing in a small village. "It's not just part of a big city, it has its own identity, and has a beach as well"!

Karen Combe

ON THE BEAT

THE summer was a very busy period for us and we were kept on our toes with Operation Drift on Portobello Promenade, providing reassurance and assistance to the large numbers of people using the area.

The colder weather and darker nights are creeping in and, as ever, we ask that you keep properties locked and don't leave items on display within cars or in windows. Take those Christmas presents into the house and hide them instead of leaving them in the car.

Operation Crackle was in full flow from Friday 1st to the early hours of 6th November. Joint partnership working with multiple agencies involved reassurance and robust removal of any potential bonfires and anti-social behaviour.

I am currently stuck indoors and not allowed out to play, due to an injury for which I am awaiting an operation. My colleague PC Amanda McIntyre has joined us for a short period and will be looking after you in the meantime, so please feel free to get in touch.

Please pop in to one of our surgeries, which are held on the last Friday of every month in Portobello Library from 1.00-2.00pm.

PC Gemma Knox

NEW COMMUNITY COUNCIL IN PLACE

THERE were insufficient nominations to necessitate an election for a new Portobello Community Council; the following 11 individual members were therefore appointed, of a maximum of 14: Elaine Murray, Craig McIntyre, Lee Kindness, Ruth Wallace, Esther Gray, Miranda Hurst, Michael Leeman, Paul Goodwin, John Cleland, Fraser McNaughton and Lauren Berrie.

Six nominated representatives of local groups were also appointed, of a maximum of seven: Brighton and Rosefield Residents Association (Catherine Etoe), Duddingston Primary School Parent Council (Rhys Nealon), The Wash House (representative to be advised), Towerbank Primary School Parent Council (Geoff Lynn), Joppa Tennis Courts Club (Marjorie Thomas) and Portobello Amenity Society (Stephen Hawkins).

Meetings, which are open to the public, are held at the Baptist Church Café, Portobello High Street, on the last Monday of each month (except December and July) at 7.30pm. Agendas, minutes and notices are posted on www.portobelloc.org and in Portobello Library. For an item to be put on an agenda, email: secretary@portobelloc.org or write c/o the library.

NEWS IN BRIEF

LIGHT ISSUES: If you know of a street light that needs repaired, let the council know. It can take up to 20 working days for a street light to be fixed, so the sooner you do it the better. Go online to www.edinburgh.gov.uk and search 'street light repair'. You can choose the light from an interactive map, and ask for an update too.

LOONY DOOK: The annual (unofficial) Porty Loony Dook will take place on New Year's Day at 1pm on the beach beside the Espy. Hundreds of folk will hurl themselves into the Firth of Forth, some in fancy dress, to bring in 2020 in style.

PORTOBELLO PROMATHON: THIS popular 4-mile race along the Promenade is in its 33rd year. It takes place on 1st January 2020 at 10.30am, starting and finishing at Tumbles. A one-mile Fun Run for juniors starts at 10am. For entry and other details see www.entrycentral.com/event/101759. Proceeds will once again be donated to Motor Neurone Disease Scotland.

VOLUNTEERS are needed at the Salvation Army charity shop in Portobello High Street.

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WE would like to begin with a big “thank you” from the library to the organisers of the Portobello Book Festival for delivering yet another great event in October. Highlights of this year’s festival included banter from Ian Rankin and Doug Johnston, and events featuring Michel Faber and James Robertson. We are proud to be one of the main venues of this excellent festival and are already looking forward to next year. Congratulations to all involved in its organisation.



We are working towards setting up a monthly audio book group. We would make use of Edinburgh Libraries’ downloadable audiobook collection and feel that such a group would appeal most to readers who are visually impaired. If you are interested in joining, please contact me at the library.

Macmillan Cancer Support has changed the times of its information and support drop-in service in the library. A volunteer is now available every Monday from 10.30am to 2.30pm and will offer a listening ear and help you find the information you need. All services are free for people affected by cancer.

As Christmas holidays approach we would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and remind you that we run one Bookbug session at 10.30am on Wednesdays during holiday periods. We normally run two sessions at 10.15am and 11.15am. Our Saturday Bookbug sessions remain unchanged at 11.30am. For those who are unfamiliar with Bookbug, sessions are free, fun and friendly events for babies, toddlers and their carers to enjoy songs and rhymes together. All 0-5 year-olds and their parents/carers are welcome

The Portobello Book Group meets on the first Monday of every month and over the winter will be discussing the following books:
2nd December: *Second Hand Time* by Svetlana Alexievich.
6th January: *The Noise of Time* by Julian Barnes.
3rd February: *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides.

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

Paul Hudson

IT’S NOT JUST A JOB, IT’S A FAMILY

CITIZEN’S Advice Edinburgh (CAE) has had a bureau in Portobello since the 1970s, and has been based at its current location in Bath Street since 2005. Over the years thousands of locals have benefited from the free advice given by its volunteers, who make up the vast majority of advisors, on a wide range of problems including welfare benefits, debt, housing, immigration, employment and consumer rights.

According to the manager, Sigita Danil, people don’t always understand CAE’s status. “They think we are part of the government but we are not, we are a charity. Because of that they think we are all paid and don’t realise how much is done by volunteers.”

Sheila Shillitto, who has been a volunteer for over 12 years, enjoys her work. “People come with all these various problems and I just love solving them. You can see the relief when a client who has been struggling alone gets the support of an advisor fighting their corner.”



Photo by Peter E Ross

From left to right, Sigita Danil the Portobello office manager, and volunteers Sheila Shillitto and Matthew Boyle.

Anna was made homeless following the conviction of her partner for serious offences. Lumbered with debt and having been in temporary accommodation with her three sons for six years, she turned to CAE. Money Advisor and the Portobello team had her debts reduced or written off and supported her as she rebuilt her life. “If it hadn’t been for CAE and Sigita, I fear for where I might be right now,” she told *The Reporter*: “They are unsung heroes, only they don’t wear uniforms. Now I have a fantastic new flat and have managed to secure a wee job.”

Sigita, who started out as a volunteer and worked her way through a variety of roles before becoming the manager in the Portobello office, says, “It’s not just a job, it’s more of an extended family. You meet people from so many backgrounds, different experiences and life stories. There’s so much to learn from each and every one and then you can help others”

“If you want to make a difference, come and join us,” says Sigita. You can contact her on 0131 510 5510 ex 1034 or email portobello@caed.org.uk or just pop into the office.

Peter E Ross

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FOOD BANK FOR PETS



EDINBURGH Dog and Cat Home (EDCH), situated at the Seafield end of the promenade, has appointed its first in-house vet in its 136-year history. Dr Bridget O'Farrell will be partnered with local veterinary practices Abercorn and Braid Vets, providing additional support for the hundreds of dogs and cats that pass through the home.

Also new to the animal charity is the introduction of a pet foodbank. It is estimated that one million people live in poverty in Scotland, and feeding a pet is often at the bottom of the list. EDCH pet foodbank will provide wet and dry food, collars, leads, bowls and bedding to owners who need this service. Lindsay Fyffe-Jardine, Deputy to the CEO and Director of Operations at EDCH said: "The Home takes in hundreds of dogs and cats in need of a second chance, however, there are times where some of these animals are coming from loving families who can no longer cope with their care. We hope by establishing our own dedicated pet foodbank that we can keep some of those much-loved dogs and cats with their loved ones while continuing to support those in need."

Neil Braidwood

BY the time you read this you may be thoroughly fed up with the General Election and the claims made by politicians on what they are going to do to make our lives

better. But for the first time ever, the majority of people have said the climate crisis will influence how they vote. The climate crisis beats all other major issues in importance, as the United Nations has stated that we have a decade to cut global emissions in half. That's not long, just two elections under the Westminster Fixed-term Parliaments Act.

You may have recently completed a survey about which local sustainability initiatives can be progressed, and support is such that a workshop is to be held on Sunday 8th December at Bellfield from 2-4pm. PEDAL is supporting this and all are welcome. It's appropriate that Bellfield is the venue, as planning permission has now been granted for solar panels to be erected on the hall roof.

On another local, cheerful note, the Donkeyfield Community Orchard celebrated its tenth birthday at the end of October, with the Apple Day proving to be a great get-together. Thanks to all who came, making it a joyous event.

Stephen Hawkins

PEDAL - Portobello Transition Town

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with Susan Burns



A more relaxed attitude to lawn care, such as leaving grass to grow that bit longer and not using pesticides, herbicides or insecticides, makes lawns a great food resource for bees. A few flowering indigenous weeds will also help butterfly numbers - cuckoo flower for Orange Tips, for example. Who wasn't impressed with the Painted Lady butterflies we had this summer?

Seed catalogues are a great source of information, so include in your order a few plants recommended for bees and butterflies. Of the perennials, Michaelmas daisies attract butterflies and hoverflies in great numbers just when they need a top-up of food to overwinter and Buddleia, the butterfly bush, does its job as described. Only cut down perennials if they are looking mushy; I've used a battery hedge-trimmer or sharp shears in February to cut down dry stems.

Watch out for emerging bulbs and maybe cover with a bucket or similar to avoid standing on them. Split up snowdrops; I do mine either when they first emerge, are in flower or when flowering has finished but they are still green. They can be potted up easily, as a gift.

Use dreary days to tidy the greenhouse or poly-tunnel ready for the growing season. Empty the compost heap before clearing the borders and use the lovely stuff, rich with life, as a mulch. Prioritise the vegetable garden, then anything newly planted.

NATURE NOTES FROM PORTOBELLO

THE simple act of winding your clocks back an hour always seems to mark settling in for the oncoming winter. However, this can become one of the best times of the year to view wildlife. Leafless trees and shorter days mean everything is done more visibly and in fewer daylight hours. It's a great time of year to watch for Kingfishers. Their colours stand out against the muted palette and they travel further in search of fishing spots. It's worth looking along the Figgate Burn, and not just in parks. Some of my best Kingfisher views have been on Adelphi Place.

Finding a single little bird can be frustrating, so it can be easier to seek out flocks. Every year there's an influx from Scandinavia. Fieldfares and Redwings will make themselves known, but Waxwings are the undoubted stars. Portobello is an early landing point, and in recent years Abercorn Park has been amongst the first locations I've seen reports. These little punks give themselves away with constant chatter, as they pass from tree to tree stripping



Photo by Anthony Robson

them of berries, often oblivious to the humans watching nearby. A few have already arrived in the UK, so keep your eyes peeled.

Anthony Robson

Cllr Kate Campbell

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LIFE RECORD

WHEN a friend showed me this photograph of a 78rpm (revolutions per minute) record he had bought it raised two questions. Why did the record have a stamp on it and where had Portobello Gramophone and Music Depot been?

Investigations reveal that the stamps were fixed to records as a form of receipt by the recording companies to show they had paid the mechanical copyright royalties due under various Copyright Acts and General Regulations. This evolved from stamping printed music with the composer's signature to show copyright. These stamps were first introduced in the United Kingdom in July 1912 and had stopped being used by 1939. Records were generally made of shellac between about 1898 and the 1950s, after which vinyl was used. The record, pictured, by Ambrose and his Orchestra was produced about 1930.

Post Office Directories show that Miss M.E.G. Moir ran the depot at 223 Portobello High Street



The record bought from Portobello Gramophone and Music Depot with the stamp enlarged in the inserted photo.

from 1926 until 1938. Previous to this it had been Elsmere Photographic Studio. 223 no longer exists, but was located on Portobello High Street beside Windsor Place Church, where the new flats are now.

Who was Miss Moir? Her home address was given as 25E Abercorn Terrace from 1926 until 1933, with her business address given as her home

address from then until 1938. Mary Eliza Graham (M.E.G.) Moir was born on 17th May 1885 at 5 Leith Street Terrace, Edinburgh to Robert Moir, widower, a silver engraver, and Amelia Moir, widow of Alexander Burn, a mercantile clerk. Robert and Amelia were married on 27th December 1880. Robert was 52 years old and Amelia was 34. Her maiden name was Graham. Robert must have

been a skilled craftsman, probably making them a middle-class family. This might explain how Meg, as she seems to have been known, could afford to establish such a grandiose-sounding business. It was well stocked. Not only did it sell records and sheet music, but also an assortment of musical instruments, musical novelties and accessories.

It also appears to have been well known across a wider area than Portobello. Evidence of this is given in Tony Smith's biography of footballer Gordon Smith, where it states: "Since moving down to the big city, Gordon would browse all the record stores. In nearby Portobello he would visit Meg Moir's record shop ..."

Meg's death in the Royal Infirmary, from cancer, was recorded on 5th February 1938. She is described on her death certificate as a Music Dealer and single. She seems to have been a successful business woman, with customers coming from a wide area to buy their records and other musical requisites.

Margaret Munro

UP IN SMOKE

WHEN they were out walking, the children from one of the local nurseries often asked what the kilns were for, so one of the nursery employees asked Margaret Munro, Portobello Heritage Trust, to go along to explain. A very interesting session discussed their use as 'ovens' to 'bake' the pottery, with the concept of coal-fired heat grasped as being similar to the barbeques their Dads had in the garden. A learning experience for all!

JOPPA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

JOPPA Residents Association (JRA) was formed in 2014. It is open to all households in the Joppa area and welcomes new members. Our current main concern is the increase and speed of traffic through the Joppa triangle during the temporary closures of Brighton Place and Brunstane Road at the rail bridge. We have also addressed security problems, the condition and drainage of roads, pavement weeds, closure of Joppa toilets, and graffiti on street furniture, buildings and Morton Street footbridge, to try to make our area more pleasant and safer for all.

To join JRA (£1 per household per annum), please complete our contact form on www.jopparesidentsassociation.org.uk or write to JRA, c/o 38 Coillesdene Crescent, Edinburgh EH15 2JL.

Brian Cramb

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What's On

EXHIBITION about Portobello-born artist, Mary Cameron: Life in Paint, 2nd Nov to 15th March 2020, City Art Centre. Admission free. For details see www.bit.ly/MaryCamExhib.

CHRISTMAS FAIR: Sat 7th Dec, 2-4pm at Towerbank Primary School. Santa's Grotto, games, stalls, refreshments.

PORTOBELLO MARKET: Sat 7th Dec, 9.30am-1.30pm, Brighton Park. Organic fruit/veg, plants, meat, bakery, crafts, coffee, snacks. For details: portobello.market@live.co.uk. Next date, 1st Feb.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE, Friends of Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home: Sat 7th Dec, 11am-2pm, Portobello Community Centre (The Wash House). Lots of stalls and gifts for all the family. Adults 50p, children free, unaccompanied children 20p.

PORTY CEILDH: Sun 29th Dec, 7.30pm, Bellfield, Bellfield St, with Da Hooley ceilidh band and caller. Bar. Fundraiser for Bellfield. Tickets - £12/conc. £10; children 5-17, £5; U-5s free (with ticket) - from The Skylark and at www.ceilidhdanceband.scot

BURNS SUPPER for Christian Aid: Sat 18th Jan, 7pm, Portobello & Joppa Parish Church Hall, Tickets £20 from church office.

PAMOJA FASHION: Quality Clothes/Accessories, first Sat of the month, 10am-1pm, St John's Church Hall, Brighton Place. Supporting partnerships between schools and communities in Scotland and Tanzania.

SING IN THE CITY rock'n'pop choir, The Wash House, Thursdays, 10am-noon. For a free trial contact hello@singinthecity.com No audition required.

EDINBURGH TOOL LIBRARY: Borrowing sessions and workshops, Thurs 5-8pm; Sat 11am-2pm. Tribe Porty, 19 Windsor Place.

DANCING: Ballroom, sequence, line. Beach Lane Social Club, Wed/Fri 1.00-3.30pm; Thurs 2-4pm. £3 incl. refreshments.

AMNESTY - LOCAL NEWS

THE AMNESTY International's (AI) Portobello Group continues to be highly active in gathering public support for human rights issues and cases of injustice across the world – of which there is, sadly, no shortage.

At the group's monthly stall at the Portobello Market, one issue that drew much positive response was AI's campaign to encourage the Home Secretary to keep the issue of refugee families in the UK visibly on the agenda, particularly with regard to currently restrictive legislation which hampers the re-unification of incoming refugee family members.

Dozens of shoppers wrote messages on this issue on a large card, which was presented to local MP Tommy Sheppard, ultimately to be conveyed to the Home Secretary.

At September's Portobello Village Show, the group collected 140 signatures supporting the right to work for asylum seekers. A further 17 people connected with local football left their contact details in connection with AI's "Football Welcomes" campaign. There was also an AI presence at October's Portobello Book Festival, with a display of posters spotlighting the plight of "disappeared" journalists in Eritrea.

AI Portobello Group's meetings are held on the second Monday of the month in Portobello and Joppa Parish Church hall (formerly St Phillips: entrance on Brunstane Rd North) from 7.30-9pm. All welcome

Jim Gilchrist



CHRISTMAS AT TRIBE PORTY

TRIBE Porty has partnered with Urban Markets to bring a high quality and regular makers' market to Portobello. On the first Sunday of each month there will be two floors of makers, music, street food, workshops from the Edinburgh Tool Library and bike services from Velow Bikeworks. Entry is free and the market runs from 12-5pm. If you want to apply for a stall, please email urbanmarket@scenescotland.co.uk.

Tribe Porty has also just launched its new website www.tribeporty.org. Have a look at the Our Tribe page to see some of the members, and you can easily find out what is happening on the What's On page.

There are also co-working gift vouchers to purchase, which is a great way to support a freelancer to connect into a community. Email more@tribeporty.org to find out more. It is a great time of year to gift a hot-desking package.

Dani Trudeau



BELLFIELD

BELLFIELD EVENTS

BELLFIELD continues to be a vibrant community hub, with weekly classes including Pilates, Tai chi, karate, movement classes, singing classes and of course Edinburgh Youth Theatre, as well as recently started craft sessions and Spanish classes.

It has also played host to some special events this autumn, including Lost Map's Strange Invitation, an all-day live music hoolie headlined by Vanishing Twin and Pictish Trail. Lost Map return on 21st December with Kid Canaveral's Christmas Baubles, which promises live music, DJs, food, drink and festive fun.

Continuing the Christmas theme, Portobello Christmas Fair brings some festive cheer to the hall on 1st December, and Edinburgh Grand Opera present a mixed programme of seasonal music that evening. On 6th December, Freedom from Torture Edinburgh Supporters' Group will stage a fundraiser, All I Want for Christmas Cabaret, featuring Mairi Campbell and Rosie Nimmo. For information about this and all other events at Bellfield visit bellfield.scot

Sarah Cockburn

WHILE flicking through the current Wash House programme, I spotted an activity for half the letters of the alphabet, so here goes: Art class, Badminton, Christian group, Dog training, Fiddle, Gentle exercise, Knitting, Lingotots, Massage, Pilates, Singing, Taiko drumming, Zumba. If there are any groups out there whose names begin with E, H, I, J, N, O, Q, R, U, V, W, X or Y, we need you!



The centre is looking bright and cheery with its newly painted hall and foyer and it's busier than ever with the sad closure of the Town Hall. We are looking forward to being the local polling station for the General Election on 12th December, and following hot on its heels is Santa's Grotto and Christmas Fair on December 14th at noon.

If you want to book the Wash House venue, then contact us at www.thewashhouse.org and we'll be back in touch as soon as possible. Meanwhile see you there on 14th December.

Check out Porty Wash House on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/portywashhouse) as well.

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TOMMY'S TALES

THE end of the year is always a fun time. So many of the best holidays and traditions take place from October through December, like Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and, of course, Christmas. It's a time when people are happy; who doesn't love to go guising?

In Portobello High School, so many great events happen that there are too many to list. Recently, S6 pupils enjoyed a Halloween Party, dressed as creepy ghosts and ghouls, Superheroes and pop culture icons. On a more sombre note, we held a Remembrance evening, remembering those who lost their lives in wars past and present. This included drama, songs, videos and speeches. The year ends with Christmas parties and community carol singing.

The highlight of the end of year events without a doubt is 'Porty Does Strictly 2019'. This is an inter-disciplinary learning event that involves almost every year group in the school. The teachers and sixth year pupils go head to head in their respective pairs, learning to dance in the hope of winning the grand prize glitter ball. Our jazz band play the music for the opening, closing and interlude sections. Costumes are made by our textile department, the media classes make introduction videos showing behind the scenes interviews, while the younger pupils make posters and programmes. Our senior pupils introduce and stage-manage the evening.

There are amazing (sometimes it feels like expert level) dancers for those who can appreciate them, and even if you aren't really into dancing and music, there's the novelty of watching your maths teacher dance the cha-cha and your Depute Head a jive.

Happy holidays, and Happy New Year!

Tommy Hurrell S2

WRITER IN RESIDENCE AT TOWERBANK SCHOOL



Mike Nicholson, Writer in Residence, shares his love of reading and writing with P4 pupils Isla and Eddie at Towerbank School.

"THE library by the sea" is how Towerbank Primary School's writer in residence, Mike Nicholson, describes this impressive new facility at the school.

Mike is a local children's author whose work includes the popular *Museum Mystery Squad* series. Mike's sessions with the pupils are held in the library and around the school. His six-month residency began in June with Primary 7's writing reflective pieces on their time at Towerbank before moving on to their secondary schools. It concludes in December with many pupils having learnt how to expand their writing skills "through workshops

involving the creation of class stories, practicing writer's tricks and exploring how different genres allow the same title to be different stories".

Mike feels that this is something that not only opens the children's (reading and writing minds) to new horizons but also provides their teachers with seed-corn, helping embed the enjoyment of writing as much as that of their reading.

Mike's residency has been provided by The Scottish Library Improvement Fund. Mike is confident that some of these children will return to Towerbank, one day, as writers in their own right.

Nigel Archdale

NEW PARK OFFERS OUTDOOR FUN FOR ALL



Photo by Andrew Mylne

THE new Treverlen Park opened its gates to the public on 7th November. It contains a large activity net, a skatepark and a selection of concrete rock outcrops within a landscaped area that includes a stand of birch trees, grass, paths and benches. The opening of the park fulfils a commitment made by the City of Edinburgh Council to replace some of the green space lost in Portobello Park to the new Portobello High School, by making a new park where the old High School building used to be.

The main entrance to the new park is on Hamilton Terrace, on the site of the old St John's Primary School, demolished at the end of last year. The other end of the park adjoins the replacement school on Duddingston Road.

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IN THE SADDLE



Photo by David Shand

A late summer tradition in Portovelo is the longer ‘challenge’ ride to take us onto unfamiliar roads beyond our normal 30-mile radius. In previous years, these have taken us as far afield as Talla reservoir, Kelso, Dollar and Falkland. This year, for the first time, we had three groups with a different challenge for each. In mid-September, the ‘fitness-plus’ group did an epic 134-mile ride south-west to Wanlockhead and the Lowther Hills, returning over the Devil’s Beeftub; while the intermediate group did a 70-mile loop into Fife via the Kincardine and

Forth Road bridges. A fortnight later, the ‘fitness’ group rode east to Spott, south to Chirnside and back over the Lammermuirs – exactly 100 miles.

From December through to February, our Sunday rides will start at the later time of 9am, before reverting to 8am starts in March.

On 13th December, we’ll be celebrating the year’s achievements with our Christmas meal, quiz and awards ceremony at the Espy. For information about this and all the club’s activities, go to porto-velo.com.

Andrew Mylne

PORTOBELLO ASC

SOME of Portobello Amateur Swimming Club’s top age-group swimmers spent the October holiday at a hot weather training camp at Club la Santa in the wonderful sunshine on the Spanish island of Lanzarote, preparing themselves for this season’s Meets.

Portobello ASC’s Club Championships are about to start and will culminate with an Awards Dinner at Duddingston Golf Club in January 2020.

We are looking for donations for our Mad March Meet, which is the club’s major fundraising event. Anything will be welcome, even reams of paper for the start of each session, and if any business would like to advertise in the programme, we’d welcome that as well - Please call 07596669778.

Cath Fleming

HEALTH MATTERS

SLEEP MATTERS

WHEN people come to the surgery, they often ask what they can do to look after their health; it is a good question and one answer is to sleep more. ‘Beauty sleep’ is not an urban myth, we are indeed more attractive if we sleep well. But what really matters is our health, as sleep is our brain’s cleansing system. The Sleep Foundation says that less than six hours sleep is not enough and suggests that there is an epidemic of ‘insufficient sleep opportunity’. There is evidence that this is bad for memory, mood and blood pressure, and increases the risk of dementia and cancer. In fact, when the clocks go forward in spring the number of heart attacks rises by 24 per cent.

What can we do? Firstly, establish a pattern and keep to the same bedtime, allowing enough hours of sleep. Try having a soothing hot bath, and cut down on alcohol and caffeine as they can impair sleep quality. Dimming lights sends a signal to the brain to trigger the sleep process, and it is also a good idea to keep screens out of our bedrooms. And for insomnia, where anxiety is the commonest cause, don’t just lie there tossing and turning, get up and go back to bed only when you are sleepy.

Shakespeare knew a thing or two and said of sleep that it is the “chief nourisher in life’s feast”.

Dr Portia Bella

PORTOBELLO GOLF COURSE SAFE - FOR NOW

IN 2018, Edinburgh Leisure (EL) announced that it was considering reconfiguring the 9-hole Portobello golf course into a 6-hole facility, including foot golf and frisbee golf. Following public consultation by EL and a petition organised by Portobello Golf Club for the 9-hole course to remain, however, EL has announced that the course is to stay as it is for the foreseeable future, with no change to the 9-hole configuration.

Lyall Scott, of the Portobello Golf Course

Action Group (PGCAG), says: “The action group would like to thank everyone for their support and encouragement. We will ensure that you are kept up to date with any new developments, good or bad. All affiliated clubs appreciate our responsibility to progress any opportunities to increase usage at our local community golf course. PGCAG will continue to meet to assist where possible with any initiatives”.

KEEP ON RUNNING

PARKRUN continues to draw large numbers to Figgate Park every Saturday morning, despite the cold. Volunteers turn up early to check the course and ensure it’s safe. It has only had to be cancelled twice this year – once in August because of an unsafe bridge and once in October after heavy rain, when the burn was close to overflowing across the route.

Portobello parkrun has been going since April 2015, but parkrun itself is quite a bit older, having started in Bushy Park, London, in 2004. There are now over 600 parkruns across the UK, including over 50 in Scotland, with over 150,000 people taking part each week. For some people, part of the fun is in collecting venues, dropping in on parkruns wherever they happen to be – even overseas (there are now parkruns across most of Europe, the USA, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Japan).

For Portobello parkrunners, the nearest alternatives are at Cramond, Vogrie, Tranent or a newly-started one at the Oriam sports centre at Heriot-Watt University. But if you want to join the parkrun family with the minimum of travelling, Figgate Park remains the best place to go on a Saturday morning.

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