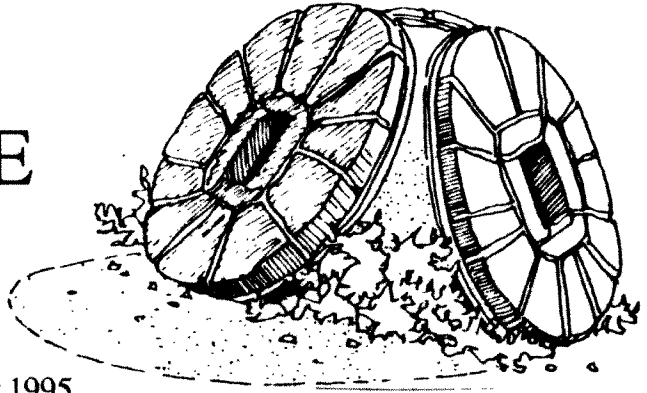


DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



No.112: Spring - Summer 1995

MISS MEG LEE

We have recently congratulated Meg Lee on her ninetieth birthday. She was the second of a family of eight children, one of whom died very young from diphtheria. She was born at 37 Dean Path, an old tenement where five families shared two toilets and water had to be carried from a sink on the landing.

The Lees eventually succeeded in renting a flat in Well Court, No.28 then No.43, which had three rooms, a WC and a scullery with cold water only; gas for lighting, a coal-fired range for cooking. Although there were wash-houses in Well Court (now flats 53 and 54), Mrs Lee preferred to do the washing in the public wash house in Henderson Row - a lot of washing, for ten people lived at no. 43: Dave and Jimmy slept in one bedroom, Meg, Nellie, Mary and their grandmother in the other, Mr and Mrs Lee and baby Nancy in the kitchen.

Mrs Lee seems to have been a strong character. It was she who organised memorable picnics on the pebbly shore at Royston. Everyone had lent a hand to peel potatoes the night before; lots of children and a few adults walked all the way, between open fields once they had passed the Western General Hospital.

Early every morning 'a little army' of children went up to Queensferry Street, from where they set out to deliver papers, rolls or milk before school.

Meg was one of them.

Leaving school in 1919, she went into service in North Berwick, with the Auldjo Jamiesons at Nether Abbey, where she had a room to herself. Other employers were the Crabbies in Rothesay Terrace and the German Consul-General in Iceland, where she experienced an earthquake. Latterly she lived in Well Court while working for many years for the two Misses Walker, daughters of Gideon Walker of Bell's Mills - it was they who built the white house near the Sports Club - and for Lawrence Walker's family after his aunts died. She was a treasure.

Meg's father died in 1930, aged 57. Her brothers and sisters all married and left home (but not all left the Village). After Mrs Lee died in 1962, Meg lived alone in the once-crowded flat until very recently. It had been bought in the 50s, with tenants' rights, for under £200. Electricity had been installed in the 30s, but it was not until the 80s that a bathroom was made out of the scullery and a modern kitchen from a bedroom.

The Lees are part of the history of the Village, and it is largely thanks to Meg's wonderful memory that newcomers like myself have learned much of it. It has been a privilege and a delight to know her. We wish her more years of health and comfort with Nancy and Burns Mackay.

D.L.F.

BASIL SKINNER (1923 - 1995)

Basil Skinner, who died on April 5, was the President of the Dean Village Association, having been one of its leading founders in 1971 and its Chairman from 1971 to 1976. He remained a good friend of the Association even after he left the "House on the Bridge" in 1983, ever willing to give us one of his fascinating lectures or a guided walk round the Dean Cemetery. The most recent occasion was at our AGM last year. (See "Stage-Coach through the Dean" in DVN 109).

He had a profound knowledge of our local history and its sources. I suspect that he was the author of many unsigned articles in the earlier years of the "Dean Village Association News", and the best summary of the history of the Village is his chapter in "The Water of Leith" edited by Stanley Jamieson for the Water of Leith Project Group in 1984 (reprinted and still available).

However, the range of his interests and knowledge was very much wider. He had studied history and fine art at Edinburgh University, became librarian of Glasgow School of Art, then assistant keeper in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, before going to the Extra-Mural Department of the University, of which he became Director in 1975.

Hundreds are happier and wiser for his company; he reminded and taught us, brilliantly, of our great legacy of the arts; in his lectures and tours he brought to life our ancestors, their triumphs and scandals, and when most needed he roused us with his passionate defence of our national treasures. He was the magician who could transform a lecture into an entertainment, arresting attention with an outrageous remark and making learning a pleasure.

His lecture programmes and study tours were planned with military precision. Lance-Corporal Skinner drove his tank in 1944 from the Normandy Beach to Luneberg Heath...and he was proud to have been in the ranks...

Basil, the teacher, magician and soldier, was a lively host, a perceptive friend and

a courageous fighter whose life enriched us all. (Desmond Hodges, The Scotsman, April 12.)

Last year it was Basil Skinner who orchestrated the campaign which saved the Portrait Gallery. An earlier fight is remembered locally: it was against the parking of commuters' cars in Miller Row. One Monday morning in the spring of 1974 he blockaded Miller Row from 7.30 by giving a lecture to an assembly of local residents - and journalists and cameramen of course. D.L.F.

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On Monday, June 26th, there will be a **COMMEMORATION FOR BASIL SKINNER** in the Old College, South Bridge, beginning at 6 p.m. A concert in the Playfair Library will be followed by a reception in the Talbot Rice Gallery. Although invitations are being sent out to a number of people, there will be seats available to any one else who wishes to attend.

WALK?WAY

It is now officially accepted that cyclists can share certain paths with pedestrians. This applies to the Water of Leith Walkway over most of its length, including Dean Bank, which does not seem wide enough. Some of us have found that, just because it is so narrow, cyclists are especially careful and considerate of pedestrians. However, there have been problems, especially near the foot of the steps from Dean Path, where two accidents have been reported. Discussions are in progress between an official of the Recreation Department and the cyclists' organisation SPOKES; barriers may be erected to force cyclists to dismount there.

Extracts from **THE CYCLISTS' CODE**, published by SPOKES:

When you are riding on a shared path

- Be considerate to all pedestrians, particularly the old and infirm.
- Thank pedestrians who move over.
- Always be prepared to slow down when approaching pedestrians. Be ready to stop if necessary.

- Let pedestrians know you are there. Use your bell or say *excuse me*...Remember many people are hard of hearing...

- Keep as much room as possible between yourself and pedestrians.

-Don't ride into problems you can't see at blind spots... BE ALERT

DON'T RIDE TOO FAST
BE POLITE.

PLANNING MATTERS

Belford Mews: consent has been granted for ten houses on the site which has been cleared. The DVA did not object to its use for housing: we just argued that ten was too many.

Damside (the shop): There is a proposal to make three flats in the main building, demolish the outside stair and replace the low building with a slightly larger one containing two studio flats, each with a little garden on the east side. These plans would create three new flats but only two parking spaces. We have reluctantly accepted the loss of the shop but asked that the total number of flats be four, not five.

Queensferry Street: We try to defend our shopping street against encroachment by restaurants etc.

3-4: The application to change the Procurator-Fiscal's office into a hotel or hostel has been withdrawn.

17: The "West End Flower Shop" has become merely the entrance to the Pierre Victoire restaurant. There has not been consent for a change from retail use, but it may no longer be viable as a shop.

40a (next to OXFAM) obtained consent for restaurant use, on appeal.

13 Melville Place ("Something Different"): The DVA has lodged an objection to the proposal to use it as a tanning salon.

DEAN CENTRE

The National Galleries of Scotland now have a long lease of this building, at a peppercorn rent. It will house not only the collection of sculptures and other works donated by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, but also other twentieth-century sculptures; and

there will be regularly changing exhibitions of modern and contemporary art. The Scottish Office will give £2.5 million for the refurbishment and some money towards the running costs.

Sir Eduardo said the gallery would not be a mausoleum but an organic, living exhibition where the public would be able to spend a day and create their own works of art...

The basement will be used to store pictures from the overcrowded storerooms of the National Galleries and the Royal Scottish Academy. The upper floor will be used as the administrative headquarters of the National Galleries. (The Scotsman, March 7.)

Since 1984 the Dean Village Association has had a lease of garden ground at the Dean Centre for allotments. We have been given notice to leave the larger area on 28 February 1996 and the smaller area (between the main building and the cemetery) on 30 September 1996. However, we can ask the National Galleries of Scotland to grant a new lease, especially for the area between the two main entrances from Belford Road, which was the kitchen garden of the Orphan Hospital throughout its occupation of this site (and even after they left the building). A case is being made out for the retention of this historic feature in the plans for the surroundings of the new gallery.

Another fairly historic feature is the brick hut used by our gardeners: it is a Home Guard office and base from World War II. (The back room is still labelled "Section Commander".) Is this the last one surviving in Edinburgh? Should it be "listed"? Do any former members of "Dad's Army", or their children remember it?

ENERGY SAVING

Here is a tip for those who missed Simon Lee's excellent presentation in February: Contact Paul at the Lothian & Edinburgh Energy Advice Centre, 72 Newhaven Road EH6 5QG (555 4008), especially if you are over 60: you can get a non-means-tested grant for draught-proofing etc.

DIARY

Sunday June 11: GUIDED WALKS between 2 and 4 p.m., starting from Well Court. Charges: £1.00 (children and OAPS 50p). St Bernard's Well will be opened.

Monday June 26: COMMEMORATION FOR BASIL SKINNER.
Old College at 6 p.m.

Wednesday July 5 at 6.30 : CROQUET at Lauriston Castle. Have a go (or just watch?). Charge £2.00. Wear flat-soled shoes. Give yourself time to walk from the gate and car park. Names, please, to Dorothy Forrester or Peggy Valentine by July 3.

Wednesday August 9: Anstruther - an outing for pensioners. No charge for drive and high tea. £1.50 for the Fisheries Museum. Depart 1 p.m. from the foot of Dean Path. Return about 7 p.m. Book with Peggy Valentine.

THE DEAN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

A summary of the accounts for 1994-95:

EXPENDITURE

INCOME			
	£		£
Subscriptions	588.75	Administration	221.88
Donations	228.00	Equipment	24.60
Guides, p.cs(net)	10.07	Secretary's honorarium	200.00
Meetings (net)	90.41	Affiliation fees	44.00
Open Day (net)	28.72	Dean Village News	179.24
Guided Walk	15.00	OAPs' outing	244.00
Interest	291.59	Taxi	104.40
		Plants	43.95
		Bank Charge	1.28
	<u>1252.54</u>	SURPLUS 1994-95	189.19
			<u>1252.54</u>

CLOSING BALANCE £ 5521.01

COMMITTEE FOR 1995-96

Chairman:	Mrs Peggy Valentine	31/2 Belford Road EH4 3BL	225 8942
Vice-Chairman:	Ms Isla Calder	38 Well Court EH4 3BE	225 7822
Secretary:	Miss Dorothy Forrester	13 Belford Road EH4 3BL	226 5843
Treasurer:	Mrs Sylvia Bradley	22 Lynedoch Place EH3 7PY	225 2639
and	Mr John Dickson	3/4 Dean Path	
	Ms Caroline Gerard	6 Belford Mews	
	Mrs Jean Gibson	49 Well Court	
	Dr John Handlay	13 Sunbury Place	
	Mr John Lumsden	33 Well Court	
	Mrs Nan McLaren	23/18 Lynedoch Place	
	Mrs Ena Turner	44 Well Court	

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Ordinary	£3.00 (or £3.80 with postage)
Senior Citizen	£1.50 (or £2.30 with postage)
Life Membership	£30.00