

# Dean Village Association

## Committee 2020 - 2021

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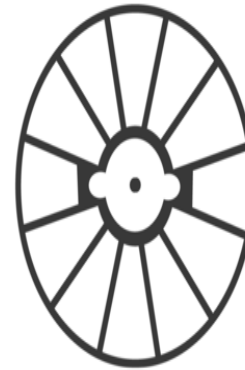
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# Dean Village News

Issue 187 December 2020  
[www.deanvillage.org](http://www.deanvillage.org)

## Water Pump returned to Dean Village

Secretary Don Jardine with pump on west side of Well Court



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

March 19<sup>th</sup> 2021

If you would like to submit an article for the News, please e-mail the Editor.

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## More artefacts given to Dean Village

In the last issue of the Dean Village News we reported that a possible gravestone had been discovered in the grounds of the house to be built at 13 Belford Mews. Since then, quite independently, two more artefacts have been offered to Dean Village.

### Sundial

Don Jardine received an email from a resident of Kirkcaldy, The lady was in possession of a Sundial, rescued by her father, from a dump during the demolition of some properties in the village in the 1960s. So it has spent the last 47 years in her garden. The stone is dated 1679 and is therefore 341 years old. Don went up to collect it, and it now is in his possession.



The stone may have been part of a house facing Well Court, opposite to where the pump was originally sited. But where shall we put it?

## It's a *Braw* Café

Opening hours and order dates for Braw are as follows: -

Opening on 1st January 2021 to provide supplies and rescue remedies from 11.00 - 15.00. As a community let us welcome the coming year.

Braw will close from 20th December 2020 to 12th January 2021 (except 1st January). Orders will continue to be supplied throughout this period.

Arrangements for picking up of orders and of course deliveries for those that need them will be made to suit customers schedule as usual.

This year we are focusing on green options, particularly our Craft box of Material for gift wrapping which is designed to be handed on to the next generation.

We have a fabulous range of Brodies beverages and treats plus our own treats wrapped in festive packaging ideal gifts for an at home Christmas.

Request orders for quiche and buckets of home-made soup should be made by 20th December. A vegan menu is available for the first time this year and as ever your own special requests can be submitted. Order sheets can be collected from Braw or Whatsapp on 07436803521.

As I write several + vaccines for Covid-19 are being heralded across the globe. There is now absolute confidence that we will come through this. In this spirit of renewed optimism I will do us all a disservice if I did not share with you the positive changes my little window to the world has revealed.

While displaying and appropriate awareness of people's space we now acknowledge others more, we work harder at relating to others and have to "announce" our good intentions in speech rather than a brief smile. This has resulted in more meaningful connections with others, however fleeting. This feeling of community, also the broader version of being a fellow human being, is a positive we would do well to keep.

I will leave it to others to tell their story of how these connections have led to very real solutions and truly wonderful moments. To advance this positive progress further, in December we will take our green credentials up a notch by offering Eternal Christmas gift packaging in our compostable boxes from Vegware. Gifts of handmade goodies in glass jars with cloth carry bags also, in a nod to Sir David Attenborough, Braw will be offering some vegan options for Christmas orders which grumpy omnivores will adore.

As plastic based face coverings are appearing in our oceans I have commissioned the making of cotton Christmas themed face masks.

## Nature Notes by Tim Steiner

Otters have been my nature discovery of 2020. I've long known that the Water of Leith has an active otter population. but only this year did I make the time to look out for them. Never a guaranteed spot, of course, but a bit of time spent quietly by the river at dawn or dusk will often result in a sighting. And it's not only in the half-light hours that otters may be out and about. I have seen them in broad daylight from time to time.

Persecution and water pollution almost wiped out the British otter population, but their numbers have been on the rise across most of the country in recent decades. Our otters remain cautious creatures, but are clearly comfortable enough living alongside us noisy humans and our dogs to be a sustained feature of our river. Unfortunately the main threat to otters remains humans, but it is now road kill that does for more of them than any other risk.

Otter's diets are amazingly diverse, fish, eels and crustaceans from the water but they will take small mammals and birds when riparian foodstuffs are scarce. They seem to find food in the river with remarkable ease, guided in large part by the sensitivity of their whiskers, which can detect movement of prey.

They are spectacularly solitary creatures, with adults only usually coming together to mate or fight. So, if you see more than one together, it's most likely to be a mother with one or more pups. At the moment it appears that the Dean Village stretch of the river is inhabited by a female with a pup which is nearly as large as she is. Presumably an adolescent. it may be the pup's turn to move away soon, then maybe we will have a new "romp" of pups (romp - a collective noun for otters).

If you've not yet seen otters in the river the best chance of doing so is to wait by one of the quieter stretches of water at about dawn or dusk and watch for them moving through the water or close to the river bank. Happy spotting!

## The Village pump

In July, Don received an email from Sandra Smith, who resides in Lanark. Her father was a watchmaker to the Council, and had premises in Kings Stables Road. He came into possession of the Dean Village Pump, probably in the 1960s, as it was sold for scrap, and he bought it. She described it as a Well, but it is in fact the village pump which was located at the drainage hole on the slope by Well Court from Damside down to the river. Don took a drive to Lanark and has recovered it, as shown in the photo on the front page.

The pump is unlikely to remain there, because cars are parked down this slope which may result in accidental damage either to the pump or the cars. DVA will be in consultation with the Council.

## Riverside Work.

Over the past few years our Secretary, Don Jardine, together with his gardener, have skimmed away the undergrowth on the riverside by Hawthornbank. A succession of plantings have been tried, all unsuccessful. The natural, indigenous growth of the natural undergrowth, together with the rise and fall of the river levels, overwhelmed our more delicate plants. This project has now been abandoned.

Trees were removed by Link Housing during the summer, and they have agreed to plant new trees. DVA will plant additional shrubs and trees, always keeping in mind that the long views up and down the river should not be obscured.

The differences between the Council and the property owners of the land around the landslip seem to be resolved. There will be some prospect of work starting next year.

However there has been no work done on our footbridge. This is especially disappointing as it forms one of the great features of the village, for residents and visitors alike.

## Dean Village 1992 - 1995

During this period, no mention was made in any issues of the News of any ongoing developments in the village. But there were many articles of interest, some relating to the past history of Dean.

**Dean Studios** on Belford Road, originally built as Dean Free Church following “The Disruption”, burnt down in 1954. But a piece in issue 103 records that the two gate posts with the studio name on one of them survived. They were removed by the owners of the site and transferred to “a property in East Lothian”.

Does any resident know where this mysterious place might be? These posts would be a good addition to our growing collection of Dean artefacts.

**Dean Conservation Area.** In the summer of 1992 the Council had prepared a “Local Plan” of Central Edinburgh for public consultation. Included in this plan was a proposed extension to the Dean Village Conservation area. The area to the west would be extended to include St. George's' School. and to the north by moving the boundary from Ravelston Terrace to Queensferry Road, thereby taking in Dean Parish Church and Stewart's Melville College.. The area around the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and Dean Centre (now SNGMA 2) was considered to be of national importance, and so no development (which might affect Belford Terrace) would be allowed.

The DVA made several comments, mostly in support of the Local Plan. But a policy was needed to conserve the river and its surroundings. And there should be a policy to control development in Mews areas, particularly regarding loss of garage spaces. Both these suggestions were approved. Stewart's Melville College had objected to its inclusion in the Dean Conservation Area, but was over-ruled.

There was mention of planning permission having been granted for a supermarket on the southern part of Craigleith Quarry, and for a revised



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requested for loved ones far away. And “Children’s Favourites” on Saturday mornings. Children of today cannot easily hear “Sparkey’s Magic Piano” where Sparkey dreams of becoming a concert pianist, without practicing, of course. And “Tubby the Tuba” where Tubby yearns to play the melody, instead of “Oompah, Oompah”. My favourite was “The Three Billy Goats Gruff” where the big bad Troll sits under the rickitty-racketty bridge, singing his Troll song. In all these stories there is a big morality code.

But the wheel has come full circle. All you have to do is ask Alexa to play these pieces. I know. I have asked her!

## Advertise in the Dean Village News

Quarter page £4

Half page £8

Full page £16

## Memories, Memories ..... by the Editor

Some of us who are more on the mature side of life may have spent a long time indoors, possibly watching the many different quiz shows ranging from the silly to the impenetrable. The questions and answers do sometimes provoke memories.

One asked about another name for the game “Jacks”. I remember playing this game as a child, either for one’s own amusement or in competition with others. In its simplest form, just gather five small pebble-size stones from the ground. Pick up one and toss it in the air, pick up another stone, and catch the original stone. Repeat this until all stones have been picked up.. The next round is picking up two lots of two stones. then three followed by one, the final round scooping up all four stones at once. In competition, the next player takes over when you fail. On regaining your turn, resume where you left off. I remember this game as “Fivestones”.

Commercialism took over and you could buy this game as “Jacks”. There was a pack containing a small rubber ball and five metal criss-cross pieces.

But before television there was the great era of radio. There was “Dick Barton, Special Agent” with its exciting signature tune “Devil’s Gallop”, and his two side kicks, Snowy and Jock. There was the comedy programme “ITMA” or “It’s That Man Again” starring Tommy Handley with many memorable characters and their catch-phrases:- Mrs Mopp, the char “Can I do you now, Sir?”, Colonel Chinstrap, who liked a drink, “I don’t mind if I do”, and the wonderfully named Perce Picacity. Not to mention “Educating Archie” where, strangely, Peter Brough, a ventriloquist, worked on radio with his dummy “Archie Andrews” and provided starts for many of the new comics of the time as Archie’s tutors.

And there were music request programmes, “Two-way Family Favourites”, originally “Forces Favourites” where records were

version of an office block between Belford Road and Bell’s Brae (a.k.a. 3/4 Belford Road)

**Tourists.** In 1992, not all residents cared for the attraction that the village had for visitors. “An information board would contribute to a Disneyfication of the area”. “Didn’t like living in an architectural museum where the buildings are labeled for gawping visitors”. “There was not an economic argument for encouraging more visitors” (but Mrs Kirkwood of 10 Well Court sold guides and postcards for DVA).

This piece was followed by a notice for village walks leaving “Cabbie’s Antiques” on Dean Bridge.

**Begbie’s Photos.** The leading article of issue 105 (winter 92/93) describes the early photographic plates in “Thomas Begbie’s Edinburgh” by David Patterson and Joe Rock (John Donald, 1991). Six plates are of particular interest to villagers.

No 22 shows St. Bernard’s Well as it would have been in 1789 without the terracing.

No 97 is a view of the village stone bridge showing Holy Trinity Church (1838) beyond.

No 98 gives a wider view of the village.

No. 100 is the Old Queensferry Road, (now Belford Road) with the old toll house (replaced with Drumsheugh Toll in 1891) and Dean Free Church (1844) beyond it.

No.101 shows Bell’s Mills,

No 10 is of Damside, showing the mill lade. This photo can be seen on the information board in the Schoolyard.

(More detailed descriptions may be found by consulting the article on our website)

**Slezer’s Engraving.** The issue 107 (Autumn 1993) is particularly worth viewing on our website. The front page shows an engraving by Captain Slezer of a view of distant Edinburgh from Dean Village in 1693. A larger version of this engraving may be seen in the wall in the

area of Lindsay's Mill, down Miller Row. The Baxter's Tolbooth is obvious at the foot of Bell's Brae. To the far left was Greenland Mill, then coming back towards the village, Mar's Mill and the substantial Lindsay's Mill. The great granary, sometimes called "Jericho" (1619), is not visible, possibly hidden by Lindsay's Mill. Also visible are the original buildings of West Mill before it was rebuilt in 1805.

An extremely interesting feature is the lone house on Bell's Brae on the edge of the gorge (or Dean, or Dene) which later became Cabbie Stewart's house and office in 1860. This house must therefore pre-date 1693. The trade stone, once belonging to Jericho, was acquired by Cabbie Stewart when he extended the house, and he incorporated it into a north-facing wall.

**Stones from Lindsay's Mill.** Also in issue 107 was an account, given in *The Scotsman*, of the demolition of Lindsay's Mill, which took place in 1931. The mill, built in 1645, was to be removed and so views along the river would be opened up.. The surrounding walls were to be cut down to three or four feet, and the interior filled with rubble and covered with soil. Shrubbery would be planted round and about.

There were two interesting stones attached to the Lindsay's Mill. One is a tablet showing the Baxter's peels, crossed, with baked buns and cakes upon them. The other was a stone lintel above the entrance doorway inscribed with the legend "Blessit be God for all his Giftis". Both were to be built into the village wall adjacent to the old road bridge (a bench is now placed there).

### Past issues of Dean Village News

We are putting some back-issues of the News on the Dean Village website. Early issues numbers 64 to to 138, spanning 1981 to 2004 (with some gaps) may be seen, together with all issues 156 to 185 from 2010 to 2019. Also in the documents section are the Constitution of the Association, the minutes of the last two AGMs, and the audited accounts of the last three years. Go to [deanvillage.org/documents](http://deanvillage.org/documents).

## Forthcoming Events

Unfortunately, just after the last issue of the Dean Village News was printed, events overtook us. Consequently the advertised social event, village and cemetery walks, and openings of St. Bernard's Well became impossible.

What of the future? We very much hope that all will be back to normal sometime next year.

**Annual General Meeting.** Our AGM would normally take place on the second Tuesday of April, i.e. 13th April 2021. But our usual venue of Lynedoch House is likely to be unavailable even if gatherings of around thirty were allowed. So the meeting could be postponed till later in the year. Other possibilities would be by consultation via the Spring DVA News, as was done this year, or possibly a virtual Zoom-type meeting. These matters cannot be decided until nearer the time.

**Social evening.** Next year, the present Association will celebrate 50 years of existence. Therefore we could expand our planned social event into an evening dinner for all members, past and present. We could also try and organise an afternoon fayre, possibly in the Belgrave Crescent Gardens if permission could be obtained.

**Walks.** Each year, during the summer months, we conduct three village walks and three cemetery walks. The village walks are on Tuesday or Thursday evenings, and the cemetery walks on Sunday afternoons. We also are happy to arrange walks for interested groups, as we have done in the past for the Friends of the Galleries.

**St. Bernard's Well.** The Edinburgh Council allow the DVA to open the Well for visitors, which usually happens on the first Sundays of the summer months. The Well is a particularly small and enclosed space, which could present difficulties.

We cannot give any definite commitments for the moment. Please consult our website to keep up-to date on possible future events.

five people were thought to have perished, but only forty six bodies were recovered.

An inquiry followed. One possible factor was the force of the wind. Bouch had taken advice from other architects, and had concluded that no special strengthening than normal need be applied, even to the central structure which had open latticework. However, the presence of a long train would increase wind resistance.

Another factor discussed was the speed of the trains. The official limit was twenty-five miles per hour. Ex-provost Richardson was so concerned that he measured the times taken for the train to cross the bridge on his watch, and concluded that north-bound trains were frequently going a lot faster. He also noticed vibrations of the bridge when the train entered the central section. South-bound trains did not go faster because there was an upward gradient from Dundee to the central section. Vertical and side-to-side displacements were also noticed by painters and other workmen on the bridge when trains were passing.

The greatest consideration was given to the construction of the bridge. Both wrought iron and cast iron were used. The former was always reliable and strong, but the strength of cast iron could be variable. The holes bored to fasten the lattice with bolts were conical rather than cylindrical. This led to stress and fatigue in the metal structure. Bouch said that had he realised this feature he would have had every bolthole reamed cylindrically.

The inquiry concluded that the design and construction of the bridge was of inferior standard, and these led to the eventual collapse. A modern forensic analysis agreed. Although the bridge had not long been open to passenger traffic, it had been extensively used by commercial trains. The continuous use of the bridge by such traffic, combined with higher than recommended speeds resulted in the gradual deterioration of the bridge structure. Finally, on that fateful night, the Burntisland train was an express, and very heavy, and its passage, combined with the gale force winds, led to the final destruction of the bridge.

## **Drumsheugh Baths in the heart of Dean Village**

Hidden away in your local neighbourhood of Dean Village is one of Edinburgh's best kept secrets. Built in 1882, Drumsheugh Baths, located on Belford Road, is the oldest private swimming club in Edinburgh.

Amongst the many appeals of Drumsheugh Baths is its fantastic location and its convenient costume and towel laundry service. This combination enables members to make use of its facilities and classes before or after work, during lunch, or at any other time of the day if they are in town and the whim takes them. Even if just for a dip in the hot tub top to escape the cold and rain!

For some (particularly the younger members, and young at heart), the most popular features are the Victorian-era rings and trapezes suspended over the seventy-foot traditional pool. For others, it is the hot tub, new sauna and steam room. There is a recently refurbished gym, and a wide range of specialised fitness classes with some exceptional instructors. For a little rest and relaxation there is a treatment room and members' lounge, with dedicated children's corner.

Drumsheugh Baths is more than just a pool. It is a community. If you are passing, have never been in, or haven't been in for over fifty years, please feel free to drop by for a visit to find out more for yourself. There are membership categories for those Under 30, for Singles, Couples, Families and Senior Citizens. Whether members want to push themselves to the utmost or enjoy a few lengths, a short steam and a long blether, the club is for everyone.

Drumsheugh Baths is one of Edinburgh's best kept secrets and it's in the heart of Dean Village.



For more information, please contact Paul Dunlop at: [manager@drumsheughbaths.com](mailto:manager@drumsheughbaths.com).

Website [www.drumsheughbaths.com](http://www.drumsheughbaths.com)

Phone 0131 225 2200

## **My Friends in the Cemetery XXXIX by David Perry Sir Thomas Bouch (1822 - 1880)**

Sir Thomas Bouch had a distinguished career as an engineer, building railways and their necessary bridges in Scotland and Northern England. Sadly, his life was blighted by one of his last projects, the building of the first Tay rail crossing at Dundee.

He was born in February 1822 in Thursby, Cumberland. His father was a retired sea captain, who kept the Ship Inn there. He was educated locally and aged 17 took a job as assistant to a railway engineer. In 1845 he became one of the engineers working on the Stockton and Darlington Railway. After four years he left to become manager of the Edinburgh and Northern Railway, later to become the North British Railway. He pioneered the very first train ferry in the world, linking Granton to Burntisland, which was very much admired in engineering circles due to its scrupulous attention to detail.

In the 1850s he set up as an independent railway engineer, working for several different companies and inter-connecting their lines. His projects included a twenty mile stretch of the Darlington and Barnard Castle Railway, twenty-two miles of the Eden Valley Railway and thirty-one miles of the Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith Railway. He paid special attention to his budget, building his lines in as inexpensive, yet entirely safe, way as possible. His railway line to Peebles he described as “long the pattern for cheap construction.”

He constructed many bridges, using lattice girders. A particular success was the Belah Viaduct, (crossing the river Belah near Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria) which an 1870 review of such bridges described as “one of the lightest and cheapest ever constructed.” He also designed tramways for the major cities. including Edinburgh.

He was much concerned with the crossing of the two great firths. Sir Thomas was the engineer appointed to build both bridges.

The construction of the Tay bridge began in 1871 and it was opened in May 1878. Queen Victoria traveled over it the next year, and was so

impressed as to award him a knighthood. Shortly afterwards the bridge collapsed while a train was crossing, and seventy-five people died.

A public inquiry followed, which concluded that the contractors to the bridge had saved costs at the expense of safety. The bridge was “badly designed, badly built and badly maintained.” Bouch was already in poor health and he died in 1880, a few months after the inquiry finished, his reputation ruined. Nevertheless, the Journal of the Institute of Civil engineers praised his life’s work and said that he “bore a distinguished part in the later development of the railway system.”

During one of our tours of the Dean Cemetery, one of our guides was describing the life of Sir Thomas Bouch and an elderly gentleman wished to make a comment. He said that he was a young apprentice to an old engineer who himself, when young, had worked on the building of the Tay Bridge. This gentleman thought that the underlying ground on the north side of the bridge was unsuitable for major foundation work. Doubtless there were many factors, of which this was just one.

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### **The Tay Bridge Disaster**

The Tay Bridge consisted of a central section in which the passing train would be completely enclosed in a cage of iron girders. Running to this area from the north and south sides of the firth was an open track, The central area would be much more exposed to pressure from high winds.

On the evening of Sunday, 28th December, 1879, the train from Burntisland to Dundee was crossing the bridge during a violent storm. As only one train was allowed on the bridge at any one time, the train slowed at the south end to pick up a baton from the signalman. Observers saw the train entering the central section. There were reports of sparks flying from the wheels, then a flash of light followed by complete darkness. The train failed to appear off the line into Dundee. It was only then that realisation dawned. Later the train was found in the river, still encased in much of the central iron girder cage. Seventy

*(Continued on page 10)*