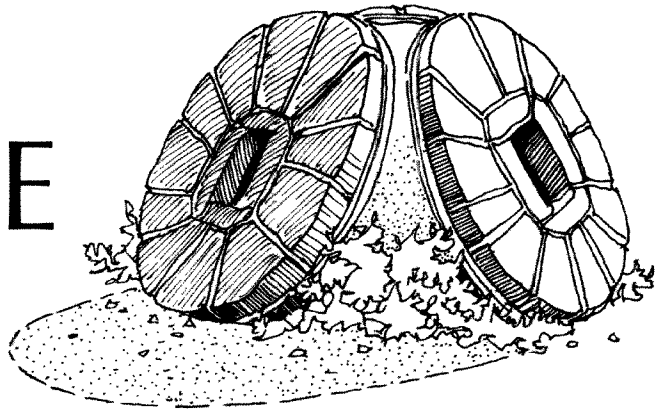


DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



No.89

Autumn 1987

HIGH GREEN – A DENSE DEVELOPMENT IS PROPOSED

The DVA has been campaigning against the District Council's decision to sell the ground for building rather than keep it open. The next best thing would be a not-too-dense development. The density suggested in the 1981 planning brief implied about 18 dwellings, "although the total merit of the proposals as a whole would override density considerations". McTaggart & Mickel's preliminary plans were for 37 units. In the end they got planning consent for 43. On density, the 1987 planning brief was unchanged; but interested parties seem to have been told that anything up to 43 units would be O.K. Naturally we feared that the biggest bid would be for the densest development.

The Council has ratified the decision of the Economic Development and Estates Committee to sell the ground to New Capital and Scottish Properties (directors, Crichton Lang, who is an architect, and the Earl of Breadalbane). They propose to build 43 flats and maisonettes and a restaurant (that makes 44 units). Their bid was perhaps the highest. Their plans, by Murray Yeoman and

McAllister, of North Queensferry, may also be the best, as has been suggested to us. That aspect was assessed by planning officials, without consultation with the public are the Cockburn Association, the Fine Art Commission, the Architectural Heritage Society (formerly the Georgian Society) or the Dean Village Association. We don't know what the other plans were like, except that we have heard of one for 33 units, all on the upper part of the slope, with green parkland below.

We have now seen the winning plan, which the developers are willing, even eager, to discuss with us, as they prepare the final plans. Their aim is to build flats and maisonettes of a very high quality (and price). We have not yet had time to form a considered opinion on the architectural quality. The restaurant is charmingly sited, near the river; but we have said that residents will oppose a licensed restaurant. When an application is made for planning consent later this year, the above-named bodies will all no doubt comment on the plans, and any individual can too. Look out for an official notice

THE MILLER OF DEANHAUGH

(A further extract from the novel by James Ballantyne published in 1844 but set in the 1790's). See DVN 80, 81.

At a short distance below Flemyng's mill stands an elegant little temple, built over the mineral well of St Bernard's, a spring said to have had its medicinal properties imparted to it by the saint whose name it bears. This well is still in great repute, and in the last century, when large potations were fashionable, the Luckenbooth merchants were much in the habit of repairing thither in the mornings to drink of the water, which was considered an excellent restorative after a deep debauch: and that abominable abortion the Earthen Mound, is said to have owed its origin to these latter worthies, who formed a footpath through the intervening hollow called the North Loch, to facilitate their intercourse with their favourite morning rendezvous, St Bernard's Well. It is insinuated, indeed that the medicinal qualities of the spring were occasionally improved by the addition of a little genuine cognac, which the keeper of the well kept for the especial use of some of his morning customers; but scandal is always to be suspected, and the report may not, after all, be well founded.

Beyond St Bernard's Well, and all along the course of the stream of the Firth of Forth, the scenery was, at the period when Flemyng occupied Deanhaugh Mill, much more romantic than it is now. The noble Firth with its isles lay sleeping in the distance. The sides of the valley through which the stream glided, exhibited a continuous succession of fertile fields and clumps of wood. The white cottages of the little village of Stockbridge, peeping through the foliage of the latter, and gleaming bright when lighted up by a summer setting sun, all contributed to make Halbert Flemyng proud, not only of his mill itself, but of the scenery also, by which it was surrounded.

It was with a countenance expressive of every kindly feeling that, on an evening after the last sack had been removed from the the funnel, and the worthy miller's face and hands had undergone a thorough ablution, he lighted his cutty pine and sauntered up to the village of the Water of Leith, to take his nightly share in the chat and cheer of his friend Mathew Waldie's smith. (This smithy seems to be on Dean Path – Ed).

The main street of the village is a curiosity in its way, taking a number of fantastic turns, and meeting the little peaked bridge that crosses the Water of Leith nearly at right angles. This street, however, is by no means so remarkable as the many little tortuous zig-zag lanes and alleys that branch out from it in various directions, like the small bloodvessels that spring from a main artery. The houses and mills seem to have been built first, either for the purpose of catching a waterfall for the mill-wheel, or to suit the taste of their owners, — the idea of forming streets and lanes having been matter of after consideration. In this way, houses have been thrust into such odd out of the way corners, that you have fairly to circumnavigate the building before you arrive at the entrance door.

"CABBIE'S"

Since moving into "the House on the Bridge" three or four years ago, Mrs Boyd had hoped to let the public have access to Stewart's Cab Office again. Now that she has opened it as an antique shop, you can go in (between 2 and 6 p.m.) and see the fine woodwork and the stained-glass door. (You can also buy our leaflet-guide and postcards of the Village).

People have been dropping in with their memories of the shop. Some remember it as a sweetie shop, others as an antique shop; "very special people" knew it in Cabbie Stewart's day. Mrs Boyd is particularly interested to hear from them.

LOCAL HISTORY

There is still scope for research on the Dean Village, Sunbury and Bell's Mills. You don't need to be an academic to find things out. If you are at all interested, please contact Dorothy Forrester. Don't hold back just because you don't know how to go about it. Anyone can tackle oral history (Advice is available). You could be guided to documentary sources – census returns, name-books of the Ordnance Survey, maps, minutes of Kirk Sessions, old newspapers ... The DVA is a members of the Scottish Local History Forum, which organises conferences, publishes a newsletter (ask us for a copy) and which could help us to lay on a training course.

FROM DEAN TO DUNEDIN

During my recent travels in New Zealand I called on Mrs Rebecca Dagger to Dunedin, who was born in the Dean Village in 1898. Her husband's father, John Howard Dagger, worked for his uncle. "Cabbie Stewart", taking orders and escorting ladies to their cabs. Young Robert Howard Dagger was daft about horses and kept hanging about the stables in Bell's Brae; but his father saw there was no future in horses and apprenticed him to a frame-maker. When still very young, he emigrated in 1913 to Dunedin. In the First World War he joined up in the New Zealand army, and fought in Gallipoli and France. Back in the Dean Village on leave in 1916, he met Rebecca McIntosh - who had been only 14 when he emigrated - and married her the following year. They went out to New Zealand in a troopship, with their first child, in 1919.

In Dunedin there was no great demand for picture frames. John Dagger eventually obtained a post as a custodian in the Otago Museum, and became keenly interested in Maori lore. The Dagggers has daughters only - five of them - so none of their numerous descendents have their distinctive surname. But there are others, descended from the Dagggers, who went out in the 1850's.

I find it interesting that successive generations of the family have gone to Dunedin, knowing that there were cousins there already. Some went out after the Second World War. (See DVN 86). Then there are connections with other families who emigrated from the Dean Village: Mrs Dagger's mother was a Weir, related to Daniel Weir, whose numerous descendents in New Zealand have been traced by Mrs Jean Dales (See DVN 87).

The family tree which she compiled has proved to be of scientific value. Specialists in Auckland and Dunedin were interested in four cases of a rare blood group. Their investigations into the family trees of these apparently unrelated individuals brought them into touch with Mrs Dales, who was able to help them trace the peculiar gene almost certainly to the Weirs of Dean Village. D.L.F.

THE FAYRE (June 6)

In spite of the rain, dancers danced, pipers played, the blacksmith hammered, the splendid fair organ resounded merrily, the baker kneaded his dough, fish and fruit stalls did well, while teas were served in Well Court and the wee sweetie shop did a roaring trade. A carriage, a sedan chair and period costumes provided picturesque subjects for the photographers. The handsomest figure, perhaps, was Sean, the "Breadwinner" in person, who not only persevered in the rain but gave a generous donation in kind.

Fortunately there was a roof for the ceilidh, in RMJ-M's, garage. That was a financial success, so that we ended the day £400 up. Of course we would have made more on a good day. Should we have insured against rain? The premium for that is very high. Thank you to Betty Boyd especially for her bright ideas and hard work.

AN APOLOGY

To the innocent parties who received a note asking them not to put refuse out before the proper day (Tuesday or Friday) and not to leave it out if they miss the collection. I hope they would understand that it was a case of "If the cap fits, wear it", and that they would welcome the attempt to deal with the abnoxious habit; but I admit that my circular could have been more tactful. D. L. F.

ALLOTMENTS

The DVA has a lease of a large area of garden ground at Dean Education centre, west of the main building, between the two driveways. Since there is a waiting list for plots, we have negotiated for a small additional area east of the main building. Apply to Bill Myles, 12 Douglas Crescent (337 4781).

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

This scheme for crime prevention has made a good start in Sunbury. Would you like a similar scheme in your neighbourhood? To find out what is entailed, contact Sargeant Ian Richardson at the West End Police Station (229 2323).

LOOTING AT BELL'S MILLS

(A bad harvest in 1739 led to shortage throughout the following year)

"A number of dissolute disorderly persons, under pretence of great Quantities of Meal etc had been hoarded up, assembled tumultuously last Thursday and proceeding to the house of Charles Sawers at Bell's Mills (who used to buy and retail grain) broke open his house and granaries, carried off some bolls of victual, and broke and demolished several things in his house. Being in some measure disappointed here, they directed their course to Leith. The Lord Provost and the Magistrates of this city having information (but too late) of their designs upon Mr Sawers, had applied to his Excellency General Clayton, for the Troops; and the same being instantly granted, his Lordship, with some Justices of the Peace, accompanied the detachment of Brigadier Cornwallis's Regiment, towards Bell's Mills, but the rioters were gone".

(Caledonian Mercury,
Monday, October 27, 1740)

There was trouble at Leith, where a number of men were arrested. Where they were being led to Edinburgh by near 200 soldiers, a vast number of rioters attacked the escort in an attempt to rescue the prisoners. The Riot Act was read. Shots were fired. Netherbow Port was shut in the face of the rioters, and the prisoners taken to the Castle. They were released by November 3, "all but the Fidler who beat the drum." Meanwhile, at Bell's Mills:

"Tuesday Night last a body of rioters made a second visit to the house of Chas Sawers at Bell's Mills and carried off some grain. One of them had a rope in his hand and asked for Mr Sawers swearing (that) if they had found him, he should never again deal betwixt farmer and eater, nor hoard up grain, while the poor starved." (Caledonian Mercury October 30)

POSTCARD FROM INDONESIA

"Having a fascinating expedition, combination of colour, pollution, exhaustion, interest and potential" Liz Law, on "Operation Raleigh"

HIGH GREEN

For an official notice posted up at the site, or watch the list of applications in the News each Friday.

DVA MEMBERS SPEAK

Three local residents will give talks illustrated by slides.

Tuesday October 6: **Dorothy Forrester** — A MONTH IN NEW ZEALAND, with slides lent by the New Zealand High Commission.

Tuesday November 10: **Doug Edgar** — LIGHTWEIGHT MOUNTAINEERING IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA — A two-person trip to and through a magnificent mountain region of Kashmir and Ladak.

Tuesday December 8: **Lester Borley** — THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND, of which he is the Director.

Time and place: 7.30 p.m. in Miller Row. Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall & Partners generously allow us to use their Seminar Room, entered from Miller Row, 20 yards down from the old stone bridge in the middle of the Village.

CLEAN-UP Saturday October 31

Meet at the iron footbridge beside Well Court at 10.30 or 2 p.m.; or you may find the gang down Miller Row.

If the weather is very bad, we'll postpone this till Saturday November 7.

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

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