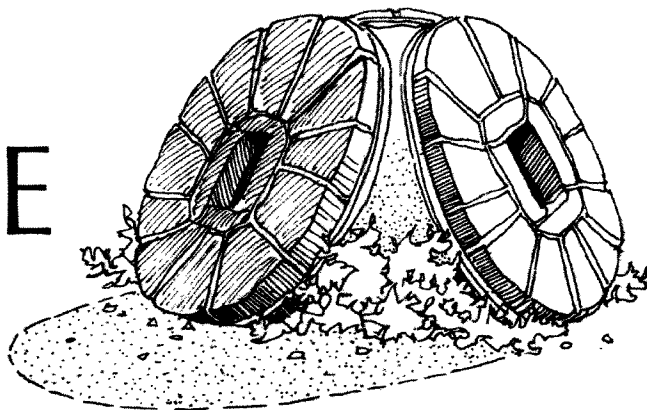


# DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



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## ST BERNARD'S WELL

*This water so healthful near Edinburgh doth rise  
Which not only Bath but Moffat outvies;  
It cleans the intestines and an appetite gives  
While morbidic matters it quite away drives.*

*"Claudero" (James Wilson)*

There is fanciful tale that the great St Bernard of Clairvaux visited Scotland in the twelfth century, while attempting to raise forces for the Second Crusade. After being poorly received at court, he withdrew, aggrieved and ill, to live in a cave (now covered over) near the Dean Bridge. He was attracted to a spring by the birds which visited it, and drank the healing waters until his strength returned. It is said that the well was rediscovered by three Heriot's boys who were fishing in the Water of Leith in 1760. In the same year a small well-house was built. Chemical analysis showed the water to be very like that of the sulphurous springs of Harrogate, and the well soon became popular with those Edinburgh citizens who wished to "take the waters", although the flavour was likened to "the washings of a foul gun-barrel". It is difficult to believe that the "effects of this water when used in making tea or punch are remarkably agreeable".

One of its most enthusiastic devotees was Sir Francis Garden of Troup, Lord Gardenstone, who bought the property in 1788 and commissioned the present Temple of Hygeia

(goddess of health) from the painter and architect Alexander Nasmyth. In his design the temple stood on a steep pseudo-natural rock which fell sheer to the river below. This is how we see it in earlier paintings. But this aspect was changed by the addition of the terrace in the 1880s, when the well was bought by Thomas Nelson, the publisher, restored, embellished and given to the City. The present statue dates from that time, as does the lavish Victorian decoration of the pump-room below. One could still get a glass of the water there, for a penny, up to 1940, when it was closed because of the war.

Most of this information is from a leaflet written by Neil Macara Brown and published by the District Council to celebrate the bicentenary of the building of the present well-house in 1789 and the centenary of its restoration in 1888.

The pump-room will be open on Sunday afternoons in July and August this summer, from 2 to 5 p.m. Anyone willing to take a turn of duty there should contact Councillor David Guest (225 6263).

## DEAN PARISH CHURCH

The first church was built in 1836, mainly for the inhabitants of the Village of the Water of Leith (i.e. the present "Dean Village") and the hamlets of Bell's Mills and Dean (on the ridge to the north, where Belgrave Mews now stands). Of the total population of about 2000, 1356 lived in the main village. As the Victorian terraces were built, grander folk moved in: "in 1890 the Session purchased carriage steps to assist the growing number of members arriving by carriage".

Was it elders from among the carriage folk who commented on non-church-going in the Village of the Water of Leith? At 5% it was higher than in the rest of the parish. Causes of non-church-attendance were given as spiritual indifference, poverty and intemperance. "Except for the Water of Leith, poverty does not prevail; but for intemperance, the poverty in the village would be considerably less than it is".

"In 1913 there occurs the last entry in the Session records of a member of the Parish being brought before the Kirk Session because of fornication. Along with non-attendance at church and intoxication, this seems to have been the only type of crime committed in the Parish. Most of the penitents lived in the Water of Leith Village". (But what was the offence committed by the Rev. James Hay, deposed in 1842?)

Our bad reputation went on: "In 1938 the Dean Village Association's application for the use of the hall for a children's treat was refused, in view of the possible damage to the new floor and the fact that the children were not connected with any organisation which could be counted on to preserve discipline".

"A History of Dean Parish Church 1836-1936" is available (price £1.50) from Miss Alexia Lindsay, 4/9 Orchard Brae Avenue (332 7540).

## LEGGETS

In DVN 79 we printed the history of this family as told by a representative of the main line. They had already been in the business of treating sheepskins in Edinburgh for 150 years before they moved to the haugh in the Village of the Water of Leith in 1836, and they carried on their rather smelly trade there - on the site now occupied by Smart's development - until 1973. (They went on obstinately using the old address, "Water of Leith", to the end).

We have now heard that one branch of the family gave rise to a distinguished geologist, Dr Robert Legget, of Ottawa, who has written: *To think that there is a Dean Village Association delights me. I will give you a summary of what I know of the Legget connection, my memories going back to 1919 (I am now 84).. The family tree which I have starts with Robert Somerville Legget, born about 1795, who founded Robert Legget & Son in 1823. Later it was called R & T Legget Ltd., but sometime later reverted to Robert Legget & Sons, which it certainly was in 1919 when I first visited "The Works" and was shown round by my two great-uncles (sons of the RL just mentioned): Robert Legget - the patriarch of the family - and Thomas Legget. My own grandfather was a third son, James Ferguson Legget; he ran away to sea and became a famous clipper captain, his wife, a Highland lady, moving her "brood" down to Liverpool, then the second capital of Scotland and the world's No 1 port, from which my grandfather sailed.*

*Back to "The Works" as they were always called in the family, they were situated around the old water mill, and I have a poor photo of the two owners ( R & T) in the overall coats they always wore. And on the front doorway of the old stone building there was a rather battered brass sign saying "Robert Legget & Sons" and it was still there when I had the joy of taking my wife down to the village in the 50s and 60s. When the two older men had to retire, their places were taken by Robert Lindsay Legget, (Robert's only son) and Thomas, or Tom, (Thomas's son), who had been badly wounded in the first world war and had (I think) an artificial leg. In consequence of this he was a very shy and retiring man, but kindly, and so I got to know Robert (Uncle Robert to me) much better. He was a real expert on sheep and wool; my wife was a weaver and so, when the two of them got together, Mrs N Legget (Aunt Nan) and I were left on our own. Uncle Robert once brought a full sheepskin home and in Nan's kitchen proceeded to show my dear wife how wool grows etc.etc., much to the disgust of his wife.*

*These two men were, in turn, followed by their sons, with the same names.... On my last visit to the village I found.. that one of the Thomas Legget ladies (if I may so express it) had opened a leather boutique... using scrap leather from "The Works"; my wife was charmed by the ladies and their wares. Is it still there, I wonder? - No: it was on the ground floor (street level) of the old building at 29 Dean Path (The Tannery Shop).*

## THE DIRECTOR SPEAKS

We were privileged to have an address by the Director of Planning, Mr Graham Duncan, at our AGM. We found him very sympathetic to our views about the Village. (He can't be blamed for decisions made, consents granted, before he took office). He has succeeded in having the building with the shop in Damside recognised as being "of listable quality". (Let's hope that the owner will soon agree to sell it to one of the many people who would like to restore it). He gave us the news that the riverside link from the footbridge to Dean Bank will soon be completed, with a ramp beside the weir and, we hope, a stile over the flood-prevention wall beyond the western pend. A new, firm policy will make it easier to defend the character of the leafy stone suburbs - mostly in the Grange, Murrayfield, Trinity etc., but we have a sample within the Dean Conservation Area (Belford Park, for example).

## RECYCLING

**Newspaper:** The Friends of the Earth now have a paper bank at Stockbridge on Saturday mornings, 8.30 to 11.30. The Scouts of Palmerston Place Church also Collect Newspaper; you can leave it in the basement area of 8 Palmerston Place at any time.

**Jars,** including coffee jars, suitable from jam etc. are welcomed by St Columba's Hospice, the Royal Repository at 23a Castle Street and the RSPB (Dorothy Forrester can take them to the RSPB).

**Other glass,** to bottle banks, of course. (There is one behind the Hilton Hotel). This year the profits are to go to Guide Dogs for the Blind.

## "THE CHEERFUL CEMETERY"

We used this phrase on our posters for a guided walk in May. It was Lord Jeffrey who used the surprising adjective: "We went into the Dean Cemetery, which was resonant with blackbirds and looked invitingly cheerful. I rather think I must have a freehold there".

A pamphlet published for the centenary in 1945 gives the history of the cemetery and has pictures of Dean House, which stood there until 1845.

In the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, Vol. 1, there is a long article by John Geddies: "Sculptured Stones of Edinburgh - the Dean Group". It does more than describe and explain the curious stones which were on Dean House and several of which are built into the terrace wall of the cemetery: it gives a detailed and in places dramatic account of the Nisbet family who lived there.

I have photocopies of these two items, which I can lend, but of course you can find them - and lots more of interest - in the Edinburgh Room in the Central Library, George IV Bridge.

D.F.

## FOR PENSIONERS

The annual outing will take place on **Wednesday, August 16th.**

We plan to go to the Lake of Menteith and Inchmahome, the lovely island where Mary, Queen of Scots, took refuge as a child. The Association will pay for the bus. Participants are asked to pay for their own tea and the entrance fee. Departure: 1.15 p.m. Return: about 7 p.m. Booking to Peggy Valentine or Dorothy Forrester.

## COMMITTEE

<b>Chairman:</b>	Mrs Peggy Valentine, 31/2 Belford Road	225 8942
<b>Vice-Chairman:</b>	Mr Alasdair Fergusson, 22 Sunbury Place	226 5656
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Miss Dorothy Forrester, 13 Belford Road	226 5843
<b>Secretary:</b>	Miss Helen Callum, 1/7 Dean Path	225 5848
<b>and</b>	Mrs Cynthia Esson, 3d Belford Park	343 1489
	Mr Ted Fisher, 29/1 Sunbury Place	225 1123
	Ms Caroline Gerard, 6 Belford Mews	225 6071
	Mr J. C. Mortimer, Flat T, 2A Dean Park	226 2070
	Mr R. J. C. Parkin, 1b Belford Park	332 3726
	Mrs Lynn Turner, 35/2 Dean Path	225 2543
	Mrs Jenny Zyw, 17 Bell's Brae	225 3213

We hope to co-opt representatives from Well Court and Dean Path Buildings. Suggestions or Volunteers, please! Next committee meeting: June 27th.

## EDINBURGH'S RIVER

by George Scott-Moncrieff in the SMT Magazine, February 1945

Most of the capital cities of the world sit upon generous rivers. Rivers wide and navigable, docile and dutiful... Paris has her Seine, London her Thames, Warsaw her Vistula. But Edinburgh has only the Water of Leith, a mere trickle, a burn that bounds down from the Pentland Hills. And, except where it has been manhandled out of all recognition for the docks and harbours of Leith, it never really ceases to be a burn. It is dirtied by its contact with the city, but not changed in its flow; feeble in dry weather, although rather grand, for all that it is murky, in a spate.....

The stretch below the Belford Bridge is perhaps the most familiar of all, apart from the mercantile reaches at the Port of Leith itself. Certainly the Water shows to best advantage here, and seems to be at its happiest.

It has one more menial task to serve after passing below the Belford Bridge, and before it can reach the arcadia of the Dean Village, for there is a tannery between the two. After that it has a holiday, spent in the pleasantest surroundings. It flows first under a footbridge, and then over the cobble-stones of an ancient ford, past the village and its more than village-size school, under a lovely little semi-circular bridge high above which rise the great arches of the Dean Bridge itself.

A few of the old houses of the Dean Village are left to us. They include a particularly attractive one with a rounded stair-tower, standing at the foot of Bell's Brae and at the head of the semi-circular bridge. It is now, unfortunately, very dilapidated; may it not be allowed to disappear.

*It did not disappear, for the artist Aleksander Zyw came to make drawings to illustrate this article. He and his wife fell in love with the red-tiled house by the bridge and had it restored by Basil Spence. It is now occupied by their son Adam Zyw (sculptor), his wife Jenny Brown (director of the Book Festival) and their twin sons, David and Thomas.*

*I am grateful to Aleksander and Lesley Zyw who gave me a copy of that 1945 article during a recent visit from their home in Italy.*

D.F.

## HIGH GREEN

Work has begun, on the basis of planning consent granted last year, for 43 dwellings and an office. In a supplementary application (which has not yet been passed) Arthurstone Developments have given details of landscaping and roads, and have sought a reduction in the number of car spaces. The Association has objected to this reduction and criticised the treatment of the river frontage.

The contractor is Stanley Miller - not the same as Miller Construction, who built Belford Court: this lot don't leave litter!

Earth-moving machinery revealed, immediately to the west of Hawthorn Buildings, the foundations of a house with part of a spiral staircase which projected into a stair tower at the back - very like eighteenth-century buildings on both sides of Dean Path. The finely shaped stones forming the stair, which were in danger of being smashed up, have been removed to safety by one of our members. Can anyone see how they might be re-used in the Village?

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Anyone at all can lodge an objection to a planning application. The applicant must notify the immediate neighbours, but they are not the only people entitled to comment. The applications are advertised publicly, in the Edinburgh Evening News on Fridays and by an official notice in the street. In the Planning Office at the foot of Cockburn Street you can examine the plans during the three weeks after the publication of the notice.

If you don't like a new development, a change of use, an alteration or an extension of trading hours, send a letter of objection yourself. Don't just leave it to the Dean Village Association. The more objections there are, the more attention will be paid to them. There were not enough individual objections to the development of High Green (See DVN 92); and only those who had lodged objections were later given an opportunity to comment on modifications to the plans.

V & F Crolla have been refused permission to extend the hours of operation of their hot food shop ("CIAO") until 1 a.m. They had originally applied for an extension till 4 a.m. at weekends. The DVA was among the objectors, even although we don't live next door. You see, anyone at all can object!