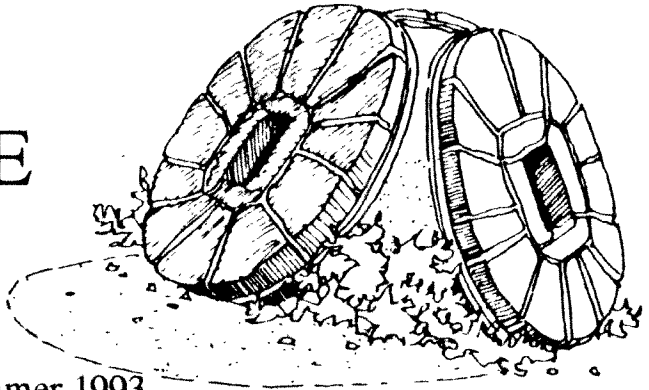


# DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



No.106: Spring - Summer 1993

## OPEN DAY IN DEAN VILLAGE

SUNDAY, JUNE 27

from 1 p.m.

Art and Craft Fair

Home Baked Teas

Short Guided Walks (free!)

See gardens and the interiors of Well Court Hall and St. Bernard's Well

## WILDLIFE BY THE RIVER

On January 26th I disturbed a grey heron fishing just below the Cauldron (the pool at the footbridge to the Gallery of Modern Art). It flew downstream past the Sports Club to a less disturbed location. They are very timid birds. The heron is sometimes seen standing motionless in the water below West Mill. A resident has seen it mobbed by (probably) crows. A week earlier I was delighted to see a kingfisher between Waterston's factory and the bridge to Warriston Cemetery. It was sitting on some overhanging bushes watching the water, then took off with a glitter of blue and green light. A wonderful sight in the winter months. The relatively mild winter must have been good for kingfishers, for there have been a number of sightings. For example, The Douglas Crescent Newsletter reports that, "On the afternoon of the 29th January, walking downstream along Dean Bank, I heard a gentle plop and caught sight of a kingfisher coming out of the water. For five minutes or

so I walked it along, it flying from tree to tree just ahead of me, occasionally diving into the water."

About 7 o'clock one morning in early May I saw a moorhen standing on the rim of the weir above the Village.

On May 15, after heavy rain, mallards were seen swimming in a floodwater pool near the Cauldron. The river was almost too turbulent for them, but the spate was not as great as it was in October 1991, when the water was above the footbridge near the hotel; but this time too it was rushing down the steel ramp at Damside weir.

A few years ago we had a pair of kingfishers just upstream of Damside which tried to nest but were slaughtered by a family of mink. The mink also destroyed a nesting pair of mallard at the West Mill, and a dippers' nest behind the waterfall at the weir. The mallard had been nesting regularly for some years and it was a delight to watch the young ducklings swimming behind their mother in

the West Mill pool while they explored each backwater for food.

I first saw the mink in the summer of 1986 when I found some boys at the West Mill pool throwing stones at what they called ferrets. I was rather pleased when they caught a young animal and were bitten on the hand. There were four young mink with dirty white coats, and I later saw the parents with their gloriously glossy black coats. Mink are ferocious predators which can swim well, climb trees and any other obstacle. Fish, rats, birds and their eggs are all taken eagerly. The mink or their ancestors have all escaped from mink farms but have readily adapted to our countryside. The following year, in 1987, I had taken down a tree and piled the branches for burning on the exposed rocks at the edge of the water. When I came to light the pile I was surprised to see three young mink in their dirty white coats run out of the pile and head off down stream. Two of them paused about thirty yards away while the third returned to my pile to retrieve a six-inch fish which it carried away in its mouth. I have also seen mink in Belgrave Gardens where they were exploring for a holt. I have not seen them since, so they must have moved on or been trapped.

Bird life is plentiful near the water but you have to sit quietly and watch out for movement. There are five or six pairs of blue tits nesting in the area. The most easily seen is nesting in the ruined walls beneath the millstones at Lindsay's Mill. It is astonishing how they can squeeze into small cracks in the stonework to make their nests. When the eggs hatch the parents are busy all day finding caterpillars and flying back and forth to their nests. Opposite Lindsay's Mill bullfinches have nested in the trees overhanging the water, but this bird is unpopular with gardeners as it picks the buds off cherry trees. A pair of treecreepers can be seen searching the trees in Belgrave Gardens. They climb up and round the trunks searching for eggs and caterpillars in the crevices of the bark. I think that they have bred here. The spotted flycatcher is another lovely

bird and I have seen its nest stuck to the bark of an elm tree about six feet from the ground. You can watch them for hours perched on a branch from where they fly to the ground when they spot an insect, catch it and return to their perch.

We are fortunate that we do not have a resident magpie. They are beautiful, but do much damage to nesting birds, taking eggs and young. Grey squirrels are another predator and we have plenty of them. Apart from taking birds' eggs they also damage young shoots on trees. I think that they are kept in check by a pair of carrion crows that raid the squirrels' drays and steal the young. There seem to be fewer blackbirds and thrushes in the last few years perhaps due to the grey squirrels, but the wrens and dunnocks are flourishing.

I am afraid that the erythroniums which were planted at the riverside on Dean Bank and which flowered for two or three years have disappeared.

K.W. Sandison and D.L.F

## CHAINSAW SCULPTURE

At Burdiehouse Nigel Ross has turned hunks of wood into benches which were designed by local children to look like frogs, ducks, fish and owls.

Near the Cauldron a massive tree trunk has been similarly fashioned into a bench by this chainsaw sculptor. We are assured that this one cannot be thrown into the river as it weighs three tons.

## LOCAL HISTORY

The Scottish Local History Forum is going to run a course next winter to help people to carry out an investigation into some aspect of their local history. There will be up to sixteen half-day meetings, during office hours, between October and Easter. If you are interested contact Dorothy Forrester, who will have the details as soon as they are available. The Dean Village Association is willing to subsidise the fees in exchange for access to the results of any research carried out.

Aromatherapy  
Baby-sitting Baking  
Bike repairs Car  
repairs Carpentry  
Carpet laying  
Cleaning Computer  
work Damp-  
proofing Dog  
walking Drain  
clearance  
Dressmaking  
Gardening Glazing  
Hairdressing Home  
help Ironing Karate  
Knitting  
Landscaping Lock  
repairs Music tuition  
Plastering Plumbing  
Radio repairs Rug  
making Sewing  
Tiling Toy repairs  
Tutoring Typing  
Wallpapering  
Welding Window  
cleaning Yoga

## PAYING BY 'DEAN'? THAT'LL DONICELY

If I agreed to do some typing for you, would you fix my radio? Or what about washing my windows in return for some baby-sitting? There are over forty barter systems operating in Britain at present. Technically known as Local Exchange Trading System (LETS), each one uses a specially devised local currency.

In one town in Gloucestershire, for example, 'a stroud' is valued at £1. A list of skills and services on offer is circulated regularly and anyone wanting a job done contacts the relevant person to agree a price which can be paid in strouds or in a mixture of strouds and sterling. A central record is kept of each transaction and members receive a monthly statement showing their debits and credits.

Through such a scheme those in work have a chance to offer skills not used in their main jobs, the unemployed are helped to use rusting expertise and, with luck, community spirit is generated. It also allows people to enjoy goods and services which they couldn't afford if they had to pay in sterling.

Would it be possible to launch such a scheme in the Village? Clearly, the more people involved the wider the range of services that could be offered. However, even a handful would probably make it worthwhile. I would be willing to undertake the administration needed to launch a barter system using a 'Dean(?)' as currency.

If the idea appeals to you, please let me know.

Isla Calder, 38 Well Court. Tel 225 7822

## PLANNING

**Shops to Restaurants?** Consent has been refused for two applications for change of use to restaurant or hot food take-away for the shops on either side of Oxfam, because there would be a smell nuisance to the detriment of neighbouring residential properties. In the first of these two cases, number 41, formerly the butchers shop, another reason was that the proposal was contrary to 'the adopted policy of the Planning Authority in respect of non-retail uses in the regional shopping centre'. This reason was not given in the case of number 40a, next to Bar Roma. We had hoped that all shops in Queensferry Street, Melville Place, Drumsheugh Place and Lymedoch Place would be protected against non-retail use. There is now a similar application for change of use at 4 Drumsheugh Place ("Something Else"). Making the former Royal Bank into a print shop did not require consent for

change of use. We have made no objection to the application by the West End Flower Shop to create a coffee room on the first floor (on the corner of Alva Street). It will be subsidiary to the shop and only open during shop hours.

**2a Belford Park:** Consent has been refused for an extension at the side because, 'it would affect adversely the character of the Conservation Area'. In other words it would be UGLY.

**West Mill:** There has been concern about work beginning on a balcony for a top floor flat, when no public notice had been seen. We found that the owner had been told that no planning consent was required, because nothing was going to project beyond the slope of the roof, the balcony being formed within a roof space. The existing break in the roof, which accommodated the recessed dormer window, will not be enlarged.

## CABLE TV

In DVN 104 the legal situation was explained: United Artists Communications not only have the right to install their cables in every street but an obligation to do so, so that their service will be available to everyone who wants it. In agreement with the Planning Department, guidelines were drawn up for installations in Conservation Areas. These are appropriate for the New Town in particular. We have discussed with the firm how these might be adapted for the Dean Village area. It has emerged that where there is a master TV aerial, as in Well Court, it may be possible to feed the new cables through the existing ducts. This could simplify the layout in the streets, result in fewer outlets from the ground, (those green pipes) and minimise the number of cables crawling up outside walls as individuals subscribe to the service. We shall continue to urge that this method is used, if possible, for Well Court, West Mill, Hawthorn Buildings, Damside and most of Sunbury Place.

## ANY SUSPICIONS?

If you see any suspicious activity, any person about whose intentions you feel uneasy, do phone the police: West End Police Station 229 2323 - unless of course you think that a 999 call is justified. Dog-walkers along the riverside should keep their eyes open.

Our Community Police Officers are anxious to maintain contact with residents. If you have a problem, ask to speak to one of them, at the same number. Do phone rather than send a letter: many problems can be sorted out without much ado. Best of all, speak to the Community Police Officers about how to set up a Neighbourhood Watch.

## AT THE AGM

The Treasurer's Report for 1992-3 showed that we began the year with £5037. The chief sources of income were subscriptions (£727), donations (£270) and interest (£353). Administrative costs were £328 and printing £223. There was a loss on the ceiling of £329 and although £1000 was contributed towards the cost of the new Victorian-style lamps in Well Court the balance at the end of the year was down by only £637, to £4400. The Association has 305 members, including 82 life members.

Emma Grainger, River Valleys Officer for the Scottish Wildlife Trust, gave an impressive account of how she is tackling the task of drawing up an integrated management plan for the Water of Leith. Her post has been funded initially for just one year, by Scottish and Newcastle plc and Edinburgh District Council. It should certainly be extended so that she can deal in a similar way with the Almond and the Esk.

## DEAN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION - COMMITTEE 1993-4

Chairman:	Mrs Barbara Mackay,	8 Damside
Vice-Chairman:	Miss Isla Calder	38 Well Court
Secretary:	Miss Dorothy Forrester	13 Belford Road
	Mrs Sylvia Bradley	22 Lynedoch Place
	Mrs Jean Gibson	49 Well Court
	Dr John Handlay	13 Sunbury Place
	Mr Callum McCulloch	22 Lynedoch Place
	Mrs Nan McLaren	23/18 Lynedoch Place
	Mrs Ena Turner	44 Well Court
	Mrs Peggy Valentine	31/2 Belford Road

Subscriptions	Ordinary: £3:00 (or £3.75 with postage)
	Senior Citizen: £1:50 (or £2.25 with postage)
	Life Membership £30:00