

# Portobello: Highlights and notes.

- 1. Portobello Pleasure Pier.** On leaving the café and immediately to the right the former Portobello pleasure pier was much used by the many visitors. Today it is long gone. The pier was designed by Thomas Bouch, who is now mainly remembered as the engineer of the first Tay Rail Bridge which collapsed in strong winds with the loss of 75 lives.
- 2. Regent Street.**  
Boasts many fine Georgian villas, houses, and bungalows. The Georgian era established Portobello as both as a fashionable summer residence and an attractive place to stay all the year round. At the time of writing (Feb 2024) Regent Street is making the news as the first pavement/roadway in Scotland to be painted with double yellow lines to enforce the new ban on pavement parking.
- 3. Abercorn Terrace.** To the east, in 1939, Joseph McLuskie became the first civilian air-raid casualty on mainland Britain during WWII after being hit by a stray machine gun bullet whilst painting a ladder. He was caught in the fire of a ground hugging Heinkel 111 bomber being hotly pursued by a couple of Spitfires each with eight machine guns blazing and showering brass cartridges over Portobello. All were flying well below the height of St Philip's Church steeple further along the road. To the west, on a site now occupied by the old town-hall in 1742, veteran seaman George Hamilton named a humble thatched cottage as Portobello Hut in memory of the capture of Porto Bello, Panama by the British Fleet in which he served.
- 4. Christian Path:** A small obscure pathway. Once the path was universally known as Jobby Lane by generations of Portobello children. Named, so it is said, because the Provost of Portobello back in the 1880's had needed a path made to offer himself a short cut to the station.
- 5. West Brighton Crescent:** Regency houses contribute to one of the most attractive areas in Portobello. An area pleasingly unspoiled by later incongruent, infill buildings.
- 6. Rosefield Park, Figgate Burn & Adelphi Place:** The former site of many clay pits. Estuarine clays of over 40ft thick were dug and described by local Hugh Miller, a self-taught Scottish geologist, writer, folklorist and evangelical Christian (cf. his blue plaque at 297 High Street). In the C18<sup>th</sup> rows of workers' cottages were built to house the pits, potteries and brick work families.
- 7. The iconic '99' ice-cream.** 99 the High Street (now a Beauty Saloon) is part of Britain's lost Seaside Heritage. The popular 99 ice-cream originated in the the Arcari family shop at number 99 in the 1930s.
- 8. Sir Harry Lauder:** born 1870 at no 3 Bridge Street the son of John Lauder, local potter and Isabella McLennan, domestic servant. A plaque on the wall pays homage to the man widely regarded as the world's first global superstar and the first British performer to sell one million records.
- 9. Sean Connery** had a stint as a lifeguard at the Art Deco pool, with its high diving boards, outdoor heated pool and the first wave machine in Scotland. The pool lay on the far side of the Figgate Burn.
- 10. Bottle Kilns and Funfair.** Two kilns, 39 ft high, survived from Buchan's Pipe Street pottery works, which closed in 1972. One of the kilns, dating from 1909, collapsed while being repaired in August 2006. The funfair stood near here for over 100 years, until 1998, with its popular 'Figure of Eight' roller-coster ride.
- 11. Cunningham's Folly.** At Beach Lane, an architectural curiosity an C18<sup>th</sup> tower built as a folly.