

Dean Village News

Issue 164 Spring 2013
www.deanvillage.org

Conservation of Dean Valley

At the behest of the Garden History Society for Scotland a meeting was set up in mid-January to discuss the development of a conservation management plan along the Water of Leith between Stockbridge and Dean Village.

Edinburgh World Heritage Trust had produced a management plan in 2005 in which was stated "One of the hidden treasures of the City is the valley of the Water of Leith, which offers a green environment of continuous drama and tranquillity within walking distance of the city centre".

However over the years numerous self-seeded trees have grown. Some of these grow out of the cliff at Dean Bridge which may eventually cause destabilisation. Weed trees have grown below Doune Terrace blocking the view to Dean Bridge and the Firth of Forth. Trees are also growing out of the riverbank which weaken the bank and the pavements above.

The land bounding this section of the Water of Leith has numerous owners, and it was necessary to get all interested parties together so that everyone's views could be expressed. Present at the meeting were representatives of City of Edinburgh Council, the Edinburgh

World Heritage Trust, the Water of Leith Conservation Trust, the Cockburn Society, Historic Scotland, Edinburgh Green Spaces Trust, the Garden History Society for Scotland, Nicolas Boyes Conservation (contractors for repair of St. Bernard's Well), Dean Gardens, Moray Feuers, Belgrave Gardens, and residents of Ann Street, Dean Terrace, India Place, and Dean Village. The meeting was chaired by Peter Burman of the Garden History Society.

The first part of the meeting was to determine who owned what along this section of the Water of Leith. The Water of Leith Conservation Trust has management plans for the entire length of the river (see their website) but in fact owns no land. Work done is always with the co-operation and permission of the landowners. The gardens on each side of the river are controlled by their own Trusts. The Council is not obliged to do any work on privately-owned property, but is responsible for much of the riverbanks.

One interesting ownership issue emerged. The riverbank below Dean Terrace between Stockbridge and the Mackenzie Bridge was bought up by a management company from the residents in the 1980s. The company then became insolvent, but was not allowed to go into liquidation. Therefore the land there is in a kind of limbo. The residents association there is not able to access the area during the annual Water of Leith clean-up. The consensus of the meeting was that this bank was in need of attention, but no resolution was possible at the moment.

Alvin Barber of the Bridges and Structures Division of the Council spoke of the flood defences. Very little work was proposed in this section, except for walls in Damside to protect Well Court. The iron bridge was considered to be a problem, since floodwater pressing against the bridge would cause a back-up of water upstream. However the proposal of raising the bridge and rotating it slightly was unlikely to occur in the near future, if at all, due to restrictions in the Council's budget.

It was obvious that there were many complex issues involved, and any plan would probably need two years to complete. It was agreed to appoint a steering group in which the local communities should be involved to carry matters onward. Another meeting was planned for 16th

March at Edinburgh Academy in Stockbridge to allow participants to consider the various points discussed.

Information about conservation and management plans may be found on the following websites:

Council Conservation management plans: www.edinburgh.gov.uk

Water of Leith Trust business plan: www.waterofleith.org.uk

Edinburgh World Heritage Trust: www.ewht.org.uk

The meeting of 16th March

The object of this follow-up meeting was to bring together everyone with an interest in the landscape adjacent to the river from Stockbridge to Well Court, with a view to forging a coherent vision for future maintenance and development of the valley. Contrasts were drawn between the historic management of this part of the river bank in centuries past, and the current situation, which not only lacks coherence of vision but, in some areas, management and maintenance.

Stakeholders will be asked to produce and agree on a conservation document for the valley. This would be a broad, high level plan identifying everything that people value about the area, including wildlife, cultural significance and how the valley enriches our lives. This document will then prove useful to property owners in future conservation, development or other work. In the longer term, such a document might aid access to funding for conservation work, and perhaps also guide the city council in maintaining the parts of the valley for which they take responsibility.

There were suggestions to provide an interpretive centre, possibly including a café, along the walkway but these were mentioned only as headline projects that might be associated with any large future funding grants, should everyone involved wish to adopt them.

The Water of Leith Walkway

The Water of Leith walkway stretches from the outskirts of Balerno down to the Custom House by Shore Road at Leith, a distance of a little over 12½ miles. Those reasonably fit walkers will complete the walk in four and a half hours. That is walking time. However it is not a race and time will be taken to inspect places of interest along the route. The first stretch from Balerno is a country walk, then into the parklands at Colinton and finally the more industrial areas before Leith.

Lunch should be taken at some time, either by taking your own sandwiches and drinks, or perhaps stopping off at a hostelry in Slateford for a beer and fish and chips. In any case some sustenance and liquid should be taken at regular intervals. At Slateford go into the Water of Leith Visitor's Centre and see the splendid exhibits there.

The walk at each end is marked by a metal ribbon set in the pavement replicating the meandering of the Water of Leith. At present the walk is interrupted by tramway work at Murrayfield, a landslip at Dean Village near the upper weir, and at several points down from Stockbridge due to the installation of flood defences. Hopefully the walkway by the river will be restored soon.

Stage 1: Balerno to Juniper Green.

Take a 44 bus to Balerno. After Currie there is a set of traffic lights where Lanark Road goes straight on and the road to Balerno forks to the left. Get off at the stop immediately after the lights. Walk down a few yards to the start of the walkway.

Down the walkway immediately on your left is a lovely wildlife garden dedicated to the memory of Graham Priestly (1938 – 2004), biologist, who was a founding member of the Water of Leith Trust. Volunteers constructed the garden in 2007.

After a five-minute walk you come to a private house in the grounds of which is the site of Newmills Grain Mill, marked by an old stone wall. Through a break in the wall can be seen an old grindstone. A further five minutes brings you to a retaining wall on your left. Inset in this wall is a small metal plate of a fish, placed there in 2001 by the Water of Leith Trust for the pleasure of walkers and brass-rubbers. This is one of several to be found along the walkway.

Shortly after you come to the site of Waulk Mill of Ballerno which dates back to 1376, and is now part of Kinauld Farm. The walkway crosses the river and, at the end of railings, goes down to the waterside. Across the river is a cleared site which was once the Balerno Paper Mill, established in 1788. The river path rejoins the walkway marked by a stone containing another brass-rubbing. The retaining wall on the right has been used for practice by rock-climbing enthusiasts.

Continue walking until you reach the centre of Currie. On your right are the Currie Kirk and the old railway station. You could make a diversion at this point

and come off the walkway and cross the Currie Bridge. It is reputed to be over 600 years old and there is a deep pool under it. On the far side is the modern and private Barnside House. On the edge of the garden is the circular wall of Currie Mill, dating back to 1506.

Resuming on the walkway you come to a weir and a lade which runs to the site of Kinleith Mill. The Poet's Burn flows down the beautiful glen and into the lade. Kinleith Mill was the largest Mill here and closed only in 1966. The site has been cleared. A sign to the right points to the Pentland Hills, and a path to the left goes by the waterside and then up to the main road.

The path now goes under a road bridge. Further on is the site of East Mill Grain Mill dating back to 1825, now a private house. You can still see the mill lade by the side of the walkway. The site of East Mill Bank Mill is nearby.

The walkway now crosses the river. There are two six-storey blocks of flats being built on your left, overlooking the river. On your right is the site of Woodhall Paper Board Mill, dating back to at least 1749. It is possible to get down on the site and walk back to see the mill lade and unique sluice gate. Continue to where a road leads up from the walkway into Juniper Green. There is a bus stop handily placed by a bank (to obtain money) and the Juniper Green Inn (to spend it).

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My Friends in the Cemetery XVI by David Perry Dr. John Anderson

In the last issue I reported that the autumn storm had resulted in many monuments in the cemetery becoming severely damaged. A very great deal of work was done before Christmas resulting in their restoration.

One of the most severely damaged was the obelisk commemorating Dr. John Anderson. The column was broken near the top, but the pieces have been reunited. The surrounding monuments, broken in a domino effect, have been restored, but close inspection reveals the damage inflicted.

Dr. John Anderson was born in Edinburgh in December 1833, the second son of a banker. Both brothers took an early interest in natural history. John was educated at George Square Academy and Hill Street Institution before going to work in the bank. But he left to study medicine and graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 1864. He studied anatomy under John Goodsir (also a cemetery resident, died March 1867 (See issue 151, Summer 2008)) and became MD in 1862 with a gold medal for his work in zoology.

For the next two years he was professor of natural history in the Free Church College of Edinburgh and published notes on marine organisms found by dredging off the coast of Scotland.

John Anderson moved to India in 1864 as the curator of the Indian Museum at Calcutta which he held till 1887 when he was made superintendent. He made several expeditions in China and Burma, studying the anatomy of reptiles, birds and mammals. Many of his plant specimens are at Calcutta, Kew and the Natural History Museum, London.

He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1879 and was made Honorary LLD of Edinburgh in 1885. He retired from service in India

in 1886, aged 53. He and his wife, Grace Scott Thomas, travelled in Japan before returning to Britain. He later travelled I Egypt, and wrote “Zoology of Egypt”. He died in Buxton in August 1900. His wife survived him by seventeen years and is also commemorated on the obelisk. Sadly, there is a small stone in the corner of the plot marking the grave of their only son who died in 1872.

Probus Pals

What is a Probus Club about? The name is derived from professional retired businessmen. It is a club for retired and semi-retired businessmen and women. The numbers are limited in any one group so that members have the chance to get to know each other. It is non-religious and non-political and we are all retired from the work scene. There are several groups in the Edinburgh area.

Craigleith is a gentleman’s Probus and we meet on the first and third Wednesday mornings of the month from October till April at the Blackhall Bowling Club. There are talks on a variety of interesting subjects. We also have a number of trips and an annual lunch.

We have a few vacancies and would welcome new members if you are retired and would like to enjoy the camaraderie that goes with links to the local community, please get in touch. Or perhaps you just want to come along for a coffee and listen to a stimulating talk on a Wednesday morning once a fortnight over the winter months. The annual subscription is £20 and there are more details on the web site craigleithprobus.co.uk

Advertise in the Dean Village News

Quarter page £4

Half page £8

Full page £16

There are 3 issues per year.

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

EYESORES & IRRITANTS by John Mackay

Residents and visitors alike enjoy the setting and townscape of Dean Village and the flora and fauna associated with the Water of Leith. Councillors are fond of saying it is "one of the jewels in Edinburgh's crown" but actions speak louder than words and the long-standing, disgraceful state of Dean Path testifies to their lack of real concern. Moreover spending money on the little-used footpath on the eastern side of Dean Path reveals a lack of priorities.

It is to the credit of the Dean Village Association that it helps the Water of Leith Trust in its annual clean-up of the river but I submit that the village itself is in greater need of a spring clean. Sadly there are chronic eyesores and irritants which detract from the brilliance of the jewel, and year after year no one does anything about them. Here in my view are the worst half dozen.

- The oldest and the worst: the dilapidated fencing and greatly overgrown site in Belford Road above Bell's Brae and adjacent to Drumsheugh Baths;
- The weed-infested courtyard with its broken-down shed and pile of wood in front of Dean Path Buildings;
- The long-abandoned cooker and other junk behind the houses at the lower end of Hawthornbank Lane;
- The crumbling walls around the courtyards of Dean Path Buildings, especially those nearest to Convening Court;
- The persistent graffiti on garage doors on Bell's Brae;
- The revealingly unpolished firms' brasses on Bell's Brae;

Against these, the restoration of Well court was welcome and the result very pleasing, but what happened to the interesting information board which was sited beside the iron footbridge and much consulted by visitors? We don't want to live in a perfect little ghetto like "Stepford" but we are proud of our village in the city and would hope that those responsible for these offending items in my list would at last do something about them. Perhaps a courteous request from the Association to firms and householders would get a helpful response? I would be willing to join a DVA work gang to help.

Editor's note: John is not the first to suggest a village working party. This topic will undoubtedly be discussed at the Annual General Meeting. Also the reply about the Well Court information board from Edinburgh World Heritage Trust was that it was only temporary during work in progress.

Notice of the Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 23rd April at 7.30pm
in the Dean Parish Church Hall

*Following the business of the meeting, Paul McAuley,
Care Officer of the Museums Section of
Edinburgh Council will give a talk entitled: -*

*St. Bernard's Well
its history, development and future*

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. Dean Village Events

St. Bernard's Well has now received some funding and so work will start on the external refurbishment. We hope that the work will be completed by the spring of 2013, and we hope to open the Well on the first Sunday of June.

Dean Village Association Annual General Meeting:- The AGM will take place on Tuesday 23rd April at 7.30 pm at the Dean Parish Church Hall. After the business of the meeting Paul McAuley, Collections Care Officer of the Museums Section, will give a talk on the origins, history and future of St. Bernard's Well.

Water of Leith Clean-up:- The clean-up of our stretch of the river between Dean Bridge and Belford Bridge will take place on the morning of Sunday 28th April. Volunteers welcome. Collect implements from the old school playground from 10.00a.m.

Village Walks:- Dean Village walks will be held on Tuesday 4th June, Thursday 27th June and Thursday 18th July. Meet at the top of Bell's Brae by Kirkbrae House at 7.15pm. Charge for adults £3.00

Cemetery Walks:- These walks will take place on Sunday afternoons on 16th June, 7th July and 28th July. Meet at the cemetery gates at the top of Dean Path at 2.30pm. The charge for adults will be £4.00 per person, of which £1.00 goes to Dean Cemetery Trust to help with the upkeep of the cemetery.

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, and we hope to be able to oblige. If anyone in the Association would like to help, please contact the Secretary, David Perry (details on the last page).

Filming in Dean Village

On Monday 11th February a film crew descended on Dean Village. Sadly, not a cinema epic, but an advertisement for a brand of bottled spring water destined to be marketed in China.

Just one week before, notices had been posted in Damside and the village centre telling car owners not to park there between 7.30 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. on this day. Fine if you are not away from home and can respond to the notices. Parking attendants stationed themselves in the village centre to divert traffic. However one car still remained in Damside at nine o'clock and was duly removed by lorry. Eventually Bell's Brae was cordoned off to prevent further traffic.

A large film crew now arrived. Pantechnicons containing lighting gear and camera equipment disgorged their contents. Two horseboxes came and eight horses were temporarily stabled in the old schoolyard. Each was given a bundle of hay, and from time to time provided some manure which was scooped up by the stable girls. Two splendid Jaguars, one old and one new, were parked outside West Mill. A



wooden bench and two old wooden tables were placed outside the old house by the bridge to create the effect of a hostelry. Mulch was laid on each side of the road to cover the yellow parking lines.

As happens in the film world there is a great deal of hanging about while the scene is set, the lighting perfected and the cameras positioned to the operator's satisfaction. The actual filming happens very quickly.

We will be unlikely to see the results of this activity. Glenburn wishes to open up the Chinese market for its spring water, fresh from Lennoxburn in the Lenzie hills, to be sold as "Ganten".

St Bernard's Well Fundraising Appeal

Please help to restore this hidden gem

St Bernard's Well will be the last in the Twelve Monuments Project, which has seen some of the city's most important statues and monuments restored. Edinburgh World Heritage is leading the fundraising effort to reach a target of £50,000.

St Bernard's Well was the idea of the eccentric judge Lord Gardenstone, who commissioned Alexander Nasymth in 1789 to design a new well house for the natural spring. The design was inspired by the Roman Temple of Vesta at Tivoli in Italy, complete with a statue to Hygeia the goddess of health.

The project will include re-securing a finial on the roof, stonework repairs and lime mortar re-pointing, conservation of stucco and cement decorations, mosaic work, and restoration of the pump mechanism.

If you would like to make a donation please contact Edinburgh World Heritage on 0131 220 7720 or info@ewht.org.uk

Dog-fouling

In recent months, there has been an outbreak of dog-fouling in and around the Village. Dog-walkers are reminded that The Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 requires them to clear up after their canine chums, on pain of a fixed penalty and a criminal record.

Courtesy and co-operation are better than a £40 fine!

Persistent offenders can be reported to the Environmental Wardens on 0131-529 3030 or at

env.wardens@edinburgh.gov.uk

It's a *Braw* Café

Summer's almost here! We hope to receive our outside seating licence soon, so you'll be able to bask in the sun. We'll be making fresh salads, lots of tray-bakes and cool drinks. And since we haven't forgotten that this is Scotland, we'll also have plenty to warm you up!

We're also celebrating our first birthday on May 15th! There'll be plenty of tasty food, and of course a totally crazy birthday cake! Come along and visit us for a free slice...

Scottish Food Guide

Award-winning Scottish Food Guide and its associated initiatives Scottish Cheese Trail and Scottish Farm Shops, make the positive connection between Scotland's finest producers, suppliers, and best places to eat and stay in one highly effective website, providing a showcase for all seekers and providers of good food. All recommendations are indepently researched and listed solely on merit.

www.scottishfoodguide.com is funded and published by Wendy Barrie Ltd., Drumsheugh Toll, Dean Village. Well known contributor to Scotland's food scene, Wendy is an uncompromising crusader for good food. For further information contact wendy@scottishfoodguide.com.

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Spring Nature Notes by Barbara Mackay

Winter is just about to leave and whilst the pristine snow shovels bought to "Be Prepared " remind us of the absence of snow, all other types of weather have visited. Frighteningly high winds, blistering rain, long cold spells and grey, glowering skies: real Granny stay indoors weather or "didnt I tell you to stay indoors" when you fall and hurt yourself!

The Water of Leith raced past, high and muddy. A sad piece in the last issue informed us of the loss of yet more willow trees. Only one great straggly willow is left, resolute to the last, whereas twenty years ago there were several on the bank opposite Well Court. Huge, spreading specimens casting graceful shadows and lending a tranquil atmosphere to the village. Willows are supposed to regenerate readily, but I see no signs of that, and when the last one is damaged and stripped methodically by squirrels, what then? We need help! These trees are such a loss to all, residents, visitors and especially for our wild life. Has anyone any ideas or tree knowledge we could use to restore them to our riverside?

To compensate for that gloom we had some new visitors in January. Not the sort who eat you out of house and home as the old saying went. Calling regularly was a family of long-tailed tits. A chubby little bird, delicately feathered and coloured with a pinkish breast, black wings, a white stripe on the head and, naturally a long tail. They dart about in groups, flying and sitting together for comfort, warmth and safety.

The second visitor, a great spotted woodpecker, called only once .Stayed for a feed and departed. Disappointing after we bought superior peanuts! He must be our most colourful wild bird and his signature tapping call is known to all .Robins are plentiful, as are blackbirds, blue and coal-tits and chaffinches who like to sing on the top of the bare trees. The dawn chorus is in rehearsal at the moment, not quite ready for a full *fortissimo* performance, but as daylight lengthens they will be. Have a warm and happy Easter.

PS I saw Rattus the other day. Remember him?

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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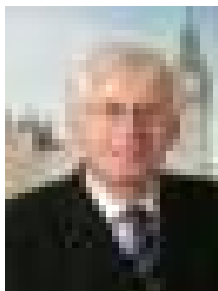
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Dean Village News

This issue of the Dean Village News has been delivered to all households in the Dean Village Conservation area. If you have enjoyed reading this issue, or found it useful or helpful in any way, you can help by joining the Dean Village Association 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.

Visit the Dean Village Website at
www.deanvillage.org
for the history and activities within
Dean Village

Dean Village Association

Committee 2012/2013

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Dean Village News

The deadline for articles for the next edition of
the News is

2nd July 2013

If you would like to submit an article for the News
please e-mail the Editor at davper@aol.com

Printed on recycled paper by University of
Stirling Graphics and Print Services

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