

BEFORE THE BOARD SCHOOL

Education in Portobello prior to 1876

Prior to the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act which led to the formation of school boards and Portobello Board (or Burgh) School, public education in Scotland was administered by the heritors (landowners) and kirk session of a parish, and the town councils of burghs. In addition, private schools existed.

In this advertisement from 1805, parents are invited to apply to Mr Jameson (widely regarded as the 'Father of Portobello') for further details.

One of the earliest maps of Portobello (1824) shows a school off Pipe Street.

The Post Office Directory for 1835 lists a Miss Hutchison running a 'female

**Hutchison, Miss,
female school, Bath Street**

school' in Bath Street:

**Caledonian Mercury
23rd February 1805**

PORTOBELLO SCHOOL

A WIDOW LADY born and educated in England has OPENED a SCHOOL at PORTOBELLO, where she proposes to Teach Children the English Language. and Needlework in its various Branches. She can Board a few Children, of either sex, whose health requires country air and sea bathing, or the warm bath. Terms moderate, and the utmost attention paid to the health and morals of the Children intrusted to her charge.

Further particulars will be learnt on application to Mr Jameson, Portobello.



Plan of the Town of Portobello, John Wood, 1824
An landowners were required to send their eldest sons to school from the age of eight or nine to study Latin, arts and law.
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Newspapers also make reference to a school premises in Tower Street (now Figgate Street).

The largest schoolroom in the burgh was in Wellington Street (now Marlborough Street).

The 1872 Act made elementary education compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 13.

On 19th April 1873, nine candidates contested the seven seats on the first Portobello School Board. A major issue was the inclusion of ‘religious instruction’ on the curriculum, which would mean it being funded out of the rates.

A census of the children of school age was carried out. It was reported that there were 1109 children between the ages of 5 and 13 in the burgh. Of these 201 were educated in private schools, and a further 149 attended the Bath Street Female School, making 350; under the act, the Board had to provide for the remaining 759 children.

The Board was supplying accommodation in Wellington, Pipe and Tower Streets for 394 pupils, but the accommodation did not meet the requirements of the Educational code. Although 150 children went to Edinburgh for schooling, the Board were not allowed to deduct them.

In 1874 the Board announced that it had procured a site on Dalkeith Road (which was later named Niddrie Road*, then Duddingston Park) on which to erect a school for 700 pupils. The cost was to be £7680.

The new school would open two years later.

** The school would frequently be referred to as the “Niddrie Road School” as well as the Board or Burgh School*

EDUCATION ACT 1696

The Education Act 1696 — or *Act for Settling of Schools* — consolidated previous acts from as early as 1633 and ordered that locally-funded, church-supervised schools should be established in every parish in Scotland, extending education beyond the nobility.