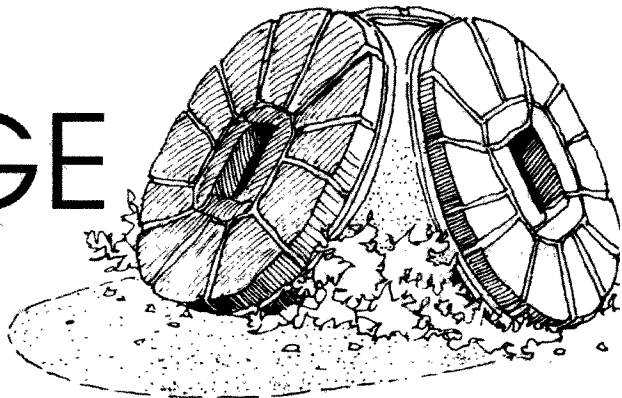


DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



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PLANNING MATTERS

The Shop in Damside: Smart's appeal against refusal of consent for demolition has been rejected by the Reporter appointed by the Secretary of State. The Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate had observed that *the building is of very considerable importance in townscape terms and its loss would radically alter and diminish the character of this part of the conservation area by opening up an otherwise tight-knit urban environment.* The Reporter agreed: *The building closes the view along Damside and is a strong visual link between Dean Path Buildings and Well Court; it punctuates the street scene and creates a sense of enclosure. Were the building to be demolished and replaced with a landscaped area of open space, there would clearly be some advantage to those who wished to use the open space, but that sense of enclosure, which I regard as being important, would be lost. It would be replaced by an uninterrupted view of the recent housing development and the cars parked within the courtyard. I find that the visual impact of this change would not enhance the character of this important conservation area and would, in fact, be detrimental to its appearance.*

The stated policy of the Secretary of State is that no worth-while building should be lost without every effort, including sale, to

keep it. Smart's have said that renovation for sale would be profitable to them. We hope that they will now go ahead, or put the building on the market so that some one else can do it up.

Smart's are under an obligation to complete the paving of Convening Court. The District Council has made a conservation grant to cover the extra cost of stone slabs. The work has been delayed pending a decision about the future of the adjoining building.

St Mary's Cathedral: Large changes are proposed for the area bounded by Manor Place, Chester Street, Palmerston Place and the north side of the cathedral. A cruciform office block would extend from Manor Place about two thirds of the way along the Chester Street frontage. The Walpole Hall would be demolished. At the corner of Chester Street and Palmerston Place there would be a sports area much smaller than the present playground. A number of mature trees would be lost, but the plan provides for a fringe of trees all round the site. A landscaped parking area for 21 cars would be entered from Manor Place. New buildings for church use and a small conference centre would form three sides of a courtyard to the west of Old Coates House. The building known as the Choir School would also be retained.

As we go to press the plans are not yet at the stage of being submitted to the District Council. We shall not say anything, at present, about the style of the new buildings, but the layout seems quite good and some development for cathedral purposes seems a reasonable use of the ground. (Most other cathedrals have ancillary buildings grouped round courtyard or cloister.) The office block is apparently for the purpose of raising money to pay for the rest. Is that necessary? Are there no longer any benefactors like Barbara and Mary Walker?

Belford Church: Consent was granted in 1987 for conversion to offices with a car park for 5 vehicles in a sub-basement (with entrance from Douglas Gardens Mews). Scott-Ross Developments have now submitted detailed plans, with several new floors being inserted and numerous Velux windows in the roofs of the nave and the aisles. No doubt one should be prepared to tolerate some changes in order to ensure an economic future for the building, but strong protests are likely.

Office Block (Belford Road/Bell's Brae): The plans have still not been passed by the Planning Committee, who object to the height and who also want an investigation made of our suggestion that there be a new public stairway instead of a dull chasm between the office block and Drumsheugh Toll. This would be in harmony with the character of the Dean Village, where unexpected views down narrow descents have great charm.

The Orphan Hospital Amateur Football Club plays on the pitch in front of the Dean Centre (formerly the Dean Orphanage). They have applied for permission to erect a "portacabin" construction to replace the dilapidated changing accommodation which had to be demolished last year.

High Green: Although we lost the battle against this over-dense development, we are keeping an eye on it, and expressing to the Director of Planning our concern over some aspects of the way it is being carried out. Belford Road has been reinforced and traffic is back to normal.

West End/Queensferry Street: We don't want our nearest shopping street to become a street devoted to revelry! Consent has been refused for an "Adult Amusement Centre" at 18 Shandwick Place. There is an application to include a bar in a licenced restaurant which would replace "Shermans" and "Fingals". At present the Turkish carry-out shop in Melville Place is allowed open until 11 p.m. They have applied for permission to open until 1 a.m. This is not so outrageous as last year's application to open until 4 a.m. at weekends, but we still object.

FROM SOURCE TO SEA

"Discovering the Water of Leith" by Hamish Coghill (John Donald, Edinburgh, 1988) describes the river from source to sea, recounting the history and legends of the villages and estates and of the town of Leith, with a large number of illustrations (including a photograph of two of our members posing in costume in Well Court during our "Fayre" in 1987).

The chapter on the Dean Valley has an account of the "feeing of the Millers", the weaving industry, the subversive "Friends of the People", the Dean Bridge and so on. Most of the material comes from fairly well-known sources, such as Cumberland Hill's "Historic Memorials and Reminiscences of Stockbridge, The Dean and Water of Leith". Coghill points out, correctly, that the original Village of Dean was on the higher ground beside the site of Dean Cemetery; but he nevertheless confuses it with the Water of Leith Village in a passage derived from Cumberland Hill. It was the Village of Dean which consisted of a single short street with a lane or two branching off to the east and which had a population of 395 in 1743. At that date there were 376 living in the Village of the Water of Leith on the north side of the river. The population on the south side of the river does not seem to have been included, according to Cumberland Hill.

The book could have been a useful guide for the walker, but the references to footpaths are too vague and they are not shown on the maps, which have been taken from some out-of-date source (the footbridges at Sunbury and at the Hilton Hotel are not shown).

THE RIVER IN 1865

From Dr Henry Meiklejohn's Report on the Sanitary Condition of the City of Edinburgh.

The Water of Leith not only drains the whole of the New Town north of George Street, but also receives the sewage of a large district of the City lying to the west, which joins it at Coltbridge... At present the Water of Leith, in its passage through Edinburgh, is a great open sewer, subject to considerable fluctuation in the volume of its waters; and in hot weather, during the prevalence of certain winds, it emits offensive odours. These have, of late years, been much complained of, especially since the formation of the Caledonian Distillery, which was most unfortunately situated (1). It was impossible to pass the refuse of this large establishment into any of the large built sewers draining directly to the east. All this strongly offensive material was discharged into the Lochrin burn, an open drain running westward, and conveying a large amount of sewage into the Water of Leith (2), which entered the City, and passed through the Village of the Water of Leith, Stockbridge, and Canonmills, on its way to the sea. The inhabitants were thus subjected to a double annoyance. During westerly winds, the odour of the refuse before it reached Coltbridge was carried over the town, and in its further progress infested all the districts along both banks of the Water of Leith. What added to the nuisance was the great diminution effected in the Water of Leith itself by the supply granted to mills along its course. In summer these mill-lades left the main stream dry, and conveyed not pure water, but sewage through densely populated localities. This state of matters was not to be tolerated in these days of sanitary progress, more especially when it was found that the rental of the district was being lowered, and when it was believed that the most disastrous results were produced on the health of the inhabitants. My attention was early directed to the subject, and to my surprise I found that the district was a healthy one, and presented no unusual percentage of preventable disease.

But there were many deaths from diphtheria, and although, in examining into

the mortality of the other city districts from this disease, no marked connection could be proved between it and sewage emanations, yet, where uncertainty prevails as to the precise cause of any unusual sickness, it is clearly the duty of a community to remove all possible sources of disease, and among these must be reckoned the existence of open drains in crowded town districts. In this light the measure (3) for the purification of the Water of Leith must be looked upon as an important sanitary measure, to be followed, at no late period, by the removal or improvement of the mills, which at present absorb the water, leaving the channel of the stream for the most part dry, and are a source of nuisance, besides necessitating the continued preservation of the mill lades (4). These, which were perfectly innocuous, when the district was a strictly rural one and some miles from the city, are quite an anomaly in the midst of a large population, and must sooner or later be removed.

(1) at Haymarket. We still sometimes smell it!

(2) at Coltbridge

(3) An Act of Parliament in 1864 had provided for sewers to be constructed all the way from the city boundary at Coltbridge to beyond the mouth of the river.

(4) Sweeping changes, involving alterations to mill lades and caulds between Coltbridge and Bonnington, were made in further sanitary improvements by an Act of 1887.

THE GREAT LADE

The lade which began at the caul (weir) just below West Mill was no doubt the one which caused most concern to Dr Meiklejohn, for, after driving three mills just downstream of the Village, it ran along the line of St Bernard's Path, then through the populous districts of Stockbridge, Silvermills and Canonmills before returning the water to the river.

Between Greenland Mill and Stockbridge it was carried in a series of wooden troughs (the Trows), which were generally very leaky. These were raised upon posts, and being patched, mended up and covered with green moss and tangled creeping water plants, had a most picturesque appearance. (Cumberland Hill: "Historic Memorials and Reminiscences of Stockbridge, the Dean and Water of Leith", 1887).

THE DENE?

A few years ago I found that the path to Stockbridge had no official name. The people of the Village spoke of "going down the waterside", which seemed more of a description than a proper name. I took to calling it "St Bernard's Path", which was clear, and seemed generally acceptable.

Later the official specialists on place names took the matter up. It was argued that "St Bernard's" was inappropriate, since the path was too far from other "St Bernard's" place names. (But I now find that the cave associated with St Bernard was below Randolph Crescent: Cumberland Hill has a drawing of it behind Greenland Mill).

The first official suggestion was "The Red Walk", supported by one occurrence in the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club (Vol. 1, p.127). A Stockaree man said that his grandfather had spoken of "the Trows", which Cumberland Hill uses. (See "The Great Lade" above). One of our members proposed "Ladeside", which occurs in "The History and Derivation of Edinburgh Street Names", based on research by Charles Boog Watson, and published by the City Engineer's Department of Edinburgh Corporation, 1975. It is described there as being *beside the mill lade or lead, from the Dean Village to Canonmills*.

Now the name adopted as official is "The Dene" - an old spelling of a word for the gorge of the Water of Leith. We don't think this was a good idea, for (1) it is indistinguishable in sound from "the Dean", which is often used for the Village, and (2) it is liable to become in usage, "the Dene Path", which results in a confusion with Dean Path (the street).

In the meantime, another department of the District Council had ordered a "Water of Leith Walkway" plaque, with "St Bernard's Path" on it. Now two plaques, with different names, have been fixed to a pier of the Dean Bridge!

D.L.F.

BICKERS

The mimic warfare, so common with Edinburgh lads in bygone times, called

"bickers", had not passed away in our young days. We sometimes had skirmishes with the boys of Canonmills, but he "Foemen worthy of our steel" were the boys of the Water of Leith and of Dean, against whom we waged long and bloody wars. The "Waterside" and the "Orchard Brae" have witnessed many daring deeds of boyish prowess and valour. (Cumberland Hill, 1887).

DIARY

Tuesday, February 13 at 7.30 Doug Edgar: UPS AND DOWNS IN THE HINDU RAJ MOUNTAINS OF PAKISTAN, in the Seminar Room, Miller Row, by kind permission of Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall & Partners. (20 pence)

Doug Edgar has previously given us illustrated talks about skiing in the Alps and mountaineering in the Himalayas. Now he is back with another instalment of his adventures.

Tuesday, March 20 at 7.30: Lord Mackenzie-Stuart of Dean: THE EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE, at 3 Belford Road (Drumsheugh Toll) You don't know anything about the subject? All the more reason to come and hear our distinguished speaker, who has been a Judge on the Court of Justice of the European Communities, and its President from 1984-88. On retiring, he came to live in Randolph Cliff, and as a life peer took the territorial title of "Dean". (50 pence)

Monday, April 30 at 7.30 p.m. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at 3 Belford Road
Speaker: **Councillor Paul C. Martin.**

THE DEAN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

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