

# Dean Village News

Issue 161 Spring 2012  
[www.deanvillage.org](http://www.deanvillage.org)

## New Playground Plan

The Parks Department of Edinburgh Council has come up with a new design of the playground area between Dean Path and Damside in response to the preferences expressed by the residents of Dean Village in the consultation completed towards the end of last year. This plan is shown in the accompanying insert.

The main difference in the present plan compared to that presented with the consultation document is that the area contains no large playground equipment like swings or climbing frames. However local development plans require that park areas do have an educational and recreational aspect.

The plan includes the following features: -

- a) along the west edge under the lee of the Dean Path buildings there will be a planted area.
- b) in the southwest area there is a representation of the course of the Water of Leith between Belford

Bridge and Dean Bridge. Across the "river" there will be a wooden bridge and some mushroom stepping stones. Drawn out on the ground will be part of a mill wheel.

c) to the east of this area will be a paved area containing the mill stones (moved from their present location), some information boards describing the history of Dean Village and the ecology of the Water of Leith, and a litter bin.

d) the area under the existing tree will be planted.

e) along the north side will be seats overlooking some simple children's games (hopscotch and snakes & ladders), a child's rocker and a skill development centre.

The areas defined in b) and c) will be made of a soft safer surface. The plans are not yet completely finalised, so there is time left to make any necessary adjustments. The owners of the site will have to approve the plan before any action is taken.

The playground area as it stands at the moment is not a very pleasant sight. This is a good chance to seize an opportunity to develop the site not only for the benefit of the residents but also as part of scenic Edinburgh that our visitors expect to see.

The playground is quite a large area, and a considerable amount of money will have to be raised before the project can go ahead. The Annual General Meeting of the Dean Village Association will be held in the Dean Parish Church Hall on the evening of Tuesday, April 24th. Please come along and express your views, particularly if you have some good ideas on how to raise the necessary finance.

## **Thomas Telford and the Dean Bridge**

The structure which dominates Dean Village is the magnificent four arched bridge built 106 feet over the Water of Leith. John Learmonth, Lord Provost of Edinburgh from 1831 to 1833, wanted a better link from Queensferry to the centre of Edinburgh than over the old Belford Bridge, or through the centre of Dean Village and up Bell's Brae. He also wanted to open up the land he owned north of the river so that he could collect feus. Putting up a substantial amount of money towards the building of the bridge he insisted that Thomas Telford be appointed to design it. The arches of the bridge are actually hollow, since the bridge could not stand if they were made of solid stone. The contractors John Gibb and Son of Aberdeen completed the bridge in good time in 1843. It is a testament to the design and standard of construction that it now carries a far heavier load of traffic than when it was originally constructed.

Thomas Telford was born in Wester Kirk, Eskdale on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1757. At the age of 14 he was apprenticed to a stone mason, and began his self-taught education as a designer and architect. One of his earliest contributions can be seen in the bridge over the river Esk at Langholm.

He worked for a time in Edinburgh but in 1782 he moved to London where he met Scottish architect Robert Adam and also William Pulteney who became his patron.

Pulteney, born William Johnstone in 1729, was the second son of the baronet of Westhall, and came from the same village as Telford. He studied law, was admitted to the Scottish Bar in 1751 and went on to become an eminent lawyer. In 1760 he married Frances Pulteney, cousin to the Earl of Bath, and he changed his name from Johnstone to Pulteney. His wife inherited the estate of the Earl of Bath thereby becoming very wealthy. On her death in 1782 this all passed to her husband.

Due to the patronage of Pulteney, Telford became the Surveyor of

Works in Shropshire and began his career in earnest. He now built many miles of roads and bridges. He built the Shrewsbury Canal and the Ellesmere Canal. Two of his most prestigious works were the spectacular Pontcyslite Aqueduct over the River Dee, and the wonderful Menai Straits suspension bridge.

In 1801 he moved back to Scotland and spent the next twenty years improving the communications in the Highlands. He built the Caledonian Canal down through the Great Glen and also redesigned the Crinan Canal. At the request of Pulteney, who at the time was governor of the British Fisheries Society, Telford built a fishing port at Wick which was known as Pulteneytown, and was the home of the Old Pulteney whisky distillery.

Another of Telford's bridges may be seen at Bannockburn. In 1819 a new road was built by-passing the village for traffic coming from Edinburgh and Falkirk to pass into Stirling. A bridge was needed to cross the burn, and Telford designed a unique arch topped by a stone circle.

As well as being the foremost architect of his day, Telford was something of a man of letters. In his early years between 1779 and 1784 he published some slim volumes of poetry. He became friends with Robert Southey who was appointed poet laureate. It was Southey who gave Telford the sobriquet of "Colossus of Roads".

The Dean Bridge was one of the last projects of Telford who died at Westminster on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1834.



## Dean Village Events

**The Water of Leith Clean-up** will take place on Sunday April 29th. Meet at the Old Playground at 10 a.m.

**St. Bernard's Well** is being refurbished this year. Consequently we will be unable to open the Well to the public. We hope to resume opening in 2013.

**Village tours:-** Thursday 21st June, Tuesday 10th July and Thursday 26th July. Meet at Kirkbrae House at the top of Bell's Brae at 7.15pm

**Cemetery tours:-** Sundays 10th June, 1st July and 22nd July. Meet at the Cemetery gates just past the top of Dean Path hill at 2.30pm.

**Dean Village Annual General Meeting** will be held on Tuesday April 24th in Dean Parish Church Hall at 7.30pm.

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## Dean Village Matters

**Tree lighting:** - Following the recent consultation with residents, the committee accepted the Council's offer to place permanent lighting on the tree in the playground rather than supply an annual Christmas tree. The lights were bought with a grant from the North Edinburgh Partnership and were installed before Christmas.

**The Dean Village "Rat Run":** - It has been reported by those living by Bell's Brae that there is a marked reduction of cars using the centre of the village as a short cut. This is because the traffic island at the top of the brae was extended during the recent gas mains work. It is now very difficult to turn right out of Bell's Brae onto Queensferry Road, although taxis can manage it with their greater turning ability.

**January storms:** - The high winds of the violent storm in early January caused some degree of damage throughout the village. Trees came down or were damaged along the Water of Leith and there were also some down in the Dean Cemetery. A part of the wooden hoarding protecting the burnt out church area between Drumsheugh Baths and the Society of Musicians on Belford Road blew down. Ever hopeful our Chairman contacted the owners, Caledonian Trust, in the hope that they would replace it with a properly constructed fence. No such luck. They simply replaced the existing eyesore.

In early March the Trust and Woodlands division of Edinburgh Council set about removing the trees that had fallen or were damaged in the Belford and Sunbury areas. The opportunity was taken to remove ivy from many of the trees. The wood was mainly burnt in selected areas.

**Water of Leith Clean-up:** - the annual spring clean of the Water of Leith between Bell's Bridge and Dean Bridge will take place on

the morning of Sunday 29th April. Please come and join us and help remove the rubbish that has accumulated over the past year in and around the river. Meet at the old playground in the centre of the village at 10a.m. All equipment will be provided by the Water of Leith Trust.

**Problems with water:** - A member and resident in Dean Village has been experiencing problems with water pressure in the house. Sometimes there was no water at all, especially irritating when having a shower. Recently this has become more frequent. The water board says that the pressure is within accepted limits and that no one else has made them aware of the problem. If any other resident is experiencing problems with their water pressure, please contact the water board.

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

### **Francis Cadell 1883 - 1937**

Francis Campbell Boileau Cadell was born in Edinburgh, the son of a surgeon, and was educated at Edinburgh Academy. At the age of sixteen, accompanied by his mother and sister Jean, he went to Paris to attend the Academie Julian. Thereafter there were spells in Germany and then in Venice where he produced very colourful scenes of life in and around Piazza San Marco.

Cadell spent most of his adult life in Scotland. He was left-handed which led to the following oft-repeated story. While still a student the President of the Scottish Royal Academy tried to persuade him to become right-handed, saying that no left-handed artists ever became great. Cadell replied that Michelangelo managed to paint well with his left hand. With that the President retired, baffled. A friend asked Cadell how he knew that Michelangelo was left-handed. Cadell replied that he did not know, but expected that the President did not know either.

Cadell, along with painters Peploe (1871 - 1935), John Fergusson (1874 - 1961) and George Hunter (1877 - 1931) are today recognised as the Scottish Colourists. They largely had independent careers, but they all combined their knowledge of contemporary French Art with their choice of Scottish subjects. Cadell painted landscapes, interiors and still life in oils or watercolour using rich colours and bold brush strokes. He said that in Scotland the light was not good enough to paint in the winter during which time he rested. In the summer he spent time on Iona because of the light and the open beaches and skies. He was also famous for painting glamorous women in vivid colours, often posing them in front of a mirror so that they could be viewed from two sides.

Cadell's first one-man show was held in Edinburgh in 1908 where he stayed until 1914 apart from visits to Venice and Munich. Then in World War I he served in the 9th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the 9th Royal Scots regiments.

After the war his style changed towards still life and interior scenes with flat, geometric patterns. During the 1920s he spent several summers on Iona in company with Peploe. His first London exhibition was in 1923

which he shared with Peplow and Hunter. But towards the end of his life he found that his paintings were difficult to sell, not helped by the economic difficulties of those times. He died in poverty in 1937, aged 54, in his house at Warrington Crescent. Today his paintings sell for a quarter of a million pounds.

His sister was actress Jean Cadell, (1884 – 1967). Her most famous appearances were in “Whisky Galore” and as Mrs. McCawber in WC Fields’ 1935 version of David Copperfield. Her grandson was Simon Cadell, (1950 –1996) who appeared in the sit-com “Hi-di-Hi”. And famously in “Blott on the Landscape”. He was a heavy smoker which sadly led to his early death.

Exhibitions of Cadell’s fellow colourists’ works are planned for the Modern Art Gallery:- Peplow in August 2012 and Fergusson in 2013.



In "Wind Mill Over Water" (1937) Cadell used oil and water. Windmill is the main subject of the painting, with a small boat in the foreground. The sky is blue and the water is dark. The painting is a landscape painting.

Images of Windmill is best available at the National Gallery or see [www.nationalgallery.com](http://www.nationalgallery.com) for more information.

## **Advertise in the Dean Village News**

Rates per issue

Quarter page £4

Half page £8

Full page £16

There are 3 issues per year.

The summer and winter issues go to members of the Dean Village Association.

The Spring issue goes to all members in the Dean

## previously... Scotland's First History Festival

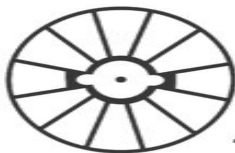
Between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011 Scotland's first History Festival was held. The idea was conceived by Festival Director Susan Morrison and Festival Producer Ian Harrower early in 2010 after a straw poll revealed to them how little the average person in the street knew about their heritage. The Festival set out to celebrate the rich and colourful history of Scotland and its people.

Over 200 different events took place during the Festival. There were numerous walks and tours, exhibitions, talks, workshops, food, drink, and, would you believe, striptease.

Dean Village took the opportunity to participate in this event. On the afternoon of 20<sup>th</sup> November we hosted a guided tour of the village (see below at Well Court and the Iron Bridge) and on the 27<sup>th</sup> a tour of Dean Cemetery. Both were very well attended and much appreciated by those attending.

Those interested in the history of Scotland could subscribe to *History Scotland* or *Scottish Memories*, or go to the website [www.historyscotland.com](http://www.historyscotland.com).





# **Dean Village Association**

## **Notice of the Annual General Meeting**

Tuesday 24th April at 7.30pm  
in the Dean Parish Church Hall

*Following the business of the meeting , Helen Brown,  
Trust Manager of the water of Leith Conservation Trust  
will give a talk entitled:-*

***The Water of Leith  
its history, wild life and local issues***

**Registered Scottish Charity SC000404**

## **Dean Village News**

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

## Storm damage in the cemetery

The great January storm left its mark in Dean Cemetery. Some of the ornamental trees near the original site of Dean House were damaged. A large branch came down from the tree near the Buchanan monument, but no stones were affected. There was a lot of general debris in the shape of small twigs and branches on the pathways which had to be cleared away.

But the picture below shows extensive damage to nine gravestones due to a nearby tree coming down. For those of you who know their Dean Cemetery, this area is 20 yards up from the John Peter Grant of Rothiemurcus altar-type stone as you go towards the Dean Gallery. The



remains of the tree have been removed but the stones were left untouched at the time the photo was taken (24th February).

The stones will be restored as far as is possible. However they do need the attention of an expert stone mason

## Hector

Major-General Sir Hector MacDonald, resident of Dean Cemetery and a must-see stop on our cemetery tour, achieved two minutes of fame on “Reporting Scotland” on 1st March. “Fighting Mac” was a Victorian hero, leading from the front in the Afghan, North African and Boer Wars and commanded the respect of his soldiers. He was so famous that he became the model on the Camp Coffee label. A 100-foot tower in Dingwall was built in his honour in 1907. Supporters in Clan MacDonald are now attempting to rehabilitate his reputation.

## Winter Nature Notes by Barbara Mackay

The snow shovels lie new and unused in sheds and garages and crampons are still in their boxes. It seems to have been the winter that never came, apart from ferocious gales in early January bringing down whole trees and branches as well as threatening old grannies. Sad as it is to see great trees blown down, their demise brings new light and growth. These broken branches and fallen tree trunks create an important habitat for insects and then provide food for birds. We can do our bit. If you collect small branches and twigs and pile them in a corner of your garden you have created your own mini-ecosystem. Soon it will be heaving with activity; you may not see it but, believe me, insect tunneling will have begun.

There is a lot of folklore connected with our ever-changing weather and each of you will know some sayings too easily dismissed as "old wives tales". One example I like is that early hoarding by squirrels betokens a hard winter. Samuel Pepys drew his bedroom curtains during the bad winter of 1661-62 and looking at the grey, mournful skies, urged his wife to "lie long abed", and if they ventured out it was only to the tavern for cakes and ale. But these are nature notes not social history!

Spring flowers are in gardens and a greenish tint is appearing on trees. One of the most spectacular local flowerings is the Witch Hazel in the school playground at the junction of Queensferry and Ravelston Terraces, a sure and welcome sign that spring is on its way. Whilst birds remain our main feature of interest, I am told there are now black squirrels although none has been spotted in Dean. The blackcap gentleman who visited last winter has not returned but young bullfinches, robins and blackbirds call regularly. I also saw a young rat, light brown in colour, scurrying along the Water of Leith walkway this week. If he was our "friend" the brown rat (*rattus norvegicus*) I'm sure the Norwegians would not want him back. How many more will follow him until we ask the city rat chap to do his business?

We look forward to the Dawn Chorus soon being in full voice before sunrise.

Happy Easter.

# **Dean Village Association**

## **Committee 2011/2012**

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**Treasurer:** Dominic Guy

**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 June 2012**

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

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