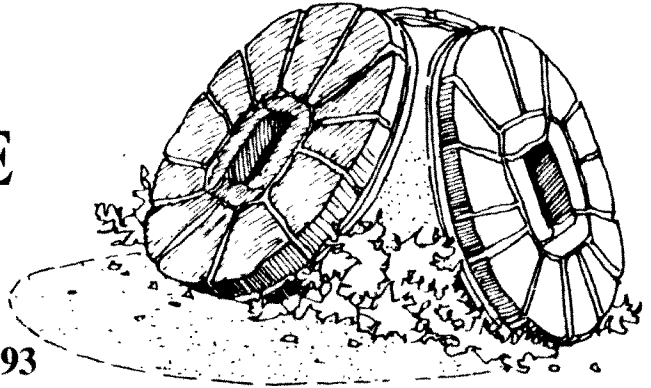


DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



No.105: Winter 1992-93

THE VILLAGE ABOUT 1858

The City Art Centre has a remarkable collection of early photographic plates, from which a selection of prints was exhibited in 1990. Now well over 100 have been published in "Thomas Begbie's Edinburgh" by David Patterson and Joe Rock (John Donald, 1991, £32). Six are of particular interest to us:

No 22 shows St Bernard's Well as it was designed by Alexander Nasmyth in 1789 without the Victorian Terrace.

No 97 is the classic view of the old stone bridge with Holy Trinity Church (1838) beyond. On the left are old houses on the site of the school, and on the right bank, just beyond the bridge, the industrial buildings which stood between Miller Row and the river until 1931.

No 98 gives a wider view of the Village and of the first developments beyond the Dean Bridge - Clarendon Crescent and Eton Terrace, which were built between 1850 and 1855. Of the large buildings in the Village we can recognise West Mill and the Baxters' Tollbooth (at the foot of Bell's Brae). Towering above the latter is Hutton's Land, which was replaced by Drumsheugh Baths in 1852. On the left one can see part of Brown's Square, where Well Court was built in 1884.

No 100 is Old Queensferry Road (now Belford Road) with the toll house which was replaced by the present "Drumsheugh Toll"

in 1891 (DVN 66 and 93). The original Dean Free Church of 1844 is just beyond it (now a vacant site). After 1889, when the congregation moved to Belford Church, it served various secular uses until it was burned down in 1954.

No 101 shows Bell's Mills, of which only the granary survived an explosion in 1971. The view is from across the river, but we cannot see the bridge, which would be the ramshackle structure of 1788 (DVN 78), lower than the present one (1885-7). On the left across a treeless expanse (now Douglas Crescent Gardens) one can see Donaldson's Hospital.

No 10 is given the title 'The Dean Village', but it actually shows Damside. Beyond the shop (with only two storeys then) a massive building is probably part of the Tannery. The street is lined with rather decrepit buildings where we now have Well Court and the yard of Dean Path Buildings. The 'dam' (i.e. the mill lade) runs along the north side of the street, as described by James Ballantine in "The Miller of Deanhaugh" (1844):...*the water course for supplying the mills, which runs through the very centre of the village. It is rather a startling sight...to see a run of water five feet in depth, and about the same in breadth, careering past and close to a long line of dwelling -houses, the only approach to which is by flag-stones laid across the stream, otherwise uncovered throughout its length.*

PICTURES AND MAPS

On behalf of the Association I am putting together a collection of pictures of the Dean Village, from old engravings to press-cuttings and photographs. Even recent ones are acquiring a historic interest. If you have some, will you show me them, and let me keep or copy them for this archive?

I also have photocopies of maps, from 1560 onwards, most of them from the Edinburgh Room of the Central Public Library.

All of these records can be consulted in my flat, even if you only want to browse through them. But will someone take up a historical study? Advice and guidance are available.

DLF

PLANNING MATTERS

41 Queensferry Street (the butcher shop next to Oxfam): PizzaSelect wanted a change of use to hot food take-away with a small sit-in area. The application was refused because of a small nuisance to neighbouring residential properties and because "the proposal will be contrary to the adopted policy of the planning authority in respect of non-retail uses in the regional shopping centre".

40a Queensferry Street (on the other side of Oxfam) : A more recent application for change of use from shop to restaurant or hot food take-away. This will surely be refused on the same grounds.

12/13 Drumsheugh Place (formerly the Royal Bank) : Consent is not required for use as a print shop. Sime Malloch have applied for consent for alterations to the frontage and a ventilation duct etc at the back.

Belford Church (currently Belford Youth Hostel) : Application to erect a Portacabin for one year on low ground beside Douglas Gardens. The DVA objects unless it is for a truly temporary and laudable purpose (e.g. a base for repairs to the listed building), not for use as an annex to the youth hostel (a bunk house?).

THE CENTRAL AREA PLAN

The Draft Plan was summarised in DVN 103. The Planning Department has listed 650 comments followed by the official response to each. For example The Dean Village Association had pointed out the importance of Queensferry Street as a shopping street. Accepted.

Stewart's Melville College objected to its inclusion within the Dean Conservation Area. Not accepted.

There should be a policy to control development in mews, particularly loss of garages. Accepted.

A specific policy is needed to conserve the Water of Leith and its environs. Accepted.

We welcomed the declaration in the Draft Plan that the sequence of open spaces around Donaldson's School, the Gallery of Modern Art and the Dean Centre was of outstanding importance. The Royal Fine Art Commission went further : existing green areas - notably those ones - "could be linked to form a continuous system of open space".- "Accepted as a worthwhile goal, but it would involve capital projects which are not practicable in the foreseeable future."

The Cockburn Association asked in vain for "a negative list of ugly and inappropriate buildings, to encourage their early replacement."

Many respondents commented on the failure of the Plan to present a comprehensive transportation strategy for Central Edinburgh. The preparation of the Local Plan is the responsibility of the District Council, while many transportation issues lie with the Regional Council as highways authority and planning authority for public transport. A joint working group is now discussing these matters.

TREES

In DVA 104 we announced National Tree Week during which trees were to be planted on the banks of the river as part of the campaign to deal with alien weeds. Native species were used: alder, crack willow, goat willow, hawthorn, dog rose, hazel and oak - 2000 in all, mostly in the Bonnington/

Warriston area, where there is a lot of giant hogweed; but nearly 200 have been planted near the sports club, upstream of the Hilton Hotel.

The Water of Leith Conservation Trust coordinated this scheme, in partnership with the District Council's Planning Department and the Edinburgh Wildlife Group. Volunteers came from Drummond High School, Edinburgh University, Friends of the Earth, the Girl Guides, Lothian Conservation Volunteers etc. There was no need to call upon our members.

What has been done is only the first phase of what will be a continuous project. The sites will be closely monitored, with essential maintenance in the Spring. Later the District Council's Department of Environmental Health will repeat the spraying which caused die-back of the invasive species last year. The combination of spraying and shade from the new trees should eventually enable the native habitat to become re-established. The Trust hopes to target other sites for planting in 1993.

"UNDER THE BRIDGE"

The Water of Leith Conservation Trust is based in the former school at Slateford, close to the aqueduct which carries the Union Canal over the Water of Leith - hence the title of their newsletter, from which our article on trees has been derived.

Successive issues have given an account of the Walkway in sections, beginning at Balerno. The current issue (No 8) describes it from Stockbridge to Bonnington. It also has a history of the Balerno railway and its engines. (Do even railway buffs know about Balerno Pugs?)

The High Bailiff for the Water of Leith, Graham Priestley, reports on the 1992 fishing season. The largest trout caught weighed 2lb 4oz. Several graylings were caught, which suggests that this species is now established, after first appearing in 1989. It was presumably introduced by anglers. Pollution incidents on the main river in 1992 were minor and brief, none involving fish kills.

There is a new post of River Valleys Officer with the Scottish Wildlife Trust, funded by Scottish and Newcastle plc and Edinburgh District Council. Emma Grainger is based at the Water of Leith Heritage Centre at Slateford, initially for one year, and will be responsible for putting together an integrated environmental plan for the Water of Leith. The Water of Leith Conservation Trust deserves your support. Annual membership costs £7.50 for an individual, £2.00 for the retired, unemployed and students, £1.00 for young people under 18. There are also rates for businesses (£50) and schools and voluntary bodies (£10). Life membership is £100. The address is 24 Lanark Road, Edinburgh EH14 1TQ.

DIRTY WEEKENDS

One Sunday morning in October I came upon over 50 young people who were about to clean up the river and its banks from Belford Bridge to Roseburn. They were from Edinburgh University Conservation Volunteers, alias "The Dirty Weekenders". This club was founded little more than a year ago, but it has nearly 200 members. It clearly matched a need - jobs to be done - and an urge to do them. They have done a lot of work up and down the Water of Leith, including the tree-planting described elsewhere in this issue; they have worked with children on another tree-planting scheme; in the Pentlands they have built dry-stane dykes and constructed and repaired footpaths; and they are willing to come and help the Dean Village Association.

STREET CLEANING

In DVN 104 I gave the times within which streets should be restored to "Grade A cleanliness". I asked the Director of Cleansing if the number of hours was calculated only after a complaint had been received. The reply was that "street cleaning recovery periods apply when complaints have been validated" by the Department (presumably after an inspector has come to assess the amount of litter and dog dirt).

I have had a good response to complaints

which I have made, so please use the new number for the **Service Enquiry Desk: Extension 3030** on the District Council's usual number, **225 2424**.

NATURE NOTES

During the spring, on Dean Bank and near the Cauldron, look out for the aconites, special snowdrops and erythroniums which have been introduced in recent years. (See DVN 100). The erythroniums are delicate lily-like flowers, pale yellow or white or, in the case of the dog's-tooth "violet", magenta, with spotted leaves.

Have you seen a heron, dipper, kingfisher, goldcrest or treecreeper?

Foxes bred in the village area in 1992.

Readers' contributions, on this as on any other topic, will be welcomed.

CALL CLARENCE

Who? - Customer Lighting And Road ENquiry CENTre, of Lothian Region's Highways Department. If you see:

- damaged pavements

- potholes in streets

- a blocked drain

- a light that's obscured or not working

- the cover missing from the electrical wires on a lighting column,

CALL CLARENCE on FREEPHONE 0800 622 235 (during office hours).

CHANGES

Oxylitre has gone into liquidation. The little baronial building below the Dean Bridge is now occupied by Athrodax Surgical Limited who are continuing the business.

The House on the Bridge has been sold, but, we are glad to say, Bill and Betty Boyd are not leaving the Village.

This issue of Dean Village News and the two preceding ones have been type-set on a word processor by Callum and Hui Hiang McCulloch, to whom we are very grateful for helping the secretary and saving the Association money. The master has been photocopied by PDC Copyprint, William Street, for a very reasonable charge.

DEAN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Chairman: Mrs Barbara Mackay

8 Damside (225 2512)

Secretary: Miss Dorothy Forrester

13 Belford Road EH4 3BL (226 5843)

Treasurer: Mr Jeremy Parkin

1B Belford Park EH4 3DP

The Committee needs new blood. Are you willing to join it? Or can you suggest some one who could be persuaded? A recently retired person perhaps, or a younger person who might be glad to help plan the Midsummer Ceilidh. The Committee meets about eight times a year. The AGM is in April, but don't wait until then to volunteer or make a suggestion.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday February 8 (Public meeting of the West End Community Council)

David Scott, Principal of Donaldson's School for the Deaf

at 10 Palmerston Place, 7.30 p.m.

Tuesday February 23 (DVA)

Robert Steedman RSA: BHUTAN, LANDSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURE

*The Seminar Room, Miller Row, 7.30 p.m.

Monday March 8 (Public meeting of the West End Community Council)

S. Dickson (Planning Department)

MONUMENTS AND STATUES

IN THE WEST END

at 10 Palmerston Place, 7.30p.m.

Tuesday March 16 (DVA)

Tom Inglis: THE SILK ROAD IN CHINA

*The Seminar Room, Miller Row, 7.30 p.m.

April: AGM, to be announced by circular

Sunday May 16: CLEANUP

Saturday June 19 : MIDSUMMER CEILIDH

*The venue for these DVA meetings may be changed. Watch for posters.