



## A local entomologist reminisces

When we came to Exeter in September 1961 we rented a flat (at 3 guineas a week) on the top floor of 32 Powderham Crescent. The Crescent garden was locked and inaccessible but the overgrown vegetation provided a good feast of flying insects for the many swifts who by May were in screaming flight above it. The swifts nested under the eaves of many of the Powderham Crescent houses.

One evening at supper I squawked, "There is something on my thigh and I think it's a nycteribiid". Nycteribiid flies are wingless parasites of bats, clinging with clawed feet, and may not have been the first squawk of most people but I had just left the Diptera section of the Natural History Museum and so could guess what one might feel like even unseen. When we looked it wasn't a nycteribiid but a member of a very closely related family the Hippoboscidae.

As you may have guessed from the name some of the better known of that family are

pests of horses, but this at least was not that. It was Crataerina pallida, quite as ugly as its 'cousin' and with similarly clawed boots but with stunted wings, and it had just flipped in from the nest above where it sucked the blood of swifts. These parasites cling on even on long migratory flights and screaming feasts.

It is great to see swifts again each summer and to hear them over St James, but when you wish for 'wildlife' be at least aware of what you are wishing for!



Crataerina pallida

## Obituary

Many readers who regularly walk down Longbrook Street or visit Queen's Crescent Garden, will be saddened to learn of the sudden death of Clive Temperton in January. Clive was a much loved and very supportive member of the Forum and Trust, who was best known for his love of cultivating little plots around the boundary of QCG.

Having retired from the Royal Navy, bachelor Clive decided to try a new hobby, and the delight with which he observed and learnt about plants was a joy. We could all do with a share of the curiosity that stayed with him into his 90s. He will be sadly missed.

Right:

Many friends gathered to remember Clive as two cherry trees were planted in his memory at St Sidwell's Community Centre.



Clive relaxing for once in Queen's Crescent Garden!



CliftonEmerydesign  
Urban design and architecture



# ABOUT St James

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DELIVERING THE NEWS AND STORIES AROUND AND ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD



FIND OUT MORE AT [WWW.EXETERSTJAMES.ORG](http://WWW.EXETERSTJAMES.ORG)

## Farewell to Exeter St James Forum

At a Special General Meeting on 27 April, Members of Exeter St James Forum voted in favour of its dissolution. Far from a defeat or a disaster, this was a positive natural progression as the influence of our Neighbourhood Plan, which continues till 2028 as a statutory part of Exeter's Development Plan, will decline as the dusk of its 15-year life approaches; a more up-to-date Exeter-wide policy will carry greater weight in planning decisions.

The Resolution was put to the membership following a very positive meeting in March attended by

representatives of each of the six local residents' associations, local city and county councillors, elected Forum Steering Group members and individual residents interested in neighbourhood planning. Without exception each spoke enthusiastically of the experience of neighbourhood planning and a desire to explore a new initiative, in consultation with communities beyond the now historic St James' ward boundary, was expressed unanimously.

Supported by our city and county councillors the appetite for neighbourhood planning remains undiminished in St James and, with other communities expressing interest, there is potential for effective liaison. We look forward to seeing who steps forward

bringing fresh energy and commitment to harness the goodwill and support for an eagerly anticipated new phase.



Active engagement in public consultation

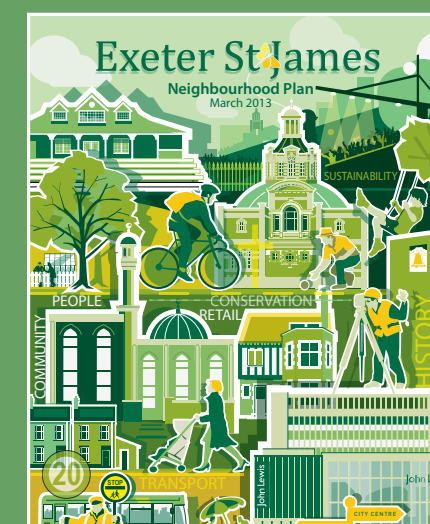
## ... and a big 'Thank You' to all former Forum Steering Group Members

This moment must not be allowed to pass without reflecting on the remarkable achievement in May 2013 when the Plan attracted a staggering 92% 'Yes' vote at referendum and gained national recognition as the very first 'made' urban neighbourhood plan in the country.

Without doubt a great achievement, our community was blessed by having individuals with the necessary expertise, passion and selfless commitment of time and energy. They were joined by a truly

impressive number of residents who became actively engaged in what has been described as "the most genuine and democratic of consultation processes, sustained over a long period of time". The views of every local resident, business and other stakeholders -including the University, the Student Guild, local faith groups, officers and local councillors of both County and City Councils, the Police and Fire Service, St Sidwell's School and Exeter City Football Club to name but a few - were repeatedly sought.

Thanks must go to the tremendous contribution made to the community by Steering Group members over the past 11 years, not least those key figures who played such an important role at the start.



ESJF was the first forum in the country to produce a neighbourhood plan



## Makeover time for Horseguards Playpark?

Last year Kate, a local resident from Horseguards, got in touch with Maisaa, the Exeter Community Builder for the Duryard and St James area, to look at improving the play equipment, drainage and wildlife planting in the local playpark at the top of Horseguards. Since then, a residents' survey and several pop up consultations have been organised and contact made with Hetty, a Wilder Communities Officer from Devon Wildlife Trust, Exeter University,

and the local councillors for the area, as well as Exeter City Council. Ideas include wildlife and nature planting including new trees, new benches and bins, and more play equipment for different age groups, including a ping pong table!



Horseguards Play Park



Left: Rotting wooden play equipment



Waterlogged pitch

## Deer in St James!

Early risers have spotted deer in the front gardens of West Avenue. Do look out for them and send us pictures for the next edition!

Please feel free to send any photographs to our new email address: [trust@exeterstjames.org](mailto:trust@exeterstjames.org)



## Change at the top!

St Sidwell's C of E Primary School has recently appointed a new Acting Head, Karen Leach. A teacher for over thirty years, she trained in London and has worked in a diverse range of schools including Stoke Hill and St Michael's here in Exeter.

Karen hopes as we move away from the Covid pandemic that the school will once again become involved in community activities. The Trust looks forward to entertaining repeat

performances with the school choir and seeing groups of school children enjoying Queen's Crescent Garden. If you have a project in which you think the school may like to be involved please do not hesitate to contact [admin@st-sidwells-ce.devon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-sidwells-ce.devon.sch.uk).



Right: Acting Head, Karen Leach



## 1st Annual Charity Chess/Draughts afternoon

Organised by Liz and Dan Smith of West Avenue, this inter-generational event on 24th April at Exeter Cricket Pavilion was enjoyed by all. Around 30 players battled for over three hours, sustained with tea, coffee and biscuits. The young triumphed over the (generally!) good natured older citizens and £163 was raised in aid of Urafiki and the DEC Ukraine appeal. It's hoped the event will be repeated in future years.

Charity Chess Afternoon - April 2022



## Locals and Students join together at Queen's Crescent Garden

University students, under the careful organisation of the Student Wardens, together with local resident volunteers descended on Queen's Crescent Garden on a fine Saturday morning in March undertaking a variety of maintenance tasks, and proving that many hands make light work. Thanks to Pura Vida for rewarding student participation with a free coffee / smoothie voucher!

New volunteers frequently report how much they have enjoyed participating in a working party and many of the students this time expressed eagerness to repeat the experience. If you haven't joined a session yet and would like to give it a go, do drop a line to [qcg@exeterstjames.org](mailto:qcg@exeterstjames.org). It's great when the community gets together, making a positive difference for us all.



## SUMMER EVENT IN QUEEN'S CRESCENT GARDEN - 25TH JUNE

Right: Event Poster

### Trains from St James

A lot of people in St James may not be aware of St James' Park Station in Well Street next to the football ground. Trains run hourly to Exmouth via Topsham and to Paignton via Dawlish, Teignmouth and Torquay. It's around 25 minutes to Exmouth and an hour or so to Paignton. Both routes take you beside the Exe estuary and have glorious views. From St David's Station there are trains to Barnstaple or down into Cornwall, and the Dartmoor Line to Okehampton has recently reopened. A lot of different days out without having to drive! Find out more at [www.nationalrail.co.uk/](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/) or [www.gwr.com/](http://www.gwr.com/).

The line to Exmouth is known as the Avocet line, named after the bird which visits the Exe estuary for the winter. The Avocet Line Rail User Group represents passengers on the line and has achieved a number of improvements on the line including at St James' Park Station. You can find out about the group at [www.avocetline.org.uk](http://www.avocetline.org.uk)



St James Park Station

## Once Upon A Time in St James

Residents of a certain age may recall that St James was once home to Exeter's main theatre, the Theatre Royal. Originally situated in Bedford Street, it was destroyed by fire in 1885 and rebuilt in 1886 at the junction of Longbrook Street and New North Road. Cruel fate revisited the theatre a year later when once again it caught fire with catastrophic consequences. Some 186 people died in the worst theatre fire in British history. Subsequent investigations and enquiries led to a complete overhaul of safety regulations for public buildings including the introduction of fireproof safety curtains in all theatres.

Two years later in 1889 a third incarnation of the Theatre Royal opened on the same site:

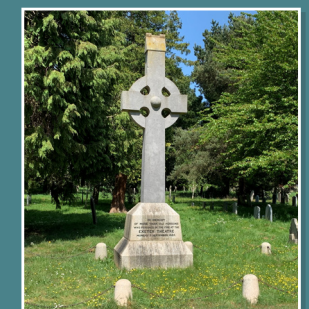


Above: Photo taken from an early 20th century post card of the Theatre Royal at the top of Longbrook Street

The theatre continued to entertain Exonians well into the twentieth century even surviving the blitz when much of the area was bombed out. Sadly, declining audiences in the 1950s saw the end of live

performances and conversion to a cinema. It eventually closed in 1962 to be sold for development as an office block and in 1918 was converted into, guess what, luxury student accommodation.

A fitting 4.4-metre-high memorial cross to the victims of the fire, carved by St James' very own Harry Hems, stands in Higher Cemetery, Heavitree.



Left: Memorial to the victims of the Theatre Royal fire of 1887 in Higher Cemetery, Heavitree

