

# THE Portobello REPORTER

Quarterly: Winter 2020

Delivered in and around Portobello; circulation 12,500  
Also available online on [www.porty.org.uk](http://www.porty.org.uk)

40<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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ISSUE

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The independent voice of Portobello

Your Community Newspaper  
produced by local people since 1980.

## 40 YEARS OF LOCAL NEWS

*THE Portobello Reporter* started its fortieth year full of optimism with the launch of its first ever colour issue, which hit the streets at the beginning of March. Little did we know then what was to transpire. When Covid-19 arrived, and the country went into lockdown, the editorial group decided not to publish a summer issue since it was unclear whether the printer would be able to print, the deliverers allowed to deliver or the advertisers want to advertise. Things clearly haven't improved much but we are learning how to navigate the restrictions and so are able to publish this winter.

The first issue appeared in June 1980 and was produced by a dedicated group of volunteers, much as it is today. In that first issue we reported that the then Edinburgh District Council proposed 'widespread changes' to Portobello that included what was to become Telferton Industrial Estate, Sir Harry Lauder Road and Portobello East Industrial Estate. Those developments radically changed the face of Portobello, as the developments on the former Scottish Power and Standard Life sites are today.

*The Portobello Reporter* hopes that it will be able to continue to chronicle the lives of the community, publish articles about its history and record the developments in the area for another forty years, when Portobello will no doubt look very different than it is doing today.

## ALL AT SEA - ARTWALK 2020



Photo: Geri Loup Nolan

**THIS** year's Art Walk Porty (AWP) event *All at Sea* took place over three weekends in the autumn with a programme of 10 socially distanced outdoor exhibitions, installations, talks and projections. Many of the events reflected the current situation, such as Geri Loup Nolan's beach installation *Present in this Place* (see photo) which examined isolation, wellness and containment, and the

project *Growing in Isolation* by AWP resident artists Susie Wilson and Felicity Bristow.

*All at Sea* culminated on the Prom with a film screening projected onto Harbour Green flats. AWP curator Rosy Naylor says: "I put out a call for films on websites like Creative Scotland and we had 75 entries from all around the world, but I could only pick 15. Films like *Plague* from a Venetian filmmaker were

particularly relevant."

Another AWP project, *The Neighbouring Orchard* created by artist Annie Lorde, is gathering momentum. One hundred people signed up to plant a tree in their gardens to create a socially distanced orchard whose harvest will be shared. Rosy says: "We hope to have a workshop in the spring on how to look after the apple trees, depending on the rules for gatherings."

Rosy says that despite the redesign of AWP to comply with Covid-19 regulations, the event was a success. "We do hope we can have an open studios event next year as local artists did miss out on the opportunity to sell their work. The good news is that we have been granted further funding from Creative Scotland to support our projects into next year and continue the artists residencies."

## SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES

**FOR** 40 years *The Portobello Reporter* has been financed solely through advertising from local businesses. The make-up of our high street has changed significantly during that time, with the closure of shoe shops, clothes shops and hardware, for example, due partly to supermarket competition, major road works and lack of parking. Now, Covid-19 is taking its toll, but if we all did at least some of our shopping locally, and used local services, we could help ensure that the high street still has a future.

## PORTOBELLO CENTRAL SEEKS GRANTS

**PORTOBELLO** Town Hall was closed last year by City of Edinburgh Council but offered for lease in February 2020. Since then a new community-based organisation, Portobello Central, has been consulting Portobello people about what they want from a re-opened Town Hall. A website and Facebook page have gained over 1000 supporters and collected a huge range of ideas and offers. The key change would be to create a charitable body able to access Lottery and similar funds, as well as release-from-rates payment. Portobello Central is applying for grants to appoint architects and consultants. Volunteers are ready to use the Town Hall to "bring new life to the centre of Portobello". A decision on whether the future of the Town Hall is to be in the hands of a private company or a charitable community interest organisation (or to remain moth-balled) is expected in the New Year.

Geoff Pearson

## ONLINE BOOK FEST

**PORTOBELLO** Book Festival was forced to go online this year because of Covid-19 restrictions. Although the social and community aspect was missing, the organising committee still managed to present an exciting and varied programme of events.

Local authors were well represented and included Archie Foley on *More Footprints in the Sand*, extracts from the history pages of this newspaper, Edward Ross reading from his graphic novel, *Gamish* which explores the world of computer games, and Gavin Francis was interviewed by Dave Francis about *Island Dreams*. From further afield Leonie Charlton discussed her book *Marram* about her trip through the Hebrides on her pony and Dr Keith Skene discussed climate change and artificial intelligence.

There were also a number of podcasts including poetry, in *Letters from Lockdown*, John D Burns talking about his adventures in the mountains and Professor Donald Bloxham discussing *Why History?*

The move online, although regrettable, has been a success attracting over 1,000 views, some from as far afield as Canada and Australia and over 10,000 minutes of viewing.

The Portobello Book Festival Committee are planning for 2021 on the assumption that we will once again be able to enjoy the book festival at real world events but are also planning some online content. Videos and podcasts remain online at <https://portobellobookfestival.com>



## PORTY PROFILE No. 76

## BARBARA JONES

Barbara Jones has been singing for as long as she can remember. Her paternal grandmother, who was of German extraction, was constantly singing German songs and nursery rhymes to Barbara and her brother. Granny had lived in South America, so spoke several languages. As a teenager, Barbara was accompanied by her father on the piano for musical evenings at home. Church became appealing due to the presence of a choir, which she and her brother sang in.



Photo courtesy of Barbara Jones

After school, Barbara left Marchmont for St Andrews University, to study French and Geography. Her granny's love of languages and travel had rubbed off.

When Barbara's studies ended, the obvious place to move to was Paris, and she spent three happy years there, most of it working at a publishing company. She lived on her own, immersing herself in the city, the culture and the language, while avoiding English speakers – except on Sundays, when she went to the Scots Kirk to sing.

It was there that she met Peter Jones, an artist, who had moved to the city for inspiration. The two became firm friends, and eventually, reunited in Scotland, they married.

Barbara was drawn into education when an opportunity arose at a school teaching French, and she was bitten by the bug.

A performance in a choral concert at St Mark's Church in Portobello was the catalyst for the couple moving to the area. "I remember driving down Brighton Place, with the sun shining and the trees in leaf. It was stunning. I went back to Peter after the concert, and said, "we've got to move here."

When pressed, Barbara goes further: "I can't think of anywhere better to live. Our kids have a sense of independence, we are close to a beautiful beach, we have lovely friends and we have made a life here."

Now teaching French part-time at Towerbank and the Royal High, Barbara is focusing more on her singing. She has produced a solo CD and is looking forward to performing at recitals again soon.

Neil Braidwood

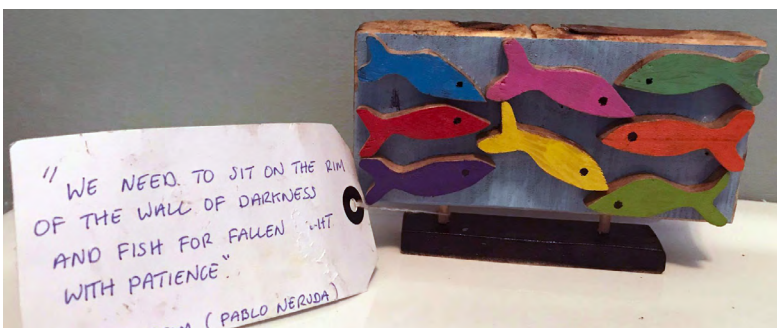
## BIKEHANGARS

**THE** City of Edinburgh Council has installed secure bikehangars at: Bath Street, James Street, Kings Road, Marlborough Street, Pittville Street and Portobello High Street (near Adelphi Place). At each location, two bikehangars each provide storage for six bikes. Spaces can be rented for £72 a year, plus £25 key deposit. This is part of a city-wide scheme, approved in 2018, through which 180 units are being installed in 79 streets, in two phases. It is jointly funded by the council and Sustrans. For further information go to: [rentals@cyclehoop.com](mailto:rentals@cyclehoop.com).



Photo: Andrew Mylne

## PORTY ROBOT MAKER



The gifts are not always discovered in Portobello. Leigh McAviney found these fishes in Pencaitland and will treasure them.



Emma Boyd came across this whale's tail near the River Esk.



Helen McCormac found this wee robot at the Joppa bandstand.

**THE** Portobello Robot Maker, whose identity is unknown, has been leaving wooden robots for the public to enjoy for a few years now. Since the pandemic, the output has been prolific. Each comes with an uplifting quotation attached, including a request to post a picture on a [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/portobellorobotmaker) page dedicated to the mystery maker. Keep your eyes peeled.

## PORTOBELLO VIRTUAL VILLAGE SHOW

**AFTER** 12 joyful years of Portobello Village Show fun, this year we moved online for a virtual celebration of the show in all its glory. Many folks joined us in posting their favourite show memories of years gone by, with new creations too.

Trains rolled down the track, the ducks swam the most exciting race ever, music was made, songs sung and the 'Village Show People' brought this year's unique show to a 'Vegetable Disco Dancing' finale. It was a great reminder for all of us about how important community is. We are all looking forward to being together in 2021.

Barbara Middleton and  
the Portobello  
Village Show Team

## TOP UP ON THE PROM



Photo: Brenda Molony

A Top-up Tap for refilling water bottles has appeared on the Promenade at Straiton Place Park, one of many installed throughout the country by Scottish Water. Each water station is plumbed directly into the public water supply and has digital tracking technology which logs how much water is being used and how much plastic potentially saved in the process.

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# ROAD CLOSURE TRIAL POSTPONED

**THE** City of Edinburgh Council's proposed 18-month trial closure of Brunstane Road and changes to vehicle access in other roads in Joppa, ahead of possible permanent changes, has been postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

A council consultation of local people in January indicated support by Brunstane Road residents for its closure, while the majority of other local residents did not support it. A Portobello Community Council survey of the wider community in March indicated 80% against the proposals, with 18% in favour.



Photo: Eric Wishart

**THE** erection of a Ferris wheel at the foot of Pipe Street led to much discussion in the community. Residents living close to the wheel had concerns about privacy, while its effect on the pottery kilns was questioned. Others thought it provided an additional attraction to Portobello. As the application was only for a temporary licence, there was no requirement for public consultation. The opening of the wheel did come under Covid-19 restrictions, resulting in its operating for only one week. John Thomson, the operator, said that he hoped the wheel would become an annual visitor attraction. Council officers have assured our local councillors that full consideration will be given to future applications.

**TO** face these challenging times and ensure that the Portobello community still has access to library services, although we are not open, we have added regular weekly events and posts to our Facebook page, including live Bookbug rhymetimes and storytimes, creative writing tips, zine workshops, Lego challenges, craft challenges and book reviews. We have also launched our hugely entertaining and informative Twitter account. To receive updates on our library services, you can like us on [www.facebook.com/PortobelloLibrary/](https://www.facebook.com/PortobelloLibrary/) and follow us on Twitter at @PortyLibrary.

Six libraries reopened in October offering visitors the opportunity to browse, borrow and return books, use a public computer, apply for, renew or replace bus passes and collect hearing aid batteries. You must book in advance and can find more information on libraries reopening at <https://yourlibrary.edinburgh.gov.uk/web/arena/library-reopening> or by calling McDonald Road library on 529 5636.

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Paul Hudson



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- Conquer Gravity - 19:30 - 20:30hrs  
**Wednesdays** - Mat Pilates (The Original) - 20:00 - 21:00hrs  
**Thursdays** - Post-Natal Mother & Baby - 13:30 - 14:30hrs  
**Fridays** - Pre-Natal - 11:15 - 12:15hrs

### Trigger Point Workshop 2020/2021:

**Saturdays** - 9:30 - 10:30hrs - 28th Nov. 2020, 30th Jan. 2021,  
27th Feb. 2021, 27th Mar. 2021

**Address:** Tribe Porty, 19, Windsor Place, Portobello

**Web address:** [www.thepilatesstudiodinburgh.co.uk](http://www.thepilatesstudiodinburgh.co.uk)

**e-mail:** [sabrina@thepilatesstudioedinburgh.co.uk](mailto:sabrina@thepilatesstudioedinburgh.co.uk)





## GROWING ORGANIC



with Susan Burns



**THERE** are successes and failures in gardening. My failures this year were the Peruvian apple (*tropaeolum speciosum*) which didn't flower or develop tubers, and chickpeas, which only produced one. I think conditions were too hot in the greenhouse. My success was Tiger nuts (*Cyperus esculentus*), a grass with little peanut-sized tubers tasting like coconut. A remembered taste from childhood.

It's not too late to plant tulips or garlic for spring. Order seeds early so they can be listed according to when to sow, and whether to start on a windowsill or put straight into the ground. I like to try a few favourites like red-leaved lettuces that slugs don't seem to like, and something new, such as a new variety of raspberry. Order some seeds that are easy for kids to grow on the windowsill and eat the results.

Over the winter, empty the compost heap and use the material as a mulch. Then clear away old herbaceous stems and so on and start a new heap. Snowdrops should be split now.

Keep houseplants on the dryish side with plenty of light, and check hyacinth bulbs, bringing them out when a green cone of two to three centimetres appears. Enjoy the perfume when they flower.

**WHAT** a change was forced on us by the lockdown in March, including traffic on the roads reportedly falling to 1955 levels, but how quickly we have since returned to our old habits of behaviour. The previous policy of encouraging us to use public transport was reversed, leading some people to cycle and walk more, while others made more short trips by car for essential travel. The contribution to physical and mental health of having public access to open space was recognised by all.

A welcome initiative has been the widening of pavements along the High Street which makes it easier to shop locally and get about the town centre safely. Other measures, such as additional cycle lanes and making pedestrian crossings at traffic lights more immediately responsive, have also helped. Further traffic reduction is needed, but with an area wide approach, as closing individual roads tends just to displace traffic.

PEDAL's traditional Apple Day at the Donkeyfield Community Orchard sadly had to be cancelled this year. At least the Market in Brighton Park, first Saturday of the month, has returned with even more traders. There might even be some Portobello Apple juice on sale if you come early.

Stephen Hawkins

PEDAL - Portobello Transition Town

## SUSTAINABLE PORTY

## POPP CLOSES DUE TO VIRUS

**PORTOBELLO** Older Peoples Project (POPP) has been forced to close due to the Covid-19 virus, depriving participants of their eagerly-anticipated weekly meetings, which for some were their only social events. Organiser Rose White, supported by some of the volunteers, has tried to make up for this by keeping in contact by phone, letters/postcards and newsletters with puzzles, quizzes and local information. POPP has also been helping some people with shopping, collecting prescriptions and generally helping in any way they can. "Socially distanced birthday wishes and cake has also been very popular", Rose says.

## ARCHITECTURE AWARD FOR PORTOBELLO HOUSES

**THE** Havenfield Mews, a group of three houses behind the former St James church, has won an award for residential architecture in the Scottish Design Awards. The new mews complex, designed by local company Sonia Browse Architects, uses stone and brick to blend in with the surrounding buildings. The houses also echo some of the neighbouring church's gothic style, with a tall aspect to the front, large windows and exposed roof trusses internally.

**LOCALS** have long been proud of the appearance of Portobello and there is a strong tradition of volunteering and environmental awareness.

In the 'daisy park', between Pittville Street and John Street, a small team of volunteers has kept the park looking attractive by weeding the flower beds. They have met on Tuesday evenings over the past two years to undertake this work. Volunteer Lynda Hepburn says: "Users of the park often comment on how

## COMMUNITY IN ACTION



The 'Daisy Park' weeders keeping the flowerbeds looking nice.

attractive it is – but without weeding, the lovely sequence of flowers would soon disappear under a blanket of weeds." They plan to start earlier next year and add another weeding

session as Tuesday evenings don't suit everyone. For further information or to volunteer contact Lynda on 07563 975216.

Environmental concerns

motivated the formation of Pesticide Free Portobello to deal with kerbside weeds without using the controversial weedkiller glyphosate. Signs can still be seen around Portobello saying that residents do not want the council to deal with weeds using toxic weed killer. Those opposed to the use of this weedkiller have signed a petition at [bit.ly/Pesticidefreeporty](http://bit.ly/Pesticidefreeporty). This community spirit is one of the many reasons why living in Portobello is so attractive.

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# THIRD GENERATION BUSINESS

**HOPEFULLY** we all use local businesses as much as we can and one which is now into its third generation is T. A. Harris and Son.

Thomas A Harris was a tinsmith and worked in the shipyards until the beginning of World War Two. On his return from military service, he rented the yard in Bellfield Lane, before buying it later in the 1940s. He undertook all kinds of metalwork and woodwork for local people, indeed he was prepared to tackle anything his customers requested. The family lived locally and it was his son Arthur who would later join him in establishing a business.

Arthur served his time as a motor mechanic with Alexanders, then moved onto selling cars with Laycocks, becoming their top salesman in Scotland. Arthur and his friends repaired cars in the yard at the weekend and in 1957 he decided to make it his full-time occupation and T.A. Harris and Son, motor engineers, was established



Photo courtesy of the Harris family

Arthur with his Mother Janet and Father Thomas.

at the yard. When Arthur's father died, his mother took over the paperwork. She could be found, with her cats, in the little caravan on spare ground beside the garage, which was originally bought as a waiting room for customers. She was in charge and started early every morning, telling the men if they were having too long for their tea-break.

Much of the business was generated by word of mouth. In a BBC radio interview in the 1990s, Arthur said:

"People keep coming back because they are treated like friends rather than customers, but it can be difficult to tell a friend that there is something wrong with their car." The garage has a small staff, but they work until 8pm trying to accommodate everyone. The weeks leading up to the Edinburgh Trades holiday, the first week in July, used to be very busy for them, but holidays are more spread out now, evening out the workload.

Arthur was eighty in January and the family had a party to celebrate his birthday. Sadly, he died a few months later. The great respect and affection customers felt for Arthur was illustrated when they lined the streets taken by his funeral cortege, as numbers attending his funeral were severely restricted by Covid-19. He always had a friendly word when you went to the garage and will be sorely missed.

His son Alan joined the business as an apprentice in the 1980s and trained under the watchful eye of his dad. Alan aims to follow in the tradition his father established, providing a friendly local service. Daniel, Thomas's great-grandson, is now serving his time as an apprentice motor mechanic in the garage at a time when automobile technology is rapidly changing. Hopefully the business will continue to prosper for many years in their capable hands.

Margaret Munro

## EDCH PORTOBELLO SHOP CLOSURE



**EDINBURGH** Dog and Cat Home (EDCH) would like to say a huge thank you to the Portobello community for your support of the shop over the years. We would also like to thank all the wonderful Friends of EDCH volunteers who ran the shop with such dedication. You have all made such a difference to the lives of so many stray, lost and abandoned dogs and cats.

Despite the shop closure, there are a number of ways you can support EDCH. Please visit [www.edch.org.uk](http://www.edch.org.uk)

Georgia Burnside

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to all our Readers, Contributors and Advertisers

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## BELLFIELD

### BELLFIELD EVENTS

WHILE it is likely to be some time before we are back to normal, we are looking ahead. The Quakers have been meeting in the garden and Edinburgh Youth Theatre reopened in late October.

In the eight months since we closed, we have sanded floors, refurbished toilets

and done a deep clean. A community garden group has also started to transform the area under the Bellfield Street cherry trees.

Our solar panels have been silently producing electricity and revenue. As part of a wider 'whole energy systems' project we have secured community energy funding for 50 per cent of the cost of a battery to store the solar power, which will charge cargo e-bikes, stored on-site thanks to a Cycling Scotland grant. We will also be installing bike racks for visitors.

Jennifer Elliot



TRIBE Porty has secured a grant from the Cycling Friendly Communities fund to upgrade our bike storage at the front of the building. We are keen to encourage more of our members and visitors to travel by bike, and to improve facilities for those who already cycle to Tribe Porty. In

our survey to find out what the group would like, top priorities were more spaces, better security and weather proofing and the use of eco-friendly materials. We also plan to install a bike repair station for tyre changes and general tuning up. We are excited to be working with a local company to build something functional and beautiful, to enhance our outdoor space and help promote cycling in the Portobello community.

Melissa McConnell

<https://tribeporty.org>

### LOCAL CHURCHES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

THE Reporter contacted local churches to find out how they'd coped during lockdown and subsequent restrictions.

According to Father Jock Dalrymple (St John's Roman Catholic church), there had been "a recognition that we're all in this together: since lockdown started the local ministers and priests have met almost every Tuesday morning on Zoom for an hour to support each other and compare notes". Dr Sophia Marriage (St Mark's, Scottish Episcopal Church) agreed that these meetings had been "a great source of encouragement and sharing for all of us" at a time when, as she put it, "every

aspect of my normal job has changed beyond recognition".

During the spring lockdown, all the churches had to close, so the initial challenge was to shift to virtual services while maintaining communications within the church community. For Stewart Weaver (Portobello and Joppa Parish Church), what mattered was how people adjusted, adapted and helped out: "Connection, inspiration, support: these were always present and surfaced marvellously (and faithfully) during lockdown." He said that, during April and May, 60 music videos created by members of the congregation were distributed or posted online, while hundreds of

phone calls, e-mails and postcards ensured that care, especially for the most vulnerable, continued.

By the summer, churches were able to re-open, albeit under tight restrictions. The Catholic churches (St John's and St Mary Magdalene's) have since held regular Sunday and weekday services but with only around 35 per cent of original numbers attending. Father Jock says people have adapted surprisingly quickly to having to book midweek, to social distancing and wearing masks, and to a shorter, pared-down service. He also feels that online worship is here to stay: during lockdown, people tuned in in unexpected numbers and there is, as he sees it, no turning back even with churches open again. Dr Marriage also felt that online worship through Zoom and pre-recorded services posted on YouTube would remain "part of our regular diet".

### AMNESTY - LOCAL NEWS

THE Portobello Group of Amnesty International bid a sad but grateful farewell to David Turner, an active member of the group for 26 years, 20 of them as secretary and latterly as chairman. Now 96, David recently moved with his wife Ida to Stirling, but was for many years a familiar and inspiring sight in Portobello, the 'Peace Peddler', making his unflappable way through traffic on his bike, bearing messages of hope, justice and sheer common sense.

September saw the resumption of the market in Brighton Park, with many shoppers pausing to consider our monthly cases. Signing a petition may seem a futile gesture, but it can be surprising how cumulative pressure can bring about results. Among the cases for which the group petitioned was that of the British businessman Kamal Foroughi, unjustly detained in Iran in 2011 but finally released this summer. Also Magai Matiop Ngong, a teenager on death row in Sudan, who was just 15 when convicted of murder. He was removed from death row in July, his case being returned to the High Court.

The group also wrote to Tommy Sheppard, MP for Edinburgh East, asking him to raise in the House of Commons the continuing scandalous UK sales to Saudi Arabia of arms which are being used to kill thousands of civilians in Yemen.

Jim Gilchrist

### WINDOW WANDERLAND

A WINDOW Wanderland is coming to Portobello in December when shops and households will be asked to decorate their windows with pictures of hope and cheer, lighting them up so passers-by can enjoy them and see their neighbourhood in a new creative light.

Window Wanderland is a non-profit organisation that aims to spread happiness and bring communities together, inspiring them to set up fun, window display-based walking trails, then share them with the world. Action Porty registered for a Wanderland in response to the darkness of winter and the need for socially-distanced outdoor ways to engage and spread cheer. Funding came from a pot of money gathered by Porty Traders a few years ago, from which they have generously donated £400 to pay for the tool kit and support to run this project.

For details on taking part, see social media and flyers in shops, or email [jennifer@actionporty.com](mailto:jennifer@actionporty.com)

It's been a strange and frustrating time for The Wash House in these lockdown months. The management committee invested in a full refurbishment of the centre, now nearly completed, and we have a shiny new space, ready to go and perfectly poised for groups and events to resume. But as this goes to print, we don't yet have the go-ahead from Edinburgh Council to re-open the building. We hope the situation will change soon, so watch this space! We are particularly proud of the newly upgraded youth lounge, in which we plan to relaunch a Porty youth group as soon as is feasible.



Meanwhile, for a trip down memory lane, and the auld Porty Wash House days, check out [www.bathsandwashhouses.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/boec.-public-washhouses.pdf](http://www.bathsandwashhouses.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/boec.-public-washhouses.pdf)

[www.thewashhouse.org](http://www.thewashhouse.org) or Porty Wash House on Facebook.


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# NATURE NOTES



Photo by Anthony Robson

AS the days get shorter and colder there is something to keep the spirits up of those who love wildlife. It's the time of year when we can start thinking of visiting migrants. Thousands of geese start to gather from Scandinavia and Iceland, and there's hopeful anticipation of waxwings coming to our shores. One visitor was

once thought so tiny that it was impossible for it to migrate on its own, and so gained the nickname Woodcock Pilot as it was presumed it hitched a lift from over the North Sea on the back of its larger travelling companion.

Resident goldcrest numbers are bolstered in the winter by migrating birds, and as the trees shed

their leaves they become more visible, flitting between branches. They're Britain's smallest bird, the heaviest weighing roughly the same as a 10 pence coin. They feed on small insects and spiders, hanging improbably from the underside of branches of conifers all over the city, or sometimes hovering in front of a web to pluck their prey.

Hardly staying still, they can be difficult to get a good look at, but they reward patience. Their boldness belies their small size, so if you see one in a tree simply stand still below, and if you're lucky its constant movement may bring it an arm's length away. Then you get a look at that shock of gold that gives the bird its name. Sometimes the best things come in small packages.

Anthony Robson

## MUSICAL WELCOME

**POSITIVE** health and wellbeing are currently top of the agenda due to the impact of Covid-19, and music plays a crucial role. With this in mind, a group from Portobello's Fun Fiddle offered a musical welcome to families as they returned to Towerbank school in August.

One of the players, Gica Loening, says: "This simple act was a strong reminder of the healing power of hearing live music for children and parents - how it lightens moods, soothes anxieties, heightens emotions."

Many parents and children were delighted and one parent said: "It was amazing. My nursery and P2 children were skipping and singing 'Mhairi's Wedding' all the way to school after hearing it."

Towerbank Head Teacher, Alasdair Friend, had this to say: "Returning to the school building for the first time since lockdown in March was daunting for many children, families and staff. The music encouraged and uplifted everyone."

## FIGGY NEWS

**DUE** to Covid-19 restrictions the Friends of Figgate Park (FoFP) have not made any general call-outs for volunteers during 2020. There has, however, been continued regular volunteer activity in the park. Park users have continued to pick up general litter when they see it, which is hugely appreciated, and there have been unadvertised ad-hoc litter picks by FoFP members. A core group of gardening volunteers have also continued to meet every week, adhering to social distancing rules, and are currently working on a new medicinal area and bulb planting. Anyone keen to get involved in our weekly gardening group can email [friends@figgatepark.org.uk](mailto:friends@figgatepark.org.uk)

Sadly we were unable to deliver a FoFP 2021 calendar this year, which is our main annual fundraiser, but anyone who would like to support the park can do so by going to <https://localgiving.org/charity/figgatepark>

Deborah Holloway



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## IN THE SADDLE

FOR local cycling club Portovelo, the first casualty of Covid-19 restrictions was the February social evening, before Sunday rides were suspended from mid-March by lockdown.

Over the spring and summer, club members rode solo or used indoor trainers, posting their activity on training apps and on social media. By late spring, social evenings had re-started via Zoom, with cycling-themed quizzes adding a competitive element. The competitive theme continued over the summer, with a series of "lockdown individual time-trials", a week-long period during which people competed to ride a specially defined route (created as a "segment" on the training app Strava) as fast as possible. Virtual group rides were also organised for those with indoor trainers.

An easing of restrictions on sporting activity in late August finally allowed us to re-start Sunday group rides, involving people from different households cycling together without needing to maintain 2m social distancing. Frustratingly, after only two Sundays, our rides were suspended again to comply with the additional central belt restrictions, continued into November under Tier 3 restrictions. The club, now affiliated to Cycling UK, will resume group rides as soon as restrictions are eased. Full details of all our activities can be found at [www.porto-velo.com](http://www.porto-velo.com).

Andrew Mylne



Photo courtesy of Roy Buchanan

Portovelo member Roy Buchanan rode the Stelvio in northern Italy in September



'Portobello Winter #1'

**THIS** restful beach scene by fine arts photographer Will Collier featured in his 'From the Prom' exhibition which was on display at the Western General Hospital gallery. Tonic Arts, of the Edinburgh and Lothians Health Foundation, hosted the exhibition as part of an arts programme aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of staff, patients and visitors. Will says: "The Prom and beach at Portobello is one of my favourite locations for photography, whatever the weather. This photo was taken during 'the Beast from the East' in 2018. There is always someone or something to photograph." See [www.willcollierphotography.co.uk](http://www.willcollierphotography.co.uk)

## THE PORTY BOOT ROOM

**ALL** of us at the Portobello Community Football Academy send our warmest wishes to everyone in the community during this difficult time. The Scottish Youth Football season was not immune to the impact of the pandemic. A delayed start to the season was imposed across all age groups, however, we started our training and coaching sessions as soon as it was safe to do so. Thank you to all the coaches and parents who made this possible. Our volunteers really are the heart of our community.

The delayed start gave us a chance to launch 'The Porty Boot Room' channel on YouTube. It showcases our football philosophy, our coaching methods to help improve young people on and off the park, and highlights the incredible standard our teams are achieving. The season is only a few games old, but already our teams have got off to a terrific start, so keep up to date at 'The Porty Boot Room'!

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=adL2z3Il3FE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adL2z3Il3FE)

John Griffiths

## HEALTH MATTERS

### WE ARE OPEN

**OUR** world has totally changed since Covid-19. It has rocked our families, work, school and friends. Many people have been sick and, heartbreakingly, people have died, and we have all had to adjust to this new life and its challenges.

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We wish things were different. We hate having to wear PPE as it is hot, restrictive and hinders relationships, and we do like seeing our patients. Please help us by checking your practice website or Facebook page for updates, and ring us rather than come in person to reduce the number of people in the surgery. Finally, please be kind to our receptionists as they have a hard job!

Thank you all for being so understanding as we struggle together to find our way through. We think our whole community can be proud of coping so well!

Dr Portia Bella

## JUST EAT CYCLE-HIRE

**THE** Just Eat cycle-hire-scheme run by Transport for Edinburgh has expanded rapidly in 2020. E-bikes were added in March, while in September the scheme was extended into Musselburgh, reflecting a higher than expected level of use in the east

side of the city. However, the scheme has been badly affected by vandalism and theft, including in Portobello where the docking station by the Scottish Water building at the east end of the Promenade has been damaged on more than one occasion.

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