

Dean Village News

Issue 180 August 2018
www.deanvillage.org

Dean Village Association - the first years

1975 was a particularly important year for Dean Village.

On March 15th the Town Clerk published an edict that Dean Village will now become a Conservation Area under the Town and County Planning Acts. The planning consent previously needed for work on specific and historic buildings was now extended to all buildings within the conservation area. Any demolition could not proceed without consent. The area was defined as lying between Ravelston Terrace and Belford Road to the north and south, and Dean Bridge and St. George's School to the east and west.

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Saturday, 30th August marked three hundred years since the completion of the "girnal", the great granary, or tolbooth at the bottom of Bell's Brae, where the Baxters of Dean stored their grain prior to milling. The villagers celebrated by holding a grand festival, which included the "Feeing of the Baxters" ceremony.

The afternoon started with a procession down Bell's Brae: participants dressed in colourful 17th century costumes, accompanied by pipe and drum, and bells from the Morris dancers. At the Baxter's building the Town Crier called for attention, and the Baillie addressed the Baxters and Millers of Dean. He thanked them for providing our daily bread, which has continued since our good King David the First (of blessed

memory), first thirled the mills at Dean. He referred to their skill of making pancakes, tattie scones, plum duff pies and other goodies. He referred to the biblical quotation from the Baxter's stone "In the sweat of thy faces shall we eat bread". He wished them a successful feeing.

The Town Crier then read out the proclamation "*Hear ye, hear ye ... The Incorporation of Baxters of the City of Edinburgh, having assembled together with the Millers of Dean and Bell's Mills, have ordanit that the feeing of the said Baxters and Millers for the coming year will be Sixty Pounds Scots.*" He further proclaimed today as a public holiday, being three hundred years since the building of our tolbooth, and gave thanks to its preservation in this, the European Architectural Heritage Year

Entertainment continued in front of West Mill with the Morris Dancers, the Mime Theatre, reels and strathspeys. Wives and daughters in festival costumes served teas, bakeries, books, lavender and even mead. All were kept safe by the POLIS guarding the approaches to the village.

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The Baxter's Tolbooth. This building had ceased being a granary many years earlier. More recently St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral had used it as a chapel and Mission Hall. Sadly, in November 1974, the Provost of the Cathedral, Dr. Crossfield, told the committee of the Dean Village Association that they intended to sell the building. The Cathedral Board recognised the historic and architectural importance of the building, that it was the only place for worship in the village and was a focal point for gatherings. But they were forced to sell because of a major financial crisis due to the inflationary pressure that was affecting the whole country. One year later the building was purchased by a developer to turn into flats.

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Planning. Several of the planned developments ran into problems.
3/4 Belford Road. The Buildings Officer of the University of Edinburgh, which holds restrictive rights on potential building, indicated that they would not oppose a granting a waiver of those rights should

the developers apply. Other holders of restrictive rights did oppose this waiver, and were supported by DVA. The matter was now being considered by the Land Tribunal.

The Skinnery. The developers, Weir Ltd, had bought the Skinnery site from the Leggets, and had received planning approval. They were not intending to carry out the development, and were selling the site.

Sloan's Garage. This area was to become modern office blocks of six storeys. Behind these would be a housing development of twenty-four high quality flats in three six-storey blocks, five three-storey town houses and four two-storey mews houses by the riverside.

23 Lynedoch Place. Viewpoint Housing Association was proposing to build sheltered accommodation on the ex-YMCA site.

Schoolyard: The committee rejected a proposal by the Arts Council to create a painting on the gable end. The committee also rejected a proposal placed on behalf of owner Craig Richards for a block of six flats on the site. The committee took the view that this space should not be lost, as it is the only play area for children.

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Kate's essay. In 1974 the Manchester Guardian had sponsored a countrywide competition linked to European Architectural Heritage Year for schools. Outright winner of one section was nine year old Kate Snowdon of Braehead Loan, Edinburgh who submitted a report about Dean Village. She had asked children in her class if they had ever been to the village and only one third had done so. Here are some of her comments.

“This is not a village in the country. It is about 300 yards from Princes Street and lies in a valley beside the Water of Leith. Some of it has been well looked after and has been carefully restored, but much has been left in ruins with broken glass and scribbling on walls. It once had its own school and shops. Now there are only a few children of school age (they go to schools in Edinburgh) and one shop. The population is 200 - it used to be 400. This is sad.”

Kate went on to comment about some of the buildings. She thought the Dean Path flats (on the east side) fitted in well because the fronts were of stone, Link Housing turning West Mill into flats without

altering the outside appearance was a good idea. The Hawthorn buildings had been vandalised and were full of dirt, rubbish and rubble.

Concerned about the state of the village, in September 1974 she wrote to the City Architect's Department about the High Green. Amazingly, she managed to achieve something that the Association had so far failed to do - get a reply.

The letter started by mentioning that work on restoring old buildings had been going on for a long time and the Council recognised the importance of new buildings keeping the village character. The High Green site in such a deep valley made design difficult as all living rooms must receive sufficient light. The letter went on to state some detail of planned housing, and repair of existing housing on Belford Road and Hawthornbank Lane. But they could not guarantee that new houses would be built using expensive stone.

(Kate would be in her fifties now and possibly married. If anyone knows her, please pass this on. Ed.)

Planning applications in Dean Village

3/4 Belford Road (14/04445/CLP): -

No further activity has occurred at this site. The pavement on Belford Road overlooking the site is crumbling and becoming dangerous in places.

Belford House and Douglas House (14/04512/FUL): - No further activity. The developing company is concentrating on other sites.

RMJM Offices (14/05243/FUL): - The conversion of offices into residences has been completed and they are up for sale. The green blinds on rollers seem to be for cosmetic purposes only. They do not move and there is no obvious mechanism. In one of the houses, through a window at ground level, a toilet may be seen. Great views out if you are sitting there, contemplating life, but a bit disconcerting when a passer-by gives you a wave.

Report of the 47th Annual General Meeting

The Chairman reported that plans to replace Belford House and Douglas House with flats and town houses had been put on hold. Conversion of RMJM offices into residential dwellings has been almost completed by Sundial Properties. In reply to a question the Chairman replied that the parking entrance would still be off Bell's Brae. No further development has occurred at the empty site between Drumsheugh Baths and the Society of Musicians' building.

The Secretary reported that the committee has arranged the placing of a memorial bench to the late Dorothy Forrester, our Secretary for 25 years. in the grounds of Dean Cemetery.

The Dean Valley Regeneration Ltd. has awarded the contract for the second phase of the feasibility study which will consider the valley of the Water of Leith as a whole. When this study has been completed and accepted by interested parties, the process of applying for a lottery grant may proceed. A survey of cyclists using Miller Row is under way. Members who would like to contribute should consult their website - deanvalley.org.uk.

Our themed tours were conducted for several groups, and have proved very popular. Tours based on the historic architecture of Dean Village were conducted as a service for students from the University of Edinburgh and also for the University of Plymouth.

The Acting Treasurer reported that income for this year was £2365, made up mainly of membership subscriptions (£746), walks (£1099), donations (£210) and advertising in Dean Village News (£86). An increase of £411 in the income for our walks was

due partly to extra walks for Friends of the Galleries coupled with very fine weather. Expenditure for the year was £2889, made up of printing Dean Village News (£433), fees and membership of other bodies (£363). The end of year balance in the bank accounts was £10126. The extra expenditure was on the Dorothy Forrester Memorial bench of £1710.

The following officials were elected: - Chairperson - Barry Mackay, Vice-Chairperson:- Javier Albert, Treasurer:-Bob Morley. Committee members: - Caroline Gerard, Charlie Hughes, Conrad Hughes, Don Jardine, David Perry, Pat Sinclair and Evelyn Whitfield. The secretary post was unfilled.

The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) had circulated charities requesting that they raised safety concerns with staff and with the public at their meetings. The committee duly took note of the concerns listed. Members who had already given their e-mail address should inform the membership secretary if they wished to have this information removed from records.

There was concern over the lack of progress in repairing the river path, closed due to the landslip caused by work on the private house above. Cllr. Whyte said that the matter was subject to ongoing legal procedures and progress would be made as quickly as possible. In answer to a question about planning permission, the councillor said that such permission does not allow unsafe actions to be carried out on the site. One member pointed out that the footpath was the responsibility of the Council, and should be repaired, and the costs argued about later. Members agreed that the signage regarding the closure was totally inadequate. Detailed and understandable signage, in keeping with the character of Dean Village, should replace the yellow direction signs that were unclear. Signs should be erected at various entry

points to the riverside path, so that walkers could make appropriate detours. During the course of the year many thousands of visitors came to the village, and then wanted to travel on to the Art Galleries. Having clear directions would be helpful to them.

Complaints had been made about the accumulation of rubbish in the village. A suitable place for a bottle bank cannot be found due to noise pollution problems. A request was made to empty the small bins more frequently, and to remove the bin on the footbridge completely.

Evelyn Whitfield said that a resident, originally from Poland, wished to show his appreciation of the welcome he had received in Edinburgh by donating a black metal park bench. The Acting Secretary would contact the Parks Department.

There was now a discussion on the preservation of the environment of Dean Village. Don Jardine showed photos of the work he had done within the Hawthornbank estate and around Well Court. With the help of the gardener he had, with the approval of the householders, removed the most of the tree that had fallen near the road bridge. They had cleared the riverside area which was owned by the Hawthornbank residents, and planted many clumps of snowdrops. Additional planting would be carried out in association with volunteers from the Water of Leith Conservation Trust on 28th May, in collaboration with the river clean-up day. (*This did not take place. Ed.*)

A riverside property owner was concerned about the privacy and security of private properties, whose owners had not been consulted. DJ replied that no work had been done or was planned to be done on privately owned properties.

Environmental work in Hawthornbank.

Those residents who walk over the Dean footbridge and make their way through the Hawthornbank apartments will be aware of substantial improvements being made in this area. This work is due to the efforts of Don Jardine, resident and on-site representative of the Hawthornbank Resident Association and factor James Gibb with their appointed gardener Donald Munro, who received his training at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Don Jardine was elected onto the committee of the Dean Village Association at this year's AGM.

Over a year ago they repaired the wooden fence along the south side of the river. To the west was a small, muddy, garden area which was replaced with slabs to create a viewing area for visitors. To the east the garden was planted with hedging and fenced off temporarily. Four hundred and fifty new plantings have been completed in this area, and a similar number will be planted later this year .



The two Dons, with the permission of the property owner, and with some discomfort to themselves, removed the trunk of a tree that had fallen into the river by the bridge. They returned later to remove the head that was embedded in the river and gathering debris.

In January they planted one thousand snowdrops along the river. Riverside land in front of the new Hawthornbank flats was cleared of bramble growth. As the bird-nesting season had started, planting will be carried out at the end of September and into October.

Discussions were held with representatives of Link Housing who own the old ochre Hawthornbank flats and the riverside land, with a view to coming to some shared vision of the future, also with the permission of the land-owners to the east of the Link land. At present no decision has been made.

In June the re-harling of the steps down to the river at the south end of the footbridge was undertaken. The coping stones have yet to be put in place.

A new LED streetlamp has been installed in Hawthornbank Lane by the Council, replacing one that had fallen into disrepair. DVA will recommend to the Council that these “green” lights should replace all others in the village.



My Friends in the Cemetery XXXII by David Perry

David Cousin (1809 - 1878)

David Cousin was a landscape architect and planner, who designed many of the cemeteries and other prominent buildings in Edinburgh. In 1843 he had joined the Free Church of Scotland following the Disruption in which four hundred ministers left the Church of Scotland. In 1845 he was commissioned to design Dean Cemetery. Dean House and the surrounding grounds had been purchased from the then owner, John Learmonth. The House was demolished and the stones were used to build the walls of the cemetery. There were many Coats of Arms built into the walls of the House, and these were incorporated in the southern retaining wall of the cemetery, below which is the Southern Terrace overlooking the Water of Leith. Lord Cockburn strongly objected to the destruction of this beautiful house, but was over-ruled. David received many commissions for new churches following the split, including those at Auchterarder, Newington, Dean, Kilmarnock and Oban. He had designed Warriston Cemetery in 1842, and went on to design Dalry, Rosebank and Newington cemeteries in 1848.

David Cousin was born on 19th May 1809 in North Leith. His father was a joiner and David trained under him for a while. William Playfair, Edinburgh's leading architect, took him on as his apprentice. (Playfair himself is resident in the cemetery - See DVN 167- Spring 2014). In 1831, David left to start his own practice. Originally a member of the Church of Scotland he, together with Glasgow engineer William Gate had designed the West Church in Greenock and Cambuslang Parish Church. From 1841 to 1872 he was Edinburgh City Architect. He was also architect to British Linen Bank, building its extending branches. In 1847 he became Edinburgh's Superintendent of Works, his first work being on the Corn Exchange in the Grassmarket. Planned streets include Chambers Street, Jeffrey Street and West Saville Road. He suffered from poor health, and towards the end of his career was helped by his brother George.

David Cousin resigned as Superintendent in 1872. He moved to Louisiana and died in Baton Rouge in 1878 and was buried there. There is a memorial stone on a path to the north of the Highlanders obelisk, where other members of the family lie. Brother George lies nearby, on the main path from the entrance next to Samuel Bough by the Crimean and Indian Wars monument.

: **Belgrave Crescent Gardens Opening**

Belgrave Crescent Gardens will be opening to the public under the Scotland Gardens Scheme on Sunday, 2nd September from 2.00pm till 5.00pm. This will be a unique opportunity to visit a very special garden area at the centre of the wonderful city of Edinburgh. Our members treasure this special retreat and now invite our neighbours and anyone else interested to join us on this special day.

Experience our spectacular views of Dean Bridge, view the lower weir which once provided power for many mills all the way to Canonmills. Wander the higher ground with herbaceous borders and extensive lawns. We will be serving teas and delicious home-baked cakes. There will be a children's play area and probably a plant sale too.

Entry will be at one of the gates on Belgrave Crescent. Entry fee will be £4 per person, children free. Our chosen charity is Fresh Start who will be there to tell you more about their work helping the homeless.

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A Tale of Two Bernards

The other day, in an episode of “The Chase” (its a sad life), the following question was posed.

*“The monk St. Bernard of Clairvaux was credited with the saying:-
Love me, love my — ?”*

The contestant had three choices *a) abbey b) dog c) habits.*

The hapless chap chose “abbey”.. The compere, Bradley Walsh, says “St Bernard ... St. Bernard dogs.”

Those residents who visit St. Bernard’s Well may see a leaflet telling them of the history of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. He lived from 1090 to 1153. A Benedictine monk, he set up the abbey at Clairvaux, and founded the Cistercian order. He quickly gained a large reputation, and was consulted as to who should be pope after the death of Honorius II in 1130. But there is no record of any St. Bernard ever entering the British Isles. He did send monks worldwide to found monasteries, one being at Culross on the Forth. A monk from there probably came to live by the Water of Leith, and so the area became associated with St. Bernard. There is no connection whatsoever with dogs.

At around the same time there was another St. Bernard. In 1049 St, Bernard of Menthon set up a hospice on the highest pass on the Swiss Alps. Travelers between the upper Rhine valley and Turin used this pass. At first St. Bernard sought to keep the pass clear of bandits and make it safe for travelers. The role of rescue developed naturally. This hospice later became famous for the use of dogs in rescue operations. Thus it is this St. Bernard who is associated with dogs.. At no time have these dogs carried miniature brandy casks around their necks.

Past issues of Dean Village News

We are starting to put back issues on the Dean Village website. Issues No 165 to 176 may be seen there now. Go to deanvillage.org/documents. Photos that are in black and white in the printed edition may be seen in full colour on the website.



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2 Chester Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7RA

Dean Village News

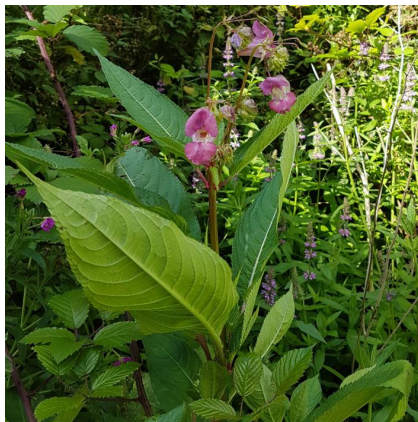
This issue of the Dean Village News has been delivered only to members of the Dean Village Association. If you have enjoyed reading this issue, or found it useful or helpful in any way, you can help by recommending joining the Dean Village Association to others and so assist in looking after our village. Yearly membership is £7 (£10 per couple) or life membership is £50 (£75 per couple). There is a concessionary annual rate of £3 single and £5 couple.

The Dean Village Association is looking for helpers to assist in delivering the News. There are three issues each year. The March issue goes to all households in the Village (ca. 1000). The other two, in August and November, only go to members (ca. 250). Please contact the Secretary if interested.

Invasive Species in the Dean Village by David Matthews

In this edition's nature notes David Matthews describes some of the invasive species that are affecting the river bank, and the work he and others are doing to eradicate them.

If you have walked along the Water of Leith this summer you may have noticed some rather attractive plants with purple flowers and wondered why groups of people are pulling them up. The plants are Himalayan Balsam and the people are volunteers on a project co-ordinated by the Water of Leith Conservation Trust. Himalayan Balsam is one of a number of species that were originally bought as ornamental plants but have now escaped and become a problem.



Originally from the Western Himalayas, Balsam has become widespread throughout Britain. In a single season a plant up to three meters tall can grow from a seed, forming dense clumps which screen out native species. Die-back in winter leaves bare patches on the river bank which are susceptible to erosion.

This year the Conservation Trust has been working to try and control balsam along the river. Being an annual, growth in future years can be prevented by pulling up the plant before seed is set. Stands by Hawthornbank Lane and above the weir have been removed. But some plants remain that are too difficult to reach.

There are other invaders along the river, one of which is Japanese Knotweed - a problem in much of Britain. Definitely not one to be pulled up! Even small pieces left behind can re-root. Each plant has to be painstakingly injected with weedkiller. Once present in Dean Village along the bank at Damside, Knotweed seems to have been largely eliminated.

It's a *Braw* Café

As Braw is well into her seventh summer serving Dean Village, I write to remind residents and visitors that we are open until 20.00 hrs. We are ready to serve up lots of fresh food ready to go.

In this great summer many customers have been taking advantage of basking in the sun in our outside area.

Please remember to order whole quiche (any size) and scones at least the day before as these items often sell out as soon as I take them from the oven. Just text Braw on 07436803521 with the details of your order.

All the best, Meg

cafebraw@hotmail.co.uk

In many ways the nastiest invader is Giant Hogweed. Originally from the Caucasus, Hogweed, like the others, was introduced as a garden plant. This plant is to be avoided because the sap can cause blistering to the skin which sometimes may last for years. Therefore one to recognise: look for spiky leaves and red blotches on the stem.

Treatment needs to be left to experts who spray the plant with weedkiller using special equipment and protective gear. Two plants were found in the village this year on the bank by Damside, and they have been treated and killed.



Destroying plants seems to be a bad practice, but necessary to deal with the invaders and encourage native species.

Dean Village Association

Committee 2018 - 2019

Chairman: Barry Mackay, chair@deanvillage.org

Vice-Chairman: Javier Albert,

Secretary: secretary@deanvillage.org

Treasurer: Bob Morley, treasurer@deanvillage.org

Membership Secretary: Caroline Gerard

e-mail:- membership@deanvillage.org

Committee members: Charlie Hughes, Conrad Hughes, Don Jardine, David Perry, Pat Sinclair, Evelyn Whitfield

The deadline for articles for the next edition of
the News is

10th November 2018

If you would like to submit an article for the
News please e-mail the Secretary

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