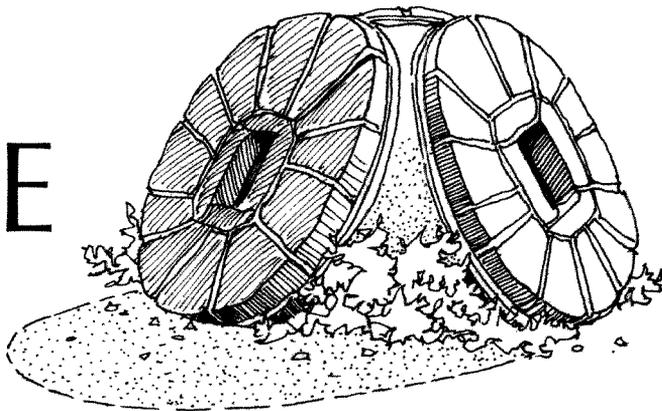


DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



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20p

MEMORIES OF BILL SMITH (1903-1982)

as recorded in 1972 and printed in *DVA News No. 11*.

(He was being shown a photograph of Bell's Brae, looking uphill).

The horses were kept on the right, the carriages and pairs there too, and on the left-hand side were kept all the cabs and four-in-hands. Now there was one called Lord Rosebery", and I forget if the other was the "High Flyer" ... or was it the "Edinburgh Castle"? And Lucky Watson and Jock Watson and all them were all the staff that washed the cabs and all that. Oh, I mind all the horses' names never mind anything else.

(These horses and vehicles were the property of "Cabbie Stewart", who lived at the top of Bell's Brae. The buildings referred to are now: on the left Sir Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall & Partners, on the right Cobb Blyth & Associates.)

The harness room was just at the side there, where they came down. Then came the middle stable and further down was where we kept the treacle and bran for the horses; and down there was the bottom stable, and I always remember there was a man there we called Deafie that used to look after it. I used to get many a jar of treacle there for my mother from Rodgers the coachman; they were good molasses at that time; it was good for you.

There was a lot of cabbies lived in the village — Bob Duncan and two or three others. I'm getting on for seventy now and I can go back to my early days when Sandy Aikman used to run the four horses. He used to have two of them and run them from the Mound to Queensferry, and when they came back the second time they used to stop at the top of Orchard Brae, and I used to go up as a boy, get on their backs and take the horses down because they had done their duty; and I took up fresh horses to them and they went on again.

I can remember quite clear coming down Bell's Brae one winter's night with three hundred hogs' skins on a lorry and I had toenails and heel-studs on my horse's feet there and just half-way down the lorry slid right in and over came the horse and everything. They sent up men from Leggat's and got the horse away. The boss wanted me to put the horse in again but it could hardly stand there and I refused.

I was one of the youngest carters with Leggat. I went there when I was 15½ and I think I was one of the longest serving carters with him too twenty-one years and four months. When I started I got eighteen shillings and one-and-six war bonus. I was working on the stoves at that time and I was driving this pony when it was needed. When the carter Jussy Scott went off, he asked me if

I'd take over — being wi' no brains and a big arm from a size ten shovel for the coal! In those early days we drove lime and in the summer we drove bark — that is the beech and birch bark for the tanning of the pelts. All that's done away with now, lime and everything. We used to drive the bark from Jones in Lothian Road.

(These two paragraphs refer, of course, to his work for Leggat's Tannery).

My mother lived in the High Green at that time. It was a but-and-ben. Those railings down there (on the Water of Leith Walk) — that was my father that made them; he was a blacksmith. His name was Smith and he was a blacksmith. He put them up for Bell there, and that's my father who put them on the Dean Brig too, those little spikes on the top of the Dean Bridge. My father was in the village — a blacksmith now, not a farrier — and his workshop was in Pitt Street; he worked with R. Bell and Son.

* * *

The Village of the Water of Leith — a View

Even before J.R. Findlay built Well Court, partly to improve the view from his home in Rothesay Terrace, he already considered the scene romantic enough to be the subject of a painting which he commissioned from Sir William Fettes Douglas in the 1870's. This painting is in the City Art Centre which has just published a colour reproduction of it as a post-card (10p) and a note card (25p). These can be bought at DVA meetings or from the Secretary.

TOURS OF THE VILLAGE

Two or three times a year we have been providing guides, on request, to take round groups from various clubs and societies. In return they make a donation to the DVA funds.

Now that we have several more trained guides we are in a position to expand this service. Do you know of any organisation which might like to put this into their programme for 1983? Contact the Secretary of the Dean Village Association.

MRS JANET MACKENZIE

We mourn the passing of Jenny Mackenzie, who had lived at No 1 Well Court — the flat below the Hall — since she came there as a bride nearly 50 years ago. She was a staunch character but a very gentle person, whose smiling presence is much missed.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, October 12: Kenneth Sanderson: **Wild Life in Kenya** (illustrated) 7.30 p.m. in Dean Church Hall.

Saturday October 23rd and Sunday October 24th: CLEAN-UP

There will be a couple of skips and lots of plastic sacks. Do your bit when it suits you or join a gang, on Saturday at 10 or 2; on Sunday at 10.30.

Friday November 5 : Bonfire and Fireworks

Monday, December 20 : Christmas Party. Watch for posters or contact the Secretary for details.

Dean Parish Church Fabric Funds

Concert in aid of Funds by Alan Brothwick & Sons in Dean Parish Church Hall, Ravelston Terrace, Thursday 30th Septem-ber. Tickets £1.50 tea and biscuits included. Doors open 7 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.

DEAN DIARY

Midsummer Barbecue

Once again Well Court Garden provided an attractive setting for a barbecue. After relishing hamburgers and sausages ones attention was drawn to the sound of jingling bells—yes-it was the Lothian Morris Men! We all enjoyed their colourful and skillful display of dances. We then returned for further refreshments before moving back to Well Court courtyard to dance to the sounds of "Ceilidh Folk". A good time was had by all. Our thanks to Ian Cowie, Frances McKail for

organisation and preparation and to all those who helped on the night, lent barbecues and tended the garden thus helping to make the evening an unqualified success.

Excursions: We doubted if we could fill a bus. So it was in a minibus and two or three cars that we went to Falkland on a sunny Saturday in June. Moreover, this new arrangement would have enabled us to postpone or cancel the trip if the weather had been awful.

(Do you remember that tour to Berwick two years ago?)

Garden Opening: For this too we made allowance for a possible postponement, but the sun shone for us on July 24th. Primarily this event was to be in the garden of West Mill, which gets the morning sun only (Hence the decision to make it a coffee morning). Entrance would be through the small gate in West Mill Lane. Then we thought: how lovely if the big gates too could be opened, just for once, giving access to a beautiful stretch of the riverside which most of us could never see. Very generously Dr Finlayson gave us permission on behalf of the proprietors of Belgrave Crescent Garden and; Mr Sanderson succeeded in opening the gates; to them we are very grateful, as also to the Link Housing Association for allowing us to use the garden of West Mill. We thank also Miss Barnett who suggested the event and who helped in a practical way to make possible the serving of coffee. This delightful occasion was enjoyed by a variety of people — local residents, Edinburgh folk from further afield, foreign tourists — and raised some money for the Association.

Festival Time: saw three of our new guides in action — Caroline Gerard, Ruth Harvey and Mike Lawton — as well as the three experienced ones — George Smith, Lawrence Walker and John Erskine. Some visitors were game to go on a guided tour even on the first, rainy, Saturday, (when tea was served under the archway of Well Court.) Better weather on the two succeeding Saturdays brought out more, and tea was then served in the garden by the river. The visitors enjoyed it and our funds benefited. Thanks to the bakers, servers and washers-up as well as to the guides.

Festival Ceilidh

Friday 10th September saw Well Court courtyard alive to the music of "Ceilidh Folk" and the enthusiastic dancers stepping out the eightsome reel, Gay Gordons and many more.

Beer, wine or orange juice was on hand, a welcome refreshment for dancers and spectators alike.

Thanks Ken Gourley for organising this event and to all who helped on the night.

* * *

Development and Planning

The Shop: Dryborough's have applied for planning permission for change of use to a pub. (This does not imply that they own the building; presumably they will buy it from Smart's only if they get this planning permission.)

The Association has lodged a very strong objection, on the grounds that a pub would result in an intolerable amount of traffic and noise. The idea of a village pub may sound charming, but it would not be a village pub: the scale of the proposed development implies that it would be designed to attract a large number of outsiders. The building would be doubled in size; this would be a gross overdevelopment of the site, and would alter enormously the existing proportions of a decent building of traditional style, which, although sadly shabby, is an important architectural element in the group of buildings on Damside.

Sunbury: The first of the "town houses" below Belford Bridge are now occupied. We welcome the newcomers and hope they will soon feel part of our community. They might have felt cut off in their enclave, but the new footbridge across the river gives them access to Dean Bank Footpath. Although at present, to reach the Village, one must climb the steps to Dean Path or take the rough unofficial path through the Tannery site, there will eventually be easy access to the houses on the Tannery site and a river-level footpath to the heart of the Village.

We understand that the Health and Safety Executive were to move into the new office block in August. They may have done so by the time this appears.

The Highways Department is renewing the pavement further along Belford Road. It is sad to see the Old flagstones disappear, but they had been in very bad condition. The roadmen were astonished to find a gaping void below the old paving stones; it was of course part of a building whose bricked-up doorway can be seen opposite 31-32 Belford Road. Most of this house must have been demolished when Belford Road was constructed.

High Green and Hawthorn Terrace: The purchase of this area by McTaggart & Mickel from the City is still not finalised. The legal process of conveyancing is being delayed because there exists no title to the roadway, which is to be included in the deal. (In McTaggart & Mickel's outline plan the position of the roadway is changed.) We estimate that it will be at least a year before building begins; in the meantime we want the area to look pleasant. An appeal by the DVA to the Lord Provost eventually brought about the clearing of dense weeds in the District Council's area under a special employment scheme.

Morris & Steedman, architects, have been helpful about cutting down the weeds in their area (bounded by a wooden fence and adjoining the car park which is also theirs). Moreover, two gardens are going to be formed there and the billboard removed.

The Walkway at Belford Bridge: We have enquired yet again why the link under the arch of the bridge has not been constructed. The answer now is that this will be done (under the Special Measures Programme) at the same time as the Walkway is extended to Roseburn. Discussions are still going on with some of the proprietors and superiors of the land at Wester Coates, but it is hoped that the legal preliminaries will soon be completed.

* * *

THE WATER OF LEITH WALKWAY

Excellent leaflets on certain sections (Dean Bank Footpath, Deanhaugh Footpath and Warriston to Coburg Street) are available free in Public Libraries and from the Planning Department.

THE PLAYGROUND

(at the corner of Dean Path and Damside)

There have been unsuccessful attempts to build flats there or make a private car park. Most people seem to want it to be kept as a public open space. Some residents complain of the noise of football. It is ugly as it is. Supposing it were made into a garden, with seats, play space for toddlers..?

There is a problem: not all of the ground belongs to the District Council.)

Opinions, please, to any member of the committee or in writing to the Secretary, possibly in the form of letters for publication in the next issue of the DV News.

* * *

UNDER THE DEAN BRIDGE

Don't worry: it's not the foundations that needed repair. As you probably know, there is a sewer a few feet below the bed of the river. (and a storm-water drain as well). There is a man-made surface of stone setts to prevent the river bed from being eroded down to the sewer. However, the action of the water had loosened stones and washed out material from below the setts, leaving a void. This is what was being repaired, as a matter of urgency, in August.

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THE COCKBURN ASSOCIATION

(The Edinburgh Civic Trust)

The Dean Village Association is affiliated to the Cockburn Association, but you could find it worth while to become an individual member: there are interesting meetings in both summer and winter, including unusual guided walks and access to buildings not normally open to the public. You would also receive the lively twice-yearly newsletter, a substantial publication packed with information.

Secretary: Miss Dorothy Forrester,
13 Belford Road, EH4 3BL

Treasurer: Ian Cowie, 20 Well Court
Editor: Miss Frances McKail, 27 Well Court.