

Exeter Civic Society

Newsletter – Autumn 2019



Founded in 1961

From the Chairman, Peter Wadham

The announcement that a Roman Fort has been found by Archaeologists under Exeter's Bus Station cheered me up a good deal. As a frequent user of our sorry looking Bus Station I have to say it's a depressing place to visit and a bad advert for our fair City, I often wonder what our visitors think when they have to use it!

So to now know that there are Roman remains under the old place is stimulating and will keep me warm until my Bus arrives.

Exeter Civic Society will endeavour to encourage a full excavation of the site, we will bring you the latest news of what the Archaeologists find.

I'm greatly looking forward to 15th October when at 11am the Society are unveiling our latest Blue Plaque —this one is to the great Elizabethan miniature painter and limner Nicholas Hilliard, he was the son of the Exeter silver smith Richard Hilliard and was born in Exeter, long regarded as Britain's foremost Miniature painter. He lived from 1547 —1619. The unveiling takes place outside Superdrug in the Guildhall Shopping Centre.

Our Blue Plaque team continue to do fine work and have advanced plans for Plaques in the new year with Sabin Baring-Gould heading the list.

Our monthly Talks which take place on the third Saturday of the Month at Belmont Chapel (which are free to members) are proving to be an even greater success due to the varied interesting subjects of local interest and excellence of the speakers.

There is so much to learn about our City, last month's talk about the Victorian wood and stone carver Harry Hemms (his work can be seen in dozens of Devon Churches and around the world) was well researched, I thought fascinating.

Now our AGM is not long away on the 16th November——it would be wonderful if a few of you came and joined us on the Committee as we are short of workers for large and small posts, please come and talk to me and I will explain how easy it would be for you to play a part, email me and I will take you for Tea.

From Keith Lewis, our Vice Chairman

Citypoint – Paris Street and Sidwell Street Regeneration.

Exeter City Council are working with The Crown Estate and consultants to develop this area, including the remaining parts of the bus station for a mixed use of retail, hotel accommodation, residential, offices and possibly a new Performance Venue and new Civic Centre. The overall proposals include redevelopment of the existing civic centre site.

Our Executive committee are supportive of the principle of a mixed use development but we have written to the Chief Executive and Leader of the City Council expressing concerns about some aspects of the proposals. Specifically, we wish to see a new public open space formed in the centre of the development rather than a new building. We believe this is essential to create a sense of arrival for those arriving in Exeter by bus and to provide a social space for those who will live and work in this area. We are questioning the scale of proposed development on the Civic Centre site, how the new buildings will be serviced by delivery vehicles, and how the Council will consult about the pedestrianisation of Paris Street.

The closure of Paris Street to through traffic was a concern with previous proposals developed by The Crown Estate because the alternative proposed route was poor. If this street is to be closed to traffic it is essential

We are making changes to our website which we hope will make it easier to find information, keep members and the public up to date with what we are doing, as well as developments in the city. The changes are being made on our live website so please bear with us while we complete this work. We now have drop-down menus like many other sites which we hope you will find easier to use. If your computer does not display the website correctly press Ctrl and F5 which should refresh the cache.

River, Canal and Quayside Group

Are you a new or recently-new member of the Society? I would be most pleased to hear from you on any matters that have struck you concerning the Quay, or any aspect of Exeter's waterways. Would you be interested in joining the RCQ Group? We only meet occasionally, but also communicate by email. Contact me at pnickol@phoncoop.coop

Some of you may have seen the fascinating and informative exhibition at Countess Wear Village Hall of the area's industrial heritage. From Roman pottery-making through medieval fulling (cloth processing) to nineteenth century glass-making (hence Glasshouse Lane), shipbuilding and papermaking: an extraordinary range of industrial processes have taken place in this interesting area.

ECS has expressed its frustration at the expenditure of some £470,000 by the Environment Agency on extending the fish pass at Trews Weir. This became necessary following the semi-collapse of St James Weir, half a mile downstream. We have long been pointing out the deteriorating condition of St James Weir and calling for its repair. The City Council have at last expressed their wish to see the weir repaired, and the consequent restoration of the leat to Countess Wear, but need now to find a way of funding the repair, which won't come cheap.

We have also written to the Council in some detail about the mess and air of neglect affecting many aspects of the Quayside and Canal Basin area, following the extended disruption caused by the EA's flood alleviation works.

Peter Nichol

Planning sub-committee

June - September 2019

Sadly this report will begin with the news, which many of you know already, that Chris Watson died at the beginning of August. Chris and his wife Robin have been members of Civic Society for over forty years and for half that time Chris has been a greatly valued member of Planning sub-committee, with firm views and particular commitment to building for the twenty first century, having due regard to low carbon emission, energy efficiency, wise use of resources, maintenance of green space, care of the Valley Parks, interesting modern architecture, and the life of Exeter. And he was a very good friend.

You may have noticed that the May newsletter had no report from the Planning sub-committee and for that deficiency I apologise, although as few commented on its absence it was possibly not greatly missed! All the varied happenings in planning in the first third of 2019 thus go unreported but if you have any queries about matters from that period I would be happy to try to answer them and as ever we are glad to hear any planning-related comments.

Now to some of the subjects we have studied and discussed at five meetings since May, two of which involve large buildings in the centre of Exeter. The House of Fraser saga continued and culminated in a welcome proposal for a row of separate shops to face High Street while all the rest of the building becomes an hotel, enhanced by a top floor addition of a glazed restaurant and terrace bar. We were concerned that the hotel entrance would be closely opposite the entrance to the public loos in Catherine Square and particularly concerned that many of the hotel bedrooms in this solid building had no windows, but we were assured that this latter is not now unusual in inner city hotels and Exeter planners had no power to combat it. The other large building has graced central Exeter since long before the House of Fraser, at the very top of Fore Street on the corner with North Street, and was long the greatly respected Cornishes and Brocks. Its elevations are much in need of the proposed restorations and we welcome the fact that internally such features as the fine and unusual staircase will be retained while the shops on the ground floor are recovered from recent decline. Of course the cupola also will remain, one of the joys of Exeter enhancing the view up the otherwise mundane South Street.

About half way between these two buildings a much older one has successfully applied for change of use from the Prezzo restaurant which has occupied it for fourteen years to again become the Turks Head pub, with a micro-brewery, six guest bedrooms (but not, it insists, an hotel) and a roof terrace at first floor level. City Development [the planning department] will be carefully monitoring the structure and location of new windows and the venerable wooden Turks Head sign will be expertly studied and restored. On the other side of High Street number 46, owned by the Prudential and until recently used by Thornton's Chocolates, is in need of skilled repair inside and out including timber and plasterwork on the front of this most notable Merchants house and replacement of flat roofs and windows at the rear. This application has not yet been determined but we are sure it is receiving knowledgeable scrutiny. In fact we have been glad to speak to ever-helpful case officers on all four of these applications on details which might otherwise have not been clear.

Sometimes of course we write objecting to an application and then we are later glad to see that it has been refused, as in the case of a block of nine flats replacing a redundant building in a yard on Willeys Avenue. More dwellings are certainly needed for Exeter but we are sure a design can be achieved which better fits the neighbourhood. While thinking of housing you may be glad to know that several hundred dwellings including some senior-living units, many family flats and houses, green space and a community building converted from a water tower may be developed on what was once railway land at Exmouth Junction, currently a storage area for vans and caravans accessed only from Mount Pleasant Road. This seems to us good use of this land with new vehicle access from its eastern end near Morrisons and access for those on foot or cycles or small wheels at the Mount Pleasant end near the church, bus-stops and health centre. The application is being stringently considered by planners who will ensure that it meets requirements, including delivering a sufficiently high percentage of affordable dwellings, before presenting it for a Committee decision.

You will remember that the land on Topsham Road on which the Deaf Academy buildings stand has received permission for development of houses, apartments and two kinds of senior-care. The Academy retained their playing field area across the road, known as Mount Radford Lawn, while seeking a developer who, by buying the land, would add to the resources needed for their new establishment in Exmouth and would provide a design allowing much green space including some with public access. Burrington Estates proposal to build seven luxurious houses for the 'top level executive market' has attracted over two hundred objections and about sixty letters of support. The supporters relate to the Academy and are concerned that the charity should gain much needed revenue for its Exmouth development while leaving as much green area as possible for public enjoyment. The objectors include the St Leonards Association whose aspiration is that the land should be entirely for the community, Central school and the Maynard who wish to continue using the ground for sports days and games as they were until recently welcome to do, and very many local residents and others who wish the area to remain available to all while being cared for. Planning sub-committee's letter suggests that a greater number of modest houses is needed, using the area intended for the large and rather

grandiose seven and providing as much green space for school recreation and for public walking and sitting as in the Burrington Estates proposal. I wonder if all this will be resolved before the next Newsletter.

In a departure from our application-based regime the Planning sub-committee discussed the fact that the City Council (and indeed most councils of university towns) make a Community Infrastructure Levy on developers of Purpose Built Student Accommodation which is only 50% of that which is levied on developers of Housing. I expect I should have known this but only became aware when Councillor Kevin Mitchell and three of his newly elected colleagues determined to present their concern to the City Executive. Their motion was rejected but the council is considering the situation among other serious matters relating to student accommodation. Civic Society Executive Committee members endorsed our concern and offer the group of four (two Mitchells, two Moores) our support.

Within the next month or so we expect to see the council's application to build sixty energy efficient council homes and thirty for sale on the open market at the Pinhoe Road end of Vaughan Road on land currently occupied by a former care home and twelve existing council homes which have come to the end of their life. A recent consultation was well-presented by the planning and housing departments and it was useful to speak with the architect of what looks like a hopeful scheme. If successful this will bring to one hundred the council housing for which the city has been able to give itself permission since the government recently removed the cap on councils gaining funding to do so. Maybe things are looking up.

Pamela Wootton

EXETER & DISTRICT BUS USERS GROUP

Tel: 01395-567795 Email: eanddbug@gmail.com

SEPTEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER

Service changes this autumn

We have been waiting expectantly for news of the autumn service changes, which we are told will take effect on Sunday October 27th. At the time of writing, it appeared that no details had yet been published by Stagecoach. However, a kind man has now pointed us to the 'promos and offers' section of their website where the information appears, unlike the 'service changes' section where it should appear, but does not. We will take this up with our contacts at Stagecoach, as this is definitely not user-friendly. At the same time, an obliging official at the information office in the bus station pointed out to us the www.plymothiantransit website, which was the only source of information available to him. The details are as follows:-

- **Service 5** - The 1851 has been revised to depart from Crediton Tuckers Close at 1909, Mondays to Saturdays.
- **Service 5A** - Mondays to Fridays, the 0645 from Hatherleigh will now start from Okehampton at 0628. On Saturdays; the 0655 from Hatherleigh will start at Okehampton at 0638. These changes offer earlier connections from Okehampton replacing the current 0703 journey from Okehampton to Exeter, which will be withdrawn. The current service 5C departing from Coplestone at 0911 will be replaced with the 5A service departing from Okehampton at 0805. The 1900 departure from Exeter on

Mondays to Saturdays will extend from Hatherleigh to Okehampton offering an improved connection between these towns.

- **Service 5C** - The 0545 departure from Exeter on Mondays to Fridays and the 0610 on Mondays to Saturdays have been withdrawn. The 1825 and 1910 departures from Chulmleigh will leave a little earlier and terminate at Lapford.
- **Service B** - The route will be extended from Union Road to Prince Charles Road, where it will terminate near the Morrison's store. In addition Union Road, Pennsylvania Road and York Road will be now served in both directions. Minor timetable changes to improve punctuality.
- **Service K** - Minor timetable changes to improve journey times with a reduced frequency on Saturday mornings.
- **Services R/S** - Minor timetable changes to improve journey times with a reduced frequency on Saturday mornings.
- **Services ,D, E, F1, F2, H, I, J, T, P, Red & Green Park & Ride** - have minor timetable changes.
- **Service A** - Minor timetable changes and a revised Saturday timetable.
- **Service 95** - Our seasonal open top service will finish for the winter months after operation on Sunday 3rd November.
- **Service N57** - The N57 will operate a revised route through Exeter city centre to allow passengers greater access to local amenities. Buses will serve from Paris Street then New North Road, Queen Street and High Street before continuing to Sidwell Street.

The new Exeter bus station

You may have noticed that work has finally started on the new bus station. The concrete apron under the site and the adjacent retaining wall have been removed and some archaeological trial pits have been opened up near the Cheeke Street end. We understand the piling rig will return in October to start work on the foundations. In the meantime, a Council spokesman has assured us that construction will be completed on programme, but apparently this will now be in the spring of 2021, not December 2020 as previously stated.

On Friday Sep. 27th evening television news for the south west, it was announced that remains of what appears to be a roman fort has now been found under the site! You can expect this to delay work even more.

Matford Depot's open day

If you would like to see the inner workings of the new Stagecoach depot at Matford, make a note of the open day on Sunday October 6th, from 10am to 4pm. You should be able to see 'fleet maintenance and bus control' in operation. There will be a free shuttle bus from Sowton park and ride site and rides aboard preserved buses.

Missing timetables

Several of our readers have recently told us of missing timetables at a number of bus stops and shelters in the area. It is the bus operators' responsibility to provide these and Stagecoach tell us that its policy is to do so at all shelters and timed points on its routes. If you find timetables missing at any stops you use, please let us know at eanddbug@gmail.com and we will pass the word to the officers concerned.

The Stagecoach Stakeholder Conference

Stagecoach hosted a conference for its stakeholders in Exeter University's Business School on July 24th and several members of our core group attended. Presentations were given by Bob Dennison (Managing Director

of Stagecoach South West), Claire Walters (CEO of Bus Users UK), Damien Jones (Devon CC's Head of Transport Co-ordination Service) and Will Pratt (Devon CC's Principal Transport Planning Officer).

Some interesting facts and statistics emerged:-

- in an independent survey of 50,000 passengers, Stagecoach South West achieved a satisfaction rating of 95%, which is the second highest in the country
- the company operates 387 buses, of which 31% are to the latest Euro 6 standard (the lowest emissions of CO2 and particulates)
- all Stagecoach South West buses offer contactless payments
- Devon CC budgets £9.3m for National Bus Pass concessionary fares and £24.2m for school transport
- bus patronage in Devon peaked in the years 2011/12 to 2016/17 and has declined slightly since
- the Exeter Transport Strategy, which was due to be presented to members this month following an extensive public consultation exercise, has been delayed to take into account the Council's recent declaration of a climate emergency. We know that Devon plans more park and ride sites at Cowley, Alphington, Peamore, Airport and Pinhoe.

Where would you like to go next?

During the summer, several of us have been exploring the Devon countryside from the top deck of a double deck bus. It's amazing what you can see over the hedges! If you have news of any interesting journeys that you have made and that you would like to share, do please get in touch on our usual email address. We look forward to hearing from you.

Veitch Lamp Post Trail – Sat 27th July

12 of us were met at the Interpretation Board on Bury Meadow by our guide Shane Cormie. He gave us a brief resume of the Veitch family whose first member was John who was born in Jedburgh in Scotland and arrived in Devon in 1771 on foot! He worked for the Acland's at Killerton. He and his son James were amongst the first to sponsor plant collectors. They had 23 collectors in all and went as far afield as S. America and Asia.

In addition to the nursery in Exeter, they purchased one in Chelsea in 1853. The firm was finally sold by Mildred Veitch in 1969 shortly before she died as there was no family member who could continue the business. They were also responsible for much of the planting at Reed Hall on the University of Exeter campus.

The family apparently also owned a shop on Cathedral Green, the site is now occupied by The Well public house.

We then proceeded to walk to the many lamp posts of which only a few will be mentioned here since there are 17 in total. The first lamp post on Elm Grove Road was the one with Camelia "Mildred Veitch" named after the last of the family involved in the trade.

We saw others like the Clematis "John Gould Veitch" (great grandson of the founder) the plant originating from Japan.

Further on Howell Road we saw Magnolia x Veitchii "Peter Veitch" who was the father of Mildred. This plant was created from hybridizing.

Crossing over New North Road we entered Queen's Terrace where to the bemusement of the customers at the Pub we all peered at the lamppost with the Flame Nasturtium or Scottish Flame flower which was introduced by William Lobb in the 1840s, the plant originating from Chile. He is better known for introducing the Monkey Puzzle tree.

The next lamppost was the most intriguing in that it was embossed with a Garland and also had the Exeter Coat of Arms with Semper Fidelis on it. This was usually done to signify the fact that the house nearby belonged to the Mayor. However, there appear to be no records to verify this fact.

The final leg of our journey took us back to St. David's churchyard where we were shown three significant graves in our story. The first to Harriette Veitch and Peter Christian Massey Veitch both in the same grave. The last two were to the Foundry men involved in creating the lamp posts, namely "Iron Sam" Kingdon and Mr Henry F..Willey.

Tour of University Gardens 6th September

On Friday September 6th 2019, 9 of us met at Reed Hall to be shown some of the gardens on the Streatham Campus of the University of Exeter.

We were shown round by the Anthony Cockell Deputy Grounds Manager assisted by another gardener Ann. He has a staff of 20 which includes apprentices. We learnt many things but were only able to see a very small part of the 153 acres covered by this site.(this area, if a town would be the size of the tenth largest town in Devon).

Reed Hall, is a Victorian Italianate Style House built by the Thomas West family in 2nd half of 19th century. He was a wealthy merchant from the East Indies. He spent £80,000 on the property and £60,000 on the gardens, he employed James Veitch to plant the garden and arboretum, so there are previously unseen plants brought to this country from many parts of the world including many varieties of orchids, deciduous trees and shrubs. The house and gardens were given to University College of South West in 1925 by WH Reed as a residential hall for men.

The Italianate garden laid out by James Veitch usually gives a very formal colourful view of planting, but there appears to be a problem with the soil so samples have been sent away to try to diagnose this, in the meantime, wild flower seed have been sown and it could be seen that there are problems in some areas of the beds, even with these plants.

The whole garden and area is now listed.

We walked round to the Washington Singer Building, and if the weather had been better we would have had some fantastic views of Devon. We saw the plants growing there benefited from being South facing and the warm air blowing directly from the sea. The cherry trees planted here promise a great show of blossom in the spring.

We then walked to the Old Botany Gardens where a Professor had planted many trees, many years ago, far closer than would have been advisable, the gardeners have not been allowed to thin them out, but this has given the gardening department interesting details of how trees adapt to lack of wind and other usual influences on their growth.

There were so many other things to see but time ran out and Ian gave us a pamphlet showing other interesting parts of both this campus and St Luke's, for us to discover by ourselves.

Coming Events

Date	Open Mornings 10.30
19 th Oct 2019	Ben Clapp will talk on the History of St. Nicholas's Priory
16 th Nov 2019	A G M at 11.00
7 th Dec 2019	Special Event John Salvatore will talk on Archelaogy in Roman Exeter
14 th Dec 2019	Keith Barker will talk on the Green Men of Exeter Cathedral
18 th Jan 2020	Dr. P Hickman will speak about his "Recollections of a Chorister 1950-55"
15 th Feb 2020	John Jones will talk about "The Workhouse"
21 st Mar 2020	Jon Bell will speak about Exeter Cinemas

18 th Apr 2020	Robert Guyver will talk about General Buller
16 th May 2020	Lucy Patrick will speak of the work done at St. Petroc's
20 th Jun 2020	John Smith returns with an anniversary to celebrate (? Not sure what)
Date	Other Events
15 th Oct 2019	Plaque unveiled to Nicholas Hilliard at 11am followed by talk at RAMM – see Hilary Neville for details.
Nov 2019	Walk led by Julia Neville and Mike Richards explaining the history and development of the University of Exeter
7 th Dec 2019	Christmas lunch at the Clifton Inn at 1pm. Must be paid for in advance and choices made by the date of AGM in order that we can place the pre-order with the Chef. Menu will be circulated as soon as available with price details.
Jan 2020	Visit to Reclamation facility at Marsh Barton

President: Hazel Harvey f.d.harvey@exeter.ac.uk

Chairman: Peter Wadham peterwadham77@yahoo.com

Vice Chairman: Keith Lewis keithatecs@gmail.com

Treasurer: Christo Skelton ecs.treasurer@gmx.com

Secretary: : Christo Skelton ecs.membership@gmx.com

Membership Secretary & Newsletter Editor: Christo Skelton ecs.membership@gmx.com

Planning sub-committee: Pamela Wootton p.m.wootton@exeter.ac.uk

Events Co-ordinator: Ruth McLeish ruthmcleish@gmail.com

River, Canal & Quayside Group: Peter Nickol pnickol@phonecoop.ccop