

Portobello: Highlights and notes.

- 1. Portobello Pleasure Pier:** On leaving the cafés and immediately to the right the former Portobello pleasure pier was much used by many visitors. Today it is long gone. Designed by Thomas Bouch, who is now mainly remembered as the engineer of the Tay Rail Bridge which collapsed with the loss of 75 lives.
- 2. Regent Street:** Boasts many fine Georgian villas, houses, and bungalows. The Georgian era established Portobello as both 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. (In the Georgian era these streets were serviced by back lanes providing access to stables and mews buildings.)
- 3. Abercorn Terrace:** To the east, in 1939, Joseph McLuskie became the first WWII, civilian air-raid casualty on mainland Britain during after being hit by a stray machine-gun bullet whilst painting up 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. To the west, on a site now occupied by the old town-hall, veteran seaman George Hamilton, reputedly in 1742, 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, in the 1880's, had needed a path constructing in order to provide himself with a short cut to the railway station.
- 5. West Brighton Crescent:** Regency houses (c1823) contribute to one of the most attractive areas in Portobello. An area of strong, formal architecture, pleasingly unspoiled by later incongruent, infill buildings. Well designed, elegantly detailed but not overly grand residential housing.
- 6. Sir William Russell Flint:** Scottish artist, claimed to be the greatest watercolour painter of the last century. Best known for his watercolours of naked, nubile young women, lived at 9 Rosefield Place 1886-1900.
- 7. Rosefield Park, Figgate Burn & Adelphi Place:** The former site of many clay pits where estuarine clays over 40ft thick were dug since 1765. They were described by local Hugh Miller, a self-taught Scottish geologist, writer, folklorist, evangelical Christian, and whose death was a tragic mystery (cf. blue plaque at 82 High St.). Rows of C18th workers' cottages built to house the clay-pits, potteries and brick&tile-work families survive. By 1779 in excess of three million bricks a year were produced.
- 8. 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 Stefano Arcari's family confectionary shop in the 1930s.
- 9. Sir Harry Lauder:** Born 1870 at 3 Bridge St. the son of John, a local potter and his wife Isabella a domestic servant. A blue plaque pays homage to the man widely regarded as the world's first global superstar and the first British performer to sell one million records. Described by Winston Churchill as "*Scotland's greatest ever ambassador*" - he raised vast amounts of money and aided recruitment for the WWI effort.
- 10. 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.
- 11. Bottle Kilns & 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-coaster ride.
- 12. Cunningham's Folly:** At Beach Lane, an architectural curiosity - an C18th tower built as a folly.