

# Dean Village News

Issue 174 Summer 2016  
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## All Change in Dean Village

In July 1939 Allan Watt Ritchie, chief sanitary inspector of the town council, had condemned 96 houses as being unsanitary. As there were no plans to replace these buildings, the 241 individuals affected would be dispersed throughout the city. These plans were abandoned in September due to the impending conflict of World War II and the need to preserve all existing housing.

Following the conclusion of the war nothing much happened. Life continued as normal. One house, Bell's Brae House, was saved by Aleksander Zyw (see page 15). A Polish airman, who was also an artist, he had fallen in love with Dean Village. The house was originally built around 1650. There were stories that the cellars were once used by smugglers to store contraband moved up the river. When Zyw purchased the house in 1946, reportedly for £300, it was a filthy condemned ruin, with the roof caved in. There was a tiny sweet shop at the front. Zyw commissioned a young Basil Spence to do the reconstruction.

In 1949 there was an attempt to start a potato crisp factory in the large hall in Well Court. Legget's tannery provided much of the work in the village and in 1957 submitted plans to modernise.

*(Continued on page 2)*

Then in November 1958 the Edinburgh Evening News reported that £100,000 was to be spent on renovation of the village. The first phase would concentrate on the bottom of Dean Path and the open areas of Hawthornbank. The “old property” at 8 Dean Path with its octagonal stair tower would be preserved and reconstructed. On each side of this building there were a total of five sites, bounded by West Mill Lane and the wall of Belgrave Gardens, which would be apartment houses plus two shops.

But by November 1961 no progress had been made. There was a possibility that West Mill could be converted into flats, perhaps containing a restaurant. The village grocer, Mr. G. Burns, of Damside, asked why should people lose their homes and businesses because of fancy ideals. The village school had closed, and pupils now went to school in Comely Bank. The schoolhouse was taken over by Ferranti, who used it to train their apprentices.

In September 1962 work started on the two early 18th century buildings on Dean Path. Houses around them had been demolished and the inhabitants moved out. One owner was offered £50 for her old house. New buildings would cost £48,000, and the rents charged were likely to be much higher than previously, and probably not affordable for the existing tenants. Work on these properties on the east side of Dean Path was completed in the next eighteen months. A photo appeared in the 12th February 1964 edition of the Evening News and Dispatch showing the new development of 2 to 10 Dean Path.

Throughout the sixties many complaints were made about the dereliction on the south side of the river. The old ochre Hawthornbank buildings were lying empty, having sustained substantial damage through fire and vandalism. Several property companies were interested in acquiring and modernising the buildings, but Edinburgh Corporation had not agreed. One of the problems facing the council was that it did not own many of the properties that were in need of development. The council was reliant on private developers to come up with suitable plans.

In 1971 the Dean Village Association was formed, to protect the interests of residents against unwanted new buildings. The event that triggered the formation of the Association was the proposal to place an office

block on the site of the burnt-out church at the east end of Belford Road. This initiative was instigated by Aleksander Zyw, who now had a studio further up Bell's Brae which would be overlooked by this development. But a feu charter of 1890 prevented obstruction of the view of Dean Bridge from Drumsheugh Gardens, and the building should be no higher than 26 feet above the pavement of the old Queensferry Road. So the plans did not go ahead.

In March 1971 a tragedy occurred when a dust explosion destroyed Bells' Mills so badly that only the external walls were left standing. Lawrence Walker, who later became chairman of the Dean Village Association, was badly injured, but happily recovered. This was the last water-powered mill working in Edinburgh.

But change was beginning. In July 1973 the Link Association completed the conversion of West Mill into 22 luxurious flats. Mr. and Mrs. Tait were overjoyed at finding a flat to rent in quiet Dean so near to central Edinburgh. They rented a third floor penthouse at £62.50 per month, with £122 annual rates. (The cheapest was £46pm).

There was a big article in the Scotsman of 17th April 1976 about the changes taking place in the village. There seemed to be little prospect of any further residential development. On the south side of the river, Hawthornbank and High Green, owned by the Council, were not scheduled for development. The best sites were threatened by large-scale office buildings. Johnson Matthey were proposing offices on the old distillery site in Miller row. Legget's Skinnery had now closed, and the site had been bought by Weir Construction, but they were not proceeding with development. Offices were planned on the site of Sloan's Garage, with the Edwardian frontage at the corner of Belford Road.

But, finally, in the eighties, massive changes took place. Link had modernised the old Hawthornbank buildings. Cala Homes were building 44 flats and 24 town houses on the site behind Sloan's garage, which previously held workshops, sheds and lock-up garages. A new office building was going up next to Sloan's showroom, the two becoming conjoined as a joint venture to house the Health and Safety Executive. The tannery site had now been acquired by J. Smart and Co. They had demolished the old tannery buildings and had received planning permis-

sion, but building had not yet commenced. The Council still owned High Green. Edinburgh builders Mactaggart and Mickel were preparing plans for a large residential development on the Green. If the plans were accepted, the land would be sold to this company. All these plans were completed by the end of the eighties.

Adam Zyw, chairman of the Dean Village Association, said that the threats of the sixties and early seventies had passed. Many buildings were lost then. It would not be possible to destroy the new fabric of the village. But not all were so approving. Stuart Matthew, a long time supporter of Dean Village, voiced his disapproval of the Damside and Hawthornbank developments in a letter to the Evening News. In addition, the growing recognition of the assets of Dean Village, the peacefulness and closeness to the city centre, were becoming widely appreciated. Thus prices were rising, which would lead to a lessening of community feeling.

Into the new century, changes were still afoot. Plans were revived for an office block at 3/4 Belford Road in 2000. A futuristic artist's impression appeared in the newspapers, but these plans were again abandoned, due to a downturn in the requirement for office space. In 2001, the feued interest in Douglas and Belford Houses were sold to developers AMA (New Town) Ltd, for £4.12m.

Burrell and Co. managed to get a plan approved to put a block of flats on the corner of Sunbury Street and Belford Road. The block was very high, and Dean Village Association, among others, objected that it was not in keeping with the character of the village, and that the height of the building would substantially alter the skyline. But the developers argued that the building would complement the Belford church spire and add to the city's appearance. Ten of the flats went on sale on 28th March 2002 and were sold in 24 hours.

Changes will still occur. AMA will build flats at the west end of Belford Road. RMJM offices are to be converted into town houses. Activity is occurring at the site at the east end of Belford Road. For more on these plans, see pages 6 and 7.

## Roadworks in Dean Village

**Dean Path:** - Work started in mid-May. Residents showed some concern when the kerbstones on the western pavement were removed. The Secretary contacted Councillor Nigel Bagshaw who elicited a reply from Calum McQueen of the Council. *“The existing whinstone kerbing is being replaced by new whinstone kerbing, which provides a better edge for the new Yorkshire Scoutmoor paving to rest against, as required by Edinburgh Street Design Guidance. This paving is used in Edinburgh World Heritage areas, as it is natural stone, extremely durable and suitable for pedestrian areas. The old kerbing will replace the whin sett kerb on the eastern pathway, providing a better edge for the roadway when resurfaced. The old stone slabs will be used nearer the centre of the village to retain its character.”*

The road at the top of Dean Path was planed and resurfaced and re-marked from the junction with Ravelston Terrace down as far as the gate of Belgrave Gardens in the first week. Then work concentrated on the pavements. Asphalt replaced the paving on the western side from Ravelston Terrace down as far as the Belgrave Gardens gate to match the existing asphalt pavement on the eastern side. Kerbstones and paving were uplifted on the western side, and street lighting cables were laid. The new whinstone kerbing was put in place, and paving stones laid on the west side right round into Damside as far as the lamppost opposite the Old Janitor’s House. On the eastern side, the old whinstone kerbing replaced the kerb setts. Tarmaced areas in the setted area at the bottom of Dean Path were replaced with setts. When the pavements were completed, the road surfacing was resumed and completed by mid-August.

**Miller Row:** - vodaphone cables were run from Bell’s Brae to the offices on the site of Mar’s Mill in two stages.

**Ravelston Terrace:** - This road was blocked off at the end of July, reportedly due to the dangerous state of the cemetery wall. If you enter the cemetery by the small gate by Back Dean, and walk along the path by the north wall for sixty yards, the large monuments there do seem to be tipping backwards slightly.

## **New Buildings in Dean Village**

**3/4 Belford Road.** This site has been derelict since the 1950s when a fire consumed what had originally been a Free Church of Scotland, built shortly after the Disruption. The site has been owned by Caledonian Scottish Developments Ltd for many years. On 19th January 2006 planning permission was granted for a seven-storey block of twenty flats with underground parking. One condition was that building had to start within five years. No work ensued. On 19th August 2010 an application was made to continue planning permission, without the necessity of obeying clause 1, i.e. the required starting limit. A deed of variation was issued on 12th October 2010 which stated that the council were minded to grant the application on the conditions that 1) the company implemented some archaeological work, to be done within three years, and 2) a site survey be carried out by the Head of Planning and Safety to determine that the site did not pose an unacceptable level of risk to human health. On 4th April 2011 a deed of variation was confirmed, and some archaeological work was carried out.

On 12th April 2014 an application was made, and granted, to extend planning permission for a further three years. Again not much happened, until four months ago when the work started on the site. The area has been cleared of vegetation, and an access has been created from the site onto Bell's Brae. So we wonder if actual building is imminent!

**Belford House/Douglas House:** - The original plans for a uniform block of flats was rejected by the Planning Department, following objections from neighbours and the Dean Village Association. The developers AMA Ltd then conducted some consultation events, and the main concern of many was that the façade of Douglas House be retained. At first this was said to be impossible, because of the difficulties in the geometry of the site. But a new design was finally approved, with a variety of roof heights, frontages and building materials, including retention of the Douglas House façade. The lease on these buildings runs out in 2017, when we can expect to see demolition commence.

**Miller Row:** - Passers-by will have noticed the activity surrounding the past office buildings off RMJM Ltd., who have now fallen on hard times. The building is now in the hands of Sundial Properties, who will be creating a number of townhouses there. Planning permission was granted on 31st March of this year, so we can expect some front doors to appear along Miller Row. The permission states that Miller Row is owned by the Council, but neither the road nor the courtyard above will be adopted by the Council for maintenance purposes. However, the public has a right of passage at all times, and no gates or other obstructions are permitted. The document also states that new residential properties in zones 1 to 8 are not eligible for parking permits. The developer will provide eighteen parking spaces, ten for residents, and eight for existing office use. The permission states that the scale, form and design of the new houses are compatible with the character and appearance of the Dean Conservation Area.

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## Dean Valley Regeneration Project

Dean Valley Regeneration Ltd (DVRL) (Company Registration Number SC515394) has been set up to make an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to regenerate and maintain the environment of the valley of the Water of Leith between Stockbridge and Dean Village. DVRL was established as a not-for-profit, charitable company (SCO46270) on 19th January of this year.

The objective of the DVRL is to renovate the walkway and the structure of the walls, bridges, railings and embankments along the riverside. There are many self-seeded trees and shrubs that have matured and become overgrown, causing damage to walls, railings and pathways. An important aspect is to promote the sustainability and self-sufficiency of the area, so that the environment may be maintained in perpetuity. Much of the project area is owned by the City of Edinburgh Council. The project cannot proceed without the full consent and authority of the Council. Residents and local organisations must be fully consulted. A meeting of the Council to consider this lottery application will be held at the end of August. A progress report has been submitted to the Council which covers the aims of DVRL and the work done so far. If successful, the Council will appoint a project manager to oversee the progress of the application. The Council has already been successful with a Lottery application and has been awarded a grant of £3.8m to restore and improve Saughton Park. This will be a five-year project, with construction work being carried out in 2017/2018.

DVRL are in the process of setting up a website, which should come on-line during August. A bio-diversity study, funded by a grant from the City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership, has been completed and will be published on the web-site. A feasibility study will be required in order to establish the extent of funding required for the whole project. This study will be conducted over at least two stages. A grant of £5000 has been provided by Sustrans, to match a grant of £3000 from the Council, and £2000 raised by DVRL. This part of the study will concentrate exclusively on Miller Row and provide an overview, but not a design, to assist in pathway improvements. Any work has to follow the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, which requires that public spaces are open to all and that the pathway must be a through route for walking and cycling for visitors and for members of the community. An invitation to tender was sent out to six local consultancies in early August. DVRL will review the tenders at the end of August and hope to appoint the selected consultant by mid-September. The final report is expected one month later.

There remains to be conducted a study on the surrounding landscapes that are not privately owned. This study is likely to cost at least £10,000, and hence grants will be sought and matching funds raised. When studies are complete, the proposals will be put before residents and any other interested parties for their comments.

## **Rubbish Disposal**

Once upon a time in Dean Village we had to put our garbage into black bags, which were then attacked by gulls. After representations to the Council, large black bins arrived, followed by more specialised bins for recycling. There are now bins in Damside, Upper Damside, Dean Path, in Miller Row and along Belford Road. However, rubbish in black bags still appears beside the bins when they are full, despite other bins quite nearby having plenty of room. Please advise those who leave bags to take them to another bin if the ones nearby are full, or keep them for a day or two until they are emptied.

Waste Services have confirmed that bottles left around in carrier bags will not be collected by the disposal team. Bottles have to be left out in blue boxes, available on application from the Council, or, if absolutely necessary, in cardboard boxes.

Another new bin, specifically for waste food, has been placed at the bottom of Bell's Brae, by the courtyard into the old offices. The waste can go to make biofertilisers, or can produce renewable energy. Placing food waste in landfill is expensive, and it decays to produce the greenhouse gas, methane. Please use this new facility.

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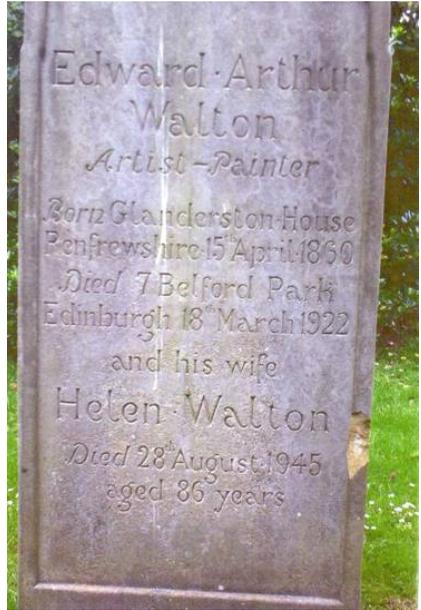
## **Death by Tree**

A tragic accident occurred early Saturday morning, 6th August, when a large tree fell on two men who were camping in the wooded area below the site of Lindsay's Mill, near the lower weir. One of the two men, aged 45, was killed immediately, and his companion, aged 35, suffered minor injuries. The emergency services were called to the site at 3.30am, but the older man was pronounced dead. The Evening News described him as being homeless, and from the Glasgow area. Forestry experts described the tree falling as a result of natural occurrences. The night was quite windy, and the area has been saturated by rain in recent days.

This is the third tree that has fallen in the area in the past ten months. One came down near St. Bernard's Well in January, and the other opposite the Tennis Club last November. Nobody was injured, but severe damage was done to the riverside walls, both of which had to be rebuilt.

## My Friends in the Cemetery XXVI by David Perry The Walton family

Edward Arthur Walton has a remarkable gravestone in Dean Cemetery, giving in great detail his address at the start and end of his life. It reads - *Edward Arthur Walton - Artist ~ Painter. Born Glanderston House Renfrewshire 15 April 1860. Died 7 Belford Park Edinburgh 18 March 1922. And his wife Helen Walton Died 28 August 1945 aged 86 years.*



Edward Walton was one of twelve children. He trained firstly at the Kunstakademie, Dusseldorf, and then at the Glasgow School of Art. He stayed in Glasgow until 1894, where he joined the Glasgow School referred to as “The Glasgow Boys”. They liked to paint in the Trossachs. Walton visited Helensburgh in 1893 where he produced a set of acclaimed watercolours of the town and its inhabitants. Much of his income came from undertaking portrait commissions. Walton became a full member of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1905. He lived in Chelsea for 10 years between 1894 and 1904, where their near neighbours were Whistler and Lavery. From 1915 he was President of Royal Scottish Watercolour Society. In the National Gallery of Scotland are two of his paintings: “Bluette” (1891) and “A Daydream” (1885).

In 1890 he married Helen, who was herself an artist, but she gave up her artistic career to look after the family. The Waltons had four children, the oldest of whom was Cecile (1891 - 1956). When the family

moved to London she was constantly in the company of artists. On the family's return to Edinburgh, Cecile attended the Edinburgh College of Art, where she took a sculpture class. While still a teenage student, she was elected to the Society of Scottish Artists in 1908 and featured her paintings in exhibitions in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London. She married painter Eric Robertson in 1914. One of her first major works was of Eric Robertson and friend Mary Newbury, relaxing in their garden in Suffolk in 1912, shown in the Exhibition "Modern Scottish Women" at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 2016. But her painting career stalled in 1927, when her marriage broke down due to her husband's excessive drinking. She contributed articles to magazines, particularly highlighting the difficulty of pursuing a career while bringing up a family alone. In later life she was in charge of programming Scottish radio's "Children's Hour". She married again but again divorced after five years. She spent the last years of her life in Kirkcudbright.

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## **Doors Open Weekend**

Every year the Cockburn Association organise Doors Open weekend. Many public buildings will be open to the public on Saturday and Sunday, 24th and 25th September. The Dean Village Association will open St. Bernard's Well on both days, between noon and 4pm. See you there.

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## **Previously...**

Scotland's History Festival this year is being extended by a further weekend, and will run from the 11th to 21st November.. Dean Village will be participating by hosting both village and cemetery walks on dates yet to be arranged. Please check our website at [Deanvillage.org](http://Deanvillage.org).

To see the full range of activities in Edinburgh and throughout Scotland go to the website at [historyfest.co.uk](http://historyfest.co.uk).

# Grand Summer Concert

Passers by the Café Braw on Belford Road between 4 and 5pm on Wednesday, June 8th were treated to a surprise concert by the Ukelele Orchestra of Stewart's Melville. This comprised a dozen Ukelele players of various ages plus one tambourine-man.



They started off with an excellent rendition of “Blue Suede Shoes”. There followed “Sunny Afternoon” by the Kinks, and works that were made famous by the Monkees, The Mamas and the Papas, Bill Withers, Bruce Springsteen, Oasis, The Beatles, (of course - Hey Jude), The Eagles, and Rod Stewart. They brought the concert to an end with the splendid “Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head” by Burt Bacharach and brought tears to the eyes of the older members of the audience, many who had by now gathered around, with their finale of “Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue - Could she, could she, could she coo? Has anybody seen my girl?” (by Lewis, Young and Henderson). All present were much appreciative of this spirited performance.



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## Summer Nature Notes by Barbara Mackay

After inquiries about one's health and discussion on the state of the NHS, conversations usually get on to the weather and the dismal summer. Violent storms may have abated but the strong winds caused the death of one homeless man and injured his companion when a tree fell on their tent just down river from the village. And opposite us one of the last big willows was split below the crown and came down. At least the loss has given us a clearer view across the river and pigeons still perch in the wreckage.

I am looking at the bedraggled treescape and life is brightened by the male bullfinch with his bright deep pink chest. He has been back since and is most welcome in this summer when bird life has seemed rarer at our garden feeders than, say, 2014. We did enjoy the sight of some infrequent but regular visitors, a mocha-coloured tiny bird which may have been a fledgling wren, and a little armada on the river - Mrs. Goosander and her five goslings. Even at their early stage they were diving expertly for food. A help yourself sort of outing.

Magpies are still common. Some farmers blame them for the paucity of songbirds. They certainly like sitting on our railings and scratching the paint off. The *Gorgie Road Gang (GRG)* have also been less frequent visitors: perhaps they don't like crossing the tramlines at Haymarket to get to the fish and chips remains down here. The one constant bird is the pigeon singing its unmistakable refrain "*Tak twa coos Paddy!*" The third chorus he stops suddenly at "*Tak*", he needs to go back for choir practice. A pair struck up a tender relationship involving a lot of chest pecking and nudging off the branch and then starting the sequence all over again. Sadly only one rather battered looking bird returned to the branch yesterday.

Enjoy the rest of the season. Let us hope for an Indian summer.

**[www.deanvillage.org](http://www.deanvillage.org)**

**Registered Scottish Charity SC000404, Dean Village Association (DVA)**

## It's a *Braw* Café

Braw is now 5 years old, so she needs a little facelift. As we change from our summer hours at the end of September we will close for a few days - from **Monday, 26th September to Tuesday 4th October**.

We will re-open seven days a week as usual but close at 16.00 hrs. from Monday to Thursday and 15.00 hrs from Friday to Sunday.

i hope you all had a wonderful summer and look forward to serving you with some warmth and comfort throughout the winter.

Best wishes from Meg@Braw.

Get in touch with us via email ([cafebraw@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cafebraw@hotmail.co.uk)) or Facebook ([facebook.com/cafebraw](https://www.facebook.com/cafebraw)).

## The Zyw Family Exhibition

The Scott Gallery of the Hawick Museum is offering visitors a unique opportunity to view works by long-time Dean resident Aleksander Zyw (1905-1995) and his sons Adam (1949-2003) and Michael (b. 1951). Aleksander became famous for his wartime drawings after his appointment as official war artist, Adam was a sculptor and painter, and Michael specialised in glasswork.

The Museum, at Wilton Park Lodge, is open every day from now until Sunday 2nd October. Details may be seen on their website.

# Dean Village Association

## Committee 2016 - 2017

**Chairman:** Barry Mackay, chairman@deanvillage.org

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**Committee members:** Oliver Goodman, Charlie Hughes,  
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The deadline for articles for the next edition of  
the News is

14<sup>th</sup> November 2016

If you would like to submit an article for the News  
please e-mail the Secretary

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