

Programme of Events:

Wednesday July 12th, 6pm

A visit and guided tour has been arranged to Oldway Mansion, the house built by the Singer family, between Paignton and Torquay on the A379. It is suggested that we should travel by train from Exeter St David's to Paignton and walk or travel by bus to Oldway Mansion.

Trains leave:	Exeter	arrive:	Paignton
	2.18		3.10
	3.18		4.14
	4.18		5.14

Paignton	Exeter
8.50	9.39
10.30	11.31

For people who do not wish to travel by train there is ample parking space at Oldway. We should like to have an idea of how many people want to go. Please let Mrs Schofield know by July 5th.

Wednesday August 2nd, 2.30pm

at Stockmans, Matford Park Road, near the Cattle Market, Marsh Barton. Mr Mike Walker, who is writing our booklet on street names, will give us a talk on the development of the Marsh Barton Estate.

Friday September 1st, 2.30pm

Top Gallery, Phoenix Centre. Mrs Philippa Burrell, Head of Devon Biodiversity Records Centre, will talk to us about some aspects of her work.

Thursday October 5th, 2.30pm

at the entrance to the Ludwell Valley Park. Chris Moulton, the Countryside Ranger, will lead a walk in the Ludwell Valley. The entrance is best approached via Pynes Hill, past the Driving Test Centre. There is ample parking space on Pynes Hill.

Mrs Beatrice Schofield, Programme Secretary



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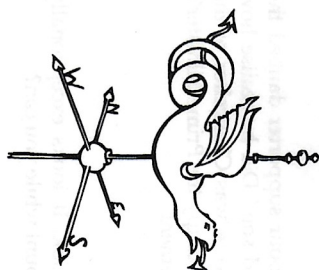
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EXETER CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Summer 2000

Chairman's Remarks:

The Public Inquiry into the demolition of Bedford Street, Eastgate and Princesshay has now been postponed to November, so that it can include the approval of Compulsory Purchase Orders, regardless of the fact that they will not be needed if the Public Inquiry rules against total destruction. Meanwhile, the owners of the Eastgate flats and the small local businesses will have the threat of eviction hanging over their heads. Land Securities could save time and money, and reassure the citizens of Exeter, by withdrawing their plans now. There are many other cities where they are pursuing their money-making schemes, at less cost to the heritage which our tourist trade depends on. Other cities have ugly postwar concrete buildings which are crying out for replacement. We have attractive brick built accommodation with pleasant architectural details. Below ground are the Underground Passages, unique in Britain, and they would surely suffer from the reverberations of the demolition and subsequent excavation of tunnels for juggernaut delivery vans.

The peaceful, tree-shaded Cathedral Close and the lawns of Southernhay would be subjected to over three years (three tourist seasons, three years of Christmas shopping) of building noise, the peep peep peep of trucks reversing, cut-throughs boarded off. When the Exeter Local Plan was agreed, the Inspector emphasised the preference for refurbishment, not demolition, for the Bedford Street / Princesshay area. Deep excavation came into the picture later as a facile solution to pedestrianisation of the surface level. It is no argument to quote the shopping charts which put Exeter as 'the 37th best shopping centre in the UK.' Nobody is going to travel from here to Nottingham or Durham because they have heard the shopping is 'better' there. They will increasingly order bargains over the net, but for a family day out they will find more pleasure in a city with a variety of local shops, distinctive local features and opportunities to escape shopping and enjoy something more interesting.

Hazel Harvey, Chairman

New Members:

Since our last Newsletter was published, we have been glad to welcome the following new members:

Mr & Mrs H. T. Shaw

Lt Col. C. E. K. Speller

Sheila Venn, Membership Secretary

A Northernhay Vignette:

When the Downing Street baby was born last month, an excited Labour supporter daubed the plinth of the statue of Sir Stafford Northcote 'We love you Tony and son.' Did he realise how appropriate it was to pick this particular statue? Sir Stafford Northcote was Chancellor of the Exchequer 1874 - 80, and since he had ten children he was allowed to occupy the Prime Minister's accommodation in Downing Street, foreshadowing the present arrangement.

Exeter Engraved:

A pre-publication order form is enclosed for Todd Gray's next book. It looks exceptionally interesting and should do well. Why not order several copies at a discount while you can?

Plaques:

The Society has added to the information available for explorers of the city by arranging for plaques to be affixed to the ruins of St Loye's Chapel in Rifford Road and the remaining tower of St Edmund's on the medieval Exe Bridge. They were previously unlabelled.

Trees:

Architects usually sketch in trees when they submit drawings of planned elevations, in the sure knowledge that they enhance the view. Bedford Street has lost the plane tree outside the post office, and most of the ornamental cherries opposite. These were felled just before the tourist season last year and have not been replaced in time for this summer. Let us hope that the council will seize the opportunity given by the indefinite postponement of redevelopment - they should replant this autumn.

Planning Sub-Committee:

This Spring Planning sub-committee was sorry to lose Peter Wadham, but is delighted that he was elected to the City Council by over a thousand of the voters of Alphington.

Much of our discussion has centred on the City Council's draft planning brief for the CENTRAL STATION YARD, now in its second stage. We are hopeful that a reasonable development of dwellings with some offices will be achieved and very much hope that a developer will be found who is willing to build the new Courts complex in this area.

Members have also spent much time considering, both in and out of committee, the early stage of the Council's draft planning brief for the present BUS STATION SITE, for which they have offered three rather similar lay-outs, to include a multiplex cinema, and dwellings, as well as space for buses and pedestrians. We have suggested that large coaches need not come into the centre of the City at all if a designated shuttle service could be created. We agree that a notable building should face the Paris Street roundabout, but its design will need public consideration. We are puzzled by the suggestion that part of Paris Street should appear to be a forecourt to the Civic Centre while still remaining a major thoroughfare. Perhaps other Civic Society members would like to visit the Planning Office to see what they make of this planning brief.

We were interested that the Planning Officer's recommendation to refuse permission for the development at the ARMY CADET FORCE site was transmitted by Development Control Committee to a request for some changes in height etc, and that the amended application with a promise of contribution of ca £13,000 to local school costs and a committed payment of £114,000 for affordable housing elsewhere is now recommended for approval.

We know that many Civic Society members visited the brief display of 3 suggested development plans for the CANAL BASIN and surroundings. Planning sub-committee wrote on several points: the Basin is of the Canal and cannot be considered separately; it should not be shut from view as would happen if an hotel were wrapped around the head, as in the McAlpine option; boats should remain near the Basin; any hotel should be of 'budget' standard, for active cycling or walking visitors [Exeter has plenty of luxury accommodation]; the Electricity building could become theatre/studios; a Farmer's Market, or any market, is inappropriate here and is/can be better provided elsewhere in Exeter. We felt that surely use of the Flood Channel for water sports [McAlpine] would make it unavailable for flood control, but have been assured that the two functions are compatible.

We welcomed the building of a traditional MOSQUE at the Islamic centre in York Road and are glad that the parts of the application we disagreed with had seemed a problem to the planners too and were amended.

We objected to the plans for obtrusive totem pole signs at the 'new' Exebridges development, and considered the revised plans an improvement. We dislike the design of the new stores there, but as no elevation drawings were shown we were not able to object at the right time. We continue to worry that we don't cover everything.

Pamela Wootton, Planning Sub-Committee

Countryside Corner:

The E.U.W.G. has distributed Wild Flower Survey forms to the Central Library, St Thomas Library, the West Country Studies Library, The Devon Record Office, the R. A. M. Museum, and Exeter Community Centre. One or two Church groups have taken a small number. The Central Library have twice required extra Survey forms, so we have hopes of a good response.

A generous donation of £30 by the Civic Society to purchase wild flower plants for the Wildlife Garden in Heavitree Cemetery prompted the Group to open a Building Society Account. Contrary to earlier expectations, planting will be later in the year.

Ray Williams applied for a further grant for wild flower plants from Pennon Water via Devon Wildlife Trust. A grant was offered, provided that the project is completed before cash is forthcoming. Exeter City Council is supplying a large number of plants and undertaking landscaping which John O'Callaghan, Director of Cemeteries, hopes will eventually create a Wildlife Garden of about 1 acre.

St Sidwells: This project has really taken off, and the clearing of the patch for the Community Garden should now be completed. The E.U.W.G. have recently donated the 4 Bird nesting boxes and the 3 Bird Feeders remaining from the generous contribution from B & Q to the project, hopefully encouraging more bird life in this city centre location.

Prizes for the Junior Wild Flower Survey: Anthony Pipe very generously offered one of his hand crafted Bird Nest Boxes as a prize. The Group expressed their appreciation of his kind offer, but hoped that he would consider holding it until our repeat Bird Survey in a year or two.

Anthony is one of our two new members, and is well known for his beautiful Bird Feeders and Nest boxes. Cherry Luxton, Cllr, Duryard Ward has also joined us. We welcome them both, and feel they have much to contribute to the Group's work.

Reta May