

Portobello Spiritualist Church

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011

SECRETARY'S REPORT

This was another very busy year. It takes real dedication and commitment from volunteers to maintain the regular, some might say relentless, programme of four public services every week throughout the year. However, my one abiding memory of 2010 will be our impressive response to the arctic winter conditions that hit us early in November and December.

As a Church we felt it was important to remain open, particularly when the other secular centres closed, to maintain a service to those in need. Although the numbers did drop, there were always people who came to our door. The majority of the development circle still managed to put on an abbreviated but still hilarious version of Grease for the Carol Service. Their infectious enthusiasm certainly warmed the hearts of the few hardy souls who ventured along. So a big thank you to all who made the effort and braved the extreme conditions to keep the Church doors open. It is to their credit that despite all, **we never closed.**

Mary Amos also kept going as Treasurer, one of the most taxing jobs on the Committee with Jill Scott in the background, monitoring the digital book keeping. Unfortunately the demands of Mary's day job means she could not continue this year.

Peter Fairbrother further developed our web site. In June he changed the web host saving us subscription fees. A new members' section was added, as well as new photos. Regular e-mail enquiries were continually answered. A welcome pack for new members was also prepared. Helen Morgan continued buying kitchen supplies and did sterling work in supplying very impressive but good value buffets.

Special events in 2010 included demonstrations from Ruth Baruch from Cheshire on 19 March, then Brian Lynch from Belfast on 28 April. Brian's workshop was a great success, revealing the individual potential of so many of our developers. The SASH AGM for healers took place at Howden Park Centre in Livingston on 19 August. BAHHA training in the Code of Conduct will be arranged to give our healing leaders validation to train new healers. Basic first aid training for Healers is also still to be arranged.

Bernice, June and Mae ran our annual introductory workshop for newcomers on 24 August. Another enjoyable and successful day, that gave encouragement to a number of new people to join the Development Circle.

Stephen Wakeling from Nottingham visited us for the seventh year on 15-17 September. He gave a very strong special demonstration on the Friday. Karen Willis gave our committee and developers a Trance evening on 29 November, followed by a really productive Saturday workshop for the developers. At our annual members' gathering on 19 November Nita Saunders again ably demonstrated the standard of mediumship that our developers aspire to. On 31 January she treated us to a thought-provoking seminar on aspects of the physical phenomena.

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Improvements were again limited last year, mainly due to pressures in Committee members' time and day jobs. New locks were fitted to the outside doors and some of the cupboards. Despite this, some cash was stolen from the office upstairs during the Monday seminar in January. The locked drawer on the desk was forced. We now have even more door locks and a new safe.

Following up on previous complaints from our neighbour at no. 20, Mrs Brown, about light pollution, we obtained Listed Building Consent for lighting in the slabs on the front path from Bath Street. This would provide much better evenly distributed lighting, under our control. However we still have to agree with Mrs Brown how we share ownership and maintenance responsibility, before any work can start.

The Christmas Fair on 5 November raised £1385 and raffle £87. Thanks to the hard work and dedication by Joyce, Helen, and many others.

Particularly sad milestones last year were Len Sutton's passing in August, then Doris Small in September. Both funerals were taken by Minister June. We will continue to remember Len in our thoughts as well as Doris, with tender affection.

In April June conducted the naming service for Sophie and Adam Hendry. One of the memorable happy highlights in the Minister's duties was Mark and Ying's colourfully international marriage blessing on 13 August, conducted in Mandarin and English (or Scottish). (Does this count as making her an international minister ?). Then Suzanne and Jonathan's wedding on 5 December. The extreme snow combined with the hilltop venue with sparkling views over white carpeted West Lothian created a truly magical setting.

A new venture this coming year is a conducted demonstration evening for developers, including those from circles outside Portobello. This will be on the first Thursday of the month starting in April, for a 3 month trial period.

Forthcoming special events in 2011 include Ruth Baruch on Friday 25 March, then Ewan Irvine's seminar on Monday 18 April. Both are highly recommended.

There is still scope for other new activities this year. We hope new Committee Members will bring fresh ideas and talents. However the vitality of our Church and its continued growth very much depends on each and every member becoming more actively involved.

P.G.H
12/3/11