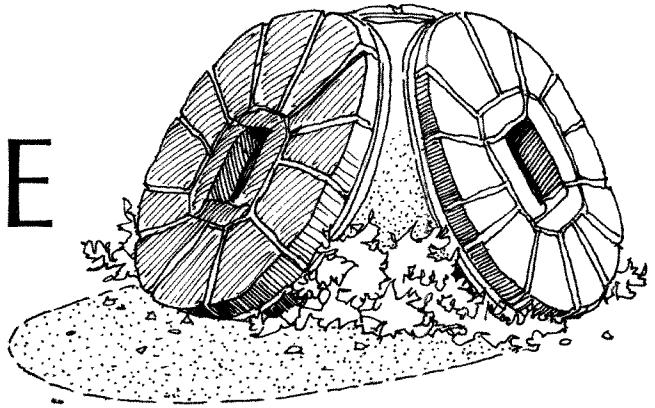


DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



THE DEAN VILLAGE — THE FUTURE?

This was the topic for discussion by our local Councillors and our members at the AGM on April 28.

A number of the points raised by members at the AGM were followed up by Councillor Ian T. Campbell, District Councillor for Dean Ward, and Councillor Tom Ponton, who has now been reelected for Dean/Murrayfield in the Regional Council Elections.

Open space or yet more houses and cars?

It is clear that residents now want High Green — the area between Belford Road and the river — to be kept as an open space and landscaped, as Councillor Campbell has been urging to the District Council. What sort of open space? A few months ago the Association put forward some suggestions for interim treatment of it as a sort of cared-for wilderness, with some seats at the upper edge, an improved footpath across it, and obstacles to keep cars off (DVN 82). We don't really want "NO PARKING" and "NO DUMPING" notices but we may get them nonetheless.

The planting of more trees would be inappropriate, for the open view is important.

But cancellation of the plans to build on High Green does nothing to solve the traffic problem in the heart of the Village. And it will only get worse

Another huge office-block?

The Association has renewed its objections to the size and design of the block for 3-4 Belford Road and to its having a car-park access from Bell's Brae. (See DVN 83)

No. 84

Spring 1986

A one-way system?

This was suggested at the meeting and is being followed up. The possibility was very carefully considered by us in 1980. A simple one-way system — which would probably have to be from Queensferry Street to Queensferry Road — might merely speed up the traffic, including cars using the "rat-run" via Ravelston Terrace to Ravelston Dykes and Barnton. So it was proposed that Ravelston Terrace should be one-way, west to east. This idea was welcomed by residents of the Village, but it met with implacable opposition in other quarters. Perhaps it should be revived.

Or have you another suggestion?

A bollard on the bridge? We are asking if this is possible. If the structure begins to suffer from the strain perhaps the Highways Dept will **have** to stop through traffic completely! In the meantime, we have just been asking for superficial repairs, including the replacement of the concrete part of the parapet by stone. (The concrete is the result of an unsatisfactory repair a few years ago.)

An extension to the hotel?

It was only after the AGM that we heard that the Miller's House at Bell's Mills had been sold to Ladbroke's, with land extending from the river to the lane behind Belford Terrace. We have seen an outline plan: a three - storey block close to the Granary (a leisure centre below, 30 bedrooms above) and on the site of the allotments a three-storey range of

12 (self-catering?) suites; and 91 more car spaces. All this using the present inadequate access!

As we go to press an application for planning consent has not yet been published for comment.

The future of the playground?

Our policy is still to have it made into a garden, but neither we nor Councillor Campbell have been able to overcome a problem.

The future of Queensferry Street?

Shall we be left with nowhere to buy food? We have asked if planning consent was required for change of use from a retail shop (Hogg & Hogg) to a hairdresser's salon. — No.

PLANNING

Belgrave Mews

An application to build two houses and garages behind a house in Dean Path has been returned to the applicant for amendment.

After it has been re-submitted there will be the usual opportunity to examine the proposal and comment on it.

Belford Mews: Some one wanted to make a very small flat out of a garage. Consent has been refused because it would be a sub-standard form of development increasing the number of residential units and reducing the number of garages — which was our principal objection. Although a single instance of this might seem trivial, it would have been a dangerous precedent, not only for the Dean Conservation Area but for Central Edinburgh as a whole.

The Old Stone Bridge: Minor repairs have been carried out at our request. The Assistant Director of Highways also agrees that it would be desirable to replace by stone the concrete part of the parapet (a sub-standard repair done a few years ago). His present budget is fully committed for essential structural work, but he will have the renovation carried out as soon as funds become available.

The Telephone Box: We have complained of its dirty condition. The new Payphone Manager for the East of Scotland replies that one of his first major tasks is to improve on the cleaning, which is done under contract. We hope he gets a new contractor.

THE WALKWAY

From Stockbridge: “A sum of money to cover the repair of the pathway does appear in the current planning budget, but it is up to the Administration whether the money is used for this specific purpose.” (Councillor Campbell).

Past Smart's site: Costs are being calculated for a path along the riverside from the iron footbridge to join Dean Bank Footpath. The Cockburn Association managed to get a copy of a sketch plan last year and, in consultation with the DVA, submitted comments.

We have not seen a more detailed plan. To negotiate the weir there was to be a ramp cantilevered out from the high wall.

There **should** also be an access through the pend which is to be built at the far end of Damside. At our AGM members complained that this route was obstructed by a wall. Having heard that it was for flood protection, we consulted the Forth River Purification Board. Their hydrologist has replied that it is indeed a flood wall and that it has been made high enough to cope with a very exceptional flood, higher even than that which was experienced during an early stage in the construction of the houses. He continues: “Edinburgh District Council approached us for advice on a raised footpath to be constructed at the foot of the flood wall. Our advice was that any further construction of the flood channel, as would be created by a raised footpath, was undesirable and should be avoided.” So we must expect the lower part of the path to be inundated during spates — all the more need to have at least a stile to cross the wall. — Is he also advising against the ramp?

Under Belford Bridge: This link from Dean Bank Footpath to the path past the Dragonara Hotel was promised years ago. We hear that engineers are again looking at the problem.

On to Roseburn: We can expect an official opening in the autumn. It has been an even longer wait than we had thought: the first access agreement was negotiated in 1902. The section from the footbridge to the grounds of Donaldson's Hospital is on the cover of a sewer; the handrail there has been inserted into sockets provided for the purpose 84 years ago. In the meantime, one **can** get through to

Wester Coates or, with some scrambling, to Roseburn Cliff or on to the old railway viaduct, over which a path is now open to Ravelston Dykes, Craigleith and Davidson's Mains along the old railway line.

CLEANING UP

The river was running so high on May 10 that the Clean-up (which we had announced by poster) had to be confined to the banks and open spaces. There was not a great deal of rubbish this time; we have the impression that several local people are regularly picking up litter, so that the area always looks fairly tidy (which may even discourage the litter-louts and dumpers). And perhaps potential litter-louts really are using the litter-bins which have been installed at our request.

Residents in Sunbury are looking after their reach of the river, and the Committee of Douglas Crescent Gardens has begun to tackle a stretch above Belford Bridge.

MEMORIES

In response to the article "Reflections of a Nonagenarian" (DVN 83) The Editor received a letter from Mrs Nicoll of The Edinburgh Clinic, from which we print an extract:-

"My younger brother still owns the lower flats of No.19 Lynedoch Place, where all 3 of us were born, and where my mother (Mary Scott Moncrieff) spent nearly all her life. My brother also still owns the 2 garages and remains of the back green, including the pear tree! But he and his wife live out at Pilmuir, since retiring from India some years ago.

I came to end my days back-to-back with the house where I was born.

Yes, I remember "Stewart the Cabbie"! He had a whistle, to whistle for a cab from his office at the end of the Dean Bridge to the rank. And "Stewart the Florist", who had glasshouses beyond "23" — which was Miss Swinton's house — and I was so glad to hear of Martin Hardie. I have often wondered what happened to him.

We probably remembered the "Stewarts" because my father spelt his name the royal way — "Stuart"!"

New Bridges and Old Customs

The scaffolding of wood, which was erected first, was a work of art in itself, which many

people came from far to see. When the bridge was in course of building — and with their own mills and Craigleith carting in full swing — the two old villages (The Dean and the Water of Leith) had the appearance of a busy human hive. The starting of work in the morning was regulated by the ancient practice of 'beating Hiemett' — a custom as old as the village mills themselves. At the appointed hour one of the millers, approved and gifted in the matter of early rising, stood on the low Bridgend and beat the large corn measure, or 'mett' with the corn rolling pin to a particular tune or rhythm — a sound which was heard far up and down the valley. It was a sound signal as autocratic in its day as the modern time gun is now, and regulated every clock and watch in the neighbourhood. About the same time, 1832, was the first visitation of the Asiatic cholera, which smote the Water of Leith more sorely than it did any other district in or near Edinburgh. A cordon was placed around the village — people were turned back, no one was allowed to go out of it, and if anyone insisted upon entering the plague-stricken place, he had just to stay.

Quoted in "The Story of Telford" (1935) by Sir Alexander Gibb, who does not give the source of this passage.

Nature Notes

Look out for sparrow hawks. They and tawny owls are the subjects of research projects in central Edinburgh. In February a merganser and redwings were seen, and a stoat, which swam across the river. In March a kingfisher was spotted near the Dragonara. (Information from the newsletter of the Douglas Crescent Gardens).

Art Exhibition

From June 13 to July 20 at The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Belford Road — Aleksander Zyw, The Nature of Painting.

For newcomers to the area: Mr Zyw and his wife were founder members of DVA and although they now spend much of their time in Italy, they still regard the Dean Village as home. And of course their son Adam (the sculptor) is still resident here.

The exhibition is open Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 2-5. Admission free.

