



EXETER CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2010

Chairman's Remarks:

I am sure that you will be enjoying the lovely flowers and glorious trees in our beautiful city. It seems that spring is actually here. While you are out and about you might like to visit North Street where, opposite the City Gate Hotel, you can see the new Wyvern weathervane on top of a flagpole. As you will know the Wyvern is the Exeter Civic Society badge. The original Wyvern was taken down for repairs, but proved to be such a valuable example of medieval metalwork that the Royal Albert Memorial Museum wished to display it in the renovated Museum. The museum staff did a tremendous amount of research and were amused to discover that the weathervane on Ottery St Mary Church originally had whistles attached. But these were removed, possibly because they kept everyone awake at night.

So Exeter Civic Society pledged £1000 towards a replacement. It was made out of copper in the Ark workshops. The original Wyvern was sent to Flybe for Xray and a lead counter balance was shown to be inside. So the new Wyvern had a counterweight added and on March 9th the Wyvern was hoisted up and placed on the pole. Fortunately it fitted the attachment very well and was soon rotating in the wind. We are



planning a proper ceremony with the Lord Mayor to celebrate the return of the Wyvern. We are in very good company having this as our badge as the Wyvern was the emblem of Alfred the Great.

We have been asked to send a representative to Devon Conservation Forum, which meets quarterly at County Hall. We would be grateful if one of our members would volunteer to attend and make reports to the Executive Committee.

On April 24th we enjoyed a most splendid guided walk in St Thomas. Christine Trigger took us into all sorts of unusual places, including a wine and spirit cellar under one of the St Thomas railway arches; rails from the Brunel's wide gauge railway; a rope walk behind St Thomas shopping precinct; parts of the old debtors prison; and a wonderful public house furnished with fairground treasures. We hope that Christine will be able to give us Part II of the St Thomas trail soon. She is certainly to be congratulated on all her painstaking research.

On May 22nd we are visiting Tiverton Castle as a joint event with Tiverton Civic Society. We do need numbers as soon as possible for this. There are a limited number of places left, so please ring me. The cost will be £7 for the Castle tour and £3.50 for a cream tea.

On July 21st at the Central Library, Chris Moulton, the City's Countryside Ranger, has kindly agreed to talk to us about Exeter's Valley Parks.

For 15th September in the Library, Richard Holladay will talk about the famous Exeter firm of Garton and King.

And on the 20th October, Central Library, Geoffrey Harding will talk about the Templers of Stowe. He promises us new material about this interesting family.

I am very grateful to our members and friends for giving us such well researched talks and walks. I do hope I will see you at our events soon.

Margo Swift, Chairman

Planning Sub-Committee - February-March-April 2010:

I had half expected that there might be comments from members on the paragraph in the last Newsletter which described the Draft Master Plan for the University until 2026, but there were none. The Master Plan is still the subject of negotiation between Exeter City Council and the University and we hope to see the final version fairly soon. All that is happening at the University currently has been the subject of planning applications which have been approved within the last year or two, and so are not included in the Master Plan. Some of the developments may seem very drastic, and indeed they do involve a great deal of earth-moving and building, but the work is all carefully planned to cause as little disruption as possible, and frequent email bulletins detail what is happening, when and for how long. I get these updates and would be glad to try to answer any particular questions you may have.

