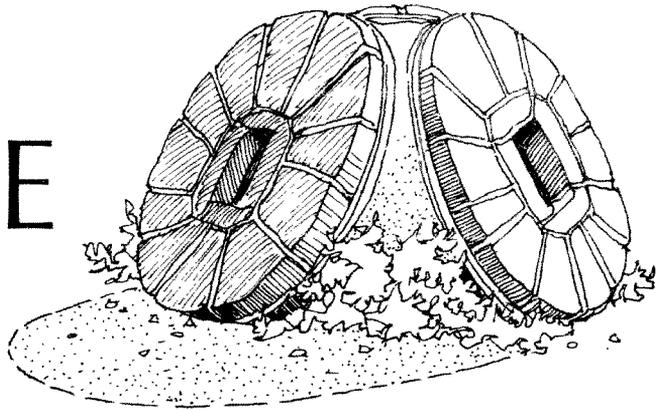


DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



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WHAT'S TO BECOME OF WELL COURT?

What is the point of doing up the flats internally if the structure is not properly maintained? Five years ago a thorough survey was made. Although most of the most urgent repairs were done then, the considerably greater amount of work judged to be necessary was not.

The opportunity to have a comprehensive repairs scheme carried out with a 90% grant from the local authority was missed. A year ago the Dean Village Association initiated a revival of the association of proprietors, and a committee was elected. There was still time to apply for a 50% grant; but few of the proprietors were willing to fill in the forms.

What is to become of Well Court now? The roof needs complete renovation, chimneys need to be repaired, pipes and gutters to be replaced Even though it is a top-category listed building in an outstanding Conservation Area, the owners cannot simply sit back and hope for an outside body to renovate the building for them. The Historic Buildings Council might have provided a supplementary grant, but only if a comprehensive repairs scheme had gone ahead.

Yet the roof may not be the greatest cause for anxiety: What about the wash-houses in the basement? Supposing a fire should be started there? This part of the building was intended for communal use. From time to time it has been suggested that it could still serve communal purposes — laundrette, pram and bicycle storage When in 1978

one man claimed exclusive ownership and proposed to make two flats there, many of the residents objected, and they were supported by the Dean Village Association, but planning consent was granted. (This did not in itself mean that the question of ownership was settled. Is it because doubts had been raised that the renovation has not gone ahead?)

There was perhaps grounds for hoping that the proprietors would make good their claim to joint ownership and renovate the premises. There is clearly no hope now that they will do so. It would be to the advantage of all proprietors that the basement be put into a stage of good repair. Should they now formally give up any claim to that part of the building and beg Mr Craig Richards to renovate it?

We shall try to ensure that this article reaches all the proprietors. REACTION PLEASE! To the Chairman of the Well Court Proprietors Association, Sandy Ford (20 Well Court) or to me (but note that I shall be away during November).

Dorothy Forrester

Note: Copies of the architect's report were provided to all proprietors in 1981. If a copy has not come to you, as a more recent proprietor, ask a neighbour to let you see a copy: or you could probably get a copy from Benjamin Tindall, Architect, 64 St Leonard's Street (667 0104), for the cost of reproduction (about £6).

THE DRAGONARA HOTEL

Proposed Extension

Ladbroke's have bought Bell's Mills House and its adjoining land along the riverside, as far as but not including the orchard below Belford Place (which belongs to the sports club). They want to build a three-storey block, linked to the old granary and containing 30 bedrooms and a small sports centre. This building is rather bulky. Beyond that there would be a quite pleasantly designed two-storey range on a domestic scale, containing ten suites. The front garden of Bells Mill's House would be retained, but most of its back garden would be taken over for car parking.

Admittedly this bald account does not give credit for the planting with which the architect would try to minimise the impact of the development; but we are concerned at the increased urbanisation of the beginning of a rural stretch of the valley, at the destruction of the environment of the Georgian house and at the likely increase in traffic through the already inadequate access. (Ladbroke's say that they will give up running large functions and that that will reduce the traffic nuisance).

The Dean Village Association and the Cockburn Association are lodging objections. So are the residents of Belford Terrace and Belford Place, who are understandably worried by the threat to their outlook and their environment.

Other developments

45-49 Belford Road: We expect to see Miller begin work soon on this site, adjoining the post-office tenement. The plans for which consent was given some time ago (when McTaggart & Mickel were intending to build on that site as well as High Green) had 38 flats and 38 car spaces, mostly underground. There are now to be fewer flats, bigger ones. We welcome this contribution to a better mix of house types. (We have already been glad to see families settling into the School).

Office Block (Belford Road/Bell's Brae): Planning consent has been granted. We fear that, in spite of modifications, it will still be too big and too bulky, with, on Bell's Brae, a vast and cavernous entrance to the basement car park. However, it may not be built:

consent was given for other plans for offices on that very difficult site, and all that happened was that the site was re-sold, with planning permission, to another developer or speculator.

DEAN PATH BUILDINGS

We congratulate the owners on achieving the complete renovation of their properties. We know that they would like also to renovate the railings and up-grade the drying areas. We would all appreciate this improvement of the environment; so the Dean Village Association has offered to supply six oak tubs for shrubs and flowers, on condition that residents in Dean Path Buildings maintain them.

TRAFFIC

We made another attempt to have an Environmental Traffic Management Scheme instituted. The Director of Highways replied: "A recent peak-hour traffic count in the Dean Village indicated that in the morning peak 35 cars used this route in a westerly direction and 33 in an easterly direction and in the evening peak the figures were 28 and 11 respectively. As these traffic flows fall well short of what a relatively minor distributor road such as this would reasonably be expected to accommodate, without detriment to road safety or environment, it is considered that at present there is no justification for the introduction of an environmental traffic scheme, but the situation will be kept under review."

Apart from traffic through the Village, there are difficulties for pedestrians crossing from Bell's Brae to Lynedoch Place, trying to judge whether a car is going to turn into Belford Road or Bell's Brae or not. If the pedestrian is pushing a pram, there is the additional problem of getting it safely off the roadway, up the steps to Lynedoch Place. We are supporting a local couple in their appeal to Councillor Ponton to have the Highways Department do something about this.

TAXI SERVICE

For pensioners the Association provides a free taxi service to the West End on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. and Wednesdays at 2 p.m. Do use it — on both days if you wish.

PAVING

Should granite or whin setts be replaced by skid-resistant modern materials even in conservation areas and historic streets? Controversy over this a couple of years ago resulted in the setting up of a joint working party consisting of officials of the Highways Department of the Region and the District Council's Planning Department.

Their provisional list of streets where setts should be retained includes all of ours: Bell's Brae, Dean Path (part), Damside, Hawthornbank Lane, Sunbury Mews, Sunbury Street, Belford Mews, Belgrave Mews. West Mill Lane is not on the list we have seen, but no doubt it is safe: it is only a few years since the setts were laid at our request.

Another neglected by-way to which we drew the attention of the Highways Department is Convening Court. We were told that it would be paved with natural stone when funds became available. Now the District Council has given a grant for this purpose.

OUR SHOPPING STREET

Is Queensferry Street going to be entirely taken over by solicitors/property agents, hairdressers, employment bureaux, travel agents, pubs, restaurants and cairry-oots?

A Discussion Paper for the Central Edinburgh Local Plan asks: "Should main shopping streets be protected from intrusion from non-shopping uses — pubs, restaurants, building societies, for example? Are special needs not being met — those of residents of the centre, for example?"

The Council already has power to prevent changes of use for the purposes mentioned. We have suggested that it might be necessary to extend those powers to cover other non-shopping uses.

DEAN SKILLS?

One of our residents offers her services as a caterer. Have we also in the area a plumber, a joiner, a handyman, an electrician, a window-cleaner, a hairdresser, a dress-maker? They could advertise in DVNews. Contact Caroline Gerard, 6 Belford Mews (225 6071). If there is enough response, we might publish a page of information for readers to keep handy for reference.

LIVING ART!

That is what Richard Demarco was heard to exclaim in Dean Village one windy day; but not everyone shares his enthusiasm for the sight of washing blowing on a line.

Newcomers to Well Court have been taken aback to find there is strong feeling against having washing out on Sundays. When there was only one proprietor, whose representative lived at no.1, such a rule could be easily enforced. The people who have lived in the Court for 40, 50 or more years try to maintain the tradition. They may well be in a minority now, in their attitude to Sunday, but they are the people who give human continuity to Well Court, it is they who clear litter and weeds and tend the garden (If you have sat in the sun there, have you asked yourself who looked after it?) So I hope that in this matter you will grant to their opinion a respect greater than would be due to their numbers alone, and even if few of the younger generation share their religious attitude to Sunday, perhaps many would nevertheless appreciate the Court looking different, for one day in the week, from its usual workaday self.

Dorothy Forrester

THE CLOCK

We have heard why only two of the clock faces work. It seems that they are not fixed to the tower itself, being held in place mainly by the clock mechanism. They also rest on the stone rims. Where these are badly eroded, the clock faces have slipped into a position in which the hands can no longer turn. To remedy this would be a major operation.

DAGGERS

We have had a visit from Craig Dagger, whose grandfather George Dagger went to New Zealand in 1960. His brother Bob had already gone to Dunedin some years earlier. Their father managed "Cabbie" Stewart's stables in Bell's Brae (now Cobb Blyth's office).

Craig Dagger will be in this country for about a year, and would welcome contact with anyone who knew his family. His address: c/o 27 Crichton Avenue, Pathhead EH37 5QH.

RECENT EVENTS

The ceilidh in Well Court at the end of August was the best organised one yet, with good food as well as a bar, plenty of seats and tables, a shelter for the band. If it had been very wet we could have used the upper garage of Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall & Partners.

One reason for holding the event was to raise money, e.g. for good lamps for Well Court. There was a profit, but not a large one. Why was the evening not better attended? Because of the damp weather? or the rival attractions of the Festival? Was it too late in the season? We'll put on the next one in June.

We have another reason for being grateful to RMJ-M & Partners: we are now holding our evening meetings in the heart of the Village again, since they are allowing us to use a comfortable room in their offices. We have already seen their Douglas Lakie's pictures of his trip to the Windward Islands, and as we go to press we are looking forward to Wilma Gladstone's of Egypt.

Offering guided walks on two Sundays after the Festival proved a success. Among the walkers was our old friend Miss Alice Bennett, at the age of 94. She has written: "It was great to see again my home of ninety years ago ("Hawthorn Buildings") looking so smart, and to see the school not knocked down but converted."

... and a non-event

In our last issue we indicated that there might be a bonfire and fireworks night on November 1st. Unfortunately we didn't have the people to organise it. But we have begun to drop hints about next year to some young people who have moved into the Village.

CLEAN-UP

Will you help with a thorough clean-up of the river, footpaths and open ground? Things don't look too bad at present, but more rubbish will show when the summer growth dies down.

Meet at the iron footbridge on

Saturday DECEMBER 6TH at 10.30 or 2 o'clock

If the weather is bad we'll do it on SUNDAY 7TH.

LANDSCAPING

Come and see what is being planned for High Green — the unkempt area between Belford Road and the river —

on TUESDAY DECEMBER 9TH at 7.30

in the offices of Robert Marshall, Johnson-Matthew & Partners. (Enter from Miller Row, by the riverside, a few yards below the old stone bridge).

ELMS

In Belgrave Crescent Gardens about 10 diseased trees have had to be felled, and the timber was burned.

VANDALS CAUGHT

Residents reacted to unusual noise outside their home in Dean Path and lads were caught damaging a car — literally caught, for a citizen's arrest was made.

You may not feel brave enough to tackle criminals yourself, but do react to suspicious sounds or sights: phone the police.

All of our area is now policed from Corstorphine. Previously Belford Road etc. south of the river were covered by the West End station. The present cover is provided by both foot patrols and cars. We are assured that the change has resulted in increased cover.

BOTTLES AND JARS

You can use the bottle bank behind the Dragonara Hotel.

THE DEAN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Chairman: Mrs Peggy Valentine
31/2 Belford Road (225 8942)

Secretary: Miss Dorothy Forrester
13 Belford Road EH4 3BL (226 5843)

Treasurer: Mrs Betty Boyd
10 Randolph Cliff (225 3289)

SUBSCRIPTIONS (1986-7)

Ordinary £2.00 (or £2.50 with postage)
Senior Citizens £1 (or £1.50 with postage)
Life Membership £20.00