

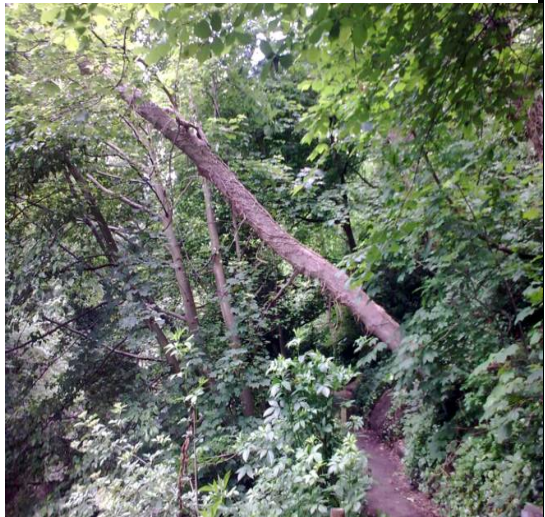
# Dean Village News

Issue 165 Summer 2013  
[www.deanvillage.org](http://www.deanvillage.org)

## Walkway Closure

In May the Water of Leith Trust put a blog on their website concerning the closure of a section of the walkway near the upper weir of Dean Village due to a landslip. Copies of the blog were posted at each end of the closed part of the walkway. If you want to see for yourself the web address is: [www.waterofleith.org.uk/blog/2013/5/8/dean-village-path-closure-update](http://www.waterofleith.org.uk/blog/2013/5/8/dean-village-path-closure-update).

The blog was in the form of frequently asked questions. While there was not much to see, there was a movement of soil, which had caused movement of some trees. One tree (pictured) was leaning over at a steep angle, placing the roots under strain, and was therefore unsafe. A sycamore tree near the top of the slope was also leaning and there was a considerable risk of it



The leaning tree of Dean (now gone)

falling, leading to further land slippage.

On the path itself a “toe” of soil had started to protrude into the path which was evidence of the build up of slipping soil. If this “toe” was removed or damaged, a landslip of the soil building up behind it was likely to occur.

The Council has appointed Halcrow Group Ltd., consultant engineers, to monitor the situation and come up with a solution. Instruments have been installed at various positions on the slope in question, and the results show that there is a constant creep towards the river. The dangerous trees could not be removed because that would increase the danger of a landslide. However in June the engineers had stabilised the slope and the trees have now been carefully removed in sections by the Forestry team.

The situation has not been helped by walkers who climb over the barriers, thus putting themselves at risk. Their actions have damaged a fence by the water, which will have to be repaired once the contractors deem it safe to work in this area. Village observers estimate that two-thirds of walkers and joggers continue along the pathway, while one-third, probably visitors, take the detour.

So the bottom line is - when will the path be rendered completely safe and re-opened to the public? It is estimated that the repair work could be completed by September. However, further work may be required to that part of the slope owned by the Council.

The blog ends with the exhortation that all users of the Water of Leith Walkway follow the diversion that has been clearly sign-posted, and apologises for the inconvenience caused.

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## **Douglas House/ Belford House Consultation**

AMA has produced new designs for apartments to replace these buildings (see page 16). A consultation will take place at the Arthur Conan Doyle Centre, 25 Palmerston Place on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August from 2pm to 7.30pm

## Spring was a little late this year.



There is a particularly beautiful sycamore tree on the Well side of St. Bernard's Bridge adjacent to the Water of Leith. On the left, on 30th March last year, the tree is almost in full leaf. On the right, on the 20th April this year, it is just coming into leaf.

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## The Water of Leith Clean-up.



Some twenty volunteers turned up to assist in the annual clean-up of the Water of Leith between Dean and Belford bridges. Many bags of rubbish were removed. Pride of place went to a Honda mobility scooter found in the deep part of the river by Sunbury Place. Volunteers entered the water and lifted it on to the bank. There it was found that it held a current tax disc till June. The police were informed, who revealed that the scooter

had been stolen in January from Dean Terrace. The Chairman of the Association (above) was interviewed by the police, but not as a suspect! The committee thanks all those who took part.

## The Water of Leith Walkway

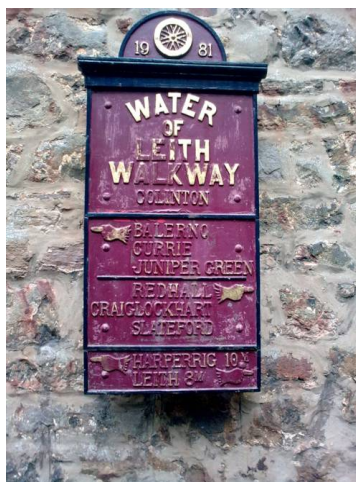
The Water of Leith walkway stretches from the outskirts of Balerno down to the Custom House by The Shore at Leith, a distance a little over 12½ miles. In the last issue of the Dean Village News the walk from the start of the walkway at Balerno to Juniper Green was described. If doing the walk in sections take the 44 bus to Juniper Green, and descend down onto the walkway.

### Stage 2: - Juniper Green to Slateford.

The walkway is rejoined where the service road to the old Woodhall Paper Board Mill runs down from the Lanark Road. Continue towards the city and immediately on your right is a footbridge across the river to the south of the village. Going straight on through a pleasant woodland section, the path curves to the left and then the right as you approach the site of Woodhall Grain Mill.

This mill was working to dry grain until quite recently. In the 19th century the mill made Hunter's Famous Lothian Oatmeal. It has been converted into apartments, and the surrounding area has many large town houses: the "Woodhall Mill Brae" estate. As you pass by the Mill flats there is a pond with a replica metal mill wheel to pay homage to its antecedents.

Just a hundred yards farther on you pass under the city bypass. There is a constant thundering of traffic and a clanking as heavy vehicles go over joints. Just past the bridge is a crossroads. To the left steps go up on to the Lanark road. To the right steps go down under the walkway, across a footbridge, to the Mossy Mill. The Mill is there no longer, once again converted into flats with manicured gardens. This is a residential area and the road continues up towards Woodhall Road. At the West Mill Road Estate there is a road to the left which rejoins the walkway.



Spylaw Park Walkway Sign

Back at the crossroads go straight on as a bridge takes you over the river and on along the wooded walkway by the side of the gently flowing river. After five minutes you reach the point where the Mossy Mill detour rejoins the main walkway.

The path once again crosses the river and you reach Spylaw Park. There is the great mansion house built by James Gillespie (1726-1797) who was a manufacturer of snuff and operated Spylaw Mill from 1759. Carry on through the park and ascend the steps up to the bridge carrying Gillespie Road. There is a sculpture put up by the Royal Bank of Scotland as a milepost for the National Cycle Network. The sculpture depicts animal fossils from an original work by Jon Mills, and casted by

Taylor's foundry at Haverhill. Under the lea of the bridge are nine mill wheels, lying flat on the ground.

After passing under the bridge you reach Colinton Tunnel. Thirty yards in on the right, is a black painting of a Balerno Pug, the small engine used here. Up to this point the walkway has followed the line of the old Balerno rail line. It continues on and moves away from the river and will eventually link up with the canal towpath. So here divert on to smaller paths and take the steps down to the riverside.

A short walk now brings you to the magnificent Redhall Weir. Cross the river on a footbridge giving excellent views. The path now follows the course of the mill lade, along which water still runs, towards Redhall Mill. It has been replaced by a private house, but the lade runs into its grounds. Steps lead up by the side of the house but a fence protects its privacy. The path passes the house called "Kate's Mill Cottage", which is all that remains of a papermill, named after the owner's wife. The mill burnt down in 1890. The lade emerging from the mill is still visible.

You are now in the Colinton and Craiglockhart Dells. There are several paths through this park, but the picturesque way is to keep the river to your left, and not cross the bridges. After twists and turns through pleasant woodland, passing by a stone fairy grotto, the path emerges on Slateford Road by the Blue Goose hostelry.

## **Sue Light**

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## My Friends in the Cemetery XVII by David Perry George Combe - Phrenologist

George Combe was born in Edinburgh on 21st October 1788, the son of a brewer. He was educated at Edinburgh High School and the University of Edinburgh. He started his own lawyer's practice in 1812.



He became interested in phrenology when he attended a demonstration at a friend's house and satisfied himself that the principles were sound. Phrenology is not, as thought by the public, a matter of feeling and reading bumps on a person's head. The phrenologist theoretically divides the cranium into up to forty small areas, under each of which the brain mass defines certain

George Combe - one of four stone heads above the Crown Office in Chambers Street.

personality characteristics. A greater area implies a greater preponderance of that particular characteristic. There were many critics who denounced this practice as "quackery". However, Victorian society was becoming more open and interested in education, and particularly, in science. So phrenologists were asked to assess their children to determine their potential.

One distinguished client was Queen Victoria herself. In October 1850 eldest son Bertie was now eight years old and showing signs of being slow, rather stupid, and possibly not fit to reign. Combe, now the leading practitioner, carefully measured Bertie's head and produced a comprehensive report. There were serious concerns - the quality of the brain was abnormal, leading to feebleness and excitability. His anterior lobe was deficient in size - that is, his brain was too small. The areas of combativeness (no. 5), of firmness (no. 10) and of self-esteem (no.15) were excessive. Thus he was an obstinate child and subject to temper tantrums. His forehead was too small which indicated an



intellectual deficiency. Combe delicately forebore to point out that this same feature was present in Victoria's forehead. However he did report that this feature was inherited from his great-grandfather George III, who had been considered to be mad. But there was no inevitability about his findings. Care and suitable education could correct deficiencies. History tells us that Bertie continued to rebel, but was successful in his short reign as King.

George Combe's great work was his book, first published in 1838 entitled "The Constitution of Man". In it he says "Mental qualities are determined by the size, form and constitution of the brain, and these are transmitted by hereditary descent". His book extended to nine editions and sold over 200,000 copies over the next ten years.

He met Cecilia Siddons, youngest child of Sarah Siddons, the most famous actress of her time. George carried out a careful phrenologic examination of Cecilia's head, and, not a modest man, reported "her anterior lobe was large, her benevolence, self-esteem and love of approbation amply developed, whilst her veneration and wonder were equally moderate with my own." They married in 1833. She brought with her a considerable fortune and theirs was a happy marriage.

Combe died in 1858, while revising for the latest edition of his book. He has a suitably eccentric memorial stone in Dean Cemetery. Cecilia survived him by nine years.

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## **Dean Village News**

This issue of the Dean Village News has been delivered only to members of the Association. If you have enjoyed reading this issue, or found it useful or helpful in any way, you can help by recommending joining the Dean Village Association to others and thus assist in looking after our village. Yearly membership is £7 (£10 per couple) or life membership at £50 (£75 per couple). There is a concessionary annual rate of £3 single and £5 couple. Membership Secretary - Caroline Gerard.

## Winner of the Grand National

On the afternoon of Saturday, 6th April, an extraordinary event occurred. A horse called Auroras Encore won the Aintree Grand National at odds of 66 to 1 and did so by a convincing margin. Firstly this horse had not achieved very much before - its greatest triumph was to be second in the Scottish Grand National at Ayr, one year ago, when it was beaten by a nose. Secondly it was trained by Sue Smith, wife of Harvey Smith, famed show-jumper, on the North Yorkshire moors, her first National winner. Thirdly the jockey on the horse,



Jim Beaumont welcomes Auroras Encore and jockey Ryan Mania

Ryan Mania, was having his first ride in this very challenging race, having recently had a long lay-off from racing. Fourthly the horse was 11 years old, getting on a bit in racing terms. And fifthly the horse was jointly owned by D P. van der Hoeven, Douglas Pryde and none other than Jim Beaumont, resident of Dean Village. Incredibly, they only gained ownership of the horse a few months previously, in December.

Auroras Encore was not the only runner Jim had in the National. He part owns Mr. Moonshine, also trained by Sue, a 100/1 outsider, but



the horse was pulled up three fences from home by his jockey Peter Buchanan. Happily no horse died and no jockey was injured during the race. However triumph and disaster are always close at hand. Less than 24 hours after success at Aintree jockey Ryan had a horrendous fall at Hexham and was taken to Newcastle Hospital for scans.

Much was made in the media of Jim's start in life as a 14 year-old bell-boy in Liverpool's Adelphi Hotel. In an interview he told how Grand National winners were brought into the hotel and paraded on stage. Doubtless this started his interest in horse racing. Since then Jim has been a restaurateur and also a course liaison officer at Musselburgh racecourse. Wife Wendy is the proprietor of "Halibut and Herring" in Bruntsfield.

Scottish racing fans had another bonanza on Thursday when Tartan Snow won the Foxhunters' Chase at Aintree, trained by Selkirk trainer and sheep farmer Stuart Coltherd, at the odds of 100/1.

Jim and the other owners and trainer decided to give Auroras Encore another run in the Scottish Grand National at Ayr on Saturday 20th April, partly to try and emulate Red Rum, the only horse to have done the double of the English and Scottish Grand Nationals, and partly to give the Scottish race-goers the chance to see this great horse. He had to carry extra weight due to his historic win, and had had little time to recover from his previous exertions.. He started well, but started to drop behind towards the end of the race and was pulled up. Sadly, a race too far.

However Jim and his connections do have a magnificent trophy to keep - a replica of the horse labelled with the name of the horse, its owners, its trainer and its jockey.

Visit the Dean Village Website at  
[www.deanvillage.org](http://www.deanvillage.org)  
for the history and activities within  
Dean Village

## Dean Village Events

**First Anniversary of Café Braw:** - Over one year ago, on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, Meg took the opportunity of setting up Café Braw on Belford Road. Others had tried before her and failed. Meg says that some had told her that this venture would suffer the same fate. But here she is (pictured at the café), one year later.

The secret of her success is the variety of goodies she has on offer - rolls, sandwiches, pastries, quiches, soups, cakes, salads, etc. She has also obtained a licence to have outside tables, although earlier this year the weather offered little incentive to sit out! However summer has now, hopefully, arrived.

We congratulate Meg on her success, and look forward to future anniversaries of this valuable addition to the amenities of Dean Village.



**St. Bernard's Well:** - work has now been completed on the refurbishment. The Museums Section of the Council has given permission for the Dean Village Association to open the Well to visitors on Sunday August 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Doors Open Days:** The Cockburn Society arranges for many otherwise private buildings to be open to the general public on the last weekend in September. This event is very popular and literally thousands of people make a pilgrimage to the various sights on display. A programme may be obtained from the Cockburn Society.

The Dean Village Association has been asked to open St. Bernard's Well on the Saturday and Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September, from 11am till 4pm and we hope to be able to oblige. If any member of the Association would like to assist in staffing the Well, please contact the Secretary, David Perry (details on the last page).

**Walks:-** a village walk take place on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July at 7.15. Meet at the top of Bell's Brae. A cemetery walk has been arranged for Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July at 2.15. Meet at the cemetery gates

**Village Clean-up:** - Following the discussion at the Annual General Meeting and the subsequent walk-through of the village with Councillors, it became evident that there were areas which could do with a bit of a tidy-up. We are hopeful that the council will provide a skip for a week. During that time working parties will be invited to tackle various areas within the village. Notices will be displayed around the village asking for volunteers at the appropriate time.

**Fun Day:** - The committee of the Association are considering having a "Fun Day". A suitable outdoor venue would have to be found, probably in late August or in September. It would be hoped to provide snacks and drinks, and fun for the children. It would be an opportunity to meet fellow residents in the most pleasant surroundings. The event would be open to all in the Dean Village Conservation Area. Notices will be displayed when arrangements are complete.

## **Mark Lazarowicz, MP**

Member of Parliament for Edinburgh North  
& Leith

### **Weekly Surgeries (Friday)**

(No Appointment Required)

4.00pm Stockbridge Library, Hamilton Place

5.00pm Constituency Office, 5 Croall Place

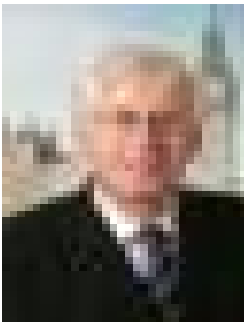
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Email: [mark.lazarowicz.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:mark.lazarowicz.mp@parliament.uk)



## **The Dean Village Annual General Meeting**

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013 at 7.30pm at Dean Parish Church Hall, Edinburgh

The Chairman explained that the planning application that had been lodged with Edinburgh Council to redevelop the site presently occupied by Belford House and Douglas House to make fifty flats had been rejected by the Planning Committee. Subsequently the planners had hosted a consultation with residents at the Travelodge, followed by further talks with Dean Village Association committee members and others. A subsequent consultation was planned for September of last year, which did not take place. In the absence of any subsequent activity, it is assumed that the development will not now take place (but see pages 2 and 16 of this issue).

The committee is engaged in talks with the Council to improve the playground between Dean Path and Damside. There still remain ownership issues to be resolved and costings to be supplied by the Council.

The Secretary referred to the hoarding between Drumsheugh Baths and the Edinburgh Society of Musicians building which had been severely damaged in March and had been again patched with hardboard. The Secretary had written to the Property Section of the Council to ask that International Caledonian Assets Trust be requested to build a wall to protect this site. A reply was received that the Council was only concerned with safety.

St. Bernard's Well is at present being refurbished. The Association would like to open the Well on the Saturday and Sunday of Doors Open weekend (but see page 10).

The Treasurer reported that this year there was £1216 income and £1497 expenditure, resulting in a decrease in funds of £281. A drop in income of £117 was due largely to the loss of donations because of the closure of St. Bernard's Well. Savings had been made in the production of Dean Village News by reduction of printing costs and

increase in advertising revenue. The end of year balance was in credit by £8097.

The following committee members were elected:-

Chairman:- Barry Mackay, Vice-Chairman:- Javier Albert, Secretary: David Perry, Treasurer:- Dominic Guy, Committee members: Caroline Gerard, Conrad Hughes, Mignonne Khazaka, Pat Sinclair, Wendy Taylor

Membership fees would remain the same, which are:- Annual membership: £7 single, £10 couple, Concession: £3 single, £5 couple, Life membership: £50 single, £75 couple.

The untidy state of Dean Village was discussed. The possibility of doing a village clean-up as well as for the Water of Leith was proposed. One member complained about a car battery being dumped in West Mill Lane. Others complained that there was no road sweeping occurring in Belford Mews, or on the steps leading down from Belford Road. Rubbish collections were very irregular. The listed telephone box outside West Mills had been damaged. The gate leading down from Damside onto the river had not been replaced and constituted a danger, particularly to children. The Secretary undertook to arrange a meeting with councillors on all these matters. The meeting recommended that councillors should be invited to the next AGM to respond to matters of this nature.

There has been an increase in dog fouling in recent months. The Secretary recommended putting notices adjacent to fouling asking the owner to come and clean it up.

With regard to the closure of the Water of Leith Walkway between Dean Village and Belford Bridge, consulting engineers have been appointed and come monthly to assess land movement. However there seemed to be no solution imminent (but see page 1).

A plea was made for notices to be displayed asking cyclists to be more aware of walkers.

Regarding events in the village the Water of Leith Clean-up would take place on Sunday, 28th April. 3 village tours and 3 cemetery tours will take place as usual.

The meeting ended at 8.25p.m. After refreshments Paul McAuley, Collections Care Officer of the City of Edinburgh Council, gave a talk on St. Bernard's Well. The refurbishment proved more difficult than expected due to the decaying wooden roof beams discovered after the stonework had been removed. The pineapple finial had been removed gold leaf applied. It was in three sections and would soon be restored to its proper place. He emphasised that more money would be needed by the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust to cover the cost of restoration.

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## **Dean Village Walk-Through - June 19th**

Following the concerns raised at the Annual General Meeting regarding the upkeep and state of cleanliness of Dean Village a walk through was arranged with the Inverleith councillors Lesley Hinds, Nigel Bagshaw and Gavin Barrie on the morning of Wednesday June 19th. The Village was represented by the Secretary, David Perry, and Barbara Mackay, long-term resident of the village.

Among the features shown were the wooden hoarding on Belford Road, the broad stairs leading down into Hawthornbank, the decaying wooden fence on the south side of the river, the absence of a handrail in Convening Court, the state of the washing greens behind Dean Path and the tarmac patches on Damside pavement and the setts of the village centre.

There were some ownership issues to be decided. A map of Dean Village showed that the "Broad Stairs" by Drumsheugh Baths were adopted by the Council who were therefore responsible for their upkeep. But Convening Court was not shown as being adopted. The state of the pavements and roads within the village are also in the Council's remit.

However there seems to be scope for Dean Village residents to form a working party to tidy up some areas within the Village. If such an operation by residents encroaches on privately or communally owned areas, then due notice should be given to the owners. There is a possibility that a skip could be provided by the Council for any debris resulting from a clean-up.

The old playground has had plans agreed as to their possible development as a play area and rest area for residents and visitors. However there were ownership issues outstanding and it was necessary to get a costing so that a fund-raising campaign can be organised.

It was agreed that in order that the issues raised during this walk through Dean Village could be raised in the appropriate forums. Representatives of the Dean Village Association should engage more fully with Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership and West End Community Council.

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## **Flood Defences Completed**

Thankfully it is now possible to walk from Dean Village down to Leith without the many diversions due to the flood prevention works.

There is now a wide walkway from Stockbridge to the Falshaw Bridge. The temporary bridge from Arboretum Walk into the Colonies has now been removed. Along the Rocheid walk there is now a splendid new bridge across the river towards the Glenogle Swim Baths. And the walkway is now open to cross the bridge over the river into Canonmills.

There are two gates along Warriston Road in case that area has to be blocked off when there is excessive water flow. Towards the end of the road there is a new elevated walkway section. And the walkway across St. Marks Park is now open all the way down to Leith.

Walkers and cyclists can now enjoy this improved amenity.



## **St. Bernard's Well**

Conservation work has now been completed. The Well has a resplendent golden pineapple finial. All exterior walls have been pointed, and damaged roof beams replaced. Some of the internal tessera which were loose have been cemented back in place. The pump is fully operational. And Hygeia has a lovely new nose.

A re-opening event was held on the afternoon of 9th July. The restoration was largely financed by the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust with the help of the City of Edinburgh Council. Their campaign raised £44,400 due to the generosity of charitable trusts, foundations and private individuals.

Dean Village Association has been given permission by the Museums Section of the Council to open the Well to the public from time to time. So if you would like to see the interior of the Well come along on Sundays August 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> or September 1<sup>st</sup> between 12 noon and 3pm. The Well will also be open on both Doors Open Days, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> from 11am to 4pm.

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## **Douglas House and Belford House**

It has been almost a year since we last heard from AMA about their re-development of these buildings (See issues 162 and 163). The leases on these buildings do not expire until 2017. Dr. Ali Afsher, director of AMA, says that he is committed to designing buildings of the highest quality acceptable both to the locality and the planning committee of the City of Edinburgh. The architects have come up with four design options. Two involve keeping the basic structure of the two buildings with some add-on structures. The third retains the façade of Douglas House with completely new adjacent apartments. The last is a complete redesign. There is a possibility of town houses down the Mews, but additional floor space would have to be found in other parts of the design. The planners emphasise that the fourth option is their favoured one. A consultation will take place at the Arthur Conan Doyle Centre on Wednesday, 28th August from 2pm till 7pm.

## It's a *Braw* Café

Yes, you are right. Summer is here! We have received our outside seating licence, so what could be better than to sit at our tables and bask in the sun. Meet and greet your friends at our Belford Road rendez-vous. We'll be making fresh salads, lots of tray-bakes and cool drinks.

All of us at Café Braw would like to thank our customers who have supported us over the past year. We have celebrated our first anniversary and we intend to be here for you for many years to come.



The 'Dean Village Boat Race' (middle row) and boat under White Horse (right side) are of the Dean Village Boat Race, taking place on the Dean Village Boat Race Course, Leith Road, Edinburgh. The boat race is held on the River of Forth, between the Dean Village Boat Race Course and the Dean Village Boat Race Course. The boat race is held on the River of Forth, between the Dean Village Boat Race Course and the Dean Village Boat Race Course.

Images of White Horse available at 01 442 11 11 or on the website [www.whitehorse.co.uk](http://www.whitehorse.co.uk)

## Advertise in the Dean Village News

Rates per issue

Quarter page £4

Half page £8

Full page £16

The summer and winter issues go to members of the Dean Village Association. The Spring issue goes to all members

## **WATER OF LEITH INITIATIVE – UPDATE ON PROGRESS**

Two public meetings have been held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January and Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March of stakeholders and other interested parties concerning the upkeep of the Valley of the Water of Leith between Stockbridge and Damside. Minutes of both of these Meetings have been placed on the website of the Garden History Society:-

[www.gardenhistorysociety.org](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org)

As agreed a steering group has been appointed – comprising Peter Burman, Kristina Taylor and Andrew Kerr in the first instance – to carry matters forward.

At the Public Meeting, Peter Burman “proposed the commissioning of an over-arching Management Plan, beneath which would be included Management Plans for the three main gardens (Moray Bank, Dean and Belgrave) and probably a fourth, covering those pockets of land belonging to the Council and other owners”. There was general support for this proposal, but it was also pointed out that the Steering Group “was not a properly constituted association with a properly based mandate”. The steering group acknowledge that, and would welcome suggestions for change, possibly leading to the establishment of a small committee representing all views. In the meantime the group have proceeded on the basis that the approval of the Public Meeting authorised them to take matters forward to a further stage.

The steering group has met several times and also met several Council representatives. It had further meetings with the Water of Leith Conservation Trust and Edinburgh World Heritage (EWH), and later with Historic Scotland (HS). The present plan is that EWH will commission a Conservation Statement (which is an essential preliminary to the Management Plan) from Peter McGowan, who is very well known in this field. HS will provide 50% funding, and the hope of the steering group is that the complementary funding required will be produced by the Stakeholders.

Any further information may be obtained from Andrew Kerr by e-mail:- [andrewkerr@btinternet.com](mailto:andrewkerr@btinternet.com)

## Summer Nature Notes by Barbara Mackay

Today, 7<sup>th</sup> July, is blisteringly hot, for Scotland at any rate. We have had numerous visitors both human and avian to care for. Fortunately for all, feeding arrangements were separate.

The dawn chorus is not so loud but we hear a pigeon who cannot finish his five note call due to a husky throat. He is one of our best known garden birds but in appearance has become so varied that it is impossible to arrive at a generalised description.

Blue Tits are still coming in great numbers. Their young often wait on the window ledge with gaping mouths to be fed. There are also lots of Coal Tits, and Blackcaps have been regularly for tea at 6pm. " Mr " with black cap is very punctual followed by " Mrs " the brown cap, not so predictable. She must be busy back at the nest. A very domineering Blackbird is a regular, with long, bright yellow beak and beady, glittering eye. Very much the boss, woe betide any bird who dares to feed or visit the feeders whilst he is around. Chaffinches have also been frequent feeders; the tall willows opposite provide both shelter and high branches from which to sing. We bought nyger seeds and have been amply rewarded by frequent visits from the beautifully coloured male, female and young Goldfinches. Another regular is the Songthrush, quite a young one I think. They like to eat snails which they crack open by banging against a stone. Not many snails to be seen to date with this exceptional warmth. Nor many Bullfinches this summer so far but we did spot a couple of Greenfinches.

In the previous Newsletter I mentioned our regret at the loss of the crack willow trees along the riverbank. Only two or three remain near us by the iron footbridge but this year they are in full, glorious foliage. Another pleasing spectacle has been the prolific growth along the verges of the river in which are plenty of reeds, sedges and wild flowers such as ramsons, red campions and wild garlic, the last being enthusiastically harvested by visitors. Do they all like garlic flavouring?

Next Newsletter I will chat more about this outburst of greenery, carbon dioxide, the Heron and the "Gorgie Road Gang". Enjoy a warm and safe summer.

# Dean Village Association

## Committee 2012/2013

**Chairman:** Barry Mackay, 3 Sunbury Place  
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**Vice-Chairman:** Javier Albert,  
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## Dean Village News

The deadline for articles for the next edition of  
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If you would like to submit an article for the News  
please e-mail the Editor at [dav12per@btinternet.com](mailto:dav12per@btinternet.com)

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