

# Dean Village News

Issue 159 Summer 2011

[www.deanvillage.org](http://www.deanvillage.org)

## Improvement of the Playground

At the Annual General Meeting of the Dean Village Association the committee were asked to canvass the views of all Association members and all Dean Village residents on this issue. A consultation document was sent to all members and households, some 900 in all, asking which improvements they would be prepared to support. 57 replies were received. Thus the great majority have no opinions one way or another. Of those that replied the results are as follows:-

	Number in favour	%	
Pave the whole area	15	26.3	
Landscape with a grassy area	29	50.9	
Plant additional shrubs	40	70.2	
Add more seating	43	75.4	
Provide litter bins	33	57.9	
Provide information boards	28	49.1	
Erect two small swings	15	26.3	
Provide small seesaw and/or rockers	10	17.5	
Erect small climbing frame/chute	11	19.3	
Erect two large swings	3	5.3	
Erect large climbing frame/chute	4	7.0	
Leave the area as it is.	0	0	pto

*(Continued from page 1)*

Residents and members were also asked if they would prefer to have a Christmas Tree placed in the Playground each year, or simply have the existing tree decorated. The preferences are as follows:-

Those preferring the Christmas Tree	10
Those preferring to have the existing tree decorated	39
Those with no preference	8

Several of those that replied were concerned about the upkeep of the area, not being convinced of assurances that the Council would take it under their care. Suggestions were made that the planting should be done in raised beds. Some others thought that there were not enough children in the area to warrant putting in place suitable apparatus.

The next step is to make the results known to the Parks Division of the Council, and come to some agreement as to the preferred improvements. An estimation of the cost involved may then be obtained, after which the committee will have to consider ways of raising finance. A public meeting might be held at this stage, or perhaps an open day in the Playground itself, to inform residents of the options and make decisions as to the way forward. In the meantime anyone who has suggestions to make regarding the improvement of the Playground, or can suggest ways of raising the finance, they may contact the Secretary, David Perry by e-mail at [Davper@aol.com](mailto:Davper@aol.com), or by telephone at 0131 226 7544, or on the mobile phone at 0777 151 1551, or by letter to 22 Damside, EH4 3BB or just drop in for a chat.

While the Parks Department are prepared to include the developed area into the maintenance schedule there will be times when a little loving care from Dean Village residents might be required. One Damside resident is frequently to be seen tidying up the area. Anyone who would be prepared to spend a very occasional hour perhaps doing a bit of weeding, dead heading, grass cutting, or general cleaning should contact the Secretary by the means detailed above.

## Events at Water of Leith

We are starting to create a medicinal herbs and flower bed near St Bernard's Well in Stockbridge - funded by the BIG Lottery Biodiversity Boost Project. We have already cleared the rank vegetation from the site and we need to dig out the old root stock.. At a workday on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June we planted native wildflowers found along the Water of Leith - these include giant bellflower, greater knapweed, teasel, maiden pink, yarrow, cowslip, common mallow, oxeye daisy, tansy, selfheal, st johns wort and foxglove.

In the autumn we will be cutting the meadows at Bells Mills and doing some more planting / seeding for next year - there are no dates yet but keep an eye on the website for details.

### **Sun 28<sup>th</sup> August - Discovery Walk 3; The Gormley Trail**

Follow the river to discover all 6 Gormley Statues in the Water of Leith along with the wildlife and heritage that makes the Water of Leith such a special place. £4.50 (members £2.50). **BOOKING ESSENTIAL.** Meet at 2.00pm at the gates to the Gallery of Modern Art on Belford Road. Estimated finish time 4.30pm at Ocean Terminal in Leith.

### **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September - Treasure Hunt in Neverland!**

Be amazed as the Centre and Dells are transformed into the set of Peter Pan. Pirates, Red Indians, Fairies and the Lost Boys will all play a part in this special adventure. Treasure Maps for sale from the Visitor Centre for £8. Enough treasure for all. From 1pm to 5pm.

**Water of Leith Conservation Trust  
Water of Leith Visitor Centre  
24 Lanark Road, Edinburgh EH14 1TQ**

**website:- [www.waterofleith.org.uk](http://www.waterofleith.org.uk)**

**e-mail:- [admin@waterofleith.org.uk](mailto:admin@waterofleith.org.uk) Tel:- 0131 455 7367**

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Working to conserve and enhance the Water of Leith as a haven for wildlife and an educational and recreational resource for all.

## **DVA AGM.**

The 40<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Dean Village Association was held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2011 in the Dean Parish Church Hall.

The Chairman reported that a planning application has been lodged with Edinburgh Council to redevelop the site presently occupied by Belford House and Douglas House to make 50 flats. At a Planning Committee Meeting on December 22<sup>nd</sup> the Planning Officer recommended that the applications to demolish Douglas House and Belford House and to redevelop the site as proposed be accepted. However the Committee rejected the application to demolish on the grounds that no clear case had been presented regarding the requirements of the conservation area and the plans to redevelop on the grounds that they were contrary to the policy on daylighting and were visually intrusive.

The applicants had appealed this decision which would now go before the Appeals Committee. The Chairman warned that the committee was more likely to listen to the arguments of the professional developers than the non-professional members of the planning committee. He provided the website for the appeals (CAC-230-23 for the Conservation Area Consent Appeal and PPA-230-2054 for the Planning Permission Appeal for 59,60 Belford Road, Edinburgh, EH4 3UE).

The Secretary reported that there is still a problem with black bags being put out in the village centre at inappropriate

times, leading to them being ripped open by scavengers. However planning restrictions prevent the positioning of large black bins in our conservation area.

The two green bins in Damside are generally working well, except occasionally when they are not emptied on schedule. However bags containing recyclable material are still dumped beside the bins and wardens do come and examine these bags to try and identify those responsible.

The No 13 bus is run hourly by Edinburgh Coach services following representations by DVA. Residents regularly used the service and reported that it was reasonably well used.

The Convener's Close steps between Dean Path and Damside are in a state of disrepair, and would benefit from a handrail and removal of a large black pipe. The Council has issued a job number but no work has taken place. A letter has been recently written to Clarence asking that work be expedited, particularly following the icy weather at the end of 2010.

The Chairman gave the Treasurer's report. This year there was £1364 income and £1665 expenditure, a loss of £301. This difference was mainly accounted for by the production of Dean Village News at a cost of £850. We also pay public liability insurance of £150. The principal sources of income are the membership fees (£430), walks (£405) and donations (£388) received during the opening of St Bernard's Well.

The following office bearers were elected:-  
Chairman;- Barry Mackay,

Vice-Chairman:- Javier Albert,

Secretary: David Perry,

Treasurer:- Dominic Guy.

Committee members: Dorothy Forrester, Conrad Hughes, Pat Sinclair and Catherine Gerard as Membership Secretary.

The meeting agreed that as from April 2012 the membership fees would be as follows:-

Annual membership: £7 single, £10 couple

Concession: £3 single, £5 couple

Life membership: £50 single, £75 couple

### **Dean Weir Hydro-electric project**

The original estimate of the project to install a micro-generator under the lower Weir was £166,000. However further problems were identified which raised the cost to over £900,000. As a result the project was not financially viable, and the Dean Village project will not be implemented.

### **Development of old playground area by Dean Path and Damside: -**

The Chairman explained that one of our local councillors, Lesley Hinds, had been approached by a resident suggesting that this area could be developed into a more pleasant amenity for the village which could include a children's playground. A meeting was held with Cllr. Hinds and James Galloway, the Parks Planning Officer. He produced a plan which included a rest area together with the playground. This plan had been circulated to all Dean Village residents in the March issue of the Dean Village News.

Copies of the plan and a list of possible objections were given to all present. Sheena Clinton objected strongly to the

provision of a playground on the grounds that it would be intrusive, noisy, attract vandals and would not be in keeping with the peace and tranquillity of Dean Village. She would not object to the development of a rest area. John Mackay had some sympathy with this view but suggested that all opinions should be canvassed. He asked about the present ownership of the land. The Chairman replied that part was owned by the Council, part by the estate of a private owner, and part jointly by these two. Both owners wished to see the area developed as an amenity for the village.

A question was asked about the cost of the project. The Chairman said that the plan circulated would cost in the region of £60,000, which would have to be raised ourselves. Possible sources of income were the Inverleith Trust and Wren, an organisation which held funds deposited by developers intended for community projects. John Mackay considered this amount to be out of range of Dean Village, but others thought that such an amount could be raised, including approaches to local businesses. The Chairman suggested that approaches to raise finance could be done immediately, but others said that a firm plan should be developed before any such approaches were made.

One member suggested that the issue should not be settled by this meeting, but all members of the Dean Village Conservation area should be consulted. Emily Thomforde suggested that such a consultation should include a blank map of the area so that residents could put forward their own ideas. Tim Steiner said that he had two young children but he did not necessarily want a play area for them. He

would prefer to see the area developed as a focal point in the village, a community space that could be used for many events.

The Secretary asked for a firm directive, suggesting that all residents of the Dean Village Conservation area, comprising 900 households, be canvassed as to their views on the development of the old playground area. This was approved by the meeting. The committee will meet in May to produce a consultation document to be circulated in early June. The results of this consultation will be made available to all residents.

### **Any other competent Business**

Barbara Mackay drew attention to the poor state of the road by the old bridge in the centre of the village where repairs had been carried out but then covered with tarmac. The Secretary undertook to write to Clarence to ask that these areas be properly replaced with setts.

John Mackay said that an information board had been put in place by the iron bridge south of the Water of Leith describing Well Court while it was being refurbished, and that this had drawn the attention of passing visitors. This board had been removed. The Secretary would contact Edinburgh World Heritage to ask if the information board could be restored.

### **Dean Village News**

This issue of the Dean Village News has been delivered to members of the Association in the Dean Village Conservation area... Yearly membership is £5 (or £8 per couple) or opt for life membership at £35 (£50 per couple).

## **Bell's Brae**

On Saturday 9th July, Bell's Brae was opened to traffic following several weeks of closure due to the insertion of new gas mains along Queensferry Road.

Those non-car owners, or those who do not use their cars frequently in Edinburgh, appreciated the quietness of this period. Cars no longer sped through the centre of the village, and those that did, ignoring the sign about the closure of Bell's Brae, had to come to a sudden halt and retrace their journey.

Although this lovely period has come to an end there is a sting in the tail for motorists. The Roads Department have taken the opportunity to extend the traffic island in Queensferry Road, where in times gone by a tollbooth was situated, by an extra six feet. Thus it is almost impossible for traffic leaving from Bell's Brae to make a right turn!

### **Sue Light**

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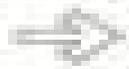
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## Friend or Foe?

This photo of these two birds was taken by St. Bernard's Bridge at the end of June. They stayed together there for some time, but the swan started to get a bit edgy. Here he (or she) was getting ready to see the heron off.

So what else can you expect to see on the Water of Leith. The bird life is great with over 70 recorded species, the favourites are undoubtedly the nesting pairs of Kingfishers and Swans and the healthy dipper and heron populations. Mammals you can expect to find include; foxes, hedgehogs, badgers, roe deer, pipistrelle and Daubenton bats and at the top of the tree we have an otter family with 2 cubs currently.



### Scottish Food Guide

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*[www.scottishfoodguide.com](http://www.scottishfoodguide.com) is funded and published by Wendy Barrie Ltd., Drumsheugh Toll, Dean Village. Well known contributor to Scotland's food scene, Wendy is an uncompromising crusader for good food. For further information contact [wendy@scottishfoodguide.com](mailto:wendy@scottishfoodguide.com).*

## My Friends in the Cemetery XI by David Perry

### Samuel Bough 1822 – 1878

Samuel Bough, known as Sam, was a Scottish landscape artist. His father was a shoemaker in Carlisle and, wanting Sam to have a reputable profession, apprenticed him to a lawyer. But Sam was not for that and left home, joined a group of gypsies and started painting in the Lake District. He continued wandering to Manchester and Glasgow where he kept himself by painting theatrical scenery. From 1852 to 1854 he lived in Hamilton and worked there with landscape painters Alexander Fraser (1827 - 1899) and Horatio McCulloch (1806 - 1867).



He eventually settled in Edinburgh in 1855 living in Jordan Lane, Morningside and became a painter of sea ports. Examples include “St. Andrews”, “The Dreadnought from Greenwich Stairs” and “Sun Sinking into Vapour”.

He became friends with Robert Louis Stevenson. They once spent three weeks on the Dubh Artach (Black Rock) lighthouse off the Isle of Iona. Stevenson’s father and uncle, Thomas and David, engineered this lighthouse, built on a skerry of basalt rock near the small, tidal, isle of Erraid. This isle featured in “Kidnapped” when David Balfour was shipwrecked and washed up there. Sam painted this picture of the lighthouse.



They were regulars at the then “Volunteer’s Rest” in Morningside, now known as the “Canny Man”, where Sam designed some of their signs.

He was a difficult personality and did not become a full member of the Royal Scottish Academy until 1875. He has paintings in the Tate, New Brunswick Gallery and the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. A signed print of his “Shipping Scene” was being offered on the internet for £975 a few years ago.

The portrait on the gravestone was sculpted by William Brodie (several works of his are here in Dean Cemetery) who signed it round the edge. Sam is shown in heroic pose with his artistic scarf round his neck, and his palette lies at the base. The original palette is in the Tullie House Museum, Carlisle.

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## Summer Nature Notes by Barbara Mackay

For a change I thought I would write about weeds. They have been in plentiful supply in Dean Village this summer, small ones amongst the already well-worn and uneven cobbles and tough-rooted horrors along walls and verges. Weeds are often described as “plants in an undesired place”, that is - not wanted by us. They can be unwanted for a number of reasons: they can be unsightly, restrict light to other more attractive plants, spread diseases or ooze chemicals which cause skin rashes or harm domestic and farm animals.

Some weeds are attractive and colourful. There is a stunning clump of Purple Toadflax in Damside which raises the question “When is a colourful weed reclassified as a wild flower?” Just by observation we know that weeds and our attitude to them can change over time. What we thought of in our youth as weeds can now be valued as wild flowers or medicinal plants or protected species, on the other hand introduced plants can become a weed threatening whole native ecosystems.

The word “weed” does possess an alien and unfriendly meaning. I will give some examples but note in passing that five plants have been designated - “injurious weeds” under UK law - common ragwort, spear thistle, curled dock and broad-leaved dock.

**BUDDLEIA** - affectionately known as the butterfly bush, they came from China and likes the lime solution in walls. They also like the railways and appear on good terms with East Coast and Virgin.

**JAPANESE KNOTWEED** - a great enemy, extremely expensive to eradicate taking 3 - 5 years to do so. Here it has no natural enemies, unlike its home in Japan, and should you buy a property on land previously contaminated by Knotweed you may be refused a mortgage.

**OXFORD RAGWORT** - came from Mount Etna around 1830 and found its way on the heels of travellers to Oxford station from where it has been travelling the length and breadth of the country. Yellow and quite pretty it can be seen on walls and waste ground from April to November.

**ROSEBAY WILLOWHERB** - which those of a certain age will recognise right away as a striking plant, tall, feathery and pale purple in colour, which took over bombed sites and loves waste and derelict ground and makes us wonder who used to live there when we see its clumps.

**RHODEDENDRON PONTICUM** - which is now being culled vigorously as it suffocates habitats and produces tree-destroying bacteria although it can lend its imperial purple to the countryside.

But what about herbal medicines? Today they appear on supermarket shelves or in specialist shops. Let us consider a few.

DIGITALIS PURPUREA - the foxglove which may be produced on industrial scale now but during the World Wars its leaves were gathered by women and dried, pressed and despatched to hospital as a useful drug.

NETTLES, CLOVERS AND DANDELIONS - which when ground can give our systems a "spring clean". Let me know if you have benefited from such a dose.

WILD GARLIC = is abundant on the banks of the Water of Leith and can be smelt before it can be seen.

GROUNDSEL AND CHICKWEED - which was used to feed Granny's budgies.

I hope I have whetted your appetites. Without weeds - no insects, no butterflies, no birds. Enjoy the summer, and look on weeds in a different light.

## **Inverleith Partnership Survey**

Dean Village is a member of the Inverleith Partnership which also includes Craighleith and Blacklaw, Drylaw and Telford, Stockbridge and Inverleith. The Partnership is a link between these areas, Edinburgh Council, Lothian and Borders Police, the National Health Service and local traders associations.

Every year the Partnership holds a Community Conference which discusses issues that concern residents of these areas. However, before the Conference can take place the Partnership needs to understand which issues are important. Workshops can then be established to discuss the issues raised with the appropriate organisation. The Partnership is keen to get as many responses as possible from those living or working in Inverleith.

***There is still time to tell the Partnership what you think and your comments will help them shape the next local community plan for action from 2011 to 2014. Give your views on what are the main issues for your community and help find the solutions!***

You can help by completing the online consultation document. You can complete the whole survey, or just complete the section(s) that are of most interest to you. The address is:-[www.surveymonkey.com/s/Inverleith-Tell\\_Us\\_What\\_You\\_Think\\_2011](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Inverleith-Tell_Us_What_You_Think_2011) or can be accessed via:- [www.edinburghnp/inverleith](http://www.edinburghnp/inverleith)

The annual conference will begin to look at the responses gathered from the survey and discuss how to tackle the issues highlighted. This will be on **Thursday 8th September 2011 from 6-9pm at Broughton High School**. Anyone may attend. Full details will be circulated shortly, but please let Elaine Lennon know if you would like to attend and she will make sure that you receive the booking information directly.

# **Dean Village Association**

## **Committee 2011/2012**

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**Committee members:** Caroline Gerard, Dorothy  
Forrester, Pat Sinclair, Conrad Hughes

## **Dean Village News**

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

**2nd December 2011**

If you would like to submit an article for the News  
please e-mail the Editor at [davper@aol.com](mailto:davper@aol.com)

**David Perry, DVN Editor**

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