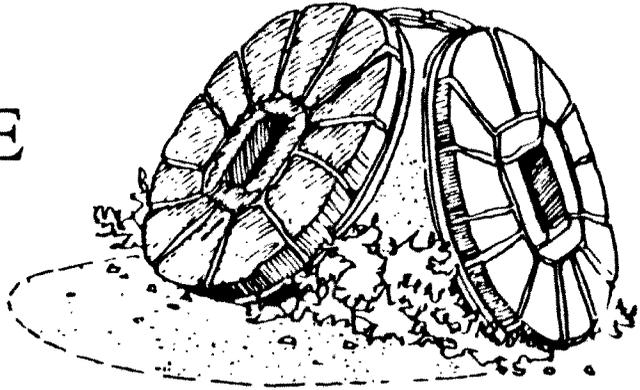


DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



No.109: Summer 1994

OPEN DAY IN DEAN VILLAGE

SUNDAY, JUNE 26

from 1 p.m.

Home Baked Teas

Short Guided Walks (free!)

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

STAGECOACH THROUGH THE DEAN by Basil Skinner

The various crossings over the Water of Leith at or near the Dean Village have changed at different periods since the Middle Ages. The Dean crossing of the river was an important element in the route from Edinburgh to Queensferry and the North. Originally the road retained all the characteristics of an ancient trackway - established "by habit and repute" over the centuries. It focused on the old ford and apparently followed the line now defined by Lynedoch Place Lane.

In the 17th century the Scottish Parliament passed a succession of laws aiming to establish a system of local responsibilities for the construction and maintenance of roads in each parish, overseen by the Justices. This called for six days labour on the road from each resident male, or alternative cash payment to a road fund. In this context we may view the engineering and construction of Bell's Brae in 1673 to provide an

alternative approach to the village bridge, replacing the older Lynedoch Lane road which was now "hardly passabil by man or horses". The bridge itself is a late 16th or early 17th Century construction, the circumstances of its building not being recorded.

Until the middle of the 18th century traffic through the Dean would mainly comprise people on foot or on horseback. Light private carriages did not exist and only the richest landowners supported strongly built travelling coaches. Public transport scarcely existed either except for the possibility of a ride on a "stage-wagon", a massive slow-moving contraption carrying merchandise, goods and people from one town to another and pulled by ten to twelve oxen or heavy horses.

The change both in road formation and in road usage was inaugurated in 1751 with the passing of the first Turnpike Road Act in

Scotland dealing with the ten-mile route from Edinburgh to Queensferry. By the setting up of a Turnpike Trust (in this case the "Cramond Road Trustees"), share capital was raised and administered for creating roads in different parts of Scotland of a highly superior nature compared with the older "Statute Labour" roads. The Turnpike Trustee were empowered to cover their maintenance costs by erecting toll-bars at defined intervals and by charging toll-fees. The new road followed the line of Queensferry Street from Kirkbraehead (i.e. The West End), descended Bell's Brae and ascended Dean Path, and then took the line of Ravelston Terrace and Ravelston Dykes (round the walls of the Dean House policies) until it struck the Ravelston House estate when it turned down to Blackhall. The village bridge was not ideal for the turnpike era so that in 1784 the Cramond Road Trustee looked for and found an alternative site for a bridge. They had considered and rejected the Stockbridge route (which was subsequently developed by private initiative) and went instead for a crossing at Bell's Mills. The predecessor of the existing Belford Bridge was opened in 1787 at vast cost and soon after had to be closed through partial subsidence - and rebuilt. This was the bridge that carried the main road north until the construction of the Dean Bridge in 1832-33. Toll bars were set up by the Trustees at Kirkbraehead and at "Drumsheugh Toll", but the latter was moved after the opening of the Dean Bridge to the "flowerbed site" on the Dean Bridge corner. From the 1760s regular stage-coach services appeared in Scotland. Different operators offered competitive services but the best known operators on the Queensferry run were Croall's and Ramsay's. In the early 19th century the Croall coach was called "The Antiquary" after Walter Scott's novel which opens on this route. The Dean Bridge project resulted (from 1831) from a partnership between the Cramond Road Trustees and Learmonth of Dean who owned the land across the valley. The story

of its design and building by Thomas Telford has already been told many times, and with its completion the final solution to the Dean Village river crossing was found, and the stage-coaches thundered overhead on the "Dean Village By-pass" instead of laboriously grinding through the village as they had done between the 1750s and the 1780s.

This is a summary of the talk given at the AGM of the Dean Village Association on April 26.

PLANNING MATTERS

Whytock & Reid: The extension to their large brick building is an improvement on the first plan. The modern showroom and office building is to be adapted as a house. The smaller of the two timber-drying shed will be demolished. Consent for the larger one (a listed building) to be removed has been granted on strict conditions designed to ensure that within a short time it will be re-erected elsewhere - most likely at Summerlee Heritage Centre, Coatbridge. The long harled warehouse which stands above the river, behind Belford Mews, will probably be replaced by a row of mews houses, but strong objections have been lodged against plans to squeeze in too many.

Queensferry Street: We have welcomed the opening of Carr's food shop with fruit and vegetables, not far from where Rankins used to be. Consent was refused for a restaurant or hot-food take-away at 40A, the former bedding shop; an appeal against this refusal is still pending. At West End Flowers consent has been granted for the coffee shop upstairs to be used as a restaurant. Delifrance has consent for what is predominantly a sort of restaurant, but the consent is not transferable to any future occupier "in order that the planning authority may exercise appropriate controls"; and it is for one year only (in the first place?) "in order to ensure that the nature of the use of the premises remains compatible with the character of the surrounding area, and no activities or processes take place which may be

detrimental to its amenities." We hope that the application for a nightclub in Queensferry Street Lane will be rejected as "incompatible with the character of the area" and a potential source of intolerable noise for residents, especially those in Shandwick Place and Alva Street.

Belford Church: The Youth Hostel has obtained a restricted hotel licence. We did not see the notice about the application in time to object. An application for listed-building consent has been made in respect of internal alterations already made.

Gallery of Modern Art: There is a proposal to erect a fairly large storage building within the further playground. The sculpture garden will remain.

Whinmill Brae: There is consent for one large house, just beyond the Gallery of Modern Art, above the river.

CABLE TV

United Artists Communications profess willingness to consult local associations, but for over a year failed to answer letters from the DVA. Only an appeal on our behalf from the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland elicited a reply : it is unlikely that the village will be cabled earlier than the latter part of 1995. (Parts of the Dean Village Conservation Area have already been cabled.) We are glad that they have engaged the architects Simpson & Brown as their consultants for listed buildings, but we have pointed out that the installation of cables in our listed buildings presents problems very different from those of the New Town. Problems, but also possibilities: when a representative of United Artists came to the village early last year, he saw that in Well Court and perhaps in West Mill the cables might be installed internally rather than on outside walls.

CLEAN

The Water of Leith Conservation Trust organised a clean-up on June 5th. We chose to clean our stretch on May 1st, when there was a very good turn-out of workers,

including an American visitor and a young couple who had moved in just the day before.

Cleaner: Can we see that the Village is spick and span for our Open Day on June 26th? Not only the river and its banks but odd corners e.g. behind Hawthorn Buildings or in front of Dean Path Buildings. Your secretary is endeavouring to get a better standard of street cleaning from Environmental Services. After a long campaign by the DVA the areas round the millstones are being well maintained by the Recreation Department under contract from the Planning Department (Landscape Section), which is responsible for the Water of Leith Walkway. The playground at the corner of Dean Path and Damside has been cleaned too - by the Recreation Department? or a public-spirited individual? It is one individual in particular who is keeping the area in front of the school much tidier than it used to be. Will someone at Dean Path Buildings take similar action?

Cleaner Still?

If Fido's frequenting the Dean
And using it as a latrine,
We residents mutter :
His place is the gutter;
Dog dirt underfoot is obscene.

But on the riverside walk dog owners should use a gadget to pick it up. The Council is supplying "poop scoops" which consist of a firm plastic grip which enables one to pick the stuff up cleanly into a plastic bag, and you put that into any rubbish bin. Some towns have special red bins but we are advised that that is not necessary.

The Council is running a campaign in parks this year, with poop scoops being handed out free. The DVA intends to mount a similar campaign on the Walkway from June 19th to 25th, just before our Open Day.

There are others frequenting the Dean
Whose droppings are just as obscene:
Pigeons in droves
On sills, in alcoves
Are using our walls as latrines.

Annella Cowan

FOR SALE

Well Court Hall, with the flat below, the property of Roland Wedgwood, architect. John Ritchie Findlay's house at 3 Rothesay Terrace, most recently a training centre for the NHS.

FINANCE 1993-4

In round figures the Association's opening balance was £4000 and the closing balance £5405.

The main items of income were:

subscriptions £674
donations £394
interest £270
Open Day £173

The main items of expenditure were:

taxi service £129
administration £200
the Secretary's honorarium £125
Dean Village News £138

TREES

In Douglas Crescent Gardens we have seen the first phase of a long-term plan for the trees. The programme of selective felling and planting is intended to achieve a mixture of trees of varied age which will ensure a healthy woodland in the future. About 150 "whips" were planted in green plastic tubes which will protect them from wind, squirrels etc. and let through wavelengths of light which the plants can use. The tubes are biodegradable in three years. The scheme was planned by specialists in the Landscape Section of the Planning Department, who

are responsible for similar work on Dean Bank and behind Donaldson's College. Some of our members are unnecessarily worried about it. The tiny whips are not only cheaper but more likely to become established. Just look into the plastic tubes and you will see that most of them are flourishing, each in its little greenhouse; and the loss of a few is not serious, for they will have to be thinned in any case.

At Roseburn the Walkway is about to be extended from the viaduct to Roseburn Cliff. All the trees there were over-mature. If they had been left they would have fallen, bringing down tons of earth. Now that they have been felled, their stumps and root systems will remain in place for many years, holding the soil while the young trees grow.

DIARY

Tuesday June 14 at 7.30p.m.

THE DEAN ORPHANAGE Visit under the guidance of Dr Walter Stephen.

Charge £1 including light refreshments served on the Terrace. (Can you bring any picnic chairs?) Lifts will be available from the Village and Lynedoch House.

Sunday June 26 from 1p.m

OPEN DAY IN DEAN VILLAGE

Tuesday August 16, departure 1.15p.m. Pensioners' outing to FALKLAND, with high tea. No charge except for entrance to the palace and gardens if you are not a member of the National Trust for Scotland. Names to Peggy Valentine (225 8942). Return by 7p.m.

DEAN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION - COMMITTEE 1994-5

Chairman:	Mrs Peggy Valentine	31/2 Belford Road (tel: 225-8942)
Secretary:	Miss Dorothy Forrester	13 Belford Road EH4 3BL (tel: 226-5843)
Treasurer:	Mr Jeremy Parkin	6B Succoth Place EH12 6BL (tel: 337-0991)
	Mrs Sylvia Bradley	22 Lynedoch Place
	Ms Isla Calder	38 Well Court
	Mr John B. Dickson	3/4 Dean Path
	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