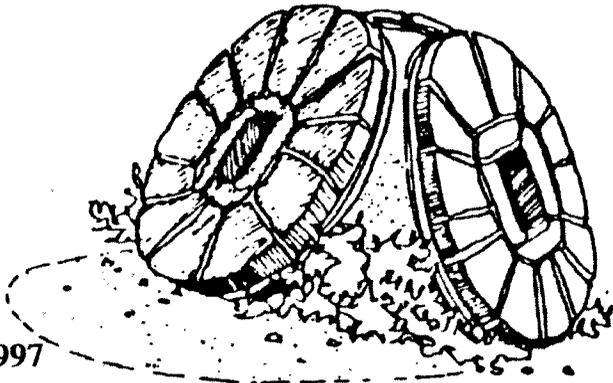


Common Purpose? (R.J. Mc.)
(Barry McKay)

DEAN VILLAGE NEWS

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THE PLACE NAMES OF EDINBURGH

by Stuart Harris

Gordon Wright Publishing (£45)

This is a comprehensive study of the place names in the District of Edinburgh as it was defined in 1975. Stuart Harris had been working on it since retiring in 1984 from the City Architect's Department, where his duties included the naming of streets.

The introduction gives the background — the languages from which the names are derived; changes in landscape and settlement; farms and estates; the mediæval burgh and the expanding city. In the alphabetic list some myths are demolished (Edwin's Burgh, Croft-an-Righ) and misunderstandings removed: "dam" is a mill-lade and "path" in **Dean Path** is a brae.

That brae led up to the **House of Dean** where the Cemetery is now, and to the original **Dean Village**, which was replaced by **Belgrave Mews**. (The choice of "Belgrave" and of "Buckingham" was *perhaps the height of snobbish aping of London*.)

"back", as in **Back Dean**, means on the western side of an estate. Having previously understood Back Dean to be a group of modest buildings just outside the gardens of Dean House (Kirkwood's map, 1817), I was surprised by Harris's account of it as *Wester Dean, the house built by Sir Henry Nisbet in about 1681 when he was fiar of Dean*. Could it really have been a gentleman's residence so close to the House of Dean built by the Nisbets in 1614?

The appearance of "Dean" in place names around Stockbridge is confusing, but **Dean Street** used to lead to the Dean. We learn that **Dean Haugh** was recorded as a village name from 1532 and that there was a **Deanhaugh House**. But Harris does not seem to know that there was **Deanhaugh Cottage** in our village; it stood on the north bank just upstream of the footbridge until at least the 1950s.

He says that **Kirkbraehead** was, on Roy's map of 1753, a clachan at the modern West End junction. To judge by

Kincaid's map of 1784 and Kirkwood's of 1817, this settlement extended a short distance along the west side of the future Queensferry Street. According to Harris, the brae is the one up from St Cuthbert's Kirk. Yet I wonder whether people living in the Water of Leith Village did not think rather of the steeper brae on their side of the ridge. Kirkwood shows **Kirkbraehead Toll** (not mentioned by Harris) on the sharp corner between Bell's Brae and what is now Belford Road; and when Cabbie Stewart extended his house after 1890, he adopted the name **Kirkbrae House**, *in deference to the role of Bell's Brae as the road from the village to St Cuthbert's*. (Basil Skinner: *The House on the Bridge*, 1982).

Drumsheugh Toll, less clearly placed on a 1759 map, may have been an alternative name for Kirkbraehead Toll. By 1852 Drumsheugh Toll was a short distance down Belford Road, where a later building has kept the name.

Harris tells us that Lord Moray's estate of **Drumsheugh** was originally "Meldrum's heuch" (land on a rocky height), which had its own mill near the town's common mills, possibly on the site of Greenland Mill. He shows that "Drumsheugh" was transferred to the other side of the main road, where it was applied to two different houses in what is now Lynedoch Place Lane before being used in street names. That lane was once part of the main road to Queensferry, the line of which was changed in other places too

between the Dean and the River **Almond** (a pre-Celtic name).

Leith is not so old: it comes from a word for "water" in a Celtic language. Harris says that what we now call **Bell's Brae** is named "Water of Leith" on maps before 1852. Kirkwood (1817) and Knox (1821) do give that impression, but I cannot believe that it was the name of the brae. Ainslie (1804) and Knox print "Drumsheugh" on part of the main road. Ainslie also prints Kirkbraehead on the road; Kincaid (1784) put it among buildings. Surely all of these were names for areas. Maps dated 1759, 1766 and 1822 show clearly that **Water of Leith** was the village. My own impression is that names were often used to describe where people lived rather than for streets. You lived "at the damside", for example.

Explaining **Damside**, Harris says that **Damhead** was at the head of the dam, where sluices controlled the flow of water from the river, in this case at the cauld (weir) above the Village. I don't think "damhead" is a specific place name here. Meg Lee told me that her mother would say the boys were playing "up at the damheid". Note the use of "the". She might just as readily have said they were playing "doon the waterside."

That, by the way, was the only local term I could find for the path to Stockbridge. At my suggestion, the path was labelled St Bernard's Path for a while, but **The Dene** was adopted in 1889. (See also **The Trows**.)

On the 1852 O S map **Hawthorn Bank** was the building which is now 30,31,32 Belford Road. Harris suggests that the name was only later used for an area. This seems unlikely. The very name suggests that it was primarily the name of an area. A tradition about 'a Covenanter's thorn', he says, does not belong there but on the haugh above Bell's Mills. (Another myth!)

Baxters' Tolbooth (at the foot of Bell's Brae) has been left out. Harris lists other buildings which have disappeared, for example, **Mar's Mill** and **Jericho**, but not **Slate Mill**. (I cannot at present say exactly where it was.) Slate=slate. Since a slate house meant a house with a slate roof, I suspect that this mill was notable in its time for not being thatched.

Whisky Row survived into the present century on the steep slope above the new part of Damside. Harris mentions only a Whisky Row in Leith, which was notable for the number of dealers in wines and spirits rather than the number of drinkers!

Another omission is **The Cauldron**, the wooded bank (and/or the pool?) behind the Gallery of Modern Art. (The various forms of this name were discussed in DVN 111.) Under **Windmill Brae** Harris quotes the tradition that the old mill had been used for milling whins to feed stock. In correspondence with me, he would not accept that it was really a whin mill. (See discussion in DVN 111.)

There is an article on **Roman roads**. Harris deduces that there was a crossroads at Back Dean and a river crossing "somewhere near Bell's Mills". Discussing **Belford**, he says there is nothing to indicate that there was a ford at **Bell's Mills**. However, there have been considerable changes in ground levels; if you look over the bridge on the downstream side of the bridge, you can see what must be the original level, and Lawrence Walker assures me that there was a ford: when a deep pit was dug at Bell's Mills he saw layers of road-metal below the level of even the earliest bridge. The Romans could have used that ford.

The sloping ground opposite Bell's Mills (Douglas Crescent Gardens) was called **Bell's Braes**. Lawrence Walker maintains that **Bell's Brae** (leading down to the Village) was so named because it led to **Bell's Mills**. However, Harris has found sixteenth-century references to Bells at the Water of Leith as well as at Bell's Mills. Moreover, a map of 1759 shows the road past **Coates** as the only road to Bell's Mills. That was called **Bell's Loan** or **Coates Bauks** (Palmerston Place and Douglas Gardens).

In his foreword, Stuart Harris wrote: *Much remains to be investigated, and one aim in writing this book has been to encourage further local studies.*

I hoped to discuss with him the omissions and possible errors. I would have challenged him to provide evidence that there was ever an ornamental well in

Well Court. But, sadly, he died in February. However, his publisher, Gordon Wright, will welcome comments and corrections, which could be incorporated into a second edition.

Don't let my criticisms put you off. This is a fascinating volume. If you are at all curious about place names you will want to consult it at least, and you may well decide like me to buy a copy, even at £45. Then tell me about my mistakes!

Dorothy Forrester.

A CHEERFUL CEMETERY

The improving spirit of the age has evinced itself in nothing more agreeably than in the reformation of our last homes. The contrast between the loathsome town churchyards and the spacious, pure and breezy cemeteries is creditable both to the taste and to the feelings of the age. (Lord Cockburn)

Cockburn's friend and fellow judge, Lord Jeffrey, took a walk with his wife one evening in the Dean Cemetery, which was resonant with blackbirds and looked invitingly peaceful and cheerful. I rather think I must have a freehold there.

He was buried there a few weeks later in 1850. So was Lord Cockburn, in 1854.

Since their time the Cemetery has become the last resting place of many other interesting people and has acquired a remarkable collection of monuments. There will be a **guided walk on Wednesday May 28 at 7 pm.**

MILLIONS

The Water of Leith Conservation Trust has been granted £2.5 million by the Millennium Commission.

The Walkway from Balerno to Leith will be completed and upgraded. It is estimated that 250,000 visitors a year will be attracted, which his will appal some residents, who think there are already too many!

The river corridor will be landscaped and wildlife habitats improved, particularly for otters and bats. The home of the Trust, a former school at Slateford, is to be developed as an education and visitor centre.

We welcome the proposal to instal lights on between the Village and Stockbridge. The Dean Bridge and St Bernard's Bridge may be flood-lit. (St Bernard's Well too?) At St Bernard's Bridge there is to be a ramp allowing wheel-chair users to reach the upper path. At present, if you go past the Well on the lower level, there is no way through; that is to be remedied and it is hoped to carry out some habitat management and re-planting on the bank opposite the Well. (Views of the Well would be improved by some felling on the near side!)

Matching funding has been secured from Edinburgh Council and others, bringing the total to £5 million. The work will begin in the autumn and and take four years. It will create 90 construction jobs and, in conjunction with Lothian & Edinburgh Enterprise Limited, lead to 200 training opportunities for the long-term unemployed.

DEAN DISTILLERY

Sunbury Distillery (DVN 116) was not the only one. Dean Distillery in Miller Row is described in *The Whisky Distilleries of the United Kingdom* by Alfred Barnard (1887). It was in a *range of buildings erected on the solid rock, rising abruptly from the Water of Leith. . . . The works, which were formerly corn mills, are of ancient date.*

James Johnston of Glenpatrick Distillery, Paisley¹, acquired all the buildings in Miller Row in 1881 and converted them into a distillery by the following year. It covered 1½ acres of ground, with barley lofts (140 feet long and 30 feet broad) and five malting floors of the same dimensions. Adjacent was the kiln, 35 feet square, which communicated with the malt deposit, a lofty building holding 18,000 quarters of malt.

Access to the mill buildings was up a circular stone staircase. The top floor was occupied by the mill (a pair of metal rollers for crushing the malt); the next floor below was the grist loft, below this the mash house, and adjoining it the tun room. Barnard details the mash tun, the brewing tanks, the underback, the five handsome washbacks and the wash charger, noting that all the work was carried on by gravitation.

The still house, which seems to have been separate, contained two old pot stills (brought from Paisley?), two low-wines and feints chargers and one spirit receiver. In the running room, besides the safe, there were a

Morton's refrigerator and two patent condensers. Next door the spirit store had a vat holding 2,600 gallons.

The visitors retraced their steps to reach the engine house with its 15 horse-power engine, a centrifugal pump for the wash, and a steam boiler 28 feet long and 6 feet in diameter. The chimney stack was on the other side of the river (i.e. on West Mill), the flue being carried across the stream on a bridge "exactly over the waterfall".

There were seven bonded warehouses, all built in the solid rock, with 2,500 casks of whisky. It was pure malt, and the average annual output was about 73,000 gallons. Adjacent to the warehouses were a small cooperage, offices, stables, peat sheds, and clerks' office.

On the 1894 Ordnance Survey map the only building marked "Dean Distillery" is the six-storey "Jericho", the site of which is occupied by RMJM's offices. It was labelled "Malthouse" on the 1877 map, before Johnston set up his distillery; so it seems likely that his five malting floors were there. But Barnard's description makes it clear that the distillery occupied buildings on the other side of Miller Row, "rising abruptly from the Water of Leith".

If the malting floors, kiln and malt deposit were on the right-hand side of Miller Row as one goes down, the apparently separate "mill buildings" could be Lindsay's Mill (where the millstones now stand), but the boiler house must have been in the range

of buildings² which extended along the riverside upstream of the mill as far as the old stone bridge, for it is from those buildings that the flue³ crosses the river to the chimney of West Mill on the O.S. map of 1894 (not exactly over the waterfall). Perhaps the bonded warehouses, cooperage etc. were on the other side of Miller Row, the site of RMJM's garage.

¹ Elma Munro: *Miller Row*
in *Dean Village News* No 72.

² They were demolished in 1931, when part at least was referred to as a granary. See *DVNews* No 107.

³ I have heard that children used to crawl through it..

RMJM

In January there was an exhibition in the Architecture Department of the University of Edinburgh to celebrate 40 years of Robert Matthew Johnson-Marshall, the practice founded by Sir Robert Matthew, Professor of Architecture from 1953-1968. He established a new department which pioneered a widening of the curriculum from an arts biased perspective to a broader skill base, and established units for planning and for architectural research. This broadening of the architect's education took root in the practice itself, which is multi-disciplinary and to this day trades as architects, civil and structural engineers, building services engineers, landscape architects, space planners and interior designers.

Robert Matthew was a distinguished civil servant, having been Chief Architect and Planning Officer at the Department of Health for Scotland and culminating in his role as Chief Architect to the London County Council from 1945 to 1953. Likewise his partner Stirrat Johnson-Marshall had devoted much of his life to the public domain. The impact of these two backgrounds on the expanding business was inevitably a social architecture servicing reconstruction and growth in health, education, housing and public buildings. Robert Matthew had been not only President of the RIBA but also President of the International Union of Architects and of the Commonwealth Association of Architects. His international interests were mirrored in the business which now operates internationally with offices in the United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Manila.

However, the exhibition focused on their work in Scotland, from the key projects in the evolution of the practice to their current work: the first civilian airport at Turnhouse (1956), Firhill School (1960), Cockenzie Power Station (1968), the Royal Commonwealth Pool (1969), Stirling University (1971), Distillers' House (1984), the Scottish Office at Victoria Quay (1995) and current plans for a Millennium Arena in Glasgow and for the revitalisation of the Usher Hall.

(Derived from *The University of Edinburgh Bulletin*, 16 January 1997.)

ANGLING

Graham Priestley, who was High Bailiff of the Water of Leith for 13 years until handing over that ancient office recently, has written a report on the 1996 fishing season for the Newsletter of the Water of Leith Conservation Trust.

Water levels were low for much of the year, and figures published by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency¹ confirmed the Honorary Bailiffs' suspicion that in the last few years the water levels have often fallen below the agreed flow which the compensation reservoirs are meant to maintain.

Although 656 permits were issued, only 24 anglers made a catch return. The average catch was two trout per visit; the best was a brown trout of 2lb 13oz caught on fly at Roseburn.

It was worrying that many of the trout and two grayling had some degree of cataract in their eyes. This may be due to a parasite or to pollution.

The fishing season is from April 1 to September 30. Permits are issued free of charge from the Post Offices at Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green and Colinton and from the Recreation Department at 17 Waterloo Place.

¹ The Forth River Purification Board has been absorbed into SEPA.

FISH

Fish are inconspicuous creatures compared to plants, birds and mammals. A quiet walk along a burn will usually tell you if there are trout present, but no-

thing about lampreys and bullheads. Happily, management of the brown trout fishery of the Water of Leith involves collecting data on all the fish. For the last three years the Honorary Bailiffs have been assisted by scientists from Pitlochry who can survey chosen pools by electro-fishing. This involves using two electrodes to pass an electric current through the water. All the fish in the pool are drawn to the upstream electrode, where they are caught by hand-netting and can be held for counting, measurement and scale sampling. (Scales reveal the age of the fish and can be used to distinguish between brown and sea trout.)

The surveys have confirmed a large population of brown trout, some wild, some marked stock fish, and at Redbraes in the lower river several sea trout were found. A salmon found dead in September at Bonnington had been tagged in the River Wear.

Grayling have appeared in the last ten years, presumably introduced by anglers, and their continued presence was confirmed at Balgreen and at Redbraes, where the catch also included flounders. Eels, three-spined sticklebacks, stone loach, brook and river lampreys, bullheads and minnows were recorded at three different sites. Anglers have reported perch and pike at Murrayfield, presumably escapees from the Union Canal, and rainbow trout enter the river from Harlaw Reservoir via the Bavelaw Burn.

(From an article by Graham Priestley in *Lothian Wildlife* 12, December 1996)

CABLE TV

Back in 1992, when it seemed that cable television would soon come to the Dean Village, representatives of the Association discussed with United Artists Communications how their cables might be installed without damage to listed buildings and with the least possible disruption in the streets. The flats in Well Court could be reached from a single entry point, using the route followed by cables from the communal television aerial, and we hoped that there could be a similar solution for West Mill, Baxters' Tolbooth and Hawthorn Buildings.

Sunbury Place was cabled, insensitively, fairly soon. From time to time we were told approximately when the Village would be done. The periods indicated came and went. The latest news, from the company (now called "Telewest") is that there are no plans so far to cable the Dean Village.

A GRIEVANCE

The keeping and rearing of pigs has become of late an intolerable grievance. . . . An enquiry was made into the number of pig styes in Bell's Mills, Water of Leith, Silvermills and area, when it was ascertained that there were no fewer than 325 different styes, averaging about four pigs each.

Mr Alexander Murray, Inspector of Cleansing, 1847, quoted in *Edinburgh Evening News*, December 15 1962.

DIARY

Tuesday April 29th at 7.30
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
in Drumsheugh Toll, 3 Belford Road.
THEN LET'S CHAT
OVER A GLASS OF WINE.

Sunday May 4th from 10.30 a.m.
LET'S CLEAN UP THE RIVER
AND ITS BANKS
from the Hotel to St Bernard's Well.
Meet at the old stone bridge.

Wednesday May 28 at 7 p.m.
THE DEAN CEMETERY:
A GUIDED WALK
led by Dorothy Forrester.
Charge: £1.00, for DVA funds.

Wednesday August 6th from 1 p.m.
A DRIVE INTO PERTSHIRE
FOR PENSIONERS
No Charge.

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