

# Dean Village News

Issue 181 December 2018  
[www.deanvillage.org](http://www.deanvillage.org)

## Dean Village Association - the late 70s

From 1976 onwards the frequency of publication of the Dean Village News gradually decreased. From March 1979 no newsletters were printed for over a year. Unfortunate because much of what has become the modern Dean Village was being created at this time.

Nevertheless, the Association was active. Christmas parties and Burns suppers were held each year at the Dean Parish Church Hall situated on Ravelston Terrace, and were well attended and greatly enjoyed. During the Edinburgh Festival, village tours were conducted at weekends, and stalls selling books, magazines, home baking and refreshments were doing so well that around £150 was raised each year.

There were concerns about several developments: -

**Tannery site:** - The first plans made by Weir Construction showed a large office block with about forty houses, and possibly a pub or restaurant next to Burnside's shop. Later plans reduced the size of the office block and the pub idea was abandoned. The planning committee of the Council approved the plans in the spring of 1978. Nothing happened for a year and then ownership of the site passed to J. Smart and Co. Ltd, whereupon demolition commenced.

**Sunbury site:** - A development company had purchased the site, which included Sloan's car showroom on Belford Road and land down to the riverside. There would be offices along Belford Road, four mews houses and forty-seven flats.

**Baxter's building on Bell's Brae:** - The building was used as a mission hall until 1974. Conversion into flats was completed in 1978.

**Hawthornbank:** - the old flats were in a complete state of disrepair. Link Housing was negotiating with the Council to renovate them.

**Bell's Mills site:** - The mill suffered a devastating dust explosion in 1971. Mercury Motor Homes now owned the site and planned to place a hotel there. Many of the old buildings would be demolished, but the granary was a listed building and had to be preserved.

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The News of autumn 1977 contained a most interesting account of a meeting of the residents of the newly opened Well Court on Saturday 4th July 1885, addressed by John Ritchie Findlay (the owner of Well Court but described as proprietor, and also as the proprietor of "The Scotsman"). JRF explained that he wished to replace the old housing with ones that would not "look ill from the homes above." (*He lived in Rothsay Terrace, which looks right down on Well Court.*)

He encouraged tenants to appreciate the "spacious court and fine views from most of their windows". They would have no need to decorate, as he had attended to that, but he would have no objection to nails being driven into walls to hang up pictures.

Tenants pointed out that there were "good many roughish neighbours" nearby. JRF (referred to, tongue firmly in cheek, by the editor as "our pioneering philanthropist") announced that he had purchased the "rubbishy property to the north" and put out the poor people. He would build better housing there (the Dean Path Buildings).

The Hall in Well Court was designed as a club room and reading room, mainly for the male population. He stated the Victorian view that "clubs for ladies had hitherto not been successful." The meeting did not respond favourably, as the men well knew who was looking after their homes when they were at the "club".

JRF concluded that he saw Well Court as a "very important social experiment in remodelling the village." He encouraged tenants to make this enterprise a success for themselves and their neighbours by

establishing a “Well Court Association”.

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In September 1980, after a gap of eighteen months, an eight page Dean Village News (number 62) appeared. This issue marked the appearance of Dorothy Forrester as Secretary and Editor of the News.

Dorothy had strong opinions on what was going on in the village. She recommended that all members of the District Planning Committee be invited to wander round Sunbury and Dean in the peace of a Sunday afternoon. She considered it likely that some members would have a slight, if any, acquaintance with the area. A practical advantage of such an outing might well convince councillors of the need for a thoroughly considered re-development plan for the area, prepared by architects and planners with practical implementation experience and a flair for designing on a village scale. An infusion of virtuosity was needed here, she wrote.

Dorothy continued on the theme of Well Court, where the available facilities were dwindling. JRF had made sure that the daily needs of tenants were met - wash houses, drying areas, a workshop, club premises, a shop and a garden area. The shop had been converted into a flat, the workshop incorporated into an adjoining flat, and the club premises were now professional offices. The four basement wash houses were used until the 1950s. Last year an application was made to turn them into flats. The Dean Village Association challenged this application, maintaining that the space should be used for modern communal purposes or to extend adjoining flats. The principles of JRF should be maintained to ensure the convenience, comfort and enjoyment of all occupants. This issue needed further consideration.

In planning matters, Roland Wedgwood Associates, who own the Well Court offices, had won an award for their architectural work on the Viewpoint flats at 23 Lynedoch Place. Smart’s had received planning permission for their development of the skinnery site. The design had been strongly criticised, but the contractors refused to consult with DVA. We trust that the District Council will support our views on the unique and valuable character of the village. Dorothy concluded “Is this the beginning of the end of the Village in a City idea?”

## **Deterioration of Dean Village.**

For many years the wall which borders Dean Path Buildings at the corner of Damside and the passageway to the back entrance to numbers 22 to 25 has been threatening to give way due to the expansion of the roots of the tree growing within the washing green. On the early morning of Monday 10th September the wall finally crumbled, several large stones falling on to the pavement. Luckily the collapse had not happened when a small child was passing by. The Council was contacted, and the stones have been piled up nearby. No further action has been seen to occur.

There are two more trees within the green that are causing distortion in the boundary wall. The concrete washing green itself is falling into disrepair. The responsibility for upkeep belongs to the owners of the Dean Path flats. This area does not give visitors a good impression of the village, as Damside is a main walking route.

This area is not the only one that has become a permanent eyesore. The wall bordering the river at Lindsay's Mill has been in a state of decay for many years now. The barriers placed there by the Council are not a pretty site.

The empty site at 3/4 Belford Road has been a problem since the 1960s, when the building, originally a Free Church of Scotland, later an artists' studio, was destroyed in a catastrophic fire. Caledonian Scottish Developments Ltd. has planning permission to build an office block there. The site is "protected" by an unsightly hoarding. From time to time the pavement crumbles into the site, or the wooden panels are broken either by the weather or by vandalism. The company effects a temporary repair and the safety inspectors declare the area safe. This hoarding between two beautiful buildings, the Society of Musicians building and the Drumsheugh Baths is not fit for purpose.

And finally, there is the ongoing saga of the landslip caused by building works at Broomieknowe House which has blocked the riverside path above the upper weir. Negotiations between the solicitors of the Council and the house owners are proceeding, we are told.

## Environmental work in Hawthornbank.

There is some good news about repair work in Dean Village.

The upper picture of the turret, a circular wall containing a seat at the south end of the metal footbridge by steps down to the river, was shown in the Dean Valley feasibility study (see page 8).

They didn't know that Don Jardine of the Hawthornbank Residents Association was on the job. With his contractors he transformed the area as shown in the lower picture.

**Before refurbishment**



**After refurbishment**



### **Edinburgh Society of Musicians - 3 Belford Road Edinburgh**

The Society's Autumn Programme concluded on 24<sup>th</sup> November with a recital by the award-winning pianist Adam Heron

The Winter Programme launches on 1<sup>st</sup> December with the Annual Young Musician's Recital followed by a Piano Duo on 8<sup>th</sup> December, Christmas Carol on 15<sup>th</sup> December, Trios for Horn, Violin, and Piano on 12<sup>th</sup> January, the Beverley Gray Memorial Concert on 19th January and a Robert Burns Celebration on 26<sup>th</sup> January,

Full details may be found on [www.edinburghsocietyofmusicians.co.uk](http://www.edinburghsocietyofmusicians.co.uk).

Admission is free and non-members are always welcome. All performances start at 7,30 sharp.

## **Eddie's Bench**

Walkers along Miller Row will have seen a new black metal bench placed on the village side of St. Bernard's Well, opposite the steps that lead down to the river. The bench was placed there by Eddie Lech, originally from Poland, who has lived in Edinburgh for around fifty years. He wanted to show his gratitude to the residents of Edinburgh, following his move here all that time ago. His inscription reads: -

**Donated to my adopted  
City of Edinburgh  
By Edward Lech  
Born 30.03.1933  
Marcówka Poland**

*The editor thanks Evelyn Whitfield who has talked to Eddie and provided this account of his life.*

Eddie was born in 1933 and lived until 1947 in Marcówka near the border with Czechoslovakia, now divided into Slovakia and the Czech Republic. His home was close to where Pope John Paul II was born and to Oswiecim, the site of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

In primary school there was just one teacher who gave two hours teaching each morning to primary 5 to 7 children and two hours each afternoon to the younger children in the equivalent of primary 1 to 4. The only subjects taught were reading, writing and religion. There was no geography, history or maths because, Eddie says, the government did not want Polish children to become too well educated. Translations of Shakespeare's work were allowed but no other Western literature as it was considered to be subversive. The children were not allowed to learn English or any other foreign language except Russian. The German Fascist regime held sway in Poland until 1945 when the Stalinists took over. Eddie and his schoolmates saw many distressing sights because of the war.

Eddie left school at around age 14 and went to a trade school in Bielsko-Biala which was quite a big city. He had three days training a

week as a tailor. He spent four years as an apprentice, receiving no wages, only food and lodgings. During this time there was widespread poverty in Poland. The economy collapsed and there was food rationing until 1953.

He finished his apprenticeship and became a journeyman tailor. In 1951 he joined the army for four years, becoming a corporal. After that, he worked for a private tailor's business and later for a co-operative. He had thought about returning to education, but decided that it was too late to start learning again. In the 1960s, at age thirty he came on a visit to Edinburgh. He was granted an extended stay because of his tailoring skills and after four years got permission to stay for good. Lord Home, then a cabinet minister, handled his case and, perhaps feeling sympathetic to Poland's troubles, he was very helpful to Eddie's future here.

In the early days Eddie worked at Gilmour Place in his uncle's business, but later started his own tailoring business, working from home. He worked as a sub-contractor to Kinloch Anderson, and made jackets for their royal customers. Amongst his other customers were members of parliament.

Eddie married in Edinburgh and has a son. He now has grandchildren and has lived in the same house in Dean Village for forty-seven years.

### **The Goothe**

Readers of the News will know the story of the Goothe. A sculpture of a duck about to take off was mounted in the centre of the river by St. Bernard's Well. It was named "the Goothe" by a small girl passing by. The Goothe was quickly overcome by the force of the river and now resides in Belgrave Crescent Gardens. (See issue 166)

A striking photo of the Goothe in its original place in the river may be found on-line. The photo is entitled: -

**Quack! Out of my way! By Stuart Gaie**

and may be found on: -

[www.flickr.com/photos/kyz/2667410908/in/photostream](http://www.flickr.com/photos/kyz/2667410908/in/photostream)

## Dean Valley Regeneration

The second and final phase of the feasibility study into the regeneration of the valley of the Water of Leith between Stockbridge and Dean Village has been completed by Land Use Consultants in association with David Narro Associates. This report and its predecessors are to be presented to the City of Edinburgh Council to form the basis of a Heritage Lottery Grant application. The full sixty-seven page report may be seen on their website [Deanvalley.org](http://Deanvalley.org) (go to documents and click the links). It is well worth consulting, not the least because there are many photographs, some comparing present day views with historic photos.

The study included structures and buildings, railings, pavements, signage, trees, and vegetation management and views. Many actions have been identified. Those which concern the residents within the Dean Conservation Area (between Telford's bridge and the metal footbridge) are summarised below.

The following actions were classified as urgent: -

- Dean village road bridge: - There was vegetation growth in some joints which should be dealt with under normal maintenance.
- Footbridge: - generally had a good bill of health but there was an area where there was corrosion in the steelwork above the southeast bearing. The area should be wire brushed back to sound metal and painted.

The following are desirable, but not necessary: -

- Dean village road bridge: - investigate the cause of the parapets on both sides of the bridge appearing to lean outwards.
- Similarly the north bank river wall on Damside appears to be leaning outwards
- Remove graffiti in two places on riverside wall by Lindsay's Mill.
- The groundworks around Lindsay's Mill have deteriorated and suffered from invasive vegetation growing through the surface. Repair would require uplifting the existing surface and reconstruction. The wooden bollards need replacing.

- There were no major defects on the railings of Hawthornbank Lane, but refurbishment and repainting was desirable in some areas.

There were a number of other areas where recommendations were made: -

**Paving: -**

- The setted path from Damside to the river was in need of maintenance.
- Localised repairs needed to the setts in Hawthornbank Lane.
- Pavements around the centre of the village need replacing.

**Signage: -**

- It was recommended that there should be co-operation with the Council to provide an integrated system of signage. If interpretation boards were included, it would be necessary to determine any future maintenance responsibilities.
- New signs should be of high quality, robust and vandal resistant, taking into account the need to remove graffiti.

**Views: -**

There are many interesting photos, old and new, showing views along the river. These suggest various vegetation managements that could improve the views.

- A Begbie photo shows the view from Hawthornbank Lane along the river with the Holy Trinity Church in the distance. This view is mostly obscured throughout the year by trees and vegetation on the banks of Belgrave /Crescent Gardens and the banks of the walkway to the east. Some pruning and crowning would help reinstate the view.
- Similarly the view from Hawthornbank Lane to the footbridge could be improved by tree pruning.
- Along Miller Row many views are now obscured by self-seeded trees and trees overgrown with ivy. Pruning, crowning and ivy removal is recommended.

## **My Friends in the Cemetery XXXIII by David Perry**

### **William Brodie (22nd Jan 1815 - 30th Oct 1881)**

William Brodie was the son of Banff shipmaster, and his brother was the sculptor Alexander Brodie (1830-1867). His family moved to Aberdeen when William was six years old. He was apprenticed to a plumber and studied at the Mechanic's Institute. He practiced making lead figurines and created small portraits in the shape of medallions. His work was appreciated by John Hill Burton, advocate and historian, who encouraged him to move to Edinburgh when he was 32 years old. He studied at the Trustee's School of Design, where he learnt to sculpt on a larger scale

Brodie worked for a time from Kirkbrae House by Dean Bridge. His better known works in Edinburgh are the statue of Sir James Young Simpson in Princes Street Gardens, Greyfriars Bobby Fountain and statues on Scott Monument. He was elected Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1857, and Academician in 1859. He was appointed Secretary of the RSA in 1876, a position which he held until his death.

He specialised in funereal sculptures, of which there are many examples in Dean Cemetery. Among those featured in this series of articles is Major-General Hector Archibald MacDonald (Fighting Mac, soldier, hero, and model for Camp Coffee), Samuel Bough (Landscape artist and friend of Robert Louis Stevenson), and John Irving (lieutenant of the "Erebus", lost in the Franklin Expedition.)

A poignant Brodie sculpture may be seen on the very large monument to James Buchanan. Around the circumference is written "James Buchanan founder of the Buchanan Institution Glasgow born in that city 24th June 1795 died in Edinburgh 21st December 1857 erected by his widow who awaits in hope their eternal reunion." There is a life-sized relief of the grieving widow, Jane Jack, gazing sorrowfully at two urns on a plinth. One is sealed with a lid, and the other is open with the lid at the base of the plinth, awaiting her ashes. Below it is written "Jane Jack the widow who erected this monument died 11th June

1883". Plainly, she was in no hurry to join him.

Many of Brodie's funereal sculptures are typically flamboyant Victoriana. An example is his homage to his one time patron John Hill Burton, to be found to the left and two rows behind Brodie's stone. On one side is a life size relief of the family grieving over their mother Eliza Paton. On the other side is a stone bust of Burton himself, although he is not buried here, but in Dalmeny cemetery. The grave is that of his wife, Isabella Lauder. who predeceased him by 31 years, aged only 40, and also his daughter Eliza and sister Mary.

This sculpture contrasts with own stone, made by him to mark the death of his daughter. a simple vase carved with an opened chrysalis and a butterfly flying free. The inscription is: -

HARRIET MARTHA BRODIE  
DIED 1853 AGED 5 YEARS  
IT WASNA HER HAME  
AND SHE COULDNA REMAIN

His inscription was added later

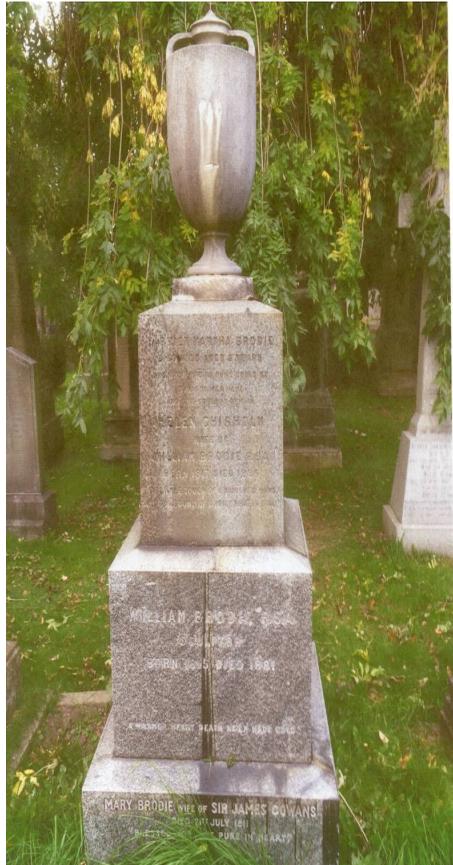
WILLIAM BRODIE RSA  
BORN 1815 DIED 1881  
A WARMER HEART  
DEATH NE'ER MADE COLD

His wife was added later still: -

HELEN CHISHOLM  
WIFE OF WILLIAM BRODIE RSA  
BORN 1817 DIED 1886

O FOR THE TOUCH OF A VANISHED  
HAND  
AND THE SOUND OF A VOICE THAT  
IS STILL

To find Brodie's stone, enter the cemetery by the main gate, take the left path at the junction. The stone is four stones past the Cameron Highlanders obelisk.



## Dean Village Memories

Some former villagers who lived in Dean Village from the 1920s to the 1970s have contributed stories and pictures of their lives and times. These memories have been collected together and are stored in Edinburgh Library.

They may be accessed on-line by typing Edinburgh Collected, and following the links: firstly users, then 132, then memories. Similarly Dean Village and its industrial heritage may be accessed on-line by typing ourtownstories and then following the links: story then 1560. A large collection of photos of old Dean and Edinburgh may be found in Capital Collections.

To get more information, or get involved, consult  
[informationdigital@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:informationdigital@edinburgh.gov.uk)

Any member with stories of old Dean, please write them down and send them to the Secretary. Also send photos and artefacts of interest which will be passed on to the archive in Edinburgh Library..

## Events in Dean Village

**Dean Village Association Annual General Meeting** will be held on Tuesday, April 9th in the lounge of Lynedoch House, starting at 7.30pm.

**Dean Cemetery Walks** will be conducted on Sundays 19th May, 23rd June and 28th July. Meet at the cemetery gates at the top of Dean Path at 2.30pm. £5 per person

**Dean Village Walks** will be held on Thursday 13th June, Tuesday 2nd July and Thursday 18th July. Meet at the top of Bell's Brae by Kirkbrae House on Dean Bridge at 7.15pm. £5 per person.

**St. Bernard's Well** will be opened from 12 noon till 3.00pm on the first Sundays of the summer months: - April 7th, May 5th, June 2nd, July 7th, August 4th and September 1st. All welcome, entry free, The Well will also be opened on Doors Open Sunday, September 29th, from 11am till 4.00pm.



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## Nature Notes by Tim Steiner

Winter - nearly here again! The sky is visible from the valley now the leaves are off the trees, but time for nature-spotting is limited in these short days.

Sometimes it feels like all we're left with are the robins. So ubiquitous are they throughout our gardens and other greenspaces we often overlook how special they are. Unlike most bird species, male and female robins look almost identical (the learned books define this as robins not being sexually dimorphic). So similar are they that there are instances of males attacking females, rather than seeking to mate with them.

Males and females are both territorial, and all are fierce defenders of their patches. They also try to keep their territories all year, rather than coming together in supportive groups to try and survive the winter like some of our other small birds. And the red breast? Just there as a warning to other robins, apparently.

My final robin fact relates to their clutch. Laying 4 - 6 eggs per brood, the eggs typically hatch on consecutive days to maximise the chance of the chicks' survival. But before she lays, the eggs can equal 90% of the female's body weight. Little natural wonders.

On a sad note, clearance appears to be starting on the site on Belford Mews on which planning consent was granted for a news house. As a result a bit of wild, wooded space will be lost. We fear for all of the family of tits that live there; we will miss them popping across to our feeders, if they are forced to move out. The dense tangle of branches and undergrowth must be home to so many insects, birds and mammals. We are sorry for all the ones we can't see, as well as the ones we can.

But how lucky we are to have our river and wildlife. On a recent wildlife watching evening in the Cairngorms (lots of badgers, but unfortunately no pine marten sightings for us) our guide told us how she had never seen a dipper - a common sight on the walk to school for us.

## **It's a *Braw* Café**

Meg wishes all Dean villagers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you once again for your support

Dates for Christmas orders are as follows: -

Last orders will be taken on the 19th of December.

These should be picked up before Braw closes at 15.00hrs. on the 23rd of December. (Of course, anyone with mobility issues will have their orders delivered free of charge.)

As usual, Braw will close for two weeks at Christmas, with a special opening on the first day of 2018, from 11.00 till 14.00hrs. to serve hangover cures.

We at Braw look forward to seeing you

Meg xxx

## **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.

Visit the Dean Village Website at  
[www.deanvillage.org](http://www.deanvillage.org)  
for our history and activities

# Dean Village Association

## Committee 2018 - 2019

**Chairman:** Barry Mackay, [chair@deanvillage.org](mailto:chair@deanvillage.org)

**Vice-Chairman:** Javier Albert,

**Secretary:** [secretary@deanvillage.org](mailto:secretary@deanvillage.org)

**Treasurer:** Bob Morley, [treasurer@deanvillage.org](mailto:treasurer@deanvillage.org)

**Membership Secretary:** Caroline Gerard

e-mail:- [membership@deanvillage.org](mailto: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

28<sup>th</sup> February 2019

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

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