

TITLE: The Rise of Suburban Exeter and the
Naming of Its Streets and Houses,
c. 1801-1907

**DEGREE FOR WHICH THE
WORK IS SUBMITTED:** Ph. D.

YEAR OF SUBMISSION: 1990

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCI	Building Control Index: a card index system containing details of properties in Exeter housed in boxes and drawers located in the Building Control Section, Exeter City Council Offices.
Besley	<u>Exeter Street Directories</u> published by T. & H. Besley.
Census	Original Enumerators' Returns, 1801-1881, on microfilm located at Exeter West Country Studies Library.
<u>Census</u>	<u>Census of Great Britain - Population Tables, 1801 - 1911</u> , printed extracts.
DOE	Department of the Environment, <u>List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, District of Exeter</u> , 1980.
DRO	Devon Record Office, Exeter.
ECA	Exeter City Archives, located at the Devon Record Office, Exeter.
EEP	<u>Exeter Flying Post</u> .
Ekwall, <u>DEPN</u>	E. Ekwall, <u>The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names</u> , 1936.
EPNS, <u>PND</u>	English Place-Name Society, <u>The Place-Names of Devon</u> , 1931 and 1932, J.E.B. Gover, A. Mawer and F.M. Stenton, eds.
EVL	<u>Exeter Valuation Lists</u> located at the Devon Record Office.
Hoskins, <u>IT&P</u>	W.G. Hoskins, <u>Industry, Trade and People in Exeter, 1688-1800</u> , 1935.
Hoskins, <u>2000</u>	W.G. Hoskins, <u>Two Thousand Years in Exeter</u> , 1960.
HSI	Highways Section Index: card index containing details of roads in Exeter located in the Highways Section, Exeter City Council Offices.

- Kelly Directories to towns, cities and counties published by Kelly.
- Miles, HNAW Joyce C. Miles, House Names Around the World, 1972.
- Miles, HNB Joyce C. Miles, The House Names Book, 1982.
- Newton, MCH R. Newton, 'Exeter, 1770-1870', Middle Class Housing, 1977, M.A. Simpson and T.H. Lloyd, eds.
- Newton, VE R. Newton, Victorian Exeter 1837-1914, 1968.
- Shapter, Cholera T. Shapter, The History of Cholera in Exeter in 1832, 1849.
- Shapter, Report on Exeter T. Shapter, 'Report on the State of the City of Exeter', Health of Towns Commission, Second Report of the Commissioners for the Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, II, Local Reports, 1845.
- Wood's Map, 1840 Wood's Plan of the City of Exeter from Actual Survey, 1840, Exeter Improvement Commissioners.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Exeter, the county town of Devon, was on the brink of major change and expansion. While some eighteenth-century visitors had found much to admire in the city - Stukeley and Clark for example - others were not so complimentary.¹ A traveller in 1794 commented that it "seems at least half a century behind other towns in improvement" and Robert Southey the poet, visiting the city in 1799 found it to be "... an ancient city ... so slow in adopting modern improvements that it has the unsavoury odour of Lisbon". Southey often expressed unfavourable opinions of the places he visited and particularly disliked Devon, but was his opinion of Exeter justified?² Analysis of the administrative archives reveals that in some respects it was. Nevertheless, suburban expansion had already begun, changing the face of the city which had hitherto been largely confined within walls. The ancient city walls had been breached and the building of Bedford Circus, a magnificent example of the country's best unified urban architecture, had commenced.³

The years 1801-1907 have been chosen for this study for a number of reasons. Although suburban development had started before the turn of the century it was not until 1801 that the first accurate population statistics were available.⁴ By that time several of the most important terraces were in progress, but the

¹ W. Stukeley, Itinerarium Curiousum, 1776 edn, p.157; E.D. Clark; A Tour Through the South of England, Wales and Part of Ireland, 1791, p.50.

² James Forbes, 'Tour into Cornwall to the Lands End', 1794, transcript of letters, Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, new series 9, part 2, 1983, p.148; Robert Southey, Letters from England, II, 1807, p.25; J.Simmonds, Southey, 1945, p.83.

³ C. Tozer, Map of the City of Exeter, 1792; T. Sharp, Exeter Phoenix, 1946, p.28.

⁴ Census, 1801.

bulk of Exeter's early suburban development took place after the turn of the century. The study terminates in 1907 - the year in which the first houses to be built by the Local Authority were completed. Hitherto all suburban development had been by private enterprise and thus this year was important as a landmark in the history of Exeter's house building.¹

Information has been gleaned from a variety of sources. Although a considerable amount of damage was inflicted on Exeter in 1942 by enemy action², many of the early elegant terraces and crescents built on the outskirts of the city have remained as evidence of the work of some of the city's finest architects and builders. The cores of many suburban estates have largely survived intact, even though the houses have been renovated and modernized. Inner city ring roads and by-passes have obliterated some of the old roads and buildings that stood immediately outside the city walls and many of the old house names, especially those incised on gateposts or painted in gold leaf on fanlights, have disappeared, but otherwise fieldwork has been an important factor in determining the pattern of suburban development. Archives, and in particular the minutes of the various municipal and urban district councils and their sub-committees, directories and local newspapers have proved invaluable sources of information. Two of the areas - St. Thomas's and Heavitree - remained outside the jurisdiction of Exeter City Council for the whole of the nineteenth century, but they have been included in this study as they played an important role in the city's suburban development. Both were eventually absorbed into the Exeter municipal area, St. Thomas's in 1900 and Heavitree in 1913.³

¹ DRO ECA 3/45 Council Minutes 20.7.1904 - 3/46 13.3.1907;
DRO ECA 9/9 Streets Committee Minutes 23.5.1906;
DRO ECA Workingmen's Dwellings Committee Minutes,
18.7.1904 - 17.3.1907 (all detailed in Chapter V).

² Sharp, *op. cit.*, p.42.

³ DRO St. Thomas's UDC Minutes, 28.2.1900; DRO ECA G11
Press t Box 9, The Exeter Corporation Act, 1900,
63 and 64 Vict. c. ccxxxii; DRO ECA G11 Press u
Box 14, Exeter (Extension) Order, 1913.

Although reference is made from time to time to the city centre, the study concentrates on the suburbs. What is a suburb? Dyos remarks that "In essence, a suburb is a decentralized part of a city with which it is inseparably linked by certain economic and social ties" and feels that the term "suburb" has been in use for centuries as Chaucer refers to it in The Canterbury Tales in 1362.¹ In the sixteenth century Leland spoke of Exeter's suburbs, but these were small collections of houses largely adjacent to the main gates.² Exeter's major areas of extra-mural development will be examined to discover the combination of factors that go towards making a suburb. Expansion began towards the end of the eighteenth century, but the suburbs did not all develop at the same time or at the same rate. The area outside the city walls in 1801 was not merely a vast acreage of undeveloped land.³ Each district had its own distinct characteristics, many of which were retained in subsequent development.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century Exeter no longer had a prosperous economic base. Its main industry had largely collapsed and its port relied merely on local trade.⁴ Its future lay in improving its role as a service centre, in providing homes and services for the prosperous and attracting visitors. Analysis of suburban development reveals the manner in which non-industrialized Exeter grew and the degree to which it succeeded. This general study is supported by an analysis of Exeter's nineteenth-century street names and house names which sheds light on some of the attitudes and aspirations prevalent at the time. Exeter had a varied and extremely interesting pattern of suburban expansion during the nineteenth century and both aspects of this study can contribute to an understanding of the city as it emerged into the twentieth century.

¹ H.J. Dyos, Victorian Suburb, 1961, pp. 22 and 20;
Larry D. Benson, ed., The Riverside Chaucer,
1988 edn, p. 271.

² Lucy Toulmin Smith, ed., The Itinerary of John Leland about
1535-1543, I, 1907, p. 228.

³ Tozer's Map, 1792.

⁴ Hoskins, IT&P, pp. 149-150.

CHAPTER I

EXETER CIRCA 1800

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw Exeter emerging as a new kind of city; new in several different ways. During the previous decades it had undergone fundamental change. In the second half of the seventeenth century it ranked third in the provinces in population, wealth and trade.¹ At that time it was a city that was sharply divided into three classes: county families with modest estates (Devon was not a county of great landed families), merchants and professional people of varying prosperity, and the labouring population.² Its wealth and prosperity were based on a flourishing woollen industry. It became the collecting centre for the serge industry and an important point of export. By 1801 it had lost both its position and its major industry. Industrial and commercial enterprises of the previous century had declined rapidly. The woollen industry in Exeter had largely collapsed and only local coastal trade was of any consequence to the port.³ It had, of course, all the usual industries of brewing, tanning, iron-founding and other necessary enterprises, but they were on a small scale. There was no sizable industry until the end of the nineteenth century.⁴

¹ Hoskins. *IT&P*, p.18.

² *Ibid.*, pp.19-21 and p.119; DRO Misc. Roll, 74 G5 (G.1).
Hearth Tax Assessment, 1671-72.

³ Hoskins, *IT&P*, pp.41-44; C. Morris, ed., The Journeys of Celia Fiennes, 1949 edn., p.245; Daniel Defoe, A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain, I, 1769, p.374; W.B. Stephens, Seventeenth Century Exeter, 1958, pp.163-165.

⁴ Census, 1801-1901.

However, a new type of society was rising. Merchants, particularly from the Continent, had become prosperous during the years when Exeter's trade had flourished and settled in the locality. Some had turned to banking and many had bought land and property outside the city walls. Families such as the Barings, for example, originally from Bremen, had an important influence on Exeter's subsequent development.¹ Trading patterns had changed. Hitherto retailing had been limited in an industrial based city of wage earners, but with the rise of a large middle class, many of independent means, attracted by the amenities, climate and scenery, there was an increasing demand for a wide range of goods and services. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century two new barracks brought to town an 'officer class' who required good houses.² The expansion of 'genteel suburbia' commenced in the 1770s and plans were put in hand for the building of elegant crescents and terraces to meet demands generated by the influx of prosperous families either moving to the area from afar or merchants wishing to live away from their businesses in the centre of the city.³ The impoverishment of the city's cloth trade was, to some extent offset by the role it had played for centuries as the social, ecclesiastical and commercial capital of the South West. Defoe, visiting the city in 1774, remarked that it was "... full of gentry ...".⁴ Until the late eighteenth century travelling was tedious and costly; hence county families who later sought entertainment in London, found their needs could be fulfilled in Exeter and some had town houses within the walls.⁵

¹ E.A. Freeman, Historic Towns: Exeter, 1887, p.214; Hoskins, IT&P, pp.42 and 47-49; DRO ECA PW/115 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.202.

² A. Jenkins, Civil and Ecclesiastical History of the City of Exeter and Its Environs, 1841 edn., pp.221 and 234.

³ DRO ECA B 1/16 Act Book of the Chamber, 8.11.1774 and 23.11.1775.

⁴ Defoe, op. cit., I, p.374.

⁵ G. Sheldon, From Trackway to Turnpike, 1928, pp.88, 99 and 113; Besley 1831, p.79; D. Portman, Exeter Houses 1400-1700, 1966, pp.29 and 66.

As the city no longer had a prosperous industrial base it needed to improve its role as a service centre, to provide amenities that would attract visitors and to build homes for the prosperous who would, in turn, generate a need for professional services in banking, medicine, the law and similar fields. If this could be achieved, economic prosperity of a different kind would follow. According to a contemporary writer, by the early 1820s Exeter was succeeding. Commenting on the demise of the cloth trade and the increase in what he termed "the miscellaneous trade", he remarks "... in all the arts of life which minister the claims and enjoyment of the opulent classes, no city can be better furnished, her streets wear an air of active business and prosperity..." Noting the "beautiful position of the city", he applauds the "architectural traits and ornaments ... which cannot fail to accelerate its progressive prosperity and improvement."¹

The city was ideally located, particularly climatically and scenically, for those with sufficient means who sought to live in pleasant surroundings. There was plenty of suitable land available for building and architects and builders who were capable of producing fashionable, elegant homes that would compare favourably with those on offer in other popular inland resorts. It was said that in the early part of the nineteenth century "It united something of the character of a watering-place with far greater local importance than that of any mere watering-place".² It was in the forefront in the provision of promenades and shady walks. Oxford, Cambridge and Tunbridge Wells all had walks by the early part of the seventeenth century, but the true rise of provincial promenades dates from the 1680s and 1690s.³

¹ W. Spreat, A New Guide to the City of Exeter and Its Environs, 1824, p.94.

² Freeman, op. cit., p.238.

³ Peter Borsay, The Rise of the Promenade: The Social and Cultural Use of Space in the English Provincial Town c. 1660-1800, British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies, 9, 1986, p.126

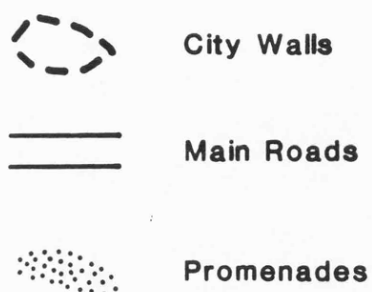
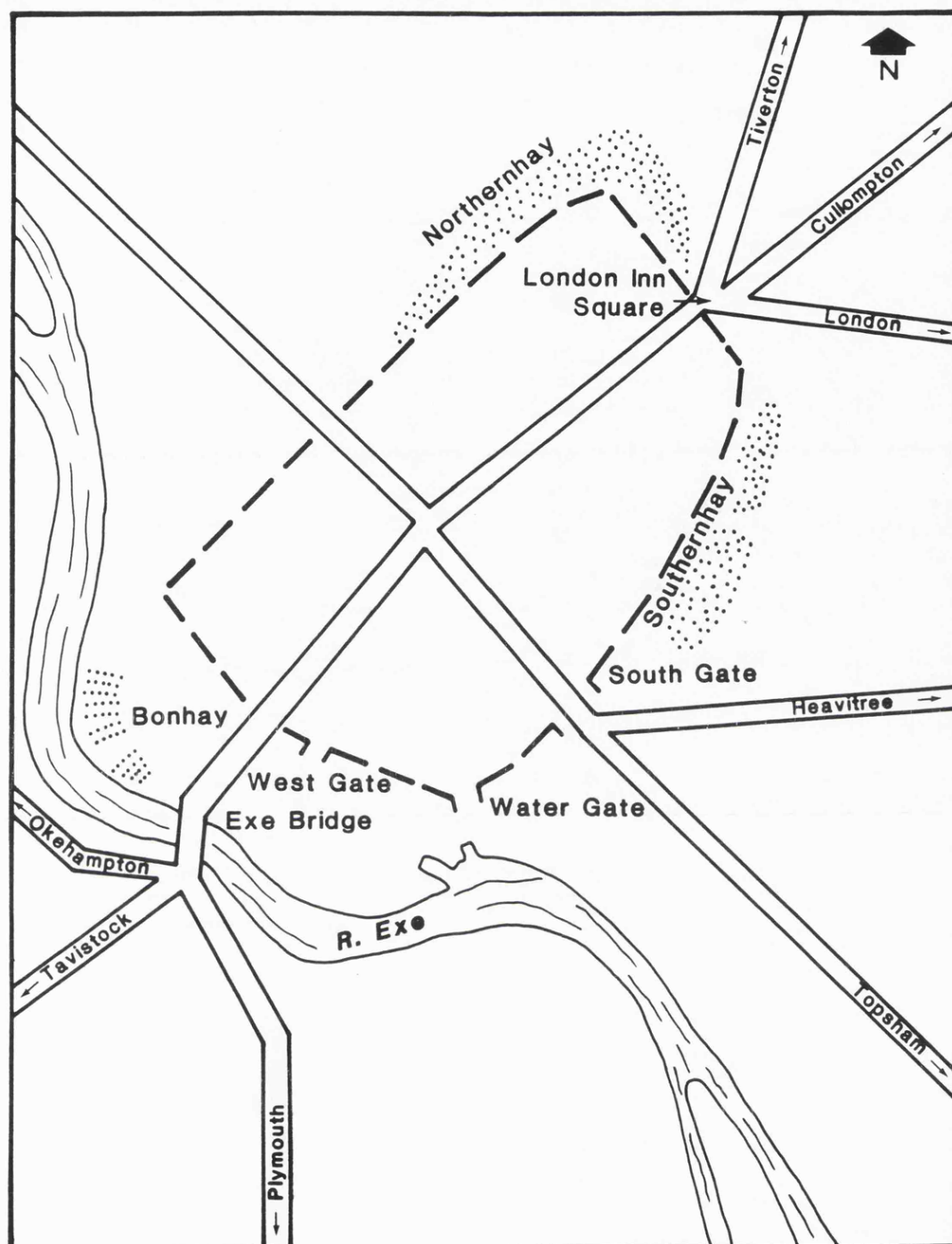
Exeter's, however, were much earlier. A late sixteenth-century map shows the northern bank of the river by Exe Bridge to have paths and trees and in 1612 the city laid out Northernhay, a crescent-shaped area skirting part of the northern walls. Its counterpart, Southernhay, which swept in a great curve from the East Gate to the South Gate, was an area of gardens and elm trees, planted in 1667.¹ (Fig. 1) Notwithstanding that the entire city was ringed with fields and open spaces within close proximity, Exeter obviously wished to designate gardens and open spaces for the enjoyment of its inhabitants. The city may well have been influenced by London which pioneered the development of the urban promenade,² but the provision of fashionable walks where local 'society' could see and be seen was doubtless a reflection of the wealth and opulence of seventeenth-century Exeter.

The city's geographic position was beneficial to its commercial activities. All West Country roads of importance converged at this strategic point. (Fig. 1) It was the route town for traffic to the increasingly important seaports of the western peninsula and when seaside resorts to the west of the River Exe began to expand towards the end of the eighteenth century, Exeter was ideally situated as a service centre for travellers.³ Although Dr. Shapter regarded Exeter at the beginning of the nineteenth century as being "a compact city picturesquely situated in a grove of trees... almost confined within its original walled boundaries", this was a rather

¹ DRO 4292 A/BS1, Hooker's Map of Exeter engraved by Hogenberg, 1580; D. and S. Lysons, Topographical and Historical Account of Devonshire, 1822, I, p.191; S. Woolmer, A Concise Account of the City of Exeter, 1811, p.11.

² Borsay, op. cit., p.125.

³ Sheldon, op. cit., pp. 114-118.



0 800 Feet

Fig. 1 Main roads and promenades in Exeter at the beginning of the nineteenth century

(based on Map of Exeter, 1800)

stylized view.¹ The city within the walls was divided into sections by four main roads leading out through the main exits and, as is typical of many English anciently walled towns such as Canterbury, Chichester and Bath, there had been some ribbon development along these exit routes at an early date.² Leland, writing about 1535, speaks of "The Suburbe that lyith without the Est Gate of Excester is the biggest of al Suburbes of the Toune, and berith the name of S. Sidewells..." and both Hooker's map (late sixteenth century) and Cole's Map of 1709 indicate that there were houses on either side of St. Sidwell's Street for more than a quarter of a mile.³ In Roman times this road was one of the routes out of the city.⁴ The northern exit followed the steep and dangerous St. David's Hill and on either side there was a scattering of houses as far as the church. The western exit crossed the river to the extra-mural suburb of St. Thomas, where the houses and shops were largely congregated near the junction with the river crossing. (Fig. 2) Both the North Gate and the East Gate had been demolished; the West Gate and Water Gate remained until 1815 and the magnificent South Gate - "the finest of them all" - until 1819.⁵ It was through the latter's turreted archway⁶ that the southern exit road passed and immediately forked, one branch going in the direction of Topsham and the other to the isolated village of Heavitree, later to become one of the city's important suburbs. (Fig. 1). Within the environs

¹ Thomas Shapter, 'Report on the State of the City of Exeter' Health of Towns Commission, Second Report of the Commissioners for the Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, II, Local Reports, 1845, (hereafter Report on Exeter), p.209.

² C.W. Chalklin, The Provincial Towns of Georgian England, 1974, p.74; DRO 4292 A/BS1 Hooker's Map, op. cit.

³ Lucy Toulmin Smith, Itinerary of John Leland, op. cit., p.228; Hooker's Map of St. Sidwell's c. 1857 and Cole's First True Map of Exeter, 1709, both at Exeter City Council's Royal Albert Memorial Museum.

⁴ Hoskins, 2000, Map facing p.7.

⁵ Freeman, op. cit., pp.216, 218 and 219; Hoskins 2000, see Plate IV.

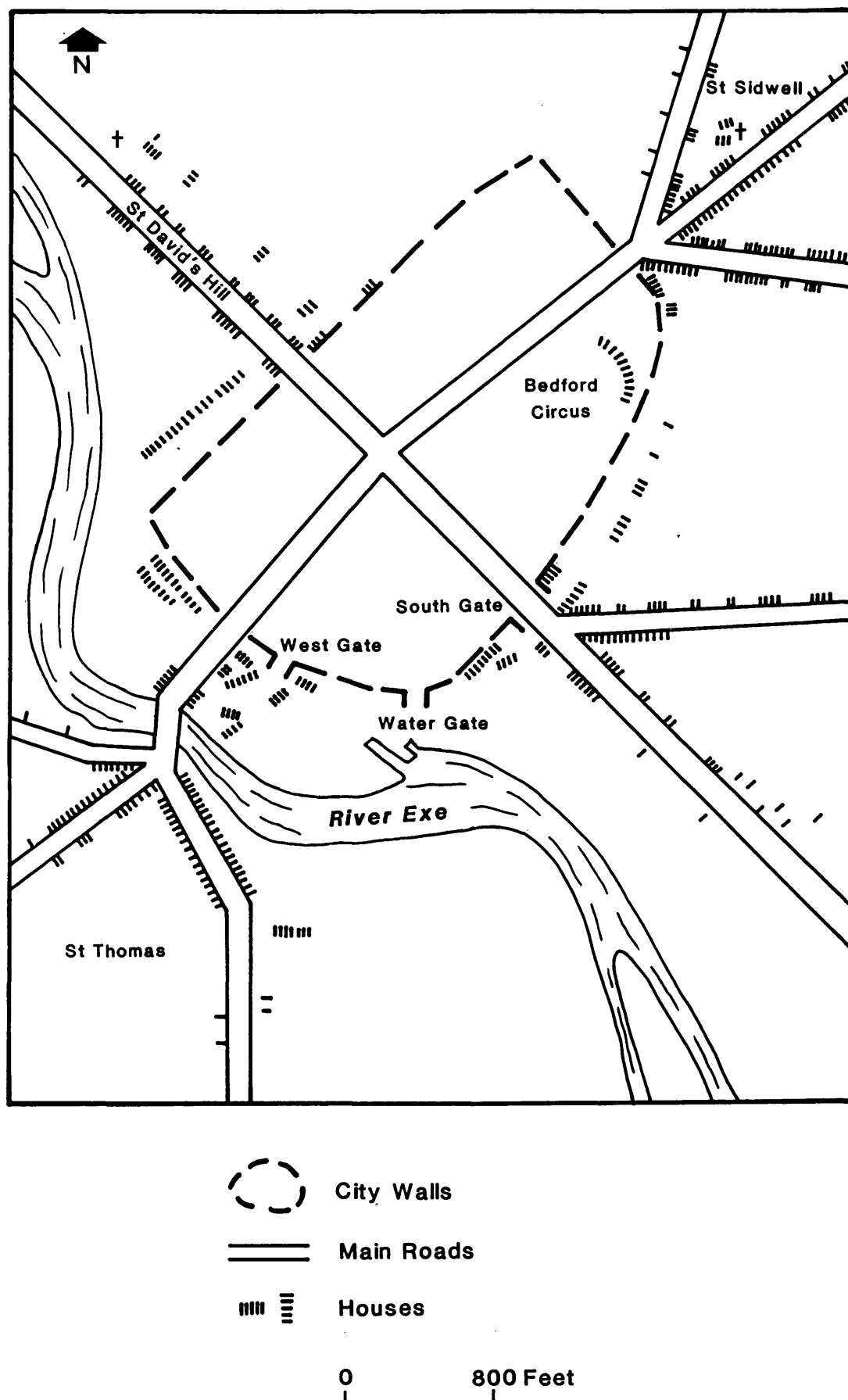


Fig. 2 Housing development outside the walls of Exeter by the beginning of the nineteenth century

(based on Tozer's Map, 1792 and Britton's Map, 1805)

of the city were a number of large mansions (Fig. 3) many of which were to play an important role in the shaping of the suburbs as will be shown later. Outside the walls trees, fields and nursery gardens abounded.¹ Within it was a city of contrasts. Referred to by Shapter as "the great emporium" and styled some years later as "the emporium and principal ornament of the West", it boasted a magnificent cathedral, a castle, a Tudor-fronted guildhall and "many other fine specimens of ancient architecture".² It was a mixture of splendid town houses, a fine hotel, banks and good shops, and in complete contrast, large numbers of filthy, unsavoury streets, a lack of sewers (the first one was not laid until 1807) and abysmal poverty in many of the overcrowded central parishes.³

Towards the end of the eighteenth century improvements had been commenced. The Exe Bridge was re-built, thus affording New Bridge Street better access to the river crossing. Travellers were well catered for by The Hotel (the first hostelry in Exeter, if not in England, to be called a hotel) and The New London Inn built in 1794 in a prime location, London Inn Square, at the junction of three important roads. (Fig.1) The New London Inn became a centre for the city's social and political life throughout the ensuing century.⁴ By 1801 expansion was apparent. A start had been made on the first of Exeter's new magnificent developments in Bedford Circus and Southernhay which immediately created job opportunities in the building trade.⁵ (Fig. 2) On the prosperous residents moved in, then professional services of many kinds were in demand. Thus the economic and commercial life of the city began to show signs of revitalization.

¹ Tozer's Map, 1792.

² Shapter, Report on Exeter, Topography and Directory of Devonshire, 1850, p.49.

³ Shapter, Report on Exeter, pp.210-213.

⁴ H. Tolson, Exeter and Its Bridges, c. 1900, p.10; Jenkins, op. cit. pp.213 and 357.

⁵ DRO ECA B 1/16 Act Book of the Chamber, 8.11.1774 and 23.11.1775.

¹ Tozer's Map, 1792.

² Shapter, Report on Exeter, p.212; William White, History, Topography and Directory of Devonshire, 1850, p.49.

³ Shapter, Report on Exeter, pp.210-213.

⁴ H. Tolson, Exeter and Its Bridges, c. 1900, p.10; Jenkins, op. cit. pp.213 and 357.

⁵ DRO ECA B 1/16 Act Book of the Chamber, 8.11.1774 and 23.11.1775.

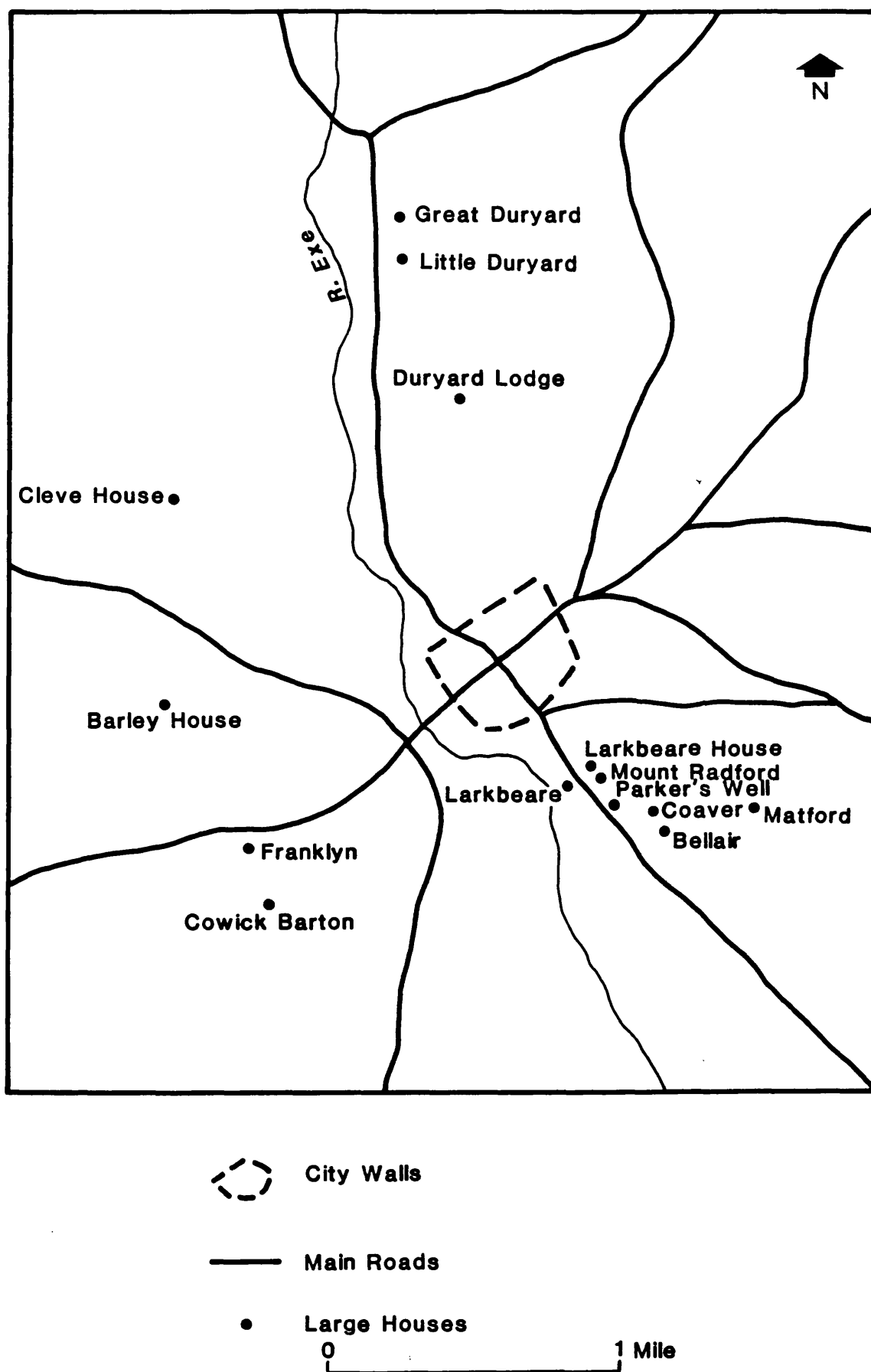


Fig. 3 Large mansions in the environs of Exeter
at the beginning of the nineteenth century

CHAPTER II

CHANGE AND EXPANSION 1801 - 1841

The first four decades of the nineteenth century were a period of great change for Exeter and its environs. Suburban expansion commenced; changes took place within the city centre; outside the walls open spaces disappeared, to be replaced by streets of houses and the whole social structure altered.

Between 1801 and 1841 the population in Exeter's built-up area increased by 93.5% to 39,790 and the housing stock more than doubled to over 7,000.¹ (Table 1). The peak period of building activity was 1831-1841, but building cycles varied in individual areas and will be discussed later. In the populous city centre districts the number of persons per occupied house increased from 6.5 in 1801 to 7.2 in 1821, at which time the number of persons per house was greater in Exeter than in the large industrial cities of Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester or other regional centres such as Chester, York and Worcester.² This suggests that the poor were congregating in the inner city in old houses, some of which had once been fine residences of flourishing city merchants, now divided into tenements with their gardens smothered in cheap cottages.³ With the expansion of the suburbs and the increase in the number of dwellings, the overall ratio had fallen by 1841 to 6.1 persons per house.⁴ According to Shapter, the health of the city in general improved slightly and the annual average mortality rate for the central areas fell from 2.58% for the period 1796-1805 to 2.45% in 1841.⁵

¹ Census, 1801-1841.

² Ibid.

³ Hoskins, 2000, p.105.

⁴ Census, 1841.

⁵ Thomas Shapter, 'Report on the State of the City of Exeter' in Second Report of the Commissioners for the Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, II, Local Reports, 1845 (hereafter Report on Exeter), pp.212 and 244.

Cholera and Its Aftermath

The city was imperfectly drained and ill-supplied with water when cholera arrived in July 1832. By September 440 deaths had occurred and a suitable burying ground for victims had to be found outside the walls. An engraving in Thomas Shapter's History of the Cholera in Exeter in 1832 shows infected clothing being burnt in the industrial area of Shilhay, but the practice was discontinued when it was found that the wind blew the smoke over the city.¹ In general cholera spread most rapidly in over-crowded districts and hit the poor who frequently lived in insanitary conditions. Fortunately, at the time of the outbreak the working-class district of St. Thomas, which lay across the river, was largely undeveloped; thus the death rate here was only 0.9% compared with 1.4% in the city (although some cases may have gone unreported).² Compared with figures available for certain other towns in England, the incidence of cholera was high in Exeter. Cheltenham, where strict sanitary measures were taken, escaped altogether. Certain ports, Plymouth for example, showed a higher incidence (2.25%), but many large industrial areas had lower overall percentages: London 0.37%, Manchester, Leeds and Bristol 0.5% and Liverpool 0.9%.³ Why did Exeter suffer so badly? Inspection by the Improvement Commissioners revealed grossly overcrowded houses without sanitation, some with pigsties attached and streets piled high with refuse. The Commissioners' powers were extended in 1832, but they were still inadequate. Shapter noted the lack of proper drainage and the totally inadequate water supply, doubtless a major contributory factor.⁴ However, the unfortunate episode brought long-term benefits to the city. The water supply was vastly improved; some of the

¹ N. Longmate, King Cholera, 1966, p.133;; Thomas Shapter, History of the Cholera in Exeter in 1832, 1849, pp.vi and 183.

² R.J. Morris, Cholera 1832, 1976, p.89.

³ Shapter, Cholera, p.265 sqq.; G. Hart, A History of Cheltenham, 1965, p.283; W. Farr, Vital Statistics, 1885, p.341.

⁴ Longmate, op. cit., p.120; Shapter, Cholera, pp.viii and 75.

worst slums were pulled down and thirteen miles of sewers were laid at a cost of £7,000. The Improvement Commissioners sanctioned the covering in of all drains. Plans were formulated for bringing fresh water to St. Thomas's and much cleansing, whitewashing and removing of nuisances was undertaken.¹ As a result, the health of the city improved. The average annual mortality rate of the central area fell from 2.58% for the period 1796-1805 to 2.45% in 1841.² Although the Improvement Act of 1832 had wrought considerable changes immediately following the cholera outbreak, by 1839 the improvement loan had risen and the commissioners anticipated an overall debt of some £70,000 at the close of the year and this restricted further large-scale operations, even though there was still much to be done.³ Whilst cholera was the stimulus for an improvement in public health, it is more difficult to attribute the boom in suburban expansion to this source. Some prosperous citizens no doubt moved out to higher, healthier ground but movement of the wealthy had already begun in the late seventeenth century when Thomas Gifford, a successful dyer, built Great Duryard House, a mile and a half to the north of the city.⁴

Institutional Land Use

The manner in which individual suburbs developed will be discussed later, but an important contribution to the shaping of suburban Exeter in the nineteenth century was the use of land for institutional purposes. As Whitehand points out, institutions are an often ignored but extensive category of urban land use.⁵ Such use

¹ Shapter, Report on Exeter, pp.223 sqq.

² Ibid., pp.212 and 244.

³ DRO G1.589 Improvement Commissioners' Proceedings, 5.8.1839.

⁴ A. Jenkins, Civil and Ecclesiastical History of the City of Exeter, 1841 edn, p.350

⁵ J.W.R. Whitehand, 'Building Cycles and the Spatial Pattern of Urban Growth', Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 1972, p.39.

in Exeter had far-reaching consequences; many of the public buildings erected immediately before or during the nineteenth century are still standing. Institutional land use has at least three important implications. Firstly, many public buildings require large plots whereas residential buildings are generally high density; secondly, the required easy access necessitates careful location, often on prime sites and thirdly, many such buildings have very long life-spans and because they usually involve heavy expenditure, once erected they cannot easily be removed. Where 'institutional development' includes amenities such as parks, games areas, cemeteries or other open spaces, the impact on land use can be even greater. Some - parks, gardens and golf courses for example - can add to the value and the attraction of an area; others such as cemeteries and prisons can have the opposite effect.

Many of Exeter's late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century public buildings outside the city walls have had a major effect on subsequent suburban development. (Fig.4) To the north the Cavalry Barracks and the County Gaol were constructed around 1790 on a south-facing slope which afforded excellent views over the city - land which subsequently might have attracted first-class residential development. In 1828 the Deaf and Dumb Institution moved from St. Thomas's to a two-acre site near the river in St. Leonard's. Had it not done so the genteel middle-class suburb being built in the immediate vicinity might have been extended towards the river and then the streets of small working-class houses that were eventually built near the school would not have existed.² The West of England Institute for the Blind was erected in 1839 on St. David's Hill.³ In 1699 the City Workhouse had been built on rising ground in the south-east sector and in 1840 remained in relative isolation, surrounded by

¹ Jenkins, 1841 edn, op. cit., pp.220-221; J. Rapkin, Map of Exeter, 1850.

² DRO PW/114 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.114; Wood's Map, 1840.

³ Kelly, 1883, p.168; Rapkin's Map, 1850.

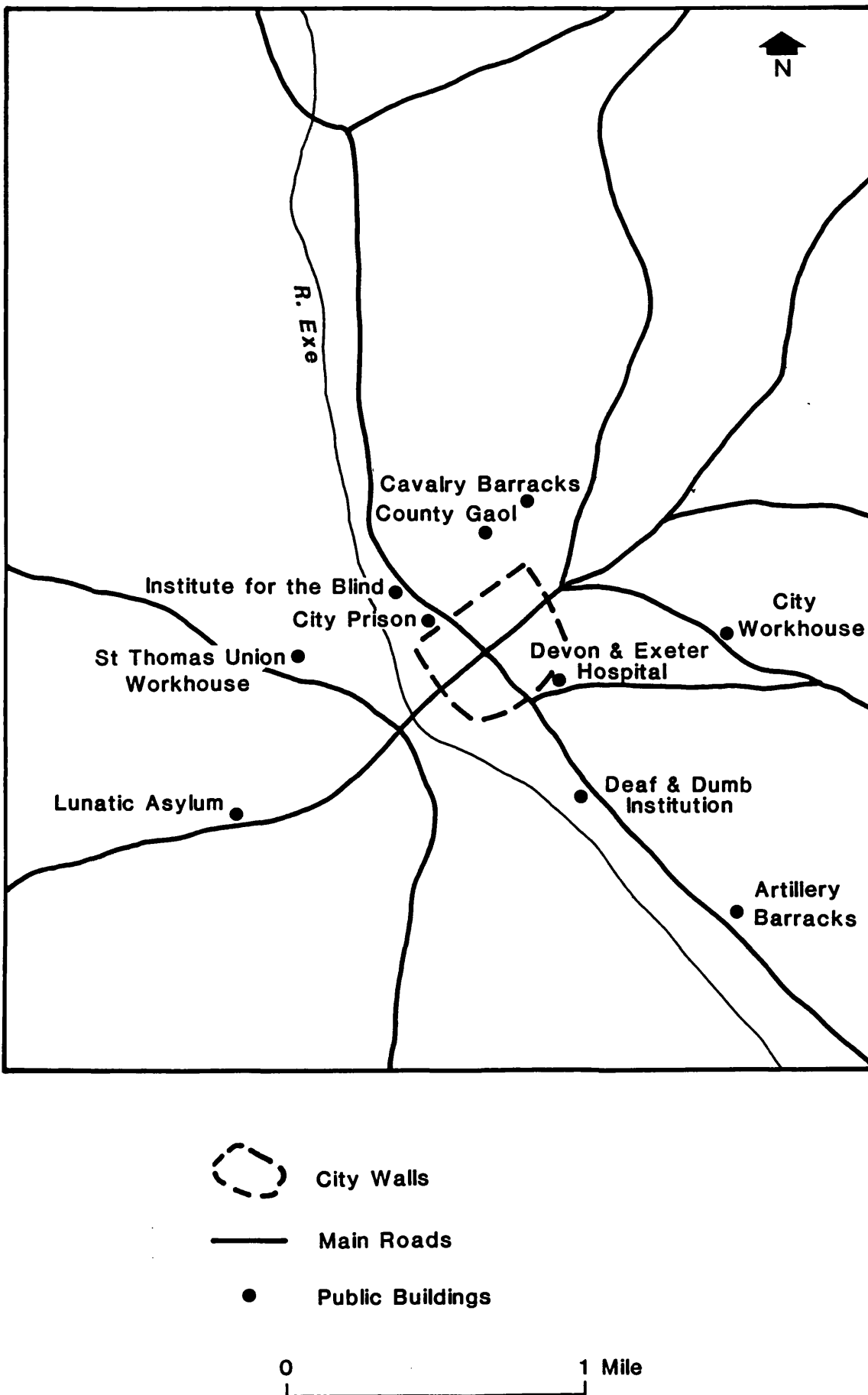


Fig. 4 Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century public buildings outside the walls of Exeter

(based on Britton's Map. 1805 and Brown's Map. 1835)

nurseries and, on its north-east side, by its brick field.¹ A large corner plot in a district devoted to market gardens was selected as the site for St. Thomas Union Workhouse (1836-7) and, apart from the railway line, much of the land behind it has remained undeveloped ever since.² (Fig.4) All these institutions occupied sites in areas that eventually became residential suburbs. Whilst market gardens and fields disappeared, these large buildings and their grounds remained, thus determining the pattern of development in their immediate vicinities.

Opening Up the City

By 1800 Exeter was no longer a walled city with exits through four main gates (some of which are depicted in Jenkins' History³). Although the pattern of most of the main exit roads remained similar to that of the Roman era, major road improvements had taken place during the previous half century. The North Gate had been demolished in 1769 and the East Gate in 1784. Although the West Gate, situated at the bottom of the original main street of the medieval city, remained until 1815, the main western exit route now lay some yards to the north via Bridge Street and crossed the river by a new bridge completed by 1778. The massive two-turreted South Gate was demolished in 1819.⁴ The city had been opened up to some extent, yet the very steep and narrow streets were heavily congested with traffic generated by the markets, waggons, coaches and industrial traffic, including that from the lime kilns of St. Leonard's and Countess Wear.⁵ A significant improvement was effected in the northern sector when in 1834 an iron bridge of Gothic design, made by Russell and Brown, was built across the Longbrook valley a little to the north of the

¹ W. Pile, An Historic Parish. 1912, p.12; Wood's Map, 1840.

² W. White, Devonshire, 1850, p. 122.

³ Jenkins, 1841 edn, op.cit., pp.77, 218, 272, 401;
Tozer's Map, 1792.

⁴ E.A. Freeman, Historic Towns: Exeter, 1887, pp.216-219.

⁵ G. Sheldon, From Trackway to Turnpike, 1928, p.141; EFP, 23.3.1820.

site of the former North gate. Cast-iron piers supported six rows of arched girders on which the road was carried. The steep ascent in nearby Fore Street was moderated and, about the same time, New North Road was built by the Exeter Turnpike Trust at a cost of £7,000.¹ Sweeping in an arc from Longbrook Street, past the Gaol and turning northwards to join the turnpike at Barnstaple, it provided a useful by-pass for northbound traffic and relieved city-centre congestion. Access to St. David's was greatly facilitated. Roadworks were also undertaken in the south-east sector. Two new roads were cut across the Barnfield in 1832 and although they remained undeveloped, and indeed unnamed until 1876, they were soon being described as not only a desirable pleasant walk but a most ready access to the eastern part of Exeter.² Further east, on the border of Heavitree, Polsloe Road was opened in 1836 which provided a north-south link on the city's eastern boundary. It was described as "a fine new road and a beautiful drive, soon to be bordered by elegant houses", although it continued to be known by its former name - Workhouse Lane - for some years.³

Improving the Trading Facilities

Road improvements were designed to meet the needs of an increasing population, to ease congestion and thus facilitate trade. Another scheme with similar aims was the building of two new markets and the creation of new streets round them. Although an 'Act for removing markets held within the city and providing another market place in lieu thereof' was passed in 1820, the scheme did not come to fruition for another fifteen years.⁴ During the last year of the old Chamber's regime before the Exeter City Council took office in 1836,

¹ Plaque; White, 1850, op. cit., p.66; HSI.

² BCI; Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 23.9.1837; EFP, 12.3.1838

³ EFP, 24.11.1836; Rapkin's Map, 1850; BCI.

⁴ DRO G 11 Press t 1, 96 M/27/1 Market Acts 1820 and 1834, Local Government Acts 1 Geo. IV c.lxxviii and 4 Wm. IV c.viii.

Charles Fowler, the successful architect of Covent Garden market, was commissioned first to design Lower Market in 1835 and then to complete the work on Higher Market in 1837 which had originally been designed by George Dymond. Lower Market, a superb classical building was built on the Shambles, where formerly butchers did their slaughtering and sold meat, and a new access road was constructed. Higher Market, perhaps an even finer building, was completed in 1838. Faced with Bath stone it had a central Greek Doric portico with pediment'. This was the start of a development that resulted in the imposing Queen Street, so named in 1839, an impressive civic undertaking in part a reflection of an existing demand for high-class shops, but no doubt built in the hope of attracting even more business. It led from High Street northwards, beyond the city walls and alongside nursery gardens for a third of a mile, although it took several years to complete.² Development was sporadic but overall the architecture was impressive. Several buildings had patent stone cornices and quoins; some had honeysuckle and scroll designs on upper floors and pilasters between the shops. The Exeter Dispensary (1841), designed by the architect S.A. Grieg, had Doric pilasters and a balustraded parapet.³ This splendid civic venture inevitably involved some sacrifice. The Swan tavern in High Street and 31 houses in nearby lanes were demolished, which must have caused some hardship if the inhabitants were poor and were forced into moving to already overcrowded slum areas in the neighbourhood.⁴ Exeter had for centuries been a provincial capital and regional market centre, and now that it had lost its main industry its economy was reliant upon its role as a service centre. Any sacrifices necessitated by enhancement of this role would be considered to be worthwhile. The building of imposing thoroughfares was fashionable - Regent Street in London, Milsom Street in Bath and The Promenade in Cheltenham - and if Exeter were to attract and retain

¹ A.E. Richardson and C.L. Gill, Regional Architecture in the West of England, 1924, p.44; DOE, p.219.

² Wood's Map, 1840.

³ DOE, pp.219-220.

⁴ R.S. Rendle, 'The Ferris Family of Exeter and Other Goldsmiths' in Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries, XXXIV, Part VII, 1981, p.287.

high-class trade it too needed grand shopping parades.'

Not all schemes for facilitating trade undertaken by the Chamber were so successful. In spite of improvements to the canal in 1714, ships were unable to reach the old quay in the heart of the city on account of obstructions in the river bed. The Chamber built a new basin in 1830 and imposing warehouses along the quay, presumably in an attempt to win back some of the prosperity the port had enjoyed during the previous century. The expenditure proved improvident. It coincided with the adoption of steam navigation at sea and the canal's proportions were inadequate. The city incurred a debt well in excess of £100,000.² This huge deficit could have had an adverse effect on other schemes that might have been beneficial to the development of the city and suburbs. It may indeed have been a contributory factor to the somewhat parsimonious attitude of future councils towards expenditure on public amenities in later decades.

Public Service Provision

Whilst Exeter was prepared to spend vast sums on imposing new buildings, the provision of public services such as water and a sewerage system was not entirely satisfactory. In 1694 the Chamber had established a water works under an Act of Parliament and water was brought from the river to the city. Householders able to afford a "reasonable rate" could have water piped to their homes through wooden pipes, but they were liable to leak.³ The water works could not deliver to higher parts of the city and only with difficulty to the

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² G. Oliver, The History of the city of Exeter, 1861, pp.262-267; Parliamentary Papers, Municipal Corporations in England and Wales, Royal Commissioners First Report, 1835, XXIII, p.495.

³ Besley, 1831, p.52; Shapter, Report on Exeter, p.211; Freeman, op. cit., pp.213-214.

reservoir that lay behind the High Street. The supply ceased altogether quite frequently and the service was so bad that in 1808 only one of the householders in the new fashionable houses being built immediately outside the city walls was prepared to be connected. In 1808 eight years of unexpired lease for the water works were purchased by Mr James Golsworthy who lived in the city centre. Among his improvements was the introduction of iron water pipes (alleged to be his original idea). London companies apparently tried to put him off, but in 1811 he obtained 6' long pipes from Chesterfield which were successful. Exeter had become an innovator as the New River Company in London adopted the system in 1815.¹ Nevertheless, the water supply was neither pure nor of sufficient quantity. Many of the increasing population depended on rain, wells and water carriers. There were a few public pumps, but there was heavy reliance on the river, adjoining streams and wells.² A house offered for sale in July 1835 in Southernhay, one of the good-class districts, boasted "a well of good water and the river water is brought in"; with hindsight, this was hardly a recommendation.³ Following the cholera outbreak of 1832, the powers of the Improvement Commissioners were extended. Old wells were repaired and deepened, private ones were purchased and some suburbs had new wells with pumps. Golsworthy was bought out and the Exeter Water Company was founded in 1833.⁴ A reservoir in the northern sector, capable of holding a week's supply for the city, was excavated, but Shapter felt that there was yet much room for improvement.⁵ During the 1820/30s water works companies were being set up in many parts of the country. For example, Birmingham's was founded in 1826 and Dudley's in 1834.⁶ Exeter was therefore keeping pace with other towns. There was an adequate supply nearby to draw on and in 1841 new machinery was installed at the waterworks, enabling

¹ Shapter, Report on Exeter, pp. 211 and 21; R. Trewman, Exeter Pocket Journal, 1816, p.45.

² Shapter, Report on Exeter, p.215.

³ EFP, 2.7.1835.

⁴ Shapter, Cholera, pp. 91, 92, 94 and 114.

⁵ Shapter, Report on Exeter, pp.228-229.

⁶ Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1982 edn, p.224; J. West, Town Records, 1983, p.189.

some 12 gallons a head per day to be produced, but this was still below the 13 gallons considered to be a normal day's supply and far below that available in some other towns: Preston and Nottingham for example could boast 40-50 gallons per head. Exeter's supply was limited to three hours a day on three days a week.¹ However, the water supply here was probably no worse than in many other towns, particularly in the larger industrial ones as revealed in two Government reports: Report of the Select Committee on the Health of Towns published in 1840 and Report on an Inquiry into the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain, 1842. Many of the poor in industrial areas had to carry all their water, often considerable distances. At Hyde, near Manchester, water carriers charged 1d per day. In a filthy court in Westminster, 16 houses had one standpipe, turned on for half an hour on three days a week and five minutes on Sundays.² Most inhabitants of Exeter were within reasonably easy reach of a water supply, even though of dubious quality. The city's mortality rate in 1841 was lower than towns such as Chester, Hull, York and Worcester, but higher than places such as Ipswich, Cambridge, Plymouth, Brighton and Oxford.³ Nevertheless, the Improvement Commissioners' report of 1834 which stated "The city is well lighted and paved and the private houses are sufficiently supplied with water" was perhaps a little optimistic and complacent.⁴

The sewerage system was in a deplorable state. In 1800 drainage was by surface gutters and in many small lanes and alleys sewage and nuisances from traders were removed by open gutters down the centre of

¹ Shapter, Report on Exeter, p.229; Parliamentary Papers, Second Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Large Towns in the Populous Districts, 1845, (602), xviii, I, p.49; Shapter, Report on Exeter, p.230.

² Parliamentary Papers, Report of the Royal Commission for Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, 1844, xvii, pp.332 and 419.

³ Shapter, Report on Exeter, pp.244 and 247.

⁴ DRO Improvement Commissioners' Report on the City of Exeter, 1834, p.491.

pavements. Unfortunately, the immediate improvement effected by the Chamber's bye-law of 1801 forbidding the disposal of rubbish of any kind and compelling householders to sweep front pavements regularly was not long-lasting.¹ Improvement Commissioners were appointed in 1809 and the Chamber secured powers to sewer the city.² Although by 1830 sewers were constructed in some of the districts occupied by the more wealthy inhabitants, there was no systematic plan. There were great open sewers, both in the central area and immediately outside the walls. Illnesses and death in houses adjacent to these hazards were proportionately high. An Act for improving the public services was passed on 13th July, 1832 and following the cholera outbreak of that year, the Improvement Commissioners provided common sewers in some of the principal streets of the city and some of the suburbs lying immediately outside at a cost of £2,000.³ Although Shapter reported that by 1841 Exeter had "considerably improved", was well supplied with water and had a good and extensive system of underground sewerage, reports in the local newspaper suggest that, despite some improvements, conditions remained deplorable, particularly in the overcrowded areas, for almost another half century.⁴ Probably Exeter was little worse than other towns. Although underground sewers had been constructed in the eighteenth century in some of the best districts of London, by 1855 only one in ten houses was linked to a proper sewer.⁵ One of the Health of Towns Commissioners reporting in 1845 remarked of Bradford that it was "...the most filthy town I visited...". Halifax was considered to have "...a great want of thorough under-sewering" and Woolwich was inefficiently drained, paved and cleansed.⁶

¹ Shapter, Cholera, p.74; Jenkins, op. cit., p.227.

² DRO ECA 2/28 Chamber Minutes, 21.4.1810, 18.9.1810.

³ Shapter, Report on Exeter, p.223; Shapter, Cholera, p.90.

⁴ Shapter, Report on Exeter, p.224; EEP, 17.10.1850, 4.9.1878.

⁵ S. Muthesius, The English Terraced House, 1982, p.56.

⁶ James Smith, 'Report on the Condition of the Town of Bradford' and 'Report on the Condition of the Town of Halifax'; W.T. Denison, 'Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Town of Woolwich' in The State of Large Towns Report, II Local Reports, op. cit., pp.151, 158 and 102.

Fire was a major hazard, particularly where there were many tightly-packed old cottages in the local vernacular tradition of cob and thatch. Devon in general seems to have been particularly prone to fires in the nineteenth century.¹ A combination of poor fire-fighting facilities and an inadequate water supply in Exeter did not help. A great fire swept through St. Sidwell's in 1799 causing tremendous distress and there were numerous reports in the local newspapers in subsequent years of property being destroyed.² Provision for fighting fires was often made by insurance companies; the London Fire Brigade being managed by insurance companies until 1865, for example.³ Exeter had no municipal fire brigade until 1888, but in 1821 several local insurance companies contributed towards the cost of fire plugs being laid down; for example, the West of England Insurance Company gave £200, the Sun £50, the Royal Exchange £30, the Norwich Union £25 and the Birmingham £10. Water was supplied free of charge by James Golsworthy's water company.⁴ By 1830 there were nine stations with fire engines, four of which belonged to insurance companies, but of these only two were located in the suburbs and both were in the western sector. St. Sidwell's, a high risk area, was poorly served.⁴

Prior to the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835 the permanent police force consisted of eight men, all of whom had additional ceremonial and better-paid jobs. Special constables and soldiers were called in to suppress disorder, the city's mayor taking command. Expenditure on police and constables in 1839 was £1215. A police force in the modern sense was not formed until 1847.⁵

¹ E.L. Jones, 'Fire Disasters: The special Case of East Devon', in The Devon Historian, 20, 1980, p.11.

² Jenkins, op. cit., p.225.

³ P.J. Waller, Town, City and Nation, 1983, p.237.

⁴ Newton, VE, p.210; EEF, 27.12.1821; Besley, 1831, p.138.

⁵ Newton, VE, pp.60-61; White's Devonshire, 1850, p.69;
DRO ECA B 2/33 Council Minutes, 16.6.1847.

Changing Employment Patterns

As nineteenth-century Exeter's economy was not based on any major industry, the greater part of the employed population consisted of small shopkeepers, craftsmen of various kinds and labourers. From evidence available it is possible to make some comparison of the employment patterns of the city during the period 1803-1816, but not a comprehensive one. The Militia List of 1803 gives some indication of occupations but is confined to males aged between 17 and 55 (i.e. only 42% of the total male population) and furthermore, of the 2,688 men recorded 352 have no employment category.¹

Exeter Militia List, 1803

<u>Category</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Approx. % of total no. recorded</u>
Gentry	48	1.8
Professions	177	6.6
Innkeeping, Transport, etc.	166	6.1
Textile Manufacturing	262	9.7
Other Processing and Wholesale Trades	97	3.6
Retail Trades	347	12.9
Crafts	1034	38.5
Landwork	55	2.0
Tool Makers	17	0.6
Labourers	202	7.5
Servants, Housekeepers, etc.	110	4.0
Defence (excluding Volunteers)	27	1.0
Minor Officials	15	0.5
Service Industry	40	1.5
Other	92	3.4

¹ W.G. Hoskins, ed., Exeter Militia List, 1803, 1972.

The woollen industry had declined, but 9.0% of city dwellers in this particular age group were still employed in textile manufacture, and of these 97 were fullers and 61 weavers. The largest category of employment was that under the general heading of 'Craftsmen'. Of these, 278 were engaged in woodwork (102 being joiners) and 195 in the building trade, job opportunities in both categories being engendered by new house building. The majority of the retail traders sold food and drink. It is of some significance, and perhaps another indication of Exeter's changing role, to note that while the majority of domestic servants employed were women, at least 75 men aged between 17 and 55 were male servants in 1803.¹ Clearly Exeter was attracting residents of sufficient means to employ footmen and other male servants who were in all probability more expensive to keep both in food and wages than young girls would have been.

An analysis of an 1816 trade directory reinforces the importance of certain categories of employment indicated in 1803, but it is impossible to make a direct comparison with the Militia List as the population covered is not identical. Being a trade directory, gentlemen, servants, labourers and military personnel were omitted and only approximately 6.5% of an assumed population of some 21,000 were included. There were, however, significant indicators worth noting. The three biggest categories were craftsmen of various kinds, those in retail trade and in innkeeping and transport. Of the craftsmen, the three leading groups were clothing, building and leatherwork. The 6.3% employed in the service industry included 11 dancing teachers, which suggests that balls and similar functions played an important part in the social life of the city. Textile manufacture now only accounted for 3.6% of those included in the directory. Exeter was ringed with market gardens and other formal gardens yet only 18 people were listed as working on the land. The others must have lived outside the area covered by the directory.²

¹ Hoskins, Militia List, *passim*.

² Trewman's Exeter Pocket Journal, 1816, *passim*.

Exeter's Changing Character

Census figures, although providing only rather a broad categorisation, also give some indication of the changing character of Exeter in the first four decades of the nineteenth century. During this time there was an overall drop in the number of people employed in agriculture, although the rate differed from area to area. In St. Thomas's, for example, it remained around 5%, but in Heavitree it fell sharply from 60% to a little over 6%, revealing one aspect of the many ways in which the village changed during the first forty years of the nineteenth century.¹ Other industries declined during this period too: Trews Weir cotton mill, advertised for sale by auction in August 1807 as the only cotton mill in the West of England, closed soon after.² Overall, by 1841 only 1% of the population of Exeter was employed in the manufacture of textiles.³ Until around 1810 some two to three thousand tons per annum of manganese were shipped out of Exeter, but local mines became exhausted and their trade through the port declined rapidly.⁴

Direct comparisons with other towns are difficult. Census figures for Exeter did not include all the expanding suburbs; no doubt this applied to other cities as well, but a comparison between Exeter and Leicester is nevertheless interesting. In 1801 both cities were of a comparable size. By 1831 Leicester's population had increased by 138.9%, Exeter's by 62.3% (69.5% including the suburbs). Exeter's growth rate during this period was only half that of Leicester's. By 1831 there was a marked difference in the employment pattern of the two cities. Exeter had twice as many "Capitalists, Bankers, Professional and Educated Men" and more than twice as many servants as Leicester, but the latter had 8.7% of those

¹ Census, 1801-1841.

² DRO PW/117 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.63; I am indebted to Trews Weir Paper Mill for information.

³ Census, 1841.

⁴ D. Lysons, Magna Britannia, 1822, 6, p.cclxxxix.

⁵ Census, 1801-1841.

listed employed in manufacturing, compared with 0.2% in Exeter. (The percentage of persons listed was 29.9 for Exeter and 28.4 for Leicester). Leicester's important hosiery industry and its diversification into boot- and shoe-making in the early nineteenth century was already suggesting a different social structure from Exeter's whose major industry had declined.¹

Exeter was attracting prosperous, professional, educated people for a number of reasons. Its site was regarded as "salubrious and healthy"² It could offer good accommodation and the "general requisites for the invalid".³ Although not actually a spa, it had many of the attributes of an inland resort: shady walks and promenades which were well cared-for and replanted when necessary;⁴ good shops and entertainment and a mild climate. The fashionable seaside resorts of Exmouth and Teignmouth were within reach. A number of titled people and senior service officers lived in its smart terraces and crescents. Shapter noted that the gentry resided in an "open, pleasant and healthful" position in the south-east quarter and that the north and south quarters were occupied by "persons, if not affluent, certainly for the most part in comfortable circumstances".⁵ It was perhaps cheaper than some of the more fashionable resorts. General Sir William Paterson, who settled in Baring Place, liked Cheltenham, found it "very gay" and went there to dine with the Duke of Gloucester but, from accounts in his wife's diary, he was not wealthy. They could, however, afford to live in Exeter if they economised strictly. Surrounded by friends, a number of whom were titled, they were able to live a comfortable and urbane life.⁶ Richard Ford, the author and traveller, considered Exeter as an ideal place to live, regarding it as "quite a capital, abounding in

¹ Census, 1831; P.J. Corfield, The Impact of English Towns 1700-1800, 1982 (paperback edn), p.30.

² Shapter, Cholera, p.74.

³ Thomas Shapter, The Climate of the South of Devon, 1862 edn, p.108.

⁴ DRO ECA B 1/16 Act Book of the Chamber, 12.11.1793, B 2/17 Act Book of the Chamber, 20.12.1820.

⁵ Shapter, The Climate of South Devon, p.101.

⁶ DRO MS 36 Lady Paterson, Diary, 18.7.1831, 28.7.1831, passim.

all that London has except for its fog and smoke".¹ This influx of prosperous people created demands in a number of fields. Good quality houses with modern amenities were required, thus creating employment in the building trade and allied services, so that by 1841 more than 12% of the male population were employed in the building industry. Vast numbers of servants were required (Table 4) and hence domestic service (which included charwomen and laundresses) accounted for the largest category - over 64% of all employed women. There was a need for professional services and there were 13 bankers, 54 surgeons and apothecaries, 56 chemists and druggists and 62 in law practice of various kinds. It was perhaps indicative of Exeter's continuing role as a service centre that it had nearly twice as many lawyers and four times as many in the medical profession in 1841 as the much larger city of Leicester.²

Perhaps not as fashionable as the spa towns of Bath and Cheltenham, although probably less expensive, Exeter was attracting people with money and this was reflected in the wide variety of goods, including luxury items, on sale. Jewellers, goldsmiths and silversmiths had risen in number from 20 in 1816 to 44 in 1841. Norwich, with twice the population, had only 18.³ Enticing ranges of the latest haberdashery, mink, sable and ermine were readily available.⁴ The author Richard Ford was delighted to find a bookseller with ten thousand volumes, and a well-chosen library at the excellent Devon and Exeter Institution which had been founded in 1813 in a former town house of the Courtenays.⁵ The city had long had a reputation for bookshops; there were over a dozen in 1831 and by 1841 there were at least 68 people employed in the book trade.⁶ For the prosperous middle class there was a satisfying cultural and social

¹ R.E. Prothero, ed., The Letters of Richard Ford 1797-1858, 1905, p.135.

² Census, 1841.

³ Trewman's Exeter Pocket Journal, 1816, passim., Census, 1841.

⁴ Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 23.1.1836; EEP, 11.3.1841, 18.3.1841.

⁵ Prothero, op. cit., p.135.

⁶ Besley, 1831, p.157; Census, 1841.

life. There were numerous balls and dances and twice as many dancing masters here in 1841 as in the large city of Plymouth.¹ Concerts attracted artists such as Paganini and Jenny Lind. The theatre re-opened in Southernhay in 1819 after extensive refurbishment and such was the interest that after a serious fire the following year, it was re-built within three months.² Official and ceremonial banquets were held at the impressively large New London Inn, a centre of social and political life throughout the nineteenth century. Great dinners were held in the city's public houses; on one occasion "a great concourse of fashionable females" was reported.³ The building of the Royal Subscription Rooms in 1820 with its 92' ballroom and numerous function rooms and The Athenaeum in 1835 with seating for 400 provided employment both for the building trade during construction and ancillary staff to run these establishments on completion.⁴

Apart from the provision of goods and services, Exeter's economy by 1841 was based on a range of small industries, rather than one single major industry. Milling, malting, brewing, tanning, paper-making, brick-making and other necessary processing were undertaken, but all on a small scale. The three iron foundries together only employed 22 men and the largest was only rated at £184 per annum whereas significantly, for it reflects the very nature of change in Exeter's functions, the most highly rated business was the New London Inn assessed at £965 per annum.⁵ Ideally located near the site of the former East Gate,⁶ it was a focal point for the city's great coaching industry whose demands resulted in increased opportunities for employment, both in serving travellers as grooms, ostlers, guards,

¹ E. Shore, The Journal of Emily Shore, 1891, p.166; Census, 1841.

² W. Cotton, The Story of Drama in Exeter 1787-1823, 1887, pp.18 and 48.

³ R. Dymond, 'The Old Inns and Taverns of Exeter', in Transactions of the Devon Association, 1880, pp.411-412; Cotton, op. cit., p.37.

⁴ D. and S. Lysons, Topographical and Historical Account of Devonshire, 1822, 1, p.234; White's Devonshire, 1850, pp.93-94 and 90.

⁵ Census, 1841; EVL, 1838.

⁶ For illustrations see P.D. Thomas, Old Exeter, 1981 edn., pp.145-146.

etc. and in the provision of vehicles, horses and allied services. By 1841 8% of the employed male population of Exeter were connected with transport compared with 4% in Norwich, a city with twice as many people.¹

Exeter had always been a provincial service centre, but this was now its major role, enhanced by the demands of its middle-class residents whose numbers had increased during the first four decades of the nineteenth century. The inhabitants of the elegant terraces and crescents being built in the suburbs needed a wide range of services which embraced not only domestic servants of all kinds, but professional, medical, financial and legal services, high-class shops, entertainment and transport to enable them to enjoy a full cultural and social life. Exeter appeared capable of fulfilling such needs.

¹ Census, 1841.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNINGS OF SUBURBIA 1801 - 1841

Although this chapter deals mainly with housing development that took place during the early part of the nineteenth century, it is necessary from time to time to look back to earlier years and consider antecedents and determining factors which led to subsequent development. For centuries there had been dwellings of various kinds beyond the city walls, mainly of poor quality cottages for the working class outside the city gates, along St. Sidwell's Street or near the river crossing in St. Thomas's, plus a few large, isolated houses. (Fig.2 and Fig.3) Whilst there had been some re-building or refurbishing of existing houses both inside the city walls and in the near neighbourhood (for example, Larkbeare in Holloway Street)¹ it was not until the last quarter of the eighteenth century that extensive suburban expansion took place. From 1773 onwards an entirely different type of house appeared. Hitherto some prosperous merchants had lived within the city walls and others had bought or built large houses on the outskirts.² Now the elegant terraces of houses began to appear; large three- or four-storied houses for the very prosperous and smaller, yet still graceful, houses for those with perhaps lower incomes.

Exeter's population doubled between 1801 and 1841; the fastest rate of growth being between 1811 and 1831.³ There was a need for a variety of houses. The wealthy who sought a mild climate and the amenities Exeter could offer, retired service officers who had made money overseas, tradesmen and professional men such as lawyers, bankers and doctors who benefited financially from increasing demands, required large, stylish

¹ R. Dymond, A History of the Suburban Parish of St. Leonard, Exeter, 1873, p.13.

² Shapter, Report on Exeter, p.213; DRO PW/115 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.202.

³ Census, 1801 -1841.

residences. Those with less money but discerning taste required smaller, elegant terrace houses. The labourers, coachmen, laundresses, non-resident servants and all those who provided services needed small dwellings at low rents. Thus between 1801 and 1841 there was a demand for a wide variety of houses. The result was the gradual enlargement of the built-up area outside the city walls. As Richards remarks, "The suburb is neither the town spread thin nor the country built close; but a quite different type of development with its own, inimitable characteristics".¹ As will be shown, this was true of all of Exeter's suburbs. Each developed at a different speed to fulfil different requirements. (Table 2)

Before considering the broad categories of development individually, it is perhaps necessary to discuss certain concepts relating to class structure and to different types of buildings.

Exeter's Class Structure

In attempting to analyse the growth of the suburbs it is necessary to be able to refer to broad social groupings, for example 'middle class', 'artisans' and 'working class', but, as has been discovered by many historians and sociologists, it is extremely difficult to define accurately what is meant by each term. Therefore it is proposed to outline briefly what is implied within the framework of this study as it relates to Exeter with its particular economic background.

What is meant by class? Kitson Clark suggests "any reasonably large section of a community which is united either by a common social status, or by a common economic position, or by both".²

¹ J.M. Richards, The Castles on the Ground: The Anatomy of Suburbia, 1973, p.2.

² G. Kitson Clark, The Critical Historian, 1967, p.152.

But what confers social status? Birth? Land? Wealth? Dahrendorf alleges that in a pre-industrialised society distinctions were primarily of rank and that with the rise of capitalism a class system emerged largely based on material possessions.¹ The main groups of people concerned with the development of nineteenth-century suburban Exeter, either as purchasers or tenants, were those usually referred to as 'middle class', 'artisans' or 'working class'. The aristocracy and landed gentry tended to live some distance away, only influencing the pattern of development through land transactions, mainly in the latter part of the century. The broad groupings which need to be defined are therefore the middle class, the artisans and the working class. There is no clear stratification and, particularly in Exeter, there was a considerable amount of social mobility during the period under review.

Although it has been suggested that middle-class people can be distinguished from the gentry by the necessity of earning their livings, this is not entirely valid for Exeter.² There were many people recorded as 'of independent means' who probably regarded themselves as middle-class and not gentry. It is impossible to determine just how wealthy such people were and this group could well encompass the very wealthy, the impoverished gentility or those with very small incomes. Exeter's middle class contained a considerable number of such people. A further sub-division of the middle-class group included the professional class, for example doctors, lawyers, bankers and service officers; another group comprised the prosperous merchants and tradespeople. Whether the latter were accepted in the early nineteenth century by those considering themselves as constituting Exeter's 'society' is doubtful. In 1768

¹ R. Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, 1959, p.5.

² H. Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880, 1969, p.23.

William Spicer, one of the city's leading merchants, sat at Westminster for a few months, but refused to stand again for re-election as, although he had money, he felt he was looked down upon socially by the other members. Leading Devon county families had represented Exeter almost exclusively until the latter part of the eighteenth century, but this changed when John Baring, textile merchant turned banker, was elected to Parliament in 1776 and thereafter prosperous merchants played an increasingly large part in the political life of the city.¹ Baring's home became the resort of "people of the best quality ... men of fashion ... gentlewomen of high degree..."² Until 1836 the governing body of the city, the Chamber, mainly consisted of retired gentlemen, bankers, doctors or surgeons who were considered to have reached the higher levels of Exeter society. Although a number remained on the newly formed City Council, they were outnumbered by local tradesmen.³

One mark of the middle class is sometimes said to be property ownership, but whilst this may apply over a broad spectrum it is not necessarily the correct yardstick for nineteenth-century Exeter. Was the size of the property owned significant? The bankers and financiers who lived in the large elegant houses most certainly would have counted themselves middle-class, but what of the small tradesmen, grocer William Luke for example, who lent money to joiner Robert Fisher to finance the building of small houses in St. Sidwell's? Fisher lived in a very poor-class district in 1831 but eventually resided in one of Exeter's prestigious mansions, but in the interim period had had to

¹ W.G. Hoskins, Industry, Trade and People in Exeter 1688-1800, 1935 (hereafter Hoskins, IT&P), p.20.

² DRO PW/116 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, R. Dymond History of the Suburban Parish of St. Leonard, 1873, p.20.

³ DRO ECA B 1/16 Act Book of the Chamber, 28.1.1777; DRO ECA B 2/31 Council Minutes, 1.1.1836.

relinquish some of his newly-built property in order to settle outstanding debts.' He was one of the many examples of nineteenth-century social mobility, but did such people rank eventually as middle class and where did the tradesmen who owned blocks of property in the poorer districts appear in the social order - especially if they themselves resided in one of their own cottages? It is suggested that property ownership is no real guide. St. Leonard's was regarded as a middle-class suburb, full of 'genteel' houses, yet the ratio of tenants to owner-occupiers was 3:1.² The overriding concern of Exeter's society in the early part of the nineteenth century appears to be 'gentility'. Houses were advertised as 'genteel' or being suitable for 'genteel families'. Gentility was, however, never defined. Probably birth or connections were all-important factors; those who had lost large portions of their fortunes through unfortunate investment would probably be accepted as 'impoverished gentility'. In reality social acceptance by a particular group was probably the result of a combination of factors not easily definable.

In the middle class there were perhaps two broad groups - 'upper middle' and 'lower middle'; the former consisting of the wealthy, the prospering professionals, large landowners and those in similar circumstances. Included here might be General Sir William and Lady Paterson who lived in a rented house and were forced to sell their coach in order to meet financial commitments, but were on calling terms with local aristocracy.³ The 'lower middle' might include the owners of small, middlingly prosperous enterprises upon which Exeter thrived: tanning, milling, brewing, building and small-scale retailing catering to a wealthy clientele. There is, however, no clear stratification as here might be

¹ DRO ECA D7 594/4 Deeds, Fisher and Luke, 22.5.1836; Besley, 1831, p.184.

² DRO Tithe Map and Apportionment for the Parish of St. Leonard, 1841.

³ DRO 3004 A, PO 13 B, Heavitree Rate Books, 5.12.1834; DRO MS 36 Lady Paterson, Diary, 10.6.1831, 18.8.1831, 22.9.1833.

included skilled master craftsmen who formed the 'artisan' group and owned the tools of their trades, teachers and administrators employed by professional men. They lived in houses that were small, but superior to the blocks of small cottages for the working class.

The working class, or the group at the lower end of the scale, are equally hard to define. Some no doubt merged with the bottom end of the lower middle class. In certain specific groups among the working class there were definite distinctions: domestic service was a prime example. All belonged 'below stairs', yet within their ranks was a rigid hierarchy, ranging from butlers and stewards to scullery maids and stable boys.

It is almost impossible to be clear cut in referring to any one particular social group. During the nineteenth century many local prospering tradesmen were able to move to expensive good quality houses in the better districts; whether they moved to a higher social grouping or remained as nouveau riche outsiders is impossible to say. Terms such as 'upper middle class', 'lower middle class' and 'working class' are therefore not intended to be definitive; they are merely used here as a very rough guide which can only indicate approximate levels of society. In other towns and cities there may have been entirely different factors contributing to class structure. In most cases the sectors are not clear cut; one merges into another and it is impossible to separate them categorically. It is, however, useful to have some means of identification, however ill-defined.

Changing Styles

Summerson points out that England had changed a good deal after the French wars. "An aristocratic society with bourgeois

leanings had become a bourgeois society with aristocratic yearnings".¹ Perhaps nowhere was this more readily and visibly demonstrated than in the houses being built for this expanding class. Borsay sees a subtle link between economy and architecture in a period where economic expansion provided growing capital to finance housing development. By the early 1800s very large town houses were not being built any more; in fact many were demolished to make way for smaller houses. For example, in London Carlton House and Bedford House were replaced by Carlton House Terrace and Bedford Place; in Exeter Bedford House made way for Bedford Circus. Instead of very large mansions for the wealthy, elegant terraces, crescents and villas were appearing all over the country.² Some towns prospered on manufacturing industry; others, including Exeter, on an economy based on services in law, finance, medicine and merchandising to a ready market expanding during the early decades of the nineteenth century. As a result, stylish terraces and crescents were built to fulfil the aspirations of consumers with sufficient money.

Why did this particular form of development take place at this time? What was its appeal? In the seventeenth century classicism had begun to replace vernacular architecture. Neo-classicism, itself a product of new attitudes in Europe towards antiquity as a source for modern invention, dates from the middle of the eighteenth century and, according to Summerson, in the early 1800s the neo-classical tradition split itself into two parallel and unopposed movements, since known as 'Greek Revival' and 'Gothic Revival' which appealed to the new middle class.³ These movements influenced the style of many different types of buildings, from the large town hall to the smaller urban houses. Borsay suggests that this desire for grand design was rooted more in the aspirations of developers, and above all, the consumers, than in overall plans

¹ J. Summerson, Architecture in Britain 1530-1830, 1983 edn, p.509.

² S. Muthesius, The English Terraced House, 1982, p.7.

³ Summerson, op. cit., p.409, p.509.

of a few creative architects, although there were a number of the latter. The newly emerging bourgeoisie had no country seats, but they had the money to buy or rent houses that would afford them social status. Urban classicism had first arrived in London with Inigo Jones; other towns emulated the capital - Warwick, parts of Birmingham and squares in Bath and Bristol among others. When expansion was commenced in Exeter it was perhaps therefore natural that this pattern be followed, particularly as the first group of houses to be erected that could justifiably be called 'suburban expansion' was on the site of the former Bedford House. From the early eighteenth century there were pattern books available so that the strict rules of classical architecture could be followed. The aspiring gentleman had to pursue culture in all its forms. Architecture was a visible means of declaring his social aspirations and a stylish house a means of rising above the social level of his forebears.¹

For some, and probably many of the middle class in Exeter, there was little likelihood of enormous wealth; thus the maximum amount of prestige had to be gained from the money available. For these people the terrace house was ideal. Houses built in terraces were not a new invention, but in the early eighteenth century they had been at first confined to London. Then they appeared in Bath and soon afterwards in Bristol. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the fashion had spread to other towns and Exeter was in the forefront, along with Liverpool, Hull and York, and to a lesser extent, Newcastle, Leeds, Oxford and Shrewsbury.² Terraces had a number of attractive features. Each house required less land than a detached house, a minimum of road frontage and might well have been cheaper to build on account of party walls. Doubtless these cost factors would have been reflected in the ultimate selling

¹ P. Borsay, 'Culture, Status and the English Urban Landscape', *History*, 67, no. 219, 1982, pp. 3-10.

² Muthesius, *op. cit.*, p.148.

price or the rent demanded. They may have been inconvenient to run being on four or five floors, but servants were readily available and probably the number employed was another prestige factor. Houses built in groups had the advantages of uniformity and increased scale. Facades could be treated to present a unified composition and by various means they could be made to look prestigious. Ornamental balconies, verandahs, fanlights and glazing bars emphasized graceful proportions. Doorcases could express individuality; ornamentation could give additional splendour. In 1818 John Papworth remarked:

"No decorations have so successfully varied the sameness of modern structures in the metropolis as the verandah, the lengthened window and the balcony. They have produced an intrinsic elegance."¹

A slight curve to a terrace was an attraction. It was important to perspective, added dignity and was pleasing to the eye. If a curved terrace stood alone, particularly on an elevation (one of Exeter's magnificent early terraces stands above the river) then it could be viewed from many angles and itself command an enhanced prospect. Above all, a terrace gave both architectural and social cohesion. For example, once Southernhay was completed it harmonized and was ultimately far more impressive than a series of individual houses in varying styles would have been.

Exeter's first suburban development, Bedford Circus, was, as its name implies, intended to be a circus, but as it took half a century to complete it remained a crescent for many years. A circus imparts a definite 'sense of place'; it is a unit separated from its surroundings and provides a central area from which to see and be seen. It looks inward, cannot be viewed from afar and perhaps, therefore, acquires a sense of privacy and separateness. The most famous is probably The Circus in Bath. To be effective a circus involves a relatively large number of buildings and, as

¹ J.B. Papworth, Rural Residences, 1818, p.103.

expansion in Exeter in the early nineteenth century took place in small groups, this accounts for there being no further attempts to design forms of this kind here. There were, however, a number of crescents. A crescent is, in effect, one side of a circus. One of the most important is Royal Crescent, Bath, built by John Wood the younger between 1767 and 1775; a landmark in the history of English architecture, for it introduced a type of urban composition used, with innumerable variations, in many parts of the country until well into the nineteenth century. Its first imitation was at Buxton and the fashion spread.¹ Exeter's first crescent was commenced in 1805 and others followed.

For those with a taste for individuality and sufficient means there was the suburban 'villa', although by now 'villa' bore little resemblance to its original concept - a country estate. The term had been used from the early eighteenth century in England to describe the smaller Palladian mansions of the nobility, but even as early as 1750 the 'cottage or plain little villa' was being alluded to. During the early part of the nineteenth century this degraded term 'villa' usually referred to quite substantial middle-class houses in the outer suburbs and on the fringes of towns and cities. Frequently in one of the 'revival' styles of architecture, they stood in their own grounds of anything up to ten acres. Some affected rusticity (the cottage orné) others urbanity (the villa). John Nash built several of these villas within thirty miles of London for lawyers, bankers and service officers. From about the 1820s 'villa' was being applied to even smaller properties being built along the main roads of the expanding towns. Dyos speaks of early nineteenth-century Camberwell having its landscape "dotted by a variety of ...villas and ornamental cottages".²

¹ Summerson, op. cit., p.393.

² T.R. Slater, 'Family, society and the ornamental villa on the fringes of English country towns', in Journal of Historical Geography, 4, 2, 1978, p.130; Summerson, op. cit., pp.375 and 532; Dyos, Victorian Suburb, p.31.

Exeter had a number of such houses along its main exit roads. Villas had numerous attractions. Compared with houses in the cramped narrow streets of town centres they had relatively large gardens, fresh air, more space and frequently pleasant views. They were detached from their neighbours and well removed from the nuisances of the busy streets. If several were placed on the same estate there was little likelihood of undesirable industrial development or working-class houses being built in the immediate vicinity.

For the slightly less affluent there were semi-detached villas. These were still substantial and dignified as the terms 'villa' and 'semi-detached' had not yet fallen to the lower end of the social scale as they did in later years. Semi-detached houses were not a new idea; there are examples in London which date from 1702, but semi-detached houses only became socially successful after the introduction of the unified facade, an idea thought to have originated from John Nash.¹ A shared gable, single roof span and central chimney stack could give an aesthetic and social significance to two quite small houses. In the same way that a grand terrace could look like a mansion from a distance, so a pair of semi-detached houses could appear to be more important than they really were, particularly if the main entrance to each lay on either side, giving an even more unified appearance to the front. Exeter has a number of instances of this. Semi-detached houses needed less land, only one central party wall and may have been built more quickly and cheaply than two separate dwellings of equivalent size. From the speculator's point of view more could be built per acre, probably at a greater profit. Careful intermingling of detached and semi-detached villas, as exemplified in several of Exeter's suburbs, in no way detracted from the overall appearance of the area. In the first part of the nineteenth century the term 'villa' encompassed a wide range of houses, from the small country house to one of a pair on a suburban development.

¹ Summerson, op. cit., p.532.

Exeter's Elegant Terraces and Crescents

The first forty years of the nineteenth century were architecturally both important and exciting for the city. The suburbs began to expand dramatically, dominated at first by the magnificent terraces built to satisfy the demands of successful professional and business people who were prospering in a city that was attracting residents well able to afford modern, comfortable homes with many amenities. Other areas in the South West were developing simultaneously. Plymouth, under the energetic direction of John Foulston, was acquiring splendid terraces and public buildings, while the years between 1815 and 1840 were, from an architectural point of view, Cheltenham's most important period.¹ This was an era of enthusiasm and expansion from which Exeter benefited immediately. A pattern was set for future development, although not all of its suburbs were on such a grand scale as the first ones.

The forerunner of middle-class suburban expansion was the development of Bedford Circus. (Fig. 5) This was constructed on the site of what must have been a truly magnificent building - Bedford House - for Portman remarks that the dwellings of even the grandest merchants in the city paled beside it.² By the middle of the eighteenth century this once elegant town house of the Earls of Bedford had become tenements and in 1773 the site was leased to Robert Stribling, a local builder, and he and another builder, Giles Painter, were able to purchase the buildings and materials for £230.³ They were, however, faced with a problem. Here was an opportunity to undertake the first large-scale modern housing project adjacent to

¹ A.E. Richardson and C.L. Gill, Regional Architecture in the West of England, 1924, p.28; G. Hart, A History of Cheltenham, 1965, p.173.

² D. Portman, Exeter Houses, 1400-1700, 1966, p.37.

³ DRO L 1258 M, London Leases, Bedford Estate, M/L/L3 24.5.1773.

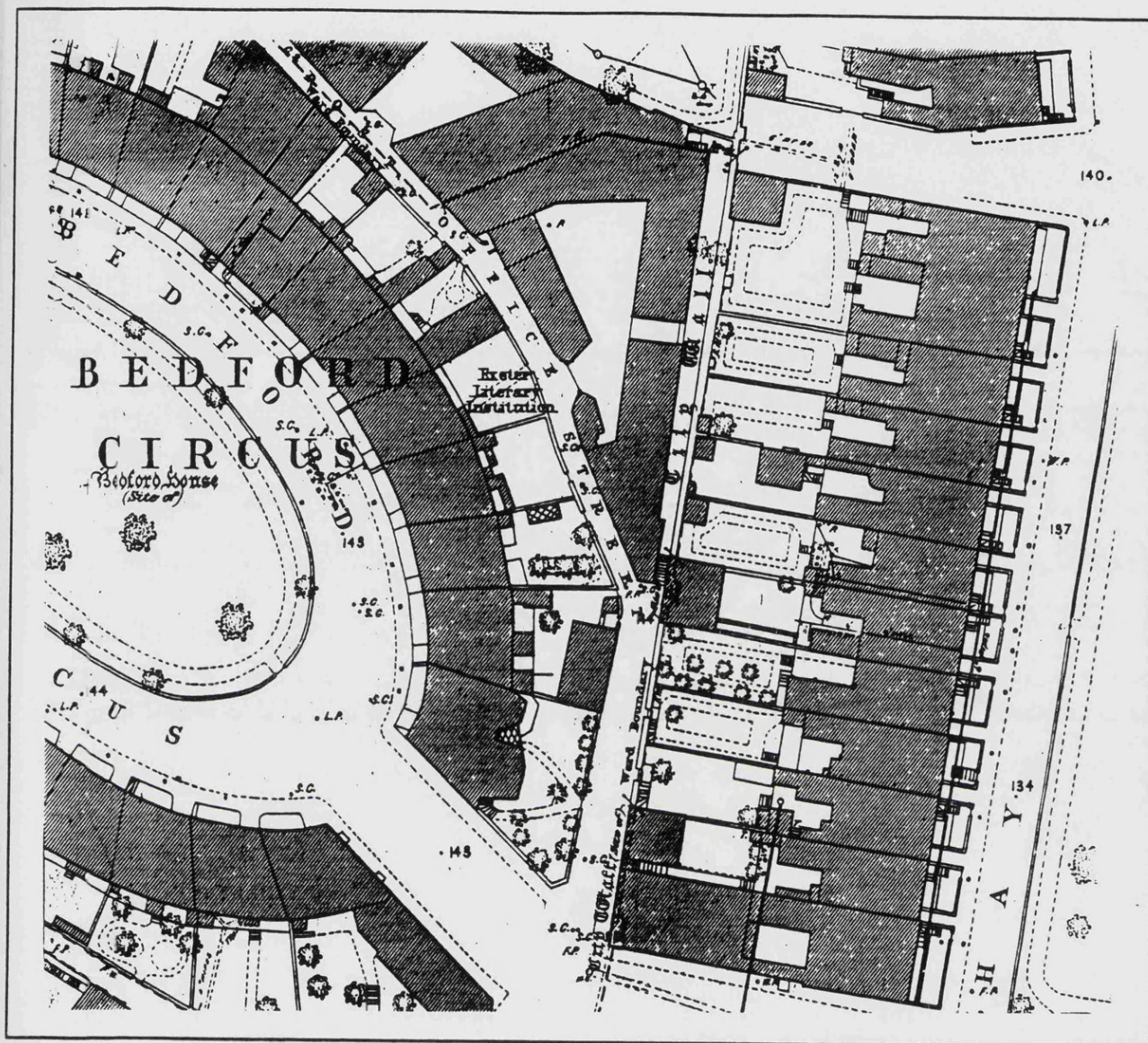


Fig. 5 Bedford Circus and part of Southernhay

O.S. Map, 1:500, second edition, 1891, LXXX. 6.18 (reduced by 36%).

what was still essentially a walled city almost medieval in character. Furthermore, the site lay in the shadow of the cathedral and one side would back on to the ancient houses in the Cathedral Close. It would probably have been easy, and understandable, had they merely imitated architectural styles of the past, but although they may have drawn inspiration from them they designed a row of houses that twentieth-century town planners have referred to as "something near perfect of its kind ... it contained the quintessence of the eighteenth century philosophy of civic design".¹ (Plate 1) As the houses were leased for only 61 years the Bedford family may, of course, have had a vested interest in their quality as they had in their eventual residents. However, it took over fifty years to complete the circus. The north-east side was completed first and then in 1825 there was an agreement between the Duke of Bedford and Thomas Wills Horrell, a local builder, for a further thirteen houses to complete the circus. The houses were both elegant and spacious, with basements, three main storeys and attics. On the ground floor of each were dining room, breakfast room and library; the second floor had two large inter-communicating drawing rooms and there were eight bedrooms. Servant accommodation, kitchens and cellars were in the basement and, as with many houses of good quality at the time, there were water closets.² By 1838 the private houses were rated between £75 and £95 and those with business premises slightly higher. The latter category included the Post Office at the rear of the postmaster's house, the printing office behind John S. Dewdney's house and the solicitor's office behind the house of John Gidley, Town Clerk.³ Befittingly, the central area was grassed and ringed with trees and railings. This ornamental pleasure ground remained part of the Bedford estate but was rented at 5/- a year to residents "for the purpose of walking and taking the air".⁴

¹ Sharp, Exeter Phoenix, p.28.

² DRO L 1258 M London Leases, Bedford Estate, M/L/L3 21.3.1825; R. Newton 'Exeter, 1770-1870' in M.A. Simpson and T.H. Lloyd, eds, Middle Class Housing in Britain, 1977, (hereafter Newton, MCH) p.31.

³ Exeter Valuation Lists (hereafter EVL), 1838.

⁴ DRO L 1258 M London Leases, Bedford Estate, IV Exon. 20/12-19, 14.3.1840.



Plate 1 Bedford Circus c. 1930

West Country Studies Library, Exeter
B/Ex P & D 42730

Access to Bedford Circus was obtained either from High Street or from Southernhay which skirted the city walls from the sites of the old East Gate to the South Gate. This pleasant broad walk was owned by the Chamber and had been laid out with grass and trees in 1667. Its first building of significance was the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital which had been constructed in 1742.¹ Probably inspired by the construction works being undertaken in nearby Bedford Circus, the Chamber decided on 8th November, 1774, that the area should be developed and instructed local builders Mr Stowey and Mr Jones to draw up "proper plans". Twelve months later the Chamber resolved that "It is the opinion of this Body that Buildings upon Southernhay will be beneficial to the publick" and appointed a Committee to consider Mr Stowey's plans for that purpose. Whether the public themselves, had they been consulted, would have agreed with this view is a matter for speculation. Their hitherto unspoilt promenade so readily accessible from the city would be built upon and doubtless the residents of these high-class houses would not wish to be overrun by city dwellers out for walks. Eventually shrubs and what were referred to as "proper trees" were protected by gates and iron railings.² The ultimate benefit was the permanent enhancement of the city's image by creating an area immediately outside the city walls of architectural magnificence. In spite of the Chamber's initial enthusiasm, actual progress was extremely slow. In June 1778 the Mayor and five members of the Chamber were appointed to "settle and carry into execution" the plan for building on Southernhay and during the following nine years a number of committee meetings took place, but even by 1787 Mr Jones had not submitted his plans.³ The Southernhay Committee were empowered

¹ DRO ECA Chamber Map Book, c. 1756; D. and D. Lysons, Topographical and Historical Account of Devonshire, 1822, I, p.191; S. Woolmer, A Concise Account of the City of Exeter, 1811, p.11; J. Delpratt Harris, History of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, 1922, p.1.

² DRO ECA B 1/16 Act Book of the Chamber, 24.10.1774, 8.11.1774, 23.11.1775; DRO ECA B 2/28 Chamber Minute Book, 12.12.1809, 4.4.1812; DRO ECA B 2/29 Chamber Minute Book, 15.11.1820.

³ DRO ECA B 1/16 Act Book of the Chamber, 1.6.1778-17.4.1787, passim.

to contract with builders who could proceed to build so that by the mid-1790s formal leases were drawn up for the houses that had been completed. As the potential of the area was realised, more local builders took part in the development and erected houses in small groups or singly. Among them was Matthew Nosworthy, one of the foremost builders in Exeter at the time who had recently completed the New London Inn.¹

The Chamber kept strict control of the whole operation. Trees could not be felled without consent; occupiers were required to pay the cost of levelling and laying out the ground in front of the new houses and plans and specifications had to be adhered to. James Chapple, one of the builders, was fined £10 for "having deviated from his contract".² By 1820 the development was virtually completed. It was an outstanding example of provincial Georgian planning. Although never a purely residential area, Southernhay quickly became the home of retired service personnel such as admirals and generals, county families, the professional classes, and, in particular, doctors as the spaciousness and convenient layout of the houses afforded sufficient accommodation for professional practices to be carried on from home if desired. By 1841 the locality included at least eight households of independent means, two solicitors, a banker and seven surgeons or doctors. Typical of the latter category was Samuel Luscombe, formerly of Gandy Street in the city centre. He had a large four-bedroomed house with a 40' drawing room, dining room, breakfast parlour, housekeeper's room, two kitchens and other domestic offices and he used two of his rooms as a surgery and dispensary. He had obviously prospered as on his death his effects included a collection of "rich cut glass", 400oz. of plate, 700 books, oil paintings and engravings and furniture "of the best description".³ Similarly in 1838 the

¹ DRO ECA B 1/16 Act Book of the Chamber, 14.2.1792; DRO ECA B 2/27 Chamber Minute Book, 23.4.1792, 21.12.1796; DRO ECA B 2/28 Chamber Minute Book, 7.5.1808, 23.8.1808.

² DRO ECA B 2/28 Chamber Minute Book, 7.5.1808, 6.11.1810, 12.1.1815; DRO ECA B 2/30 Chamber Minute Book, 18.4.1826.

³ Besley, 1831, pp.170-222; Census, 1841; EFP 4.8.1825, 11.3.1841.

effects of the late Francis Turner of No.25 Southernhay were said to include paintings by Titian, Poussin and Brueghel. These may have been optimistic attributions, but if Francis Turner was a man of judicious taste and expenditure they could have been genuine masterpieces, in which case they would be some indication of the level of prosperity that could be found in this neighbourhood.¹ The houses varied in size and value. Rateable values in 1838 ranged from the large dwelling house belonging to Colonel Truscott of the East India Company, purchased in 1832 for £2,998 and rated at £129 to a double cottage rated at £16.10.0d. Some houses were owned, some rented. A Miss Dowell owned five which ranged in rateable value from £60 to £67.² The character of Southernhay had been considerably altered; the ordinary citizens had been deprived of at least some of their promenade and the Lammas Fair had to be re-located in 1793 on account of the building in hand. Nevertheless, the rural atmosphere did not disappear immediately as the Horse Fair, which attracted as many as 300 horses, continued to be held in the upper part of Southernhay and adjoining fields until 1823.³

By 1800 building in Bedford Circus and Southernhay was progressing, but slowly and both schemes were only partially complete. Two further ones in the immediate vicinity were started and neither of these was finished, which suggests that the market at the time had been satisfied, although other schemes were undertaken further out. Perhaps they were too near the city centre, although they were both adjacent to fields. Leading off Southernhay opposite the entrance to Bedford Circus was Barnfield Crescent. This was commenced in 1805 by Matthew Nosworthy - a terrace of houses built in the grand manner. Thomas Sharp speaks of their "iron balconies of lace-like delicacy, handsome similar doorways ... elements of the distinguished Georgian

¹ EFP, 19.7.1838; I am indebted to Mr John Somerville of Sotheby's for advice on the value of the paintings, 14.6.1985.

² EVL, 1838; Newton, MCH, p.19.

³ DRO ECA 1/16 Act Book of the Chamber, 10.7.1793; J. Cossins; Reminiscences of Exeter Fifty Years Since, 1878 edn, p.21.

architecture of Exeter".¹ (Plate 2) One had a Heavitree stone front, but the remainder were built in red brick with patent stone bands and round-headed windows. Jenkins felt that even London would not be able to produce anything better.² They were not all built at the same time; the first five dated from around 1805 and stood in a graceful curve for at least thirty years before two more were added at the northern end, one which matched and one which was slightly recessed. There were very small gardens in front and the rear plots varied in size. (Fig. 6) They became the homes of the titled and of prosperous professional men. In 1841 a banker, an Army officer, a doctor and a merchant employed between them twenty-six servants. Dr. Thomas Shapter lived next door to Bartholomew G. Gidley, alderman, influential Conservative and eventually town clerk. The houses were not identical in size. Four were rated between £79 and £92, but even the smallest, rated at £42, was valued at seven times as much as neighbouring houses for the working class.³

To the immediate east of Barnfield Crescent lay Dix's Field, once the property of W. Spicer Dix and Son, local brewers. (Fig. 6) In 1798 bankruptcy forced the sale of the land and around 1810 Matthew Nosworthy, the city's leading builder/architect, built a row of elegant town houses in red brick with patent stone bands and cornices and iron railings to their areas. Intended for genteel people, they were located in an area of other superior dwellings, adjacent to open space and ideally laid out for entertaining. By 1838 there were 29 houses here, although it has been suggested that the full extent of the work originally projected - a large and deep quadrangle - remained unfinished.⁴ By 1838 at least eleven of the houses were owned by the Nosworthys: Thomas lived in a small one (rateable value £26) and

¹ Sharp, op. cit., p.124.

² A. Jenkins, Civil and Ecclesiastical History of the City of Exeter, 1806, p.357.

³ DOE, p.6; Census, 1841; EVL, 1838.

⁴ R. Fortescue Foulkes, ed., Exeter - A City Saved, 1977, p.38; DOE, p.68; EVL, 1838; Sharp, op. cit., p.102.

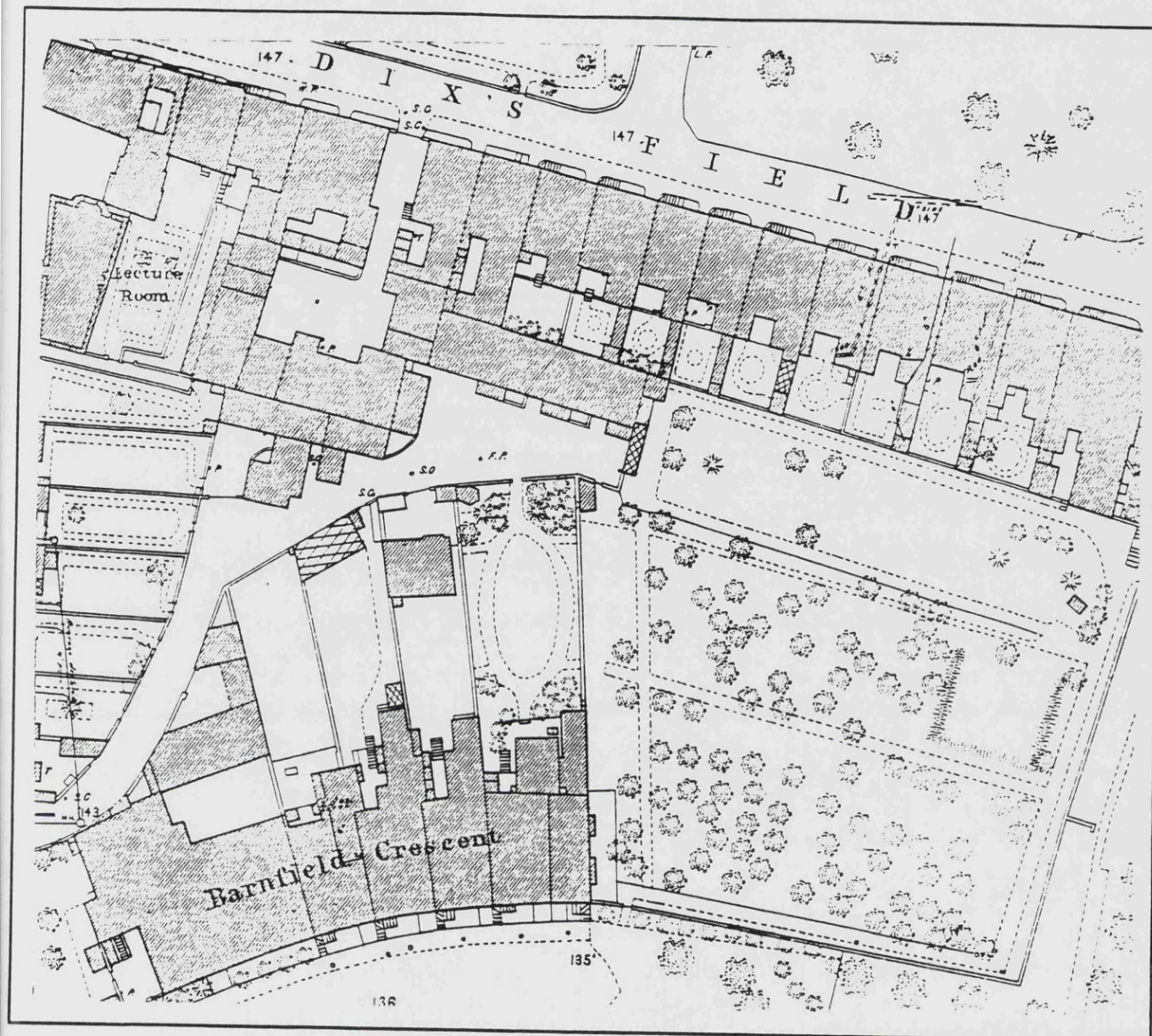


Fig. 6 Barnfield Crescent and part of Dix's Field
O.S. Map, 1:500, 1877, LXXX.6.18 (reduced by 36%).



Plate 2 Barnfield Crescent

Matthew in a pretty corner property with bow windows and a crinoline verandah to the first floor main window. The majority of the houses were quite large, rated between £52 and £93, although one with vaulted cellars, a counting house and warerooms was assessed at £134. They attracted the professional class and those of independent means. In 1841 the residents included a Colonel's lady, a Captain in the Royal Navy, a physician, two solicitors and a barrister. Every household had at least two servants and some had as many as six.¹

Although initial suburban expansion was concentrated in the Southernhay area, by the turn of the nineteenth century developments were taking place further afield. The only building of any importance along the main Heavitree Road was the Workhouse, completed in 1707 and it was on land adjacent to this that two superior terraces were built. The local building firm of William and Henry Hooper played an important role in the development of Georgian and Regency Exeter and it was William who built Higher Summerland Place (originally known as Hooper's Buildings) and Lower Summerland Place. (Fig. 7) Higher Summerland Place fronted the main Heavitree Road and consisted of eleven large houses with extensive rear gardens as land purchased by the Chamber from the feoffes of St. Sidwell in 1811 had been incorporated, extending the site to almost one and a quarter acres. It was regarded as "a very pleasant abode at any season of the year" with front gardens "very chastely lain out with shrubs and flowers constantly in bloom..."² (Plate 3) Lower Summerland Place, a row of nine smaller houses on proportionately smaller plots, was built nearby at right angles.³ These gracious two-storey town houses were on rising ground, within easy reach of the city. In the 1830s the residents included clergymen, captains in the

¹ EVL, 1838; Richardson and Gill, op. cit., p.32; EVL, 1838; Census, 1841.

² Besley, 1831, p.63; Newton MCH, p.36; Hedgeland's Map, 1806; DRO ECA Corporation of the Poor Map Book, 1824; Besley, 1831, p.63.

³ Brown's Map, 1835.

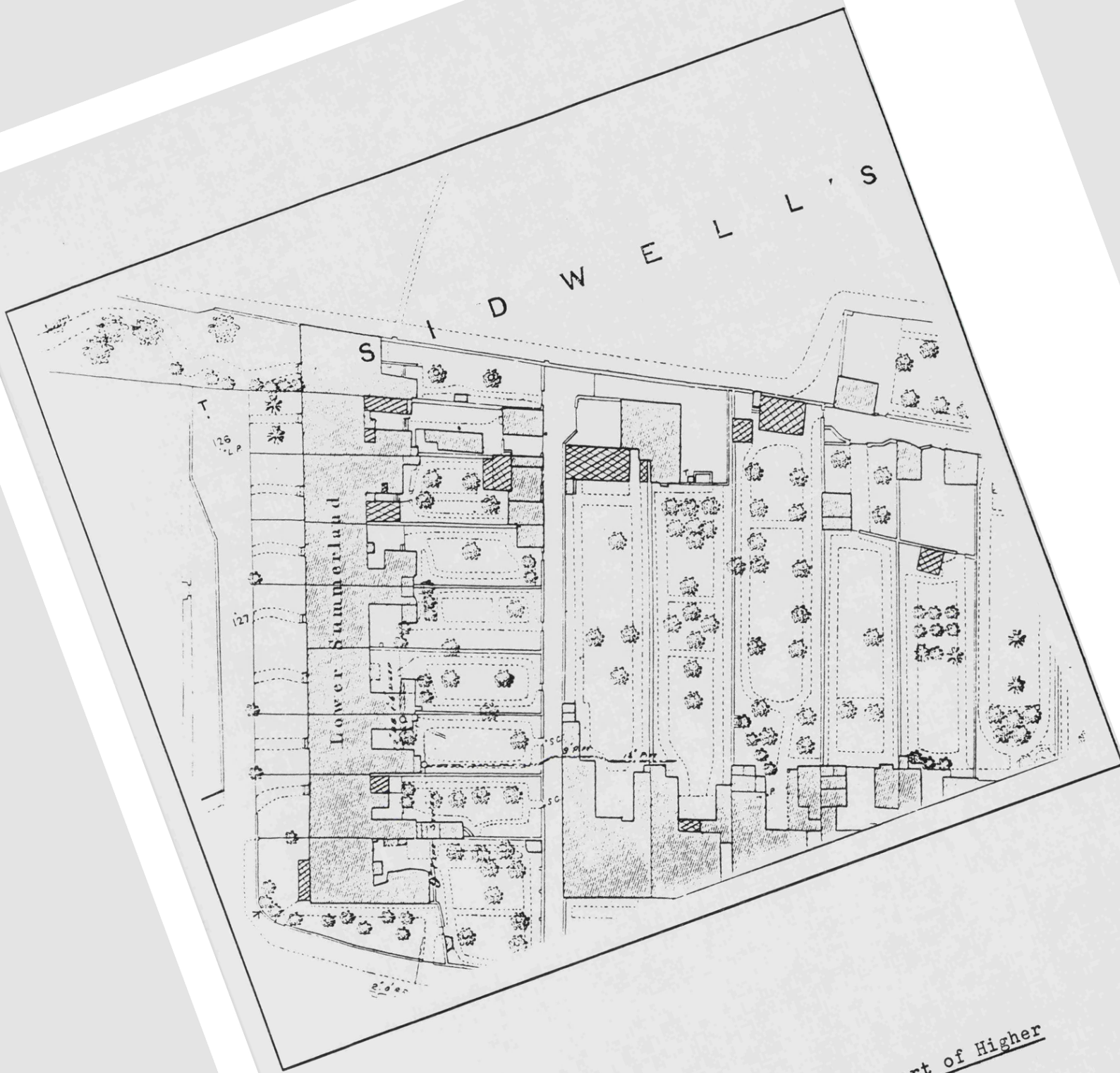


Fig. 7 Lower Summerland Place and, adjacent, part of Higher Summerland Place
O.S. Map, 1:500, 1876, LXXX.6.14 (reduced by 36%).



Plate 3 Higher Summerland Place (Hooper's Buildings), 1804

DRO ECA Map Book of the Exeter Corporation of
the Poor, 1804.

services, several 'esquires' and a number of widows and maiden ladies. Miss M. Baring, probably a member of the important Baring banking family, lived at 7 Higher Summerland Place for over fifteen years.¹ Although contemporary pictures suggest that the road outside the house was wide and easily negotiable, it was in fact quite dangerous as a visitor graphically records in her diary.²

The Friars, an area of land lying between Holloway Street and the river, was once monastic land, but it eventually came into the possession of the Colleton family, several of whom had been merchants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the 3rd September, 1802, the first stone of Colleton Crescent was laid by Mrs Graves, attended by General Simcoe, and there rose on the almost cliff-like banks above the river, well away from the damp and the noise of shipping, what has been referred to as "the climax of the terrace house of the early period of building outside the walls".³ This was a fine dignified, red brick terrace on a slight curve, completed about 1805, four storeys high with the central houses projecting slightly forward. The first floor windows had intricate wrought-iron balconies and Coade stone enriched the entrances, reminiscent of Bedford Square, London.⁴ (Plate 4) Across the road on the river bank was the residents' private garden. These houses were designed for the prosperous middle class and were large family residences. In August 1804 Mr Major, builder, auctioneer and undertaker, was advertising a handsome newly-built house in the terrace with two parlours, two drawing rooms, seven handsome bedrooms, four smaller bedrooms and a range of domestic offices. Coach houses and stables were available in the mews. The house was claimed to "command one of the most magnificent views in this, or any other Kingdom, taking one entire

¹ Besley, 1831, pp.170-222 and 1845, p.217.

² E. Shore, The Journal of Emily Shore, 1891, p.164.

³ Besley, 1831, p.49; Hoskins, 2000, p.138; Besley, 1831, p.39; Newton, MCH, p.28.

⁴ Muthesius, op. cit., p.220.



Plate 4 Colleton Crescent

view of Exeter, Exmouth, Lympstone, the River Exe and all the adjacent country.¹ No.9, a house with eight bedrooms, had a hot house and a vinery. In 1838 these houses were mainly owner-occupied and their rateable values were between £75 and £94. The residents included several leading citizens: Joseph B. Sanders of the Exeter City Bank; Council Member J.C. Wilcocks, draper and landowner; Ralph Sanders, attorney; Henry L. Hirtzel, Official Assignee, together with three high-ranking service officers. Hoopers, the builders, owned one of the houses and ironmaster William Kingdon two of the smaller ones. All the residents kept several servants.² The Colletons sold the whole of their property on the south-western edge of Exeter in 1827 and this included the Crescent.³ Houses varying in both size and quality were subsequently built at the rear of Colleton Crescent but as this splendid row stood on cliffs facing across the river it was able to remain aloof from its less prestigious surroundings.

Beyond the Longbrook the road climbs steeply to the area which became known as Pennsylvania, and it was here that in 1822/3 the Quaker banker, Joseph Sparkes, a partner in the General Bank, invested in the construction of one of Exeter's finest terraces, Pennsylvania Buildings (later Park). (Plate 5) It was constructed by Joseph Rowe of Paris Street and from a drawing by George Rowe it seems likely that eight houses were intended but only six completed.⁴ Access to this two-acre site was through iron gates across the narrow entrance road, thus affording isolation and exclusivity. It was located on the northern side of the town, not a disadvantage in Exeter as the prevailing winds came from the west and north-west and, in any case, there was little industry to create smoke or fumes.⁵ The site was 300 feet above any possibility of damp air from the river valley and it afforded panoramic views over the surrounding countryside, an important feature

¹ EFP, 30.8.1804.

² EVL, 1838; Census, 1841.

³ DRO Box 60/5/2, Colleton Estate Papers.

⁴ EFP, 5.6.1823; West Country Studies Library, Exeter, ref.977, George Rowe, print of Pennsylvania Terrace, about 1823.

⁵ T. Shapter, The Climate of the South of Devon, 1862, p.16.



Plate 5 Pennsylvania Buildings

if the wealthy were to be attracted to the houses for, as Loudon remarks:

"...without (prospects) a villa may be beautiful picturesque or romantic; but it can never be dignified or grand, and scarcely even elegant or graceful".¹

Pennsylvania Buildings were terrace houses and although not villas, the same principal applies and they were certainly dignified and grand. The gardens at the rear were relatively small, occupying a mere quarter of an acre, but in front on the south-facing slope was a one and three-quarter acre private park providing privacy and preventing any future building from being erected which would destroy the views. Architecturally the terrace has been regarded as "unexcelled" and of national importance.² It was a three-storey stucco terrace connected by one-storey Ionic porches. The first floor had French windows with iron balconies with canopies on slender supports. "Calm simplicity" is an apt description.³ Inside the houses were large and each required at least four servants to run it. There were breakfast-, dining- and drawing rooms, library, five bedrooms, water closets, several staircases and servants' quarters. Although bathrooms were already being introduced in the best London houses from the 1820s, here there was just a 'slop cupboard' connected to a lead drainpipe. There was adequate provision for stables and coach houses and this elegant terrace, rated in 1838 between £80 and £88 per house, attracted the gentry. In 1831 Joseph Sparkes himself lived at No.1 and Lady d'Urbini at No.5.⁴

Another interesting group in the vicinity was Pennsylvania Crescent, sited 500 yards to the south of Pennsylvania Buildings.

¹ J.C. Loudon, The Villa Gardener, 1850, pp.6-7.

² Sharp, op. cit., p.21.

³ DOE, p.209; Sharp, op. cit., p.21;

⁴ I am indebted to Mr Stuart Muir, architect, for information on Pennsylvania Buildings; Muthesius, op. cit., p.62; EVL, 1838; Besley, 1831, pp. 182 and 212.

This consisted of five detached stucco houses which formed a shallow curve of large, elegant houses, the central one having a pilastered front and the other four verandahs with canopies. Built about 1820, they were intended as homes for prosperous people and in 1841 fifteen servants were employed between the five houses.¹

Both these groups contained the essence of the early suburbs - a combination of both rural and urban features: elegant town house architecture set in isolated rural surroundings; panoramic views but easy access to the commercial centre. Until such rows became surrounded by a multiplicity of houses in later decades, a high degree of rus in urbe could be obtained by the prosperous.

Across the River

Whilst the terraces and crescents so far described have been built on attractive sites in what quickly became fashionable districts, there were three terraces built during the first decade of the nineteenth century in the largely working-class area of St. Thomas's. The area had a number of drawbacks - it was isolated from the city by the physical barrier of the river and its flat, river-valley location was not one of the attractive healthy areas such as Pennsylvania or Heavitree. Yet some superior houses were built here. Between 1805 and 1810 Church road, fourteen elegant three-storey terrace houses in red brick were built, nine forming a group. Some had cast-iron balconies, some had mask keystones similar to those under construction in Southernhay.² Two more graceful terraces of town houses were built nearby - Sydney Place and Hampden Place on the main Alington Road. Sydney Place was in the style of Nosworthy,

¹ DOE, p.208; Census, 1841.

² DOE, pp. 48-49.

the row consisting of three-storey, three-window red brick terrace houses, with one-storey flanking wings at each end. A break-forward between Nos.1 and 2 suggests a longer terrace was envisaged but never completed.¹ Perhaps the anticipated demand was not forthcoming. The round-headed doorways with vermiculated quoins and keystones were currently fashionable in Exeter. Tall first-floor sash windows with iron balconies added distinction. The houses were of comparatively modest size, having four bedrooms and two reception rooms and they attracted retired service officers and professional people, some of whom had very comfortably furnished homes.² Neighbouring Hampden Place, a stucco terrace of seven three-storey houses with cast-iron balconies, was equally elegant and comparable with some of the superior terraces in Heavitree. For the first four decades of the nineteenth century this was the only concentration of owner-occupied property in the district.³ The siting of these elegant houses in a predominantly working-class area needs explanation. Access to the city involved crossing the river and traversing the industrial area of Exe Island and the poor West Quarter. Within a short distance were the Bridewell, almshouses and the debtors' prison.⁴ It was a damp, unhealthy area, subject to serious flooding which, on occasion, inundated the entire area, and the drainage system was deficient.⁵ Round the corner from Hampden Place was Hydrantha Place, built in 1803 to re-house slum dwellers.⁶ Why build elegant middle-class houses here? Land may have been cheaper than in the better-class suburbs, resulting in gracious but less expensive houses. It may have been hoped to attract buyers unfamiliar with the area. Certainly William Hicks was speculating in property development in St. Thomas's whilst

¹ DOE, pp. 2 and 3.

² Newton, MCH, p.28; EFP, 21.10.1813;

³ Tithe Map and Apportionment of St. Thomas's, 1838.

⁴ Tozer's Map, 1792.

⁵ J. Brierley, 'Flooding in the Exe Valley, 1960', Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers, June 1964, pp.169-170; DRO Parish Records of St. Thomas's PS/13.2.1809.

⁶ J.V. White, Provincialism: A Study of the Work of General Practitioner Architects of Exeter, 1760-1840, 1963, p.63.

he was building in Southernhay, but the houses he offered for sale in 1801 in St. Thomas's may have been difficult to sell for at the same time he offered eleven acres of land for sale, obviously preferring to sell it rather than to build on it. His advertisement for his house gave scant details of its amenities, but he described the view lyrically and at some length.¹ The proximity of the river may have been an attraction, but whatever motivated this limited development, the outcome was an unhappy mixture of elegance and poverty in juxtaposition and for the next half century there was little attempt at middle-class development in St. Thomas's.

Of Singular Grace and Beauty

Exeter's early terraces and crescents conformed to no overall plan. They were built mainly during the first two decades of the nineteenth century by a variety of local men and many have remained as contributions to what Sharp refers to as the "genius of Exeter".² As has been discussed, towards the end of the eighteenth century the pace of change quickened and the city was attracting an increasing number of prosperous middle-class families who were seeking superior houses. The overcrowded central area was unable to cope with their demands and expansion beyond the walls became a necessity. As few large individual houses were built, it must be assumed that the clientele did not possess great wealth, but demanded prestigious houses to purchase, or, in the main, to rent for reasonable sums. The terrace was ideal. Smart terraces had already been built in London, Bath and Bristol and therefore to reside in a terrace, albeit perhaps somewhat less grand, was doubtless considered very fashionable.³ A terrace house was cheaper to build than an individual house; it required less land and it could easily be designed to present an imposing facade. Ornamentation by way of balconies, verandahs and

¹ EEP, 14.5.1801.

² Sharp, op. cit., p.11.

³ Muthesius, op. cit., p.148.

wrought-iron work could be incorporated to meet the highest aspirations. There was plenty of land available and the terrain was conducive to providing the much-desired view and fresh air. The terrace and crescent, therefore, fulfilled many needs. They were admirable solutions to the requirements of a prosperous, but perhaps not over-affluent, market yet many of the terraces and crescents took an extraordinary long time to complete or were never finished. Either the demand had been over-estimated and the market quickly became saturated or, in some cases, where there was ample land - Dix's Field for example - development was piecemeal without, perhaps, there being an overall plan for a complete scheme. From the outset Southernhay appears to have been seen as a development on a sizable scale as a decision was taken by the Chamber to develop the area for the benefit of the public. Even here the scheme was carried out by a variety of builders and it took all the powers of the Chamber almost fifty years before the scheme was finally complete. The result was an outstanding example of Georgian planning regarded as "domestic building of the most civilized refinement and beauty".¹

Detailed consideration has been given to these early suburban terraces partly because they were a landmark in Exeter's suburban expansion and typified the residences required by the upper strata of Exeter's middle class, and partly because they contributed a great deal to the character of nineteenth-century Exeter, endowing it with a legacy of some of the best domestic buildings in England.² They were a yardstick and their importance has been recognized. Whilst not all subsequent development was of the same high standard or of the same splendour, their influence can be seen in terraces of less importance built for those with genteel tastes but limited means.

¹ Sharp, op. cit., p.38.

² Ibid., p.21.

Genteel But Not Grand

Not all development taking place in suburban Exeter during the first half of the nineteenth century was on the scale so far described. To cater for what might be described as the 'middling prosperous' - those who could perhaps afford one servant - a number of terraces were built of modest proportions yet regarded as genteel. Some were interspersed with small courts and tenements that lined the main exit roads; some were more isolated. St. Ann's Terrace in Tiverton Road was a good example. (Plate 6) This was a row of six similar, but not identical, double-fronted, flat-windowed houses built by William Chesterman, a builder of St. Sidwell's, in 1821. Over the years they were the homes of business people, including wine merchants, and those of independent means who could usually afford one female servant. In 1838 they were rated between £18 and £21.¹ Beyond lay Peerless Place, regarded as "a row of very respectable houses".² On the opposite side of the road Albion Place was built in 1834. This was a row of thirteen very small houses, rated not long after they were built between £5 and £10, with one much larger house rated at £27. It was a dignified, quiet row, built at right angles and some yards back from the main road with a gate across its access, thus affording considerable seclusion and distinguishing it from other rows of small houses with similar rateable values. In 1838 six of the houses were owned by Thomas Simons, a builder, of Hampton Buildings.³ Off Longbrook Street a number of modest, but superior, houses were built in small groups that attracted merchants of various kinds, accountants, an editor, a musician and several people of independent means, most of whom could afford a resident servant. The houses were within easy walking distance of the city centre and small enough to attract people with modest incomes.⁴ Some of the groups of similar

¹ Wood's Map, 1840; wall plaque; Census, 1841; EVL, 1838.

² Besley, 1831, p.59.

³ EVL, 1838; information supplied by residents; Besley, 1831, p.210.

⁴ Census, 1841.



Plate 6 St. Ann's Terrace

genteel, modest terraces - those off Blackboy Road for example - had the added inducement of excellent views. They were the homes of accountants, fullers, builders and people of independent means, all of whom employed servants. Some of the residents owned property elsewhere. The houses were in a variety of ownership. Hampton Buildings, for example, was a group of ten houses, seven of which were owned in 1838 by George Houghton, possibly a grocer and druggist formerly living in Fore Street.¹

One of the last of the terraces of the early period, before the brick terraces characteristic of the eighteenth century gave way to the stucco villas, was a row of "first rate houses", Northernhay Place. Close to the ruins of the castle and leading off London Inn Square, they faced north-east; some had a pleasure ground in front and one of their advantages, according to a contemporary directory, was a "commanding view of the country round". Designed by local architect, John Lethbridge, they were begun in 1821 by the builder Thomas Cole, who had built several of the houses in Southernhay and the nearby Devon and Exeter Subscription Rooms. The houses had accommodation on four floors, plus domestic offices in the basement; good family houses only yards from the main street. When Cole went bankrupt in 1827 they were sold off, nine being bought by Charles Brutton, a prominent attorney and later mayor of Exeter, who lived for a time at No.1. His neighbours in 1831 included Thomas Cole who continued to live there after he went bankrupt, Joseph Hill who kept a lodging house at No.4, J. Leakey an artist and Thomas and Mary Mason who ran a dancing academy at No.8. Prior to his financial difficulties, Thomas Cole must have lived in some style as when some of his effects were advertised for sale on 13th September, 1827, they included four-poster and tent beds, goosefeather beds, mahogany and rosewood furniture, lustres and Kidderminster carpets.²

¹ Census, 1841;; Wood's Map, 1840; EVL, 1838; Trewman, Exeter Pocket Journal, 1816, p.46.

² Wood's Map, 1840; Besley, 1831, p.47; Newton, MCH, pp.32-33; EVL, 1838; Besley, 1831, pp.175-198; EEF, 13.9.1827.

There was a variety of these dignified, superior, dwellings of various sizes catering for merchants, accountants, prospering tradesmen and those of independent, but perhaps limited, means. The considerably lower rateable values of these properties (often in the region of £18 compared with the £90 or so frequently found in the more grand terraces) suggest fewer and smaller reception rooms and probably far less accommodation for servants. A group off the Blackboy Road offered a parlour, drawing-room, three bedrooms and two attics - half the number of rooms to be found in Pennsylvania Buildings.¹ Although architecturally interesting, these more modest terraces lacked the panache of the grander terraces and crescents. They were perhaps small-scale imitations. Some were intermingled with poorer quality housing, whereas in the early decades of the nineteenth century the majority of the grander terraces stood either in isolation or in small groups of similar property. Some of the modest terraces had good views, but they were not on such large plots and did not enjoy the private gardens of, for example, Colleton Crescent. Their residents were less likely to include titled people and high-ranking service personnel. Nevertheless, there were a number of houses - Little Silver for example, twelve small stucco houses grouped round a square near St. David's church - available in the 1830s for renting at around £18 per year; ideal for those with middle-class aspirations but of limited means.² (Fig. 14)

A Regency Suburb

Early suburban development was not confined to the building of isolated terraces or small groups of houses. Between 1820 and 1841 a completely new suburb, almost exclusively middle-class, was created in St. Leonard's, made possible by the sale of the Mount Radford estate.

¹ Newton, MCH, p.24.

² EVL, 1838.

This provides an interesting study of the way in which the sale of one large estate influenced both the physical shape and the social tone of a complete neighbourhood which, with only a few exceptions, remained almost intact for more than a century.

Before 1820 the area between Magdalen Road and the river was largely rural. There were a few gentlemen's houses along the main road; Trew's Weir cotton factory was still in existence, as were the lime kilns, but they stood in isolation on the river bank. (Fig.8) The house of paramount importance in the development of St. Leonard's was Mount Radford. It was built in 1570 on high ground by Laurence Radford and changed hands a number of times, eventually being purchased by banker John Baring in 1770 for £2,100, by which time he owned nearly all of St. Leonard's. He lived at Mount Radford until his death in 1816 when the estate was bought by Sir Thomas Baring. In 1826 a company of shareholders purchased the house and opened College School there. In 1827 five and a half acres of the grounds were bought by the Hooper brothers, builders, for £17,000 for housing development, the original house remaining in a variety of usages, sometimes as a school, sometimes as a private residence, until it was demolished in 1903.¹

In 1801 St. Leonard's had a population of 133 and 33 houses. By 1841 the population had risen to 1129 and the number of houses to 194. Large-scale development commenced once the Hoopers had acquired the land, although they did not develop the whole of the area themselves; several local builders and architects participated. Some portions of land were immediately re-sold; for example, Samuel Haydon of Heavitree bought several substantial parcels of land, eventually

¹ C. Worthy, The History of the Suburbs of Exeter, 1892, pp.68-71; DRO PW/115 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.202; Hoskins, 2000, p.145; DRO PW/116, Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.19; Besley, 1831, p.128; EEP, 15.2.1827 and 26.3.1827; DRO PW/116 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.19.

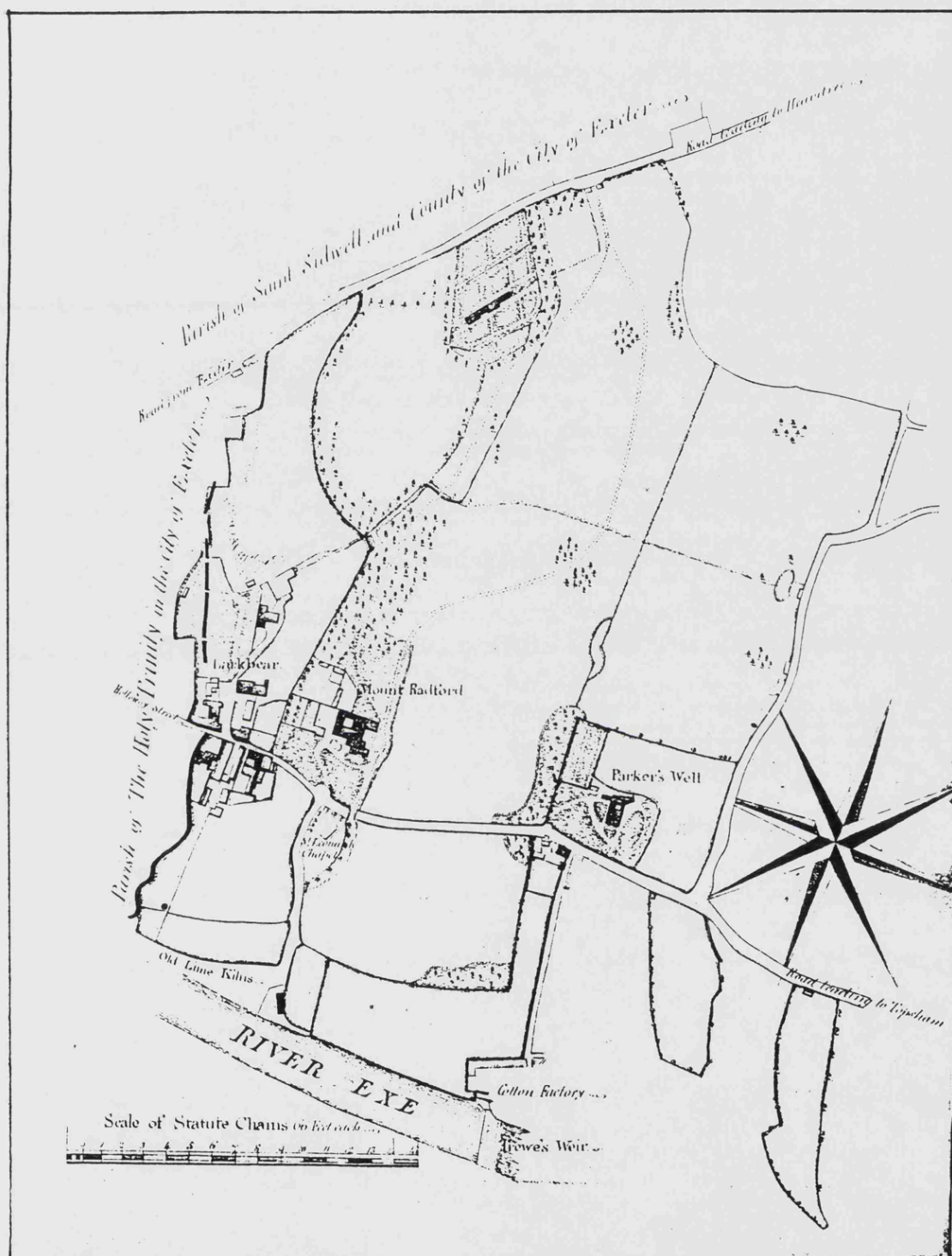


Fig. 8 St. Leonard's in 1816

J. Coldridge, A Survey of the Manor of Mount Radford and Heavitree in the Parishes of St. Leonard and Heavitree, 1816.
DRO ECA Z17/3/11.

becoming a resident himself.¹

The layout of the estate was governed by the external and internal boundaries which are clearly shown on Coldridge's map of 1816. Although the mansion remained, the main carriageway became Upper and Lower Mount Radford Terrace. The houses varied in style and size. Some had two storeys, others three and a basement. Characteristic of the larger houses was one offered for sale in 1838 having a parlour, a drawing room, three good bedrooms, two attics, two kitchens, other domestic offices, a small garden in front and a walled garden behind. A number had French windows on the ground floor opening onto verandahs with cast iron balustrades. Even the more modest houses usually had two parlours and could be bought for £260 or rented for £32 a year.² They were ideal for a clientele with middle-class aspirations but whose means were modest. The eastern limit of the development in 1841 was Albert Terrace, three pairs of large semi-detached stucco houses. Each had four windows at the front and the main entrance door at the side, but were not architecturally identical. Five of these were owned by Robert Fisher, a builder who resided in the large mansion known as Larkbeare. The remaining house belonged to William P. Luke, a city grocer who owned a considerable amount of land in St. Leonard's and who one financed Fisher's house building. The six tenants in 1841 employed between them nine female servants.³ Many of the houses in St. Leonard's were fairly modest-sized terrace houses, but others were much larger. The north-west boundary of the estate formed a curve and into this were built six large detached houses, each in its own grounds, giving on to a circular area with grass and trees, thus affording privacy to this very elegant and gracious crescent. Opposite the crescent was

¹ Census, 1801-1841; Newton, MCH, p.36; Besley, 1845, p.224.

² DRO 217/3/11, J. Coldridge, A Map of the Manor of Heavitree and Mount Radford, 1816; EEF, 26.4.1838 and 10.6.1830.

³ DRO Tithe Map and Apportionment for St. Leonard's, 1841; DRO ECA D7/594/4 Leases 27.10.1830 - 22.5.1836; Census, 1841.

The Quadrant, an elegant block built about 1835, consisting of two pairs and two single houses connected by lower porches, the fronts having pilasters, entablatures and cornices.¹ In the south-east corner of St. Leonard's were even larger houses. Grove House, built by John Gill of Paris Street in 1829, had a dining room and a drawing room each 20'x17', a large breakfast parlour, library, five bedrooms and two dressings rooms, besides servants' accommodation and domestic offices.² Nearby on a field known as The Grove, which Samuel Haydon had purchased from the Hoopers in 1829, three substantial villas named Claremont Grove were erected in the 1830s under the supervision of Exeter architect Charles Hedgeland. (Fig. 9) The first house was offered on a seven-year lease at a rent of £135 a year, the lessee having the right to purchase for £3,200, a very high price indeed compared with houses in the immediate vicinity for sale at £260 or rented for £32 per annum. It was renowned locally for its beautiful trees, but was obviously overpriced as it remained unsold and was again to let four years later at a reduced rent.³ Perhaps those able to contemplate purchasing such an expensive property did not wish to live in this area which, although predominantly middle-class, had houses varying in size and price nearby which might well have attracted people not considered socially acceptable to some of the residents. A further detracting factor may have been the construction in the late 1830s of Mount Radford Square, eighteen very small houses, probably intended for domestic or outdoor servants, in close proximity to Claremont Grove.⁴ The northern perimeter of the suburb ran along Magdalen Road, the main road to Heavitree, and here there were several large properties, some having as many as eleven bedrooms and three reception rooms.⁵ (Fig. 10)

¹ DOE, p.215.

² EFP, 16.4.1829.

³ Newton, MCH, pp.38-39; DRO Box 67/9/1 St. Leonard's Leases; EFP, 24.3.1836; EVL, 1838.

⁴ DRO Tithe Map and Apportionment of St. Leonard's, 1841.

⁵ Wood's Map, 1840; DRO PW/115, Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.4.

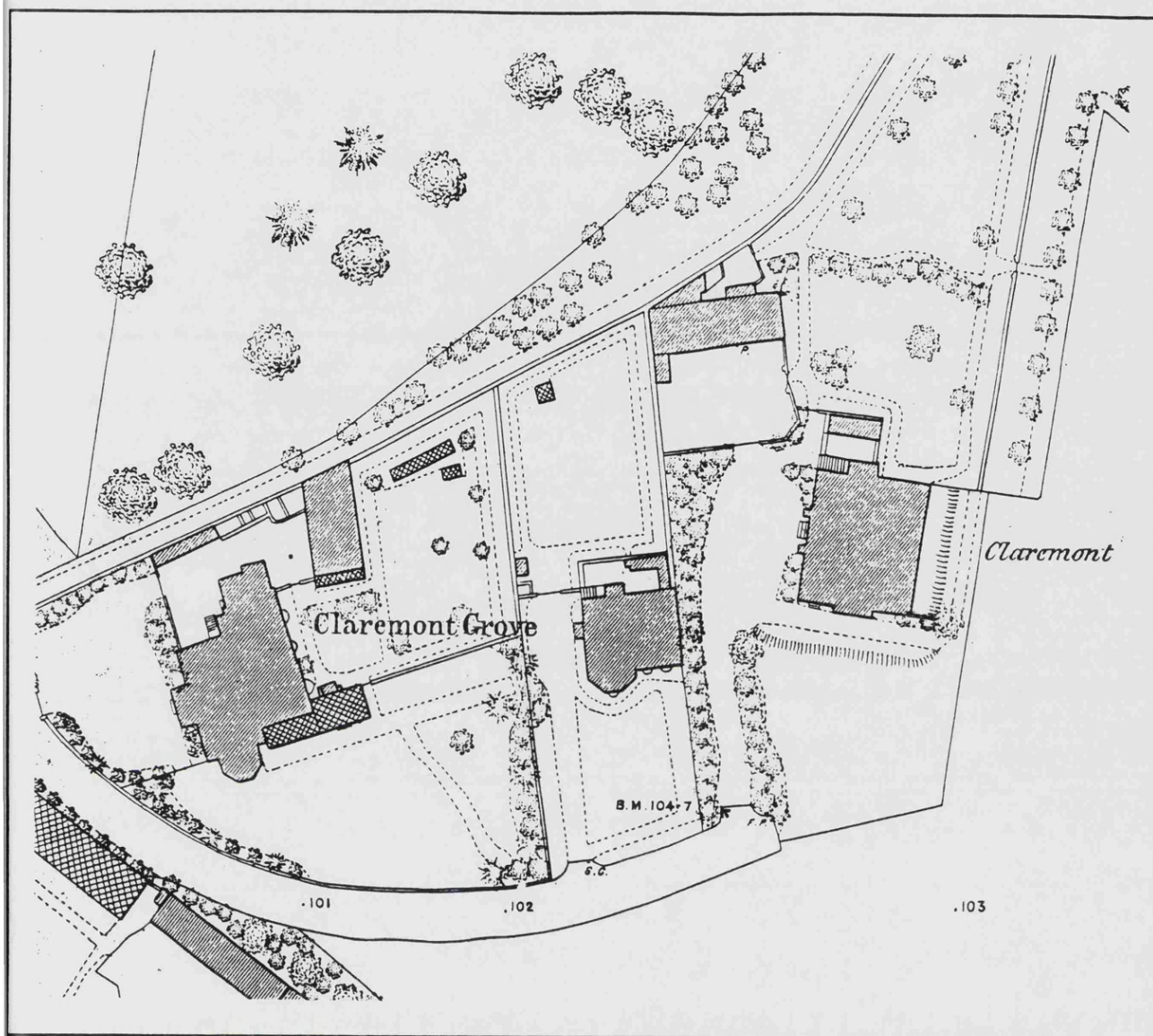


Fig. 9 Claremont Grove, St. Leonard's
O.S. Map, 1:500, 1876, LXXX.10.4 (reduced by 36%).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century St. Leonard's was an area of a few large houses owned by the wealthy, but the social structure altered somewhat once development started. By 1841 there were 194 completed properties, of which 16 were uninhabited and a further 34 were in the process of being built. (Table 1) The main landowners at that time were John Tyrrell, a barrister who owned approximately 33 acres; William Ponsford Luke, a grocer, with 26 acres and the Hoopers with 10 acres. There was a mixture of owner-occupied and rented houses. For example, of 36 properties in Upper and Lower Mount Radford Terraces in 1839, 9 were owner-occupied and 27 were tenanted. Hoopers owned all the very large houses in The Crescent, occupied one and let the other five to professional people or those of independent means. In 1841 they employed between them 17 residential servants.¹ In 1841 St. Leonard's was a compact suburb of genteel houses with an air of quiet respectability. Two buildings in particular had influenced its character. In 1832 the Deaf and Dumb Institution moved from St. Thomas's to Hill Field, a two-acre site on the Topsham Road, almost opposite to Mount Radford House, thus precluding residential development in this corner. (Fig. 10) Mount Radford House, whose grounds formed the core of the early suburb, had been the focus of social life for what the parish records refer to as "people of the best quality" and "gentlewomen of high degree"; a role held for over two centuries, thereby setting the tone of the district. In 1826 it became a school and therefore was not available for sale (and possible demolition) when several acres of its grounds were sold for house building. Thus something of its former character was retained. Had the mansion not been located here, then St. Leonard's might have been an entirely different kind of suburb.²

¹ Census, 1841; DRO Tithe Map and Apportionment of St. Leonard's, 1841; Census, 1841.

² DRO PW/114, Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.114; EFP, 18.12.1828; DRO PW/116, Parish Records of St. Leonard's, R. Dymond, History of the Suburban Parish of St. Leonard, Exeter, 1873, p.20 (re-numbered p.45); Besley, 1831, p.128.

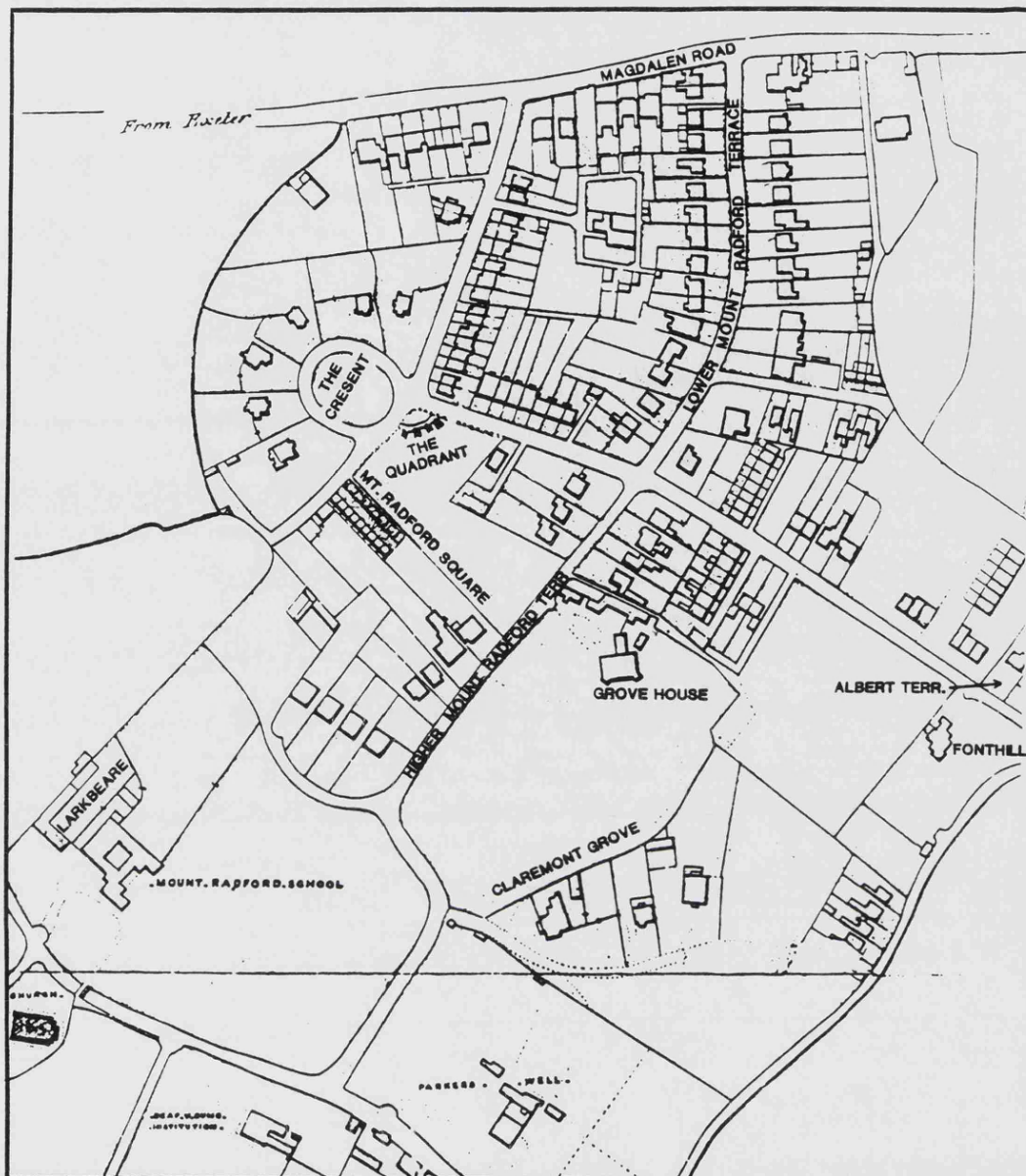


Fig. 10 St. Leonard's in 1841

(adapted from the Tithe Map of
St. Leonard, 1841, DRO ECA)

An Expanding Village

The northern perimeter of St. Leonard's was the Magdalen Road which led to the neighbouring village of Heavitree. In 1800 this was a small, isolated village lying about a mile to the south-east of the city centre. In 1801 500 of its inhabitants claimed to be in agriculture.¹ A considerable amount of land, including most of the property in the village centre, belonged to the Baring family who, of course, owned much of the adjoining land in St. Leonard's.² The nucleus of the village was centred round the junction of the Great London Road and Church Street, the site of the Turnpike Gate; the built-up area consisting of 700 yards of ribbon development along the main road and 220 yards down the eastern side of Church Street.

(Fig. 11) It was a mixed community. Some of the houses along the main road were well spaced out and set in their own grounds. Others were smaller dwellings and shops. Behind them fields stretched away to the north. In the middle of the road to the east of the Turnpike Gate was Middle Row, a line of cottages, a stable, orchards and gardens, which divided this main road, restricting it to a narrow lane on the south side. The removal of Middle Row in 1828 resulted in a short stretch of very wide road. Three public houses served the community, two having function rooms. Church Street was almost completely built up on its east side with houses, some with courts behind. Opposite were the church, churchyard, rectory and glebe lands with a slaughterhouse and shop nearby. This was a small agricultural community living astride one of the main exit roads from the city, but completely separate, having its own shops and public amenities.³

¹ DRO ECA General Map Book of the Lands of the Chamber of Exeter, c. 1756, Map of Exeter; Census, 1801.

² DRO ECA 3004 A/PFT 86, Heavitree Deeds PS 1/1 1-13.

³ DRO ECA 217/3/11, J. Coldridge, A Survey of the Manor of Mount Radford and Heavitree in the Parishes of St. Leonard and Heavitree, 1816; T. Falla, 'Heavitree', Discovering Exeter, 3, Exeter Civic Society, 1983, pp.33 and 24; EFP, 6.3.1828.

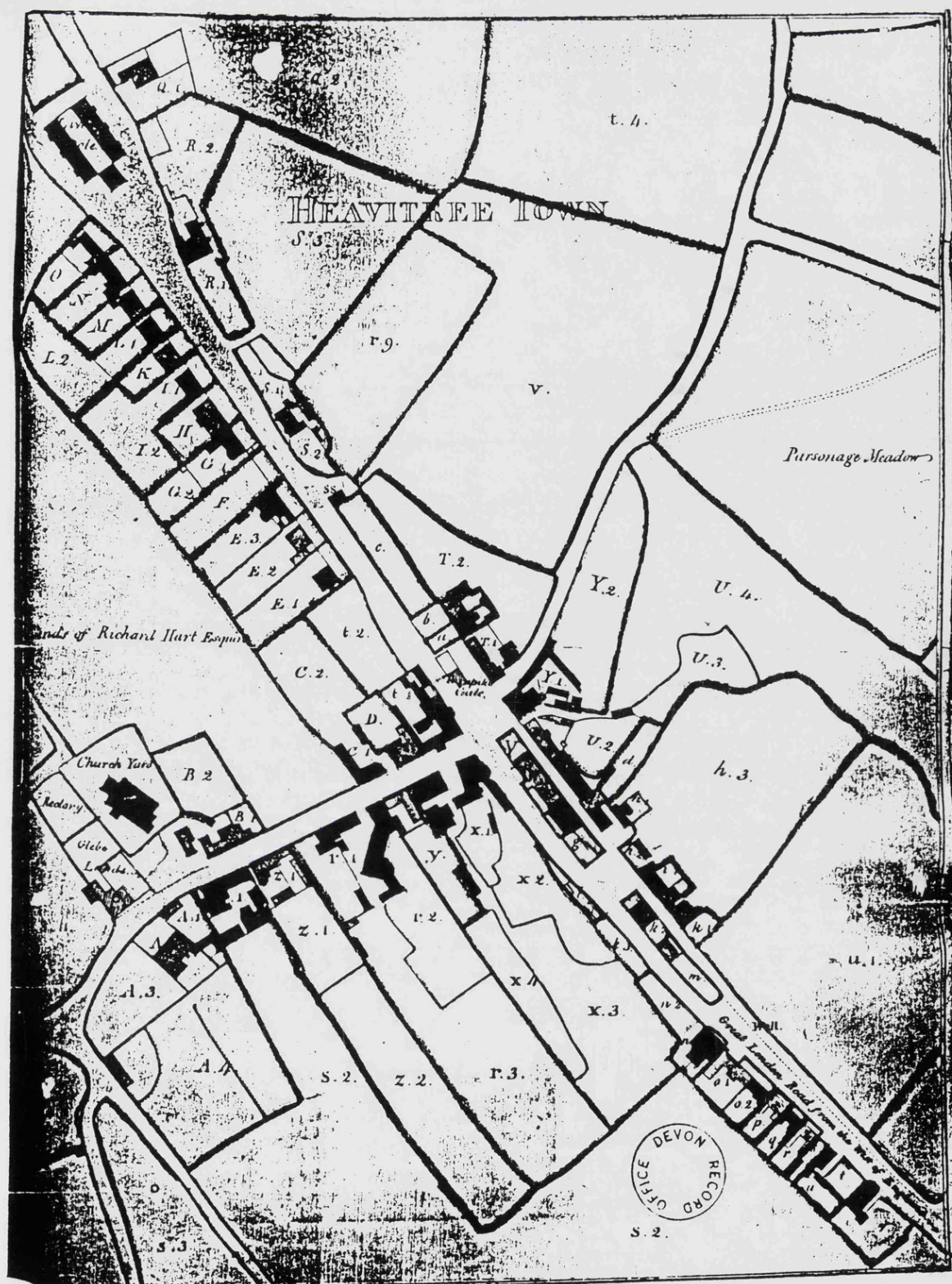


Fig. 11 The Village of Heavitree, 1816

J. Coldridge, A Survey of the Manor of Mount Radford and Heavitree in the Parishes of St. Leonard and Heavitree, 1816. DRO ECA Z17/3/11.

The first forty years of the nineteenth century were a period of great change for Heavitree during which time its population more than tripled: from 833 in 1801 to 3048 in 1841.¹ It was regarded as a very healthy area with a mean average temperature said to be nearly one degree higher than Exeter's and it was soon attracting the more prosperous citizens, both as residents and summer visitors; others walked there on Sundays and holidays.² It was located well away from the flood plain, mainly on high ground and far away from the nuisance and insanitary conditions which prevailed in central Exeter. Contemporary writers frequently commented on its healthy situation:

"Heavitree, always famous for the purity and salubrity of its air, its delightful situation, fine prospects and agreeable walks and rides ..."³

Jenkins comments on its "... delightful situation, both for prospect and air" and Lady Paterson recorded in her diary that Lieutenant P. Johnson of the 21st Regiment had lodgings in Heavitree for his health.⁴ Heavitree attracted residents who had sufficient means to choose the location of their homes. One of its advantages was that it was within ten minutes walking distance of the city, a feature noted in advertisements of properties for sale. There was a boom in the building industry in the early part of the century and many comfortable and convenient houses for prosperous people were constructed. In 1831 the compilers of a local directory remarked that "the vast number of genteel houses and villas recently erected here far exceed our limits of description". One local historian remarked that "Heavitree by 1830 was considered to be the most fashionable village in the West of England".⁵ In 1801 there were only 177 houses (163 inhabited) in the entire parish but by 1841 there were 609 (528 inhabited). The greatest

¹ Census, 1801-1841.

² T. Shapter, The Climate of the South of Devon, 1862 edn, p.108.

³ Besley, 1831, p.64

⁴ Jenkins, op. cit., 1841 edn, p.437; DRO MS 36 Lady Paterson, Diary, 25.10.1832.

⁵ Besley, 1831, p.64; G. Sheldon, From Trackway to Turnpike, 1928; p.114, quoting R. Dymond.

increases had been between 1821-1831 with 71% and 1831-1841 with 62%.¹

The Manor of Heavitree belonged to the Barings and the land passed to Sir Thomas Baring on the death of John Baring in 1816.² When the Baring Devonshire Bank failed in 1820 much of the estate was purchased or leased by Hoopers, the builders, a further instance of Hoopers prospering from the development of Baring land. Even before his death, John Baring had begun to lease out parcels of land for development. One of the first was Salutory Mount, an ideal site on the main road, and here houses were constructed in the manner of architect/builder Matthew Nosworthy who was responsible for the elegant Colleton Crescent among other fine buildings. Leases were granted by John Baring between 1804 and 1809 to a variety of people, for example William Lane, a victualler of Heavitree, John Salisbury, cabinet maker of Exeter and William Wells Esquire of Ivybridge, to build or acquire the 13 houses in the row.³ They were not identical, either in size or style. One group of five were two-storey red brick houses with Coade stone bands, vermiculated voussoirs to round-headed doors and mask keystones, similar to those found in Southernhay. Eagle House had two very large stone eagles and a circular plaque depicting a stone eagle on its front. The houses attracted residents sufficiently prosperous to keep two or more residential servants.⁴

Other developments followed in the vicinity, also on Baring land, two having names commemorating this influential family: Baring Crescent and Baring Place. In 1818 John Brown Esquire leased three fields from Sir Thomas Baring to build "superior cottages". In reality they were large houses. (Fig. 12) Houses in Baring Crescent had semi-circular front gardens and private gardens across the road

¹ Census, 1801-1841.

² Worthy, op. cit., p.9.

³ DRO ECA Baring Estate Papers B/L 4/24-31 and B/E 5/34-39.

⁴ DOE, p.92; Census, 1841.

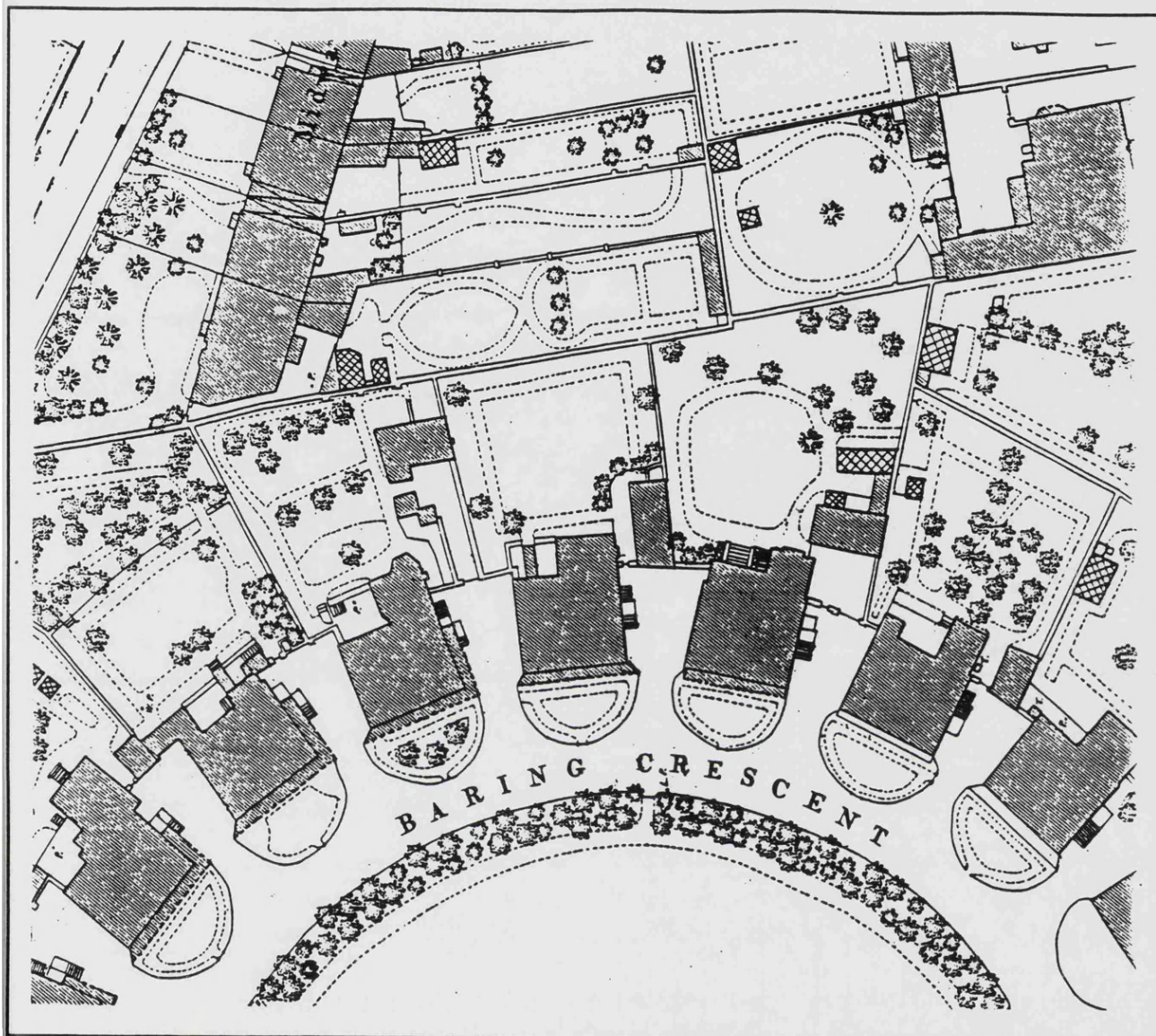


Fig. 12 Baring Crescent, Heavitree and part of Midway Terrace
O.S. Map, 1:500, 1876, LXXX.6.20 (reduced by 36%).

behind a hedge. They were secluded from the dust of the main roads and had stables and coach houses at the rear, with access both to Heavitree Road and Magdalen Road. Each had eight bedrooms, two drawing rooms, a dining room, a breakfast room, cellars and servants' quarters. Attention to detail was meticulous and they were designed to sell for at least £1000. By 1823 six of the houses had been completed and four acres of the land on which they were built sold to the Hoopers for £1,500. Apart from high-ranking service officers such as General John G. Clay, they attracted prosperous tradesmen from the city who presumably hitherto had lived over their premises: for instance, Edward Adams, goldsmith of High Street, lived here in 1828, doubtless attracted by the amenities and possible social enhancement offered to residents in Heavitree.¹ Nearby Baring Place was built in 1822. These fine Regency dwellings with Greek Doric doorways, semi-circular fanlights, tall sash windows with delicate glazing bars and iron balconies, commanded extensive views over Haldon; spacious and well-proportioned, their large rooms were ideally suited to entertaining. In 1834 their rateable values ranged from £35 to £50 and their rents were about £55 per annum. The Hoopers owned Nos. 3 and 4 and the residents, which included Lieutenant General Sir William Paterson, were of sufficient means to employ at least five servants per family. Advertisements of household goods for sale suggested that their interiors contained furnishings of very good quality.²

Completing a triangle of superior dwellings was Midway Terrace. This was a row of six pairs of elegant two- and three-storey houses with trellis porches fronting Heavitree Road. Rated between £30 and £45, lower than either Baring Place (£40-£48) or Baring Crescent

¹ DRO Baring Estate Papers, Box 116; DRO B/E 5/21 1-3; Leases 1818; EFP, 3.9.1818; DRO Indenture: Barings and Hoopers, 25.8.1823; *Besley*, 1828, *passim*.

² DRO B/ B/E, 5/20 Lease, 1822; DRO 3004A PO 13B Heavitree Rate Books, 15.12.1834; Census, 1841; EFP, 23.9.1837.

(£42-£92), they were nevertheless houses of quality with good gardens to the front and rear. (Fig. 12) William Hooper resided in one which had five "good bedrooms" and when it was advertised for sale potential clients were advised that "no expense had been spared". Although the houses attracted families of independent means, the servant ratio was 1.5 per family compared with more than five in Baring Place, which suggests that some of the Midway Terrace households were less affluent.¹

Following these, other terraces were built; for example Stafford Terrace was completed by 1824 for the reception of "genteel families". Each house had a dining room and a drawing room 22' x 14', three sitting rooms, six bedrooms and water closets with hydraulic pumps.² By 1841 Heavitree had almost a dozen rows of spacious, elegant houses designed for gracious living. Some of the larger houses had a decided air of grandeur and sophistication. A good example is Mont-le-Grand whose very name suggests superiority. (Fig. 25) Built in 1840-1 off what was then still known as Workhouse Lane, these houses had architectural features such as pediments and tympanum wreaths, doorways with clustered shaft pilasters, cast iron balustrades to steps, quoin pilasters with honeysuckle ornaments and similar decoration. The end pair had ornamental barge boards.³ The terrace of eight on the south side of the road was perhaps one of the most gracious in the whole of Exeter and this, along with several of the ones already discussed, bear comparison with many of the elegant terraces that could be found nearer the centre of Exeter.

Many of the properties in Heavitree offered professional men and city merchants easy access to their businesses and, at the same time, residences in an almost rural setting with shopping and social activities readily available. The area was favoured by retired people, particularly those from overseas or former service personnel.⁴

¹ DRO 3004A PO 13B Heavitree Rate Books, 5.12.1834; Falla, *op. cit.*, p.16; EFP, 9.6.1842; Census, 1841.

² EFP, 18.3.1824.

³ J. Rapkin, *Map of Exeter*, 1850; DOE, pp.189-190.

⁴ Census, 1841.

It was prestigious, but probably less expensive than other favoured areas such as Bath or Cheltenham. General Sir William and Lady Paterson found that in the early 1830s a comfortable and urbane life could be lived economically in one of the larger houses in Baring Place. They rented No.4 and then subsequently purchased No.10 for £1600, although they were not wealthy. They were "seriously incommoded" by their son's financial difficulties and had to "economise strictly" and sell their carriage to honour his debts, yet were accepted by the local aristocracy and appeared to have a pleasant social life.¹ Not all the new building in Heavitree was in groups; individual houses were constructed or rebuilt. The traveller and artist Richard Ford regarded Exeter as an ideal place to settle and rebuilt an old house opposite Heavitree church. It was from here that he wrote the Handbook for Travellers in Spain, published in 1845.² Several large individual houses were built, particularly along the main road. Some were expensive; for instance Edward Eardley, an Exeter china merchant, built five spacious houses valued at over £3000 each, giving them the prestigious-sounding name of Heavitree Park, probably to attract the newly rich.³ In 1831 Heavitree had the same number of families as the small country town of Crediton, but employed twice the number of domestic servants; an indication of the solid standards of comfort enjoyed by some of the residents of what was now a suburb of Exeter.⁴ By 1841 it was physically joined to the city, but not continuously, by large houses in their own grounds, giving it the appearance, at least during the first four decades of the nineteenth century, of a relatively isolated, rural community with only tentative links with Exeter. This was deceptive since, as has been shown, many of its residents had businesses in the city and doubtless prosperous families looked to the city for their shopping and

¹ DRO MS 36 Lady Paterson, Diary, 1831-1835, passim.

² R.E. Prothero, ed., The Letters of Richard Ford 1797-1858, 1905, pp.145 and 173.

³ Falla, op. cit., p.38.

⁴ Newton, VE, p.76.

entertainment. Nevertheless, it remained administratively independent of the City of Exeter until 1913.¹

Housing the Working Class

Hedgeland's map of 1806 shows that there were already many small dwellings on either side of the main exit roads from the city and from evidence available it is clear that there had been "suburbs" of a kind from early times. By the 1520s a quarter of the citizens of Exeter were living outside the walls.² One of the most important extra-mural areas was St. Sidwell's. Typical of very early suburban settlements,³ it lay immediately outside one of the main gates, East Gate, and had a church to serve both parishioners and travellers. An old trackway came down along the ridgeway from the north-east, along St. Sidwell Street and into the oldest thoroughfare in the city, High Street. In Roman times St. Sidwell Street was one of the main roads out of the city.⁴ Portman suggests that in the fifteenth century there had been one-roomed huts in St. Sidwell's constructed of cob or elementary timber-framing with thatched roofs (forbidden within the city walls) which housed labouring poor.⁵ After the Restoration a Mr Long built a number of tenements and other houses varying in size in this area at annual rents ranging from 4/- to £2.13.4d.⁶ According to the Hearth Tax of 1671, St. Sidwell's had the largest number of households of all parishes enumerated, but the lowest average number of hearths

¹ Wood's Map, 1840; DRO ECA G11 Press u Box 14, Exeter Extension Order, 1913.

² Portman, op. cit., p.1; W.Stukeley, Itinerarium Curiosum, 1766 edn, p.157; Portman, op. cit., p.2.

³ D.J. Keene, 'Suburban Growth', The Plans and Topography of Medieval Towns in England and Wales, The Council for British Archaeology, Research Report No.14, 1976, p.71.

⁴ Hoskins, 2000, pp.2-3.

⁵ Portman, op. cit., p.122.

⁶ Ibid. p.3.

(1.8 as opposed to 5.0 in the wealthy inner city parish of St. Stephen). Statistics suggest that the parishes which lay outside the walls, which might be classed the early suburbs, were among the poorest.¹

St. Sidwell's was probably a 'provisioning' area in the days of pack horses and still retained its role of providing services for the transport industry. The New London Inn, the largest of its kind in the area, was built here in 1794 and by 1816 there were at least 17 public houses. Large numbers of ostlers, grooms, servants, coach builders, harness makers and others in similar employ were housed in this vicinity, many in the small courts between St. Sidwell Street and Paris Street.² Building continued in this triangle with a range of courts and cottages, the majority being rented. By 1819 there were congregations of small courts round the junction of Longbrook Street/St. Sidwell Street; the latter was built up on both sides as far as St. Ann's chapel and there were dwellings behind houses near the church. Beyond lay fields and open country.³ In-filling continued, particularly when old houses were destroyed by fire, a hazard here, as even by 1832 this densely built-up area had no fire brigade.⁴ Many of the houses in this area were small, often being advertised as "convenient". Rateable values varied; ten cottages in Clarence Place ranged between £4.5.0d and £9.10.0d per annum, which suggests variation in size and amenities.⁵ The nature and scale of development differed from the middle-class developments. Small builders often obtained working capital through mortgages. Robert Fisher, joiner, borrowed money to build King William Terrace from William Luke, grocer, mortgaging to him all the houses. A pawnbroker

¹ Hoskins, *IT&P*, pp.112-115.

² R. Dymond, 'The Old Inns and Taverns of Exeter', *Transactions of the Devon Association*, July 1880, pp.411-412; Trewman, *The Exeter Pocket Journal*, 1816; Hoskins, *IT&P*, p.126.

³ DRO J. Coldridge, *A Survey of the City of Exeter*, 1818-19.

⁴ *Besley*, 1831, p.138.

⁵ *EVL*, 1838.

advanced £700 for the building of one street. Many small tradesmen financed blocks, often occupying one of the houses. At the same time wealthy property owners, for example the Kingdon brothers, ironmongers, and Charles Brutton, leading attorney and property owner, had houses under construction here in the 1830s.¹

Towards the end of the 1830s a completely new scheme was undertaken; the commencement of what was to be a self-contained community - Newtown. Building started on the lower slopes of the Polsloe Ridge on land that was part of Sandford's Charity and Sclater's nurseries. Known as Sclater's Town at the time of its inception, it was slow to materialise. Only three streets were commenced and the real development did not take place until the 1870s.² Hence it will be discussed in detail later.

Although there was a considerable amount of building activity in St. Sidwell's during the 1830s, much of the land in this eastern sector of the city was still undeveloped by 1840; of the 300 acres in the parish, 170 remained as meadow and pasture. Some market gardens had been built over, but 30 acres survived and several acres remained as waste land. Development was fragmented as was land ownership. William Nation, banker of Southernhay, and Codrington Parr together owned 27 acres; other parcels of between 15 and 19 acres were owned by local wealthy bankers and tradesmen; charities owned 30 acres and the City Council six.³ While the wealthy owned large parcels of land, many of the houses were owned by or mortgaged to local tradesmen. By 1841 St. Sidwell's was, perhaps, the most highly developed suburb outside the walls. Building land was being offered for sale and contemporary maps showed outlines of further streets with 'Intended Building's; nevertheless much of the land in this sector was

¹ DRO ECA D7/594/4 and D7/596/2 Leases; EVL, 1838.

² Wood's Map, 1840.

³ DRO Tithe Map and Apportionment of the Parish of St. Sidwell, 1842/5.

undeveloped and most of the building had taken place along the main roads within three-quarters of a mile of the site of the East Gate.¹

From contemporary maps it appears that once Colleton Crescent was completed it was intended to build on the surrounding area known as The Friars, but work did not commence here until after the sale of the Colleton estate in 1827. The land was purchased in parcels and it became a very mixed area, both from the size of the dwellings and the type of residents. Friars Walk, a promenade, valued for the "salubrity of the air and extensive prospects", disappeared and several streets of small cottages were built, interspersed with shops, workshops, a slate yard and other business premises.²

In the core of the elegant and largely self-contained suburb of St. Leonard's the only exception to the middle-class housing was Mount Radford Square. This consisted of eighteen very small terrace houses, built by a Mr Nottle, and probably intended for people in employment in the large houses in the immediate vicinity. Although included on the Tithe Map, they were not enumerated in the 1841 Census, which suggests that they had only just been completed. On the river bank near the lime kilns, away from the main suburb, were some artisans' dwellings inhabited mainly by labourers, limeburners, laundresses and people in similar circumstances.³

By contrast Heavitree contained many houses for the working class. Otton and Pascoe's survey of 1824 recorded 99 houses, a tenement and 95 cottages, but how a house was differentiated from a cottage was not specified. Many cottages dated from the previous century. In the 1830s streets of small dwellings were built for

¹ EFP, 16.8.1838; Wood's Map, 1840.

² J. Britton, Map of Exeter, 1805; DRO ECA Box 60/5/2, Colleton Estate Papers; Besley, 1831, p.50; EVL, 1838.

³ DRO ECA Tithe Map and Apportionment for St. Leonard's, 1841; Census, 1841.

artisans who supplied a range of local services. The first large-scale example was Oakfield Street, appropriately named as it was built on former woodland. It contained some thirty neat, two-storey flat-windowed dwellings with tiny front gardens, five of which were owned by W.R.Bishop, assumed to be the attorney with an office in the city centre. In the near vicinity other streets of small cottages were constructed; several of their owners lived in their own houses nearby. By 1841 Heavitree had extended northwards as far as Park Place, a row of twelve small dwellings built on land belonging to a James Godbear, but even so this was only a little over a quarter of a mile from the centre of the village which, in the main, clustered round the junction of Church Street and Fore Street.¹

At the beginning of the nineteenth century in the area to the north of the city, St. David's, there was a straggle of small dwellings on either side of the main road, St. David's Hill, between the former North Gate and the church and a row of houses immediately outside the north walls, but much of the land was undeveloped. The new Iron Bridge, built in 1834/5, improved the access to this district and some of the old houses became shops. By 1841 a few small houses for dressmakers, laundresses, shoemakers and others similarly employed had been built near the County Gaol and there was some in-filling on St. David's Hill and its approach road. Townsend's Nurseries occupied several acres and a considerable amount of undeveloped land in a variety of ownership lay between St. David's Hill and the river. The area did not develop appreciably until the coming of the railways and for the first forty years of the nineteenth century it remained largely a sparsely-developed rural area.

- ¹ T.Otton and J.Pascoe, A Survey and Valuation of the Parish of Heavitree, September 1824, located in the West Country Studies Library, Exeter, ref. XB/EXE/336-22/HEA; Coldridge's Survey, 1816, *op. cit.*; Falla, *op. cit.* p.9; DRO Tithe Map and Apportionment for Heavitree, 1842;
- ² Britton's *Map*, 1805; White's *Directory for Devonshire*, 1850, p.66; Census, 1841; Wood's *Map*, 1840.

In 1800 St. Thomas had a number of small dwellings clustered round the junction of the Exe Bridge and the three main roads. Most of them were small cottages as reports of "a prodigious flood" in 1800 refer to "...these poor class inhabitants". There were several market gardens in the immediate vicinity, beyond which lay open ground formerly rack fields.¹ On a former barley field, Hydrantha Place was built in 1803, a three-storey block to re-house slum dwellers. This was possibly an early example of the 'model blocks' of dwellings built by trusts such as the Peabody Trust during the second half of the nineteenth century, for it is recorded that in appearance it was like a warehouse with "unbelievably" small rooms, tiny windows and extremely steep and narrow staircases.² Anthony Wohl draws attention to criticisms levelled at model blocks; dark, gloomy passages, 'pokey' rooms and dwellings that resembled workhouses; criticisms that obviously applied to Hydrantha Place. But cost factors were important; even with cheap land Trusts found difficulty in averaging £90 per room in construction costs, whereas small suburban houses could be erected for under £40 per room.³ By 1841 there were 758 inhabited houses plus 69 uninhabited houses in St. Thomas's (Table 1) the bulk being ribbon development of small houses along the three main roads, although there were some houses in side roads near the canal housing workers in tin, publicans, coachmakers and tailors among others. Interspersed with people in varying occupations, for example labourers, servants and gardeners, were some recorded as "independent", but how affluent they were compared with those living in, say, St. Leonard's is impossible to say. There were a number of courts behind Cowick Street, largely for gardeners, dairymen, turners, bakers and other workers. A similar diverse occupational pattern obtained in Alphington Street and Okehampton Street, although the latter was not as built up as the other two main roads.⁴ The real development of the suburb was several decades away.

¹ Tozer's Map, 1792; Brierley, op. cit., p.169.

² J.V. White, Provincialism, op. cit., p.63.

³ A.S. Wohl, The Eternal Slum, 1977, pp.167-168.

⁴ Census, 1841.

Suburbia: The First Four Decades

Until the latter years of the eighteenth century Exeter had been a city largely confined within walls, although for centuries there had been some houses and cottages lining the exit routes or grouped near the gates. The layout of the city had changed little in shape since medieval times, but towards the end of the eighteenth century change became apparent: new roads and a new bridge were built; access to the city was facilitated by the demolition of the gates; transport improved and expansion began beyond the walls.

The building of Bedford Circus, which involved breaching the walls, was the forerunner of suburban development which is still continuing. Between 1801 and 1841 the population of the built-up area increased by 93.5% and its housing stock by 106%.¹ By 1841 Exeter had distinct and recognizable suburbs, each with a varied pattern of building cycles and each with its own character. Considering that the entire population totalled less than 40,000 and the limits of the built-up area were within one mile of the city centre in any direction, why should each of the suburbs have developed in such an individual and distinct manner? It is perhaps necessary to review the nature of a suburb. Today it might be felt to be a self-contained community with its own shops, services, schools, leisure and cultural facilities and, in some cases, railway station. In earlier times this was not so. As has been shown, some of Exeter's suburbs were based on established thriving communities; some were newly built; others developed very slowly over the years. Some had shops and community facilities and some did not; some were linked to the city others were separate. Dyos has drawn attention to the complexity of defining a suburb.² Whatever its nature it is essentially dependent upon the city.

¹ Census, 1801-1841.

² Dyos, op. cit., p.20 sqq.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century some of the inhabitants of Exeter's oldest and largest suburb, St. Sidwell's, may seldom have penetrated the city centre, yet one of the reasons for the existence of the suburb was the city itself. Already a well-established provisioning area, the building of the New London Inn immediately outside the eastern gate in 1794 brought people, trade and job opportunities to the suburb, as it was not only the largest and most commodious inn in the city, but it rapidly became the centre of social and political life throughout the century. Building continued in this area, particularly of small working-class houses, so that by 1841 it was the most densely built-up area outside the city walls.¹ It seems, therefore, that during the first four decades of the nineteenth century St. Sidwell's expanded but retained its character as a working-class suburb. The two most likely reasons for this are that there was an abundance of low-level 'service' jobs - porters, ostlers, grooms, stable-boys - connected with the transport industry and a well-established core of working-class houses.² The builders of elegant terraces for the wealthy middle class were less likely to be attracted to the area, although some 'genteel' terraces of smaller houses were built on the fringes of the suburb amid more rural surroundings than the crowded triangle between St. Sidwell Street and Paris Street which formed the heart of the suburb.

St. Thomas's was another working-class suburb. Early maps show a collection of houses and a church clustered at the southern end of the Exe Bridge and separated from the city by the physical barrier of the river.³ As there has been a bridge at this point since at least 1231 (and doubtless earlier)⁴, the original settlement can be accounted for by the river crossing. By 1800 the area had not developed to any great extent; it largely consisted of ribbon development along its

¹ Hoskins, 2000, p.92; Wood's Map, 1840.

² Hoskins, IT&P, p.126.

³ Tozer's Map, 1792.

⁴ E.A. Freeman, Exeter, 1837, p.72.

three major roads which ran through areas of market gardens and what had formerly been rack fields. However, unlike St. Sidwell's, it did not develop rapidly. There was no major source of employment; most of the small industries were located across the river on Exe Island and the Shilhay immediately outside the western exit of the city.¹ Attempts were made during the early part of the century to introduce middle-class residents by the building of three groups of superior terraces. However, once completed they remained as sole representatives of this class of development for several decades. St. Thomas's did not develop into a thriving suburb with a mixture of social classes and a variety of houses until the latter part of the century. The land consisted largely of either flat flood plain adjacent to the river or very steeply sloping ground which, in the early nineteenth century, would have been impossible to build on without sophisticated earth-moving machinery. It was regarded as an unhealthy area probably on account of its tendency to flood. When there were so many far more attractive areas to choose from in the immediate environs of Exeter it is not surprising that in these early years it did not expand as rapidly as other areas.

A completely different kind of suburb evolved in St. Leonard's. Whereas much of the early development outside the walls had been on small plots, resulting in single terraces, for example Pennsylvania Buildings and Baring Crescent, here on the Mount Radford estate was sufficient land to create what might appear at first to have been almost a village. In fact it was not; it lacked the amenities usually found in a village: shops, public houses, blacksmith and other services. Its church lay across the main road to Topsham, isolated from the main community (although in 1779 John Baring had had the highway lowered and diverted and had built a bridge across it to facilitate access to the church).² Apart from two rows of tiny cottages, it consisted of middle-class houses of some architectural

¹ Britton's Map, 1805; Besley, 1831, p.52.

² DRO PW/116 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.19.

merit. By 1841 'Regency' St. Leonard's was complete. (Fig.10) Later years saw some development on its eastern fringe, but the core of the suburb has remained unaltered to this day. The reason for its development in this manner was the sale of the Barings' Mount Radford estate in 1827 to Hoopers, the builders.¹ Although some of the land was quickly re-sold and several local builders and architects took part in the development of this estate, the Hoopers were responsible for much of the layout. The result was a cohesive and graceful suburb of visual unity which attracted the prosperous. The old Mount Radford mansion, which had at one time been a focus of social life for Exeter society, remained, and with it possibly some vestiges of its former prestige. Prior to the building of the estate the area had been largely rural (Fig. 8), but there were one or two very large houses in the immediate vicinity which had set the tone of the neighbourhood and these remained. On a field adjoining the Mount Radford land several very substantial houses were built and in the heart of the suburb was a graceful crescent of superior dwellings. Although most of the new houses were of modest proportions, the overall ambience of the suburb was of prosperous gentility. The houses varied in size, yet the core was built within a sufficiently short period of time to ensure an overall cohesion. The estate had the added advantage of being on high ground and its location between two main roads ensured to a certain extent that it remained an intact and integrated community. The Deaf and Dumb Institution and its extensive grounds occupied a large area of land near the church, thus precluding residential development here and adding to the general air of spaciousness. St. Leonard's was therefore completely different from Exeter's other suburbs. By 1841 there were at least 100 people and their families of independent means here. Other residents included solicitors, bankers, surgeons, army officers and prospering merchants.² The fact that the builder Henry Hooper, whose family fortunes may largely have resulted from the purchase and development of Baring land, chose to

¹ DRO Pearse Box 67/9/1 Leases; EFF, 15.2.1827, 26.3.1827.

² Census, 1841,

live here may have been a further indication of its desirability. The residents employed between them 285 residential servants, the majority (262) female.¹ (Table 4) The percentage of owner-occupiers to tenants was 24.7% (Table 5), thus the social tone of the neighbourhood was set by tenants rather than owners. It was a suburb that emerged purely on account of the sale of a large area of land initially in one parcel. The reasons for the eventual emergence of such a graceful suburb are many and varied; some are fortuitous. The land was available at a time when there was a market for genteel houses in rural surroundings. It was ideally located, upon high ground yet within easy reach of the city centre. It was already an area of close association with "people of the best quality".² The land was purchased by Hoopers, builders of some local standing, who were responsible for the creation of the suburb. As a number of other builders were involved, it is indeed fortunate that the outcome was harmonious. How much actual influence the Hoopers had in the overall design is not known. The result was an excellent example of rus in urbe with all the conveniences of the city close by.

Heavitree has been included in Exeter's suburbs although in 1800 it was not a suburb but a separate, isolated agricultural village independent of Exeter. However, by 1841 it was linked to the city by ribbon development and its population had tripled.³ (Table 2) Some of its new properties had been built by firms engaged in developing other parts of Exeter; some of its residents were investing heavily in other suburbs. Merchants from the city were moving out to smart houses in Heavitree and others were actually speculating in property development there. Heavitree, therefore, had links with the city other than merely physical ones. It developed as a suburb from a very different

¹ Census, 1841; DRO Tithe Map And Apportionment for St. Leonard's, 1841.

² DRO PW/116 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, Dymond, op. cit., p.20.

³ DRO General Map Book of the Lands of the Chamber of Exeter, c. 1756, Map of Exeter; Wood's Map, 1840; Census, 1841.

base and at a very different pace from the other expanding suburbs. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was a self-contained nucleated village with shops, public houses, almshouses and necessary services. It was a well-established community in an area that had much to offer. The area was favourably located on high ground and a considerable amount of it was owned by the Barings. By the 1820s most of the estate had been sold, thus releasing land ideal for development.¹ As has been shown, a variety of houses was built, including some of Exeter's most prestigious terraces, so that by 1841 Heavitree's housing stock had more than tripled.² No longer was it an agricultural-based society, although there were still market gardens in the vicinity.³ It was a far more mixed community than the other expanding suburbs. Its residents were occupied in a wide range of jobs.⁴ It was proving attractive to those who had retired, particularly from overseas or the services. It did not cater exclusively for the middle classes as did St. Leonard's, neither was it predominantly working-class as were St. Sidwell's and St. Thomas's. A popular area for walks and holidays, it quickly became an attractive area in which to live and its residents included titled people. Not as fashionable as Cheltenham or Bath, nevertheless many people, General and Lady Paterson for example, found they could live a pleasant, sociable life within their rather limited means.⁵ In the early years of the nineteenth century Heavitree should perhaps be more properly described as an expanding village than a suburb, but within a few decades it had become one of Exeter's important suburbs, even though it remained independent of the city for the remainder of the century.

¹ DRO 217/3/11 J. Coldridge, Survey, 1816, op. cit. ; DRO Baring Estate Papers B/L 4/24-31 and B/E 5/34-39.

² Census, 1841.

³ DRO Tithe Map and Apportionment for Heavitree, 1842

⁴ Census, 1841.

⁵ DRO MS 36 Lady Paterson, Diary, 1831-35, passim.

Exeter's expansion was not limited to the suburbs discussed; there were pockets of new houses built in various areas as and when land became available; for example houses of varying types were built in the Friars behind Colleton Crescent when the Colletons sold their estate in 1827.¹ Several "genteel houses with good gardens, in a pleasant situation, free from the noise and smoke of the city"² were built at the top of Longbrook Street. These became known as Hills Court and, together with the farm and nursery nearby, were described in 1831 as a "pretty village" which suggests a certain amount of cohesion rather than mere ribbon development.³ Some areas were very slow to develop. In 1800 St. David's Hill, the northern exit route, traversed the most rural and isolated area. A row of trees ran down the middle of the road near the church and suburban expansion was very slow for a number of reasons.⁴ The building of several large houses, each with extensive grounds, on the Duryard estate in the previous century resulted in less land being available for building plots. Topographically it was a difficult area in which to build. On its western edge there was the very narrow floor of the River Exe and towering above were the very steep and, in some places, almost vertical river-cliffs above the Exe. Flat marshy land, some of it devoted to withy beds, lay between the river and the cliffs and some of this was subject to flooding. The surrounding terrain was not conducive to development. St. David's Hill itself was extremely steep and access from the town remained difficult until the Iron Bridge was built in 1834.⁵

¹ DRO Colleton Estate Papers, Box 60/5/2.

² Jenkins, 1841 edn, op. cit., p.344.

³ Besley, 1831, p.60.

⁴ DRO ECA J. Coldridge, A Survey of the City of Exeter, 1818-1819.

⁵ White's Directory, 1850, p.66; plaque on the Iron Bridge.

As has been demonstrated, Exeter's suburbs did not develop at the same pace nor in the same manner. There were those which were almost exclusively confined to one social group; there were those which were a mixture. Exeter both benefited and suffered from the nature of the terrain. Very steep land in St. David's and St. Thomas's restricted building; on the other hand steep river-cliffs with a flat top provided an excellent site for Colleton Crescent. The many areas of sloping land in the vicinity of Exeter afforded sites for houses with excellent views - a much desired feature for, as Loudon remarks:

"Scarcely any object that can be created within the boundary wall of a small spot can compensate for the want of a distance prospect..."¹

The River Exe, which had once contributed to the city's wealth through the port, formed a physical barrier between the city and the extra-mural area of St. Thomas; probably one of the factors for the slow development of that area. Furthermore, the flat flood plains in both St. Thomas's and St. David's were yet another factor prohibiting building in these areas. Floods inundated the streets of St. Thomas's on numerous occasions in the early years of the century, causing extensive damage and rubbish in the river blocked drains.² The area's image was not enhanced by such disasters.

Borsay's suggestion that the desire for grand design emanated from developers and consumers rather than from overall plans of a few creative architects appears to apply, to a large extent, to Exeter.³ Unlike Plymouth, where the remarkable West-Country architect John Foulston designed the majority of terraces and nearly all the public buildings, stamping an indelible mark on both the public and domestic architecture of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse,⁴ Exeter had no

¹ Loudon, *op. cit.*, p.7.

² Brierley, *op. cit.*, pp.169-170.

³ Borsay, *op. cit.*, p.3.

⁴ W.G. Hoskins, *Devon*, 1954, p.458.

mastermind; indeed Exeter had no specialist architects in the early decades of the century as the builders were also architects. Nosworthy, Stribling and the Hoopers played major roles in designing and building some of the early magnificent crescents and terraces. Bedford Circus was commenced by Stribling and Painter in 1773 and completed in 1825 by Thomas Horrell, yet in spite of the time it took to complete it achieved an almost perfect unity.¹ Pennsylvania was not the work of any of these men, but of Joseph Rowe of Paris Street and until part of its frontage was ruined by a late-nineteenth century ornate porch to one of the houses, it ranked with some of the country's finest buildings.²

The first forty years of the nineteenth century were perhaps some of the most architecturally exciting years in Exeter's history. Terraces, crescents and whole suburbs were created to meet the needs of those who prospered, not from agriculture or industry, but from urban professions and services, and those of sufficient independent means who sought a comfortable life in a pleasant climate. Alongside the smart houses, smaller dwellings were built for those with less money and those who served the more affluent. Together they constituted Exeter's early nineteenth-century suburban expansion.

¹ DRO L 1258 M London Leases, Bedford Estate, M/L/23 24.5.1773 and 21.3.1825; Sharp, op. cit., p.28.

² EFP, 5.6.1823; Sharp, op. cit., p.107.

CHAPTER IV

SIXTY-SIX YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT 1842 - 1907

The period 1842-1907 (from the year following the first detailed Census Returns to the completion of the first Local Authority housing in Exeter) saw the working out of processes of economic and social change which had begun to reshape Britain from the beginning of the industrial revolution. Exeter's population growth slowed down. Numbers within the city itself actually declined between 1881-1891, though this fall was offset by growth in the suburbs.¹ At the beginning of 1850 the local press reported that "there were too many people in distress." In 1878 it deplored both the water supply and the sewerage system and E.A. Freeman, writing in 1887, felt that Exeter was a city of the past.² No major new manufacturing industry had developed to replace the woollen industry and in the absence of a strong manufacturing base it seemed that the best the city could hope for was a slow rate of growth and a period of more or less successful adjustment to economic decline.

Exeter did expand, though slowly. It was able to offer professional services - banking, insurance, medicine, law, education - together with a relatively inexpensive, pleasant and comfortable life to those with sufficient means to live in a good-class residential district. It eventually became the junction of a network of railway lines linking the West Country with Bristol and London; an engineering industry on a local scale was established towards the end of the century; housing estates gradually spread over former agricultural land or market gardens; roads and services improved and by the beginning of the twentieth century a new air of prosperity and vitality was apparent and conditions for the working classes (which

¹ Census 1881-1891.

² RFP, 17.1.1850, 4.9.1878; E.A. Freeman, Historic Towns: Exeter, 1887, p.239.

had been poor) were showing some improvement. Some of the reasons for these changing fortunes were internal to Exeter, but others were to be found in external factors, largely economic, which were determining the extent to which the city would share in the general long-term prosperity of the British economy.

Economic Development: Manufacturing and Service Industries

Table 8 shows how population growth in Exeter through the century compared with that of other towns. During the years 1841-1901 the population of Exeter and its suburbs increased by approximately 38%. In the same period the national growth rate for the population of England and Wales was 82%.¹ Exeter went on growing, but failed to keep up with the rapid development of the Midlands and the North of England.

The slowing down of Exeter's population growth in the Victorian period compares with the period 1801-1841 when the population of the city and suburbs almost doubled.² The unease about social conditions and economic performance expressed by some observers at this time was not confined to Exeter. There was a time when commentators referred to the period 1875-1895 as the Great Depression.³ Although, in terms of the main indicators of economic activity, such as growth in national income and levels of investment, 1875-1895 may not represent a clearly identifiable trough in a business cycle, it is clear that doubts had begun to creep in about various aspects of the British economy and its performance, particularly by comparison with the best individual achievements of rising competitors such as

¹ Census, 1841-1901; P.J. Waller, Town City and Nation, England 1850-1914, 1983 paperback edn, pp.86, 219 and 94.

² Census, 1801-1841.

³ P. Mathias, The First Industrial Nation, second edn, 1983, p.361; F. Crouzet, The Victorian Economy, trans. by Anthony Forster, 1982, p.58.

Germany and the United States. By this time it was seen that being first in the field with industrial development could have disadvantages which took time to show their effects. Though the parallels should not be overstressed, the mood in Exeter to some extent reflected concerns which were making themselves felt in the national economy.

In Chapter I of this study reference was made to the collapse of Exeter's woollen industry, which had been the basis of its former prosperity. Figures for the cloth trade tell what is left of the story. In 1831 there had been 55 fullers; by 1851 there were only 17, by which time the cloth industry in Exeter and St. Thomas's employed merely 172 males and 120 females. By 1871 only 15 males and one female remained in the industry. (Both sets of figures relate to persons over the age of 20).¹

No major manufacturing industry arose to replace textiles. The reasons why large manufacturing industries developed elsewhere, but not in Exeter, have to do with the nature and demands of developing technology, and with the changes in Britain's industrial structure which had gathered momentum from the late eighteenth century onwards.

The new manufacturing industries required increasingly large-scale operation and tended to concentrate in locations where a combination of favourable factors had a cumulative effect in creating the right conditions for development: raw materials, sources of power, entrepreneurs, capital, ready access to markets and the availability of a large workforce with the varied skills needed to operate and service plant and machinery.²

Exeter was not located on a coalfield or a source of iron ore. It could not readily generate the huge supplies of water required by the new industries. Its decline as a port denied it the ready access to North American markets which fostered the growth of Bristol,

¹ Census, 1831-1871.

² Mathias, op. cit., p.129.

Liverpool and their hinterlands. Lacking these advantages, Exeter was unlikely to attract the entrepreneurs, the capital and the large labour force which would have been needed to complete its evolution into a major industrial centre comparable with the conurbations of the Midlands and the North.¹

Within these constraints there were still opportunities to succeed in manufacturing, as individual firms demonstrated, particularly in the period after the Depression of 1875-1895. A new iron foundry was erected in the early 1840s, but it was up for sale by 1844.² The Victorian fashion for church refurbishment favoured Wippell's, the church furnishers, who built new premises in High Street in 1883 and employed 500 people by the mid-twentieth century. The Exeter Brick and Tile Company opened in 1899 in St. Sidwell's at a time of suburban expansion and reviving prosperity, installing the latest machinery which enabled 100,000 bricks a week to be produced to cope with rising demand. Small manufactures, such as helmets for the Rifle and Artillery Corps, were carried on in the outer suburbs.³

The most important manufacturer of the post-Depression era was Henry Willey, whose early death at 41 in 1904 deprived Exeter of an entrepreneur who created some real expansion and who might have done much more. In 1868 H.F. Willey, son of a cordwainer of St. Sidwell's, had founded an engineering business which produced gas stoves and gas meters on a small site near Exe Bridge. On his death in 1894, his eldest son, Henry, took over the business and under his direction the firm expanded until it employed over a thousand people and occupied new premises on the Canal Basin site in St. Thomas's. It was Henry Willey who discussed with the Chamber of Commerce in 1902 the establishment of motor car manufacturing in the city.⁴ At that time

¹ Mathias, *op. cit.*, p.84.

² EFP, 16.5.1844.

³ Building News, 23.2.1884; T.Sharp, Exeter Phoenix, 1946, p.47; Western Times, 4.7.1899; EFP, 11.9.1870.

⁴ Hoskins, 2000, pp.116-117 and 124.

ten years before Morris began building cars in Oxford, successful motor manufacturing could still have been developed from small beginnings. Had the idea gone ahead it would have been a turning point for Exeter, with far-reaching consequences for its economic base and its character as a city. But the industry which ultimately grew until it could serve as an indicator of national economic performance did not come to Exeter.¹

Such were the factors, national and local, underlying the decline of secondary sector occupations in manufacturing industry and Exeter's increasing dependence on tertiary sector occupations in services and professions. The tertiary sector in Great Britain developed rapidly in the Victorian period. In 1841 services accounted for 37% of Britain's total occupied population and 44% of its national income; by 1901 these proportions had increased to 45% and 54% respectively. To that extent, Exeter in this period reflects a trend in the national economy.²

Within the tertiary sector, however, some occupations accounted for more growth than others. Between 1841 and 1901 the percentage of manpower employed in trade and transport in Great Britain expanded by 50% (with a particularly rapid increase in the 1850s and 1860s) largely due to the expansion of railways and the growth of merchant shipping.³ A comparable performance in Exeter would have required a revival of the port as well as greater readiness to exploit the potential of railways.

As it was, there was no revival of the port and the one water transport venture was a disaster. While Britain's carrying trade expanded by 50% between 1851 and 1871, Exeter's canal on which the old Chamber had incurred massive expenditure, lost nearly all its London trade to a steamship service, opened in 1850, plying between London and Plymouth. Its locks were, in any case, of insufficient

¹ Crouzet. op. cit., p.257.

² Ibid., pp.69-70.

³ Ibid., p.69.

size for anything other than small vessels. The City Council opposed the proposal for a rail link with the canal basin, and eventual authorisation came too late to save the trade. There was a short-lived revival of trade between 1888 and 1898, but by 1907 Exeter's mercantile trade was in a serious position.¹

Railway promotion in Britain was undertaken by private enterprise and, unlike the planned systems of France and Germany, lines merely proliferated throughout the country from the inception of railways in the north in 1825. Some towns - Crewe, Swindon and Wolverton for example - were railway creations where railway companies provided more than 25% of total employment and where railways dominated both manufacturing and service industries; other towns, Stafford for instance, became important junctions and acquired railway-related industries. Some towns - Middlesbrough, Carlisle, Derby - which already had an independent economic base - gained tremendously from their railway linkage.²

Exeter could have been in the forefront of railway development had proposals put forward as early as 1825 been adopted. But railway schemes encountered persistent opposition within the City Council. The Bristol and Exeter Railway was authorised by Parliament in 1836 at the instigation of a group of Bristol merchants.³ Perhaps because of the Council's lack of enthusiasm, the Railway Company located their first station in St. David's, not in the central area. It was not until 1st May, 1844 that the first train reached Exeter.⁴ A link to Plymouth (proposed by Plymouth entrepreneurs) did not materialise.

¹ United Kingdom (Trade, Commerce and Condition of the People)
Return to the House of Commons, July 1914, LXXXVIII;

K.R. Clew, The Exeter Canal, 1984, pp.54, 57 and 62-71.

² J.R. Kellett, The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities, 1969, p.3; J. Simmons, 'The Power of the Railway', in The Victorian City, 1, 1973, H.J. Dyos and M. Wolff eds, p.293

³ DRO ECA 2/31 Council Minutes, 21.1.1836; E.T. MacDermot, History of the Great Western Railway, 1927, Vol. II, p.195.

⁴ EEP, 2.5.1844, 9.5.1844.

The South Devon railway was extended to Newton Abbot via St. Thomas's in 1846.¹

Growing public enthusiasm for railways contrasted with the continuing opposition from city councillors. When the House of Lords rejected a plan for a railway from Exeter to London, local citizens at a public meeting requested that the line go ahead so that Exeter could have "a full and fair participation in the advantages of railway communication".² Assent was given in December 1855 to the London and South Western Railway Company to complete the second link with London. A very convenient and centrally located station was built in Queen Street and the line opened in 1860. The new railway cut the journey to London by twenty miles and it was hoped that this new line would create closer links with Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire, with benefits to market trade.³ Meanwhile opposition from the City Council continued; they successfully petitioned against an Exeter, Topsham and Exmouth railway in 1846 and decided to remain 'neuter' in respect of the proposed application to Parliament for an Exeter to Crediton line.⁴ Even when this line was completed in 1847, local political skirmishes over gauges prevented its operation for four years.⁵ Such dilatoriness was not calculated to enhance the city's image with potential investors. Eventually, what proved to be a highly profitable branch line was laid in 1861 down the east bank of the Exe to Exmouth with three halts in Exeter's expanding eastern suburbs. By the turn of the century the Great Western Railway and the London and South Western Company were the principal operators in an enhanced and successful service.⁶ (Fig.13)

The conflicting attitudes in Exeter towards railways are

¹ MacDermot, *op. cit.*, Vol.II, pp.195-210.

² DRO ECA 2/33 Council Minutes 26.8.1846 *sqq.*

³ DRO ECA 2/35 Council Minutes 29.12.1855, 12.6.1860.

⁴ DRO ECA 2/33 Council Minutes 13.5.1846, 8.1.1845.

⁵ MacDermot, *op. cit.*, Vol.II, p.149.

⁶ R.C. Sambourne, Exeter - A Century of Public Transport, 1976, p.7; David St. John Thomas, A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain, 1, The West Country, 1981, p.65.

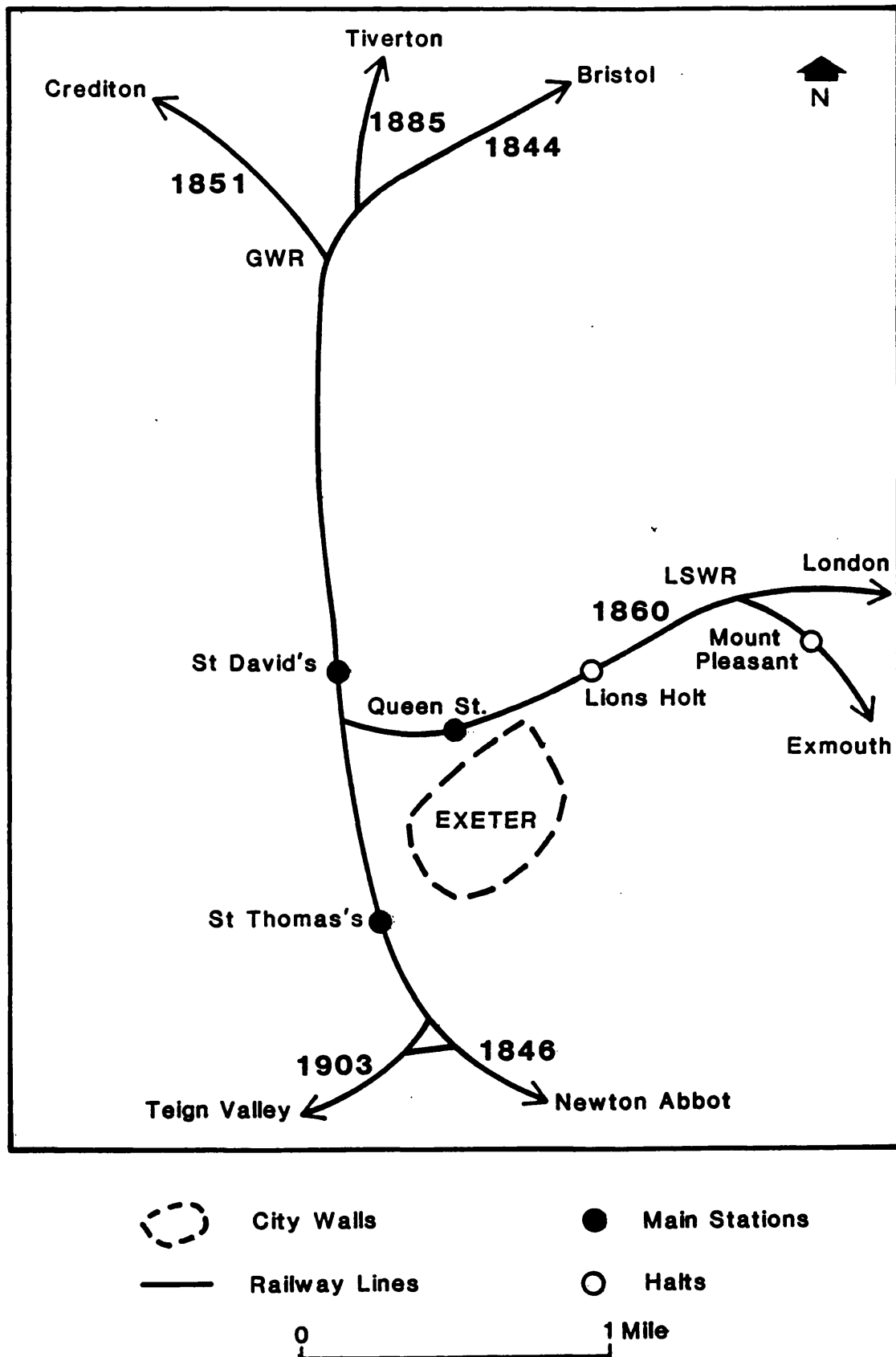


Fig. 13 Exeter's railway services by 1907

(dates indicate when the lines were opened)

reflected in the patterns of employment. The number of carriers, carters, waggoners, saddlers and livery stable keepers in Exeter actually increased between 1841 and 1851, by which time over 700 of the 7,556 men recorded as in employment worked in some part of the transport industry. Of these, 111 males were railway employees. By comparison at least 500 York residents were employed by the railways in 1851.¹

Though, numerically, transport workers formed a significant part of Exeter's working population, the structure and organisation of its transport services, together with its comparatively late connection to the railway system, meant that the full potential for development in important sectors of tertiary industry would remain unrealised.

Other service occupations included financial services and charitable organizations. By 1866 three separate insurance companies had premises in Exeter, and in addition representatives of at least 61 different insurance companies were located in the city and suburbs. The imposing offices of the West of England Insurance Company in High Street provided an example of the outward signs of commercial prosperity the city needed. Financial services were not limited to the middle classes. Apart from the building societies, which will be dealt with in the next chapter, a number of provident institutions existed, for example the Western Provident Association, established in 1848, for the purpose of providing the working class with a weekly income and medical care during sickness and old age, plus a payment of between £5 and £100 on death in return for small regular contributions. It attracted some 663 members during its first year and was subsequently able to open branches in neighbouring towns. A number of charities and charitable organisations provided assistance for the very poor.³

¹ Newton, *VE*, p. 79; A. Armstrong, *Stability and Change in an English County Town*, 1974, p.43.

² Kelly, 1866, pp.814-815; White's *Directory*, 1850, p.119.

³ White's *Directory*, 1850, pp.119 and 95 sqq.

The Local Political Background: Entrepreneurs and Gentlemen

Until 1835 the governing body of the city was the Chamber, a self-elected corporation. Although it had put in hand a number of schemes of benefit to the city, notably the new markets, Queen Street and, earlier, the development of Southernhay, it made a disastrous mistake over the building of the new canal basin and was heavily criticised in the Report on Municipal Corporations in England and Wales (1835).¹ The Parliamentary Commissioners had not accused the Chamber of corrupt practices, but in many senses it had become obsolete. To have both aldermen and councillors elected for life left little room for an infusion of new blood. The Municipal Reform Act of 1835 led to the formation of the new City Council with 12 aldermen and 36 councillors. The new council took office on 1st January 1836, with 'Iron Sam' Kingdon as mayor. Kingdon was a land and property owner and a local businessman, co-owner of S. & W. Kingdon, allegedly the most extensive ironmongers and founders in the West of England.² The wealthy bankers, surgeons and members of the higher levels of Exeter society who had held office in the Chamber were still represented in the seat of power, but at least they were now not necessarily there for life and the social and economic composition of the council overall was transformed by the inclusion of a number of tradesmen - grocers, drapers, candle and soap merchants and nine representatives of the licensed trade - hitherto unlikely to have achieved positions of authority and prestige within the local community. Throughout the Victorian era the conservatives retained control of the council, except for three short interludes.³

¹ DRO ECA 1/16, 2/17, 2/30, 2/30a Chamber Minute Books, 1801-1835, *passim*; Parliamentary Papers: Municipal Corporations in England and Wales, Royal Commission, 1st Report, 1835 (611) xxiii, appendix p.498.

² DRO ECA 2/31 Council Minutes, 1.1.1836; Wood's Map, 1840; EVL, 1838; REF, 8.9.1836.

³ DRO ECA 2/31 Council Minutes, 1.1.1836; Besley, 1831, pp.170-222; Newton VE, p.xvii.

Exeter did not blossom under the new regime. On many occasions there was opposition to, rather than enthusiasm for, modernisation. Many of the real improvements - New North Road, the Iron Bridge, Higher Market, Queen Street and the impressive warehouses on the Quay, as well as the beginning of suburban expansion, had been under the jurisdiction of the old Chamber. A certain ambivalence would be expected in a West country cathedral city where service and professional occupations were still increasing in influence. Between 1841 and 1881 the population of the country as a whole increased by 60%, but during the same time the seventeen main professional occupations increased their numbers by 150%.¹ It was a period in which a process of gentrification was taking place among the middle classes, and the earlier entrepreneurial values which had sustained the industrial revolution were being questioned. The Great Exhibition of 1851, which embodied the ideals of technological progress, in some ways marked the end of an era. It was the last major technological exhibition to be held in England, and by the time it took place there were many signs of changing attitudes.² Some at least of Exeter's civic leaders and their supporters, therefore, were probably aware that they were opting for gentrified stagnation, and they would have felt that this was justified on moral and cultural grounds.

Though such humanitarian and liberal sentiments were often genuine, they failed to take account of the need for growing resources to deal with poor social conditions, exemplified by a high incidence of juvenile crime and the existence of 1024 inhabitants classed as paupers in 1865.³ Indifference to public health and the welfare of the poor could hardly be justified in terms of a liberal or gentlemanly ethos.

¹ M.J. Weiner, English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980, paperback edn, 1981, p.15.

² Ibid., pp.27-28.

³ FFP, 26.7.1865; The Builder, XXVII, 30.1.1869, p.91.

In Exeter as elsewhere, there was a close interdependence of economic and social factors. The attitudes of mind which underlay local politics affected all aspects of local life from public health to industrial innovation. In Exeter, as in Britain as a whole, no one factor provides a simple unitary explanation of the city's evolution during this period.

Community Health

One of the attractions of the West Country was its equable climate, undoubtedly a factor in attracting middle-class residents, especially those in retirement, to the expanding suburbs during the early part of the nineteenth century. Heavitree, said to have a mean average temperature nearly one degree higher than Exeter, was popular and as St. David's and Pennsylvania were largely on high ground, they should have been healthy, desirable areas.¹ But was Exeter in general a healthy city?

In his report on the state of large towns, Shapter wrote that Exeter in 1841 had considerably improved; it was well supplied with water and it had a good and extensive system of underground sewerage.² This seemed a somewhat optimistic view. The average death rate for

¹ Thomas Shapter, The Climate of the South of Devon, 1862 edn, p.108.

² Thomas Shapter, 'Report on the State of the City of Exeter' in Second Report of the Commissioners for the Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, II, Local Reports, 1845 (hereafter Report on Exeter), p.224.

the period 1838-1841 had been 2.50%, roughly comparable with that of London and Derby, but higher than for towns such as York, Plymouth and Norwich. In 1841 Exeter's average was approximately 2.45%. The suburban districts of St. David's and St. Sidwell's showed slightly lower figures, possibly because they were outside the congestion of the inner-city parishes, beyond the confines of the walls with plenty of open space behind their ribbon development.¹ The recording of deaths and their causes has only been a legal requirement in England and Wales since 1874; hence these statistics (which vary slightly from source to source) must be treated with caution, but even allowing for some discrepancy, Exeter's record was not good.² The overall mortality rate for England in 1841 was 22.07 per thousand. J.N. Daw, an Exeter citizen, drew attention to what he described as the "excessive mortality" during 1841 and in the autumn and spring of 1843/44, particularly in localities where sanitation was deficient, and he made reference to uncovered drains on the outskirts of the town and in the vicinity of slaughter houses and pigsties.³

Although some £7,000 had been spent on sewerage between 1835 and 1845 and the Longbrook and the Shitbrook, both serving as drains, had been covered in, a great deal remained to be done.⁴ An editorial in a local newspaper in April 1845 drew attention to the evils that remained and referred to the apathy of the wealthy who thought that they had little to fear from "the unwholesome state of the dwellings of the poor and the large amount of sickness there". It was felt that

¹ Parliamentary Papers, Report of the Royal Commission on Housing of the Working Classes, II, 1884-85 (C.44022 - I), p.707; Shapter, Report on Exeter, pp.244-245, 231.

² T.R. Forbes, 'By What Disease or Causality?', Journal of the History of Medicine, 31, 1976, p.398, quoted by Gerard Kearns in 'Urban Epidemics and Historical Geography: Cholera in London, 1848-9', Historical Geography Research Series, 15, 1985, p.15.

³ Sixth Annual Report of the Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England, 1845, p.xxxix; Shapter, Report on Exeter, pp.250-251.

⁴ Shapter, Report on Exeter, p.224.

there was insufficient open space for recreation and that there were still households without a water supply. It advocated the building of warm baths and accommodation for river bathing, the latter a seemingly irresponsible recommendation as sewers discharged into the river. Three years later another local newspaper reported that the health of the city was good and that the sanitary precautions appeared to win the confidence of visitors.¹ This may have been an attempt to boost the morale of the citizens as cholera was again spreading westwards. In 1847 the City Council and the Improvement Commissioners undertook a street-by-street investigation of the city to ascertain its sanitary state. From this resulted active suppression of many "urgent and crying nuisances".²

The return of cholera to England led to the Nuisances Removal and Disease Prevention Act, 1848, giving powers for the suppression or removal of nuisances as a charge on the poor rates. Emergency plans were put in hand in Exeter for dealing with a cholera outbreak. Medical staff were organized and Mr Hooper and Mr Brutton, two leading citizens, offered premises for use as hospitals. Handbills advised citizens on diet, hygiene, drainage and ventilation. The policy was to take maximum preventive steps at minimum cost. In spite of precautions, cholera reached Exeter again in 1849, but the ratio of deaths (0.13% of the population) was lower than during the 1832 outbreak (1.2%) unlike that of some other large towns - Portsmouth, Bristol, Liverpool and Leeds for example - where the death rate was higher in 1849 than in the previous outbreak.³

Improvements to the city's amenities continued to be made. In 1852 bath and washhouses were built in the poor quarter of the

¹ EFP, 24.4.1845; Western Times, 21.10.1848.

² DRO ECA 2/34 Council Minutes, 9.12.1847, 9.1.1850.

³ DRO ECA 2/34 Council Minutes, 4.9.1848, 17.7.1849, 14.12.1849, 9.1.1850; W.Farr, Vital Statistics, 1885, p.341 (but note comments on Farr's statistics in G. Kearns, 'Urban Epidemics', op. cit., p.25); Asa Briggs, 'Cholera and Society', Past and Present, 19, 1961, pp. 79, 85.

city. Between 1851 and 1860 the mortality rate dropped slightly to an average of 23.8 per thousand but rose again during the following decade to 25.3, a figure higher than those returned for York, Norwich, Derby and Plymouth. Whilst many towns continued to show a slight fall in death rates between 1871 and 1880, in 1881 Exeter's rate at 24.1 was still higher than that of many other towns, even London's 22.4.¹ Following the Registrar General's report on the rate of mortality for principal towns in England in 1869, the local press commented that Exeter "had not much cause to congratulate itself". It deplored the fact that Exeter had a higher mortality rate than many industrial cities, among them Cardiff, Plymouth and Portsmouth, and pointed out that Exeter had no harmful manufacturing industries; it had the advantages of pure air, almost the best climate in England and "generally healthful" occupations. It laid the blame on the lack of a general sewage system, precipitation of sewage into the river, foul conditions of dwellings of the poor and an unfavourable water supply.²

The City Council had already taken steps to improve matters. In 1867 they adopted the Local Government Act of 1858, became the Local Board of Health and took over the duties of the Improvement Commissioners.³ In April 1867 an Inspector of Nuisances was appointed at a salary of £100 per year. He consulted the Bye-laws and Regulations of Salisbury, Winchester, Croydon and St. Thomas (which suggests that the latter were an improvement on those appertaining to the city centre). By December of that year he had made 2,750 inspections of houses, yards and drains, serving 14% with notices for the removal of nuisances, a figure that seems low in view of the high mortality rate, which rose to 26.7 during the first quarter of 1868.⁴

¹ Kelly, 1866, p.813; Royal Commission on Housing, *op. cit.*, p.707.

² Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 5.3.1869.

³ DRO ECA 533(a) note in Sanitary Committee Minutes book.

⁴ DRO ECA 533(a) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 20.4.1867; 6.1.1868; 29.2.1868; 7.12.1868.

Carcases, however, were still hung outside butchers' shops.¹ Although no figures are given, the rate for 1869 must have been worse as the Sanitary Committee declared it was "exceptional", laying the blame on what they termed "fluctuation of sanitary conditions", measles, a defective system of sewerage, overcrowding in dwellings of the poor and insufficient cleaning of streets. Sewage outfalls were located in densely populated districts and a large part of the river was an open drain. Deaths increased immediately a Gas Ammonia and Liquor Distillery and Manure Manufactory was installed in 1870. This scheme was intended to solve Exeter's sewage disposal problem and at the same time provide some 600 acres of fertile land. Fortunately the company soon went into liquidation. The Council alleged that the poor were "unwilling to acknowledge the lack of decent accommodation", a somewhat curious statement. Surely they were only too well aware of it but where were they to go? Many were in debt at having to find the 1/3d to 2/- per week for a room; they could not afford more. Overcrowding was rampant, five or more inhabiting one room both day and night, some actually working there. It was suggested that builders should perhaps be encouraged to build to less stringent standards and that building regulations might be modified.²

In 1877 fevers swept through wretchedly narrow streets of tiny back-to-back houses with totally inadequate sanitary facilities. The only solution was demolition, re-planning and, ideally, the provision of better houses in the suburbs.³ The Council's attitude left much to be desired. The blame for the ills - excessively high infant mortality rate for example - was laid on the people themselves, the Council alleging adulteration of milk, improper food and attendance at large schools with a concentration of children from similar backgrounds, where, presumably, diseases were likely to spread easily. A further contributory factor was considered to be the

¹ DRO ECA 510 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 29.2.1868.

² DRO ECA 533(a) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 29.2.1868, 7.12.1868, 14.3.1870, 21.3.1870.

³ DRO ECA 533(a) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 24.9.1877, 26.11.1877.

failure to comply with the Contagious Diseases Act in force in several neighbouring towns. This led to diseased people resorting to Exeter to escape detection and thereby a number of diseases, venereal disease for example, existed here to a greater extent than in much larger towns.¹ Furthermore, the Council had earlier refused to spend a mere £70 on a scheme that would have improved the water supply to the western quarter of the city.² Their idea for remedying the situation was to encourage builders to provide dwellings of an even poorer quality. There was no local authority housing at the time; presumably they hoped a philanthropic builder would come to the rescue. The Council recommended the ventilation of drains and the provision of a separate supply of drinking water. It was hoped that the Water Committee would soon be able to arrange a constant supply of water to the city and the adoption of the Contagious Diseases Act was recommended to help contain the outbreak of fevers.³ The latter was probably merely a piece of benevolent bureaucracy; it did not strike at the root cause of the problem.

In the ensuing years the Council made a conscientious, although limited, attempt to improve the city's health. During 1881 £18,500 was spent on street improvements and sewage works and a loan of £7,850 was requested from the Local Government Board to further this work.⁴ However, the recommendation of the Corporation of the Poor made in 1879 for the appointment of a full-time Medical Officer of Health was not endorsed and a part-time Medical Officer sufficed until 1913.⁵ Between 1884 and 1889 Exeter's mortality rate was either better than, or on a par with, 28 large towns in England and Wales, except for 1886 when it was 23.3 per thousand compared with an average of 21.0 elsewhere.⁶ The public were dissatisfied with lack of progress and

¹ DRO ECA 533(b) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 23.9.1878.

² DRO ECA 2/34 Council Minutes, 10.4.1850.

³ DRO ECA 533(b) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 24.9.1877, 26.11.1877, 23.9.1878.

⁴ DRO ECA 1/3 Finance Committee Minutes, 24.5.1882, 10.5.1882.

⁵ DRO ECA 529(a) Corporation of the Poor Minutes, 22.1.1879.

⁶ DRO ECA (no ref no.) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 22.1.1890.

held a public meeting of protest at insanitary dwellings. The Council employed similar tactics as they had on previous occasions: they "saw no reason for supposing an extensive scheme was either necessary or advisable".¹ Following a complaint from the Committee for Improving Conditions of the Working Class, an Inspector of Nuisances carried out an inspection, reported that courts in the central area had ample light and air and were not overcrowded and remarked of one suburban court off Paris Street that he did not know of any court in the city that was in better sanitary condition - a somewhat ambiguous statement.² In 1895 a further survey of the sanitary conditions of Exeter was carried out by a Dr. Fletcher (presumed to be of the Local Government Board). Although the actual report and correspondence are not available, it seems that he submitted a most unfavourable report and at a Special Meeting of the Sanitary Committee an indignant reply was drafted to the Local Government Board refuting many of the allegations. They refused to accept Dr. Fletcher's sweeping condemnations of housing for the working class and alleged that his comprehensive scheme for the improvement of the dwellings was not required, was immensely costly and would "cause inconvenience". They took grave exception to the "strong language" used by Dr. Fletcher and refused to accept that many of the houses were unfit for habitation, even though their own inspector had reported insanitary, overcrowded dwellings. They claimed to have improvements in hand to counteract the adverse report on the water supply.³

Although obviously no massive improvement schemes were undertaken, some progress was made. During the last month of 1896 Exeter's mortality rate of 18.47 per thousand compared favourably with the 19.16 for the '33 Great Towns', and although it was 18.34 compared with 17.54 at the end of 1900, by 1907 Exeter's 11.8 per thousand was much better than the 15.9 for the '76 Large Towns'⁴. In 1896 Donald Cameron, the city surveyor, devised a modern system of sewage

¹ DRO ECA Sanitary Committee Minutes, 27.3.1895.

² Ibid., 24.4.1895.

³ Ibid., 11.12.1895, 22.5.1895.

⁴ Ibid., 27.1.1897, 2.1.1901, 22.1.1907.

treatment which was adopted by the City Council. The previous year the Sewage Disposal Committee had obtained permission to borrow £42,000 for sewage disposal improvements and subsequently the Council acquired some 100 acres of land for the purpose of disposing sewage by irrigation. By 1900 sewage was no longer discharged into the mill leat and river but through main drains.¹ It had, however, taken many decades to effect these improvements. Similarly protracted was the alleviation of an inadequate water supply. By 1845 Preston provided 45 gallons per head a day, Nottingham citizens paid 1d a week for 40 gallons a day or 10/- a year for an unlimited supply. Throughout the country supplies and prices differed. Inhabitants of Newcastle-on-Tyne and Sunderland paid twice as much per day as those in Nottingham, Preston and Ashton-under-Lyne paid per week. Only 5,000 of the wealthiest persons in Bristol were supplied with piped water; the remainder relied on public and private wells which were frequently tainted.² Exeter's supply had been a problem for decades. In 1843 houses were advertised for sale with "river water" listed as an amenity - a highly dubious one as the city sewers discharged into the river.³ During the 1850s new filter beds, costing £5,257, were constructed at the Danes Castle reservoir; a new intake from the river was arranged and an engine installed to pump water to the reservoir. Aware of the inadequacy of supplies to the poorer quarter of the city, the Council nevertheless refused to recommend the expenditure of £70 on a scheme to remedy the situation, a singularly unenlightened attitude in view of the recent outbreak of cholera.⁴ The sum involved was paltry compared with the benefits that would have been obtained.

¹ EFP, 17.10.1896; DRO ECA Sewage Disposal Committee, 30.1.1895; DRO ECA 9/8 Streets Committee Minutes, 26.11.1886; Newton, VE, p.261.

² Parliamentary Papers: Second Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts 1845 (602) xviii, pp.48-49.

³ EFP, 24.4.1843.

⁴ A.Kneel and Ransom Pickard, 'The Modern Water Supply of Exeter', Transactions of the Devonshire Association, LXV, 1933, p.344; DRO ECA 2/34 Council Minutes, 10.4.1850.

In 1867 the Sanitary Committee urged that a daily water supply for at least two hours was a necessity, but the Water Company felt that it was not a matter for the local authority and found that a continuous supply of water to the whole city was impracticable.¹ In July of the following year the Water Committee ordered an increase in the supply for a minimum period of four hours on five days a week.² A further health hazard was the inadequacy of water closets; fewer than one house in eight had one even by 1869. Well water was still the main supply for what were described as "multitudes" in Black Boy Road, St. Sidwell's. Notwithstanding, a Sanitary Committee Report in 1869 alleged that the water supply to the city was now very good - surely an optimistic view.³ However, improvements gradually took place. A new reservoir was built in St. Thomas's in 1870 and in 1873 the Water Company purchased Hill Field in St. David's for £600 and constructed Marypole Head Reservoir. The Dartmoor and Exeter Water Company was formed in 1877 and water piped from the River Taw, together with a new intake from the Exe in St. David's, increased the supply. As with many other British towns, Exeter suffered from leaving the provision of water to private initiative. In 1870 the City Council made an unsuccessful attempt to buy out the water company but did not succeed until an Act of Parliament in 1877 enabled the Council to take it over for £116,417, whereupon improvement schemes were embarked upon.⁴ In 1890 the Public Analyst reported that the city's water supply was of excellent quality. By the end of the century the daily supply was 30 gallons per head, an amount still far short of Preston's 45 gallons per head half a century earlier.⁵ However, by 1901 the water had improved

¹ DRO ECA 533(a) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 27.12.1867, 6.1.1868, 9.3.1868.

² *Ibid.*, 6.7.1868.

³ *Ibid.*, 13.12.1869; DRO ECA 510 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 15.4.1868; DRO ECA 533(a) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 14.3.1868, 12.8.1869.

⁴ Kneel and Pickard, *Transactions LXV*, *op.cit.*, pp.344-346; F.B.Smith, *The People's Health 1830-1910*, 1979, pp.215-218, EFP, 21.11.1877.

⁵ DRO ECA City Water Committee, 24.12.1890; PP *Second Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Large Towns*, 1845, *op.cit.*, p.49.

considerably and the Medical Officer of Health reported that the city's reservoirs were filled exclusively with filtered water.¹

Serious problems with the infrastructure were no doubt contributory factors to the decelerating population growth during the second half of the nineteenth century. Lack of a proper sewerage system and an inadequate water supply would be obvious to visitors and those seeking a retirement home or a suitable area in which to open a business. It was a time when the panacea for all ills was not medicine but fresh air, with the addition of spa water if possible. Exeter could never be a spa but it had prided itself in earlier decades on the salubrity of its air. Surely it was short-sighted of the Council to permit one of the city's main assets to be polluted in the ways described. Competition from the railways, which could offer fast, cheap excursions to the healthy seaside, should have been sufficient inducement for the City Council to enhance its attractions. Foul stench from the river could not be disguised, nor could smells from the gas works which were so bad in 1877 that the Council took out a summons against the Gas Company for nuisance injurious to health.² Such conditions were not conducive to attracting either wealthy residents or profitable tourists when more healthy resorts could be easily reached. Developing areas such as St. David's Hill were not on main drainage in 1868. The city centre was subject to extensive flooding during periods of heavy rain, on occasions necessitating demolition of premises.³ What trader would risk losing valuable stock in such conditions? Industrial expansion might have been viable had there been an assured water supply. There was plenty available; it merely needed organizing. Without any major industries Exeter needed all the attractions it could obtain. A city centre of congested narrow streets was a sufficient disadvantage; for it to be in

¹ DRO ECA City Water Committee Minutes, 12.6.1901.

² DRO ECA 533(b) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 24.7.1877.

³ DRO ECA 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 29.2.1868; DRO ECA 9/3 Streets Committee Minutes, 19.10.1875.

juxtaposition to squalid slums and pervaded by undesirable odours was sufficient to daunt even the most courageous entrepreneur.

Fortunately not all Exeter's services were deplorable. The city had been only ten years behind London in building a gas works in 1816 and ahead of Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham. Increasing demand, however, led to haphazard expansion. Following complaints and an unsuccessful attempt at summoning the Gas Company, the City Council called in a London gas engineer in 1877 who found that the confusion of buildings and plant was "absolutely painful and distracting". Apparatus that was totally inadequate should have been abandoned years before; large-scale expenditure was long overdue. The Council failed in their attempt to acquire the company, but from 1877 undertook all aspects of street lighting except the supply of gas. In 1877 the Gas Company was prosecuted for nuisance and the following year the gas works was laid out on a new plan.¹

Electricity reached the city in May 1888. Originally it was intended to harness the river, but the idea was vetoed by the Council and a generating plant was set up in a disused hat factory. After some initial hesitation, the Council agreed to overhead wires for the purpose of lighting homes and shops. Within a year part of the central area was illuminated by electricity. After protracted negotiation, the Council acquired the Exeter Electric Light Company Ltd in 1896 and a municipal power station was opened in 1905 in St. Thomas's.²

¹ Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1982 paperback edn, pp.217-218; Besley, 1831, p.52; DRO ECA 533(b) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 24.4.1876, 18.2.1877, 20.9.1875; DRO ECA 2/38 Council Minutes, 24.7.1879, 31.1.1877; M. Chitty, A Guide to Industrial Archaeology in Exeter, 1971, p.21.

² DRO ECA Street Committee Minutes, 23.5.1888, 27.6.1888, 22.5.1889, 6.10.1890, 14.9.1895; Chitty, op. cit., pp.30 and 21.

One important benefit to the city resulting from the coming of railways was the introduction of Greenwich Mean Time (otherwise known as Railway Time). Following a public meeting on the 28th October, 1852, G.M.T. was adopted after which Exeter was no longer fourteen minutes and twelve seconds behind London.¹ Confusion was eliminated as was the need for three-handed clocks.

Land Use and Internal Transport

A large-scale survey of the city, undertaken by John Wood in 1840 for the Improvement Commissioners, provides a fairly comprehensive picture, not only of the land use but of land owners at the time. Ten years later Rapkin's map shows Exeter to have been still a fairly compact town with no main residential area further than one mile from the city centre and, in fact, most within half a mile. The overall pattern remained very much the same - a tightly packed central area with the greater part of suburban development clinging to the main exit roads. There were still nursery gardens on all sides of the city.² It was not until 1876 that a really accurate record of the city became available. Authorisation for the survey and publication of the 1:500 O.S. town plans had been given in May 1855 and the map of Plymouth was commenced in that year. By 1874 Exeter City Council were so anxious to have the city mapped that they agreed to pay two-thirds

¹ C.W. Ponsford, Time in Exeter, 1978, p.12.

² Wood's Map, 1840; J. Rapkin, Map of Exeter, 1850.

of the cost if the city could take priority over the other towns; thus in 1874 preliminary work commenced. They were not prepared to finance the mapping of areas not yet incorporated within the city's boundary. St. Thomas's parish decided that they did not need such a map; the records of the decisions of Heavitree and St. Leonard's have not survived, but eventually all three areas were mapped.¹

One important change in land use in the middle years of the nineteenth century was the building of railway lines. The South Devon railway track followed the flat river valley on the western edge of the city and involved very little demolition of existing houses; neither did it upset street patterns. Of great benefit was the road built to link Exe Bridge with St. David's station, thus bringing this rather isolated area into closer contact with the city. Considerable changes in land use were wrought when acres of orchards, market gardens and meadows had to make way for track, sidings, warehouses and commercial premises when a second line was opened - the London and South Western railway. The northern sector of Exeter was largely rural until the 1880s, and much of it well into the twentieth century. Even by 1907 the houses on the northern built-up perimeter near the prison had rear views over nurseries. Beyond was completely open country, apart from a few large houses in their own grounds.²

Even the densely populated suburb of St. Sidwell's had open spaces as late as 1907; some were "public" open spaces. Ten acres

¹ O.S. Map 1:500 for Exeter, 1874-77, LXXX (41 sheets); J.B. Harley and J.B. Manterfield, 'The Ordnance Survey 1:500 Plans of Exeter 1874-1877', Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries, XXXIV, Part 2, 1978-1981, pp.63 and 70; EFP, 12.8.1874; DRO F3 C11 St. Thomas Local Board of Health Minutes, 5.8.1874; DRO ECA 9/2 Streets Committee Minutes, 30.3.1874, 2.5.1874; DRO ECA 9/3 Streets Committee Minutes, 20.6.1874, 4.7.1874, 18.7.1874, 10.10.1874, 28.11.1874.

² O.S. Map, 1:500, 1877, LXXX.6.1 - 6.24, 10.1 and 10.6; Rapkin's Map, 1850; O.S. Map, 1:2500, second edition, 1905, LXXX.6.

became Exeter Cemetery in 1866; five acres had been planted and designated Belmont Pleasure Ground in 1886; adjacent to the railway line was the sports ground and Newtown had allotment gardens. All helped to alleviate the claustrophobic effect created by tightly-packed terraces and courts, as did two brick and tile works which had few buildings but large sites. Part of the Polsloe Priory estate was also open space, although building had commenced. The grounds of the Workhouse and the adjacent hospital had absorbed some of the nearby nurseries, but several remained in the near vicinity.¹

Land use in the south-eastern sector of the city remained almost unchanged between 1842 and 1890, with the exception of the erection of a few large, well-spaced houses in their own grounds. The land to the rear of Southernhay remained largely undeveloped for most of the century, although two roads had been cut through it in 1832. Many of the houses on and near the eastern side of Southernhay had uninterrupted views over a large tract of open space, nurseries and playing fields, giving this central area a spacious airy character. The river, sweeping down the western edge of the city, curving round the lower end of the main thoroughfare and then on in a south-easterly direction, was a physical barrier which contained the city on its NW/SE axis. St. Thomas's was separated from the old city by the river and by a large stretch of flat, marshy land liable to flood, which eventually had some industrial development. Apart from some houses of widely differing types and sizes lining its main roads within the vicinity of the bridge, major urban development did not commence on any large scale until the last quarter of the century. Until then it remained an area of market gardens, barley fields, disused rackfields and low-lying land which at its northern end, gave way to steeply sloping ground.²

¹ Kelly, 1875, p.149; Kelly, 1889, p.172; Q.S. Map 1:2500, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6.

² Q.S. Map, 1905, op. cit.; BCI.

There was little major change in the road pattern of the central area throughout the century (with the exception of Queen Street which will be discussed in some detail below). The central congested area was a tremendous fire hazard and unlike some cities which cut through great new streets and at the same time cleared out some of the worst slums - Corporation Street, Birmingham is an excellent example - only piecemeal development took place in central Exeter.¹ Opportunities for improvement were sometimes deliberately ignored; for example when fire caused damage amounting to £5,483 in the very narrow Gandy Street in 1894, the owners requested the Council to acquire the site and widen the road. As it was not a main thoroughfare the Council claimed they could not justify the cost.² Many old buildings in High Street and Fore Street remained intact until well into the twentieth century. Even long stretches of the city walls were left untouched until they started to fall down in the 1930s. A report in a local newspaper in 1869 remarked that visitors to the city centre would be "much struck with the picturesque old houses ... with their caged bracelets, grotesque heads and overhanging storeys".³ Some changes were made - approved by some, deplored by others. Local writer James Cossins claimed in 1877 that "... Semper Fidelis ... is improved and so much altered ..." whilst a writer in The Builder in January 1880 declared that "the fine old High Street ... is fast losing its individuality of character which renders it so interesting to the visitors". Others deplored the demolition of fine specimens of domestic architecture which disappeared to make way for enlargement of shop premises.⁴ Freeman, in 1887, felt that the Exeter of the nineteenth century

¹ J. McKenna, Birmingham Street Names, 1986, p.9; H. Reed, 'Demolition of Ancient Buildings of Exeter during the Last Half Century', Transactions of the Devonshire Association, LXIII, 1931, pp.279-280.

² DRO ECA 2/42 Market and General Purposes Committee, 16.1.1895, 30.1.1895.

³ Reed, op. cit., p.281; Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 8.1.1869.

⁴ J. Cossins, Reminiscences of the City of Exeter Fifty Years Since, 1877, p.77; The Builder, XXXVIII, 17.1.1880, p.81 and XXXIX, 9.10.1880, p.435.

kept the personality of the thirteenth century better than many other cities had done.¹ This may have been a somewhat idealistic view. Crowded streets within the confines of walls may have been far less healthy than in a city where either the walls had been removed or had never existed, thus allowing streets to spread out. Around the turn of the century even more of the old buildings vanished, without any thought being given to preservation; thus much of historical value was lost. A considerable number of fires destroyed many heavily timber-framed houses, several in strategic positions, but once again the Council did not take the opportunity to widen the road, allowing tall, ornate buildings to dominate the very narrow main thoroughfares.²

Roads were still congested. Although the railways took over some of the carrying business, they were by no means as flexible. Passengers had to be picked up from stations and goods had to be delivered to outlying areas. Much traffic depended on the road network. Over the years the area covered by Exeter carriers became less extensive, but more than forty separate carrying services survived in 1907.³

Perhaps one of the most important innovations that affected the ordinary citizens of Exeter, and may indeed have led to the expansion of the suburbs to some degree, was the introduction of tramways. Whilst the railways provided long-distance travel, until the last two decades of the nineteenth century movement about the city for those with little money was on foot. A home near to one's place of work was thus of paramount importance, as also were adequate shopping facilities within easy reach. Once trams were introduced, living further afield was facilitated.

¹ Freeman, op. cit., p.213.

² Reed, op. cit., pp.186, 277-280; EEP, 27.2.1884.

³ Kelly, 1910, p.231.

Trams were first introduced in Birkenhead in 1860 and the Tramways Act of 1870 enabled many local authorities to introduce them, but the Exeter Tramways Company was not established until July 1881. This was yet another example of short-sightedness as ultimately shopkeepers, particularly those in St. Sidwell's, apparently benefited considerably. Trams would, in general, be for the working classes; others owned or hired carriages and this may have been a contributory factor. Initially four routes were planned, three radiating from London Inn Square. The fourth, planned to diverge as a branch line down Queen Street did not materialise in spite of the obvious pick-up points at the market and the station, but there had been protests from residents and shopkeepers. Perhaps the quality shops did not want the working class to have easier access to Queen Street. After some setbacks three routes were fully operative by August 1883. In July 1889 horse bus services were extended to outlying villages as far afield as Topsham and Exminster. Farming communities thus had much easier access to the city, beneficial to both. Exeter's steep terrain meant difficulties in operation and expensive maintenance. In 1902 the St. David's station section was discontinued. A horse bus service introduced in May 1897 between the Guildhall and Pennsylvania was shortlived as it was not well patronised. Horse tramways operated until April 1905, by which time they had been supplanted by electric traction.¹ Motor buses had no impact on the city during the period of this study, although in 1904 the L. & S.W. Railway Company introduced a daily summer service to Chagford, a small moorland town then developing as a holiday resort.²

By the turn of the century Exeter was well furnished with public transport. People were now able to live further away from the city centre or their places of work. Suburban estates practically ringed the city, all amply provided with either horse buses or horse trams.

¹ Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, p.15; Sambourne, op. cit., pp.9-11 and 16.

² Sambourne, op. cit., p.61; Hoskins, Devon, p.361.

By 1887 bicycles had just begun to be used and the first motor car made its appearance in 1897, although only in a circus. Attracted by a Daimler passing through Exeter on a journey from Land's End to John o' Groats, a local engineering company built its own car in 1899.¹ The citizens of Exeter did not, however, flock to purchase cars. When the amendment to the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896, was passed in 1903, each county was required to keep a register of car owners. There were 8,465 private cars in England in 1904; by June 1905 Devon had 535 registered cars. Outstanding among the "professional and trade users" in the county were doctors, although those in Exeter seemed to show little enthusiasm; only one had a car, the others continuing to use horse-drawn vehicles for their rounds. Whilst there were 25 automobiles registered in Torquay in 1905, Exeter had 13, mainly belonging to prospering tradesmen and professional people; by 1907 there were still only 70. The "age of the motor car" did not really reach Exeter until after World War I.²

Under the Corporation Act of 1899 the old three-arched Exe Bridge was replaced with a single-span iron structure to deal with an anticipated increase in road traffic, but the only other important changes to the central area road system during the second half of the nineteenth century were the completion of Queen Street and the linking of St. David's station with Exe Bridge, a route which also served as a by-pass to the overcrowded central area.³ Necessary in-filling of part of the Longbrook valley near Queen Street station obviated some of the extremely steep slopes and facilitated the passage of traffic

¹ DRO ECA PW/116 Parish Records of St. Leonard, letter in parish magazine, May 1922, p.235; Hoskins, 2000, p.123.

² Waller, op. cit., p.163; P.A. Kennedy, 'Devon Register of Motor Cars and Motor Cycles, 1903-1905', Transport and Shipping in the West Country, H.E. Fisher and W.E.Minchinton, eds, Exeter Papers in Economic History, 7, 1973, pp.49 and 53.

³ Opening of the New Exe Bridge and the Electric Tramway in Exeter, souvenir pamphlet, no author, 1905, p.9 (located in the West Country Studies Library, Exeter); Reed, op. cit., p.281.

and in later years the L. & S.W. Railway Company donated land for the extension of a road which improved access to both railway stations.¹ The major changes in the pattern of roads in the area took place in the suburbs and will be discussed in a later chapter.

Commercial Premises and Public Buildings

As a provincial service centre Exeter had always been important for shopping and to improve facilities the Exeter Arcade Company constructed the Eastgate Arcade in 1880-1 on the site of the former East Gate. Designed by local architect James Crocker in Classic style at a cost of £18,500, it was a complete entity of twenty-four shops and a coffee tavern, providing 250' of undercover shopping.² It was criticized in an article in The Builder as being in "a somewhat tawdry and vulgar style", but the writer appears to have been out of sympathy with much of the new building in this vicinity, describing some as "metropolitanised" and the new Constitution Club as "a rather unreal Italian building".³ Urban renewal and refurbishing were not confined to commercial premises. In the 1880s new buildings included the Post Office in Gothic style, a police station and a Council House, and the Guildhall was restored.⁴ All of course, were on a relatively small

¹ DRO ECA 9/8 Streets Committee, 22.12.1886.

² P.D. Thomas, Old Exeter, 1981 edn, photograph, p.144.

³ Kelly, 1889, p.169; The Builder, XLV, 25.8.1883, p.433.

⁴ Kelly, 1889, pp.169, 278 and 279.

scale. The destruction of ancient monuments had not been counterbalanced by the construction of fine public buildings. Perhaps this was not due to a subconscious wish to remain a city of the past, or even civic inertia (although several cases of reluctance to sanction improvements have already been cited) but more to the absence of commercial prosperity and the means with which to erect prestigious buildings. Visible displays of civic pride were totally misplaced unless accompanied by real wealth. Exeter had no neighbours with which to compete; both Bristol and Plymouth were far bigger and totally different cities, whereas in the north the rivalry between Leeds and Bradford expressed itself in many ways, one being architecturally. St. George's Hall, Bradford, countered a few years later by a splendid new town hall in Leeds, epitomised both civic pride and vitality and doubtless engendered community interest.¹

There were, however, some schemes of which Exeter could be justifiably proud. The building of the Higher Market and the new commercial street, Queen Street, had been commenced under the regime of the old Chamber. By 1842 the construction of the imposing Queen Street was well in hand and by 1850 it was lined by buildings of some distinction beyond the old city walls, although some sites were still vacant. In 1841 S.A. Greig designed a new Dispensary with Doric pilasters and a balustraded parapet. There were blocks of elegant shops delicately ornamented. The local newspaper proclaimed that this part of the city "bids fair to becoming soon one of the most fashionable thoroughfares".² However, the entire street was not completed as quickly as perhaps had been hoped. When the City Prison, located at the northern end, was sold the site remained undeveloped for twelve years, eventually being acquired in 1875 by the Devon and Exeter Hotel Company for £25,000 upon which they built the Rougemont Hotel.³ The demolition of old premises and in-filling that took place during the second half of the century resulted in a street of considerable importance to the city as a whole. Now more than ever

¹ Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, pp.155 and 158.

² Rapkin's Map, 1850; DOE, pp.219 and 220; EFP, 3.8.1848.

³ EFP, 21.1.1876; Kelly, 1889, p.169.

Exeter needed its role as a market centre to sustain its economic base. The building of two new markets, Higher Market in Queen Street and Lower Market nearby, removed some of the congestion caused by open trading in the streets and the opening up of Queen Street doubtless attracted the prosperous from the suburbs to patronise its quality shops. Centrally located it was ideal for consulting rooms for professional people. A new Post Office was opened in 1850 and streets leading off Queen Street were refurbished, thus generating a great deal of local business. For example, Trewman's Exeter Flying Post was transferred in 1860 to new premises, built by Ware and Son, in Little Queen Street and new steam machinery was supplied by the local ironfounder Alfred Bodley.¹

The building of Queen Street railway station brought travellers directly into this area and several hotels were opened. One new building that was to have long-term significance and result in Exeter becoming a university town was the Royal Albert Museum, built initially as a memorial to Prince Albert. Opened in 1869 it was a highly ornate building, designed by local architect John Howard in Venetian Gothic style and built of Heavitree stone with paler red stone dressings; a complete contrast to the cool, classical elegance of its neighbours.²

By 1876 Queen Street was almost completely built up with commercial premises and public buildings, but towards its northern end was a terrace of ten three- and four-storied houses which has been described as "the most ambitious of the mid nineteenth-century stucco terraces in this district".³ Meadow land once owned by 'Iron Sam' Kingdon had vanished beneath railway marshalling yards and goods sheds adjacent to Queen Street station, but located as they were in the

¹ DRO ECA 2/34 Council Minutes, 14.4.1847, 13.9.1848; EFP, 26.3.1862.

² H. Mortimer, Handbook and Directory for Exeter and Its Neighbourhood, 1874; B.W. Clapp, The University of Exeter: A History, 1982, pp.3-4, 6-7, p.15 sqq.; DOE, p.222.

³ DOE, p.220.

Longbrook valley, they were not intrusive. Perhaps as a finishing touch, a Baroque-style Jubilee clock tower was erected in 1897 at the northern end of Queen Street, although its multi-coloured stonework and mythical animal ornamentation jarred with the neo-classicism of many of the buildings in the street.¹

Architecturally Queen Street was a delight; whether it was a commercial success is less certain. Thomas Sharp thinks not, arguing that for many years it remained largely a street of small shops and offices, retaining its original architecture whereas other streets underwent change and expansion.² It functioned as a broad, straight access road linking the northern sector of the city with the central commercial area. It could perhaps be seen as a visual account of the city's aspirations. Newton refers to it as "a museum of Victorian provincial architecture".³ It was an impressive handsome thoroughfare, undoubtedly designed to attract both residents and visitors. Those arriving at Queen Street station gained their first impression of the city from Queen Street. For the prosperous suburban residents it provided an elegant and spacious shopping environment; for the professions it offered gracious consulting rooms. It could perhaps be summarized as the commercial counterpart of the elegant terraces of the expanding suburbs.

¹ Wood's Map, 1840; Q.S. Map, 1:500, 1877, LXXX 6.12;
DOE, p.221.

² Sharp, op. cit., p.36.

³ Newton, VE, p.145.

Education

Exeter's contribution to education may be considered as part of its role as a service centre. During the first half of the nineteenth century Exeter had a large number of private schools, many of them located in the suburbs. This pattern changed during the latter part of the century and the location of the new schools had a long-lasting effect on the suburban pattern of development. In the seventeenth century three charitable schools had been founded, all located centrally: St. John's Hospital or Blue School, the Blue Maids' School and the Grammar School. The latter aimed at educating boys for the Services, the Civil Service and the East India Company and some of these former pupils may well have been among the number of retired Service officers and colonial officials who returned to suburban Exeter to settle. Hele's School, although derived from a charitable trust of 1632 from Elize Hele, was not actually established until the 1840s. By then there were 10 national schools, 89 commercial or middle schools, 79 dame schools, 8 endowed day schools and one infants' school.¹ The Education Act of 1870 highlighted the need for educational reform throughout the country and Exeter, recognizing that facilities in the city were inadequate, proposed reorganizations. These met with violent opposition, but under the powerful leadership and influence of the Bishop, Dr. Temple (later to become Archbishop of Canterbury), the reorganization of Exeter's schools was completed by 1875. The new Exeter School Board met on 16th February, 1871, determined to provide better educational facilities for the rising number of children - 3,623 by 1872. New Board schools were opened and dames' schools, some of which were criticized in the local press, were reduced from 53 in 1871 to 34 in 1875.²

¹ Besley, 1831, p.156, pp. 127-128; White's Directory, p.96 sqq.
Exeter Diocesan Board of Education, Second Report, 1840, p.52.

² Newton, VE, pp.218-220; DRO ECA Exeter School Board Minutes, 16.2.1871, 2.3.1871, 8.8.1872; EEP, 9.12.1875.

In 1880 the Grammar School was moved from the High Street to a 20-acre site on the St. Leonard's/Heavitree border, amid loud protestations from older citizens who alleged that the old school in the city centre was for the children of tradespeople and the better class of working people, whereas the new one would be a "high class school for the children of people of higher social scale than the original one".¹ A High School for Girls was built on a large plot in the developing Barnfield area. The Royal Commission on Secondary Education felt that this school was in a position to deal satisfactorily with what was referred to as "the caste problem" and they felt that "objection to the mixture" had been overcome. Exeter was regarded as being superior to other towns, Torquay for example, whose tradesmen scarcely sent their children to a High School at all.² Both schools were in good class areas, both occupied large plots, particularly the Grammar School, and have remained schools surrounded by extensive grounds ever since, thus endowing their immediate neighbourhoods with a certain character and precluding high density building. Although the new schools created opportunities for able professional teachers, they largely extinguished the work of private governesses and there was less need for private schools. Another educational establishment of lasting importance to the city was the Exeter Diocesan Training College (St. Luke's), opened in 1840. In this field Exeter was in the forefront as it was one of the first teacher training colleges in the country. It moved from the Cathedral Close to new buildings in extensive grounds in Heavitree Road in October 1854 and was built on land purchased from Samuel Kingdon for £1,340. It provided another large area of low density building surrounded by playing fields.³ The Royal Albert Memorial College was initially opened as a technical and university extension college on the museum site in Queen Street. Ultimately it became a university

¹ The Builder, XXXIX, 9.10.1880, p.435.

² Royal Commission on Secondary Education. Report of the Assistant Commissioners, VI, 1895, pp.88-89.

³ F.Fuller, The History of St. Luke's College, Exeter, 1970, I p.48 and IV, p.882.

and its extensive campus in St. David's has determined the character and the shape of the northern sector of Exeter. From a small beginning it achieved national and international importance and played a significant part in Exeter's economy.¹

Educational establishments have contributed considerably to the character of Exeter and, to some extent, its prosperity. The establishment of good schools which attracted pupils from the county as well as the city, a Training College which would eventually bring students from all over the country, together with the founding of the Royal Albert Memorial College served to enhance the city's reputation as a cultural capital in the West. It created job opportunities and generated trade. Both professional and ancillary staff were required. Outfitters, booksellers, stationers and all trades supplying the educational establishments would benefit. The Royal Albert Memorial College was in the Queen Street neighbourhood, thus bringing its staff and students to the centre of the shopping area. Parents visiting children at school would bring additional business in several fields, including transport and catering. The significance of the siting of the schools and the training college has already been noted. Schools in a good-class residential district adjacent to large houses in their own grounds might well have more appeal to middle-class parents than schools on crowded city-centre sites. It may be said that there was little emphasis on technology, applied science and vocational subjects; but that was characteristic of the English cultural climate both then and later.² By the turn of the century Exeter was well established as a centre for education; it has remained so ever since.

¹ Newton, VE, pp.233-234.

² Mathias, op. cit., p.389

Tourist Attractions and Amenities for Visitors

Exeter needed attractions to compensate for the fact that it was neither a seaside resort nor a spa. In reality there were, as has already been pointed out, a number of factors to deter the discerning person seeking either a healthy holiday resort, a residence or an opportunity for commercial enterprise. Cholera had returned to the city in 1849; public health services were still unsatisfactory; the water supply was not wholly adequate until the end of the century and for many years the atmosphere was polluted by foul smells. Although Exeter had an imposing market in Queen Street, it had no large central square in which to see and be seen. Its walks and promenades were no doubt well known to the inhabitants, but to a visitor they were not immediately apparent. There were no fine public buildings such as might be found in the industrial cities of the north proclaiming civic pride in prosperity. Manchester Town Hall, opened in 1877, was a handsome, noble building symbolic of power through trade. Apart from its magnificent concert hall, public rooms and grand staircases, it housed a large bureaucracy which provided municipal services, among them a constant supply of pure water to most of its expanding population.¹ Similar buildings could be found in confident Victorian cities such as Leeds and Bradford. Exeter could only boast the Royal Albert Museum. The overcrowded, insanitary West Quarter was very close to the central area and, although many of the buildings in the main thoroughfares were picturesque, pedestrians, carriages, carts and later trams and bicycles thronged the narrow streets in which they were located, detracting from their interest. In layout Exeter could not compete

¹ Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, p.138; J.A. Hassan, 'Water Supply in Manchester', Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire, 133, 1984, p.35.

with the wide sweep of The Stray, Harrogate, or The Promenade, Cheltenham. Had the Guildhall been set in a large square laid out in gardens, the effect would have been dramatic. Even the magnificence of the cathedral and its beautiful Close was hidden away behind the High Street, a relic of its enclosed state in the Middle Ages. Many of the visually attractive features of the city were probably overlooked by visitors in the congestion of the central area.

Recreation

Exeter as a social centre offered entertainment of all kinds and for all classes, whether it was merely walking in the local parks to see and be seen, cheap excursion trips for those with sufficient money, a day at the races or, on a much grander scale, theatres, concerts and balls for the middle classes and five or six packs of hounds for hunting. The Exe Fishing Association was established in 1844; the river was noted for its fine trout and a variety of other fish. A bowling alley and a billiard room were erected on the site of burnt out cottages in Longbrook Street in the early 1880s.¹

¹ EFP, *passim*; White's Directory, 1850, pp.93-95; The Builder, XLV, 1883, p.335.

The Royal Subscription Rooms in High Street, built in 1820, were advertised in 1865 as "the most handsome, comfortable and commodious in the West of England". Here all manner of public functions were held: concerts, exhibitions, grand balls under the patronage of local aristocracy and dinners such as that given in 1865 for 300 railway employees from the Bridgwater carriage factory.¹ Horticultural and botanical exhibitions were held occasionally in Northernhay as were celebrations organized by various clubs and societies, the Odd Fellows for example, which attracted vast crowds of merry-makers. At Christmas the wealthy provided great feasts for the poor. For those whose social life centred round public houses, in 1850 there were 204 licensed premises throughout the district.² Once the railways had arrived, cheap trips were offered. For 14/- excursion trips were available in 1865, valid for 6-13 days, to various parts of the country, but these were beyond the reach of foundry workers, skilled labourers, postmen and others similarly employed on wages of 15/- a week.³

By the late nineteenth century there were clubs to cater for many tastes: the Constitutional Club built in 1883 in French Renaissance style; the Devonshire Liberal Club and the YMCA, offering reading and recreational rooms and the latter lecture halls. A new theatre opened in 1886 with a "large and fashionable assembly in the dress circle and stalls", but it was destroyed the following year by a disastrous fire which cost 200 lives. It was quickly re-built and later enlarged to seat 1,150 which suggests that it attracted enthusiastic audiences.⁴ Swimming, roller skating, bowling and billiards were all readily available. For those who preferred the open air, or could not perhaps afford other entertainment, there were numerous parks. Some were of long-standing - Northernhay, for example, one of the oldest urban

¹ White's Directory, 1850, p.93; EFP, 26.8.1865;

² EFP, 8.1.1879, 26.7.1865; Howard, op. cit., p.39

³ EFP 26.7.1865; Newton VE, p.343.

⁴ Kelly, 1889, p.170; 1910, pp.214, 215; Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, 11.10.1886; Evening Post, 14.10.1886; Hoskins 2000, p.121.

parks in the country - and others were provided as suburbs expanded. St. Thomas Local Board, for instance, bought four acres of land for £3,600 in 1890 for pleasure gardens. Parks ringed the outskirts of the city, to some extent compensating for the loss of market gardens which no doubt had once provided airy open spaces and some enjoyment for the neighbourhood.¹

Exeter had long been a social centre for genteel and aristocratic society. Christmas, Easter and Assize balls were regular features, but once the railways were able to offer comfortable, speedy journeys to London and other fashionable centres, the pattern of entertainment in the city began to change. It was, of course, a two-way process. Whilst London was more readily accessible so too was Exeter. By means of cheap fares, people from a much wider area were able to reach Exeter to visit shops and seasonal attractions which catered for all tastes: concerts provided by the Working Men's Mutual Improvement Society; Bannister's Budget of Fun at the Victoria Hall; the D'Oyly Carte Opera, fetes and fairs - a whole range of varied entertainment. For some concerts, special trains were laid on or express trains made additional stops at small stations; times of performances were adjusted accordingly. At Christmas shopkeepers advertised an attractive range of goods and customers were given substantial gifts.² Whilst in some respects Exeter may have lost the patronage of some local aristocracy, both for social functions and shopping, it probably gained overall from increased trade from a much wider section of society.

¹ David and Samuel Lysons, Topographical and Historical Account of Devonshire, 1822, 1, p.191; DRO St. Thomas Local Board Minutes, 11.1.1890; Q.S. Map, 1:2500, second edition, 1905, LXXX.6.

² EFP, 20.9.1886, 24.9.1886, 15.1.1873, 16.12.1863.

Towards a Brighter Future

Although progress was slow, there were signs of increasing vitality being generated in the city towards the end of the nineteenth century. Shopping facilities had improved and several retailers had built new premises, sometimes in imposing, ornate styles. The "latest novelties" were being offered by the London and Parisian Mantle Company which claimed to be the "largest retailers of mantles in the world".¹ Shares in some of the local companies were healthy; investments, particularly by the working class, were on the increase and the Local Government Board reported trade to be generally prosperous throughout the South West.²

There was plenty of social life. Special trains brought country people to events such as the pantomime, thereby undoubtedly benefiting local traders. National events, such as elections and victories achieved during the Boer War, were celebrated with enthusiasm; processions and parades took place in a flag-decked city. Balls under aristocratic patronage were held frequently; cheap day excursions ran to seaside resorts and there were occasional film shows (although the first permanent cinema did not open until 1911).³

For the middle class there were large, convenient houses available in pleasant residential districts, either for sale or to rent, with servants to run them. For the working class there were plenty of houses to rent from 2/6d per week, many on rising ground in the newly expanding suburbs.⁴ An improved infrastructure meant an adequate water supply and better sanitary facilities for many. Tramways increased mobility and enabled people to live further afield in healthier surroundings.

¹ Reed, *op. cit.*, p.279; EFP, 1.7.1886;

² Newton, VE, p.279.

³ EFP, 8.1.1879 *passim.*, Hoskins, 2000, p.122.

⁴ Exeter Valuation List, 1905.

The old inns still served as focal points for the numerous waggons and carriers that served the neighbourhood and coastal towns in the vicinity. The narrow streets of the central area, down which the electric trams clattered, vying with the horse-drawn cabs, became thronged with people on market days drawn from a wide area of the surrounding countryside. From around the 1870s Exeter was the focal point of a network of West Country railways and this brought increasing employment opportunities in a number of fields. By the turn of the century there was, at last, one reasonably large industrial concern. The main functions of the city, however, were still those of an ecclesiastical and provincial service centre.

Life was not idyllic for everyone. The West Quarter of the city remained an area of poverty and deprivation for many years.¹ For the remainder of the inhabitants, pleasures were simple, conditions were gradually improving and there were opportunities to improve standards of living and the quality of life in this non-industrialized, small, cathedral city.

¹ DRO ECA Sanitary Committee Minutes, 2.1.1901.

CHAPTER V

HOUSING THE EXPANDING POPULATION 1842 -1907

The period 1842 - 1907 with which this section is concerned was, from the housing point of view, one of expansion and change. During the 1840s the last of the magnificent Regency-style terraces were built, not as in previous decades close to the city centre, but in Heavitree which was rapidly changing from an agricultural village to a much sought-after suburb. They were the last of their kind. A number of pleasant villas in classical style and some Gothic terraces were built, but the impact created by the magnificence of Bedford Circus, Southernhay and Pennsylvania Terrace was not repeated.

Exeter's population, unlike that of the industrial cities, grew only slowly. Industry was not expanding and therefore the city had to rely on its function as a service centre. In many respects this was its saving grace and its suburbs did not consist of rows and rows of tiny back-to-back terraces crouched beneath grim factory walls. The suburbs expanded gently. (Table 2) For decades there were fields within two minutes' walk of the city walls; nursery gardens abounded and, because of the nature of the terrain, there were excellent views of the surrounding countryside from most of the residential areas. Geographically Exeter had many advantages, but it was by no means an ideal city. Its infrastructure left much to be desired. Nevertheless the suburbs expanded, each in its own way. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century estates of red brick houses of uniform design, synonymous with suburbia, began to spread round the edges of this former very compact city. The first council houses were built in 1906. From its formation in 1867, the minutes of the Streets Committee reveal the pattern of building and record some

of the disagreements that arose between the City Council and speculative builders over building standards.

Gradually, streets of houses of various kinds encroached on the former fields and nursery gardens; large estates were sold and old mansions demolished to make way for homes for railway employees, police constables, journeyman craftsmen of varying kinds and labourers. However, Exeter did not become engulfed in an amorphous mass of identical houses. There were wide varieties of style, size and price - everything from gaunt tenement blocks to ten-bedroomed houses in their own grounds. The overall result was a tightly-packed central area within the former walled city dominated by the cathedral, surrounded by a number of suburbs which, although they were physically linked by houses, had each retained its own characteristics. How, when and why each developed as it did will be discussed in turn.

Working Class Finance

During the nineteenth century the range of incomes was very wide indeed. In the 1840s, for example, a schoolmaster could expect to earn under £150 a year whilst a cathedral canon received £3,000 and the precentor £2,000 plus a rectory.¹ The latter sums would have been considered enormous even a hundred years later. Since there was no general wage structure, remuneration was in the hands of employers and as economic expansion was negligible in Exeter wages rose only very slowly. Even in 1876 when there was an increase in teachers' pay, the maximum schoolmasters could earn in the public sector was £150, while for women it was £100 - which did not compare favourably with the £8,000 being paid to the Bishop.² As there was such a

¹ F. Fuller, The Founding of St. Luke's College, Exeter, 1966, p.16.

² DRO Exeter School Board Minutes, 10.8.1876; information supplied by Mr Jeremy Pearson, Exeter City Museum.

wide variation in rates of pay and different sources tend to quote different rates, the citing of individual cases can be misleading. But taking a very general view, in the 1840s some labourers appeared to earn in the region of 14/- a week which rose to 21/- by 1907, although those totally unskilled earned several shillings a week less. Meanwhile in the 1840s navvies on the railways could earn from 15/- per week in a poor year to 24/- in a good year, which was relatively high pay. Between 1840 and 1907 bricklayers' wages rose from around 25/- to 35/- (4/6d per day was being offered in 1856); carpenters' wages rose from 21/- to 33/- and police constables' from 16/- to 22/6d. St. Thomas Union Workhouse in 1873 was hoping to recruit a porter for £20 per annum (7/6d a week).¹ Standing alone such statistics are useless unless related to the necessities of life. During the seventies and the eighties and even to the turn of the century, some food prices fell, but rising rents offset any increase in earnings for many working people, and the important factor is the proportion of income being spent on rent. Throughout the period the range of rents varied enormously. In the 1840s and '50s cottages could be had from £2 a year; by 1907 an advertisement referred to houses available in all parts of Exeter for rent between £15 and £160 p.a., although £15 was by no means the cheapest; a block of modern cottages in 1907 attracted rents of £13 p.a. plus rates. More exact statistics and many more examples would be needed before definitive comparisons could be made, but it appears that whereas wages for bricklayers in Exeter rose between 1840 and 1907 by some 40%, rents appear to have risen more steeply.² An index of urban house rents in England and Wales compiled by W.W. Singer shows a rise from 100 points in 1845 to 185 in 1910. Detailed studies carried out by Rowntree in York in 1900 revealed that for all wage-earners in the city

¹ Newton, VE, p.343; J.F.C. Harrison, The Early Victorians, 1832-51, 1971, p.40; Hoskins, 2000, p.119; EFP, 15.1.1873.

² EVL, 1838; EFP, 12.6.1856, 16.2.1907; DRO ECA Book 533(a) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 21.3.1870.

rent took an average of 14.9% of income. For a craftsman in the Exeter building industry in 1907 this would mean an approximate rent of £14 a year - and cottages could be had for that figure.¹ Numerous attempts to measure the average proportion of working-class income spent on rents offer differing results, but it seems that the working classes were likely to have to spend a higher proportion of their income on rent than the middle classes. Exeter had accommodation to offer at all levels: a room in the poor quarter in the 1870s cost 1/3d to 3/- a week; a small house in Newtown £8 - £10 per annum; genteel houses in Albion Place £20 and larger houses up to eight times as much. Between 1891 and 1895 268 houses were erected at rents from £10 to £15.² To draw general conclusions would be meaningless, but it appears that Exeter was in a similar position to that revealed nationally in that for the vast majority of people the payment of weekly house rent was a large fixed amount of their budget.

Wages of domestic servants can hardly be compared with others since, in many cases, food and accommodation were provided; thus the £14 a year that could be earned by a superior cook in 1854 was, in fact, a relatively large income. This rose to around £20 a year in 1871 and to £50 by 1900. Ordinary domestic servants were not so fortunate. In 1871 a servant could be got for £7 a year and by the turn of the century the rates were only between £10 and £18. A children's maid advertising in 1901 "expected between £16 and £18".³ Exeter was an important centre for domestic service. In 1851 1,882 females in Exeter were employed as domestic servants of various kinds, while a further 2,114 were recorded in St. Thomas. The area attracted

¹ J. Burnett, A Social History of Housing, 1815-1970, 1978, p.145 sqq.; A. Wohl, The Eternal Slum, 1977, p.295; Newton, VE, p.343.

² DRO ECA Book 533(a) Sanitary Committee Minutes, 21.3.1870; EFP 4.9.1878; DRO ECA 9/8 Streets Committee Minutes, 1891-1895, passim.

³ Jane Emerson, 'Service and the Single Girl in Victorian Exeter' in The Devon Historian, 25, 1982, p.10. EFP, 1.1.1901.

both locals and newcomers from the surrounding countryside and neighbouring counties, at the same time acting as a centre in which to gain experience for those wishing to move to better jobs in London and elsewhere. Thus the domestic market in Exeter was one of constant change. Many stayed only a few months with one household.¹

During the middle years of the nineteenth century several societies were formed aimed at assisting the working classes with their finances. The Exeter Freehold Land Building Society was formed in 1857 with a view to encouraging the building of superior dwelling houses on which loans would be made to buyers.² Other financial help could be obtained from the Friends of Labour Loan Societies which were formed under an Act of 1840 which tied them to a prescribed rate of interest at an attractive rate to investors. Two societies were formed in Exeter, both based on inns. One at the Bear Inn in South Street, opened on the 4th August, 1859, flourished to such an extent that by 1867 it had a membership of 500 and moved its base to The Three Cranes Inn nearby. Its aim was to raise deposits and lend sums of between 5/- and £15 to "the industrious classes" to be repaid by weekly instalments with an interest rate of 1/- in the £. The second one followed in 1862 based on the Odd Fellows Arms, New North Road. By the third year it had a membership of 206 and a capital of £347. It expanded and opened one branch at the Duke of York, St. Sidwell's Street, and another at the Hourglass Inn in the Friars.³ Whether or not these societies encouraged people to purchase their own homes is difficult to say. There seems no evidence left to prove links between loans and the purchase of houses; more likely they merely aided the poor over financial

¹ Census, 1851; Emerson, op.cit., p.10.

² Western Times, 14.3.1857, 4.4.1857.

³ Jeffrey Porter, 'Friends of Labour Loan Societies 1859-67', Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries, XXXIV, Part V, Spring 1980, pp.181-183;

crises. Both these loan societies seemed to have disappeared by about 1867.¹ Building societies or building clubs were operating in many working-class towns - for example Leeds, Burnley and several in the West Midlands and some 1,500 existed by mid-Victorian times with a membership of perhaps 300,000, but most of these were of a temporary nature.² Between 1845 and 1855 Exeter had at least a dozen building societies; among the earliest were the Exeter Benefit Investment Society whose first meeting was held in April 1845 and the Second Economic Building Society, founded in 1848. Whilst the reports of societies such as the Provident Permanent Building Investment and Loan Society appeared regularly in the local newspapers between 1856 and 1885, others made only brief appearances; for example, the Exeter Self Help Building Society was referred to only twice, both reports appearing in 1883.³

There was, therefore financial help available for those able to take advantage of it. However, it seems that much of the development taking place in the latter half of the nineteenth century, particularly in the working-class districts, was undertaken by speculative local builders constructing houses in small blocks to be let at modest rents. (The proportion of houses built on speculation in London suburbs in the 1880s was thought to be 99%).⁴

As in previous decades, each suburban area of Exeter continued to develop at its own pace and with its own particular characteristics. The process of development in individual suburban areas will now be discussed in some detail.

¹ M. Fuller, West Country Friendly Societies, 1964, p.1; Porter, op. cit., p.181-183.

² S. Muthesius, The English Terraced House, 1982, p.18.

³ EFP, 3.4.1845, 8.12.1856, 25.2.1885, 30.3.1883, 25.7.1883.

⁴ EVL, 1885, 1905; H.J. Dyos, Victorian Suburb, 1977, p.219.

St. David's

To the north of the city the area known as St. David's which lay outside the walls between the river and Pennsylvania had always been a somewhat rural and isolated district, although it was enumerated with the city for record purposes. During the first part of the nineteenth century there had been some development along the northern exit road, St. David's Hill, (Fig. 14) but this was sporadic and between 1801 and 1841 the increase in the number of inhabited houses (83%) was far lower than that of either Heavitree (224%) or St. Leonard's (585%).¹ (Table 2). By 1842 the main concentration of houses was still immediately outside the city walls near to the site of the former North Gate and on either side of St. David's Hill as far as the church, beyond which there were a few very large houses in sizable grounds and then open country. This area should have been ideal for development. It was on a main exit route from the city with plenty of spare land; rising ground should have afforded an abundance of fresh air, extensive views and no possibility of flooding and it was within half a mile of the city centre. Yet by 1842 St. David's Hill had fewer than fifty households and much of the land in the vicinity was devoted to market gardens.²

Between 1842 and 1851 the number of inhabited houses in St. David's increased by 10%, probably on account of two important factors with direct influence on this area: the coming of the railway and the construction of Queen Street which, at the time, was well in hand.³ By 1850 there were buildings of some distinction from its junction with High Street northwards to the City Prison and an extension had been cut northwards across the Longbrook valley to join New North Road in the heart of

¹ Census, 1801 - 1841.

² Wood's Map, 1840; Census, 1841.

³ Census, 1841 and 1851.

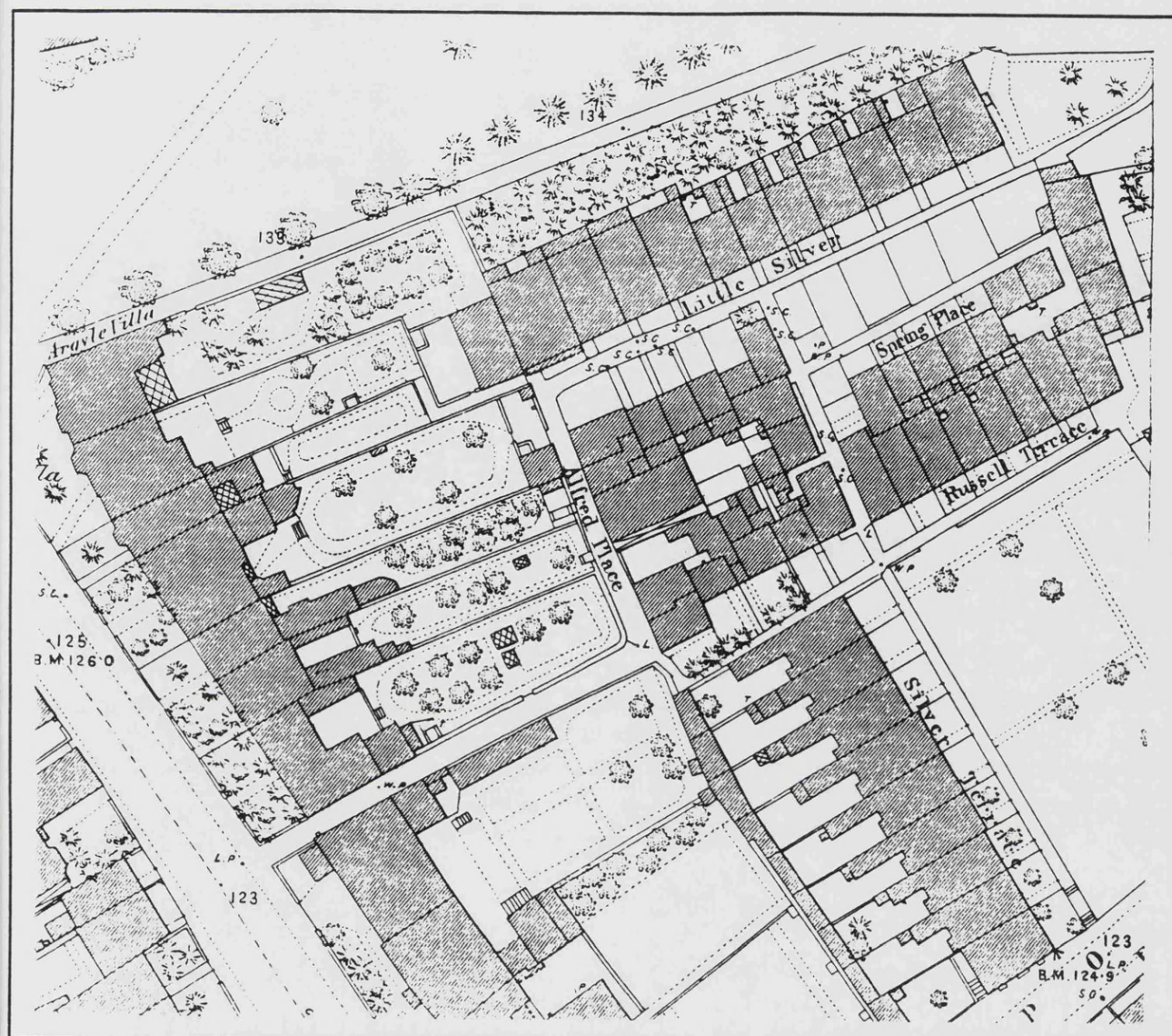


Fig. 14 Large houses with gardens flanking St. David's Hill
with smaller, older property to the rear

O.S. Map, 1:500, 1877, LXXX.6.11 (reduced by 36%).

St. David's.¹ It was here, adjacent to this junction, that a cluster of houses of some architectural interest was erected around 1845. Although most of the houses in St. Leonard's at that date had been built in Regency style and a number of houses in the Pennsylvania area had adhered to the Classical tradition, this corner of St. David's followed the Gothic Revival, and Queen's Terrace was one of the small, but distinguished number of individual Gothic terraces that were to be found in various parts of the country, for example St. Mary's Place, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and less distinguished ones in Herne Bay and Tunbridge Wells. Queen's Terrace, Exeter, and its near neighbour, Bystock Terrace, were not completely Gothic but relied more on Gothic details on a basic Classical structure with some houses having Tudor square hoodmoulds over the windows, gables and bargeboards. One house had a verandah with a canopy and cast-iron balustrades to the steps. Loudon referred to the Gothic as "the irregular manner of building", seeming to prefer the greater compactness and less ornamentation of the Grecian style.² If, as he alleges, it was "calculated for producing emotion"³ this style may well have succeeded here as nearly 150 years later it is still impressive and, viewed at the time of building in conjunction with the very imposing Queen Street nearby, must indeed have been quite spectacular.

Around the middle of the century several more architecturally interesting stucco terraces were built near the Queen Street/New North Road junction, the most ambitious of these being a row of ten fronting Queen Street. Immediately round the corner were two more terraces, perhaps slightly less elaborate but none the less distinctive. Some years later two further terraces of tall three-storey, stucco houses with gables and

¹ J. Rapkin, Map of Exeter, 1850;

² DOE, p.225; Muthesius, op. cit., p.232; J.C. Loudon, The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion, 1838, p.120.

³ J.C. Loudon, An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture, 1833, p.1123.

rusticated quoins were built nearby. They were set well back from the road and some had French casements and verandahs. When they were first built they were surrounded by fairly open ground consisting of nursery gardens, Victoria Park and the grounds of the County Prison and they were on the edge of the Longbrook Valley. It is possible that they were built for well-to-do citizens anxious to escape from the cholera-ridden city, but the outbreak of 1849 was not as severe as the 1832 epidemic and the houses were within a quarter of a mile of the city centre.¹ But there was a major drawback. The proposed new London and South Western railway was to run along the Longbrook valley, a matter of a few yards from these new terraces. As the line opened in 1860 plans must have been known and work put in hand either during or soon after the completion of some of the terraces. One of the nursery gardens disappeared under a welter of railway sidings and outbuildings; Queen Street station swallowed up a large slice of open land and before long two of these distinguished terraces backed on to marshalling yards and two overlooked goods sheds, sidings and the new station.² (Fig. 15) Once the railway was operational, noise and smoke must have polluted the immediate vicinity. If these distinguished terraces were originally intended to attract a superior class of people the aim was not fulfilled for by 1874, of a total of 28 houses in two of the terraces, 12 were lodging houses and the pattern remained very much the same during the next twenty years.³ If, however, it was anticipated that the railway would stimulate commercial prosperity and bring travellers flocking to the city who would need convenient accommodation, then the houses were perhaps built in a rather too elaborate, and no doubt expensive, style. They were quite large - for example No.7 Bystock Terrace had nine rooms, two kitchens, a conservatory and a large garden -

¹ DOE, pp.220 and 193; Rapkin's Map, 1850; William Farr, Vital Statistics, 1885, p.341.

² O.S. Map, 1:500, 1877, LXXX 6.12.

³ H. Mortimer, Handbook and Directory for Exeter and its Neighbourhood, 1875, p.60; Besley, 1895, pp.27 and 88.

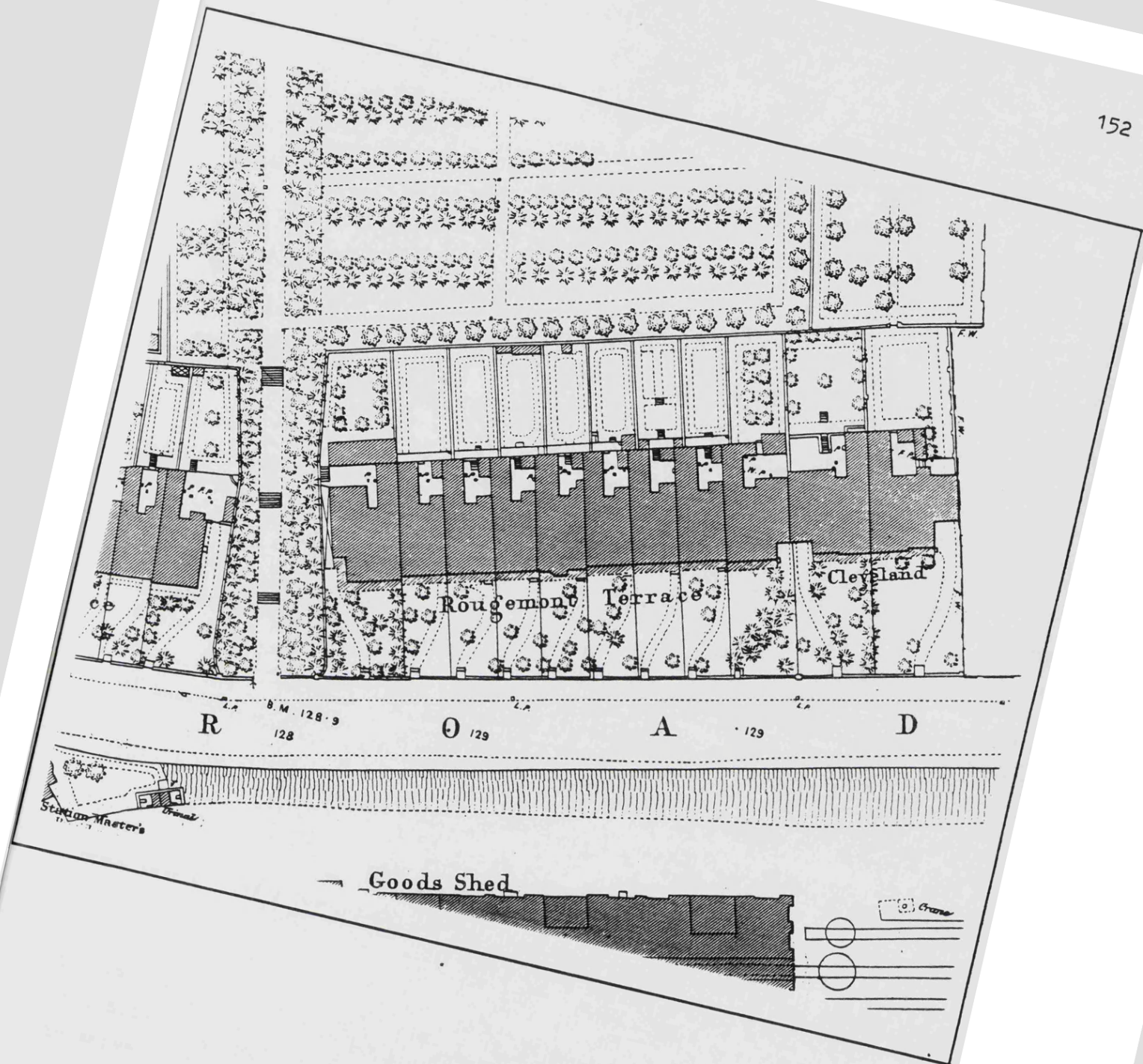


Fig. 15 Terraces in St. David's overlooking the railway
 O.S. Map, 1:500, 1877, LXXX.6.7 (reduced by 36%).

and thus were suitable for guest houses. At rents of between £40 and £45 per annum (far more than many clerks earned in a year) they were too expensive for ordinary people and therefore had either to attract the prosperous or become commercial premises. Many became lodging houses of a superior type, catering in the main for guests of independent means or civil servants. Gradually other businesses moved in.¹ In all probability the railway drove the 'officer class' and those of sufficient means to seek residences in the more salubrious expanding suburbs.

Some distance to the north of the railway and flanking Bury Meadow Park, Velwell Villas, the last villas to be built in Exeter in the classical tradition were constructed in the 1870s by local architects and builders John and Charles Ware. Built as residences rather than with a view to subsequent commercial use, their traditional style may have appealed to those of a more conservative taste than that of the elaborate Gothic architecture of nearby terraces. Some were two-storey and some three-storey; they were mainly semi-detached and of stucco with a band at first floor levels, sash windows and verandahs, genteel villas designed for people who could afford servants. Some of their first residents were retired businessmen. In front was a permanent open space - Bury Meadow Park, and even by 1907 the land to the rear was still under cultivation as nursery gardens.² (Fig. 16) One of the builders, John Ware, was instrumental in persuading the Improvement Commissioners to improve the roads in the immediate neighbourhood. He donated land for the provision of a road to serve his new houses and provide a link with the main roads.³

¹ EFP 23.11.1886; Newton, VE, p.88; Census, 1881; Besley, 1895, pp.26 and 88.

² DRO ECA Book 510 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 25.1.1868, 5.1.1870, 19.3.1870, 9.4.1870; DRO ECA Book 512 9/3 Streets Committee Minutes 20.6.1874; Census, 1881; Q.S. Map, 1:2500. 1905, second edn, LXXX.6.

³ DRO ECA Improvement Commissioners' Minutes, 14.3.1864.

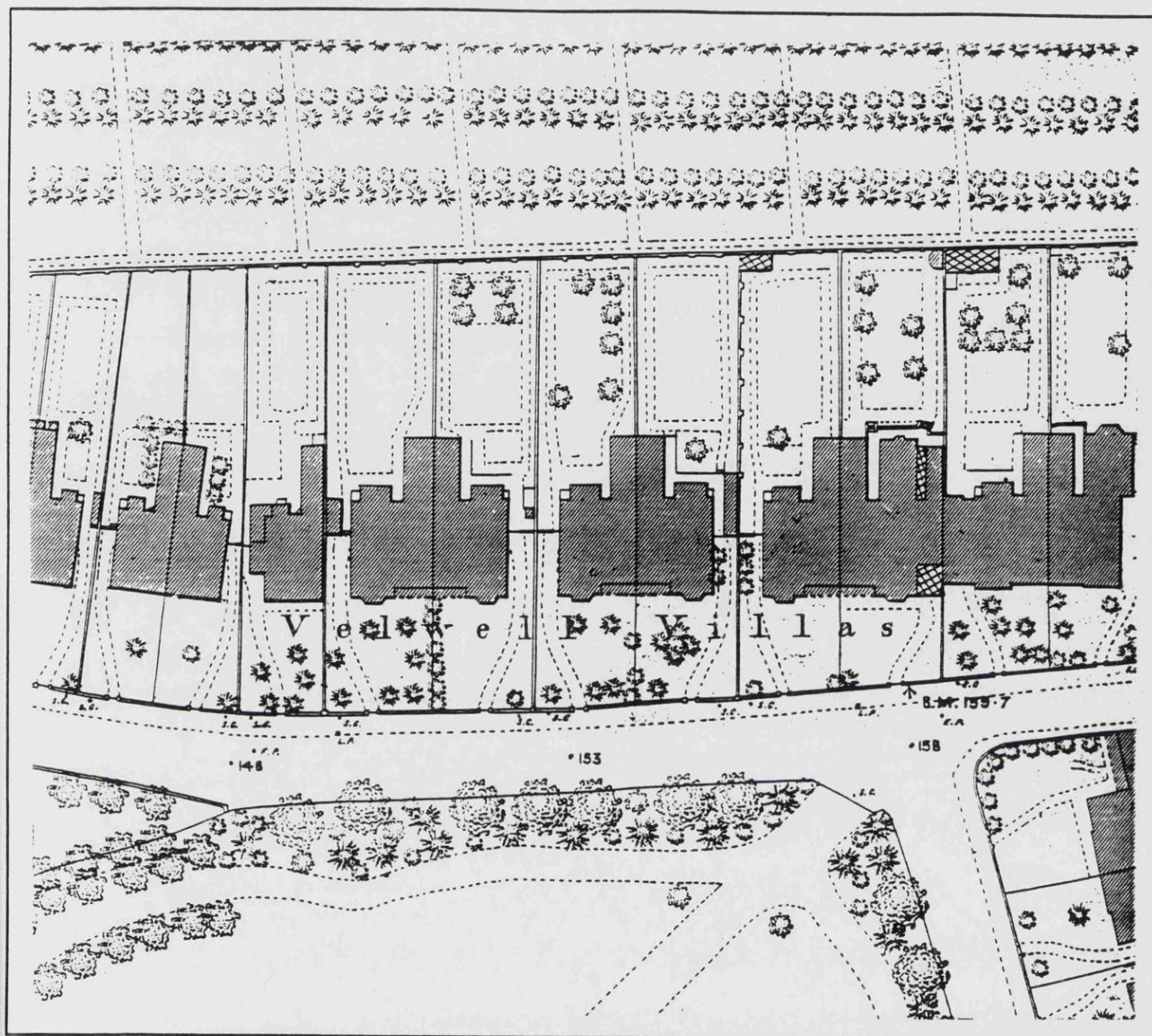


Fig. 16 Velwell Villas, St. David's

O.S. Map, 1:500, 1877, LXXX.6.6 (reduced by 36%).

In keeping with what has been referred to as "the simplicity of West Country vernacular building" that could be found in other parts of the region, Torquay for example, and with open space to front and rear, they retained their gentility in almost rural surroundings well into the twentieth century.¹

To the north beyond the last of the newly-built villas, late nineteenth-century St. David's was largely rural, with a few very large houses in extensive grounds, residences of the wealthy, some of whom could afford to keep a footman as well as a staff of female residential servants. Residents included a member of the aristocracy, a land and fund holder, a banker, the Town Clerk and two high-ranking Army officers.²

The Duryard estate formed a major part of this north-western sector of the city, St. David's, and it was here, in Duryard Lodge, that Samuel Kingdon (known as Iron Sam) lived for the latter part of his life. He was the first mayor of the new city council which replaced the old Chamber in 1836 and one of a new class of businessmen who took over the management of the city.³ He was a member of a wealthy Unitarian family who wielded power in the city and played a part, particularly through their land and property holdings, in the physical shaping of Victorian Exeter. A member of the firm of S. and W. Kingdon, allegedly the most extensive ironmongers and founders in the West of England, Samuel Kingdon owned land in various parts of the city, including part of the Longbrook valley through which the London and South Western railway would eventually run.⁴ In 1866 the trustees of his estate sold Duryard Lodge to Richard Thornton West, a merchant trading in the East Indies who had inherited over a million pounds from his uncle, Richard Thornton, who, it is

¹ A.E. Richardson and C.L. Gill, Regional Architecture in the West of England, 1924, p.19.

² Census, 1881.

³ Newton, VE, p.6; DRO ECA 2/31 Council Minutes, 1.1.1836.

⁴ Hoskins, 2000, p.102; Wood's Map, 1840.

believed, had made his fortune by blockade-running in the Napoleonic Wars. The old house was largely pulled down and Thornton West built a Victorian Italianate house, Streatham Hall, on its site and had the gardens laid out by the local nurserymen, Veitch and Son.¹ After the death of Thornton West's wife in 1902 the house became something of a problem. The Streatham Hall Estate offered the house and some 58 acres of land to the City Council for the provision of a park, but the Council was not prepared to buy it.² Later it was presented to University College and played an important role in determining the character of this district. The house stands on a south-facing slope on high ground, well above any likely frost-pocket, and trees had been brought from most of the temperate regions of the world, laying the foundation of what became an extremely beautiful and valuable botanical garden.³ Had this not been there, the land might well have fallen into the hands of developers.

Two highly significant events occurred in the 1860s which have had a permanent effect on the subsequent quality of life in Exeter. Firstly, an abortive attempt was made in 1863 to develop the Duryard estate and plans were made to build what was described as "a superb range of villas".⁴ Presumably there was insufficient demand as the plans fell through. Secondly, Thornton West was wealthy enough to buy and re-build Duryard Lodge and maintain its extensive grounds. Both these events resulted in the preservation of the Duryard estate and its ultimate availability in later years as the site of Exeter University. Several of the old houses have been restored and their magnificent gardens retained as part of a fine university campus and the area has been spared a sprawl of suburban housing.

¹ John Caldwell, The Grounds and Gardens of the University of Exeter, 1969, p.5.

² DRO ECA 3/46 Council Minutes, 13.3.1907.

³ Caldwell, op. cit., p.5.

⁴ Newton, VE., p.144.

Occupying the south-westerly corner of St. David's is Mount Dinham, an estate of 'free cottages' built on a small plateau of ground on top of the river cliffs outside the northern city walls - a permanent memorial to one of Exeter's benefactors. The land, originally known as Weare Cliffs, was purchased by John Dinham, once a silversmith and jeweller and subsequently a wealthy local tea dealer. In 1862 40 cottages were built, 24 by Dinham, 8 by John Scanes and 8 by Exeter citizens. The houses were well planned and the site attractively laid out with wide grass verges and trees. After Dinham's death in 1864 a grateful Exeter erected a 6' Sicilian marble statue to his memory in the pleasure gardens in Northernhay and were proud of the fact that they had done so whereas Bristol, a city with many benefactors, had not at the time made any such public gesture.¹

Although the local press speculated that with the coming of the railways property values in St. David's would increase in value, this is difficult to substantiate.² There is no real evidence to suppose that there was an increase in the demand for better class houses. In fact, as already mentioned, the proposed scheme for "superb villas" to be built on the Duryard estate never materialised and many of the rather grand terraces built near Queen Street station quickly became business premises. The demand was more likely to be for working-class housing which would probably not enhance the value of property in the neighbourhood. Neither of the railway lines had much effect on the landscape of this northern sector of the city. The Exeter to Bristol line ran along the flat valley floor on ground largely unsuitable for development on any large scale, and certainly not for high-quality houses, for it was marshy, liable to flood and

¹ DRO ECA General Map Book of the Lands of the Chamber of Exeter, c.1756; Kelly, 1893, p.177; EEP, 11.4.1866; Kelly, 1893, p.188.

² Western Times, 25.9.1847.

probably considered unhealthy. The London and South Western line ran along the bottom of the Longbrook valley which was steep-sided and could not have been used for building land.¹ There was no large commercial centre within commuting distance of Exeter and therefore little likelihood of prosperous businessmen choosing to live in Exeter but work away. There was, however, considerable expansion in the provision of small, working-class dwellings, some of which housed railway employees - for example, by 1881 Locomotive Terrace and Railway Cottages had been built near St. David's station. Eleven of the cottages, plus three houses nearby, were owned by the G.W.R. and let to their employees. The road linking Exe Bridge to St. David's station had been completed in 1861 and many of the small terraces built both along here and beyond the station housed railway personnel. The dwellings varied in size and quality from very tiny flat-windowed brick cottages with no front gardens and very little space at the rear (many of which have now been demolished) to more superior houses, some double-fronted with ornamental "ropework" decoration. The more senior railway employees tended to live in somewhat larger terrace houses with front gardens.²

No large-scale estates were built in this district compared with the development taking place on the Heavitree/Exeter border for example. One road of three-storey gabled houses was started in 1890 and by 1894 five of the 24 housed commercial agents. Although when completed the road had 44 houses, it could hardly be considered as an "estate".³ Eventually Knightleys, once the home of Lady Mary Isabella Duckworth, located opposite St. David's church, was demolished and four streets of small terrace houses were constructed, but this was not until 1907, which suggests that the railway had not led to an immediate demand for

¹ O.S. Map, 1:2500, second edn, 1905, LXXX.6 and LXXX.5.

² Census, 1881; EVL, 1885; HSI.

³ BSI; Besley, 1894, p.47. DRO ECA 9/10 Streets Committee Minutes, 2.10.1907.

rapid expansion in this area; it had by then been in operation for sixty years.¹ Unlike the pattern usually found in Europe of one major rail terminus, Exeter, in company with many other British towns, had three large stations.² Personnel as well as trading activities were thus not concentrated in one area. Had St. David's been the sole main line terminus, the pattern of its housing and commercial development may have been very different.

Development continued in St. David's but slowly and on a small scale. (Table 1) In the 1870s, after protracted negotiations, land deals were effected with the London and South Western Railway Company and Samuel Jerred which enabled Blackall Road to be extended along the northern bank of the railway cutting, thereby linking the top of Longbrook Street and the Pennsylvania area to both central railway stations, and by 1894 27 very tall terrace houses had been built along one side only, as the other side sloped steeply down to the railway below.³ This was not an ideal location. Although they were within very easy reach of the city and had extensive views right over it, they were on the fringe of noise and smoke belching from engines which constantly rattled along only a few yards away, both on the through lines and in the sidings. Nevertheless many of the houses were quickly named (which suggests private ownership) and they attracted several commercial agents and the collector of the general district rate who was also a Lay Vicar of the the cathedral.⁴ Immediately behind were the cavalry barracks and the water works. In 1883 a horse tram service was inaugurated linking London Inn Square with St. David's station, thereby providing a through service from the outlying suburbs of Heavitree and Mount Pleasant. Thus transit

¹ BCI; Besley, 1894, p.93.

² Jack Simmons, 'The Power of the Railways', H.J.Dyos and M. Wolff, eds., The Victorian City, 1973, I, p.280.

³ BCI; DRO ECA Book 511 9/2 to Book 515 9/6 Streets Committee Minutes, 30.7.1870, 19.2.1876, 8.4.1876, 22.7.1876, 30.7.1878, 21.12.1882.

⁴ Besley, 1894, p.23.

across the city was greatly facilitated. No longer was St. David's isolated. By 1901 the population of the built-up area of Exeter had reached almost 55,000; Willey's engineering firm was expanding and there was an increasing demand for houses, particularly small ones for rent at under £12 p.a. Recognizing this, the City Council relaxed regulations to allow a road 28' wide instead of 32' to be built on the strip of land between the cavalry barracks and the water works. Hooper Road, 69 small flat-fronted terrace houses without front gardens, was built to accommodate railway workers, prison warders, postmen and those in similar occupations. A second road, Danes Road, built in 1904, was of slightly better houses which had bay windows both upstairs and downstairs and tiny front gardens and although they too attracted railway workers these tended to be inspectors.¹ There was no room for further development here; public institutions flanked each side and these two roads have remained unaltered ever since.

In a report by Shapter in 1845 St. David's was classed as a "mixed district", neither rich nor poor, and, sixty years later it was still very much a mixed community.² Many of the very large houses in their own grounds remained, although here change was apparent. Rows of working-class dwellings had replaced Knightleys, once the home of aristocracy, yet other large houses, for example the extraordinary German Gothic turreted and gabled Taddiford House, had been built by wealthy businessmen.³ The coming of the railways had brought both job opportunities and an influx of people to the district. Now the working classes no longer congregated near the city walls at the foot of St. David's Hill, but small workingmen's houses were spread throughout the district. The completion of the imposing Queen Street in the

¹ Census, 1901; Hoskins, 2000, p.117; DRO ECA Book 515 9/6 Streets Committee Minutes, 21.9.1882, 21.12.1882; Besley, 1894, p.53 and 1909, p.24; BCI.

² Shapter, Report on Exeter, pp.212, 216, 231.

³ BCI.; DOE, p.196.

city led to the building of several smart terraces near its northern end, presumably to attract better-class residents. If this was so, the idea was not altogether successful as many of these fine houses soon became commercial premises. It seems hardly likely that this was the original intention. Bury Meadow was flanked by the last of the houses to be built in Exeter in the classical tradition. Road and transport communication had improved throughout the southern part of the district. For most of the latter half of the century St. David's station, the water works and the cavalry barracks between them formed the limit of the built-up area; beyond, the district remained rural in character with only scattered dwellings.¹ By 1907 building had commenced on an estate to the east of the cavalry barracks.² Suburbia was gradually spreading northwards, but the process was very slow. Along the main exit roads development was still only sporadic. There were three large areas of nursery gardens within 300 yards of the church and beyond them, acres of open land. Within a few minutes of leaving Queen Street a traveller could be in open country.³ It was still a very pleasant, rural area.

Pennsylvania - Powderham Crescent - the Springfield Estate

The tone of Pennsylvania, which lay almost due north of the city at the top of Longbrook Street, had been set in the 1820s with the building of Pennsylvania Crescent and the magnificent Pennsylvania Terrace. Both were sufficiently secluded to remain virtually unspoilt. Pennsylvania Terrace faced its own private southwards-sloping park of one and three-quarter acres and although houses had begun to appear in the vicinity by 1907, the terrace itself was unaffected and retained its commanding position. However, there were some exterior

¹ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6.

² BCI.

³ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6.

structural alterations, some more harmonious than others. In 1890 H.A. Willey, the prospering ironfounder, purchased Nos. 3 and 4, knocked them into one house and added a Victorian Gothic carved Portland stone portico and a teak front door.¹ This not only broke up the architectural simplicity of the facade, but the ornate heavy addition jutting out ruined the balance of this otherwise exquisite example of some of the country's best Regency terraces. Immediately to the east Sylvan Road was partially cut through and laid out by 1889 but was surrounded by fields. The sewers were laid in 1893, but development was slow. The road was made up in 1905 and gradually more houses were built, designed for the relatively prosperous as they were twice as expensive as, for example, houses in Lyndhurst Road, St. Leonard's, itself a dignified, middle-class area.² Obviously Pennsylvania could command high prices. It was both conveniently near to the town centre and yet rural, being described as "one of the most favourite resorts in the neighbourhood".³

Between the private parkland of Pennsylvania Terrace and the railway line the land slopes steeply downwards and in this segment three distinct types of houses had appeared by 1907: very large residences in their own grounds; big, ornate semi-detached houses for those with aspirations; red-brick new estates for the working class. The first group was in Pennsylvania Park, immediately below the private parkland reserved for the residents of Pennsylvania Terrace. Here the owners, Exeter Freehold Land Society, put forward a scheme in 1886 for constructing four roads, but three were not approved by the City Council and were abandoned. The fourth eventually consisted of four very large houses, individually styled and set in their own grounds.⁴

¹ I am indebted to Mr Stuart Muir, architect, for this information.

² BCI; HSI; EVL, 1885, 1905.

³ DRO BCA 9/9 Streets Committee Minutes, 28.3.1906.

⁴ DRO BCA 9/8 Streets Committee Minutes, 24.2.1886; BCI.

To the immediate south was undeveloped land as far as Union Road, the east/west road which for over 200 years had linked Pennsylvania with Mount Pleasant. It was widened in 1870, facilitating access to this area.¹ By 1907 the land between Union Road and the railway line had become covered in houses of two quite distinct types. Off Pennsylvania Road substantial houses were built in styles designed to attract the affluent middle class and advertised as being in a "healthy, good-class neighbourhood".² Built either in terraces or semi-detached pairs, there was much external ornamentation; some had ornate glass hoods over their front doors. One road, Powderham Crescent, has been referred to as "a monument of comfortably pretentious architecture".³ (Plate 7) Unusual for Exeter, it was laid out in circus mode: two crescents with a central garden. (Fig. 17) Each house had a small front garden; rear plots varied in size. The majority of the 49 houses were rented, rents in 1905 averaging between £30 and £45 p.a. Several were owned by the Setter brothers, builders involved in suburban estate development, particularly in St. Thomas's. Residents included service officers, accountants and a large number of maiden ladies and widows.⁴

Although there was a nucleus of cottages in the Lion's Holt area by 1841, suburban development did not commence here to any great extent before 1867. Typical of the first road, Victoria Road, was No. 85, advertised for sale in 1883. It had a parlour, kitchen, back kitchen, larder, w.c., two bedrooms and two large attics. It had a small back garden and a rear entrance and one of its attractions was that it overlooked a field in front. At the time it could be rented for £15 p.a.⁵ Judging by the rents, the houses were not all identical; some were bigger than others.

¹ Wood's Map, 1840; DRO ECA Book 510 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 21.5.1870.

² EEP, 11.3.1885.

³ Newton, VE, p.248.

⁴ EVL, 1905; Besley, 1894, pp.83 and 84.

⁵ Wood's Map, 1840; BCI; EEP, 7.2.1883.

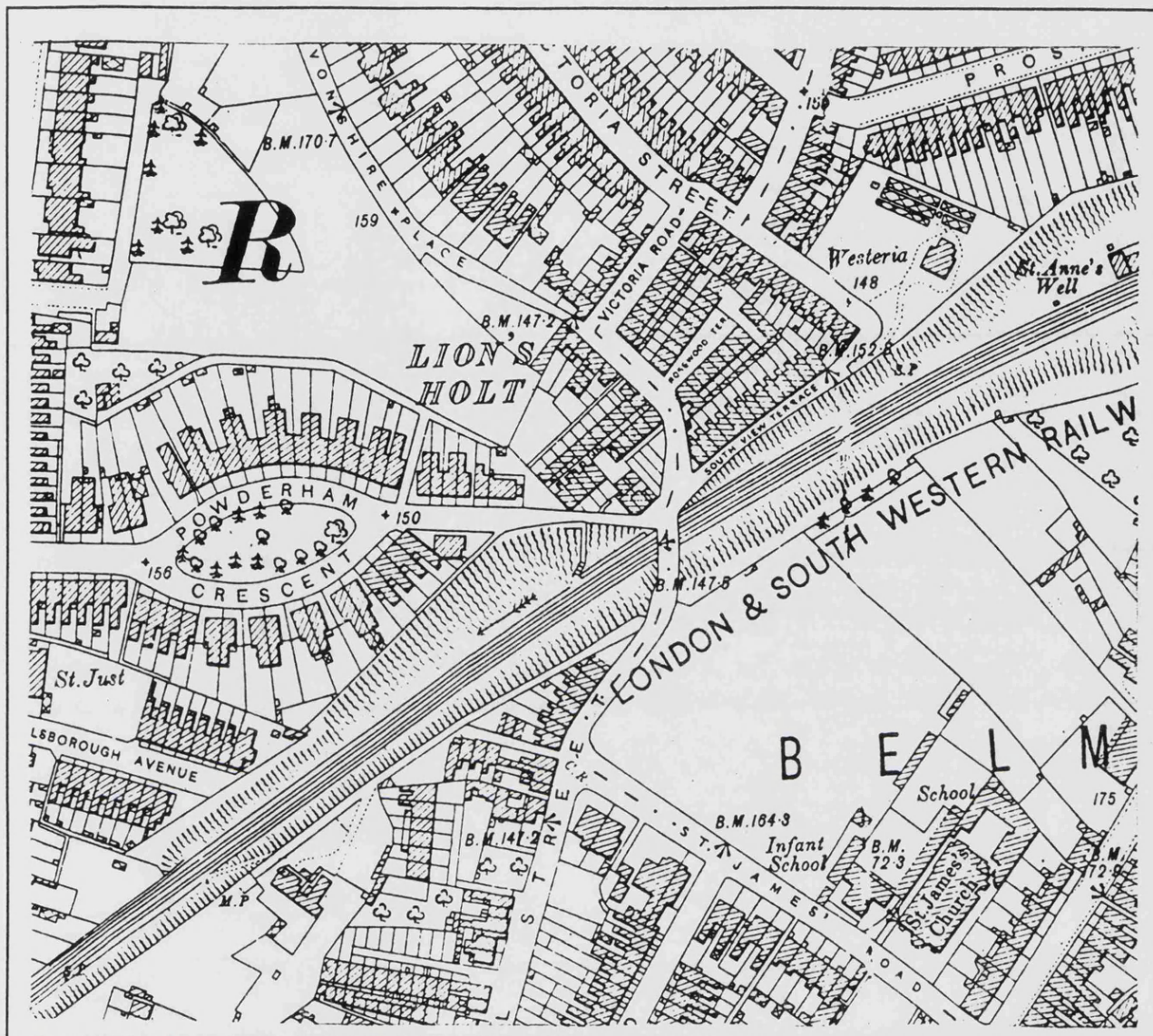


Fig. 17 Powderham Crescent and part of the Springfield Estate
O.S. Map, 1:2500, second edition, 1905, LXXX.6.



Plate 7 Powderham Crescent

The architect, Mr Packham, was responsible for a considerable amount of building in this area. In October 1874 he put forward plans for further development here on land between Victoria Road and Union Road, later known as the Springfield estate. (Fig. 17) In 1840 this had been owned by William Land Esq (possibly a surgeon of St. Sidwell's) but was now partly owned by the Exeter Freehold Land Society and partly by H.F. Willey, the industrialist. The Streets Committee withheld approval until the drains had been re-aligned.¹ The estate finally consisted of three roads of high-density houses of locally-made red bricks. The roads sloped and the front doors opened directly onto the pavements, but nevertheless they were of reasonable quality and designed for renting in the region of £15 p.a. to artisans who wished to live away from the central area.² (Plate 8).

By the early part of the twentieth century the rectangle formed by Pennsylvania Road, Union Road, Old Tiverton Road and the railway line had been largely developed, leaving only a few gaps for in-filling later.³ The small railway station, Lion's Holt (later St. James's) built in 1906, afforded easy access to the L.&S.W.R. and the area was within easy reach of the city centre.⁴ It was a complete mixture of houses - in style, size, cost and social class. In general the western half contained large, comfortable, middle-class houses. To the east was the Springfield estate and the old settlement of Lion's Holt, homes of railway workers, firemen, labourers and those in similar occupations.⁵ There was, however, one exception. In this eastern sector and leading directly off the working-class Springfield estate, Prospect Park was laid out in 1878.⁶ This row of very large terrace houses of vastly superior quality to

¹ DRO ECA Book 512 9/3 Streets Committee Minutes, 10.10.1874; Besley, 1831, p.195; Wood's Map, 1840.

² EFPP, 5.9.1880; Besley, 1894, p.105.

³ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edition, LXXX.6 and LXXX.2.

⁴ David St. John Thomas, A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain, 1, 1981, The West Country, p.65.

⁵ Besley, 1900 -1907, passim.

⁶ BCI.



Plate 8 Springfield Road, Springfield Estate

its immediate neighbours was built on the site of Combs Farm.¹ The houses, built between 1878 and 1887, were of several different styles. Some had wooden hoods and one corner house was turreted. They attracted professional people and businessmen, some of whom were involved in local politics. It was at No. 24 that George Gissing wrote Born in Exile.² Two features probably isolated them from their more commonplace neighbours; the name Prospect Park had overtones of grandeur and where the road joins the Springfield estate at its northern end there is an effective bend which imparts a feeling of separation. The main access was from the Old Tiverton Road so that it probably identified more closely with the latter better-class area.

Mount Pleasant and St. Sidwell's

The London and South Western railway line slices across the north-eastern corner of this city separating two large areas of late nineteenth-century suburban development. The Springfield estate has already been discussed. A triangular area of land, largely vacant, lay between Old Tiverton Road, Mount Pleasant and Blackboy Road. This was put on the market in 1884 as being "specially adapted for the erection of villa residences of a superior class for which there is a demand in this district" and it was bought by the Exeter Freehold Land Society for £2,200. A large turreted house, Elmside, remained as a residence but the adjacent land was developed as the Elmside estate, a row of some 55 'stepped' three-storey terrace houses that attracted railway inspectors and skilled craftsmen.³ Immediately adjoining the

¹ Tithe Map and Apportionment for the Parish of St. Sidwell, 1842.

² BCI; Besley, 1894, pp.84 and 85; W.J. West, George Gissing in Exeter, 1979, p.5, see also frontispiece plate.

³ EFP, 27.8.1884 and 17.9.1884; DRO ECA Book 516 9/7 Streets Committee Minutes, 18.12.1884; Besley, 1894, p.40.

road, the Mount Pleasant estate, designed by local architect J.A. Lucas, was constructed between 1896 and 1901. The spine road and five side roads were mainly on steep slopes and it was an area of high-density housing intended for railway employees, postmen, shop assistants and others similarly employed. Most of the houses had five rooms and a bath; rents were between £15 and £17 p.a.¹ They had no front gardens; rear entrances were reached by central back alleys and the houses had front bay windows both upstairs and downstairs. (Fig. 27) In design they were common to thousands of other houses being built throughout the country, and particularly in the London area in places such as Fulham and Camberwell.² These two estates completely filled the gap between Old Tiverton Road and Mount Pleasant Road and thereby suburbia had spread right to the edge of the Exeter/Heavitree border. Residents here were well served. Corner shops developed; in May 1897 a horse bus service was instituted to run along the Old Tiverton Road and link the city centre with Pennsylvania and in 1906 Mount Pleasant railway halt was opened. Access to the city was therefore easy; furthermore London Inn Square was a mere half-mile walk - probably one reason why the bus service was short lived on account of insufficient support.³ Many residents could walk to work and to the shops.

By 1907 there was a substantial 'arc' of new suburban building sweeping across the north-east corner of the city from Pennsylvania Road to its border with Heavitree. Westwards towards the city centre the old working-class core of St. Sidwell's was experiencing change. Some of the new building here was in-filling and whilst it inevitably led to more crowding in St. Sidwell's, initially some of it was destined to assist in relieving the malodorous squalid conditions that still existed in several parts of the city centre. Since the 1840s there had been

¹ BCI; Besley, 1901-1907, *passim.*, EVL, 1905.

² See Plate 17, Newton, VE n.p.; Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, 1978, p.64.

³ Sambourne, *op. cit.*, p.9; Thomas, *op. cit.*, p.65.

a marked growth of philanthropic associations formed to assist the poor with housing, for example the Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes founded in 1841.¹ The Exeter Improved Industrial Dwellings Company was launched in 1873 with a capital of £15,000 for the purpose of providing "commodious and healthy dwellings" for the poorer classes of Exeter and its neighbourhood. The intention was to provide dwellings at a price the poor could afford, not to launch a scheme that would benefit the investors. Ideally the company wanted to provide accommodation - two to four main rooms, plus domestic offices - at rents between 1/6d and 3/3d a week. The Mayor (C.J. Follett, an attorney) was instrumental in starting the company, which was chaired by W.J. Kendall, a draper and city councillor. The trustees were the Earl of Devon, the Bishop of Exeter and Sir Stafford Northcote. The scheme proved popular: £13,000 of the initial requirement of £15,000 was raised by subscription within twelve days of its being launched. The first block of tenements to be built - Follett's Buildings - was in the poorest quarter of the city "wherein evil is most prominently felt" and then a block of 17 separate tenements - Kendall's Buildings - was constructed in Blackboy Road. (Fig. 18) However, the rents were higher than had been hoped, 2/6d to 4/3d per week; thus the tenants were not from the very lowest stratum of society, but were described as "labouring men". Nevertheless it was felt that the scheme was of benefit as the new tenements would free the poorer quality of dwellings for the very poorest. This argument was no doubt proffered to counteract criticism. The original ideal had not, however, been fulfilled; the squalid dwellings remained. Apparently dividends from the company were not quite as expected, being only £3 per cent per annum, but as the original scheme was intended to benefit the tenants and not the investors this hardly seems legitimate cause for complaint.²

¹ Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1968 paperback edn, p.19.

² EFP, 21.5.1873 and 18.6.1873; DRO ECA Book 512 9/3 Streets Committee Minutes, 6.6.1874



Fig. 18 Kendall's Buildings, Blackboy Road
O.S. Map, 1: 500, 1876, LXXX.6.9 (reduced by 36%).

St. Sidwell's had, for centuries, been the most built-up area outside the walls. By 1842 there was a nucleus of working-class cottages and courts in the Longbrook Street/Paris Street triangle centred on London Inn Square, the heart of the coaching business. Between 1842 and 1907 the area became even more densely built up with a variety of houses, mainly for the working class, although not exclusively so. Many houses had little, if any garden. (Fig. 19) By the time the Mount Pleasant estate was completed there was an almost continuous spread of houses on the southern bank of the railway line from Longbrook Street to the Heavitree border. A correspondent in the local newspaper in 1926 recalls the Blackboy Road in the 1870s as "a perfect little maze of courts and alleys". The brickfields were described as being "in full swing" and a small colony of workers employed there - men, women and children - had settled in the locality.¹

In spite of the high density of building, by the turn of the century there was a relatively large amount of permanent open space in St. Sidwell's. Between the railway line and Old Tiverton Road was St. James's sports ground and in the south of the district five acres had been planted and designated Belmont Pleasure Ground in 1886. The Polsloe Road brick and tile works, which dated from 1870, occupied a large area on the St. Sidwell's/Heavitree border and although there were industrial buildings on the site, much of it was clay pits and open space. Adjacent to this was a strip of land devoted to allotment gardens. There was, in effect, almost a corridor of open space between old St. Sidwell's and the newly developing estates on the Heavitree border.²

¹ Wood's Map, 1840; O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6; Letter from G. Seague, Devon and Exeter Gazette, 6.10.1926.

² Kelly, 1889, p.172; DRO ECA Book 510 9/1 Streets Committee 5.3.1870; O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edition, LXXX.6.

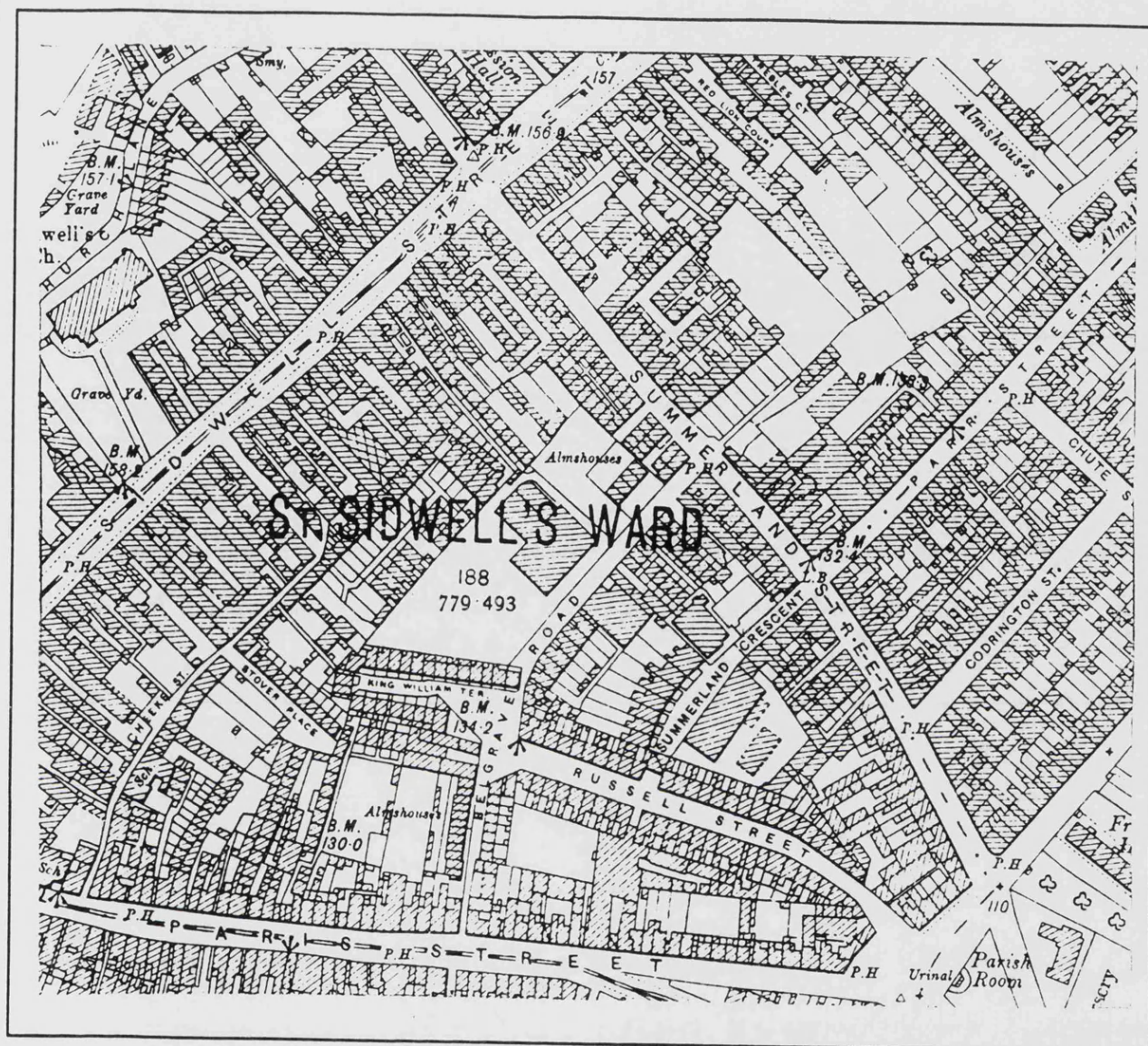


Fig. 19 St. Sidwell's

O.S. Map, 1:2500, second edition, 1905, LXXX.6.

Newtown - a separate community

Until the 1870s there was a considerable amount of open space in the south-east corner of St. Sidwell's adjacent to Polsloe Road. Sclater's nurseries lay on either side of the Workhouse and much of the adjacent land remained as fields for many years. During the 1830s work had commenced on the development of streets on ground behind Higher Summerland Place - nurseries owned by Sclater and land belonging to Sandford's Charity and J.C. Wilcocks (possibly a draper and a member of the city Council in 1836/7).¹ Little progress was made and only three streets were commenced; none of them was actually completed at the time and they remained surrounded either by vacant land or what remained of Sclater's nurseries.² In 1868 local architect R.W. Best put forward plans for the further development of this district. Building began again and over the next thirty years what amounted to a complete community of some 600 houses evolved. In 1873 a school was built and fifteen years later it was enlarged into one of the two biggest Board schools in Exeter. Shops and public houses were opened and in 1887 St. Matthew's church was constructed in the heart of the community, along with a church hall. (Fig. 20) Originally known as Sclater's Town, by 1868 it had acquired its permanent name of Newtown.³

Clearly it had not been an overwhelming success initially as it took over sixty years to complete. The land on which the later houses were built was in a variety of ownership - mainly local businessmen, for example William Nation the banker and N. Codrington Parr, who between them owned 27 acres of land in

¹ Wood's Map, 1840; Newton, VE p.328 and see his Plate 3 n.p.

² Wood's Map, 1840.

³ DRO ECA Book 510 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 11.1.1868; Book 513 9/4 Streets Committee Minutes, 4.3.1878 and 3.6.1878; Kelly, 1893, p.187; DRO ECA Book 510 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 8.2.1868.

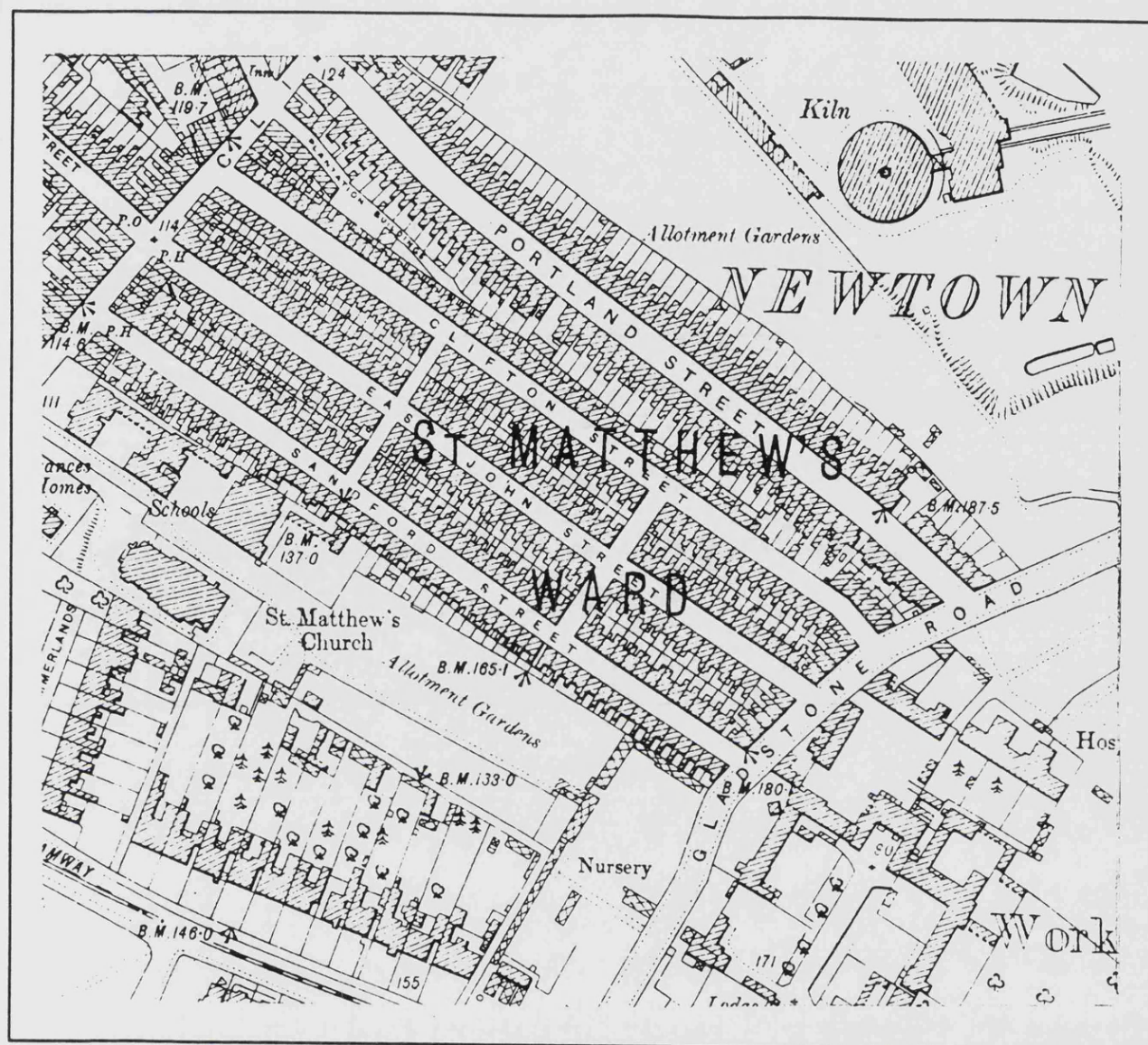


Fig. 20 Newtown

O.S. Map, 1:2500, second edition, 1905, LXXX.6.

St. Sidwell's in 1842.¹ Newtown became an area of high-density housing adjacent to the Workhouse and the brick works, with much larger houses of far superior quality in the near vicinity. It was typical mid-Victorian rectilinear street planning and the dwellings were scaled-down versions of early nineteenth-century terrace town houses. (Fig. 21) Although there were variations in size and accommodation, the basic design had a 16' frontage and a plot depth of 44'. Many had a front and a back room with a passage through to the stairs at the rear, two bedrooms, a small back yard but no rear access. Built of local hand-made bricks and of plain design, they had an overall uniformity of appearance. There were no front gardens, but in 1886 five acres of ground a few yards to the north became Belmont Pleasure Ground and provided the neighbourhood with recreational facilities and two areas were devoted to allotment gardens. Rents of about £8 were envisaged and even in the early 1900s houses could be rented for between £9 and £14 p.a. (much cheaper than houses on other new estates). A small house was priced around £175 and some of the slightly larger ones could be bought for £220 in 1907.² In 1842 when the first few streets had been built, some 50% of the householders were craftsmen such as stonemasons and builders; some were people of independent means (although presumably these means were limited) and there were bakers, laundresses, milliners and those in similar occupations. Only one householder, a bookbinder, kept a female servant. One of the roads housed six labourers. A similar pattern of varied employment - masons, carpenters, wiremen and stablemen for example, was evident at the turn of the century, but by now the inhabitants included large

¹ Tithe Map and Apportionment for the Parish of St. Sidwell, 1842.

² O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edn., LXXX.6; City of Exeter Newtown Improvement Scheme, 1971, pp.2 and 3; City of Exeter, Newtown Project Report, 1967, pp.2-14; Kelly, 1889, p.172; EVL, 1905; EEP, 22.8.1907.

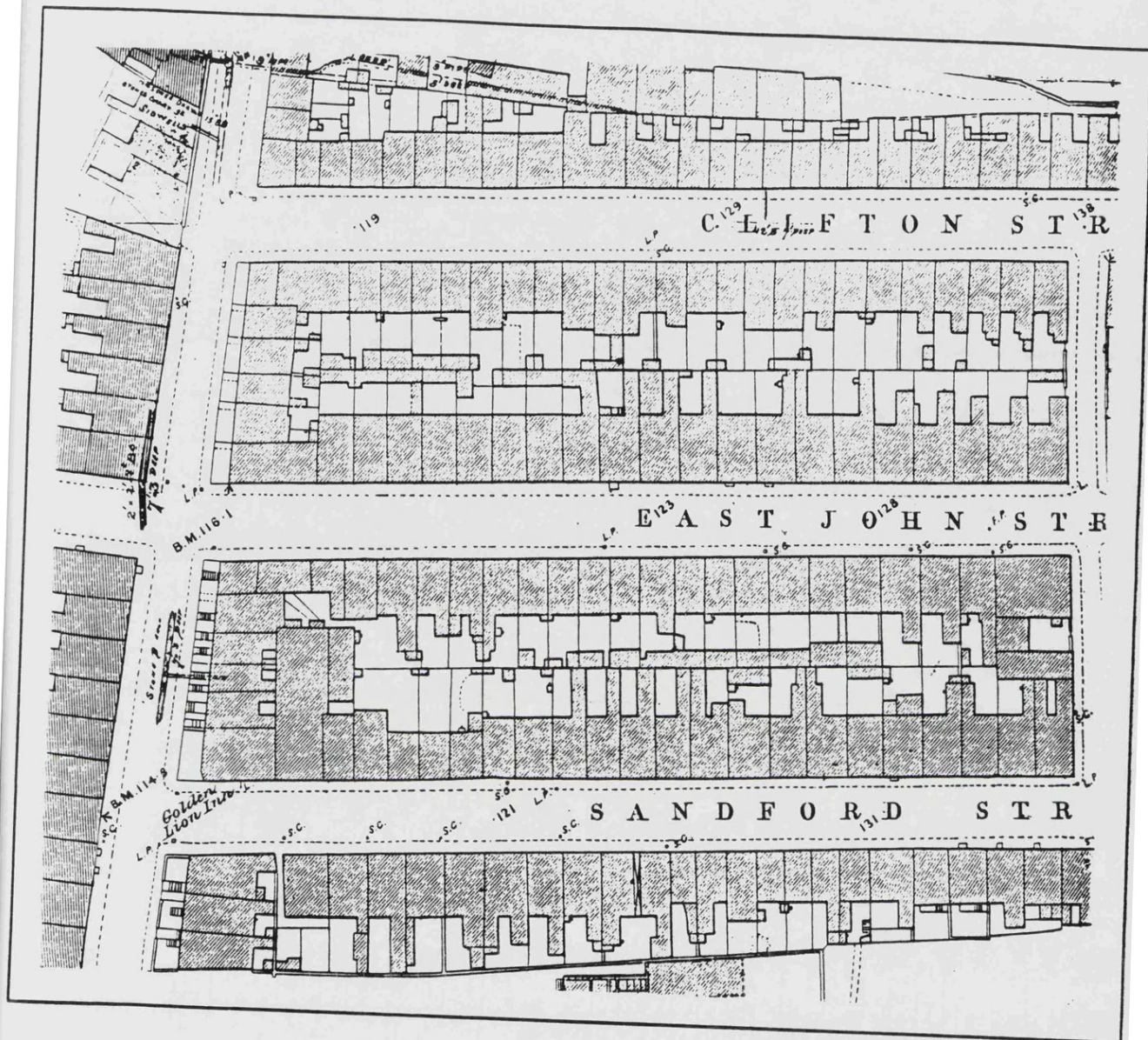


Fig. 21 Part of Newtown

O.S. Map, 1:500, 1876, LXXX.6.14 (reduced by 36%).

numbers of railwaymen.¹

Newtown was a self-contained community with its own amenities: local shops and public houses, St. Matthew's church, schools, allotment gardens and recreational facilities in the park nearby. At the same time it had all the amenities offered by the city centre within a quarter of a mile. It was not, of course, unique. Other towns had similar communities - Stafford, for example, had its Newtown, built largely for railway employees at the nearby station and factory workers in local industries, including engine works. That too had shops, schools, a church and public houses, together with a park and the town centre within easy reach.²

The Barn Field

Lying between Newtown and Mount Radford was what could well be described as a rural pocket. This was the Barn Field which lay to the immediate east of Southernhay. Among the earliest developments outside the city walls at the beginning of the nineteenth century had been those of Southernhay, Dix's Field and Barnfield Crescent, but once these early terraces had been completed expansion did not continue. Roads were cut across the Barn Field in 1832 but house building here did not commence until 1869. Progress was rather slow and by 1894 there were only about twenty houses but they were very large dwellings set in their own grounds and referred to in official records as 'residences'.³ Some were an extravaganza of architectural styles: castellated, turreted, with embattlements and cupolas. (Plate 9).

¹ Census, 1841, 1881; Besley, 1894, passim.

² Staffs. Record Office D1323/H/10 Stafford Borough Extension Bill, Minutes of Evidence, 1876, p.111; J.G. Jenkins, ed., VCH for Staffordshire, VI, 1967, p.195.

³ Wood's Map, DRO ECA Book 512 9/3 Streets Committee Minutes, 19.1.1876; Besley, 1894, pp. 19, 38 and 105; BCI.



Plate 9 A large house in the Barn Field
(now Spicer Road)

Advertised as being in "a particularly healthy open and pleasant situation and in the best residential suburb of the city" they were of superior quality. Some had eight bedrooms and three large reception rooms and contained "English oak and other expensive mantelpieces". One built in 1906 had a motor house, a sign of increasing car ownership.¹ The Alexandra Nursery occupied a large corner site and opposite was a three-acre field still undeveloped at the turn of the century; therefore, although the area was under half a mile from the city centre it retained a rural atmosphere. Two public institutions, the Girls' High School and the Exeter Diocesan Training College, occupied sizable plots which added to the general spaciousness of the district.² Even though the Rougemont estate had been developed in 1876 immediately behind the Training College, this was merely two roads of some 42 houses.³ Perhaps the almost rural ambience was one of the factors that might account for this new trend of some of the wealthy preferring to live near to the city centre rather than further afield. Convenience may have been another factor as there were very few motor cars to be seen until around 1904 and some of these householders may not have owned carriages.⁴ The area was not, however, to retain its rurality for many more years as in 1904 the local architect J.A. Lucas submitted estate plans for rows of smaller dwellings to be built in the immediate vicinity.⁵

By 1907 a swathe of houses stretched in an 'arc' from the London and South Western railway line in the Mount Pleasant area through Polsloe Park and Newtown to the Barn Field. It contained a wide variety of houses catering for people who derived their incomes from a vast range of sources. These varied from the labourers in Newtown, the semi-skilled and skilled craftsmen,

¹ EFP, 20.10.1906.

² Q.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6.

³ BCI.

⁴ Kennedy, 'Devon Register of Motor Cars', op. cit.⁵ BCI.

accountants and schoolmasters in Mount Pleasant to the physicians, surgeons and wealthy people of independent means who inhabited the very large residences in the Barn Field area. A further category comprised the very poor cottages and courts which dated from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which housed the labourers, charwomen and those at the lowest end of the social scale. Within a triangle, whose sides measured no more than three-quarters of a mile each, lay a very mixed area indeed from several points of view: housing styles and sizes and the financial positions of its inhabitants.'

St. Leonard's

By 1842 St. Leonard's was already a small separate suburb built on land formerly belonging to the Mount Radford estate. Although additional houses were subsequently built on the periphery, this core remained almost unchanged throughout the period under review.

Between 1842 and 1877 (when the parish of St. Leonard became part of the City of Exeter)² the number of inhabited houses increased by 64%, from 178 to 292, a relatively small number when compared to nearby Heavitree which had 727 houses in 1871 or St. Sidwell's with 2166.³ However, St. Leonard's was an entirely different suburb; it had been built in an area which contained merely a few isolated large houses at the turn of the century whereas Heavitree had developed from an already well-established village and St. Sidwell's, closer to the centre of Exeter, had for centuries been a built-up area. The period of fastest growth rate for St. Leonard's was between 1842 and 1851 when the total number of houses rose by 50%; a far more rapid rate of growth

¹ BCI; Besley, 1900 - 1907, passim.

² City of Exeter Extension Act, 1877, 40 and 41 Vict. cap, cxii.

³ Census, 1841 - 1871.

than either Heavitree (15%) or St. Sidwell's (8.3%). The pattern changed during the next two decades. Whereas St. Leonard's merely showed increases of 3% and 6.2% respectively, other nearby suburbs were expanding at a much greater rate. There had, of course, been tremendous expansion in this area during the first forty years of the nineteenth century when the total number of houses increased by 585%; perhaps the market for this particular kind of house was temporarily satisfied. There could even have been a desire to retain the character of the area without further additions which may not have been in keeping. Between 1871 and 1881 there was, in fact, a slight drop in the total stock of inhabited houses and none was recorded as being in the process of building, whereas all the other suburbs were still expanding.¹

It was an attractive district, being on high ground on the southern side of the city, well above the river and separate from the working-class districts that surrounded the central area of the city. All the houses had easy access to good main roads and the city centre was within half a mile. (Fig.22) Apart from one small block of cottages, for the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century the houses were architecturally harmonious, being in Regency style; most had good gardens and many were set in spacious grounds.² In 1852 ten of St. Leonard's 107 'gentry' lived in Albert Terrace (later re-named Lyndhurst Road). Until 1841 this road consisted of three pairs of large semi-detached houses, mostly owned by Robert Fisher, a local builder, but four large detached houses and a pair of semi-detached houses were subsequently built here on land owned by the Ponsford Luke family who owned a number of properties in Exeter.³ By 1873 the western

¹ Census, 1841-1881.

² DOE, pp. 235-241; Wood's Map, 1840.

³ Slater's Royal National and Commercial Directory and Topography for the County of Devonshire, 1852, pp. 40-42; DRO Tithe Map and Apportionment for the Parish of St. Leonard, 1841.

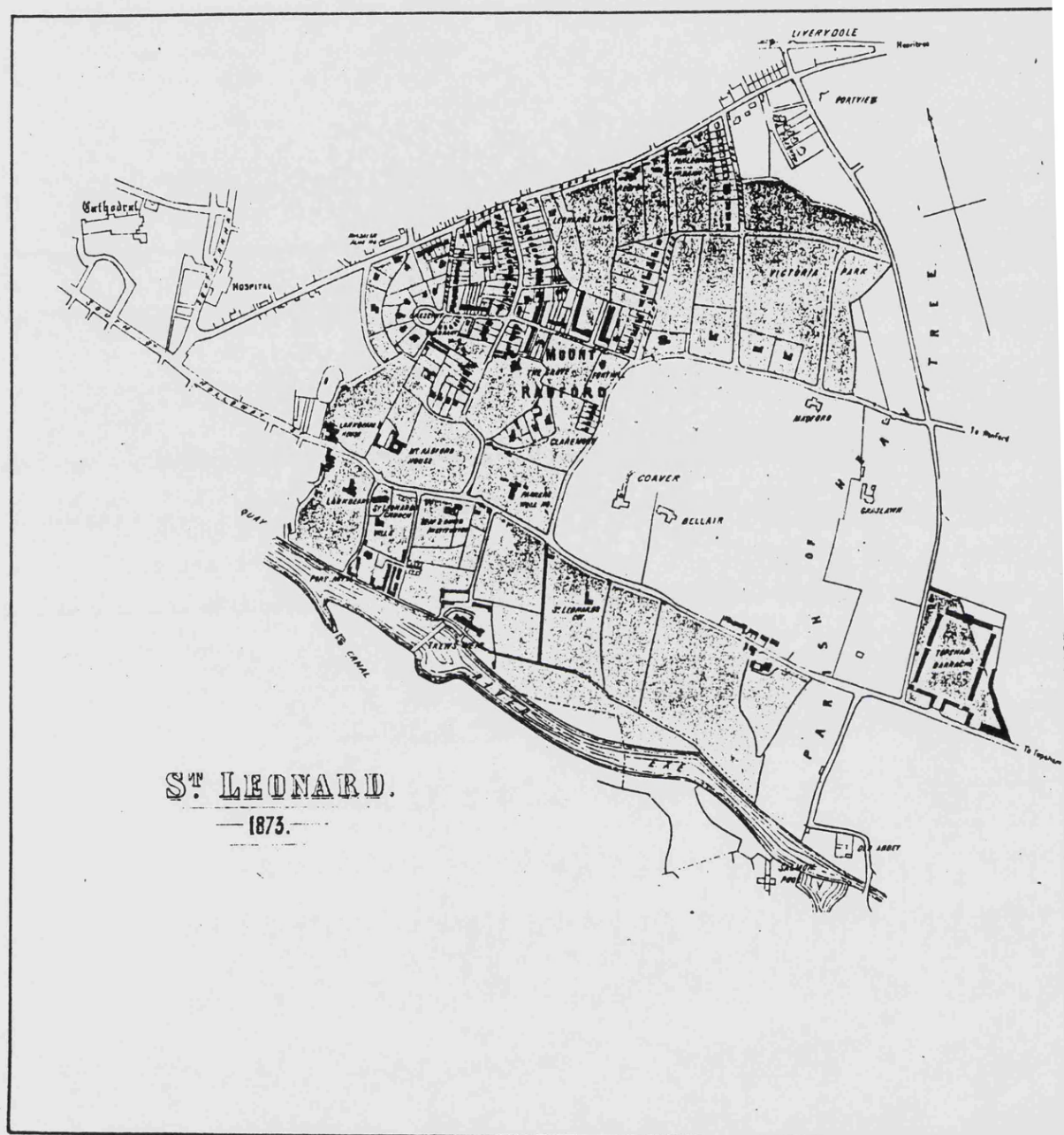


Fig. 22 St. Leonard's in 1873.

G. Wolfenden, Map, 1873.

DRO ECA PW/116, Parish Records of St. Leonard,
frontispiece.

side of the road was almost completely built up. The houses were well proportioned, spacious and dignified. (Fig. 23) All were architecturally interesting, some having moulded shells above their lintels, others much decoration above the ground-floor windows. These kinds of houses set the tone of the neighbourhood and standards were maintained when, later, large superior residences were built on the other side of the road. For example, in 1886 the Rev. George Porter of Paddington sold a plot here to Clement H. Sander of Queen Street, Exeter, for £350 with the proviso that the purchaser was "not to build on this land any semi-detached building of less value than £700 nor any detached building of less value than £900, nor any building which shall be a nuisance or annoyance to the occupiers of houses opposite". Although London based, the vendor was anxious to retain the character of the area. The following year Glencoe, a very large house with a frontage of 300', was erected on this site. By the turn of the century this road was well developed with large houses, several in their own grounds.¹

The superior houses of St. Leonard's attracted residents of some standing in the community. In 1871 merchants and bankers lived in mansions along Magdalen Road; Claremont Grove's residents included a landowner, a baronet's widow and the former Governor of Hong Kong, the last yet another example of the role Exeter played in attracting those who had retired from service overseas. The High Sheriff of Suffolk lived in The Crescent. Domestic staff for such houses usually included a butler, a footman and up to six female servants. If there was a lodge (Grove House, for example) outdoor staff were accommodated there.²

¹ DRO D5/119/1-3 Deed, Porter to Sander; BCI; Q.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6

² Census, 1871.



Fig. 23 Albert Terrace, St. Leonard's

O.S. Map, 1:500, 1876, LXXX. 6.24 (reduced by 36%).

Wolfenden's map of 1873 (Fig. 22) shows that whereas the very large houses were still in relative isolation, most of the 318 dwellings were clustered around the original 'core'. Expansion had taken place by in-filling or continuation of existing roads. Middle-class exclusivity was not maintained over the decades. By the 1870s governesses, bank clerks and commercial travellers lived in some of the smaller, yet still elegant, terraces. The ratio of servants dropped too; whereas eleven had been employed in Premier Place in 1841, by 1871 there were only three resident ones. Park Place, once exclusively occupied by people of independent means with a total of seven servants, now had only one annuitant and one resident servant. Nevertheless, many of the houses continued to be occupied by people of substance.¹

The general air of prosperity attached to St. Leonard's was due to a number of factors. Much of the area was developed in similar Regency style in the early part of the century; subsequent building and in-filling consisted of large houses (even though some were semi-detached or terraced) designed for the prosperous. The large mansions in extensive grounds in the eastern sector led to an overall low average density of building and two public institutions occupied considerable areas of land thereby precluding residential development - the Deaf and Dumb Institution and the Topsham Barracks. Victoria Park has had an important and long-standing effect on the St. Leonard's/Heavitree border, even though 20 acres of it became the site of the new Grammar School in 1880.² The school was surrounded by playing fields which, together with the park, provided controlled open space not available for development. Most of the houses in St. Leonard's had gardens both front and rear (albeit some were tiny). Trees, flowers and lawns abounded, particularly in the grounds of the large residences. Thus for most of the century the suburb was an airy, spacious and predominantly middle-class

¹ Census, 1841-1871.

² Kelly, 1910, p.229; O.S. Map 1:2500, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6

residential district of some attraction. It retained its character for many years for the initial building of working-class houses in the 1880s in its southern sector had, as will be shown, no effect on the main core.

The first real changes became apparent when in 1902 the Exeter Building Estates Company built a row of twenty-eight gabled red brick terrace houses on the eastern side of St. Leonard's Road (formerly Higher and Lower Mount Radford Terraces which were amalgamated in 1894).¹ Each had a bay window both upstairs and downstairs and a rear extension which probably contained an outside lavatory. Extra light and space was afforded by upstairs rear bay windows. There were tiny front gardens, and rear gardens of some 20' with access to an alley-way which ran the length of the terrace. Whilst they were well constructed and had decorative ceramic tiles on the front doorstep risers to give added interest, they were in no way comparable with the substantial residences on the opposite side of the road. They catered for an entirely different class of people. Officers, gentlemen, clergymen and solicitors resided on the western side; the new smaller houses were occupied by widows, spinsters, dressmakers and accountants who paid rents in the region of 2/9d per week.² The building company extended its operation on land immediately to the east, the site of Grove House, a once-splendid mansion standing in its own grounds. In order to cram as many of these small houses onto the site as possible, the line of St. Leonard's Road was altered and narrowed at its southern end to allow two streets to be built on the Grove House site instead of one. Thus both the character and the width of St. Leonard's Road was altered considerably. The two new streets, East Grove Road and West Grove Road, were both culs-de-sac, terminating in a high brick wall (which may have been a deliberate attempt to cut these small and more commonplace houses

¹ DRO ECA 9/8 Streets Committee Minutes, 28.11.1894; BCI.

² Besley, 1904-1907, passim; EVL, 1905.

off from their more superior neighbours.) They consisted of 113 small bay-windowed terrace houses with minute front gardens. Their most interesting feature was the cream decorative banding adjacent to the top and bottom of the bay windows and immediately under the guttering. They were designed to be let in 1902 at around £14 p.a.¹

The age of red-brick suburbanity was now affecting Mount Radford - perhaps more noticeable in an area which had remained almost unaltered in style for over half a century. The Exeter Flying Post of 25th October, 1902 remarked that "What effect this (Grove Park estate) development will have upon the better class residences in the immediate neighbourhood remains to be seen, but for certain their value will not be increased". It is difficult to judge, but ultimately, as will be seen, it may well have had very little effect at all. The whole area was, in any case, undergoing considerable social change. Mount Radford House, once the focus of high-class social life, became a school between 1825 and 1878 and was subsequently sold to a tradesman - Edward Knapman, a draper. The last vestiges of this once imposing Baring mansion disappeared in 1903, by which time it was almost a ruin.² Its site was then developed by the Exeter Building Estates Company which had already commenced work on the new roads nearby. Two roads of red brick houses were constructed. One was a steeply sloping cul-de-sac of small terraced bay-windowed houses without front gardens - very inferior in style to the older houses of Mount Radford; the other was a more superior road of 29 three-storied terraced houses with square bays downstairs and round ones to the first floor. Roofs were gabled and there was some cream banding decoration. The road was built up on one side only and remained so for at least fifty years, enabling residents to enjoy open views over the grassy space that was

¹ F. Fuller, The History of St. Luke's College, Exeter, 1970, 4, p.869; EFP, 25.10.1902.

² DRO PW/116 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.19; HSI.

once part of the grounds of Mount Radford House.¹

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century further houses for the working class were built in developments on both sides of the main Topsham Road. On the southern side, between the main road and the river where there had once been only cottages for workers at the lime kilns and the Trews Weir paper mills, both improvements to existing streets and new building took place. In 1879 footpaths were constructed of paving bricks and roads were metalled.² Although labourers, laundresses, dressmakers and charwomen continued to inhabit many of the cottages here, some terraces housed people in more skilled occupations; for example in 1871 Weirfield Place had two Honiton laceworkers, a master carpenter, a journeyman smith, a railway inspector, a coal merchant, two teachers and a tea dealer. In nearby Baring Terrace two households each had a female servant.³ In 1895 the Weirfield estate was built - two streets which sloped steeply to the river. The 53 identical small terraced houses in red and cream bricks had bay windows both upstairs and downstairs and ornamental plasterwork beneath the roof gutterings. One street could only be developed on one side as it overlooked the grounds of the Deaf and Dumb Institution; the other had an air of spaciousness as one side backed onto the grounds of the former St. Leonard's Villa which subsequently became a graveyard. The houses had tiny front gardens and many had views across the river, so although they were houses inferior in both size and design to even the smallest of Regency St. Leonard's, they were infinitely superior to many other terraces being built at the time in the near vicinity. They initially attracted a high proportion of journeyman craftsmen.⁴

¹ DRO G/570 St. Leonard's Improvement Committee Minutes, 24.3.1878; BCI; Q.S. Map, 1:2500, 1932, LXXX.10

² Wood's Map, 1840; DRO G/570 St. Leonard's Improvement Committee Minutes, 18.1.1879.

³ Census, 1871.

⁴ BCI; DRO PW/110 Parish Records of St. Leonard, Plan 1896; Besley, 1897-1907, passim.

Across the main Topsham Road and adjoining the Mount Radford estate, another working-class development was built. The original Larkbeare House was demolished in 1889 and on this six-acre site five steeply sloping streets were built containing in all 203 houses on freehold plots 15' wide and varying in depth.¹ (Fig. 24) There were no front gardens, but each street had a back alley with access to tiny back gardens. They were brick built and offered kitchen, parlour, scullery and two bedrooms; a third bedroom could be added over the scullery for about £10 extra. Some had ground floor bay windows, others had flat windows. Some had two upstairs flat windows, some only one. (Plate 10). There was thus some variation in outward appearance and in the road patterns as the 'roads' had approximately 60 houses each whereas the 'streets' had between 20 and 30. The architect was F.J. Commin of Bedford Circus, Exeter and the estate was built for D. Radford Esq. of Mount Tavy, Tavistock (who also had a house in nearby St. Leonard's Road). He owned all the land except for one small portion which belonged to Exeter City Council. The carriageways were 36' wide with 6' footpaths properly kerbed and channelled and 6" and 9" sewers were laid in straight lines between manholes in order to afford good sanitary facilities. There was considerable argument over the actual construction of the dwellings, the Council initially withholding approval of the proposed 4½" party walls. The architect claimed the required 9" thickness would result in the abandonment of a third bedroom as the low rents envisaged would not cover the additional cost. Eventually a compromise was reached, the Council agreeing to 4½" walls provided the fifth room was used only as a bathroom, but stipulating 9" party walls for future dwellings. The total cost of the land and necessary roadworks was £7,500. Each house cost some £95 to build, plus £30 for the land. They were designed to provide "suitable and separate dwellings for working men earning

¹ DRO PW/117 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.130; BCI.

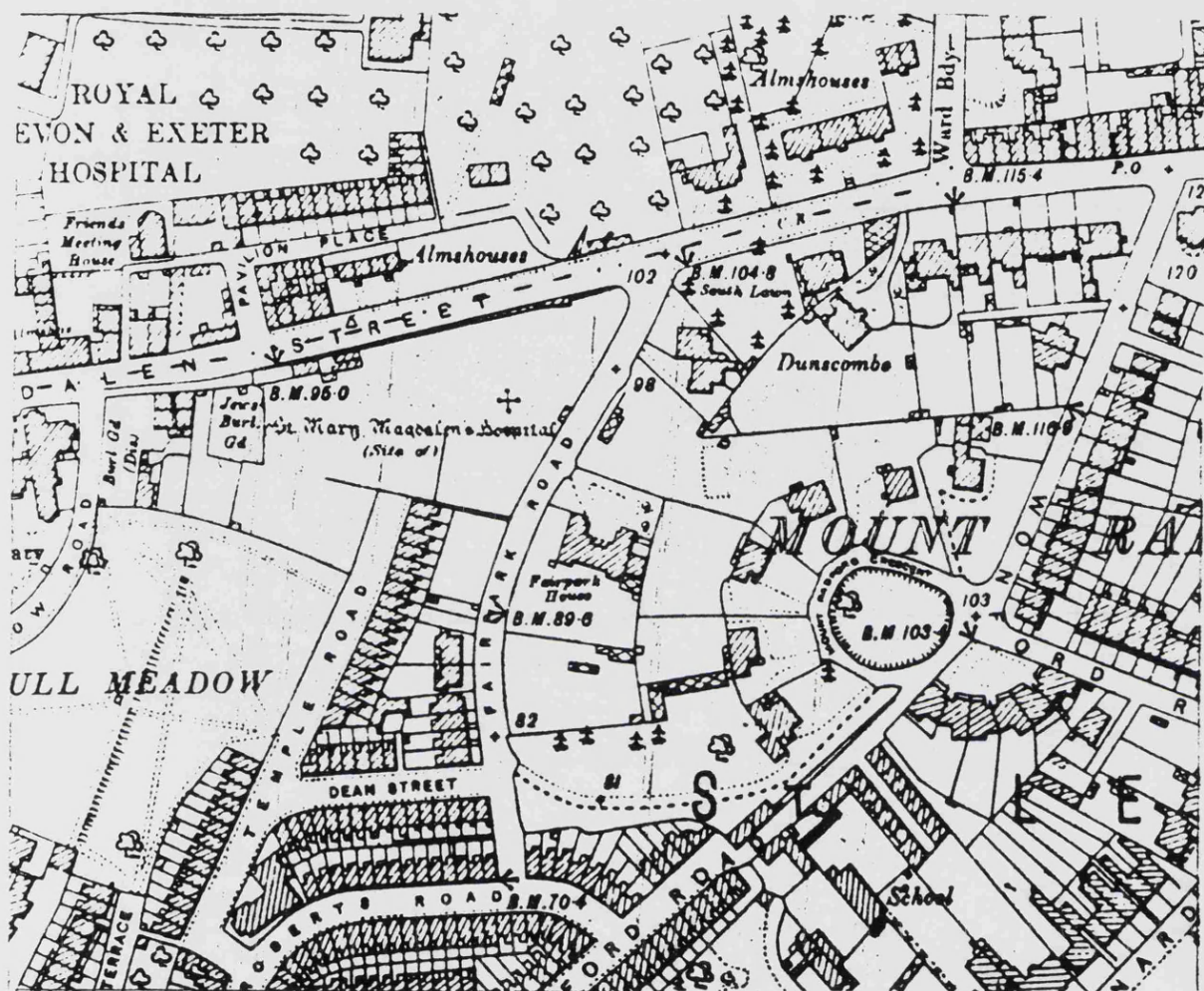


Fig. 24 The Larkbeare Estate adjacent to Mount Radford

O.S. Map, 1:2500, second edition 1905, LXXX.6.



Plate 10

The Larkbeare Estate
Front and rear views



from 25/- to 30/- per week" and rents were £9 - £10 p.a., although some were sold for around £155.¹ Once completed the new estate housed a variety of people, including 13 railway workers, 5 police constables, 18 employed in the printing trade and 58 journeyman craftsmen.² There were at least four shops on the estate and a mineral water works, so that from the outset it was obviously intended to be a neighbourhood community with its own shops, rather than a mere dormitory reliant on town shops. It had its own Mission Hall and eventually an Institute, which provided a social centre.³

Fears were voiced that to build such obviously working-class houses in the immediate vicinity of what had hitherto been a very superior suburb might have been detrimental and led to depreciation in value of the larger houses, but according to a person described as "a competent surveyor" this was not so.⁴ Both estates were almost separate communities. Weirfield estate, a neat, inconspicuous rectangle, was separated from the Mount Radford estate by a busy main road and bounded on one side by the river and on its other two sides by large buildings in their own grounds, thus prohibiting further expansion. Larkbeare estate sloped away from Mount Radford and the only direct access to the latter was along one very narrow road.⁵ It was a cohesive self-contained neighbourhood. Access to the city was down the slope to the main Holloway Road; the better-class Mount Radford estate had access to the city in the opposite direction.⁵ They were, in effect, almost two separate communities. The working-class inhabitants had little need to penetrate the better-class area,

¹ DRO ECA 9/8 Streets Committee Minutes, 18.1.1888, 25.1.1888, 28.11.1888; D. Radford, 'Working Men's Dwellings', Transactions of the Devonshire Association, XXII, 1890, pp.140-141; EFP 5.7.1888.

² Besley, 1894, *passim*.

³ Q.S. Map, 1:2500, 1932, LXXX.6 and LXXX.10.

⁴ Transactions, *op. cit.*, p.141

⁵ Q.S. Map, 1932, *op. cit.*

except perhaps as employees. There was no possibility of extending the Larkbeare estate; it remained a separate entity with no visible effect on the adjoining district.

By the turn of the century the former largely middle-class stylish suburb of St. Leonard's had a mixed social structure (Table 3), but for the most part the various social groups were compartmentalised. Much of the genteel core remained intact; Lyndhurst Road was merely an extension of similar types of large houses. The extensive grounds of the Grammar School precluded further development in its vicinity. The Grove Park estate only affected one old road to any extent. The Weirfield and Larkbeare estates were peripheral rather than core development. Land was not in short supply and it was not deemed necessary or financially desirable, as it is today, to utilize every square yard for house building within reach of the city centre. Therefore houses with large gardens were numerous, frequently in single private ownership or rented as private dwellings. There was little to indicate the future use to which many of the houses in St. Leonard's would eventually succumb - flats, business premises and schools. Much of the area remained a spacious and genteel suburb for many years.

Heavitree

Although the village of Heavitree was for centuries a completely separate entity distanced from Exeter by acres of undeveloped open space, by 1842 it was not the isolated community it had once been. A number of houses had been built along the main road forming a partial, although not quite continuous, link with the city.¹ It retained its independence throughout the whole of the period under review, but was eventually absorbed by Exeter in 1913.² By 1907 it had developed rapidly and had

¹ Wood's Map, 1840.

² DRO ECA G11 Press u Box 14 Exeter Extension Order, 1913.

become an important suburb of Exeter, firmly linked both along the main roads and its western border by suburban development of various kinds.¹ Statistics available for the area cover the whole of the parish, including the small villages of East and South Wonford and Whipton which have been excluded from this survey. The main areas for discussion are the old village of Heavitree centred round the junction of Fore Street and Church Street, the Polsloe Priory estate and the Polsloe Park estate. In 1841 there was a population of 3048 living in 528 houses, with a further 81 uninhabited. By 1901 both the population and the housing stock had more than doubled.²

By 1842 there had been some development on the western side of the village, linking Heavitree with St. Leonard's. Already there were houses of some substance in Workhouse Lane (later renamed Polsloe Road), the link road between two of Exeter's major exit roads.³ Mont-le-Grand, one of Exeter's most gracious terraces, was built off Workhouse Lane in the early 1840s - eight elegant Regency-style three-storied houses, some adorned with fanlights and iron balustrades and some with ornamental barge boards. More houses were added in this immediate area, including Bicton Place - several large houses of some architectural merit set back behind a grassy square. (Fig. 25) The land on which these houses were built had been bought from the Baring estate by Edward Eardley, an Exeter glass and china merchant. In the 1860s residents included retired service officers, people of independent means and professional people. Many of these households kept five or six female servants.

¹ Wood's Map, 1840.

² Census, 1841, 1901.

³ Wood's Map, 1840.

⁴ T. Falla, 'Heavitree', Exeter Civic Society, Discovering Exeter, 3, 1983, pp.9, 20, 21; Census, 1861, 1871.

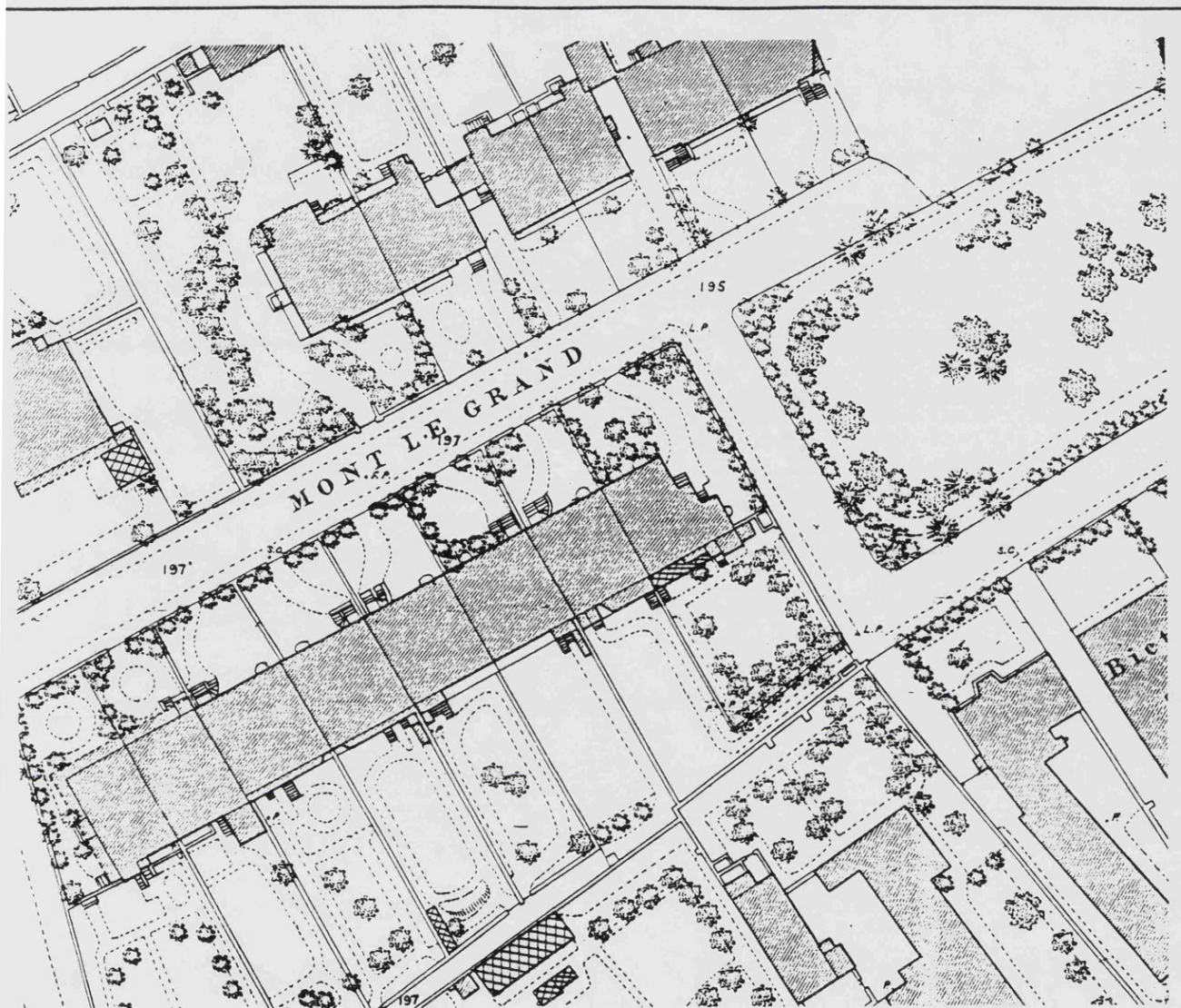


Fig. 25 Mont-le-Grand and part of Bickton Place, Heavitree
O.S. Map, 1:500, 1877, LXXX.6.20 (reduced by 36%).

Adjacent to Mont-le-Grand, another superb road, Regent's Park, was commenced in 1843. The first four houses were quickly occupied by people of quality but the remainder did not have residents until 1848/49. There is a decided imbalance in the overall layout with eight houses on the north side and only three on the south, which suggests that the original plan was not completed. It has been suggested that as the undeveloped adjoining land was owned by the builder of the house, John Tremble, a larger London-style square was intended.¹ As it was, the central area between the rows of houses was a shrubbery and the remaining land was left undeveloped for decades.² This is perhaps evidence of the slow rate of expansion in mid-nineteenth century Exeter, already discussed in some detail. This seeming shortage of clients could well account for a somewhat curious situation appertaining in the neighbouring road, Mont-le-Grand. This road of extremely large, elegant terrace houses had vacant land at its eastern end ideal for the construction of a similar short terrace or one residence in its own grounds. However, in the 1880s a row of very small terrace houses in red and cream brick with tiny front gardens was built. Perhaps even more extraordinary, bisecting it at right angles, an extremely narrow cul-de-sac of ten tiny flat-windowed houses without front gardens was built, inhabited in 1894 by clerks and gardeners.³ Mont-le-Grand became an area of two distinct social classes. There can be few roads of such great contrast. At one end there were some of the finest houses in the whole area while at the other were tiny terrace houses cramped together in a manner more reminiscent of the inner city. This reinforces the notion that the demand for large gracious homes in Heavitree diminished towards the end of the nineteenth century; otherwise the character of the road would surely not have been so drastically altered. Here was a significant social trend. In 1857 it was claimed that

¹ Falla, *op. cit.*, p.23.

² *O.S. Map*, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6.

³ HSI; *Besley*, 1894, pp.66 and 29.

Heavitree "contains a number of neat and handsome residences occupied by persons of respectability".¹ It was a favoured area long regarded as healthy, on high ground convenient to the city centre and attractive to people of independent means. Its early suburban development reflected their tastes and in 1871 the middle classes were still being drawn to the area. In that year there were 92 households of independent means; five householders were enumerated as "gentlemen", three as "ladies" and 25 as landowners. In 1894 there was an Admiral and a titled Lady in Baring Crescent.² However, not all the elegant terraces retained clientele from the upper strata of Exeter society. In 1841 Stafford Terrace, built in 1826 for the reception of "genteel families", had begun to show signs of change in the status of its occupants and by 1871 it housed a cabinet salesman, a cabinet maker, an engraver, and a former housekeeper among others, although there were still 14 female servants employed.³

By 1901 Heavitree's total population was 7529 and there were 1617 houses, plus 54 being built.⁴ The real demand towards the end of the century was for small, modern estate houses for the working class and although one or two large houses were built from time to time, the needs of the prosperous middle class could perhaps be satisfied in other areas - Pennsylvania and Mount Radford for example, whose original identity had remained unimpaired to a greater extent. St. Leonard's had, by the turn of the century, acquired several working-class estates but as they were isolated from the original Regency core they were less intrusive.

Two areas in Heavitree will serve as examples of the suburban estates being constructed towards the end of the

¹ M. Billings, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of Devon, 1857, p.90.

² Census, 1871; Besley, 1894, p.19.

³ Census, 1841, 1871.

⁴ Census, 1901.

century: Polsloe Park and Polsloe Priory. (Figs. 26 and 27) Both these estates were located on the Heavitree/Exeter border, an ideal area for development. The land available adjoined the built-up area; it was within three quarters of a mile of the city's commercial centre; it was on high ground; there were good main roads along its edges and, following the formation of the Exeter Tramway Company in 1881, horse tramways were established from London Inn Square to both Mount Pleasant and Livery Dole, terminals which would serve both newly developing estates and provide a link to the city's two railway stations for passengers and employees. Subsequent extension ensured good transport facilities for residents on the new estates.¹

Polsloe Park, owned by Stephen Brunskill, a wealthy Exeter tailor, was sold for re-development in 1865, but the ten-bedroomed mansion with its seven acres of grounds remained as a residence for a number of years.² By 1875 Polsloe Road (the former Workhouse Lane) contained 45 houses and by 1894 it was almost fully developed.³ Its elevated position afforded good views over the city, the majority of its houses faced south-west and advertisements for the first houses claimed them to be "in one of the healthiest and pleasantest parts of Exeter ... and were well supplied with spring and river water" (the latter probably being a dubious recommendation).⁴ Building was, for most of its length, only feasible on one side, the western side being largely occupied by the Workhouse and hospital grounds, a brick works, a nursery and a girls' reformatory. In the near vicinity was a pleasure ground and some of the houses backed onto another brick and tile works.⁵ Thus, combined with their elevated position, the houses were in a light and spacious environment. There was a variety of styles and sizes; a few were detached,

¹ O.S. Map, 1:2500, second edn 1905, LXXX.6; Sambourne, op. cit., p.9.

² Newton, VE, p.137; Western Times, 6.10.1865; EFPP, 7.5.1879.

³ Mortimer, Directory, 1875, pp.57-58 and Besley, 1894, pp.80-81; BCI.

⁴ EFPP, 16.8.1865.

⁵ O.S. Map, op. cit.

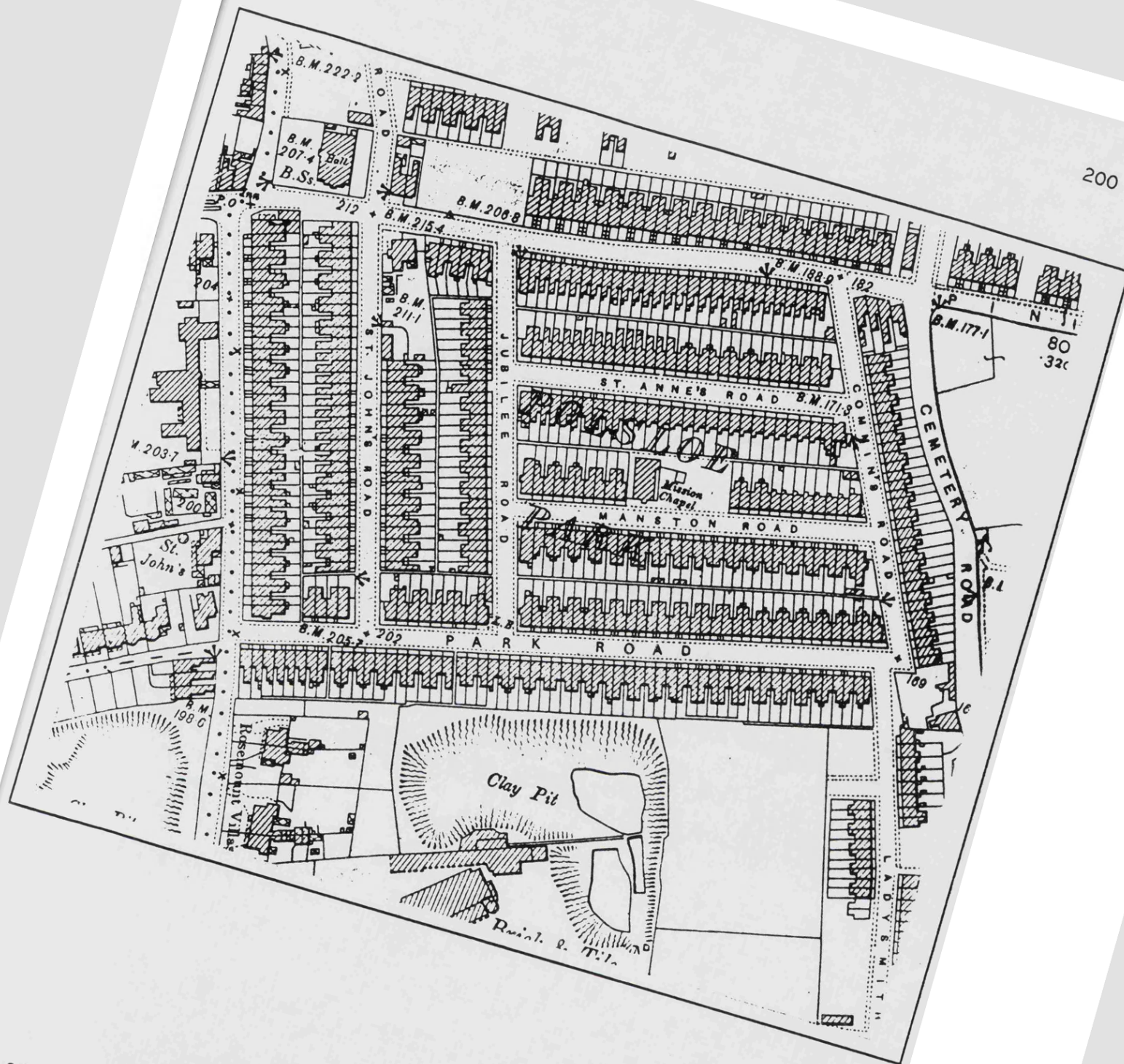


Fig. 26

Polesloe Park, Heavitree

O.S. Map, 1:2500, second edition 1905, LXXX.6.

some were large semi-detached villas with big gardens, others were three-storey terrace houses. (Plate 11) Several had a considerable amount of ornamentation. (Plate 12) They attracted retired people, several manufacturers (one with a workforce of 77), a stockbroker and some of independent means who, between them, employed at least 23 servants in 1881.¹ By 1894 there was a change in the character of the road. Polsloe Park House had been demolished and on its site the Polsloe Park estate was built. (Fig. 26) A terrace of 35 houses fronted the northern end of the road. They were on three floors, each having a bay window and a short flight of steps to the front door. Ornamental plasterwork and stained glass fanlights added interest. There were small gardens to front and rear and rear access by means of an alley. Residents ranged from those in administration - for example an Inland Revenue officer and the General Superintendent of the Pearl Life Assurance Company - to a tinsmith worker.² Behind this terrace and located on the remainder of Polsloe Park was a tight oblong of six roads of small houses with a mission chapel in the centre. They were high-density terrace houses of red and cream brick with bay windows and decorative stonework. They too had small front and back gardens and rear access. Here lived a variety of artisans - tailors' cutters, journeyman coachbuilders - and Post Office and railway employees.³ A house with three bedrooms, drawing room, dining room, kitchen and wash house with furnace could be rented for £18 p.a. in 1906.⁴ Plans were drawn up by a local architect to extend the estate southwards with five new streets on plots varying between 16' and 25' in width, but the scheme never came to fruition.⁵

The Polsloe Priory estate was built a few yards to the north of the main Pinhoe Road. (Fig. 27) Mount Pleasant Road (formerly Cross Lane) had been the limit of suburban expansion until the last

¹ Census, 1881.

² BCI; Besley, 1894, pp.80-82.

³ O.S. Map, 1:2500, second edn 1905, LXXX.6; Besley, 1894, *passim*.

⁴ EFPP, 1.12.1906.

⁵ DRO ECA M 17-18 Charles Cole, Polsloe Park Road building estate plan, n.d.

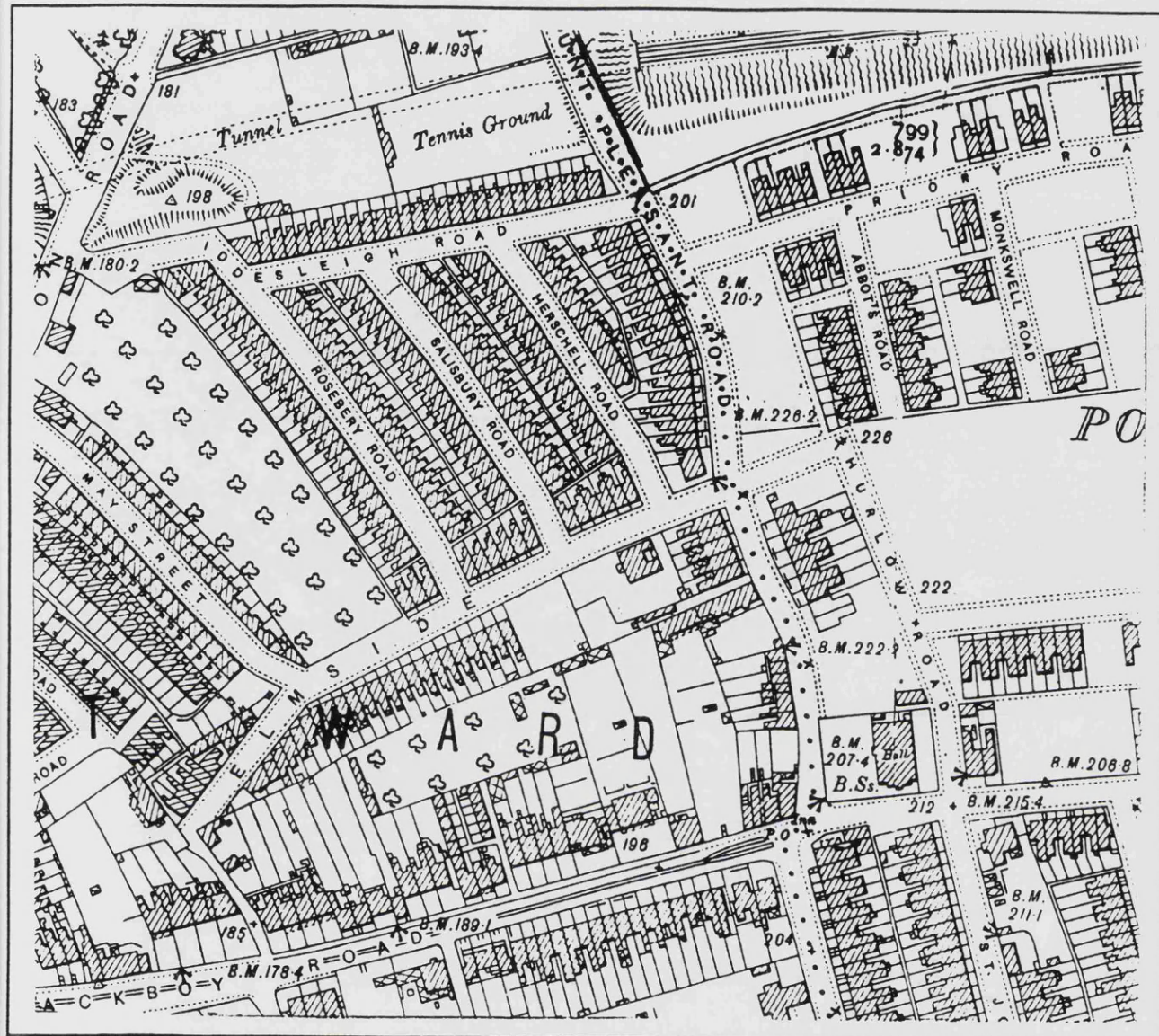


Fig. 27 The Elmside Estate, the Mount Pleasant Estate and the commencement of the Polsloe Priory Estate

O.S. Map, 1:2500, second edition 1905, LXXX.6.



Plate 11 Three-storey terrace houses
in Pilsloe Road



Plate 12 Ornamentation on houses
in Polesloe Road

quarter of the nineteenth century. In the 1840s it had a cluster of cottages near its junction with Pinhoe Road and from that point onwards it ran north through open fields. By 1894 it contained 28 properties, varying in size and style from Railway Cottages (some of the few owned by the LS&WR Company) to much larger properties for those in managerial positions. Their rateable values ranged between £12 and £23 and of the 49 houses in existence in 1905 11 were owner-occupied (24%).¹ To some extent development was limited by the Exeter Lawn Tennis Club grounds and the railway cutting. The eastern side of the road formed the boundary of an estate which formerly belonged to Polsloe Priory. By 1850 the nunnery was crumbling and all that remained of the estate were "an indifferent farmhouse and outbuildings".² The new housing estate was slow to develop. By 1906 seven roads had been commenced, but only a few groups of terrace houses had been erected and only parts of the roads were made up. (Fig. 27) The dwellings, which had rear access and small gardens, attracted clerks and craftsmen and a number of Post Office and railway employees.³

In 1883 a group of houses was built that in no way matched either contemporary building or much of what had previously been built in Heavitree. This was Regent Square which led directly off the main road, Fore Street. (Fig. 28) It consisted of 63 tiny closely-packed cottages with neither front gardens nor rear entrances. Each cottage had three bedrooms, a parlour, kitchen, scullery and washing furnace. The overall plots measured some 15'6" x 42'. Built before local bye-laws demanded higher standards, they were crammed into a very small square with only one narrow entrance; a site more reminiscent of poor quality inner-city courts than a pleasant once-rural village. It was, by local standards, a fairly large-scale Victorian speculation undertaken by

¹ Wood's Map, 1840; Q.S. Map, 1:2500, second edn 1905, LXXX.6; Besley, 1894, pp.66-67; EVL, 1905.

² W. White, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire, 1850, p.73.

³ DRO Heavitree UDC Streets Committee Minutes, 12.6.1906; HSI; Besley, 1907, passim.

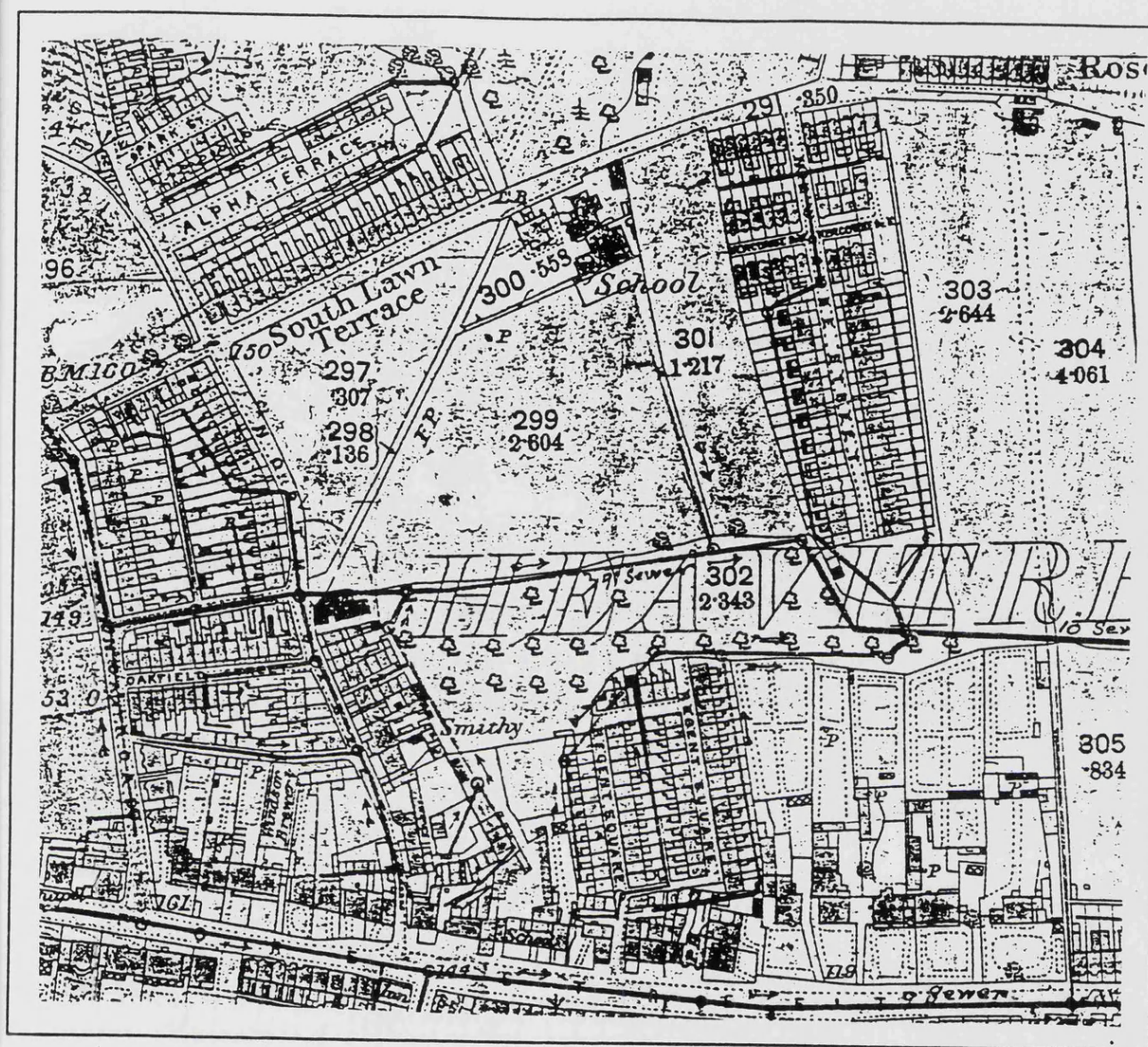


Fig. 28 Heavitree Village north of Fore Street, 1888
(Regent Square - bottom centre)

O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1888, LXXX.7.

J.F. Ellis, a plumber. By 1894 all but ten of the houses were occupied. Residents included labourers, firemen, bakers and, in particular, a large number of gardeners, the latter probably accounted for by nearby nursery gardens and large houses requiring groundsmen. Regent Square appears to have been a successful enterprise for within two years Ellis was able to move from here to a fairly substantial villa off Polsloe Road.¹

In 1897 the UDC Surveyor presented plans for six streets of labourers' cottages to be located south of Exeter Cemetery. Tenders were accepted in May 1898 from a local builder, Edward Mudge, but the work was not commenced for eight years, whether from lack of demand for such houses or other commercial reasons is not known.²

By 1907 there were many different types of properties available in Heavitree. Property values increased following the introduction of the tramway system, but in 1900 a new house on the Polsloe Park estate could be rented for £18 p.a. plus rates. A five-bedroomed house on three floors in Mount Pleasant Road cost £26 p.a., which compares very favourably with the £32 p.a. being asked for possibly smaller houses in St. Leonard's some seventy years earlier. A house in Polsloe Road could be purchased for £375 and although this was two-and-a-half times the price of a working man's dwelling in Newtown, it was still less than the £440 for a small house in St. Leonard's on offer in 1836.³

Heavitree was becoming suburbanised, but estates tended to be concentrated adjacent to the city boundary, adjoining an

¹ Wall plaque; O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1888, LXXX.7; EFP, 17.9.1884; Besley, 1894, p.125; Falla, op. cit., p.34.

² DRO Heavitree UDC Streets Committee Minutes, 8.6.1897 and 10.5.1898.

³ EFP, 27.2.1903; Newton, VE, p.251; EVL, 1905; Newton, MCH, p.39.

already built-up area. Additional houses led to the expansion of transport services. Suburban development had extended eastwards by 1907, but by less than half a mile. To the south of the main road through the village there was little development beyond that fronting the road. The new houses were largely confined to an "L" shape, the stem being the city boundary and the base line the main road through the village. There was no untidy suburban sprawl as yet, although contemporary maps showed that considerable areas of land were destined for building sites. Open land still abounded; the chief crops of the district were those of market gardens and a considerable acreage was under wheat or meadow land. The cemetery and pleasure grounds provided further open space.¹

Between 1801 and 1901 Heavitree changed from a largely nucleated agricultural community into a suburb of Exeter. Both its population and its housing stock increased ninefold. Until the middle of the century its new residents were largely prosperous middle-class who lived in elegant terraces; later development concentrated on catering for those in somewhat lower income brackets. There was an extensive range of property sizes. By the 1880s it had become a very mixed community. (Table 3). There are a number of factors which could account for this, although not exclusively so. Unlike St. Leonard's, it developed over a much longer period and was not centred on one large mansion. Heavitree had an ample supply of suitable land close to main roads to satisfy the increasing demand for working-class houses. Cheap transport was quickly made available, facilitating movement between home and work-place. A number of public institutions such as the hospital and the Workhouse, plus several brick yards and the railway cutting, may have deterred some would-be residents. The commencement of

¹ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6 and LXXX.7; Kelly, 1883, p.170.

² Census, 1801-1901.

estates for the working class may have lowered the social standing of the area; certainly Regent Square did nothing to enhance Heavitree's former image. There were other areas, for example the Barn Field near Southernhay, suitable for, and indeed attracting, the building of very large houses. By 1907 Heavitree was a mixture of social classes; its inhabitants ranged from surgeons, service officers, merchants and manufacturers to clerks, plumbers, railwaymen and labourers. Very grand residences were in juxtaposition to tiny cottages and already there were signs that this once very exclusive area would shortly be ringed by working-class estates.

St. Thomas's

Across the river the suburb of St. Thomas was slow to develop. By 1842 there was some ribbon development near the junction of the three main roads - Okehampton Street, Cowick Street and Alphington Street which met at the Exe Bridge. Even so, houses and shops extended for less than half a mile from the river crossing and a mere seven houses were under construction. During the following decade the housing stock actually fell in total from 827 (758 inhabited) in 1841 to 800 (762 inhabited) in 1851 compared with a rise of 8.3% in St. Sidwell's and 50% in St. Leonard's. It was not until 1871 that there was any major increase, but then between 1881 and 1891 it outstripped even the rapidly growing Heavitree.¹ What led this barely developed and hitherto unpopular district to increase its housing stock during the last three decades of the nineteenth century by over 80%?

The reasons for the unpopularity of the district have already been discussed in some detail; low-lying terrain subject to flooding; steep slopes difficult to develop; an area regarded as unfashionable and unhealthy; a river-crossing to negotiate to

¹ Wood's Map, 1840; Census, 1841-1891.

gain access to the city and then a journey through a slum district and a steep climb up Fore Street before the city centre could be reached. The industrial character of St. Thomas's was reinforced by a prominent railway line and the gas works which caused considerable nuisance over the years. However, it was perhaps its industrial aspects that ultimately led to its development. Lacking the advantages of a healthy, airy district and without south-facing slopes attractive to house developers, it nevertheless had job opportunities. In 1870 a new reservoir was built here and by the 1890s there were saw mills and an asphalt works. The railway provided a certain number of jobs and immediately across the river were the industrial areas of Exe Island and the Shilhay with breweries, tanneries and foundries within easy reach of the inhabitants of St. Thomas.¹ In 1894 Henry Alfred Willey inherited his father's prosperous firm which manufactured gas stoves and gas meters on a cramped site in the Shilhay. He moved it to the canal basin in St. Thomas's, built new premises on land that had formerly been fields and turned it into one of the largest engineering firms in the West of England. He built cottages for his labourers and at the height of its prosperity the firm employed over a thousand people - a large enterprise by Exeter's standards.² By 1905 St. Thomas's was linked to the city by an electric tramway.³ No longer an isolated backwater, St. Thomas's became part of the Exeter municipal area in 1900. All this industrial development led to a demand for houses.⁴

Although this expansion was of great importance to Exeter, compared with developing towns in the north, for example Sheffield, Leicester and Liverpool, it was very small and large areas of St. Thomas's were unaffected, remaining as open fields

¹ A. Kneel and Ransom Pickard, 'The Modern Water Supply of Exeter', Transactions of the Devonshire Association, LXV, 1933, p.345; O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1890, LXXX.10.

² Hoskins, 2000, p.116; DRO ECA G1 Exeter Electric Tramway, 1881-1905, Box 1; DRO ECA St. Thomas's UDC Minutes, 7.11.1900.

and wooded plantations. Nurseries formed an important feature of the landscape until the end of the nineteenth century.¹ The extension of the railway from St. David's through St. Thomas's to Newton Abbot in 1846 resulted in an elegant station, designed by Brunel, being built in Cowick Street on a site known as The Pitt where once packhorses had been tied.² The railway line sliced across the three main roads and the great arched brick bridges which replaced the original viaduct dominated the immediate surroundings, dwarfing the small dwellings clustered nearby. The siting of the railway station at the northern end of Cowick Street probably emphasized the commercial character of the streets, but the coming of the railway did not bring an increase in the number of inhabitants; in fact between 1851 and 1861 this fell by 44.³

By 1907 suburban expansion had taken place but it was largely an extension of the already built-up area round the junction of the three main roads, together with two estates off Alphington Road, although even one of these remained incomplete until 1925. How did it compare with the development taking place in Exeter's other suburbs? Whereas some areas of nineteenth-century Exeter were predominantly middle-class with just a sprinkling of working-class houses - St. Leonard's and Pennsylvania for example - St. Thomas's was the opposite. It was mainly a working-class area with pockets of more genteel houses. In 1844 it had 19 persons eligible to be included in a local directory's "List of Nobility and Gentry", but many of these included families living in some of the very large old houses scattered throughout the area, for example the Snows of Franklyn House who were bankers; Montague Bere, Commissioner of Bankruptcy of Barley House and Lady Miller of Cleve House.⁴

¹ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1890, LXXX.10.

² E.T. MacDermot, History of the Great Western Railway, 1927, II, p.208; DOE, p.58; Exeter City Council, correspondence between Exeter Civic Society and Town Clerk, 8.1.1971.

³ Census, 1851, 1861.

⁴ HSI; J. Pigot, Royal National and Commercial Directory, 1844, p.31.

The graceful terraces in Alphington Street built in the 1820s have already been discussed and it was several decades before any further building of any significance took place here. When the railway viaduct was built immediately to the south of these houses it formed almost a physical barrier between the built-up area and the land on the other side. Beyond the viaduct, replaced by a towering brick arched bridge in 1899,¹ Alphington Street became Alphington Road and the character of the houses changed completely. By the 1870s the first few of an ultimate dozen large, mainly semi-detached, villa residences in gardens were built. These were unlike any others to date in St. Thomas's and sufficiently large to be turned into hotels a hundred years later. Initially they attracted merchants in coal and timber, a cattle dealer and the Registrar of Marriages. One, Ford House, located near Pince's Nursery, is a good example. It had a drawing room 35' x 21', dining room, sitting room, six bedrooms, servants' quarters, wine cellar, and a bath with hot and cold water. The house was heated by hot water pipes and had two gardens, each 100' long, a peach house and a vinery. The premises included loose boxes, a coach house and a harness room; clearly a house for a prosperous family.² Opposite to the old elegant terraces a row of large well-built terrace houses was commenced towards the end of the century on what had hitherto been a floral nursery. Although they did not compete architecturally with those they faced, they added a certain air of prosperity to the neighbourhood and attracted professional people. It was, however, a very mixed area; nursery gardens remained nearby but also in the vicinity were a variety of small industries, including Well Park Brewery.³

¹ MacDermot, *op. cit.*, p.208; BCI; Mortimer, *Directory*, 1874, p.31; Census, 1881.

² EFP, 14.10.1885.

³ BCI; Besley, 1894, p.130; *O.S. Map*, 1:2500. 1890, LXXX.10.

Estate building commenced in St. Thomas's in the mid-1860s. The Exeter Freehold Land Building Society had been founded in 1857 and from it came the impetus for the construction of good houses.¹ Estates were commenced to suit a wide range of requirements, from working-class cottages to substantial villas. (Fig. 29) In the latter category was Queen's Road, off Alphington Road, which had three "villa residences" for sale in 1869 whose most unusual features were two water closets, an innovation at the time.² Lothair Villas, a pair of two-storey bay windowed semi-detached brick houses with a third gabled storey, built by the Freehold Land Society in 1870, were subsequently considered of sufficient architectural merit to be cited in reference books on popular Victorian architecture.³ They had three reception rooms and five bedrooms and could be rented for £32.10.0d p.a. in 1884.³ By 1874 Queen's Road had fourteen villas. The first to be built could be purchased for a deposit of £20 and interest at 5½% on the balance.⁴ By 1905 11 of the 21 houses in this road were owner-occupied, the others were rented for £22-£30 p.a., nine of them being owned by Mr. Packham, an architect much engaged in local suburban development.⁵ Queen's Road was the eastern boundary of an estate laid out as an inner square linked to an outer square, but it eventually emerged as a rather mixed estate. It was not completed until 1925 when Local Authority houses were erected on its southernmost boundary road, originally laid out in 1867.⁶ The western boundary, Regent Street, contained 110 small terrace houses by 1905, for rent at £12-£13 p.a., much cheaper than neighbouring villas. Only 22 were owner-occupied; the remainder were let to railway employees and journeyman craftsmen.⁷ Such

¹ Western Times, 14.3.1857 and 4.4.1857.

² Ibid., 29.1.1869.

³ See Newton VE, Plate 8 n.p.; Dixon and Muthesius, op. cit., p.63; EFP, 9.1.1884.

⁴ Mortimer, Directory, 1874, p.39; EFP, 15.12.1869.

⁵ DRO ECA St. Thomas's Valuation List, 1905.

⁶ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1890, LXXX.10; BCI.

⁷ DRO ECA St. Thomas's Valuation List, 1905; Besley, 1894, pp.144-145.

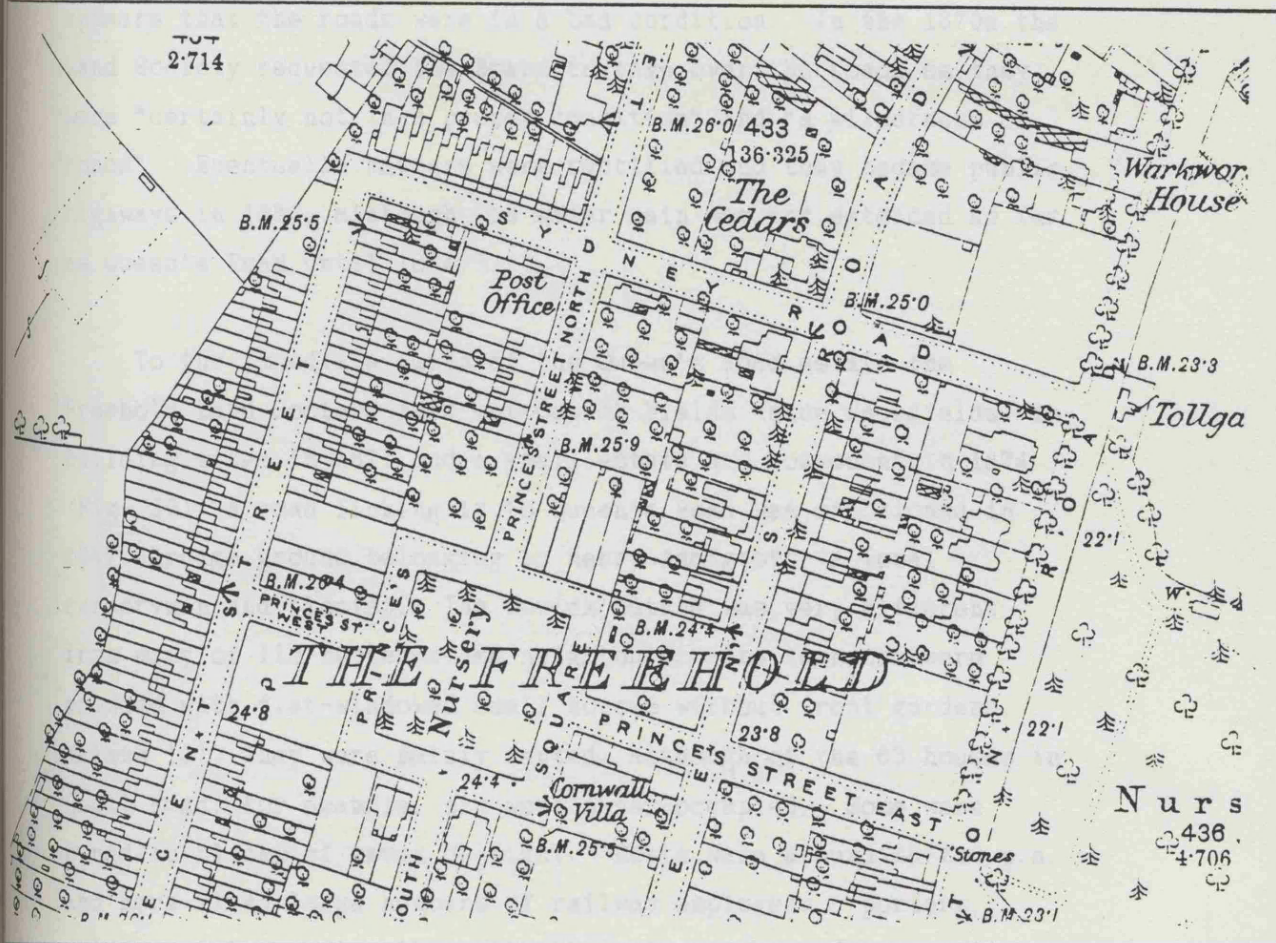


Fig. 29 Queen's Road Estate, St. Thomas's

O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1890, LXXX.10.

was the mixture that a lady of independent means employing a female servant had as neighbours a stoker from the gas works and a woollen draper's assistant.¹ Several members of the St. Thomas Local Board of Health owned a number of these houses, but it appears that the roads were in a bad condition. In the 1870s the Land Society requested the Board to take over the roads as they were "certainly not in a proper condition" and "a wilderness of roads". Eventually matters were rectified and they became public highways in 1880, although the water main was not extended as far as Queen's Road until 1884.²

To the immediate north of the Queen's Road estate the Freehold Land Society laid out Cowick Fields (once rackfields) in building sites in 1871 and a small estate was commenced in 1874. (Fig. 30) A road linking it to Queen's Road was sanctioned in 1887 through ground belonging to Henry Addiscott, a local nurseryman and florist. The Cowick estate was very different from many of its better-class neighbours. Its terraces were crowded with flat-windowed small houses without front gardens. (Plate 13) They were mainly rented, although of the 63 houses in Cecil Road, for example, six were owner-occupied. Some were owned in blocks of seven or eight. Rents were around £8-£10 p.a. and here lived large numbers of railway employees - porters, guards, stokers - together with those in a range of occupations from journeyman carpenters to labourers.³

The Alphington Road district was a hive of building activity during the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1881

¹ Census, 1771.

² DRO ECA St. Thomas's Local Health Board Minutes, 1.11.1871, 20.11.1880, 1.12.1880 and 3.1.1884.

³ DRO ECA St. Thomas's Local Health Board Minutes, 3.5.1871; P. Hedgeland, Map of Exeter, 1806; DRO ECA St. Thomas's Local Health Board Minutes, 1.11.1887; Q.S. Map, 1:2500, 1890, LXXX.10; DRO ECA St. Thomas's Valuation List, 1905;

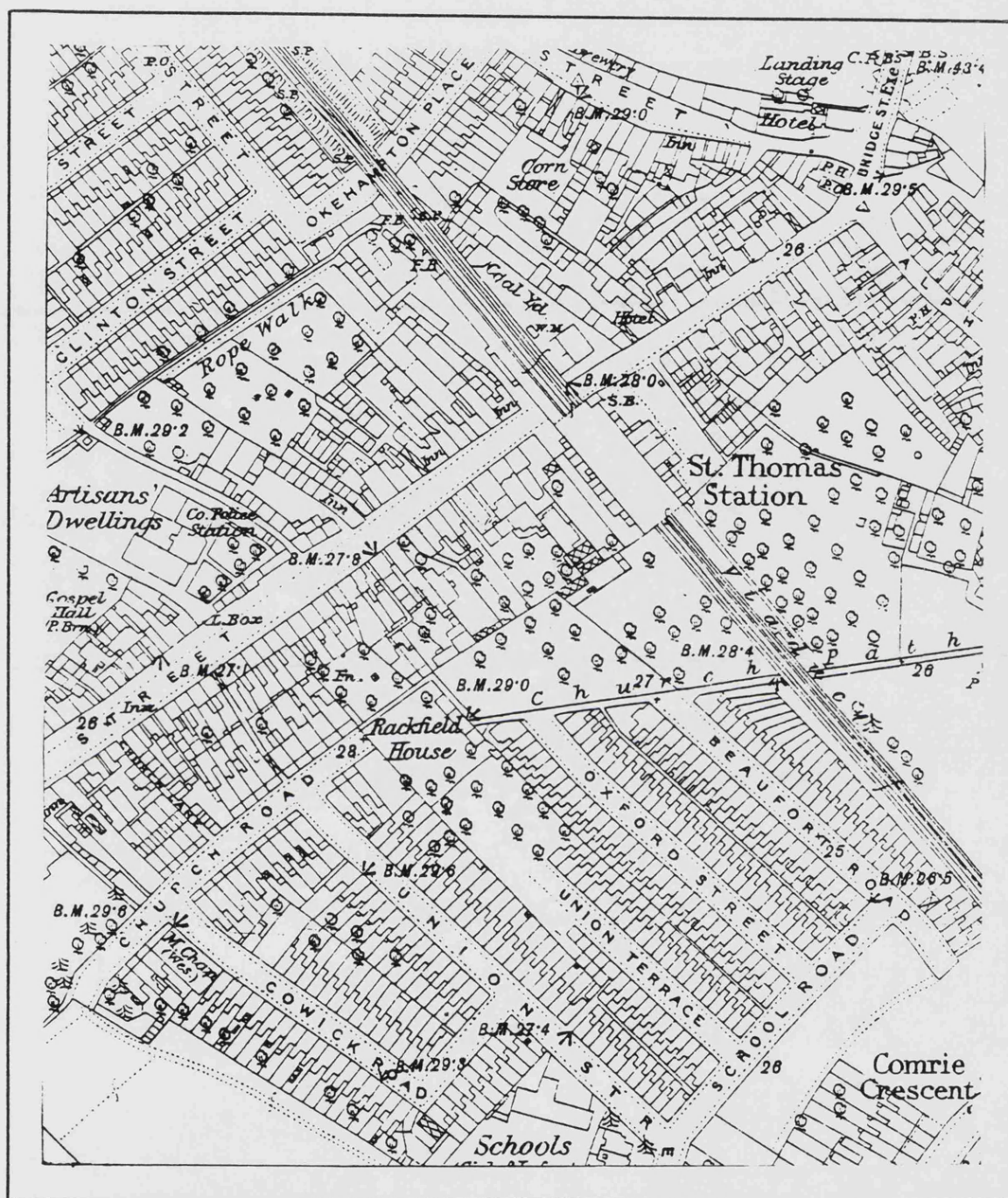


Fig. 30 The Cowick Estate (Union Terrace became Cecil Road) and
 (top left) - part of the Buller Estate (see also Fig. 31)
St. Thomas's
O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1890, LXXX.10.



Plate 13 Cecil Road - part of the
Cowick Estate

Union Terrace (Cecil Road is shown as Union Terrace
in Fig. 30)

DRO WCA 67. Thomas's Land: Board Minutes, 7.3.1914

Basley, 1961, pp. 131, 175 and 176.

DRO WCA F.S.R. 11-12. Road and Land. Sale Particulars.

1.2.1914, 1.2.1914, 1.2.1914.

DRO WCA 10374/6/10 Plans. Part 1. House Estate: WCA; EBF

21.5.1914

three new streets off its eastern side were approved. These were working-class houses for waggoners, bus drivers, warehousemen and those similarly employed.¹ At its northern end, near the junction with Exe Bridge, 31 plots of varying sizes were offered for sale in 1906 for both business premises and private houses, the auctioneers claiming that this area possessed "a very great future as a suburban business centre".²

Cowick Street retained its importance as the main business centre throughout the nineteenth century. The railway station added to the commercial atmosphere of its northern end, an area of shops, coal yards, breweries, corn stores and other enterprises.³ (Fig. 30) Beyond the Cowick estate lay open country until 1905 when the Park House estate was commenced. The original Park House was left standing, but quickly became swamped by rows of small, working-class terrace houses. The estate, designed by local architect Sam Dobell and built by Trigg, Sanders and Sleeman, was planned on a grid pattern with a central spine which egressed into the lower end of Cowick Street. The western half of the estate was completed in 1905 and the eastern half during the following year. The houses were not identical; some had gables, some bay windows and some were built in a mixture of red and cream bricks, typical of many houses in the area. There were several shops - necessary as it was located on the periphery of the built-up area and by 1907 the estate formed the edge of the south-western suburban development of Exeter. Much of the surrounding land was still devoted to nurseries; apple and cherry orchards covered the ridges to the west.⁴

Okehampton Street, the main road to Okehampton and Launceston, runs almost parallel with the river until it turns

¹ DRO ECA St. Thomas's Local Health Board Minutes, 7.9.1881; Besley, 1894, pp. 135, 138 and 139.

² DRO ECA F.3 B.11-12, Reed and Goss, Sale Particulars.

³ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1890, LXXX.10.

⁴ DRO ECA 1037M/E9/18 Plans: Park House Estate; BCI; EFP 21.5.1914.

south-west and becomes Okehampton Road. This too was an area of some early ribbon development backed by nurseries. (Fig. 31) Much of the land in the Okehampton Street/Cowick Street triangle (which was in a variety of ownerships, a considerable portion being inherited by W.A. Commins, a local builder) remained undeveloped until the last quarter of the century.¹ In 1883 Packham and Croote, local architects, drew up plans for an estate which, after much amendment, were eventually passed by the Local Health Board. The outcome was the Buller estate, fifteen streets of small terrace houses, built between 1884 and 1907 on Commins' land, once nursery gardens. (Figs. 30 and 31) Strict adherence to byelaws was required - Thomas Coles was brought before the justices over using incorrect mortar.² The houses were not identical, but the estate had a certain coherence; the majority of houses had bay windows downstairs and two flat windows upstairs, tiny front gardens and rear accesses. Careful thought to detail resulted in some attractive frontages: cream decorative banding; patterns in cream brick against a red background; 'ropework' between windows; carved wood and glass hoods over front doors with decorative ironwork along the top ridge - all removed the harshness of the typical Victorian 'byelaw' street. (Plate 14) Once the streets had been completed to the satisfaction of the local authority (i.e. the Local Health Board to 1894, the UDC from 1895 to 1900 and Exeter City Council thereafter) they became public highways.³ Only a few houses were owner-occupied. Rents averaged £12-£13 p.a. and they attracted railway employees, carpenters, factory workers, police constables and those similarly employed.⁴

¹ DRO ECA Tithe Map and Apportionment for St. Thomas, 1838;
DRO ECA St. Thomas's Local Health Board Minutes,
3.7.1884.

² DRO ECA St. Thomas's Local Health Board Minutes, 23.10.1883,
6.12.1883, 2.12.1886, 5.10.1887, 5.2.1885, 16.4.1885.

³ DRO ECA St. Thomas's UDC Minutes, 2.1.1895, 28.2.1900,
6.4.1898; HSI.

⁴ DRO ECA St. Thomas's Valuation List, 1905; Besley, 1907,
passim.

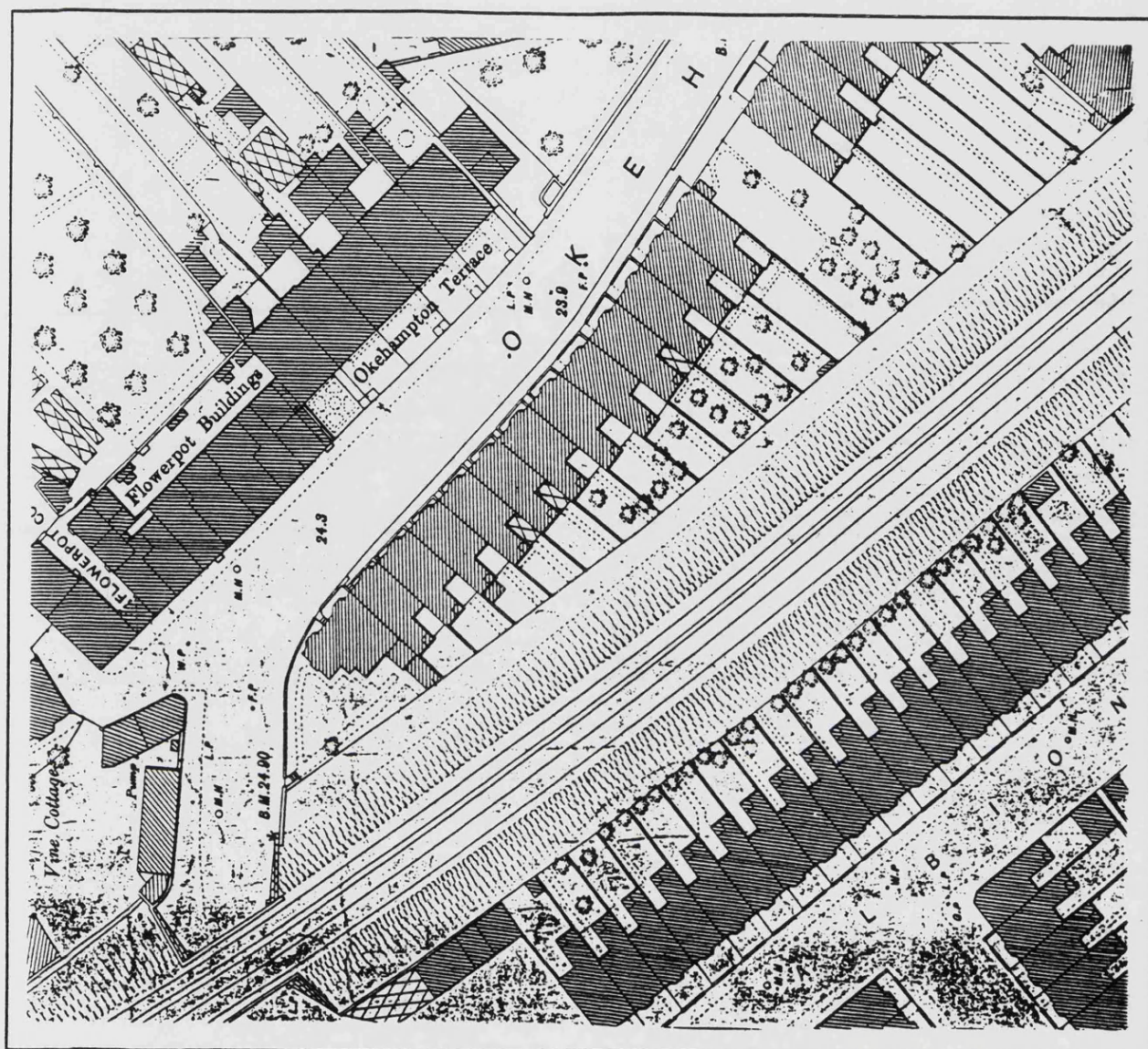


Fig. 31 The northern edge of the Buller Estate astride
the railway (see also Fig. 30) Older properties to the north
O.S. Map, 1:500, 1888, LXXX. 6.21 (reduced by 36%).



Plate 14 Decorative frontages - the Buller Estate

The Buller estate is a good example of a local authority demanding the maintenance of standards in house building. From May 1887, under the provisions of Section 25 of the Public Health Act 1875, an adequate sewerage system was a pre-requisite. Commins was eventually fined for not completing roads by a given time; from 1897 the architect's name was mandatory on plans submitted for approval. Perhaps they had learned from the appalling example set by their near neighbour, the overcrowded West Quarter of the city.¹

Local Authority Housing

The heart of St. Thomas's industrial zone lay in Haven Banks, the area between the canal basin and the railway line. Here, by the turn of the century, there were the gas works, coal yards, timber yards, a saw mills, a tannery, a brewery and Willey's large engineering works, but the remainder of the land was under cultivation by the South Devon Nursery.² It was here that the first council houses were built in 1906 under the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1900 and the Exeter Corporation Act of 1900. In 1904 a Workingmen's Dwellings Committee was formed. Some of the land required was already in corporate ownership, some was purchased from H.A. Willey. Initially two estates were planned; one on part of the nursery and one on the northern bank of the river in the old industrial zone outside the city walls. The first site was to contain two types of houses; nine Class A houses, each providing accommodation for six persons at a cost of £193.8.0d. per house and 49 Class B cottages, each providing accommodation for five persons at a cost of £148.12.0d. per house. The total cost, including land, road works, etc. was estimated at £12,500. The second site on the

¹ DRO ECA St. Thomas's Local Health Board Minutes, 4.5.1887, 2.12.1886, 7.12.1887; DRO ECA St. Thomas's UDC Minutes, 1.12.1897.

² O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1890. LXXX.10; DRO ECA G1/T7/12, Plan of Property Building Estate on Willey Land, n.d.

northern bank of the river was for 40 houses at a cost of £11,212. The money was to be borrowed from the Local Government Board. The Exeter and District Master Builders' Association protested against the nursery ground site (did they see it as ideally suited for private development?) and advocated the northern site. Little notice was taken by the Council and by 1906 49 Class B houses were built and the road named Isca Road. Each house had a living room 13'3" x 12'3", a scullery 7'9" x 6'3", two bedrooms, w.c., fuel store and larder.¹ They were built of red brick, each with a large double sash front window upstairs and downstairs, no front garden but a small plot at the back and rear access. (Plate 15) The rent, exclusive of rates, was to be £13 p.a. - approximately the same as that for a two-bedroomed house on the privately-owned Larkbeare estate. The cost was approximately £142 per house, compared with £95 for the Larkbeare ones (although these were built some years earlier).² As the scheme had been completed for some £300 below the original estimate, the Workingmen's Dwellings Committee recommended a reduction in rent as requested by the residents, but the Council would not agree. Meanwhile the scheme for building the nine larger Class A houses had not been commenced. The Workingmen's Dwellings Committee advocated proceeding with the scheme in view of work already undertaken, but after several meetings and discussions, they were overridden and in March 1907 the scheme for Class A houses was abandoned.³ Similarly, in May 1907 the Council abandoned the scheme for housing on the northern

¹ DRO ECA Workingmen's Dwellings Committee Minutes, 18.7.1904; DRO ECA 3/45 Council Minutes, 20.7.1904; DRO ECA 9/9 Streets Committee Minutes, 20.7.1904; DRO ECA 3/45 Council Minutes, 19.9.1904; DRO ECA 9/9 Streets Committee Minutes, 23.5.1906; DRO ECA Workingmen's Dwellings Committee Minutes, 19.3.1906; DRO ECA 3/46 Council Minutes, 28.3.1906.

² Exeter City Council Architect's Plan, Isca Road, drawing No.5, n.d.; DRO ECA 3/46 Council Minutes 28.3.1906; DRO ECA Exeter Valuation List 1905; BCI.

³ DRO ECA Workingmen's Dwellings Committee Minutes, 13.3.1907, 27.3.1907; DRO ECA 3/46 Council Minutes, 13.3.1907.



Plate 15 Local Authority Housing
Isca Road, St. Thomas's

bank of the river, reserved part of the land for possible development at a later date as a children's play area and let the remainder of the site for industrial premises. By the end of 1907 therefore, only half the original council housing scheme had been completed and no further meetings of the Workingmen's Dwellings Committee had been convened.¹

Exeter responded reasonably quickly to the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1900 which extended to provincial boroughs the powers given to London in 1890 enabling local authorities to acquire land and build houses. Many authorities were very reluctant to impose on ratepayers the expense of property ownership. Of all new houses built between 1890 and 1914 fewer than 5% were provided by local councils. The extreme examples were Birmingham who chose to repair and renovate rather than build houses, and Liverpool whose first council dwelling dated from 1869, thirty years before the Act.² Exeter's swift response might at first seem praiseworthy, but in spite of investment in land and preliminary infrastructure on both sites, the original scheme was cut by half. Furthermore, the location for the first excursion into property ownership was in an industrial area, well away from the socially acceptable middle-class districts. The second site was adjacent to the poorest quarter of the city. There was presumably no profit motive yet eventual rents were similar to those houses in private ownership, although a comparison of plans shows the council houses to be on marginally smaller plots and to have only two-thirds as much space on the ground floor. Where was the benefit for those for whom the houses were intended? The Council had invested in land and infrastructure; they had the backing of the Workingmen's Dwellings Committee; the poor, already denied better living

¹ DRO ECA Workingmen's Dwellings Committee Minutes, 19.4.1907;
DRO ECA 3/46 Council Minutes 8.5.1907.

² J. Burnett, *op. cit.*, p.181.

conditions when the Industrial Dwellings Society's schemes turned out to be more expensive than planned, desperately needed houses - were the Council merely paying lip-service to the Working Classes Act?'

St. Thomas's at the Turn of the Century

By the end of the nineteenth century the landscape of the central area of St. Thomas's had undergone drastic change. Many of the fields had disappeared under the spread of suburbia; however, much open space remained. The flat, marshy land to the north of the Okehampton Road was unsuitable for building; a large area behind the church was taken up by the football and athletic ground and opposite the church was a four-acre recreation ground, created by the Local Health Board in 1890 at a cost of £3600.² Nevertheless, St. Thomas's suburbs were spreading and the central core was being consolidated by in-filling with both houses and commercial premises. For example, by 1905 the water main had been extended along the Okehampton Road and this now had at least 60 houses. A range of workshops producing a variety of goods - umbrellas, tents, harnesses, rope, aerated water - clustered round the Exe Bridge junction. It was predominantly a working-class area, not enhanced by offensive smells from the gas works, but it contained houses varying in social class, style and size.³ There were rows of very small, flat-windowed houses, yet

¹ Exeter City Council Architect's Plan, Isca Road, drawing No.5 n.d.; BCI; EFP, 21.5.1873, 18.6.1873.

² DRO ECA St. Thomas's Local Health Board Minutes, 1.1.1890;

³ Ibid., 6.7.1882, 1.7.1886; DRO ECA St. Thomas's Valuation List, 1905; DRO ECA St. Thomas's UDC Minutes, 5.10.1898; Besley, 1894, pp. 141-142; DRO ECA St. Thomas's Local Health Board Minutes, 2.11.1881, 3.9.1885.

many of the estates had ornamental brickwork. By the end of the nineteenth century the area could boast a number of substantial villas, some of which belonged to people with local businesses - for example William Densham, a timber merchant with a business on Haven Banks lived in The Cedars, in Queen's Road.¹ As early as 1876 there were rumours that the City Council desired to take over St. Thomas's, but this met with resistance from the Local Health Board, probably justifiably so as a few years earlier an article in the Exeter Flying Post asked "Has not St. Thomas's managed its local affairs with much more intelligence and judgment than we have in this city? Have they not set us a good example which we are very slow in following in the matter of sewerage and water supply?"² St. Thomas's managed to remain an independent authority, becoming an Urban District in 1895. However, in 1900 a local poll revealed 733 citizens were in favour of annexation and 502 against. Perhaps those in favour could see possibilities of economic growth by being part of the city; at the very least they would not suffer any possible ill-effects of isolation and could legitimately share in any benefits. Those against may well have wished to remain a 'separate place', possibly fearing loss of identity by becoming part of a larger community. Eventually all opposition was withdrawn and St. Thomas's became part of the City of Exeter in November 1900.³

¹ Besley, 1894, pp. 139 and 144

² DRO ECA St. Thomas's Local Health Board Minutes, 2.2.1876; EFP, 2.4.1873.

³ DRO St. Thomas's UDC Minutes, 2.1.1895, 28.2.1900; Exeter Corporation Act, 63 and 64 Vict. cap. cxxxii.

The Years of Progress

In 1842 Exeter was a fairly compact city. Its expanding suburbs were located mainly in the vicinity of its ancient walls or they stretched intermittently along its exit routes. The main exceptions were St. Leonard's, where part of the former Baring estate became the nucleus of a new suburb, and Heavitree, which had elegant terraces stretching westwards towards St. Leonard's. Much of the development was for the prosperous or even wealthy middle class who could afford fine houses with staffs of servants to run them and carriages to transport them to their businesses or social engagements.

By 1907 the pattern of development had changed radically. The rows of fine terrace houses were still there and some of these houses were occupied by the prosperous, but many had become business premises such as schools or consulting rooms.¹

Exeter was a provincial market and service centre. It lacked large-scale industry; therefore there was no need for thousands of tiny, cheap industrial dwellings. On the other hand, it did not benefit from the philanthropy of men such as Edward Ackroyd, Sir Titus Salt, Cadbury, Rowntree or Lever.² Suburban development was therefore slow - apart from a 50% increase in the number of houses in St. Leonard's between 1842 and 1851. It was not until the late 1860s that rows of urban Victorian working-class streets began to appear. Although such houses may be regarded by some people as "without grace or character" - and indeed may be just that, particularly in industrial areas - many of those in Exeter, as has been shown, had external decoration of various kinds.³ However, because

¹ Besley, 1906 *passim*.

² See for example Asa Briggs, A Social History of England, 1983, p.193

³ Census, 1841, 1851; Newton, VE, p.141

there was no-one to mastermind 'model' working-class suburbs, much of the development was piecemeal, resulting eventually in many of the suburbs being a complete admixture of style, size and social class. The nature of the terrain led to many of the late nineteenth-century houses being built on steeply sloping streets. Whilst this may have been inconvenient for builders and inhabitants, it resulted in many of the houses having excellent views of pleasant countryside, thereby retaining both a feeling of rurality and emphasizing the atmosphere of a country town. The only relatively large industry was located across the river in St. Thomas's on a site near the river and was therefore no threat to the majority of the suburbs.

By 1907 the suburbs were linked together by roads and housing estates, apart from St. Thomas's which was separated by the river, yet there were still considerable areas of open space. Some of it consisted of grounds attached to public institutions, some formed the sports grounds of schools and colleges and some was designated as public parks. Nurseries still occupied many large sites, thus affording open, airy places which people could visit for pleasure. Furthermore, there were still many acres of undeveloped land, some within yards of the city centre. Even by 1907, all the main suburban development was within one mile of the centre, apart from a little ribbon development along main roads.¹ It was still a compact area and most people were within easy reach of public transport.

As Keene remarks, suburbs are an important measure of a town's development² and much of the development in Exeter during the nineteenth century took place outside the former city walls. But what makes a suburb? Is it more than simply a physical area?

¹ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6.

² D.J. Keene, 'Suburban Growth', The plans and topography of medieval towns in England and Wales, M.W. Barley, ed., The Council for British Archaeology, Research Report No.14, 1976. p.71.

Homogeneity, separateness, a sense of identity, social composition - all can be important contributory factors. Dyos points out that the identification of a suburb is not easy,¹ but some of Exeter's suburbs could, in the nineteenth century, be readily identified. They were more or less linked by continuous housing development along the main roads, yet each had evolved separately. Their origins were different; they had grown at different speeds and the results were that each area had its own character.

In previous decades St. David's had been a thinly populated rural area and although the number of its inhabited houses increased by 56% between 1842 and 1881 (Table 2), much of the building took place in its southern sector near the railway, leaving the remainder of the district sparsely populated and largely undeveloped. Its terrain rose steeply from the river and the Longbrook valley which, together with the swathe cut along its southern perimeter by the L&SW railway line, must inevitably have added to its separateness.²

By contrast, neighbouring St. Sidwell's had, for centuries, been the most populous district outside the city walls. Its focus was the bustling London Inn Square, the heart of the coaching business and a centre of employment for this working-class district. It continued to expand throughout the nineteenth century and, being far smaller in acreage than St. David's but with more than twice as many people, it appeared to be many times more crowded.³ (Table 2) The heart of St. Sidwell's remained working-class and the image was further reinforced by the completion of two tenement blocks and a complete district, Newtown, all designed specifically for lower paid workers.

St. Leonard's was a unique suburb. Its development was made

¹ H.J. Dyos, Victorian Suburb, 1977, p.21.

² Census, 1841-1891; O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905 second edn, LXXX.6.

³ Census, 1841-1891.

feasible by the sale of a large portion of Baring land. Its middle-class core was developed over a relatively short period of time and remained largely unaltered for the rest of the century. Mid-century additions were of a similar type of property, or even superior. These remained intact and although small houses were built on its fringes, many of these groups were isolated from the real heart of the suburb. Although by 1907 the suburb as a whole was no longer exclusively middle-class, a large part of it remained unaffected by the inferior dwellings that had recently been built in the immediate vicinity.

Heavitree was yet another kind of suburb. Originally an isolated village, by 1842 it was linked to the city's eastern sector by houses along its main roads.¹ Regarded as both a fashionable and healthy place to live, it acquired a number of elegant terraces and very large houses in their own grounds. By the turn of the century it had become a rather mixed area with a wide variety of houses, ranging from large mansions to tightly packed squares of labourers' cottages, yet it retained its own individuality as a village with a main shopping street adjacent to the church. Administratively it managed to remain independent of Exeter until 1913.

The suburb of St. Thomas was almost the antithesis of Heavitree. Regarded as unfashionable and unhealthy, its terrain was difficult to develop, being either flat flood plain near the river or steep slopes in the western sector. Disastrous floods created havoc for the inhabitants over the years and did nothing to enhance its reputation; neither did the siting of the gas works and other industries on the river bank. It was slow to develop until the last two decades of the century. Although some substantial villas were built, partly for those with local business connections, late nineteenth-century expansion was largely rows of small terraces for the working class.² It became

¹ Wood's Map, 1840.

² O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1890, LXXX.10.

the second largest suburb, doubtless on account of the job opportunities available at the large engineering works on the river bank and other industrial enterprises nearby. These reinforced its working-class image and it was probably quite deliberately chosen for the city's first council house scheme. The physical barrier of the river inevitably led to St. Thomas's being a quite separate suburb.

By the turn of the century Exeter had a wide variety of property available both to rent and to buy and an equally wide range of prices. A small house could be rented for under £10 a year. For the more affluent a 'genteel villa' could be obtained in St. Thomas's for £32.10d per year, and in one of the best areas a house with eight bedrooms and three sitting rooms cost £60 a year.¹ To compare either rents or purchase price of houses in Exeter with those of other towns is almost impossible. What is a valid comparison? The houses may have the same floor area or the same number of rooms, but the localities may not be similar. A house on rising ground in what was considered a good locality was likely to be more expensive than its equivalent in a poorer class of district. The prevailing state of the market in relation to local industry would also be a factor, as no doubt would be the wages paid to bricklayers and labourers, which might vary not only from area to area, but also between employers. In 1900 a house in Liverpool with a ground floor area of around 220 square feet cost £100 to build; one in Plaistow of 359 square feet cost £150, pro rata approximately an equivalent rate. In 1889 a house in Larkbeare, Exeter, with a ground floor area of 301 square feet cost approximately £95. From these examples Exeter would appear to be cheaper, but they are isolated cases; other comparisons might reveal different results.

¹ EVL, 1885-1905; EFP, 3.3.1884, 2.7.1884.

² Muthesius, The English Terraced House, op. cit., pp.127 and 94; Transactions of the Devonshire Association XXII, 1890, op. cit., p.141 and plans facing p.140.

Attempts to compare the pattern of building cycles of suburban Exeter with those of other towns are also extremely difficult. Analysis of building cycles shows that nationally building activity was at its lowest in 1890. There was a slow recovery to 1895; construction rose to a peak in 1898-9, declined for the next three years, returned to a peak in 1903 and then experienced a sharp decline which had not been reversed by the outbreak of war in 1914.¹ But as Saul points out, the index is dominated by building in London and a few large towns; there were individual fluctuations and special local circumstances and therefore this general pattern cannot be taken as representative of all towns. Many of the north-western industrial towns, for example, experienced increased building activity while much of the country showed a decline.² How does Exeter compare? The situation is somewhat complex. Municipal reorganization at the turn of the century meant that after 1900 statistics for Exeter included the large suburb of St. Thomas, whereas Heavitree remained a separate urban district until 1913, but the latter must be included in considering the development of Exeter as a whole. Burnet suggests that builders often made use of the number of empty houses as an indicator of the state of local demand.³ Between 1901 and 1903 Exeter city had a relatively high proportion of empty houses - 9.4% (greater than Bristol with 9.3% or Liverpool with 8.8%) but figures for 1901 for the suburbs were lower, ranging from 3.9% to 7.9% and suburban house building continued at an accelerated rate.⁴ The number of houses in Heavitree,

¹ J. Parry Lewis, 'Building Cycles; A Regional Model and Its National Setting', Economic Journal, LXXX, 1960, p.533.

² S.B. Saul, 'House Building in England 1890-1914', The Economic History Review, Second Series, XV, No.1, 1962, pp.119-128; see also M.J. Daunton, 'The building cycle and the urban fringe in Victorian cities: a comment', Journal of Historical Geography, 4, No.2, 1978, pp.175-191.

³ Burnet, op. cit., p.141.

⁴ Saul, op. cit., pp.120-121; Census, 1891 - 1911.

for example, increased by 64% during 1901 - 1911 whereas in the previous decade the increase had been 34.5%¹ This would seem to confirm an allegation made in 1897 by Robert Pople, a former mayor, that although there were many houses to rent in the city they lacked the modern conveniences now required by the middle classes.² It would suggest that prosperity was returning to Exeter and with it a demand for much better quality houses. Certainly the very large and architecturally interesting houses that were being built in some areas - the Barn Field and Pennsylvania for example - were visible signs that there were people with a considerable amount of money desirous of living in Exeter; whether this money had been, or was being, made in Exeter is somewhat difficult to say. The increase in the number of houses of all kinds suggests either an influx of people from outside the area, or, what is more likely, a number of people were able to leave old low-standard housing in the still deplorable conditions of parts of the inner city and move to better accommodation (and possibly jobs) now available in the suburbs. Certainly the expansion of Willey's engineering works around the turn of the century and its domino effect would account for some of the increased demand. Once detailed information is available from the 1891 census returns more positive conclusions may be drawn.

By the beginning of the twentieth century most of the suburbs had changed drastically in shape and size. The majority had had to accept additional houses that were of a completely different style from those built in what might nostalgically be referred to as 'the half century of elegance'. The second half of the nineteenth century had been one of similarity rather than individuality; of improved standards for the masses rather than style and elegance for the prosperous few. The vast majority of

¹ Census, 1901, 1911.

² EEP, 2.1.1897.

the new houses were no longer of stucco with delicate wrought-iron balconies, fanlights and pediments with tympanum wreaths, but they were built to conform with stringent bye-laws. They were mainly bay-windowed terraces, homes of railway workers, shop assistants, clerks, skilled craftsmen and people who served the community in a wide variety of occupations. The suburbs may be criticized for monotonous uniformity, but nevertheless they offered a chance for the working class to own their own property in a few cases, but otherwise to rent decent homes in a pleasant, still largely rural, atmosphere within easy reach of a transport system that would carry them to their employment or the wide range of shops and entertainment in the city centre. At the same time, there was ample opportunity for the wealthy to refurbish the old-style elegant residences and still plenty of land available, both near the city centre and further out, for them to indulge their architectural whims. For the very poor, life in the city centre had not improved, but for those who could afford a modest rent there were many opportunities to improve the quality of their living accommodation.

Table 3 shows a comparison of the social class structure of the five main suburbs of Exeter based on the occupations given in the Enumerators' Returns of the Censuses for 1851 and 1881. It is based on a sample of one in ten heads of households. The sampling method is that adopted by Armstrong for his study of York, except that Floud and Schofield's criticisms of Armstrong's methodology were noted and therefore lodging houses and boarding schools excluded by Armstrong have been included in this sample.¹

The allocation of occupations to social groups follows the procedure adopted by Armstrong, and uses the 1951 attribution lists

¹ Census, 1851 and 1881; A. Armstrong, Stability and Change in an English County Town, 1974, pp.6-15; R.C. Floud and R.S. Schofield, 'Social Structure from the Early Census Returns' in Economic History Review, 2nd series, 1968, 21, pp.607-609.

published by the Registrar-General.¹ The modifications used by Armstrong in analysing the social structure of York in 1851 have also been adopted.² The criticisms of Armstrong's modifications and of his use of the 1951 attribution lists in preference to those of 1911 have been noted but his use of the 1951 lists is widely recognised and has been followed here, not least to facilitate comparisons with other studies.³

The classes were stated (in general terms) to be:

Class I	Professional, etc. Occupations
Class II	Intermediate Occupations
Class III	Skilled Occupations
Class IV	Partly Skilled Occupations
Class V	Unskilled Occupations

(Class X a residual class for uninformative entries)

Caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions from the results of this analysis. Firstly, occupation can be only a rough guide to social class. Some of the attributions in the Registrar-General's list appeared to be rather anomalous. Secondly, there was a relatively large percentage of people for whom no occupation was given, or the entry was uninformative ('householder', 'gentlewoman'). This was particularly noticeable in 1881, especially in St. David's where 10% had to be relegated to Class X through lack of specific information. Thirdly, in one district in 1851 it was recorded that "the Enumerator

¹ General Register Office, Census 1851: Classification of Occupations, HMSO, 1951, *passim*.

² Armstrong, *op. cit.*, p.14.

³ E. Higgs, Making Sense of the Census, Public Record Office Handbook No. 23, 1989, pp.94-95; W.A. Armstrong, 'The Use of Information about Occupation', in E.A. Wrigley (ed.) Nineteenth-century Society, 1972, pp.209-211; W.A. Armstrong, 'Social Structure from the Early Census Returns' in E.A. Wrigley (ed.) An Introduction to English Historical Demography, 1966, Appendix D, p.273.

committed an error by departing from the original consecutive numbers and entering schedules as they were collected irrespective of the precise residences of the parties ..." therefore the entries were not in sequence. In 1881 there were many crossings-out in one Enumerator's returns, one schedule was duplicated and one appeared to be missing. It is, however, well recognised that problems will be encountered when dealing with nineteenth-century censuses¹, but nevertheless the findings from this analysis support the information obtained from other sources about the general social composition of the individual suburbs.

Table 3 shows that both in 1851 and 1881 the highest proportion of Class I citizens resided in St. Leonard's, already described as a middle-class suburb, largely on account of the type of houses built in that area. Few of its residents were categorized as Class V. It was an area without industries and it had very few houses of poor quality. Not unexpectedly, in both 1851 and 1881 it had the highest ratio of servants per household of all the suburbs (Table 4) and both in 1841 and 1881 the largest proportion of owner-occupied houses. (Table 5) Heavitree had grown from a small agricultural village and was thus a more mixed community. In both social class samples it had a fairly large Class I, but it had the largest Class IV (partly skilled occupations) of all the suburbs in both instances. Employment in agriculture, although diminishing, was still evident, particularly in 1851 when 55% of those classified as Class IV were agricultural labourers, and even by 1881 this group accounted for 38%. The ratio of domestic servants per household was relatively high (Table 4). Both in the proportion of owner-occupancy and number of in-house servants it had marginally more than St. David's in mid-century, but

¹ J.A. Banks, 'The Social Structure of Nineteenth Century England as seen through the Census' in Richard Lawton (ed.) The Census and Social Structure, 1978, p.184; J.M. Bellamy, 'Occupation Statistics in the Nineteenth Century Censuses' in Lawton, op. cit., p.172.

fewer in 1881 - figures that reflect the overall type of development taking place at the time. Heavitree emerged at the end of the nineteenth century with old elegant terraces and crescents, evidence that there had been a demand from Class I residents, and rows of respectable terrace houses of varying styles and sizes to house the 66% of its population who by then formed Classes II - IV.

The remaining three suburbs had far fewer residents in Class I and in each case in both sample years the dominant class was Class III (skilled occupations which included many of the railway workers, of some significance to St. Sidwell's). Of the three, St. David's had marginally more Class I residents overall (10.8% and 8.0%). St. Sidwell's had 9.7% and 8.7%, largely accounted for by the fact that Barnfield Crescent, Dix's Field and part of Southernhay, areas likely to house residents in Class I, were included in St. Sidwell's (the remaining part of Southernhay being in St. David's). It is suggested that the St. David's return for 1881 was unbalanced by the 10% in Class X - an unacceptably high figure for an accurate analysis of a small area. It is also important to take into account the fact that, particularly in St. Sidwell's, several householders were returned as having "income from property", thus putting them in Class I, but there was no evidence to suggest the level of income and this may have been far lower than that of house and land proprietors or those of 'independent means' living in large houses in other suburbs. St. David's had almost twice the ratio of in-house servants to St. Sidwell's, but the former had a number of very large properties able to sustain large staffs of domestic servants. St. Thomas's had 11.8% of Class I residents in 1851 as in the early part of the century several rows of elegant good class houses were built (already detailed), but as large numbers of new houses built in the latter part of the century were small working-class dwellings it is not surprising to find that by 1881 St. Thomas's returned only 3.8% in Class I and a

correspondingly high proportion in Classes III - V. Its ratio of in-house servants was the lowest of all the suburbs, as was its proportion of owner-occupiers, consistent with the general pattern of its housing development.

Each suburb has already been discussed in detail and the statistical analyses described above serve to confirm the findings from other sources.

Chapter VI

STREET NAMES OF SUBURBAN EXETER

Names are functional. They define locations for practical purposes; they identify individuals. Without a name a person or place loses significance. Places exist in themselves; names exist only with man. Onomastic studies form an important part of social history. The present study is, however, only concerned with two branches: the naming of streets and the naming of houses in Exeter between 1801 and 1907. Although work has been done on Roman road names¹ and street names in general, much of the latter tends to take the form of lists of streets selected at random in various towns with origins when known, with little attempt at comparison or analysis.² This section attempts to analyse the names selected for the new streets of suburban Exeter, to make certain comparisons with patterns of naming in other towns and to establish, where possible from the limited information available, the reasons for the choice of names selected. Table 6 sets out an analysis of the street names of nineteenth-century suburban Exeter.

The Naming of Suburban Streets

Whereas many of the ancient names of streets in the central area - Goldsmith Street, Butcher Row, Waterbeer Street - bore names related to a trade being carried on there, the naming of suburban streets is quite different.³ It is usually reasonably easy to date a suburban street name but it is not always possible to determine the reason for its selection, or, in some cases, the reason why the original name given was subsequently changed. Streets Committee Minutes record that a certain name has been

¹ K. Cameron, English Place-Names, 1961, p.153 sqq.

² For example: J. McKenna, Birmingham Street Names, 1986.

³ EPNS, PND, Vol. VIII, Part I, p.21 sqq.

bestowed on a new street or that certain streets will henceforth be known by different names, but seldom are reasons for these decisions given. All that can be done therefore is to make certain assumptions and offer reasonable hypotheses. In recent times Exeter City Council adopted a policy of commemorating local citizens prominent in the world of sporting activities by naming roads after them.¹ Other local authorities have in the past used street naming as a memorial to local notable people. Stafford, for example, named a number of its new suburban streets in the 1950s after local servicemen killed in World War II. Some names have contemporary historical associations. A few have names of the fields on which they were built. Many are purely functional: Middle Road, Third Avenue. A street name may be a guide to its location: Priory Road (on former priory lands); Station Road; the somewhat macabre Cemetery Road and the equally uninviting Gas Works Terrace. Caution must be exercised in dealing with names that suggest direction. London Road may indeed have once been the great highway to London and those roads bearing names of neighbouring towns are often functional; for example Okehampton Road and Topsham Road in Exeter served this purpose. However, very few of the hundreds of Lyndhurst Roads throughout the country actually lead to the New Forest.

Local authorities have always had a vast pool of names on which to draw - some no doubt suggested by builders, owners and occasionally by local inhabitants. It is unfortunate that precise details of the origins of suggestions and the reasons for choice are not recorded. There have always been fashions in the naming of suburban streets. Whereas today it is often considered necessary to introduce rural overtones into a built-up area by way of street names such as Primrose Avenue or Oak Tree Close, this was not so in the nineteenth century when there was a considerable amount of open space even close to the city centre and the countryside was near at hand. Then there were many streets with royal names. In 1875

¹ Information supplied by the Chief Executive's Department,
Exeter City Council.

Exeter had Queen Street, Queen Street Road, Queen's Road and Queen's Terrace. A road incorporating the word 'queen' often implied houses of some elegance - Queen's Terrace in St. David's, Queen's Gate in London, Queen Square in Bristol - and the multiplication of this name throughout the country expressed a deep respect for the person of the Queen, not present today to the same extent. Other proud and glorious names associated with victory in battles appeared on roads, streets and terraces throughout the country - Wellington, Nelson, Inkerman, Balaclava, for example - although such names were found more frequently on rows of tiny terrace houses, often in industrial areas. Were such illustrious names chosen in an attempt to dignify often poor quality housing? How important is a name? Does it matter? Can it tell us anything about those responsible for its inception? When suburban development first began to spread the actual name of a road was perhaps less important than today when owner-occupancy is higher. Records show that certain names were rejected on grounds that duplication would lead to confusion; whether names were debated on account of their suitability or attraction is not known. What is noticeable in Exeter is that in roads where the name could be said to be unimaginative - North Avenue and South Avenue are particularly good examples - not only are the groups of villas named, but individual houses within those named groups also bear names. Whether this was a measure to counteract the commonplace street names is pure supposition. A name certainly matters today: Exeter's Cemetery Road was changed to St. Mark's Avenue in 1964. Pester Lane (site of the old Pest House) became Union Road in 1835 which suggests that even in those early days of expansion, a name with overtones of cholera did not convey the right image.¹ A name was certainly a guide to contemporary national aspirations and attitudes. Queen Victoria was probably responsible for more street names than any other historical figure.

¹ Building Control Index (hereafter BCI) located at Exeter City Council Offices.

Exeter's suburban development was less rapid and less industrialised than that of many other cities. An investigation of its street names will determine the major influences in the selection of names.¹ (Table 6) Where possible the reasons, or the apparent reasons, for the choice will be shown. In many respects Exeter had not, during the period under review, followed the pattern of development of towns with which it might fairly be compared. Its rate of growth was slower. (Table 8) It attracted rather a special type of resident in the early part of the nineteenth century and new industries did not develop to replace the ones lost. In many areas, particularly those of public services already discussed, it appeared to show less inclination to move into the nineteenth century than many other cities. It remained basically a quiet, rural cathedral city with some suburban development on the outskirts. Did this influence in any way the naming of its suburban streets?

There will always be key routes in any area which bear ancient names. Frequently these are the main exit routes from the town through the straggle of houses that formed the base of the town's future suburbs. Exeter was no exception. St. David's Hill ran in a northerly direction from the site of the North Gate up past St. David's church. (There has been a church or chapel dedicated to St. David on this site at least since 1194).² This was the main northerly route out of the city until the last quarter of the eighteenth century when New Road or Howells Lane (both names are shown on Tozer's map of 1792) was completed. For centuries this had been merely a country lane known as Red Lane on account of the colour of its soil.³ Once improved, it became a convenient by-pass for traffic in the northern sector of the city. Its eastern end was

¹ Unless otherwise stated, street names of suburban Exeter taken from published sources are from street directories of Exeter published variously by Trewman, 1816 and 1855; Mortimer, 1874/5 and Besley 1828-1907.

² W. White, History, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire, 1850, p.82.

³ Hoskins, 2000, p.142.

known as Barrack Road as it was adjacent to the Cavalry Barracks; the remainder kept the name New Road until house building commenced along here. By 1850 Barrack Road had lost its separate identity and the whole stretch had become Howell (not Howell's) Road.¹ The association of the name Howell/Howell's with the road is not clear. It could contain the element 'stream' or it could refer to a family name mentioned by Hooker: John Howell, a cordwainer, was steward of the city in 1558 and a John Howell was mayor of Exeter in 1599.² The main route on the eastern edge of the city came into Exeter over Stoke Hill along Hill's Court, named after Sir John Hill, a medieval Lord Chief Justice who had his mansion there.³ This led into Longbrook Street (Lanbrokestrete c.1369 which takes its name from an old stream called Langebrok (c. 1250).⁴ This road terminated in London Inn Square, itself named from the New London Inn, rebuilt on the site of the old Oxford Inn in 1793/4.⁵ The square was once the hub of coach routes and later became a major tramway junction. Several roads radiated from this square, including one of the old Roman roads out of the city, St. Sidwell's Street, which takes its name from the church of St. Sidwell, dedicated to a local saint, Sidwella, a recluse, alleged to have owned land outside the East Gate and a source of several legends. By 1845 the street name had been secularised and henceforth was known merely as Sidwell Street.⁶ Some three-quarters of a mile from London Inn Square Sidwell Street branches: the northern fork has been known by several names. In 1806 it was referred to as Bath and Bristol Road. In 1831 it was

¹ J. Rapkin, Map of Exeter, 1850.

² Ekwall, DEPN, p.242; W.J. Harte and J.W.Schoppe, eds, J.Hooker, The Description of the City of Excester, 1919, p.934.

³ A. Jenkins, The Civic and Ecclesiastical History of the City of Exeter, 1841 edn, p.344.

⁴ EPNS, PMD, Vol.VIII, Part I. p.23.

⁵ A.E. Richardson and C.L. Gill, Regional Architecture of the West of England, 1924, p.28.

⁶ W. Pile, An Historic Parish, 1912, p.6; W. Spreat, A New Guide to the City of Exeter, 1824, p.341; Besley, 1845, p.10.

Old Cullompton Road and later Tiverton Old Road (presumably to distinguish it from Tiverton Road which was an extension of St. David's Hill). By 1890 it had acquired its present-day name, Old Tiverton Road.¹ The southern fork of Sidwell Street bears an interesting name - Black Boy Road. In the mid-seventeenth century under Cromwell, Royalist plots were rife in Exeter and a notorious meeting place was an inn at a spot in what is now called Mount Pleasant. Here it is alleged that the future King Charles II was toasted under his nickname 'the black boy', a name given on account of his dark complexion. After the Restoration the inn sign was changed to The Black Boy and eventually the road acquired this name. For some unknown reason, in the 1860s the road was re-named Bath Road, but this name was short-lived as the Council restored the original name in April 1868. Nevertheless, the horse trams insisted on retaining Bath Road on their destination boards until their demise in 1904.² Another name of some interest is that given to the first quarter of a mile of the road leading from London Inn Square in the direction of Heavitree: Paris Street. This was not recorded as a name until 1422. Before that time it bore the name of the stream nearby, the Shittbrooke. On certain old maps it is recorded as Parrys Street which suggests that the French pronunciation was in use and that the name was misprinted from this. Its origin is uncertain, but it may contain the OFr. pareis from the Latin paradisus, 'an enclosure'. This seems more likely than T.J. Joce's suggestion that it is named from a garden known as Paradise.³ There are two more main roads of importance in the southern sector of the city - Magdalen Street (Maudeleynestrete 1419) from the almshouses of St. Mary Magdalen there, and Holloway Street, a name first

¹ P. Hedgeland, Map of Exeter, 1806; Besley, 1831, p.59; White, op. cit., p.124; O.S. Map, 6", 1st edition, 1890, LXXX.NW.

² Exeter City Council, Exeter, n.d., p.89; DRO ECA 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 18.4.1868; R.C. Sambourne, Exeter - A Century of Public Transport, 1976, p.11.

³ EPNS, PND, Vol. VIII, Part 1, p.23; Donn's Map of the City and Suburbs of Exeter, 1765; T.J. Joce, 'Exeter Roads and Streets', Transactions of the Devonshire Association, Vol.LXXV, 1943, p.133.

recorded in 1515. It had also been known as Carternestrete (1219) - the street of the carters. Its later name almost certainly reflects the steep hollow or valley of the Larkbeare Brook into which it descends. Once it climbs out of this it becomes Topsham Road. This latter name was not recorded on the parish map of 1773. The road was merely marked "To Topsham", but on the map accompanying Coldridge's survey of 1816 it was labelled Topsham Road.¹ These are the main roads leading directly into or out of the city. Across the river St. Thomas's had three main roads: Alphington Street and Okehampton Street which had merely directional names, but the third and most densely built up at the beginning of the nineteenth century was Cowick Street, a name with important local connections. It is generally accepted that it takes its name from the Saxon Manor of Cowic which lay on that side of the river (cowic - cow farm). Although it was known by this name in the eighteenth century, in later years it was also referred to as St. Thomas's Street as it was the location for the parish church.²

The roads mentioned so far are the main routes through the suburbs and are thus of importance. But they are old roads whose names have evolved over several centuries and are not suburban roads with nineteenth-century names. There are insufficient examples to draw any real conclusions about major influences in these early names, but several were named after the towns or villages to which these main roads would eventually lead - Okehampton, Tiverton, Topsham and this is a pattern which can be found in towns throughout the country: Stafford has at least six of its main exit routes named after towns or villages to which these roads lead - Wolverhampton, Lichfield, Stone, Newport, Eccleshall, Weston; Leicester has roads named for London, Lutterworth, Narborough, Melton and there are

¹ EPNS, PND, Vol. VIII, Part 1, p.23; DRO PW/116 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, Frontispiece map, 1773; DRO J. Coldridge, A Survey of the Manor of Mount Radford and Heavitree in the Parishes of St. Leonard and Heavitree, 1816; DRO PW/117 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.6.

² EPNS, PND, Vol. IX, Part II, p.438; Donn's Map, 1765; J. Britton, Map of Exeter, 1805.

hundreds more examples nationwide. Many were roads to and from local market towns and reflect old trading patterns. The roads in Exeter which contained a church were often named after it - St. David's, St. Sidwell's, St. Thomas's. Heavitree was the exception. Although the church, dedicated to St. Michael, was in existence before 1152, there has never been a street in Heavitree of that name; Church Street sufficed.¹

When planned suburban development began at the end of the eighteenth century there were two methods of naming the new roads: either the adoption of a name already in use for the land on which the houses were built or the selection of a new name. By 1907 there were at least 400 roads outside the old city walls and it would be impossible to deal with each in turn.² It is proposed therefore to divide them into two main groups: those completed between 1800 and 1841 and those built between 1842 and 1907.

The Street Names of Elegant Exeter

Although it is not possible to be absolutely clear cut, the first forty years of the nineteenth century was the period when 'elegant Exeter' developed. During this time magnificent crescents and terraces were built, rows of quite small houses had grace and dignity and architectural details added interest to facades, resulting in roads with distinct characters. Not every house came into this category and there were streets of cottages without distinction being built in some areas, yet this was predominantly the time of the 'genteel' house. Did the road names match? The growth rate in house building in the suburbs declined during the middle years of the century but accelerated, particularly in some

¹ T. Falla, 'Heavitree', No.3 of a series Discovering Exeter, Exeter Civic Society, 1983, p.4

² Highways Section Index (hereafter HSI) located at Exeter City Council Offices; Besley, 1907, passim.

areas. towards the end.¹ (Table 1). Building in the classical tradition was still continued, but on a very limited scale, until the end of the 1860s. After that came a distinct change in both style and building materials. Stucco, pediments, tympanum wreaths, verandahs, iron balconies and Doric porches gave way to machine-made bricks in red and cream, ornamental ridge tiles and gables. Long streets of terrace houses with minute front gardens (sometimes none at all) and back alleyways spread throughout the area. Although some large houses were still being built towards the end of the century, they could not compete with the elegance of former years. Whereas many houses were advertised as 'genteel' in the early 1800s, houses advertised in newspapers dated in the latter part of the century were more likely to be recommended as 'convenient'. It is proposed to consider whether the names on the roads of better-class houses differ in any way to the names on the streets of working-class houses that proliferated towards the end of the period being reviewed.

Two of the earliest, and perhaps the most important, developments - because they were the forerunners of suburban Exeter - were Bedford Circus and Southernhay and both have names of significance. Bedford Circus was built on the site of Bedford House, the town house of the Earls of Bedford and it was fitting that the circus of elegant town houses should take the old and aristocratic name.² Nearby Southernhay was built on land that had been laid out as a public garden in 1667.³ Southernhay and its counterpart Northernhay were enclosures to the south and north of the city, possibly hedged, hence 'hay', OE *gehaeg*, enclosure.⁴ An early example of a name with no connection with Exeter's history but

¹ Census, 1801-1901.

² DRO L 1258 M London Leases, Bedford Estate, M/L/L3 24.5.1773.

³ S. Woolmer, A Concise Account of the City of Exeter, 1811, p.11.

⁴ EPNS, PND Vol.VIII, Part I, p.24.

purely a personal selection was Pennsylvania Terrace and the name Pennsylvania was eventually adopted for the entire district. One of Exeter's most magnificent terraces, this was built by the wealthy Quaker banker Joseph Sparkes and he adopted this name from the American province founded by William Penn as a refuge for persecuted Quakers. The area was well wooded so that the 'sylvan' element was appropriate.

By 1841 there were sufficient names for specific categories to have become well established. (Table 6) In some cases appropriate names were taken from the land on which the roads were built. Good examples of this are Barnfield Crescent, Higher and Lower Summerland. Barnfield Crescent was built on part of a field which lay to the south of Southernhay between the walls and the Shitbrook. The name Barn Field was not of great antiquity as in the sixteenth century the land was known as St. John's Feeldes, but by 1792 it was known as Barn Field.² Higher Summerland and Lower Summerland, built in 1804 adjacent to the Workhouse in Heavitree Road, probably took their names from a field name. Originally Higher Summerland was known as Hooper's Buildings as the houses were built by William Hooper. A few years after completion, the Chamber bought a parcel of land immediately behind the buildings which was part of the field known as Little Summerland. Furthermore, on a map of 1835 the ground adjacent to Higher Summerland separating it from the Workhouse was shown as Summerland Gardens.³ It was a pleasant name with 'rustic' connotations and subsequently several other roads built in the vicinity took the name Summerland with street, place or crescent added. Some fields became known by the names of their owners. For example, Dix's Field, off Southernhay, was once the garden of St. John's Priory but by the eighteenth century the land belonged to the

¹ Hoskins, 2000, p.146.

² J. Hooker, Map of the City of Exeter, 1587, located at the Guildhall, Exeter; Tozer's Map of the City and Suburbs of Exeter, 1792.

³ DRO ECA Exeter Corporation of the Poor Map Book, 1824; R. Brown, Map of the City of Exeter, 1835.

brewers, Spicer Dix and Son. When the firm went bankrupt in 1798 Matthew Nosworthy built a row of elegant town houses here and retained the name Dix's Field.¹

The use of the names of a wide variety of people provided another category of street naming and was an important source. This device was used for rows of large houses, streets of small dwellings and rows of tiny cottages. In some cases the roads were built on land owned (or once owned) by the people to whom the road was dedicated. On occasion people named blocks of houses or courts after themselves. Sometimes roads or parts of roads were named after people of local importance. Some of the early middle-class houses were built on what had been Baring land; hence in Heavitree by 1822 there were both Baring Place and Baring Crescent.² An area of ground high above the river between the Quay and Holloway Road belonged to the Franciscan or Grey Friars in the fourteenth century. It eventually came into the hands of the Colleton family, several of whom were merchants in Exeter in previous centuries and subsequently landowners in this district. Thus when they built a magnificent terrace between 1802 and 1814 it was named Colleton Crescent. The whole area was sold in 1827 but the crescent retained its name and several streets of small houses that were eventually built nearby also took the old family name.³ The area as a whole retained the name of The Friars and names relating to the early religious order - Friars Walk, Friars Gate, Friars Road - have been in existence since the 1830s.⁴ Other merchants with long-standing connections with Exeter who have contributed to the pattern of street naming include the Chick (or Cheeke) family, sixteenth-century brewers and later property owners in St. Sidwell's, on whose land Cheeke Street

¹ Hooker, Map, 1587, op. cit.; R. Fortescue Foulkes, ed., Exeter - A City Saved, 1977, p.38; DOE, p.68.

² DRO Baring Estate Papers, Box 116; DRO B/ B/E 5/20 Lease 1822.

³ DRO Colleton Estate Papers, 60/5/2; Wood's Map, 1840.

was built in the early nineteenth century.¹ In the northern sector of Exeter is an ancient road running from the heights above Pennsylvania to the river crossing at Cowley Bridge and forming a link between two northern exit roads. This is thought to have been named Wreford's Lane in the early nineteenth century after the bailiff William Wreford who, along with the owner of the nearby farm, planted and maintained many of the trees in the northern part of the parish of St. David.² Until 1850 part of Haven Road in St. Thomas's was known as Painter's Row, in memory of Elizabeth Painter who gave the interest on one hundred pounds to the poor of the parish.³ Poltimore Place, built in the early part of the century, was named in honour of the then newly created barony of Poltimore, bestowed on the Bamfylde family in 1831. For several centuries they had been among the most prominent families in Devon and owned a town house in Bamfylde Street, Exeter.⁴ Kekewich Place was named from the Kekewich family of Peamore who were prominent in the city's political life.⁵ There were a number of courts and tenements named after their owners, some wealthy others probably not. For example Wood's Buildings were owned by William Wood, gentleman; Joseph Gattey, builder, lived in Gattey's Court and also owned Gattey's Buildings. Later there were many more examples, but in general such names were usually found on very small dwellings in the poorer quarters.⁶ If property owning signified middle-class status, then owners of poor quality dwellings who chose to live in such surroundings obviously did not have the aspirations of those of the middle class who sought 'a good address'.

Certain names appear to have been chosen to suggest

¹ Hoskins, 2000, p.138.

² John Caldwell, The Grounds and Gardens of the University of Exeter, 1969, p.55.

³ C. Worthy, The History of the Suburbs of Exeter, 1892, p.170.

⁴ W.G. Hoskins, Devon, 1954, p.464.

⁵ Newton, VE, p.290.

⁶ Census, 1841; Besley, 1831, p.186.

aristocratic connections. Edward Eardley, an Exeter glass and china merchant, purchased some land from the Baring estate in Heavitree and in 1835 built Bicton Place. The name suggests connections with the Rolle family of Bicton, once the largest land-owners in Devon and owners of one of the great houses in the West of England. The only possible connection with this site seems to be that Lord Rolle owned the nearby Livery Dole almshouses. However, Eardley had already built rows of houses whose names had overtones of grandeur. In 1825 he took a lease of land off Fore Street, Heavitree, conditional upon his building brick and stone houses each to the value of £3,000, a very large sum indeed when compared with houses in Baring Crescent available for £1,000. By 1829 he had built five and adopted the name Heavitree Park, presumably as an inducement to potential purchasers. He also built Mont-le-Grand, eight of Exeter's finest upper-class terrace houses. Eardley's strategy for using aristocratic-sounding names was probably very successful.'

Accurate locational names can be useful; for example North Place, Heavitree, lay to the north of the main road. It must be assumed that Midway Terrace was chosen for a row of fine middle-class houses along the Heavitree Road because they were located almost midway between London Inn Square and the eastern edge of Heavitree. The name may have been thought useful in attracting residents who wished to live in a rural area yet have easy access to the city. It is less likely to have been chosen because the terrace lay between two other elegant groups: Baring Crescent and Baring Place.

Names of royalty frequently appear on streets, public buildings, bridges, and inns. In the nineteenth century the names of Victoria and Albert were much in evidence as street names, particularly in the latter half of the century. By 1840 Exeter

¹ Falla, op. cit., pp. 20, 18, 38; Hoskins, Devon, op. cit., pp. 84, 335.

had two terraces and one place named Victoria and a terrace, a place and a street named Albert. Albert Terrace could be found countrywide, but usually at a later date. Exeter's Albert Terrace was a middle-class row in St. Leonard's; the other streets bearing the name Albert were in working-class districts. St. Sidwell's had a number of streets bearing names with aristocratic associations: Clarence Place, York Buildings, Windsor Terrace. There is nothing to suggest that Hampton Buildings are named after the owner, so these too may have been given a name with royal overtones. Another patriotic name fashionable at that time also appeared both in St. Leonard's and in a row of small, but dignified, houses off the Old Tiverton Road. This was Albion Place - Albion being the old name for Great Britain. During this period there were few streets named after statesmen, historical figures from the past or heroes of battles. The great proliferation of streets commemorating political figures was to come very much later. St. Sidwell's had Wellington Place and Nelson Place. Melbourne Place and Melbourne Street were probably named after Queen Victoria's first prime minister, and Sydney Place and Hampden Place, neighbouring early middle-class terraces in St. Thomas's, possibly in memory of two great statesmen, although both had lived two centuries or more before these terraces were built. The choice of Melbourne and Sydney may, of course, at the time have been due to a personal link with two of Australia's state capitals, both of which were named to commemorate British statesmen.¹ 'Places' were usually short rows or small groups of houses. To have an illustrious name may have been thought to confer dignity.

Research is being undertaken into the significance of streets named Silver, particularly in areas where there is little likelihood of there having been silversmiths working there. The name, common in Devon, may refer to a stream.² In the early 1800s twelve small

¹ Stewart, *op. cit.*, p.355.

² Correspondence with Mr. John Field, 1986; EPNS, *PND*, Vol.IX, Part II, p.358.

houses were built to the south of St. David's church which were known as Little Silver. Early maps suggest that this was an area of nurseries and trees; the name could possibly therefore relate to silviculture but this is merely supposition. There were brooks and streams nearby.¹ Goldsmith street, however, a row of small cottages, was built in the 1830s in Heavitree on part of Goldsmiths' Meadow, land which belonged to the city's Goldsmiths' Company.²

One tree that played a significant part in the naming of both roads and houses in St. David's was the elm. This is not surprising as it is perhaps the most widely used name derived from a tree for both roads and houses throughout the world.³ Elms must have been a major feature in the landscape of the city's environs, particularly in the middle of the eighteenth century. The Chamber's general reference map, drawn about 1756, records a slope of young elms on the northern and eastern sides of the wooded area below the castle; Exe Lane had elm trees planted along its length in 1769 by William Hayman and a number of lofty elms provided shade for riverside walkers on the Bonhay.⁴ Thus when suburban expansion took place the elm began to figure in street naming. A group of houses built in the late 1830s in New North Road was named Elm Grove and this theme was continued four decades later when John and Charles Ware built a row of good town houses adjacent to Elm Grove which became Elm Grove Road.⁵

It is, of course, quite impossible to determine the reason for the choice of every street name. Some puzzles will inevitably remain unsolved. Stafford Terrace in Heavitree is a good example. A first possible link might be with Sir Stafford Northcote, but this

¹ DRO ECA General Map Book of the Lands of the Chamber of Exeter, c.1756.

² Donn's Map, 1765; Coldridge, Survey, 1816,, op. cit.

³ Joyce C. Miles, House Names Around the World, 1972, (hereafter HNAW), p.114.

⁴ DRO ECA Chamber Map Book, op. cit.; Jenkins, History, 1841 edn, op. cit., p.403.

⁵ DRO ECA Book 510 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 25.1.1868.

is an unlikely suggestion for he was only six years old when the houses were built. Humphrey Stafford was created Earl of Devon in May 1469, but was beheaded three months later. This would not seem to be a likely source. Possibly the builder had Stafford as a family name or had connections with the county town of Stafford, or more likely, with the Devonshire manor of Stafford, or the Stafford family of Stafford Barton, near Dolton.¹

Some Particular Influences

So far street names have been considered in broad categories. It is now proposed to look at several small areas, each of which was developed and named over a limited period, to see what influenced the choice of street names. In St. Sidwell's the triangle of houses between Paris Street and Sidwell Street was built on land that had largely been nursery gardens. In 1792 one named street bisected the area - Spiller's Lane, presumed to be named from a local family about whom little is known.² By 1841 there were several streets of working-class houses, many with names connected with people. Here were Cheeke Lane, thought to have been built on land once owned by the Cheeke family; Gattey's Court - the Gattey family were local builders and Joseph Gattey senior resided here in 1831; Wood's Court and Clarke's Court (possibly owned by local tradesmen).³ Here also was one of the many streets throughout the country that were named after the Russell family. It was particularly appropriate in Exeter as the great land-owning family had long been connected with Devon.⁴

¹ Hoskins, Devon, op. cit., p.414; White's Directory, 1850, op. cit., p.32; EPNS, PND, Vol, IX, Part II, p.367; Hoskins, Devon, op. cit., p.388.

² Tozer's Map, 1792;

³ Hoskins, 2000, p.138; Besley, 1831, pp.186, 177, 222.

⁴ Hoskins, Devon, op. cit., p.83.

This, along with nearby Brunswick Place and King William Terrace, were further examples of aristocratic names bestowed on rather mean streets. They were, of course, nationally popular names, examples being found not only in London (King William IV Street was built in the City in 1829) but throughout the country; Bristol and Birmingham for example, had many.¹ It may, even subconsciously, have been a way of counteracting the meanness of the streets, or Exeter could merely have been following contemporary fashion. Whether or not the original Spiller's Lane influenced the others in the bestowal of family names on streets is impossible to say; again, it may have been a fashion. In the 1830s Newtown was commenced. This was intended to be a community of working-class houses, although it was not actually completed until the end of the century. By 1841 only a few streets had been partially completed, but nevertheless their names are of interest. Sandford Street was named because it was built on land formerly owned by Sandford's Charity. William Sandford was one of Exeter's great merchants in the 1670s, acquiring the title of 'Esquire' whilst still a grocer.² The origin of John Street East is not verifiable, but the land on which this was built belonged to John Sclater, nurseryman, who had a son John. As Newtown was known originally as Sclater's Town but subsequently became Newtown, it might well be that the family had at least ensured some permanent recognition.³ In the early days of its inception the only other name used on Newtown's streets was Clifton, and there were Clifton Street and Clifton Road, which eventually became part of Clifton Hill where there was Clifton Place. This too was a popular name. Whether it was deliberately chosen for its meaning 'tun on a hill or hill slope' (appropriate here) or whether it was selected by a person with connections or liking for the Bristol suburb of Clifton is not known.⁴ Although there are too few

¹ E. Ekwall, Street-Names of the City of London, 1965 edn, p.87.
Basil Cottle, Names, 1983, p.182; McKenna, op. cit.
passim.

² Wood's Map, 1840; Hoskins, IT&P, p.118

³ Wood's Map, 1840.

⁴ Ekwall, DEPN, p.107.

names for any distinct patterns to emerge in the two particular working-class areas, two factors are worth noting. All references to the original nursery gardens either disappeared quickly, as in the case of Sclater's, or with Coxe's Gardens, on which the Sidwell Street/Paris Street houses were built, remained unacknowledged. However, the second point of interest is the retaining in several cases of family names, often with local associations, as street names.

The middle-class suburb of St. Leonard's was built on land that was once part of the Mount Radford estate and that name, together with the name of the parish - St. Leonard's - were prominent on roads that were built here during the first phase of development to 1841. The original name of a large portion of this land had been St. Leonard's Mount, but when Laurence Radford bought the site in 1570 he built a house which he named Radford Place. John Baring acquired the property in 1770 and it became Mount Radford. The house remained, with this name, until 1827 when the Hoopers bought part of the ground and built on it.¹ The names of the roads in the heart of the new suburb were fairly predictable: Upper and Lower Mount Radford Terrace, Mount Radford Square, St. Leonard's Terrace and St. Leonard's Crescent. The use of 'square' was unusual for Exeter and, in this case, singularly inappropriate. It was a group of very small working-class houses, totally alien to the grandeur of the surroundings.² Coombe Leonard (OE cumb - a narrow valley) was a little unusual. This is a particularly common element in place-names in the south-west and there was a Coombe Street in the city (Cumstrete 1256) which lay in a valley and therefore had a logical name.³ Coombe Leonard dips slightly southwards but there is little evidence of a valley. In fact Coombe Leonard and its parallel neighbour, Mount Radford Terrace, followed the former paths or

¹ Worthy, *op. cit.*, p.68; DRO PW/115 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.202; DRO PW/116 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.19.

² DRO Tithe Map and Apportionment for St. Leonard's, 1841.

³ Ekwall, *DEPN.* p.113; *EPNS, PND*, Vol.VIII, Part I, p.22.

carriage drives across what had been Lodge Field adjacent to the house.¹ Evidently both names were unsatisfactory as they were altered in later years. Most of the other road names followed contemporary fashion: Albion Terrace, Albert Terrace, Bellevue Place and Claremont Terrace. Bellevue Place was appropriate as its outlook was over open fields towards the river or the wooded grounds of very large houses. Claremont is less easy to define. For almost two hundred years this has been a very popular name, both for road and house names. It has overtones of aristocracy and probably is derived from Claremont, Surrey, the property bought and named in 1714 by the Earl of Clare. This name was also selected when Lawn Home Field, adjacent to Mount Radford House, became the site for one very large house and five slightly smaller ones - Claremont Grove.² Thus in naming the new roads of St. Leonard's the old field names were largely ignored and instead great emphasis was laid on the name of the parish and its associations with Mount Radford. In some respects the street names of middle-class St. Leonard's and working-class St. Sidwell's bore similarities in their acquisition of names with aristocratic connections - Claremont, Russell: in other respects they differed. St. Sidwell's had no great house to commemorate and relied more on local family names whereas, in spite of their importance not only to the immediate area but to Exeter as a whole, St. Leonard's had no reference to the Baring family. St. Leonard's followed the fashion for patriotic names in Albion Terrace and Albert Terrace, but perhaps had more 'rustic' names than St. Sidwell's - Claremont Grove, Bellevue, Mount Radford; the last two eminently suitable for roads located on high ground.

¹ Coldridge, Survey, 1816, op. cit.

² G.A. Underwood, Lithographic Plan of the Town of Cheltenham, 1820, located at Cheltenham Local History Library; Ekwall, DEPN, p.104; Coldridge, op. cit.

Suburban Street Names of the Second Half of the Century

During the first forty years of the nineteenth century both the population and the housing stock of the suburbs had increased considerably: the population by 93.5% and the number of houses had more than doubled. (Table 1) Hence there were many new streets. The next four decades was a period of far less rapid expansion. Apart from a 50% increase in the number of houses in St. Leonard's between 1841 and 1851 (from 178 to 267) it was not until the last quarter of the century that suburban expansion again took place on a large scale.¹ Thus many of the new street names in this section are likely to reflect the fashions of the late nineteenth century. Representative samples will be taken to determine the pattern of street naming during the second half of the century.

With the increase in the number of streets and responsibilities appertaining thereto, the City Council appointed a Streets Committee in 1867, an event important to this study as it had power to name any street or road within its area.² Over the years this committee made changes to existing street names, although the reasons for making changes or selecting particular names are not recorded unless, as, on occasion, the suggested name was already in existence elsewhere in the city or suburbs. A number of changes were made to streets whose original name contained the word 'Lane'. Pound Lane, Cross Lane and Workhouse Lane were all changed in 1868.³ Maybe the new committee felt that 'lane' had a slightly derogatory air to it, an image not appropriate to an improved thoroughfare, although perhaps some residents would have preferred the old name in some

¹ Census, 1801- 1901.

² DRO ECA Book 510 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 21.8.1867.

³ Ibid. 7.3.1868, 18.4.1868.

cases. Pound Lane, which had originally contained a cattle pound, became Richmond Road by the 1890s, a name that was probably generally acceptable as there appears to be no particular reason for its choice.¹ On the eastern edge of Exeter's suburbs Workhouse Lane and Cross Lane provided access from Heavitree village to Pennsylvania. Once the building of middle-class houses commenced in the 1860s in the Workhouse Lane area its name was changed to Polsloe Road, obviously to give the area a better image. The new name was appropriate as Polsloe Park (Polesleuga - Poll's marsh) was at its northern end and this had recently been sold for development.² Retaining the original name of the park in a road ensured that it survived even though the former parkland became smothered with houses. Cross Lane became Mount Pleasant Road, another name taken from the locality.³ These two names, both of which were selected for sound reasons, may have been chosen to link these new developments firmly with the existing neighbourhood and ensure that older names did not die out. The elimination of the rural overtones implied in 'lane' is in complete contrast to present-day policy when any connection with rurality is welcome and efforts are made in newly-developing suburbs to retain connections with the countryside. Hence streets of modern suburban houses in Exeter bear names such as Barley Farm Road, High Meadows and Green Lane to create an illusion for residents of living in the country but enjoying all the amenities of suburbia.

In common with many other towns and cities throughout the country names associated with royalty proliferated. In May 1848 a statue was erected to the Queen in Exeter's elegant shopping street, Queen Street, and a smart terrace built at its northern end in the 1840s was named Queen's Terrace.⁴ In Heavitree Regent's Park,

¹ Chamber Map Book, *op. cit.*; HSI.

² Wood's Map, 1840; DRO ECA Book 510 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 18.4.1868; EPNS, PND, Vol. IX, Part II; p.440.

³ DRO ECA Book 510 9/1 Streets Committee Minutes, 18.4.1868.

⁴ EFP, 25.5.1848; DOE, pp.224-5.

built in the mid-1840s, became the first of at least five streets to be named after the Prince Regent.¹ The 'Regency' period was long since over, but it seems that there was still a desire to have a lasting reminder of that age of elegant architecture and, in fact, building in the old classical traditions continued in Exeter well into the Victorian era. However, apart from Regent's Park which had large, imposing middle-class houses, most of the streets named after the Regent were of ordinary working-class houses and indeed Regent Square, built in 1883, was a cluster of sixty tiny cottages huddled together, without rear entrances or front gardens, and with nothing suggesting either elegance or Regency architecture about them at all. In such cases the name Regent was not chosen because it was appropriate to a particular style of architecture. If it had been so it might have been classed as a 'reminiscent' name. Leicester's Regent Road was laid out in the 1870s, but this was a continuation of the much older Regent Street; thus when the name Regent Road was adopted for the whole street between 1890 and 1894 there was a historic reason for the choice.² There seem to be no very good reasons for the use of Regent on Exeter roads built in the second half of the nineteenth century. A possible explanation for the one in St. Thomas's is that the name had royal connections and therefore might have been thought to match its neighbours Queen's Road, Prince's Square, Prince's Street North and Prince's Street South.³ Mr John Ellis, the builder of Regent's Square, might have thought a royal name would enhance his low-grade development.⁴ As has been shown, Exeter was not an innovator and there were times when the municipal authorities were reluctant to adopt modern ideas; perhaps this was an example of a desire to retain for as long as possible links with the past.

Much more topical and appropriate was the use of the name Victoria. Some streets bearing this name have already been

¹ Falla, *op. cit.*, p.23.

² Bennett, *op. cit.*, p.21.

³ OS Map, 1:2500, 1890, LXXX.10.

⁴ Falla, *op. cit.*, p.34.

mentioned. In later years others followed. St. Leonard's had a Victoria Terrace and in 1850 there was a Victoria Park.¹ This manifestation of loyalty to the Queen continued. By the time suburban development began in Lion's Holt in 1867 Prince Albert had died and the Queen participated less in public life; nevertheless popular fascination and devotion continued to be expressed and the first suburban road in Lion's Holt was named Victoria Road.² A few years later when the nearby Springfield Estate was built there was a Victoria Street. Prince Albert died in 1861 but streets throughout the country continued to be named in his memory for several decades. Manchester eventually had 57 so named; Birmingham 40 and Liverpool 12. When the new City of Stoke-on-Trent was formed in 1950 encompassing the five towns of the Potteries, the nine thoroughfares named Albert caused such confusion that several had to be re-named.³ The name Albert Terrace/Place/Street is often associated with austere rows of small, flat-windowed artisans' houses without front gardens. Good examples, built around 1877, exist in Stafford and Stone. Exeter's last Albert Street was of a similar type. It is not easy to explain this association. Perhaps the popularity of the name coincided with the large numbers of this type of property being built at the time. It appears that such association did not suit the middle-class residents of St. Leonard's for when Albert Terrace, a row of elegant town houses, was extended and more large houses were built along the road, the residents requested that the name be changed to Lyndhurst Road - a pleasant, rural-sounding name, but one with no obvious connections with St. Leonard's.⁴ In the second half of the nineteenth century interest in the names of other members of the royal family became manifest countrywide. Following the marriage in 1863 of Edward, Prince of Wales, and Princess Alexandra

¹ Rapkin's Map of Exeter, 1850.

² BCI.

³ Geographers' A-Z Street Indexes: Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool, 1986, n.p.;
City of Stoke-on-Trent, Complete List of Streets Re-Named, 1950, p.1

⁴ DRO ECA Bk 514 9/5 Streets Committee Minutes, 19.2.1880.

of Denmark, a road across the Barn Field hitherto unnamed became Denmark Road and a terrace off Blackboy Road was named Alexandra Terrace.¹ Examples of this source could be found elsewhere: Dorchester had an Alexandra Terrace and a Prince of Wales Road.² In Exeter, however, although there were several roads and terraces named Prince's, neither the names Edward nor Prince of Wales appeared as such on street name plates in the nineteenth century. The last of the roads to be named after royalty for many years were built in St. Thomas's at the end of the nineteenth century: Victoria Street and King's Road, although both these names were soon changed and it seemed that the era of naming streets after royalty was coming to an end, at least for the time being.³

Throughout the century names connected with royalty continued to be chosen, as did those which immediately suggested aristocratic connections. Frequently such roads or streets were themselves in direct social contrast to their appellations. It is not possible to establish exactly why such names were chosen and it is difficult to account for their choice other than current fashion. Many such names were connected with the elegant terraces and squares built in London during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and were copied throughout the country, although it is curious that rather grand names should be selected for what were usually poor quality groups of houses. Such properties were more likely to be let than sold, but perhaps the 'right address' was still important. The many Regent names, both in Exeter and in other parts of the country, could fall into the category of copying fashionable London streets. In the case of Exeter's Cavendish Road, it is suggested that the name was selected to match those of its neighbours and perhaps to disguise the fact that it was totally out of keeping with

¹ Rapkin's Map, 1850; HSI.

² Kelly's Directory of Dorsetshire, 1895, p.72.

³ DRO ECA Book 512 9/4 Streets Committee Minutes, 8.4.1876.

those in its immediate vicinity. Cavendish Road was built in the 1880s and is an extremely narrow cul-de-sac of tiny terrace houses, without front gardens, leading off the very superior Mont-le-Grand, with Regent's Park close by. By why Cavendish? It could have been after the fashionable London square or possibly from the family name of the Dukes of Devonshire, but as their family seat is Chatsworth in Derbyshire this seems a very tenuous link.¹ Albany Place, a short row of small houses located behind St. Thomas's railway station, also had a name which suggested aristocracy. Again it could have been copied from London or it may have taken its name directly from Leopold, Duke of Albany, a younger son of Queen Victoria, in keeping with Exeter's vogue for names connected with royalty.² Carlton Terrace, which lay in front of Veitch's Royal Nurseries, was a much more superior row and its name was no doubt associated with that of the magnificent Carlton House Terrace, built on the site of Carlton House which had been abandoned as a London residence by the Prince of Wales in 1827. This derivation is assumed to be the most likely, as the name bears no relation to the former owner of the land, Samuel Kingdon.³ It seems ironic that where apparently two streets were named after one of Devon's great landowning families, the Russells, both should be of working-class houses - Russell Terrace in Little Silver, home of railway workers, and Russell Street in St. Sidwell's, abode of labourers, blacksmiths, ostlers and those in similar employ.⁴ There are many examples throughout the country of working-class streets bearing the Russell name: for example Russell Street, Stafford, was built to house railway workers; Russell Street in the central area of Birmingham was built for artisans and tradesmen and as it was situated on the edge of the Gun Quarter, some of its houses were

¹ Dictionary of National Biography, Part I, 1961 edn, p.218.

² Ibid., p.767.

³ S. Muthesius, The English Terraced House, 1982, p.7;

Wood's Map, 1840.

⁴ Besley, 1895, p.92.

converted into gun-making shops or factories.¹ The actual member of the Russell family after whom most of the streets were named was Lord John Russell and one possible reason for the choice might have been that under the prime ministership of this great Liberal statesmen the lot of women and children employed in factories was improved.² Although it has been suggested that many of the streets were named after aristocratic families, particularly those with local connections, the names of some, if not all, may well have merely followed a nineteenth century fashion for naming provincial streets after fashionable London ones. Although this is an interesting example of 'aspiration to grandeur' it does not seem to be entirely the answer because why were only certain street names selected? Why not a nationwide proliferation of Pall Mall, Hyde Park, Mayfair, Park Lane or Piccadilly? The link with royalty or aristocratic families is much more likely.

Several of Exeter's roads were dedicated to local benefactors, both contemporary and from a bygone era. Hele Road (originally Edinburgh Road, but changed in 1876) was named on account of the location there of Hele School, opened in 1849 for tradesmen's children as a result of a legacy left by Elize Hele in 1632. Nearby was Blackall Road, dedicated to Bishop Offspring Blackall to whom Exeter owes some of its charity schools.³ Mount Dinham was created in 1862 by John Dinham, a wealthy local tea dealer, on land originally known as Weare Cliff as it stood on a bluff high above the river.⁴ Landowners were a source of a number of Exeter's street names; some have already been mentioned. Chichester Mews was built in 1842 on land owned by Robert Chichester, and Thornton Hill, built

¹ Information supplied by the Local Studies Librarian, City of Birmingham Reference Library. 3.12.1986.

² Asa Briggs, A Social History of England, 1983, p.199.

³ DRO ECA Book 512 9/13 Streets Committee Minutes, 12.2.1876; White's Directory of Devonshire, 1893, p.351, p.177.

⁴ Kelly's Directory of Devonshire, 1893, p.177; DRO ECA Chamber Map Book, 1756, op. cit.

⁵ BCI; Caldwell, op. cit., p.5.

in 1905, was named after Richard Thornton, a merchant who bought the old Duryard Lodge, demolished it and built Streatham Hall on the site.¹ It is very surprising that Iron Sam Kingdon, landowner, prominent local politician and first mayor of the new regime following the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act, should not have been commemorated when other seemingly less prominent figures were.²

Exeter was naturally interested in the South African war where the Devonshire Regiment was fighting. People flocked to see the cinematograph pictures of the local hero, General Redvers Buller, in the midst of battle and Buller Road, Redvers Road and Ladysmith Road were named in commemoration. There was to have been a Pretoria Road, named from the capital of the Transvaal, but although the name appeared on a plan of the proposed extension to Polsloe Park, this was never built. After the death of General Gordon in 1885 at Khartoum, the Gordon Lamp was erected in his memory in Heavitree Road and Gordon Road, constructed in 1905, was probably named after him.³ As there was obvious interest in the relief of Khartoum, it is highly probable that Roberts Road on the Larkbeare Estate, built in 1889, was named after Lord Roberts, General Gordon's successor.⁴ Street names taken from other war heroes and battles came from previous eras - Trafalgar Place, Waterloo Place, Waterloo Road, Raleigh Road, Drake Road, Wellington Road and Nelson Road - even though the streets were not built until the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. In later years the horrors of war were too immediate and particularly so in Exeter which suffered extensive damage, for memories to be kept alive on street name-plates. Instead a number of the street names of modern Exeter honour the pioneers of space exploration.

¹ Caldwell, op. cit., p.5.

² DRO ECA B/31 Minute Book of the Council 1.1.1836.

³ Devon and Exeter Gazette, 14.1.1900; DRO M.17-18, Polsloe Road Building Estate: plan of proposed roads, n.d.; Falla, op. cit., p.18; BCI.

⁴ BCI.

It was noted earlier that the use of saints' names for street names was restricted to saints of local interest and this practice was continued throughout the century. St. Petrock's Terrace was named after a very ancient city church and parish; Upper and Lower Mount Radford Terraces became St. Leonard's Road, and St. Leonard's Avenue was constructed in 1895, both in St. Leonard's parish; St. James' Road and St. James' Terrace were built near the church of that name. Two further streets were dedicated to the alleged local saint, Sidwella, already discussed. The Polsloe Priory development gave rise to a set of names with religious overtones - Abbot's Road, Monkswell Road and Priory Road.¹

The importance of the view has already been discussed and the practice of naming terraces in particular with emphasis on their advantageous location was continued in names such as City View Terrace, Exe View Terrace, West View and South View Terraces. The site of the former Combs farm near the top of Old Tiverton Road became Prospect Park, this rather smart name probably being given to enhance the status of the road which was adjacent to an estate of small, working-class terrace houses.²

In view of the popularity of Devon families as a source for street names, it is somewhat surprising to find that when place-names were selected for street names there was very little interest shown in choosing the names of the many delightful and delightfully named Devon villages in the immediate surroundings. Bystock for a row of elegant houses built in 1845 and Newcombe for a short row in Heavitree were among the very few terraces to bear Devon place-names, although Haldon Road and Haldon View Terrace were perhaps almost inevitable as the Haldon range of hills can be seen from many parts of Exeter. When estates developed more prolifically towards the end of the nineteenth century and place-names were selected as a source for street naming, they were chosen from all over the country

¹ W.T. MacCaffrey, Exeter 1540-1640, 1958, Map of Exeter in the Early Seventeenth Century, (end pocket); BCI; O.S. Map, 1:2500, 2nd edition, 1905, LXXX.6.

² Wood's Map, 1840; DRO ECA Tithe Map of St. Sidwell's, 1842.

which suggests that the reasons for the choice were other than local interest. The most popular was York with five terraces, buildings or streets bearing this name. There were two Richmond Roads, but one was changed to Cleveland Street in 1888.¹ There was an Oxford Street, an Oxford Road and a Cambridge Street. However, it must be noted that all these names, apart from being the names of towns of historic interest, were also the names of aristocratic families. It is not apparent why Thurlow, Yeovil and Mansfield were chosen. Toronto Road, an overseas place-name on an estate largely named from politicians, is also a puzzle. The developers must have had specific reasons for their selection. By 1907 there were 48 streets bearing transferred place-names (12%) and there was evidence to suggest that they would play an important role as a source for street names in future decades as Looe Road, Elton Road and Rugby Road had already been commenced and would be followed by many more named after towns and villages throughout the country.²

Exeter was a non-industrialised country town and a few of its late nineteenth-century street names reflected rurality, although the age of deliberately giving a road a country-sounding name to balance its urban appearance had not yet arrived. The new suburban development was something to be proud of; as yet there was no need to make it 'sound rural' artificially. Exeter's suburbs were interspersed with open spaces; the countryside was very near at hand and the hills were in constant view. Even so, at the turn of the century some 6% of roads had names directly derived from nature; three came from roses - Roseland Crescent, Higher Roseland Terrace and Rosewood Terrace; but only one more specific flower was represented - Woodbine Terrace. A number of names referred to trees, in particular the elm which grew in abundance in the vicinity. Canopies of lofty elms were much prized to provide shade for pleasant walks for citizens. It is therefore not surprising to find at least four names incorporating the elm following the earlier preference for this tree. There were two Oakfield Roads, both built on land which probably contained oak

¹ DRO ECA St. Thomas UDC Minute Book, 7.11.1888.

² HSI.

trees; Sylvan Road was built adjacent to a small wooded park and Cedars Road had cedar trees in its vicinity.

All traces of many of Exeter's old buildings have gone but occasionally a street name will be a reminder of what once stood on the site. This is more likely to occur when modern streets are named because conservation and local history have become more important in recent years. There were, however, a few examples on some nineteenth-century Exeter street name-plates. Mount Radford Terrace has already been discussed. Larkbeare Road was built near the site of one of the two houses named Larkbeare in St. Leonard's. Barnardo Road commemorates an Elizabethan house of that name.¹ About 1700 an Exeter butcher built a barn and this led to Rowe's Barn Lane, but this became corrupted to Rosebarn Lane, thus losing the original source.² A number of field names were perpetuated: Fair Park Road on the site of Fair Park; Culverland Road near the area once known as Culverland, and Flowerpot in St. Thomas's (with Flowerpot Buildings nearby). Little is known of the origins of this very unusual name except that it was a very old field name.³ This area was one of nursery grounds for many years and it may have acquired its name on account of the trade. When Gaol Field was developed the name vanished: perhaps it was not thought fitting to retain it, although other towns have streets referring to their prisons; Stafford, for example, has both a Gaolgate and a Gaol Road. The first street to be built on Exeter's former Gaol Field was named Hoopern Street by the developer. To the north there was Higher Hoopern Farm and it has been suggested that this ancient name, first recorded in 1225, may mean "the place where barrel-hoops were made",

¹ C. Tozer, Map of the City of Exeter, 1792; F. Fuller, The History of St. Luke's College, Exeter, 1970, 4, p.868.

² Hoskins, 2000, p.147.

³ R.K. Dawson, Map of Exeter, c.1832; Wood's Map, 1840; Burnet-Morris Index located in the West Country Studies Library, Exeter.

so although a field name disappeared an ancient craft may well have been commemorated. In any case the name Gaol Field was not older than the eighteenth century, for the gaol was not built until 1794.¹ Springfield Road, part of the Springfield estate, was built on land through which the Longbrook stream ran. A map of 1832 suggests that several tributaries ran into the stream on this site which, although not marked as such on maps, may well have borne the local name of Spring Field.² Weirfield emerged onto the river bank just above Trew's Weir on land once known as Ware Meadow; Water Lane lay on the river bank in St. Thomas's adjacent to the Canal Basin. Well Street was named after the ancient spring associated with Saint Sidwell, and it contained Headwell Terrace; both were on or near a site marked "Sidwell Wells" on Roque's map of 1744.³ Velwell Road, built in 1907, took its name from an old spring that flowed here fealu-wielle (the pale brown spring).⁴ It would therefore seem that a number of meaningful and pleasant suburban street names were derived from water sources. Animals did not provide much inspiration. Apart from the older Lion's Holt and Horse Lane in the Friars, Exeter had a suburban Lion Terrace. This, however, may have related to a public house, but although there was a private house named Lion House in 1874, no trace of an inn of that name has so far been discovered.⁵ In general street names associated with animals tended to relate to marketable livestock and to be of streets in central areas: the Bull Ring, Birmingham; Pig Market Lane, Taunton; Horse Fair, Rugeley; Sheep Street, London, E.1. Exeter made little use of its markets as a source for street naming even in the central area.

Whereas a number of new 'courts' of recent date have been named from the old woollen trade - Shearmans Court, Weavers Court, Carders Court, Fullers Court for example - there were only two references in

¹ Besley, 1831, p.54.

² Dawson's Map, 1832.

³ J. Roque, Map of the City of Exeter, 1744.

⁴ BCI; Hoskins, 2000, p.150; Ekwall, DEPN, p.168.

⁵ Tozer's Map, 1792; Mortimer, op. cit., 1874, p.31.

the late nineteenth century to Exeter's once prosperous industry - Rackfield and Rack Street. Perhaps the loss was still too recent then but could be viewed more dispassionately by the latter part of the twentieth century, aided by an increasing interest in local history. There were, as may have been expected, very few references to any kind of industry: a Locomotive Terrace (but no Railway Street as in many towns - the railway companies built very few houses here). One old lane was known as Lime Kiln Lane for many years as it led down to the lime kilns on the river bank, but in December 1880 this was changed to Larkbeare Road, thus all reference to this old industry vanished.¹ There were, however, several roads named from educational sources: College Avenue and College Road were built adjacent to the teacher training college; there was a School Road in St. Thomas's, and Marlborough Road, St. Leonard's, took its name in all probability from a Marlborough College formerly located on this site. Such names added further emphasis to the importance of educational establishments to the prosperity of the area.² The name for the first Council houses to be built in Exeter came from a new source - Isca Road from the old Roman name for Exeter, Isca Dumuniorum. Unfortunately this idea of giving roads names of historical significance did not continue on other roads built in the vicinity of Isca Road. These merely followed local fashions: two came from landowners - Fords Road (probably from the adjacent Ford's nurseries) and Willey's Avenue. H.F. Willey was the founder of the nearby factory of Willey and Ford, gas meter manufacturers.³ The last of this group was Chamberlain Road. Whether this was after Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary at the outbreak of the Boer

¹ Rapkin's Map, 1850; DRO ECA Book 514 9/5 Streets Committee Minutes, 19.12.1880.

² O.S. Map, 1:2500, 2nd edition, 1905, LXXXI, 6; EEP, 25.10.1902.

³ EPNS, PND, Vol. VIII, Part I, p.20; DRO ECA G1/T7/12 18 Plan of Property Building Estate on Willey Land, n.d.; Hoskins, 2000, p.116.

War, or his elder son who was Chancellor of the Exchequer when the road was constructed is not recorded.¹ As Exeter had several roads named from people and places connected with the Boer War the former reason is the more likely.

Doubts have been expressed about the origin of some street names; two remain a mystery - Idol Lane, off Blackboy Road, and Sagona terrace, St. Sidwell's. Idol Lane does not appear to have been a misspelling of Idle Lane (although there was once an Idle Lane in the city centre whose name is thought possibly to mean 'vacant, empty, unused land'). Idol Lane contained several cottages and the name remained until the 1930s when the road was extended and renamed Jesmond Road. Sagona remains unidentifiable, although it was in use until the middle of the twentieth century.²

Patterns of Naming on the Larger Estates

The end of the nineteenth century saw the development of much larger estates than had been built in previous decades and these provide an opportunity for studying the patterns of naming in groups of streets built at approximately the same time. Was there an overall scheme? Did they match? Mention has already been made of the Polsloe Priory estate where the obvious choice was made of

¹ Concise Dictionary of National Biography, II, 1901-1950, 1961, p.81, p.82.

² EPNS, PND, Vol.VIII, Part I, p.23; Besley, 1894, p.55, p.93; BCI.

selecting names connected with a priory, although here only 50% of the names conformed. The nearby Polsloe Park estate - completed between 1875 and 1895 - displays no clear-cut pattern in names. (Fig. 26) Jubilee Road obviously related to a jubilee of Queen Victoria (although not the sixtieth one as the road was named before 1897). Commins Road was named after its builder who lived nearby at Polsloe House. He may well have chosen all the names on the estate as the Council did not take it over until 1902, even though it was completed several years prior to this.¹ St. John's Road may have been named on account of nearby St. John's Cottage, a cottage orné, built about 1840. St. Ann's Road was obviously selected on account of the ancient chapel of St. Ann, less than half a mile away.² Manston Road was probably a personal choice; there is a Manston Terrace in St. Leonard's, but nothing to suggest why a Dorset place-name was chosen. The Council encountered opposition from some house owners to the fixing of street name-plates to their houses and eventually the work had to be enforced under Section 64 of the Town Improvement Act, 1847.³ This suggests that the house owners on this estate were not particularly happy with this somewhat ill-assorted selection of names.

There was, however, some pattern to the naming of a third estate in this vicinity - the Mount Pleasant estate, built in the 1890s.⁴ (Fig. 27) This was a new trend in naming and one which has continued ever since. There was a spine road with three roads leading off it all named after national figures: Salisbury and Rosebery (both Prime Ministers); Iddesleigh (although the name of a Devon village, it was more likely to have been chosen because Sir Stafford Northcote, leading Exeter politician, whose inspiration resulted in University College of the Southwest, became first Earl of Iddesleigh in 1885).⁵

¹ BCI; Besley, 1894, p.80; HSI.

² DOE, p.213; Q.S. Map, 1:2500, LXXX,6, 2nd edition, 1905.

³ DRO Heavitree Streets Committee Minutes, 8.6.1897, 12.7.1897.

⁴ BCI.

⁵ Hoskins, Devon, op. cit., p.414.

and Herschell, a road probably named after the astronomer. These roads led into Elmside, which contained a large house named Elmside House, probably there before the road was built up - hence the name of the road and the whole estate. Two other roads on this estate were separated from the others by a copse and their names did not fit into the pattern - May Street and Toronto Road, probably personal selections of the builder; May could have been his wife's name.

The estates built in St. Thomas's in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth had a distinct naming pattern and one encountered before. St. Thomas's had a reputation of a less fashionable, working-class district and many of its crowded streets of tightly-packed cottages bore names of the great county families. Between 1875 and 1895 five streets of very small terrace houses were built off the elegant Church Road, one of St. Thomas's very few rows of stylish town houses. Three of these had names of aristocratic families - Oxford, Beaufort and Cecil (originally Union Terrace).² (Fig. 30) The pattern continued. Off Alphington Road a group of four streets was built, all with names of influential families: Ebrington, Courtenay, Fortescue and Percy. The preference for naming roads after people was particularly marked in St. Thomas's. In fact there were occasions when other categories of names were chosen but subsequently changed. For example, on a small estate near the railway station three of the five streets bore place-names - Cleveland, Sunderland and Richmond, names probably selected by a person with North of England connections, although Cleveland Street could possibly have been named after Stephen G. Cleveland, President of the United States for two non-consecutive terms in the late nineteenth century.³ In November 1888 St. Thomas's Highway Committee decided for reasons unrecorded to change

¹ Q.S. Map, 1:2500, LXXX.6, 2nd edition, 1905.

² HSI; Q.S. Map, 1:2500, LXXX.10, 1890.

³ A. Johnson and D. Malone (eds), Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. IV, 1930, p.205.

all the five street names.¹ The north-country names would not have conjured up much to the St. Thomas's dweller; there may even have been some local protest. For whatever reason the streets acquired new names: Cleveland Street became Buller Road; Sunderland Street became Redvers Road. Both would have been familiar locally as they were doubtless inspired by patriotism. The name Cleveland was not, however, dispensed with which possibly adds weight to the speculative Presidential connection; it replaced Richmond. The two remaining streets already had names with aristocratic connections but these were nevertheless altered. Victoria Street became Albion Street and Russell Street became Clinton Street, the latter change merely involving a switch from the name of one distinguished Devon family to another. Lord Clinton was formerly one of the Fortescues, owners of a large estate in Devon and prominent for centuries in both county and national affairs. The Bullers owned some 508 acres in St. Thomas's in 1838.²

When the Parkhouse estate on St. Thomas's southern suburban edge was commenced in 1905 the same pattern of basing street names on family names continued for some of the streets. Holland Road is presumably from the Holland family whose seat was Bowhill, Dunsford Hill, St. Thomas's, in medieval times.³ The name of Powderham Road had local connections with Powderham Castle, near Exeter, home of the Earls of Devon; Duckworth Road was no doubt named after Sir John Duckworth, Bart. of Weire House near Exeter, one of the two MPs for the city in 1852, and Coleridge Road most probably had as its source John Duke Coleridge, the future Lord Chief Justice, elected (along with Lord Edward Courtney) MP for Exeter in 1865.⁴ Although he was the great-nephew of the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, it was not until the 1930s that Exeter began to name roads after poets.

¹ DRO ECA St. Thomas's Highway Committee Minutes, 7.11.1888.

² Hoskins, *Devon*, *op. cit.*, p.88; DRO ECA Tithe Map and Apportionment for St. Thomas's, 1838.

³ D. Portman, *Exeter Houses 1400-1700*, 1966, p.61.

⁴ Hoskins, *Devon*, *op. cit.*, p.466; Newton, *VE*, pp.111, 193, 126.

Churchill Road also had a name with local historical connections as in the nearby parish of Broad Clyst is Churchill farm, first recorded in the fourteenth century, and from which the politically important family of Churchill are thought to have taken their name as early as the twelfth century. It is, of course, possible that this is a misinterpretation. The road does slope and it is within a quarter of a mile of the parish church, but Churchill is not written as two separate words and there is nothing to suggest that this area was known as Church Hill, whereas some two hundred yards to the south of this road is Church Path Road built on land which formed part of an old footpath leading across to the church known as Churchfield Path. The spine road on the Parkhouse Estate is Barton Road whose obvious derivation is Cowick Barton as the road terminates on part of the Cowick Barton estate. Parkhouse Road itself is on the site of the old Park House.¹ The only road without immediately obvious local connections is Shaftesbury Road, and whilst it could have been taken from the Dorset place name or been another London imitation, the more likely derivation is from the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, nineteenth-century philanthropist and social reformer, after whom many roads were named throughout the country. In naming the roads of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century St. Thomas's there was a marked respect for both local and county aristocracy.

The Larkbeare estate, built on the site of the ancient mansion known as Larkbeare, had five streets of working men's dwellings and this estate too appears to follow the pattern of deriving its street names from people, although it has not been possible to authenticate all the sources.² There are two "streets" and three "roads" which are longer than the streets, although all except 17 of the 239 dwellings were of the same size so that "street" did not imply poorer quality houses. The origins of the names of the roads -

¹ Hoskins, *Devon*, *op. cit.*, p.351; DRO Tithe Map for St. Thomas, 1838; *Q.S. Map*, 1:500, 2nd edition, 1904., LXXX.XCII NW.

² Wood's *Map*, 1840; *Q.S. Map*, 1:2500, 2nd edition, 1905, LXXX.6, L.XXX.10.

Radford, Temple and Roberts - are perhaps more easy to determine than those of the streets. The estate was built in 1889 for D.Radford of Mount Tavy, Tavistock, and the name of Radford Road was originally proposed as Mount Radford Road because it lead directly into the Mount Radford estate. However, it was felt that confusion might arise and the shorter name Radford Road was sanctioned. This name did not, therefore, as might at first be supposed, stem directly from the estate owner's name; it was perhaps a fortuitous coincidence. There was another possible angle. Radford Road contained tightly packed working-class houses and Mount Radford was still largely middle-class. It was feared that there would be objections to the building of lower-class dwellings in the vicinity and that the large houses in the neighbourhood would depreciate in value, so although nothing was recorded as such, there may have been an unwillingness to have the full name Mount Radford linked so firmly and permanently with a street of much poorer quality houses intended for a lower social class.¹ Temple Road was probably named either after Bishop Temple who became Bishop of Exeter in 1869 and subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury in 1896, or his sister who was a female leader in the city's public life in Victorian times.² The origin of Roberts Road is more difficult to determine. Although there was a C.T.K. Roberts on the City Council in the 1890s, in view of Exeter's close connections and interest in the South African war, Roberts Road was probably named in honour of Lord Roberts who, as Commander-in-Chief, was instrumental in making possible the annexation of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.³ It is even less easy to determine the sources for the names of Franklin Street and Dean Street. Franklin could have been named for Sir John Franklin who commanded the expedition to the North West passage and subsequently perished, but this does not fit in with the rest of the names.⁴ The spelling does not coincide with the old mansion

¹ DRO ECA Streets Committee Minutes, 21.1.1888, 25.1.1888; DRO PW/117 Parish Records of St.Leonard's, p.130.

² Newton, *VE*, pp. 339, 176, 223.

³ Concise Dictionary of National Biography, Part II, *op. cit.*, p.367.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Part I to 1900, 1961 edn, p.464.

Franklyn in St. Thomas's after which the modern Franklyn Drive is named. There was an F. Franklin, coachbuilder, who was on the City Council between 1868 and 1877, but this was more than a decade before the road was named.¹ Dean Street could just possibly refer to Dean Prior, near Totnes, home of Robert Herrick the sixteenth-century poet, but again it does not fit in with the pattern, neither would it be particularly appropriate as Herrick did not like Devon, referring to it as "this dull Devonshire".² In all probability the references are purely local and the sources have vanished.

Another estate that consisted entirely of working-class houses was one, already briefly mentioned, in St. Sidwell's that eventually became known as Newtown. When it was commenced in the 1830s it was known as Sclater's Town, as its first streets were built on part of Sclater's nurseries. The appellation of "town" suggested that it was not seen as just another suburban expansion, but rather as a separate community. It took over half a century to complete, but by the 1890s it was being referred to as Newtown which again suggests a separate community; it had its own shops, church, schools and public houses.³ Such a community was by no means uncommon; for instance Stafford had its Newtown built largely for railwaymen and that too had shops, public houses, a school and a church all within close proximity to the railway station and goods yard.⁴ Leicester had its Newtown behind the prison. New streets in the second phase of Exeter's Newtown followed the pattern of naming streets after people, although here, unlike in St. Thomas's, the families were not aristocratic ones. Two streets were named after one landowner,

¹ DRO ECA 510 9/1 Council Minutes 1868-77 *passim*.

² Robert Herrick, *Discontents in Devon*, F.W. Moorman (ed.) *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*, 1947 edn, p.19.

³ Wood's *Map*, 1840; Exeter City Council, *Newtown Project Report*, 1967; *O.S. Map*, 1:2500, 1905 2nd edition, LXXX.6.

⁴ *Victoria County History for the County of Stafford*, Vol. VI, 1967, p.195; Staffs. Record Office, D1323/H/10, Stafford Borough Extension Bill, Minutes of Evidence, 1876, p.111.

Codrington Street and Parr Street, after N. Codrington Parr Esq. Why he should have been singled out is not known; owners of adjacent land such as J.C. Wilcocks and William Nation were disregarded.¹

In Streets Broad and Narrow

In general the word 'street' as an overall term of reference has been used throughout this chapter to include all thoroughfares whether they were actually named 'street', 'road', 'avenue', 'terrace', 'place', 'row' or similar compound. The most frequently used words in the actual names of the major streets were 'street', 'road', 'terrace' and 'place'. Is there any important difference between 'street' and 'road'? The definition of 'road' is a line of communication between places for the use of foot passengers, riders and vehicles. A 'street' is a town or village road. (OE straet from Latin strata meaning 'a road' and 'a street in town'). This implies that a 'street' belongs more properly to a town. The majority of early street names in the city of London were compounds with the words 'street' and 'lane' as second members; there was an occasional 'row' but no 'road'.² What was the pattern in Exeter? In the central area in 1831 there were three times as many 'streets' as 'roads', whereas in the suburbs at the same time there were twice as many 'roads' as 'streets'.³ This suggests that the use of 'street' was more likely to be found on old streets close to the city centre, but when new streets were developed in the suburbs the pattern altered. This trend continued in the latter half of the nineteenth century, so that by 1895 there were 53 suburban 'roads' to 44 'streets' and the only area where the 'streets' equalled the 'roads' was the working-class district of St. Thomas's where the development that took place was quite close to the central core. In the remaining suburban areas the proportion was approximately 49

¹ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1905, 2nd edn, LXXX.6.

² E. Ekwall, Street-Names of the City of London, 1965 edn, p.1.

³ Besley, 1831, pp.165-168.

'roads' to 29 'streets'.' Are there any implications in the choice of either 'street' or 'road'? There are several examples which suggest that the further away from the central area and the less densely built up the more likely is the 'street' to be named 'road'. Alphington Street, St. Thomas's, leads from the river crossing southwards; once under the railway bridge it becomes Alphington Road and its character changes completely, having better-class, bigger houses in larger gardens. Similarly nearby Okehampton Street leads westward from the river bridge and contains working-class houses; once under the railway bridge it becomes Okehampton Road and in 1894 it contained a number of named villas.² In the southern sector of the city Magdalen Street is named as such until it begins to climb out to the parish boundary of St. Leonard and then it becomes Magdalen Road and contains much larger houses.³ This does therefore suggest that a 'street' may well be of poorer quality houses, and possibly narrower, than a 'road'. Queen's Road, St. Thomas's contained named villas in the late nineteenth century; its parallel road was Regent Street which housed people such as gardeners, carpenters and railway workers.⁴ In some circumstances the terms 'road' and 'street' were used to imply social segregation. However, this demarcation did not apply in all cases: Springfield Road and Victoria Street contain similar houses.⁵ Sixteen new streets were constructed during the first seven years of the twentieth century. Ten were 'roads' and only one was a 'street' and this was close to the industrial zone of St. Thomas's.⁶

Well over a hundred 'streets' had other combinations of names, for example lane, park, crescent, grove, place and terrace. In 1831 the use of the 'place' was very marked in the suburbs; there were at

¹ Besley, 1894, *passim*; HSI.

² Besley, 1894, pp.129-130, 141; O.S. Map, 1:2500, 1890, LXXX.10.

³ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 2nd edition, 1905, LXXX.6.

⁴ Census, 1881; Besley, 1894, p.144.

⁵ O.S. Map, 1:2500, 2nd edition, 1905, LXXX.6.

⁶ BCI.

least 44 examples (all within other named streets or roads) and only marginally fewer by the turn of the century.¹ They differed widely both in social class and physical structure. For example, Baring Place was a straight, middle-class row on the main Heavitree Road; similarly, nearby Higher Summerland Place was a fine row of large houses also on the main road. The inclusion of 'place' in their names may have been intended to impart a sense of cohesion and distinction. The same cannot be said of all 'places'. The working-class 'places' were, in some cases, small groups of houses built off other streets - Verney Place and Portland Place in St. Sidwell's for example.² Some, of course, may have been built by one single builder who wished them to be seen as a separate entity. Muthesius remarks that "It is odd that the term 'terrace' as such has never really been fully accepted".³ Its dictionary definition implies a piece of elevated ground or a row of houses on a level above the general surface. Over the years it has often been used on a row of houses uniform in style, whether raised above the level of the roadway or not. This term found much favour in suburban Exeter. In 1831 there were at least 13 'terraces', all within other named roads, for example St. Ann's Terrace in Old Tiverton Road. It probably came to imply a unit of cohesion if not of absolutely identical design. If one particular builder completed a short row of houses - William Chesterman built the six houses that comprise St. Ann's Terrace in 1821 - then he might have allotted it a separate name, especially if at the time it stood alone as some, although not all, did. The fashion for the use of the word 'terrace' continued in the suburbs so that by the end of the nineteenth century there were some 55 named terraces.⁴

It has already been noted that Exeter was proud of its promenades of shady trees and stands of elms and a number of the

¹ Besley, 1831, pp.165-168; 1894 *passim*; BCI.

² Rapkin's Map, 1850.

³ S. Muthesius, *The English Terraced House*, 1982, p.14.

⁴ Besley, 1831, pp.165-168; wall plaque; Besley, 1894, *passim*; BCI.

smart early nineteenth-century crescents had their own private gardens for the use of residents, but avenue-planting as such was not a regular feature of suburban housing estates during the first half of the nineteenth century. It appears to have been introduced (in London at least) in 1851 by a speculative builder in Chelsea and gained the support of the Prince Consort, although the idea was not immediately adopted by all estate developers. Some perhaps realized the difficulties that would quickly be experienced by large overhanging trees that would obstruct traffic and block light. Trees took up space. Many of Exeter's late nineteenth-century streets were too narrow for such decoration. However, 'avenues' had appeared by the 1890s and obviously proved popular as one quarter of the new streets constructed in the first seven years of the twentieth century were avenues, although the names chosen were not necessarily 'rural'.¹ Perhaps now that many acres of once-green fields had vanished beneath bricks and mortar there was a subconscious desire to introduce a more rural atmosphere and to counteract the extreme austerity of the rather grim crowded streets that were appearing in all quarters of suburban Exeter. The provision of a private garden for the exclusive use of residents was no longer practical. Apart from cost, there were far too many people; hence Hillside Avenue, Willey's Avenue and College Avenue were examples of the many tree-lined streets that would follow in later years on less densely built-up land with streets of sufficient width to accommodate tree planting.

The names of Exeter streets that have been discussed represent a major proportion of those chosen between 1800 and 1907 and include all those of significance. It has been seen that these names fall into distinct groups (Table 6) and that the choice of certain of these groups in relation to their locality is of some interest. Many of the naming patterns of Exeter's new suburban streets are similar to those found in other parts of the country. Can it be said that the street names of a locality match the social aspirations of its

¹ A.M. Edwards, The Design of Suburbia, 1981, p.36; BCI.

inhabitants or potential inhabitants? In certain areas this would seem to be so. Streets of large houses designed to attract the prosperous often bore names associated with wealth and prosperity. Heavitree, a much favoured district, began to develop at the beginning of the nineteenth century with houses destined for the prosperous middle class. Some of these early groups of houses were named from the great Baring family, wealthy merchant bankers, who for over half a century owned the manor of Heavitree, the Mount Radford estate and almost the whole parish of St. Leonard's. Sir Thomas Baring sold most of the estate to various builders in the early part of the nineteenth century and elegant terraces such as Baring Crescent and Baring Place were built.¹ It was doubtless considered logical to name them after the former landowner, but this was probably not the only reason. The name Baring was synonymous with prosperity and wealth; to live in a road linked by name to such an eminent family might have been thought an attractive proposition to potential residents. By contrast, it is most noticeable that although the locally well-known building family of Hoopers was responsible for constructing many of the fine houses in Exeter's early nineteenth-century suburbs (together with most of the public buildings of the period, including the splendid Higher Market), it had no streets whatsoever named after it. The only brief acknowledgement was that Higher Summerland Place was known as Hoopers Buildings for a short period immediately after it was built.² Were Hoopers considered not sufficiently grand? Streets named after builders were usually located in working-class districts, for example Gatty's Court and Gill's Buildings in St. Sidwell's. Certainly by comparison with the superior-sounding names of Mont-le-Grand, Regent's Park, Grosvenor Place and Carlton Terrace, a name such as Hoopers Road would not perhaps convey the same image, particularly in an area such as Heavitree which apparently sought to

¹ DRO Baring Estate Papers, Box 116; DRO B/E 5/21 1-3; Leases 1818; DRO Indenture: Barings and Hoopers, 25.8.1823; DRO B/ B/E 5/20 Lease, 1822.

² P. Hedgeland, Map of Exeter, 1806.

enhance its reputation by selecting names such as Prospect Place and Salutory Mount. In the case of Cavendish Road, perhaps this aristocratic family name sought to disguise the fact that in the midst of the splendour of Bicton Place and Mont-le-Grand this row of tiny and vastly inferior dwellings had been built. Proof that the "right" name was important comes with the application of Mr. Marks, owner of property in Spiller Street and Nelson Place, for a street name change. Hitherto this had been an area notorious for its inhabitants, but Mr. Marks had ejected all tenants of questionable character and erected commodious livery stables, thereby hoping that the character of the neighbourhood would have been improved and in May 1895 he requested the Streets Committee to change the name of Spiller Street to Belgrave Road. Spiller Street (or Lane) dated back to at least 1744 if not before, but obviously the Streets Committee felt the suggested name would improve the area and the request was granted.¹ Thus the image of an area was thought to be enhanced, but at the expense of losing a name which was part of Exeter's eighteenth-century history. In its place was a name associated with the Duke of Westminster's magnificent Regency terraces in London, but these bore no relationship to the working-class Spiller Street, however much improved, and the name had no local connections. The image conveyed by a street name was therefore considered to be all important. Whether the Committee felt that they had, in the past, made a mistake in refusing to change a name is not known, but in 1883, some twelve years earlier, a person interested in the Paris Street neighbourhood requested that the name of Morgan's Square be altered to "Victoria Cottages or some other name". In this instance the Committee felt that as the name was a long-standing one they were not prepared to sanction a change.² At the time there were several groups of houses and streets named Victoria and this may have been a contributory factor to the Committee's refusal. Had a more distinctive name been suggested it might have been allowed.

¹ DRO ECA 9/8 Streets Committee Minutes, 22.5.1895; Roque's Map, 1744.

² DRO ECA Book No. 515 9/6 Streets Committee Minutes, 19.4.1883.

The predominant source for naming streets in Exeter during the nineteenth century seems to have been the names of people, particularly those of royalty and the aristocracy in a variety of forms. (Table 6) The name Regent was still being chosen more than half a century after the end of the Regency period. Popular loyalty to the royal family and the establishment was more marked than it is today, but at the same time this persistence in looking backwards is perhaps indicative in a town that was not expanding rapidly, not developing new industries and was perhaps reluctant to accept change, particularly in areas such as transport and public amenities. Unlike many fashionable towns which have Royal Crescents and Royal Squares (Cheltenham, Bath and Brighton for example) Exeter had no streets named Royal and, in fact, never has had, even though several of the splendid terraces were quite worthy of the name. Perhaps this was because Exeter had not been graced for many years by royal visitors. Patriotic enthusiasm nevertheless led to the erection of a statue of Queen Victoria in Queen Street and the naming of a number of terraces and streets after her and her consort. Patriotism was also prevalent in the favoured Albion.

Particularly noticeable during the latter part of the nineteenth century were street names based on names of great wealthy Devon families. Respect for and deference to aristocratic families was then much more persistent than nowadays. Many of the inhabitants of the streets so named may have been immigrants from the Devon countryside and familiar with these landowners. Whilst some property developers might have thought that an aristocratic-sounding name would enhance a poor quality street, it may not have been a deliberate policy at all but merely a current fashion which could be found country-wide. People have been an important source of names for Exeter's suburban streets, from tiny courts named after their developers to roads named after great statesmen - Chamberlain, Shaftesbury, Gladstone - although the latter was a memorial as the road was not constructed until after his death. As has already been noted with Victoria and Albert, it is quite remarkable how many

roads named after great historical figures consist of small, working-class houses, often without front gardens. For example, apart from the grand Regency terraces and squares of London which frequently bear aristocratic names, throughout the land dozens of streets of artisans' houses bear the name Russell, usually after Lord John Russell, although Liverpool's Russell Street is named after Admiral Edward Russell who defeated the French in 1692.¹ Lord John Russell was a member of a well-established family with immense properties. In the sixteenth century it was granted well over one-sixth of all the monastic property in Devon. Lord John Russell had strong territorial connections with Devon through his father, the Duke of Bedford, which would perhaps account for the West Country's Russell Streets. Nationwide the choice may have been made just because it was a fashionable, prestigious name or, as has already been mentioned, because of Russell's involvement with improving conditions of employment for women and children.² Wherever Russell Streets are found - Stafford, Leicester, Birmingham and Exeter are but a few examples - they were usually built originally to house railway workers, blacksmiths, ostlers and others in similar occupations. The choice of names of eminent people was one of fashion in an era without radio and television to provide popular heroes when probably identity with a locality was important.

Very few names provided social commentary. Improvement Place, referred to as a "jubilant" name, followed the Improvement Act of 1832 and Speculation Place, built by Grant and Son in 1858, is indicative of purpose, especially at a time when building activity was at a low ebb.³ Mount Pleasant and Belmont Road are almost self-advertisements, although Peerless Place, described in 1831 as

¹ T. Lloyd Jones, Liverpool Street Names, 1981, p.32.

² W.G. Hoskins, Devon, 1954, p.84, p.183; Asa Briggs, A Social History of England, 1983, p.199.

³ T.J. Joce, 'Exeter Roads and Streets', Transactions of the Devonshire Association, Vol.LXXV, 1943, p.133; wall plaque.

"a row of very respectable houses" seems a slight exaggeration and Premier Place, St. Leonard's, was not the best in the vicinity.¹

Until World War II involved civilians in their own homes as well as troops on active service both in this country and overseas, war provided a source of names for streets, boats and houses. There was a certain romanticism in using names such as Spion Kop or Mafeking. Usually they were to be found on mean streets; probably many of the soldiers involved came from such backgrounds. Exeter cemented its links with the Devonshire Regiment fighting in the Boer War by naming some of its streets after battles or heroes. In general it preferred to use the names of battles fought a century before - Trafalgar and Waterloo - which by then had no doubt acquired a certain amount of romance and glamour. Immortalizing war in street names largely ceased when war involved everyone. There was no need for heroic reminders; war and its aftermath were too immediate and so, in general, only names relating to World War I and before remain. Modern roads bearing continental place-names are more likely to have acquired their names through the practice of twinning than fighting.

Although transferred place-names have always played an important role in street naming and were in nineteenth-century Exeter the second most important source, yet they accounted for only half as many as those dedicated to people. The "directional" names had arisen naturally, often indicating a nearby market town. York and Windsor suggest patriotism. As reasons for particular selections are not recorded, streets named Mansfield, Elton, Toronto and Thurlow must be presumed to be personal choices. Montpellier, synonymous with smart towns such as Bath and Torquay, might have been expected. Application was made to adopt this name for a road in Pennsylvania, but the Streets Committee turned it down on the grounds of possible confusion with a small terrace of that name.² As the latter consisted of only

¹ Besley, 1831, p.59.

² DRO ECA 9/8 Streets Committee Minutes, 24.2.1886.

fourteen houses in Pennsylvania Road itself, a good name was lost.

Nineteenth-century Exeter was essentially a provincial service centre and very few names bore reference to the city's former wealth. Until the beginning of the twentieth century only a few small courts such as Tanner's Lane and Quay Place made any mention of industry at all. Even by 1907 only Willey's Avenue commemorated Exeter's largest industrial enterprise. The area was a centre for education and three roads, College Road, College Avenue and Marlborough Road were apt references.

It has been shown that Exeter's street names commemorated national and international figures, both political and historic, together with some of the great Devon families. Who was considered worthy of being honoured among its citizens, either contemporary or from past generations? Of those who might have been eligible, very few were selected. Mosworthy, the architect of some of the finest early nineteenth-century terraces, had but a Row (an unusual term for Exeter) - five small cottages in St. Sidwell's Street housing people in menial jobs. Robert Stribling, responsible for the magnificent Bedford Circus, the forerunner of suburban Exeter, is not mentioned at all. As already discussed, Hoopers the builders had a block named after them, but only for a very short while.¹ Clearly those responsible for naming, and in particular the Streets Committee with its overall power, placed little value on the contributions these men made towards producing a city which, unfortunately, was worthy of inclusion in the list of the most beautiful and historic cities in England singled out by Hitler for destruction. Even today these early architect/builders whose contributions to suburban Exeter were so great have no dedications, yet a more modern architect, Archibald Lucas, has Archibald Road, built in 1904, and the much later Lucas Avenue.² When Exeter streets were named after people, money and national or local political importance seemed to have taken

¹ Besley, 1831, p.167; Hedgeland's Map, 1806.

² BCI.

precedence. To some extent this continued on new roads built in the early 1900s. Thornton Hill and West Avenue, roads of large villas for the prosperous, were seemingly named from Richard Thornton West, Exeter's only nineteenth-century millionaire, builder of the Italianate mansion, Streatham Hall.¹ Exeter did have some famous people who could well have been remembered in the new streets of the expanding city. Among them might have been included the author Richard Ford; Sir Thomas Bodley, founder of Bodley's Library in Oxford, who was born in a fine town house in the city centre; Robert Veitch, whose internationally famous Royal Nurseries were located in Howell Road (a grave omission considering Pince's Road, St. Thomas's, was named after nearby nursery gardens); John Hooker, sixteenth-century Exeter historian; Dr. Thomas Shapter, resident of Exeter and author of The History of the Cholera in Exeter in 1832; 'Iron Sam' Kingdon, landowner, public benefactor and first mayor under the new Council of 1836.²

There have too been lost opportunities with old field names, the greatest perhaps being Gallants' Bower, the name given to the grassy wooded slopes in Northernhay between the castle and the Longbrook. Others once extant were South Pestle Downs, Weare Cliff, Shoulder of Mutton, Cistern Field, Wisdom Hays, Job Park, Beanfield, Whipping Lane Field - a few examples of old names that could readily have been adopted.³ However, in the early twentieth century there were signs that Exeter's history was being considered as a source for streets names: Isca Road (from Isca Dumuniorum); Danes Road (near a site which, in the eighteenth century, came to be called Danes Castle, a defensive mound raised, it is believed, in the twelfth century to defend Exeter Castle, although the earthwork has nothing to do with the Danes), and Athelstan Road, built on the southern bank of Athelstan's Dyke, named from Athelstan who is said to have

¹ Caldwell, op. cit., p.5.

² Wall plaque, Gandy Street; Besley, 1894, p.55;; BCI; Census, 1851; DRO B 2/31, 1.1.1836.

³ Chamber Map Book, op. cit.

been responsible for expelling the British and making Exeter an entirely English city around 928.¹

The frequent use of the word "genteel" in house advertisements, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century, has already been discussed, but did a road of "genteel" houses have a "genteel" name and what constitutes a "genteel" name? Genteel houses were presumably considered to be suitable for the better class of persons; did such rows of houses have names which suggested fashion, style and the 'right' address? Answers to such questions are not clear cut. Who were the better classes? They were less easily definable in the later years of the nineteenth century when prosperous tradesmen were able to buy large houses in select areas. In the early years the elegant terraces of Bedford Circus, Baring Crescent, Baring Place and Colleton Crescent, for example, could properly be described as 'better class' residences. They bore names of their aristocratic or wealthy landowners - presumably "genteel" names. If such people had been named Smith, Jones or Brown would such names have been so readily adopted? Several instances suggest this would have been unlikely. In 1818 John Brown built Baring Crescent on three fields leased from Sir Thomas Baring but did not elect to call it Brown Crescent. In 1812 William Hooper bought Baring land for Baring Place.² Had this been Hooper Place would Lady Paterson have moved there? Indeed, as already mentioned, Hoopers Buildings became Higher Summerland Place within a few years.³ It seems likely from these examples that a road name taken from a family name was considered suitable for good class houses if the family were themselves aristocratic, titled or long-established and wealthy. Poor courts and rows of tiny dwellings more often took their names from the builders - Gatty, Hill and Taylor for instance, although even here some were named after influential political

¹ EPNS PND, Vol.III, Part I, p.20; Hoskins, 2000, p.27; Tithe Map of St. Sidwell's, 1842; Hoskins, 2000, p.12.

² DRO Baring Estate Papers, Box 116; DRO B/E 5/21/1-3, 1818, Leases.

³ Hedgeland's Map, 1806; Besley, 1831, p.63.

figures. An aristocratic name did not automatically imply an expensive property; the frequent incidence of Russell Street appearing on rows of artisans' houses has already been cited as has the occasion when, in order to improve the tone of a formerly notorious area, the name Belgrave Road was bestowed. Similarly Cavendish Road matched its neighbours only in the type of name. Much depends on currently fashionable names. To live in parts of the East End of London in the nineteenth century implied working-class status; today many of these formerly artisans' houses are extremely expensive and hence many once commonplace street names have become smart addresses. What makes one name genteel and another nothing of the kind is very hard to define, if indeed any name can be said to be genteel other than by association. Many royal names/associations - Victoria, Albert, Jubilee and, more recently Coronation, have become associated with mean streets. Conversely Claremont, Albany, Belgrave and Clarence, particularly when accompanied by 'road' rather than 'street' usually suggest more prosperity than, say, Albion or Regent Street in a suburban setting. In nineteenth-century Exeter Pennsylvania Crescent and Denmark Road were names of upper-class roads; Toronto Road and Brunswick Street were not. Why this should be so cannot readily be explained. For rows of houses that were named from sources other than personal names the question of gentility does not arise. It cannot be said, for example, that Crediton and Okehampton are more superior names than Tiverton and Alphington; neither can one differentiate between St. David, St. James and St. Sidwell as street names. Eardley, the china merchant, recognized the need for superior-sounding names when he built his large houses in Heavitree naming them Heavitree Park, Mont-le-Grand and Bickton Place.¹ Names such as Factory Row, Gas Works Terrace or Industry Street did not apply to Exeter; Cemetery Road was not in the same category - it was merely unfortunate and was later changed.

¹ Falla. op. cit., p.38 and p.20.

Overall, the street names of suburban Exeter between 1800 and 1907 could perhaps be said to have been fashionable and dignified. Table 6 shows the pattern of naming during the nineteenth century from which it will be seen that, apart from the very early period when, of the relatively few names, more than 26% had local connections, the predominant source of names was that of people, with a high proportion being concerned with royalty. Great emphasis was laid on the names of the wealthy and the famous as a source, irrespective of the types of houses in the streets that bore the aristocratic names. Royal names could be found on juxtaposed streets, one of which consisted of large good-class villas and the other of small terraced cottages. There seemed to be no logical reasoning behind the selection of some landowners' names and the omission of others. Whilst some historical landmarks were commemorated, there were a number of missed opportunities. Many of those who contributed to the architectural splendour of some of the suburbs or became figures of some national importance have no streets named after them as a permanent memorial. As the number of streets increased so did the categories from which names were chosen. Names which were generally descriptive, popular in the early years, were retained, but selections for later streets tended to be more imaginative. The reasons for many of the choices have either been deduced from evidence available or a hypothesis for the choice has been offered. Inevitably some names had to be listed as 'unclassified' for lack of evidence of their origin. It is suspected that some were surnames of people connected with the development of the area. Although accurate records were kept of the dates of the selection of many of the later names, unfortunately the reasons for their ultimate choice were omitted. These would have thrown even more light on an important facet of local history.

CHAPTER VII

NAMING THE SUBURBAN HOUSES

"The giving of names is a basic human trait.
With need and opportunity the names will come..."¹

House names have hitherto been a neglected branch of name studies. From time to time articles appear in newspapers and magazines, usually drawing attention to the more bizarre names; occasionally a chapter on house names appears in a book largely devoted to other kinds of naming and there have been one or two booklets listing house names and their meanings. In 1972 the writer undertook a brief survey of some of the many and varied house names to be found throughout the world. In 1979 she was awarded an M.Litt. by Bristol University for a dissertation on *The Naming of Private Houses in Britain since 1700*, based on a survey of some 20,000 houses and subsequently a paperback was published which listed some of the more amusing findings.² Apart from these, little else seems to have been written on the subject. The social significance of house names and naming has not been realized or investigated at an academic level.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the names of private houses as evidence of the social attitudes in Exeter's suburbs

¹ George R. Stewart, *Names on the Globe*, 1975, p.367.

² Basil Cottle, *Names*, 1983, p.186 sqq.; Leslie Dunkling, *The Guinness Book of Names*, 1974, p.187 sqq.; Leslie Dunkling, *English House Names*, 1971; Joyce C. Miles, *House Names Around the World*, 1972 (hereafter *HNAW*); Joyce C. Miles, *The Naming of Private Houses in Britain since 1700*, unpublished thesis, University of Bristol, 1979; Joyce C. Miles, *The House Names Book*, 1982 (hereafter *HNB*).

between 1801 and 1907, with supplementary examples taken from house names from various parts of the UK and Europe gathered for previous studies and from recent fieldwork.

The subject as a whole is one of complexity which becomes increasingly so with the proliferation of house names that has occurred since the 1920s with the rise of owner-occupied houses on vast estates built on the fringes of many towns throughout the country. Much work still remains to be done. This thesis is limited to a period when house naming was not so commonplace. Many of the suburban houses were rented, even in middle-class suburbs. (Table 5) For example, in 1841 in St. Leonard's 75.3% of property was rented. Unless a speculative builder or owner chose to name a house or a row of houses, rented houses, particularly small ones in tightly-packed streets, were likely to remain unnamed until post World War II when many were purchased by young couples as first homes, renovated, often given new windows and new front doors and sometimes named. There are many examples of this practice in Exeter's suburbs.

The information for this chapter has been obtained from a variety of published sources and from fieldwork and all remaining houses in suburban Exeter dating from the period under study have been visited. Whilst street directories are an invaluable source, particularly for the names on larger houses, for a house to appear in a directory without a name does not necessarily mean that that house was unnamed. Some houses have what appear to be original fanlights with names either in stained glass or gold lettering yet these houses are shown as unnamed in contemporary directories. Unfortunately more and more houses are losing the pillars (sometimes surmounted by large stone balls) which once supported ornate front gates and on which the name of the house was originally carved. When the front entrance is widened the name disappears with the removal of the gatepost. It is

¹ DRO ECA Tithe Map and Apportionment for St. Leonard's, 1841.

emphasized that any statistics shown are based on either recorded evidence and/or that which remains visible.¹ Nevertheless, from the evidence of house naming that has remained from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries some interesting aspects of social history will be revealed.

The Function of House Names

House names are among the few names we choose for ourselves. Usually names are inherited (surnames), bestowed on us by others (forenames), chosen by a somewhat detached body of people (street names), or, in the case of names of places, rivers, large areas of land and similar geographical features, they have evolved over the centuries and, in many instances, have undergone change. House names are deliberately chosen in the first instance and can thus reveal a number of important and interesting indicators about the attitudes of those selecting the names. Whilst there is much documentary evidence about the size, type, occupations and age structure of a community, a house name may well be one of the few pieces of evidence of householders' views on their place in society, for only a few of the more literate were likely to have their opinions on their community published in a newspaper, whereas there is evidence that people have been naming their dwellings for at least two thousand years.

It is impossible to be specific about the exact date of the first house name. The Palace Without a Rival ("I called its name") is mentioned several times in the Annals of Sennacherib; the Romans certainly named some of their houses, for example Rostrata Villa which was twenty-four miles from Rome, Villa Faustini at Scole

¹ Unless otherwise stated, house names relating to suburban Exeter taken from published sources are from street directories of Exeter published variously by Trewman, 1816 and 1855; Mortimer, 1874/5 and Besley 1828-1907.

(Norfolk) and at least seven in Africa including the Villa Magna and Villa Privata presumed to be imperial estates.¹ Sixteenth-century London had some fine examples - Stow refers to "...a fair house of old time called the Green Gate next is a house called the Leaden Porch".² The Vyne in Hampshire acquired its present form in the fourteenth century, although the property was referred to as Vynnes in a deed of 1268.³ Possibly early house names were attached to very large houses as a means of identification. Small houses clustered together in a settlement would have no need of individual names or numbers. In the 1760s street naming and numbering were introduced in London; this later spread to the provinces and Exeter adopted house numbering in the principal streets in 1804, the same year that street name plates were first put up, but it took over half a century before the majority of houses had numbers.⁴ House names can therefore be seen to have several functions: they can either accompany a number adding a further mark of individuality or they can be a means of identification if a house is located in an area where house numbers have not been allocated (and there are many villages and rural roads where, even today, house numbers have not been allotted). If house names were confined solely to this latter category they would be of far less significance and of far less interest. Fortunately this is not so and house names can be found on houses of all kinds, from large imposing mansions in vast grounds to small cottages with front doors abutting the pavements and minimal back yards.

¹ David D. Luckenbill, The Annals of Sennacherib, 1924, pp.111, 124.
A.C.F. Rivet, The British Section of the Antonine Itinerary, Britannia, I, 1970, p.47.

² John Stow, The Survey of London, 1633, p. 162.

³ Victoria County History, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, 4, 1911, p.21.

⁴ City of London, Act for the Better Paving, Cleaning and Enlighting, 8 Geo. III, c.xxi, XXIII; Hoskins, 2000, p.92.

Sources of House Names

The names themselves are derived from a wide variety of sources and in some cases are autobiographical, expressing feelings, attitudes and, on occasion, aspirations of the owners. The example quoted from The Annals of Sennacherib displays certain overtones in pride of ownership. This was later to be an important element in house naming. In the nineteenth century the acknowledgement of ownership occasionally manifested itself in the bestowal of the owner's name on a group of cottages or buildings; thus in Exeter in the last quarter of the nineteenth century there were Lee's Cottages, Willey's Cottages, Passmore's Court and many more in similar vein. Having an apostrophe in the name suggests possession, whereas having a group of houses named after a person - Buller Place, Baring Crescent - does not give the same overtones of ownership and it becomes merely a street name. If cottages were good, then a public declaration of ownership by way of a name was an ideal advertisement. The fashion had not yet appeared of using names such as Myowne, Wedidit or Oursitis, and certainly not of belittling a property by calling it Chaos, The Shack or using other derisive appellations.

Most house names fall into one of several broad categories, which in turn can be sub-divided. (Table) Some of these categories have been in existence for many decades; others are of more recent origin. Ones of long standing include the transferred place-name (i.e. the use of a place-name to create a house name in a location other than the original one); those derived from nature; those relating to location and those based on personal names (whether of social or historical significance or merely personal choice). In the period under review the use of colour in a name was not so marked as in later periods. Even one of the most famous in this category, The White House, was not named as such until the beginning of the

twentieth century.¹ There were very few facetious names so prevalent today. Even when they existed the humour was very mild - for example in 1879 George Shepherd lived at Shepherd's Tent in Bacup and in 1800 two houses in Cheltenham were named The Nutshell and Paradise House.²

Overall, the most frequently used source of house name is the transferred place-name. Unless there is specific evidence of a reason for a particular choice, which in the case of many twentieth-century house names is readily available from either the owners or their descendants, then all that is possible here is to offer some probable suggestions for that choice. A transferred place-name on a modern house will usually have been selected because it was the location of a honeymoon, a meeting place or other romantic associations; because it was the birth-place of one of the owners or maybe where they spent most of their working lives and, having moved to a strange retirement area, wish to take with them some reminder of their former lives; or, since the advent of the package holiday, a declaration that the owners have travelled abroad. Hence housing estates throughout the country bear signs on gateposts which read St. Ives, Newquay, Windermere (but not Rhyl, Blackpool or Margate); Cornwall has at least one Wakefield and from the 1950s onwards Torremolinos, Marbella and Rimini abound and more recently Serengeti, Barbados and Bali. In the early part of the nineteenth century the pattern was different. The transferred place-names tended to be those of dignified cities - Oxford, York, Bath, Warwick and Chester for example. Many such names had aristocratic connections and it may have been felt that the use of such a name might add dignity or grandeur to a house. The coming of the railways enabled people to travel further afield. In 1841 Thomas Cook introduced his first excursion from Leicester to Loughborough, followed by others to more distant towns and in 1863 his tours abroad commenced, first to

¹ Miles, HNAV, p.24.

² Slater, Royal National Commercial Directory of Lancashire, 1879, Vol.II, p.34; J. Shenton, Cheltenham Directory, 1800, p.36.

Switzerland and then to Italy.¹ Whether the expansion of people's horizons directly influenced their choice of house names is difficult to say a century and a half later, but house names derived from transferred place-names came from further afield than previously. A few examples from the last quarter of the nineteenth century will serve as illustrations: Exeter had Venice Villas, Lucerne and Cyprus Cottage; there was Pontresina and Cremona in Bournemouth; Madeira Villa, Valetta and Asia Minor in Weston-super-Mare and Leamington Spa had an Albania.² For whatever reason - Cook's tours, the availability of rail travel or better communications generally - the use of foreign place-names as a source was increasing in popularity.

House names derived from nature have always been very popular. It is a readily available source, needs no research and can provide an almost unlimited variety of pleasant names. It is nevertheless interesting to note that within this category fashion plays an important part, particularly with names taken from trees. Throughout the whole period of house naming by far the most popular name for a house derived from a tree is The Elms, or versions with different endings - Elmfield, Elmhurst, Elmgrove. This seems to be no mere accident. The elm has played an important part in myths and legends from many parts of the world. Some people thought the elm was the first woman; others that it was the mother of the goddess of fire. An elm growing in front of a Swedish home was regarded as the dwelling of the spirit who guarded the family. Whether those who chose the name were aware of all these legends or not, once smaller houses began to acquire names, The Elms, or a derivative, figured largely.³ Exeter was no exception. By 1875 it had at least six house names derived from the elm; by 1895 this had increased to

¹ Information supplied by the Thomas Cook Organization, London.

² Kelly's Directory of the Counties of Wiltshire, Dorsetshire and Hampshire, 1885, pp.613, 614; Kelly's Directory of the County of Somerset, 1897, pp.460, 464, 462. Kelly's Directory of Warwickshire, 1888, p.131.

³ Maria Leach ed., Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, 1975 edn, p.343; Miles, HNAY, p.114.

eighteen. Other tree names popular in the nineteenth century but less so today were The Firs, The Hollies, The Laurels and the more general name The Shrubbery. Half a century later such names were not so common, preference being for Twin Oaks, Copper Beech, Silver Birches, Many Trees. Possibly the old names conveyed the gloom and deep shade provided by the dark evergreens that surrounded many of the large, Victorian houses so named, whereas today houses are likely to have much smaller plots and large windows chosen to let in light and sunshine. Names such as The Hollies or The Laurels are less appropriate for modern houses. Similarly The Grove or Grovelands imply a considerable acreage of land. In the nineteenth century this was quite probable; for example, Grove House in Exeter had extensive grounds and The Grove, Weston-super-Mare was "...a handsome residence surrounded by ornamental gardens and embowered amidst magnificent trees".¹ Today the majority of suburban building is of high-density, relatively small houses where The Grove or similar names would be inappropriate. Another fashionable nineteenth-century name in this category was one allied to ferns - Fern Villa, Fernlea, Fern Hill. Walsall in the West Midlands had a particularly high proportion of its houses with fern names in the 1870s. Ferns were another feature of Victorian gardens; they are not as favoured today neither are house names associated with them.² Birds did not play such an important role in the naming of houses as might have been expected. They were perhaps not as valued as they are today. Occasionally a large detached Victorian residence had the name of a bird, quite likely that of a large one - Ravenhurst, Rooksmere, or The Rookery for example. Exeter was perhaps a little unusual. By 1895 it had five houses all named from the eagle, but this preference cannot readily be explained. Countrywide it was well into the twentieth century before smaller birds - robins, finches, woodpeckers among others - began to feature as house names to any great extent.³

¹ Miles, HNE, p.32; Rapkin's Map of Exeter, 1850; Whereat's New Handbook to Weston-super-Mare, 1845, p.49.

² Miles, unpublished thesis, op. cit. p.209.

³ Miles, HNE, p.34.

Similarly with animals. Although Britain is supposedly a nation of animal lovers, surprisingly few appear on house nameplates. There was a Lion House in St. Thomas's in 1875 (not, apparently related to a public house), but this was exceptional; badgers, squirrels and foxes played no part. Even today domestic pets have a minimal role in naming, but names derived from wild animals have become increasingly popular in recent years.

Flowers have always been a well-used source for house names, particularly for cottages, and primrose, ivy, myrtle and honeysuckle are merely a few of the flower names in popular usage. Throughout the period of house naming, however, by far the most favourite flower as a source has been the rose and there are thousands of houses of all sizes with rose names in one form or another. From the early 1800s Rose Cottage could be found throughout the country and since then the rose has appeared in a variety of name forms: Rosedene, Roseneath, Rose Hill and many similar. Occasionally a rose name will relate to a place; for example Rosedale on a stained glass fanlight in Rawtenstall dating from 1890 may well have related to Rosedale Abbey in North Yorkshire. A much favoured garden name in many parts of the country in the latter part of the nineteenth century made use of the word "lawn" - Grass Lawn, Lawn Cottage, Keynsham Lawn, Fern Lawn - there were numerous variants. Apart from "a plot of grass" the name once meant "a glade" and was probably used to imply that the house was surrounded by well-kept spacious grounds. There were many examples in the West of England in the middle of the nineteenth century; this form is used less frequently today.¹

House names taken from personal names fall into several groups. There are those which, like street names, commemorate some national figure - Nelson Cottage, Victoria Villa, Albert Lodge, Blucher House - named probably through patriotic fervour. There are those which

¹ Miles, HNB, p.33; Miles, unpublished thesis, op. cit., p.357;
H. Davies, Cheltenham Annuaire, 1837, p.139.

are dedicated to some local person of importance, perhaps a landowner or someone with local connections who has achieved national fame - Baring Lodge and Buller House in Exeter for instance. Some take the surname of either owner or occupier and can occasionally provide an example of early and unusual naming, for instance a cottage named Prothole, referred to in a fifteenth-century document from Holcombe Rogus, Devon, took its name from the occupier called Prout.¹ Other house names in this category bear the forename of someone of significance only to the houseowners - Maria Villa, Mona Lodge, Clare Cottage. Whilst some of these groups indicate who was considered to be important and worthy of commemoration at the time, either nationally or locally, the last group is also an indication of those forenames then currently in fashion. In the second half of the nineteenth century Eustace Lodge, Algernon Villa or Georgiana Cottage were typical examples; by the turn of the century fashions had changed and houses bore names such as Ethelville or Laura Villa and thus this form of naming has changed over the decades through Gertyville and Franksdene of the 1930s to the Suescot and Kevinsholme of today. This category of naming has acquired a new sub-division in recent years, that of the blended name using portions of two personal names. Hence throughout the country there are examples such as Iverne, Franmarge, Maurob and occasionally ones with unfortunate results such as Renal. This however is a modern phenomenon; nineteenth-century house names based on personal names usually consisted of the personal name plus 'villa', 'house', 'lodge', 'cottage' and later '-ville': Maria Villa, Edith Cottage and Mayville.²

Descriptive names may give some indication of the owner's perception of the house or its environment. They may, of course, also be useful in selling transactions. It has already been noted that a view was an important feature in the location of a house,

¹ I am indebted to Dr.H.S.A. Fox for this information.

² Miles, unpublished thesis, *op.cit.*, p.360.

often taking precedence over room sizes in an advertisement of a property for sale and once house naming began to increase in popularity. Where appropriate, the word "view" was often incorporated in the house name. Hence in Exeter in 1895 there were a number of properties so named: Exe View, Bonhay View, City View House and similar. Other towns had houses with names which incorporated this device: Quantock View in Taunton, Milford View in Stafford, Avon View in Leamington Spa are typical examples.¹ Although railways must have brought both dirt and noise to their immediate environs, this did not preclude their being used as the base for house names. St. David's Hill in Exeter had Station View in 1895 and a house overlooking the railway cutting near St. David's station was known as Loco View as it was near the engine sheds. In previous decades the use of the actual word "view" was not favoured, but instead a name was chosen that performed a similar function. One of the earliest examples in Exeter was the house built by John Vowler about 1710 named Bellair, an apt name as the house was on rising ground well above the city and the name gave an immediate and vivid description.² Others in similar vein, but dating from more than a century later, were Prospect House, Hillside, Hillbrow which, in the days when development was more likely to be along a main road than in a tightly packed estate, could reasonably be thought to imply a view. Field names are useful as a source for both street names and house names and to some extent they were more readily available in the nineteenth century than they are today. Some people then would have known the name of the land on which the houses were built, and indeed numerous fields crossed by footpaths were undoubtedly in everyday use and referred to by name. Two early examples of this in Exeter are Bury Meadow House and Spurbarn, the latter named by 1845 from the land, Spurbarn, on which it was built.³ Many houses throughout the country

¹ Halden's Directory of Stafford and District, 1907, p.160; Kelly's Directory of Warwickshire, 1888, p.130.

² Hoskins, 2000, p.83.

³ Wood's Map, 1840.

were named from fields and this has been very useful from the social historian's point of view in ensuring that the original field name has not merely become a record filed in a library or even lost for ever. In recent years there has been a revival of interest in field names as a source of house naming and many new houses now bear ancient field names: for example Glastonbury has The Pennings and Wyrall House and Marshfield, Avon, has Honeylands and Worlocks Leaze. In rather a similar vein, Yeeles House, Marshfield, is built on land owned by Thomas Yeeles who ran a bakehouse there in the seventeenth century.¹ In the nineteenth century a house name taken from its former use was quite likely to be of a religious origin; hence there are many old houses bearing names such as The Priory, Friar's House and Ebenezer Cottage, the last often attached to a chapel and dating from the early nineteenth century. Houses which were actually bakeries, dairies, mills or homes of shepherds, glovers, potters and other craftsmen were not named as such. It is only during the last quarter of a century that it has become fashionable to buy an old cottage, investigate its original use and then adapt it appropriately; for example, The Old Creamery, Glovers, Potter's Cottage and The Mill House. However, there are occasionally a few early examples where an occupation was incorporated in the house name and Exeter had several in 1895, among them Rackfield House and Ferry House.

As has been shown with the naming of streets, during the time under review war had not become the terrible, personal and immediate catastrophe it did in World War I and to an even greater extent in World War II. It was therefore nothing out of the ordinary to find houses marking in a tangible way some aspect of a battle. Throughout the country there were innumerable houses with names such as Waterloo, Nelson, Trafalgar, Wellington, Spion Kop and Blucher. The

¹ Gloucestershire Record Office, 5251 1/1-11, Parish Registers of Marshfield and information supplied by house owners in Glastonbury, Somerset, and Marshfield, Avon.

village of Cropredy in Oxfordshire did not forget that there in June 1644 the Parliamentarians under Waller were defeated by the Royalists under Charles I. A row of cottages was erected in 1899 and each has a name incised to commemorate the event - Waller, Kentish, Culverin, Cavalier, Cleveland and Charles - all followed by the word 'Cottage'.

If an area has a strong religious association there will usually be a large number of old houses bearing saints' names and other religious references. Glastonbury, for example, had houses dating from 1850 with names associated with the abbey - Abbey House, Abbey Grange - and around the turn of the century several bearing references to St. Joseph and Arimathea. Later emphasis shifted from St. Joseph to his holy thornbush and names were invented such as Winterthorne and Thornlea.¹ Exeter has an ancient chapel dedicated to St. Anne and hence several houses bore the name of this saint.² Legends play an important role in house naming and the Arthurian legends surrounding Avalon and the Holy Grail are reflected not only on old Glastonbury gateposts but throughout the country, Avalon being particularly popular in the twentieth century, possibly through Tennyson. Although mythology and superstition now play a part in the naming of houses, it is a more recent fashion and names such as Touchwood and Janus were not used to any great extent until recent decades; the first one in Exeter - Pandora - did not appear until some years after 1907.³ Whilst the twentieth century has a wide variety of what might be termed recreational sources on which to base a house name if so desired - television, radio, films, holidays and a range of sporting activities available to all - this was not so a hundred years ago. The cinema did not reach Exeter until the

¹ Miles, HNAW, p.85; Census Return for Glastonbury, 1851, Kelly's Directory for Somerset, 1906, p.276; Miles thesis op.cit. p.114.

² DRO 4292 A/BS1 Hooker's Map of Exeter engraved by Hogenberg, 1580.

³ Besley, 1919. p.68.

beginning of the twentieth century, the first automobile arrived there in 1898 and the people who were wealthy enough to own cars were not likely to name their houses after them as is sometimes the case today.¹ However literature was a useful source and one of the authors who provided inspiration for some house names in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was Sir Walter Scott. *Ivanhoe* is found on houses in many parts of the world, with *Waverley* and *Kenilworth* competing strongly for second place. Occasionally *Marmion* and *Lochinvar* can be found on older houses in leaded fanlights or carved on grey stone pillars, but the first three were by far the favourites. Although references to Shakespeare are occasionally found, the popularity of Scott far outweighed all other authors until recent times.²

The nineteenth century was not an age where vulgarity and tiresome jokes appeared on gateposts; *Tuksumdoin*, *Kuminside*, *Ibindun* are post-World War II inventions. Whimsical names, *Pixies' Glade* and *Elfin's Whisper*, came into vogue with ornamental garden gnomes. Backspellings, *Yadiloh*, *Selaw*; phonetic spellings, *Jusrite*, *Dunbuzin*; job-related names, *Blades* the home of a helicopter pilot, *Top Gear* that of a driving instructor; *Maxwell House* in *Coffeelake Meadow* and many more manufactured categories of house names are inventions of the second half of the twentieth century and bear no relationship to the more dignified names that the majority of house namers selected in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Composition of House Names

Reference has already been made to the relationship between fashions in personal names and house names based on them and there were fashions too in the actual composition of house names, although

¹ Hoskins, 2000, pp.122-123.

² Miles. *HNAW*, p.106.

these were not rigidly adhered to. Nevertheless, in the mid-nineteenth century the majority of house names had accompanying words such as "house", "cottage", "lodge" or "villa". The use of the words "house" or "cottage" was no indication of the size of the dwelling. Talbot House could be found in a road of small terraced houses; Grove House stood in its own grounds. Similarly, "cottage" could be found in Exeter on St. John's Cottage, a substantial cottage grn  in Polsloe Road and on Lilly Cottage, a tiny dwelling in Regent Square, Heavitree. Although "villa" once referred to 'a country residence with land attached', there was a growing, alternative meaning and "villa" frequently referred to a property on a much smaller, urban scale. There were many dwellings with "villa" names in suburban Exeter in the 1870s - Alpha Villa, Prospect Villa, Fairbank Villa among many more.² The trend for the two-word name continued for several decades until the single word name acquired popularity and by the 1890s houses were being named Holmleigh, Fairmead, Glencroft. The ubiquitous "villa" was very gradually being superseded by "-ville" - Rockville, Fernville, Florenceville. The use of this suffix is curious. It was, of course, being used in place-names for nineteenth-century towns which grew up round a particular industry, Bourneville and Coalville for example, and for many American place-names (there are eighteen "-ville" names round Baltimore alone, including Churchville and Simpsonville).³ It can also be found in twelfth- and thirteen-century English place-names - Keinton Mandeville, Hardington Mandeville - but these are related to family names and this strand is not really relevant to this survey.⁴ Why people should choose a "-ville" name for a house is not easy to

¹ J.C. Loudon, An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Functions, 1836, p.8.

² There is an early example of the introduction into this country of the Spanish and Portuguese word quinta, 'country house' or 'villa' in Quinta Parke, (1606) (later The Quinta) St. Mary Church, Devon. EPNS, PND, Vol. IX, Part II, p.519. Bath had The Quinta in 1888. Post Office Bath Directory, 1888, p.460.

³ Basil Cottle, Names, 1983, p.165.

⁴ Ekwall, DEPN, p.257.

explain. It appears to coincide with the development of the housing estate. It may well be that whilst a householder wished to impart a sense of individuality to his house by way of a name, the use of the word 'villa' might have been considered somewhat pretentious for a house that was one of a hundred or more identical properties but the suffix '-ville' less so.

Displaying the Name

Apart from the fashions in actual names, there were also fashions in the nameplates or other devices used on the fronts of houses. Quite probably the very large seventeenth-, eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century houses had no nameplates. There were a number of very large named houses in Exeter during this period but as most of them have been absorbed by the University, remodelled and extended, turned into public institutions or demolished, it is now impossible to check. There were several methods of displaying a house name universally popular towards the end of the nineteenth century. If the house was of a fairly substantial size it was quite likely to have had two large pillars, sometimes each being surmounted by a stone ball, on which the gates were hung and the house name was then incised on one or both pillars. Smaller town houses had proportionately smaller gateposts, but the names were inscribed in a similar manner. (Plate 16) There are still a few remaining examples of these. This suggests that the houses were named at the time of building and this is a good guide to the ages of the names and the types of names currently fashionable. Furthermore, these names have lasted far longer than others inscribed in a less durable manner and probably forgotten. Another method which has proved equally (and sometimes even more) long-lasting is the plaque which builders inserted below the roofline of a house. This was more frequently found on smaller houses; sometimes a street of terrace houses built over a period of years would have several examples. Occasionally a pair of semi-detached houses would

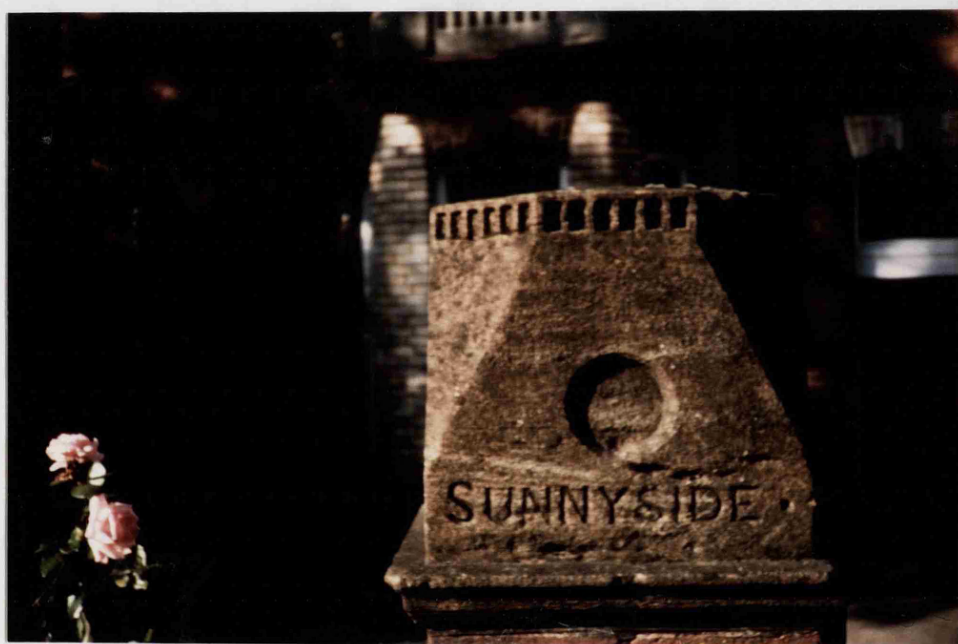


Plate 16 A house name incised on a gatepost

share a name, Clevedon Villas for example, and to distinguish them they would also be known as No.1 Clevedon Villas and No.2 Clevedon Villas.¹ Unless deliberately filled in when such houses are renovated and re-pointed, these plaques also serve as a very useful record. Undoubtedly some of these names were chosen by the builder. For instance, a builder named Madeley came from Shropshire and built Crudgington Villas in Walsall, naming them from a Shropshire village.²

A less durable device, but one which was very much favoured around the turn of the century, was the inscription in gold leaf, of a house name on a plain glass fanlight over a front door. (Plate 17) These were clearly visible but most of them have disappeared. The gold leaf, or other paint, needed renewing periodically and many houses throughout the country show signs of once having had a name as traces of paint are still there; occasionally sufficient remains to enable one to distinguish the name. Unfortunately thousands of these names disappeared when the fanlights were re-glazed. Much more durable were names incorporated in stained glass fanlights, some of which were leaded. (Plate 18) There are a number of good examples still remaining in Exeter, although once again renovation of the frontages and new front doors has led to many being destroyed. A similarity of naming device in a row, whether it is incised in stone or fashioned in stained glass, strongly suggests that the names were chosen by the builder, unless of course this was an option open to the first prospective buyers. Many of these methods of naming ensured that the name was a permanent feature of the house. It was costly to remove a plaque or renew a fanlight. Once naming became more popular then fashions in nameplates changed. It also meant that names could be discarded, and, in many cases, all records of such names were lost. In more

¹ H. Mortimer, Handbook for Exeter and Its Neighbourhood, 1874, p.39

² W.F. Blay, The Street Names of Walsall, 1929 (typescript, Walsall Public Library).



Plate 17 A house name displayed in gold leaf
on a fanlight



Plate 18 A house name in a leaded
stained glass fanlight

recent times there have been marked fashions in nameplates, many of which last less than a decade. None of these were in use in the last century; devices then in fashion were far more permanent than those of today.

Why Name a House?

It is relatively easy to discover patterns of house naming during different periods of time, but it is extremely difficult to ascertain why people name houses. For houses named before living memory it is virtually impossible as there is little likelihood of there being existing evidence for the choice and certainly not of the reason for deciding to name a house, unless of course it had no number and a name was therefore a necessity. Before the availability of the telephone and the automobile, the postal system was a vital form of communication and this demanded easily identifiable property. For some people it was therefore essential to have a distinguishing name, but for those whose properties were already numbered it was merely personal choice. Even when it is possible to question the donors of house names, people are reluctant, and sometimes unable, to explain exactly why they elected to name their houses. In many areas it appears that once one householder in a road introduces a name others follow; thus while some roads have no house names other have quite a few. This pattern also seemed to occur on older houses. Some rows obviously had names; others close by and of similar size and design appear to have remained unnamed. A change of name, which on some houses occurred quite frequently, is easily justified; an initial decision to bestow a house name must often remain an enigma.

Houses built in a carefully designed block, be it terrace, crescent, circus or other complete entity, are less likely to be named. Names would not be expected in Royal Crescent, Bath. Many of Exeter's early terraces had no named houses and names only appeared

when the road was extended and separate houses of a different character were erected. Occasionally a house built at the end of a crescent or terrace, but not part of the original terrace, would take the name of that terrace; hence Colleton Crescent House and Baring Crescent Villa, but both were separate from the original blocks. Here it would seem that, although the houses were not part of the original development, there was a wish through a name for close identification with that block.

The property speculator probably decided to name individual houses as an added attraction in creating "the right address" in much the same way as some roads acquired names with overtones of grandeur; for instance Mont-le-Grand and Heavitree Park. To some people, buying Claremont was preferable to purchasing No.3, particularly if the house was in a road of no particular merit. It may have been identical in most respects to its neighbours, but at least it had its own name. This reason for naming houses seems a perfectly legitimate one when applied to the vast estates of near-identical houses that were built in the 1920s and 1930s. One of the very few methods of bestowing any form of individuality on a house among acres of largely unrelieved uniformity was to name it. This was usually done by the purchaser as by then privately owned houses were within the reach of a wider social group than in previous decades. Although there were no vast estates of houses in mid nineteenth-century Exeter, towards the end of the century a considerable number of identical or very similar houses was built, and whether they were named by the speculative builders or by the purchasers, the reason for naming appears to be one of stamping individuality on a property and thereby making it more desirable. Small groups of identical houses within an existing road that otherwise lacked cohesion may have been thought to acquire a more positive identity by being named.

There are probably several reasons for people wishing to name a house; family tradition; a wish to continue a link with a former place or even a wish to conform (although this may not be readily

admitted). However, it is suggested that in the nineteenth century when there was less home ownership than there is today and less mobility, a house was quite likely to be named for one of four main reasons: a means of identification, a selling attraction, a stamp of individuality or as a cohesive device.

The House Names of Suburban Exeter The Early Years

Having discussed house naming in general and the broad categories into which house names fall, consideration will now be given to the house names chosen in suburban Exeter. Whilst some are discussed in detail, others are dealt with in terms of broad trends and categories. It is hoped that an analysis of these trends will reveal some interesting aspects of Exeter's social history.

Several large houses in Exeter's suburbs were built and named before 1800 and strictly speaking, these are outside the scope of this review, but as most of them have played an important role in the shaping of subsequent development and often in the naming of suburban roads, they must be included. The most significant perhaps are the houses built on the Duryard estate which lay to the north of the city between the city walls and the river. This estate, whose name means 'animal enclosure' was owned by the City for some 800 years, but most of it was sold off towards the end of the seventeenth century and a few large houses were built in subsequent years, all surrounded by extensive grounds.² The two most important houses were Great Duryard, built about 1690, and Middle Duryard, built shortly

¹ EPNS, PND, Vol. IX, Part II, p.436.

² Hoskins, 2000, p.139.

afterwards, both retaining the old name.¹ When further building took place in the nineteenth century in this vicinity, two more houses bore Duryard names - Duryard Lodge and Rose Duryard. The latter was a much later and smaller house fronting the main northern exit road and the combination of 'Rose' and 'Duryard' made little sense, although at the time any knowledge of the original meaning of Duryard would probably have been lost. Many of the names on Exeter's large old houses were related to their location. Barley House, originally Barley Mount first recorded in 1298, means 'barley clearing' and it was strategically placed on rising ground.² Its grounds have become the modern Barley Estate and several of the houses here have names incorporating 'barley'. Cleve House stands on steeply sloping ground above the river, hence its name: cleeve - a cliff.³ The modern Cleve Road is nearby. Two houses near the former South Gate bore the same name - one Larkbeare House, one simply Larkbeare - 'lark wood'. They stood opposite each other near a deep valley once wooded and allegedly noted for its larks. Larkbeare House was demolished in 1889 to make way for the Larkbeare Estate, the other became the Judge's Lodgings; thus a name dating from at least the thirteenth century still survives.⁴ In 1570 Laurence Radford built Radford Place in St. Leonard's. This was on high ground and eventually became known as Mount Radford. The nucleus of the suburb of St. Leonard's was built on land formerly belonging to the Mount Radford estate and hence the district adopted the name Mount Radford.⁵ Although some of these names are those of properties rather than of houses, they are included as they played an important role in the subsequent pattern of Exeter's house and street names.

¹ Hoskins, 2000, p.139.

² EPNS, PND, Vol.IX, Part II, p.438.

³ Marget Gelling, Place-Names in the Landscape, 1984, p.134.

⁴ EPNS, PND, Vol.IX, Part II, p.437; DRO PW/117 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.130.

⁵ C. Worthy, Suburbs of Exeter, 1892, p.68 sqq.; DRO PW/117 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.19.

Much of Exeter's early suburban development consisted of terraces and crescents where houses were not usually named. However, there were a few exceptions. Southernhay House, the only one in the row to be named, was the grandest. Architecturally it was slightly different and set back from the road with a small drive and a screen of trees - most unusual for this type of development. A name probably added to its distinction. The five houses built in Pennsylvania Crescent around 1820 all eventually acquired names. This may be because they were not in one continuous row as Barnfield Crescent, but were detached and were, at the time of their construction, out in the country in a secluded row at right angles to the main road. Two had names with local connections: Marypole Villa taken from the nearby Marypole Head (Marepoll, 1461, Poll's marsh, probably a boundary pool) and Stokeland Villa, probably from Stoke Hill or Stoke Woods which lay to the north.¹ Sungum Villa is something of a puzzle. In 1845 it was occupied by a Major Arden and it may have been derived from Sungu, an area in the former Congo.² Some detached houses along Pennsylvania Road acquired names, possibly as a means of identification. Although they were mainly rather ordinary ones such as Elliot Cottage, Ibsley Cottage and Crescent House, one was of particular interest: Hoopern House (Hoperneslande, 1225) which may have described a place where barrel hoops were made.³

There were relatively few names recorded during the first quarter of the century - a mere 47 by 1828 - but by the 1840s house building had taken place in most of the suburban areas and a pattern of house naming began to emerge. (Table 7) It is extremely difficult to compare the proportion of named houses in Exeter with those of other towns. Almost all of Exeter's were in the suburbs which lay entirely outside the former city walls; there were scarcely more than half a dozen named houses within the central area. Some other towns

¹ EPNS, PND, Vol. IX, Part II, p. 441.

² Besley, 1845, p.217.

³ EPNS, PND, Vol. IX, Part II, p.436.

appeared to have far more named houses within their central areas. Accurate statistical comparisons cannot be made as the compilation of directories varied. Some carried comprehensive lists of named residences, others did not. There are no relevant records of named houses in Royal Tunbridge Wells, for instance.¹ Figures that are available are, however, of some interest - particularly those of the 'inland resorts'. In the mid 1840s Exeter had a population of around 40,000 (including the suburbs) and of its approximate 6,600 houses 74 had names.² Leamington Spa, about one third the size of Exeter, had only nine house names at that time.³ Cheltenham, on the other hand, whose population equalled that of central Exeter, already had 428 named properties by 1837.⁴ Bath had 91 in the early 1850s.⁵ The paucity of names in Leamington Spa may be accounted for by the fact that by then it was an inland spa in decline.⁶ On the other hand, Bath and Cheltenham were fashionable spa resorts patronised by royalty. The latter's population had increased tenfold during the first half of the nineteenth century during which time Regency Cheltenham developed. Elegant houses were built and many were named after their aristocratic visitors.⁷ Exeter could not compete in this respect.

By mid century Exeter may not have had an abundance of house names, but a number of those in existence then leads to quite interesting speculation. Several of the transferred place-names came from

¹ Correspondence with Kent County Archivist, 3.9.1986 (KAO/G1).

² Census, 1841, 1851.

³ Kelly's Post Office Directory of Birmingham and Warwickshire, 1845, p.652.

⁴ H. Davies, The Cheltenham Annuaire For the Year 1837, *passim*.

⁵ Post Office Directory for the City of Bath, 1854, *passim*.

⁶ T.H. Lloyd, 'Royal Leamington Spa', M.A. Simpson and T.H. Lloyd, eds, Middle Class Housing in Britain, 1977, p.120.

⁷ Census Returns for Cheltenham, 1801-1841; Miles, unpublished thesis, *op. cit.*, p.257.

overseas: Seville Cottage, New York Cottage and Montpellier Cottage (the latter name being much favoured, particularly in resort towns, for both houses and roads). It suggests that the donors of such names had travelled abroad or had overseas links. St. Leonard's had a Radnor Villa in Radnor Place and later a Radnor House and a Radnor Cottage. Possibly the person who named the road originated in Wales. On the other hand there is a town named Radnor in Pennsylvania USA and as the Quaker Joseph Sparkes named his terrace Pennsylvania from this source and this name was later adopted for the surrounding area, there could possibly have been a connection with Radnor USA.

Although there was only one Devon place-name used as a house name in this period, there were at least fifteen that had strong local connections, generally affiliated to the district in which the house was located: hence, St. Leonard's Lawn, Heavitree House, Pennsylvania Cottage and Colleton Villa among others. One of the most interesting of these local references was Sidwella Cottage. Sidwella (or Satviola) was a local saint to whom the parish church of St. Sidwell is dedicated and about whom there were several legends.¹ There were two houses named after wells. Parker's Well House, probably erected by a Thomas Collyns in the early 1750s, was thought to have taken its name from a nearby well known as Parker's Well whose water was celebrated as a cure for sore eyes. Later the name was incorporated into the title of one of its owners, Baron Gifford of Parker's Well.² In St. Thomas's there was a house known as Felix Well. Although this name remained for at least thirty years and a neighbouring dwelling was subsequently named Felix Well Cottage, little seems to be known about it, but as there were two houses which bore its name, the well was probably in existence at the time. Both house names had vanished by the turn of the century. Several local people, presumed to be the owners of either the properties or the land on which they were built,

¹ C. Worthy, Suburbs of Exeter, 1892, p.72.

² DRO PW/116 Parish Records of St. Leonard's, p.47.

had their names on cottages or 'buildings', a practice that was to increase considerably over the next half century - Gatty's Cottage, Hill's Buildings. The Baring family had only one house named after them at this time - Baring Lodge; more came later.

Names derived from nature were extremely popular, even in the very early years. (Table 7) Attention has already been drawn to the ubiquitous house names derived from the rose and Exeter had a Rose Cottage in 1828 and two by 1845, plus a Rosemount Cottage. Roses, of course, are among the favourite garden flowers and a cottage with roses round the door is the ideal for many people. If this cannot be achieved then perhaps an acceptable substitute is a dwelling bearing a name associated with the rose. Almost as popular, and again conforming to general trends in other parts of the country, were names relating to the elm and in 1845 there were three: Elmfield House, Elmfield Cottage and Elm Grove. Exeter had for decades many stands of elms and hence these names were entirely to be expected. The only other tree to be mentioned specifically at this time was the walnut - Walnut Cottage on St. David's Hill. Presumably they had a walnut tree in the garden. Groveland Villa suggested a variety of trees. There was a sprinkling of flower names on cottages - primrose, myrtle and ivy, but the most unusual one concerned with natural elements was Zephyr Cottage. The wind is a popular source for names in the twentieth century, even those giving an unfavourable impression - Windy Ridge, All Wynds, East Winds - but this was not so in earlier periods and to find both a reference to the wind (Zephyr - the personification of the west wind) and in a mythological form was rare for that time.¹ By 1895 the house had been re-named Ivy Bank. Two houses had field names - Spurbarn, built on land known as Spur Barn, and Home Living, about which little can be discovered other than that it was located in Heavitree and occupied by John Brown Esq.² Presumably it was once a small farm. Other house names

¹ Miles, *HNB*, p.35.

² Wood's *Map*, 1840; *Besley*, 1845, p.219.

incorporating the word 'Living' in their names would suggest this: for example Virgin's Living in Middle Chinnock was built on a smallholding belonging to a Mr. Virgin.¹

Two houses bore the name of Albert, the Prince Regent, and there was one Waterloo Cottage, but it was perhaps a little early for ardent patriotism to be displayed on gateposts. The Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition were to come. Victorianism had not reached its zenith.

Great stress has always been laid on the desirability of a good location, as witnessed in many advertisements for the sale of property. The practice of giving advantageous locational names, quite feasible in hilly Exeter, became widespread in later years, but already by mid-century Exeter had two houses named Belmont, a Prospect Cottage, a Hill House and a row named Portview Cottages. One house in St. Leonard's copied the then accurately descriptive eighteenth-century name of Bellair, although the later house was not located in such a favourable position as the original Bellair which stood in spacious grounds high up on the Topsham Road. As was the custom at the time, almost all of the names included 'house', 'cottage', 'villa' or 'lodge'; very few were merely one-word names. There were relatively few houses named in the 1840s; approximately 1.1% of houses in the built-up area, although if Exeter's suburbs alone are considered, the proportion is 2.07% and it may well be that there were house names which were not listed.² From the evidence available the house names in general conformed to the patterns of house naming that had been widespread during the early nineteenth century, but there were one or two interesting exceptions. Although the main categories of transferred place-names and nature were well represented, there was also a strong emphasis on names relating to the location of the house (hardly surprising in view of the nature of the terrain) and names with local connections. Perhaps one or two more

¹ Information supplied by the present owner.

² Statistics based on Besley, 1845.

names from the Baring family might have been expected. Names with local connections continued to play a major role in the pattern of Exeter's house names throughout the century, but the proportion declined over the years as interests widened. (Table 7)

The House Namers

Who were the people who named their houses? This is often difficult to ascertain. Bellair, which dated from the previous century, was named by its owner, John Vowler, a wealthy grocer who chose a highly descriptive name, all the more apt considering the deplorable state of central Exeter at the time.¹ People who lived in very large houses such as Great Duryard and Larkbeare were presumably wealthy and in such cases house naming was synonymous with affluence and social standing. Large houses in spacious grounds needed names as a means of identification. A house with a plaque, or a pair of houses jointly named, suggests that the name was bestowed by the builder, probably to add distinction. Some people accepted the name of the house they moved to; others changed it. A name incised in stonework, as many were, is, of course, both difficult and expensive to change. A name appearing in a directory for the first time is no guarantee that it was newly acquired. Conversely, a name disappearing from a directory does not mean that the name had vanished; the residents did not wish to use it. Apart from the gentlemen in the very large houses, of the people living in the more ordinary named houses in Exeter in 1845 thirty were described as 'esquire'; fourteen were married ladies (presumed to be widows) and eight were serving officers, including a general and a lieutenant colonel. There were three spinsters and one titled lady. In Portview Cottages, presumed to have been named by the builder, lived a stationer and an artist. Eight people described as 'Mr.'

¹ Hoskins, 2000, p.83.

resided in named cottages, although it cannot be assumed that 'cottage' implied a smaller dwelling than 'house' and indeed some dwellings originally referred to as 'cottage' acquired the suffix 'house'. An instance of this is Walnut Cottage, home of an 'esq.' in 1845, which by 1875 had become Walnut House. It can only be presumed that the new owner preferred the perhaps grander-sounding title of 'house'. Several householders in named houses in Mount Radford in 1845 were listed as 'Mrs'; presumably they were widows of sufficient means to maintain a middle-class establishment. From the evidence available, it is suggested that at least two-thirds of the named properties were occupied by middle-class people with reasonable incomes. At the same time, many wealthy and successful people lived in the elegant terraces and crescents where the houses were not named. There is no evidence to suggest that the small dwellings of the working class bore individual names at this time.'

The House Names of Suburban Exeter: The Later Years

By the mid-1870s the number of houses in the suburbs had risen by some 40% since the 1840s, but the number of house names recorded had increased by 284%.² There were now at least 284 house names and approximately 6% of suburban houses were named compared with some 2% in the 1840s. The main categories of names remained, but a few more were added. As in 1845, the majority came within four groups: transferred place-names, nature, names descriptive of location and names with local connections. (Table 7)

In the broad category which encompasses all the names that

¹ Besley, *passim*.; Census, 1841.

² Census, 1871.

stemmed from nature, those derived from trees outnumbered the others. Twenty-one had specific trees names - The Birches, The Cedars, The Laurels, The Oaks and similar; five were related to elm trees (some of which were still in existence from earlier decades, for instance Elmfield House) thus continuing the popularity of this derivation. Four involved the word 'grove', including The Grove and Grove Cottage, which had overtones of a varied collection of trees. Indeed houses built on the field known as The Grove in Mount Radford subsequently became noted for the very wide variety of trees in their gardens.¹ Flower or plant names accounted for nineteen, and here the most popular was not, as might well have been expected, the rose, but the ivy, a pleasant, short name undoubtedly reflecting the creeper that adorned the properties. There were, nevertheless, four rose-related names, continuing the interest in this popular source. Two cottages bore the general flower name of Flora Cottage (although this could have been a personal forename).

Whereas foreign place-names, or names with foreign connections, formed 44% of the house names in the transferred place-names category in 1845, by 1875 the proportion was only 27.6%, the majority being derived from the UK. However, there were so few names in 1845 that no real conclusions can usefully be drawn from this trend. Relatively few in 1875 were Devon names - Exmouth, Bystock, Discombe, Branscombe and Devonian; obviously the other forty-two house names in this category were looking further afield. Their choice may have been influenced by any one of several factors - retirement, family connections or a reminder of a holiday. A number of the names came from Bristol or Somerset - Clevedon and Lansdowne Villas, Pilton House and Clifton House - and the remainder came from towns and villages scattered throughout the country. Some no doubt were the choice of the builders and names such as Clifton and Lansdowne, then currently fashionable, might have been thought to add overtones of sophistication. Although those based on foreign place-names

¹ Newton, MCH, p.39.

were largely European - for example Venice Villas and Lucerne - and may have resulted from holidays abroad, some names were from much further afield than in past decades. There were now several from the United States, Canada and Australia. These could suggest links with emigrants who, in turn, may well have taken Devon place-names with them for their new homes. There were several houses named from places connected with great houses or castles. Donors may have wished to impart something of the dignity of these historic buildings by choosing Woburn, Windsor and Hampton; on the other hand they may have been used purely as transferred place-names, a major source of house naming, as has been indicated. Of the names from the London area one is of particular interest as it replaced Duryard Lodge. This house had been built by Phineas Cheeke, Esq., a native of Exeter, who held a lucrative post in the stamp office in London, hence it was known locally as Mount Stamp.¹ In 1866 this ornate lodge was sold to Richard Thornton West, a merchant trading in the East Indies who had inherited over a million pounds from his uncle, Richard Thornton who, it is believed, had made his fortune by blockade-running in the Napoleonic wars. The old house was largely demolished and Thornton West built a Victorian Italianate house on the site. Instead of retaining the original name or using some local source he called it Streatham Hall. It had a south-facing slope and trees were brought from all the temperate regions of the world thereby laying the foundations of what is today an extremely beautiful botanical garden.² Obviously Thornton West was interested in gardens and thus a house name from a horticultural or a botanical source might have been expected and would certainly have been appropriate. Why he chose the name of a village in Surrey, later to become a London suburb, is not known. He left no heir so there seems little hope of discovering the reason for his choice.³

¹ A. Jenkins, Civil and Ecclesiastical History of the City of Exeter, 1841 edn, p.350.

² John Caldwell, The Grounds and Gardens of the University of Exeter, 1969, p.5.

³ Ibid., p.5.

There was now a wider variety of houses with what might be termed 'locational' names: Basin Cottage (on the canal basin), Hillside, Southlands, Salutory Cottages, Uplands: several more had acquired 'view' names: Haldon View, Midview Cottages and one all-encompassing View Villa. There were three Prospect Cottages and two Picturesque Villas (although the latter were located very close to St. David's station). Alpha Villa was a misleading name as it was in the middle of a row. Either it was unthinkingly named after Alphington Road wherein it was located, or it was the first to be built. At least six houses were named after the street in which they had been built. Fourteen bore field names. These included Fair Park House, Hillyfield, Bury Meadow House and Summerland Cottage. Several houses had names such as Springfield and Brookfield, but these may have been descriptive rather than actual field names. Velwell Villas were located near land once known as Velwell Meadow. The name comes from an old spring that flows here, recorded in a thirteenth-century deed as "fealu-wielle, the pale brown spring".¹

Four houses bore foreign expressions, mainly of the 'bel' variety such as Belle Vue House. Although there were no new references to mythology, two more cottages had acquired the name Zephyr. The idea of using a house name as an indication that a home is a place of rest and seclusion is today fairly common in names such as The Hermitage, The Moorings or The Anchorage, but by 1875 only one of this type had appeared in Exeter - The Retreat. Another fashion that was to become very popular towards the end of the century was giving a house a personal name, presumably the forename of one of the residents and already there were a few in Exeter - Maria Villa, Clare Cottage and Mona Lodge (the last being the diminutive of a name meaning 'noble').² By 1875 Exeter had its

¹ Hoskins, 2000, p.150.

² George R. Stewart, American Given Names, 1979, p.195.

first Sunnyside, a name which later became extremely popular throughout the world for many decades. Another example of a later universally-used name was The Bungalow. This 1870s example must have been well to the forefront in usage as the first bungalow was not built in the UK until 1869.¹ It is possible that the owners of the Exeter bungalow had once lived in India.

Historical references gained in favour, although they tended to be of general historical interest perhaps because many of the house namers were newcomers to the area who would have little interest in Exeter's particular history. One rare reference was Isca Villa derived from the old name for Exeter, Isca Dumuniorum.² Some historical references survived from previous decades, especially those relating to Albert and Victoria. With the increasing interest in the queen, names such as Osborne House, the name of Queen Victoria's residence built in 1845 on the Isle of Wight,³ were now being adopted by suburban residents. Alma Cottage commemorated the Crimean battle of 1854 and this name appeared nationwide on houses for the rest of the century. Albion had, in former years, been used to name roads; now it became a house name too. Sydney Cottage and Sydney House were located in Sydney Place in St. Thomas's, but there was another Sydney House in Blackboy Road and it raises the interesting question of whether they were named from the city of Sydney in Australia or the Sydney family. Sydney Cove was named in 1770 by Captain Arthur Phillip, the first governor of New South Wales, after the Secretary of State for Home and Colonies, Thomas Townsend, the first Viscount Sydney. The name was later passed to the state capital. It has not been possible yet to trace any connection between Exeter and Viscount Sydney or Sir Phillip Sidney, so the reasons for selecting these names (and both spellings were

¹ Anthony King, The Bungalow, Part 2, Architectural Association Quarterly, Vol.5, No.4, 1973, p.65.

² Ekwall, DEPN, p.163.

³ R. Dixon and S. Muthesius, eds, Victorian Architecture, 1978, p.35.

used) remain unidentified. Another rather unusual choice was that of Havelock Cottage, presumed to be after Sir Henry Havelock, the English general who relieved Lucknow in 1857 which, at the time of naming, was probably very topical.¹ By the 1870s there had been a proliferation of cottages and buildings named after the builders or owners, for example Grant's Buildings and Burgoyne's Cottages, and such names are a useful historical record.

By the end of the 1870s transferred place-names and nature were the two most popular sources. The latter may have been due to an increasing awareness that more houses were encroaching on formerly open space and thereby the nature of the environment was changing from rural to urban, or it may have been merely a desire to retain something of rus in urbe. For whatever reason, many people had a wish to incorporate ideas of trees and flowers in their house names. Some of the names, although based on nature, had suburban overtones: Groveland, The Shrubbery, and all the tree names were prefixed by 'the' (The Oaks, The Hollies) which suggested privately owned trees belonging to a specific plot rather than trees in the wild. Whether it was a deliberate attempt at cleverness or merely coincidence is not known, but a timber merchant lived at The Cedars. It was a little early for conscious attempts to link employment with house names; a helicopter designer living at Choppers and an electrician living at Megohm were a century away. Nevertheless, apart from the cottages already mentioned relating to the railway, a house named The Quarries was located opposite Pocombe Quarries and named as such by 1875.

In previous times most names had 'house', 'cottage', 'villa' or 'lodge' incorporated therein, but now the single name began to appear, although not in any great quantity: Oakwood, Hazlewood, Sunnyside, Lanrothal and Culverland were a few examples of a type which would become increasingly popular in later years. There were

¹ Dictionary of National Biography, 1897, Vol. III, p.219 and Vol. LV, p.255.

many more smaller houses being built and perhaps it was felt less appropriate to name a small house Park Villa or Oak Lodge. A single name may have been thought to be less pretentious. On the other hand, it may have been the beginning of a change in fashion. The two-word name had been popular for a great many years. People may have just been seeking a new type of name in a similar manner to those desiring new types of clothes or furniture. Directional names were increasing: North Park, East Cottage. It was surprising to find so few Devonshire names. There was a wealth of beautiful villages and geographical locations to provide inspiration, but the newcomers may not have been from the immediate neighbourhood as mobility had been considerably facilitated by improved transport. For some unknown reason names from Bristol and Dorset were much favoured. Others came from as far afield as Scotland, Cornwall and Kent. The locational names were largely favourably descriptive. 'Fair' began to appear in manufactured names such as Fairbank. The overseas names suggested an increase in foreign travel or family links with many parts of the world. In general the house names were pleasant, appropriate and similar to those found in many towns throughout the country.¹ Few were really remarkable.

The Last Decade The Names Increase in Number

Statistics show that interest in house naming continued even though many houses with names were also numbered and therefore such names were not given as a necessary means of identification. Between 1875 and 1895 the number of names increased by 189%, rising from 284 in 1875 to 820 in 1895, an increase in the overall proportion of named suburban houses from approximately 6% in 1875 to 11% in 1895.

¹ Miles, unpublished thesis, op. cit., passim.

Well over half the names fell into three main categories: transferred place-names (26.9%), names derived from nature (20.1%) and names that gave some indication of location, either from the point of view of the position of the houses or the roads in which they stood (15.2%). (Table 7)

Apart from the actual name Devon (Devon Cottage, Devonian) the proportion of Devon place-names being used had risen from 8% in 1875 to 12%. There was considerable interest in the use of Scottish place-names. This was a trend also noticed in other towns, particularly Walsall, during the latter part of the nineteenth century.¹ Presumably people were more easily able to travel to places of scenic beauty such as Scotland. Interest still remained in Queen Victoria and her residences. Although one house was named Holyrood after the former residence of Scottish kings, Balmoral itself was not then used as a house name. Was it perhaps considered to be too presumptuous? Later there were no such scruples. Some of these houses may have been named by emigrant Scots and the novels of Sir Walter Scott, favoured in themselves as a house name source, may have kept alive an interest in Scotland. Other transferred place-names came from many parts of the country. Lamorna, Penrhyn and Highbury were duplicated and there were several houses named Stafford, which could have been derived from the prominent local Stafford Northcote family or from one of several places of that name. Neighbouring counties of Somerset, Dorset and Cornwall provided, among others, St. Just, St. Germans Villa and Camborne. Migration is the likely factor in some of these choices. An unusual one was Wulfruna, more familiar around Wolverhampton where the manor was given in 985 to a lady named Wulfrun.² Almost 28% of the transferred place-names were of foreign origin; a

¹ Miles, unpublished thesis, op. cit., p.233.

² Ekwall, DEPN, p.505.

similar proportion to those in existence in 1875. It is impossible to be sure of the exact source when a name occurs in more than one country. For example, Ellerslie Villa - was it one of the Australian Ellerslies or one of the American Ellerslies? Who can say? At least sixteen overseas countries were represented and four times as many names apparently came from the United States as from any other country. There may have been a certain amount of 'romance' generated by the ships steaming across the Atlantic. In St. Thomas's there were neighbouring houses named Galveston House and Texan House, which strongly suggests they were both named by someone, possibly the owner, who had strong connections with the United States. It can probably be assumed that names emanating from India and parts of Africa such as the Congo were chosen by people who had served in the Army, the Colonial Service or one of the big trading companies. (Other retirement towns displayed names from these sources).¹ One, probably unique, Loma-Loma, came from Fiji. A choice of a European place-name, and there were at least 11, could be accounted for by foreign travel which was steadily becoming more readily available.

The next most favoured source was that of nature and here 18 of the 165 in this group had some connection with the elm, which, as already discussed, has always been the most used of the tree names. There was a wide variety of tree names; at least one each from birch, beech, walnut, willow, poplar, accacia, cypress and chestnut; seven from laurels (five actually being The Laurels); seven from oaks, although there was more variety here - Oakhurst, Oakland as well as The Oaks; four were The Cedars and four were The Hollies. There was a Burnt Oak next to a Burnt Ash. Occasionally houses with such names have the remnants of ancient trees in the garden. For instance, Burnt Oak in Oxford has a 400-year old hollow oak where allegedly drunks were once locked up.² As both the Exeter names

¹ Miles, unpublished thesis, *op. cit.*, p.270.

² Information supplied by the owner.

disappeared around the turn of the century it has not been possible to ascertain their origins. Ashleigh was next to Elmsleigh, with Oak Villa nearby. All these three sources were in Okehampton Road and although the name has nothing to do with trees the sound may have subconsciously suggested them. Even more frequently chosen than the elm, and again true to fashion, the rose provided 25 names; nine straightforward Rose Cottages, others with a variety of suffixes including Roseleigh, Roseneath, Roseland and Rosewood. Next in favour came the ivy with ten; four Vine Cottages and then single examples from a fairly limited range of flowers including the daisy, magnolia, wisteria and myrtle (the last of long-standing popularity). Ferns were selected here as frequently as in other parts of the country and there were nine from this source with various endings, including Fernleigh and Fernville. Another combination name which appeared all over the country towards the end of the century, Exeter included, was Thornleigh (Thornlea). This may have been thought to have religious overtones. There were many houses throughout the country with "glen" names, a word which may indicate a valley, although houses so named could be found considerable distances from any suggestion of the romance of Scotland. It was often used indiscriminately attached to other words. Exeter had Glenrose, Glenthorne and Glenoak and although all these were, in fact, overseas place-names, it is suggested that they were selected as fashionable names rather than having some particular significance. 'Glen' names with a variety of suffixes could be found countrywide: Glenwood and Glendene in Stafford; Glenroyd in many towns and villages in the north; Glenavon in Taunton.¹ The remaining names in this section were fairly straightforward and of no special interest - for example Moss Grove, Springdale - pleasant but unexciting. Houses named after birds were unusual during this period and whilst Exeter had five, they were all named after the eagle. This could have been pure coincidence or a local fashion

¹ Goodman's Guide and Directory of Taunton, 1887, p.169.

whose origin has not so far come to light. Some of the houses so named had large stone eagles or plaques denoting eagles adorning their fronts. (Plate 19) Lion House remained from an earlier period and for a short while there was a Dolphin House, but throughout the period under review they remained the sole representatives of the animal kingdom.

The last of the major categories related to the location of the house. Such names often took the form of a house name directly related to the road in which it was located - Colleton Crescent House, Dixfield House - and as more streets were constructed so more houses with this type of name appeared. By the end of the nineteenth century there were many more houses with names indicating location - Bridge House, Mile End Cottage - but some were less specific - Endmead, Omega Villa, Halfway House and The Knoll for example. The importance of the view both in naming and in advertising has already been discussed. By now it was even more important and Exeter had at least 22 houses with names denoting views of one kind or another; for example a panoramic view - Pinhoe View, Haldon View and City View; an attractive view - Castle View and Exe View; or what might today be thought to be less desirable - Station View. This constituted some 2.7% of all the names; by comparison Leamington Spa had 0.86% and Bath 2.5%.' Both Exeter and Bath's hilliness were conducive to such names.

Interest in historically derived names was sustained, particularly by those relating to the royal family: Victoria, Albert and Osborne were much in evidence. One or two new historically based names appeared including Cromwell Villa, Trafalgar Cottage, Raleigh Lodge and Collingwood House. The latter was re-named in the 1880s; prior to that it had been Belmont. Whether or not it had any connection with Admiral Collingwood who became Chief Commander on the death of Nelson is not known, but his cousin, Captain

' Kelly's Directory for Warwickshire, 1888, p.131 sqq.;
H.S. Wooster ed., Post Office Bath Directory, 1888-9,
p.448 sqq.



Plate 19 Stone eagle on a house
in Heavitree

Collingwood, had lived nearby in 1805 and there may have been a family connection to merit the choice.' Collingwood has been a much favoured name for houses and private hotels for decades.

Many more house names consisting of either forenames or surnames appeared. This may have been because of an increasing trend in home ownership and a desire to display a name that indicated a strong personal link with a property. The forenames were indicative of names then in common use - Edith Villa, Eva Cottage, Brenda Villas. Female names were favoured. Whereas in those days men tended to play a dominant role in home ownership this may, even subconsciously, have been a way of redressing the balance and suggesting joint ownership. It was becoming fashionable to manufacture a house name by using a personal name with a suitable ending, hence Mayville, Maylands, Dennysmead. There were several examples during this period of a trend that was to be taken to extremes in later years - that of using the owner's surname to form a house name. For example, there were two Osborne Houses; one presumably a historical reference, the other from the inhabitants, the Osborne family. William Rayner Best lived at Rayner Villa, Horace Beevor at Beauvoir, the Misses Florence, Amy and Minnie Ross at Rossmore and William Allen at Allendale. Such names displayed pride in ownership and perhaps some indication of middle-class dynastic ambitions. William Ash lived at Oak Cottage and it seems highly likely that humour was intended as it was the only named cottage in a road of twenty-six.

The number of houses now dedicated to saints had doubled. All those noted in 1875 remained and among those added to the list were St. Clare, St. Michael and St. Mary, the last two also being the dedications of two Exeter churches. The use of the word 'sunny' was

' T. Falla, 'Heavitree', No.3 of a series Discovering Exeter, Exeter Civic Society, 1983, p.19.

occasionally found from the 1850s onwards, but did not achieve its universal popularity until the latter part of the nineteenth century. Exeter had one Sunnyside in 1875; by 1895 there were three and four more in similar vein: Sunnybank, Sunny View and two Sunnymedes. Every area has a number of unusual names, although there were fewer in existence around the turn of the century than in later years. Exeter had several examples: Bend Or House (possibly a heraldic reference), Compass House, Salutation Cottages and one which was quite extraordinary - Fant House, Fant being one of the Sudanic-speaking people of what was then the Gold Coast of West Africa. Presumably the owner had served there in some capacity. One name which survived for over thirty years was Mandrake House. Why anyone should wish to name a house after a poisonous plant alleged to shriek when plucked is puzzling, although in some areas of the world it used to be thought to promote fertility. Most probably the reference is to Donne's Song.¹ The name Taddiford Court has survived for over a hundred years. This was taken from the Taddiford (Taddyforde) brook "the toad or frog frequented ford" which flows across St. David's Hill near to the property which was built during the 1870s.²

An interest in house names derived from the arts was now apparent. Several had literary connections - Abbotsford (Sir Walter Scott's estate), Haidee from Byron's Don Juan and Elsinore which is assumed to be a Shakespearean reference but as the house was occupied by a master mariner it could simply be a transferred place-name.³ The real interest in names based on books did not arrive until well into the twentieth century. For perhaps the

¹ Maria Leach, op. cit., p.671; A.J. Smith, ed., John Donne, The Complete English Poems, 1971, p.77.

² EPNS, PND, Vol.VIII, Part I, 1931, p.13.

³ T.G. Steffan, E.Steffan and W.W. Pratt, eds, Byron's Don Juan, Canto II, Stanza 128, 1978 edn, p.134.

first time in Exeter music provided a source with Zingara (meaning gypsy) which could have come from La Zingara, an opera by Donizetti dating from 1822, and Iolanthe from the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.¹ Both productions may well have been staged in Exeter as theatre played an important part in late nineteenth-century social life.

As already shown, the use of names relating to occupations was rare until the 1880s. Ferry House and Railway Cottages were quite appropriate, but Navy Cottages were curiously named as in 1895 masons, painters and others similarly employed lived there.² There was no obvious link with the Royal Navy unless the owner had a service connection.

The Rise of the 'General' Category

There is a category of house names which can only be described as general and until the 1890s very few house names in Exeter came into it. Until then most names were meaningful or purposeful, often inspired by the environment, but from the latter part of the nineteenth century when an increasing number of houses were named, 'manufactured' names appeared in large numbers. One of the most frequently concocted involved the word 'fair'. Two have already been noted in the 1870s, but by 1895 there were at least eight, excluding Fair Park House which took its name from a field.³ The others relied on suffixes to distinguish them - Fairmead, Fairlea, Faircombe being typical examples. 'Holme' was another element which rapidly became over-used in producing artificial names and, it is suspected, more often than not, mis-used since it means a small island, a piece of land partly surrounded by streams, or a piece of

¹ S. Sadie, ed., The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5, 1980 edn, p.564.

² Besley, 1895, p.67.

³ DRO ECA Chamber Map Book, c. 1756.

dry land in a fen. It appears in many cases to have been used as an alternative spelling to 'home' and hence Holmleigh (Holmlea) adorned gateposts throughout the country. Supposedly it was intended to convey simple, domestic comfort, but it was probably felt more appropriate to use these rather grander manufactured names than the actual word 'homely', although occasionally Homelea appeared. This type of name was usually found on houses in terraces and Exeter had two Holmleighs in 1895, neither of which was on an island; a few years later there were five houses with this name. Other variants were Homeland, Holmewood and Homedale. Holmoak (Ilex Querus), which would have been appropriate in Exeter, was absent. This Mediterranean tree, introduced into Britain in the sixteenth century, had become increasingly fashionable, particularly in the south-west.¹ There were many in Exeter and it would have made an appropriate and euphonious house name. Occasionally the element 'home' was incorporated with other popular prefixes: Glenholme, Fairholm, Ingleholm, all equally inappropriate. For those who sought inspiration in vain The Cottage or The Lodge sufficed, but The House as a name has not yet been encountered. (Reference has already been made to the Spanish and Portuguese word quinta (country house) introduced into Devon as a house name in the eighteenth century). Once bungalows began to be built in large numbers then The Bungalow was adopted as a name. The first dwelling to be described as a bungalow was built in 1869 on the Kent coast, but this architectural style did not spread inland to any great extent until the late 1880s when R.A. Briggs built an estate of bungalows in East Grinstead.² Exeter was therefore in the forefront with The Bungalow by 1895; by the early 1920s there were at least eleven dwellings so named and hundreds throughout the country.

¹ G. Grigson, A Dictionary of English Plant Names, 1974, p.109.

² Anthony King, op. cit., p.65; John Burnett, A Social History of Housing, 1815-1970, 1978, p.208.

Naming by Builders

Some builders were obviously proud of their contribution to improved housing standards and this pride was manifested in plaques bearing either their names or their initials. A good example is "Progress Villas built by JE 1888". The JE was John F. Ellis, a plumber of Heavitree, who built the crowded, working-class Regent Square which also bore an incised plaque with his initials on it. It has been suggested that he made money from this development which enabled him to build Progress Villas and occupy one of them.¹ It could well be that the word 'progress' referred to his own particular financial or social position rather than an improvement in building standards, although the fashion for house names being used to indicate an owner's pecuniary state (Nowimbroke, Skynt) had not yet arrived. It seems that this builder was interested in house names as the end cottage in Regent Square had an incised plaque - Lilly Cottage - an unusual and unexpected occurrence in a group of very poor-quality houses such as these. Had he not prospered he may have intended to live there himself.

The inclusion of plaques led to the over-use of house naming in two short roads built in the mid-1880s in Heavitree. They were unimaginatively named North Avenue and South Avenue and each group of houses (some two, some as many as six) had its own name. There was no particular pattern to the naming - Cyprus Villas, Richmond Villas, Rosewood Villas - the names came from a variety of categories. However, some individual houses also had names. This led to complicated addresses exemplified by one resident, Richard Trevithick, of Highland Villa, Floristan Villas, South Avenue, Polsloe Road, Heavitree, Exeter.² From the precise way in which each group of villas was named by means of an incised plaque

¹ Falla, *op. cit.*, p.34.

² Besley, 1895, p.101.

for the group name, it would appear that these were given by the builder, but as not all the houses bore individual names as well, the owners presumably added their own choice. This was somewhat unusual, but some people may have disliked the group name and wished to have a name of their own choosing. The names of the roads themselves were dull and characterless and the houses were located close to the Workhouse and two brickyards, factors which may have contributed to householders' determination to ensure their houses bore marks of individuality.

The Early Twentieth Century

By 1907, the end of the period under review, there were at least 956 house names in Exeter's suburbs. Excluding the half dozen that were name changes, the total number of names increased by some 15.9% between 1895 and 1907, but the great increase in house naming did not come until after World War I. Some of these early twentieth-century additional names were occasioned by the development of new roads of middle-class houses and others by the choice of a name for a house hitherto unnamed. Some houses underwent name changes: Hillsden became Rokeby, a Yorkshire place-name or a reference to Scott; Westwood was formerly Skiddaw; Rayner Villa (named after Rayner Best) changed hands and the name, no longer appropriate, was altered to Durley Lodge (which suggests Hampshire connections). In general the names being selected at the beginning of the twentieth century conformed to the patterns in vogue during previous decades; the real changes did not come until the 1920s. The largest group of names (29.3%) came from transferred place-names with more than three times as many from Britain as from overseas. Names from nature accounted for 19.1%, those derived from location for 15%, local connections for 7.6% and the remainder were a miscellaneous assortment. Of these, one or two are worthy of

note as they were the forerunners of fashions that became very popular during the next few decades. One is the incorporation of an architectural feature into a house name and one of the first in Exeter was Seven Gables, the name of a large house in Pennsylvania. The misspelling Korna House was an early attempt at a form of humour which proliferated in later years. Further changes in some of the styles of house names were perceptible. Whereas previously the usual suffix was 'ville' (Woodville, Roseville) there was an increasing use of 'dale' and 'dene', both implying 'valley': Oakdene, Ivydale, Olivedale - not always appropriately located. This suggests that the names, as with those using the suffix/prefix 'holme', were chosen without reference to their real meaning but merely to conform to contemporary fashion and perhaps to impart a suggestion of rurality.

A Century of House Naming

Although any statistics quoted must, of necessity, be approximate as there were probably house names in use that were not recorded, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that as Exeter's suburban development increased the proportion of named houses increased. Clearly there was a desire to name a property even when such a name was not strictly necessary for the purpose of identification. The fact that some groups of named villas acquired their own individual names in addition reinforces this conclusion. There are no accurate records of house names; gazetteers and directories are the main source, but they are selective records and do not include all the houses. Furthermore, there are many examples of small terrace houses listed in directories with numbers only, but which have names incised on plaques inserted during the course of building. Exeter's early nineteenth-century directories carried few house names, merely those of the large mansions. However, by 1845 directories were more comprehensive and a clearer picture emerged. By that time there were 74 named properties in the suburbs

and very few in the central area. It is very difficult to compare this figure with those available for other towns. It would be pointless to compare Exeter with an industrial town such as Walsall; both the social groups and the types of houses of the latter were different. It might, however, be reasonable to compare Exeter with other towns of similar size or those which might be classed as 'inland resorts'. York and Exeter were approximately similar in size for the first half of the nineteenth century but York had far fewer house names on record - merely three in 1828 and fifteen in 1843. In the 1830s Cheltenham had more than five times as many house names as Exeter but this was a fashionable spa resort enjoying royal patronage - a town where its wealthy clientele could 'see and be seen' in the pump room, gardens and promenades and it may well have been fashionable to have a named residence in which to give smart parties. Exeter, of course, was much less of a resort town and both the type of people it attracted and their financial standing were rather different. On the other hand, Bath, also a much favoured spa resort, had slightly fewer house names than Exeter even by the 1850s - 91 compared with Exeter's 94. More might well have been expected. The paucity of house names in Leamington Spa (9 in 1845) probably reflected its status as an inland spa in decline. There are no records available for Royal Tunbridge Wells and Harrogate had fewer than 3,500 people in 1851.¹

The pattern of naming in Exeter conformed in general to the broad patterns of naming found elsewhere in the country and here, as elsewhere, the actual formation of names changed over the years. Whereas early nineteenth-century names were invariably accompanied by 'house', 'villa', 'cottage' or 'lodge', by the end of the century

¹ Census, 1851; Pigot's Yorkshire Directory, 1828-9, pp.1132-1133; W.H. Smith, City of York Directory, 1843, pp.28-80; H. Davies, Cheltenham Annuaire, 1837, *passim*; Post Office Directory for the City of Bath, 1854, *passim*; Kelly's Post Office Directory of Birmingham and Warwickshire, 1845, p.652; Lloyd, *op. cit.* p.120; Correspondence with the Kent County Archivist, 1986.

there were far more single names: Ashleigh, Endmead, Glenoak. By the 1870s there was an increasing use of 'the', particularly preceding a tree-based name: The Elms, The Cedars, and invariable with the purely descriptive The Cottage, The Lodge. By the beginning of the twentieth century this device was less popular. The early use of 'villa' continued - Rose Villa, Fern Villa - and the change in use of this word has already been discussed. If 'villa' was intended to imply superiority, then those using a house name to add distinction to a property might well choose this form. There was a fashion for some years of putting 'villa' in front of a name and Exeter had Villa Rouge and Villa Tarifa. This is a practice much favoured in continental Europe. Certain names, particularly those with foreign suffixes, are more euphonious preceded by 'villa'; others are quite the contrary. Rouge Villa is awkward, Villa Bath is inconceivable. One house name was almost a contradiction in terms; Villa Cottage, although perhaps it conveys something of the aspirations of the owner. Later the word 'villa' became less popular and '-ville' was preferred - Roseville and Fernville. Although misused, 'villa' suggested at least a detached house with some land; perhaps '-ville', a term which had connotations with 'villa', was considered a diminutive and therefore more suitable on a small terraced or semi-detached property. But its use was not always confined to small houses; a huge ornate residence in one of Exeter's most prestigious districts was named Tracyville in the 1880s. Perhaps the suffix was accepted without question at the time; purpose-built towns, for example Bournville, had adopted it although here the connotation was different. Present-day attitudes to it may have been influenced by the recent slang associations with pop music (oldsville, dragsville) which have done little for its image. The popularity of the word 'cottage' in conjunction with the name of a flower may well have been an attempt to emphasize the idea of rus-in-urbe. Indeed, Tiverton had a Rus-in-Urbe Villa in 1850.¹

¹ Loudon, op. cit., p. 763; A.E. Edwards, The Design of Suburbia, 1981, p.13; White's Devon, 1850, p.317.

Both in Exeter and in other parts of the country the most consistently popular category of house names was the transferred place-name. Many of Exeter's transferred place-names came from outside Devon. This suggests several hypotheses: people were travelling more widely; there were family or social links with places scattered throughout the country; immigration was an important feature. As it is impossible to establish who selected these house names, reasons for their choice will, in the majority of cases, now remain unknown. Many could have been selected merely as ideal names; ones that sounded euphonious or conjured up idyllic locations: Glencoe, Lamorna. Perhaps the concept of selecting an 'ideal' name accounts for the quite extraordinary popularity of Claremont, originally the name given to a property in Surrey by the Earl of Clare in 1714.¹ It appeared throughout the country as a house name from at least the early part of the nineteenth century. Cheltenham had Claremont Cottage and Claremont Lodge before 1820.² Exeter had three by 1874. Names such as Belgrave, Grosvenor and Carlton in various forms were also much favoured, but this was probably a desire for superiority by association with elegant London squares and roads bearing these names. Not so Claremont. It originated much earlier; it did not belong to the capital city. The theory of idealism is the only one that can be offered at present.

Some of the builders who named their terraces or groups of houses may have been pandering to the aspirations of grandeur of their clients, or indeed may themselves have had such tastes. Several groups of Exeter houses came into this category: Carlton Villas, Venice Villas, Lansdowne Villas and Claremont Houses, one of which was additionally named Claremont Villa. Some builders may have felt that by fixing a plaque on a group of houses bearing a name of their own choice they had left a long-lasting personal mark.

¹ Ekwall, DEPN., p.104.

² G.A. Underwood, Lithographic Plan of the Town of Cheltenham, 1820, located in Cheltenham Local History Library.

More likely, however, it was merely a selling device and an aristocratic name was deemed to be attractive to a superior type of buyer.

The Significance of Naming

Idyllic names encompassed some of those based on nature, particularly those with pastoral, floral overtones - Daisy Mount, Rosebank, Laburnum Cottage - particularly when found on suburban houses. Exeter had many examples, some rather incongruous; a cottage next door to Exeter Water Works named Hazlewood was a little optimistic. More realistic was the use of the word 'lawn': Spring Lawn, Baring Lawn - appropriate names in a suburban setting, suggesting limited areas of mown grass. Although many names were derived from nature they tended to infer organized gardens and cultivated flowers, trees and shrubs rather than suggest nature in the wild. Wishes for good fortune or deliberate invocations of supernatural powers in names such as The Amulet, Mizpah and Nirvana were mid-twentieth century inventions; earlier, people sought protection in dedications to saints. Exeter had twenty-two houses bearing saints' names by the beginning of the twentieth century.

All house names are denotative and indicate the building to which they refer. Unlike many forms of naming, a house name is transitory; it can be changed or discarded at will. Unlike a place-name it has not developed over the centuries and changed in formation. In a sense many house names have no real meaning. Whereas the name of the city of Oxford was derived from 'ford for oxen', Oxford Villa means nothing of the kind.' Therefore, it is suggested, house names are being used in an entirely different sense. Greenfields is probably chosen to suggest rurality; the fact that the nearest green field is some distance away is irrelevant. Eboracum belongs in York; its use on a house

¹ Ekwall, DEPN, p.338.

in Exeter or Rawtenstall has a different implication. Isca is appropriate in Exeter as it links the house with Isca Dumuniorum; used elsewhere it might suggest that the donor was a native of Exeter. House names must be regarded in a totally different way from other kinds of naming. They can be connotative, or at least partially so. Fairbank was on a slope and, doubtless in the eyes of the householder, a pleasant dwelling. Houses named from land on which they were built - Spurbarn, Culverland, Bury Meadow House - can claim to be connotative. The two houses in Exeter named Rougemont may well have been named from the castle with the desire to be associated with a local landmark of historic importance; on the other hand, they may well have had red soil and steep gardens. This name may have even fulfilled both criteria. It is somewhat difficult to determine why people wish to name houses after battles unless the properties are adjacent to the sites where fighting took place. The examples quoted from the village of Cropredy are comprehensible as they are reminders of the battle that took place there in 1644. Cromwell Cottage at Marston Moor or Edge Hill would be readily understood, but Cromwell Villa in a group of houses in Exeter already named Fern Villas does not at first make sense. Similarly, Waterloo Cottage in Wellington Street would be appropriate, but a Waterloo Cottage in Pennsylvania in 1875 is perhaps less so, unless at the time of naming there was fervent patriotism, less likely more than half a century after the event. By then there was perhaps an element of romanticism or folklore. There could, of course, have been family reasons for the choice.

There are a number of fairly straightforward names whose frequency of use is quite extraordinary and, in some cases, unaccountable. Among these are Belmont, Lyndhurst, Lyndale, Mona Cottage and Montpellier House/Cottage. Belmont suggests an airy location with extensive views, but why this should be far more popular in the nineteenth century than, say, Mount Pleasant is not immediately apparent. Montpellier, widespread in use from the 1820s suggested the romance of the Riviera, then only accessible to wealthy travellers, but why did this name account for far more house

and road names than Nice or Lucerne? Did it sound more romantic or more superior? Lyndhurst (lime-tree wooded hill)' is a pleasant small town in the New Forest, but it is difficult to see why this place-name should be selected for house and road names in preference to its neighbours Ringwood or Lymington, more especially in districts where the possibility of slopes clad in lime trees was highly unlikely. In all probability many such names were chosen because they 'sounded good'. The innocuous name of Lyndale has appeared in a wide variety of residential areas for over a hundred years. Its popularity cannot readily be accounted for. There were three houses so named in Exeter in 1907 and many more throughout the country. There is a Lyndale Point in Skye, but as a tourist attraction (doubtful in the nineteenth century) it could not, even now, be said to be as universally familiar as other Scottish beauty spots such as Glencoe or Braemar. It could not even be suggested that it was derived from a contemporary popular girl's name. A euphonious name, with vaguely Scottish or rural overtones does not seem the complete answer. Several Mona Cottages existed in Exeter from the 1870s and earlier elsewhere, although this name was not among the most popular as a personal name. Whilst top favourites, for example, Mary, Florence and Edith, have been used on many cottages, who was the Mona who inspired house namers in Exeter, Cheltenham, Leamington Spa and probably other towns too? Both Mona and Lyndale could have been taken from popular contemporary literature in much the same way as 1930s house-namers adopted Jalna from the novels of Mazo de la Roche.²

Although the twentieth century has hundreds of bizarre names, there was less likelihood of these occurring during the nineteenth century, but nevertheless there were those for which there seems no obvious explanation. Exeter had several: Ooz Cottage, Mote (?Moat) Lodge, Crom-a-boo, Coaver House and Boeboetan (although there is a

¹ Gelling, *op. cit.*, p.296.

² Miles, *HNB*, p.51.

Boetan in Indonesia). We shall perhaps never know the reasons for their choice.

House naming is not peculiar to Britain; it has been widespread for many years in various parts of the world. France, Spain and Portugal have large and varied collections; so too have many other European countries. There is still much remaining evidence of Czechoslovakian villas with incised names over their imposing portals. Once development began in Australia and New Zealand house names appeared, often making use of English place-names which reminded the new colonists of their roots. This two-way pattern was continued in India with British names on Eastern gateposts and, in return, Indian names on houses owned by ex-Colonial service people in Exeter, Torquay and other retirement areas.¹ House naming is not, therefore, a whim or passing fancy, but it has played a role in the social history of many people and countries. The giving of names of all kinds is fundamental to man. We are unlikely to be able to discover how most place naming started and such names are therefore thought of as having evolved. Other names are bestowed or given names, and it is into this category that house names fall. A house needs to be identified from its neighbours; therefore if it has no number a name becomes essential. Selecting a name through sheer necessity may be a different process from choosing a name for a house that already has a number. Here owners are making a conscious decision to bestow a name as well. Why does this happen? It is perhaps easier to account for the practice in recent times when people's lives are dominated by numbers - national health, income tax, mail order, telephones, bank accounts - the list is very long. Although essential, such numbers become impossible to remember and telephone subscribers found it easier to identify with Bishops Cleeve, Derwent or Acorn than an anonymous code. Names bestow some warmth and possibly impart some pride in ownership, Would motorists speak with as much enthusiasm of "My 6347" as they do of "My Jaguar"? Travellers who once delighted in the Queen Mary,

¹ Miles, *HNAW*, pp.58-68.

the Royal Scot or the Cornishman probably feel a lot less attached to a DC 10 or a Boeing 727. Even coaches had names - The No Wonder, The Regulator, The Age and many more linked Exeter with Bristol, Falmouth or London.¹ Would numbers have been as exciting? Surely it is easier to identify with Honeysuckle Cottage, Well Lane than 1469 Sixty-fourth Street? It is suggested that a named property becomes a more personal possession and it is significant that with the increase in home ownership came a proportionate increase in the number of house names. House names are frequently altered when property changes hands, which suggests that a house name actually means something to the house owners. Conformity too plays its part. What else is fashion if it is not a desire to have what everyone else has at the same time? Lists are published of the most popular forenames, implying conformity in naming children; so too with house names. Some areas will have a wealth of names in adjacent streets - it is the local fashion; other areas of apparently similar houses will have few. Exeter has good examples of roads of late nineteenth-century house with evidence of names painted in gold leaf on their fanlights and other roads of similar houses where there is no apparent evidence of their ever having been named.

In some cases a house name becomes almost an advertisement for the qualities of the property: Salutory Cottage, Bellevue, Picturesque Villas, Bellair. Fortunately in the period under review the deplorable habit of decrying one's property by labelling it Our Shed, Bedlam or Nothing Matches was half a century away. By 1907 whimsey was only just appearing. Exeter had Pixey Cottage and The Nest; Bath had Peep o'Day; Leamington had Hermits Lea.² By this time far more use was being made of foreign expressions, usually associated with the word 'belle'. Manufactured names were gaining in popularity, although those in Exeter were dignified: Fernleigh,

¹ Besley, 1831, p.144.

² Post Office Directory for Bath, 1889, p.405; Kelly's Directory of Warwickshire, 1888, p.130.

Southcroft, Rosemont, and it was not until well into the twentieth century that remarkable and often quite appalling, artificial names became commonplace in many parts of the country: Osokosie, Itzars and others in similar style, some of which in recent years are barely credible. Fortunately Exeter has not succumbed to this fashion.

It would therefore seem that many people have a need for close association with their houses through the bestowal of a name, preferably chosen by themselves. That being so, it is relatively easy to account for the straightforward names apparent in Exeter throughout the nineteenth century. These have been discussed in some detail. In most cases their origins are apparent, although the reasons for their choice are not always clear. Although the pattern of naming was beginning to show slight changes around the turn of the century the names, whilst increasing in number, remained very much in the broad categories found throughout the country during the previous century and it was not until the 1920s that any marked changes became apparent.

CONCLUSION

The nineteenth century was a period of uncertainty for Exeter. At the beginning of the century it had already lost both its major cloth industry and the greater part of its shipping trade. Like other ancient cathedral cities, it showed little ability to diversify its economic base and continued to function as a market and service area for its hinterland. Its future prosperity depended on its success in this role, together with its ability to develop as an attractive and elegant residential area.

In the event its growth was much less than that of the new industrial areas, or the increasingly popular seaside towns. Census returns show that in 1841 Exeter had a population comparable in size with Derby and Bradford, but during the period 1841-1901 Exeter, with an overall growth rate of 51%, lagged far behind the 223% of Derby and the 709% of Bradford. Seaside towns such as Bournemouth and Torquay were expanding much more rapidly than former inland spas and resort towns such as Exeter, Bath and Cheltenham.

Though it was comparatively slow, some growth took place in Exeter and there were signs of emerging prosperity. But in the absence of large-scale commercial and industrial development the impetus for confident and continuous expansion was lacking. Both the city centre and the surrounding suburbs reflect the opposing forces of development and stagnation which characterise the period of this study (1801-1907).

In 1801 Exeter was a compact city largely confined within its ancient walls. Conditions within the city, however, had already led to the beginnings of the first new suburbs which had caused the walls to be breached. Heavitree was a separate pleasant village offering space, fresh air and a retreat from the noisome city. Across the river the suburb of St. Thomas consisted mainly of houses and shops clustered round the three main roads which converged at the

Exe Bridge. Outside the city walls there was an abundance of trees, fields, nursery gardens and shady walks. Within the walls was a mixture of a magnificent cathedral, the remains of splendid town houses, a fine hotel, banks and shops and unfortunately, a large number of filthy unsavoury streets, a lack of sewers and abysmal poverty for many. It was a city of contrasts.

One hundred years later Exeter had become a much more densely built-up area. Outlying districts such as Heavitree were linked with the main city by continuous development along main roads. Within the old city walls there was little room for development, but outside them there was still plenty of open space - market gardens, public parks or undeveloped land. Terraces of fine houses had been built. Many of the former mansions had been replaced by rows of houses of varying sizes; others remained surrounded by suburban streets. Nevertheless, the built-up area was still contained within one mile of the city centre and the overall shape had not altered drastically.

Until 1906 all of Exeter's housing development was undertaken by private enterprise; much of it by local builders and speculators, many of whom were small businessmen who owned property in blocks, occasionally occupying one of the houses themselves until they had made sufficient money to move into better-class areas. Suburban expansion continued throughout the century, each area developing at a different pace and in a different pattern. Most areas had a mixture of houses, both in styles and sizes which attracted a cross-section of the community. There were exceptions: Pennsylvania remained exclusively middle-class for many years and the original core of St. Leonard's was, with the exception of one small row, designed for the genteel middle class, subsequent houses for the working class being confined to its periphery.

The lack of continuity in Exeter's important housing developments is an indication of social and economic attitudes and expectations at the time. There are several instances of initial enthusiasm for a particular scheme being followed by postponement, abandonment or a

change of plan. Bedford Circus, forerunner of 'elegant suburbia' took over fifty years to complete, as did Southernhay. It has been suggested that Dix's Field was intended to be a deep quadrangle but was never completed. Its neighbour Barnfield Crescent contained one row of five magnificent terrace houses built in 1805 to which two more were added thirty years later, but the remainder of the road was left practically undeveloped for most of the century. A considerable area of good building land close to Southernhay - the Barn Field - was left vacant until the 1880s. The magnificence of the original terrace named Mont-le-Grand in Heavitree, built in the early 1840s, was not continued in later years, the far end of the road being filled with working-class houses. Nearby Bicton Place faces an open stretch of grass and trees which could well have become an elegant square.

Exeter's lack of large-scale commercial and industrial expansion was clearly reflected in many housing schemes. The lack of demand or willingness to speculate did not apply solely to middle-class housing. What appears to have been an experiment in building a separate working-class community did not meet with instant success. Sclater's Town (later Newtown) was commenced in the 1830s but only three streets were partially completed and plans for the completion of the schemes were not put forward until 1868. Even then it was not finished for another twenty years. This suggests a fall in demand for workmen's dwellings in the middle years of the century. Certainly there was a slump in the whole suburban housing market in the 1850s. There were no houses recorded as being under construction in Heavitree at the time of the 1851 Census as opposed to 31 in 1841.

Even when the city was showing signs of revitalization and expansion around the beginning of the twentieth century and Exeter appeared to be in the forefront of the provision of suburban Council housing, its first major scheme was abandoned when only half completed. This could not be attributed to economic depression or lack of demand as numerous private-enterprise schemes were in progress. It could not have been entirely for financial reasons as the land for the proposed sites was either in Council ownership or had

been specially purchased and a loan to fund the scheme had been arranged. The sites chosen bordered industrial areas and were not in close proximity to already developed fashionable districts. Was private development preferred? The Exeter and District Master Builders' Association protested at the use of nursery ground for local authority housing. Did they envisage cheap Council houses as a threat to private enterprise? If so their fears were groundless; the Council house rents were no cheaper.

Social attitudes seem to have played as great a role as economic necessity in decisions on public expenditure in Exeter in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1836 the old-style form of local government, the Chamber, was replaced under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 by a newly elected City Council. No longer dominated by a patrician element, the new council contained many more businessmen. They had inherited a massive debt incurred by the old Chamber in an earnest, although misguided, attempt to improve the canal. There are many instances throughout the nineteenth century which illustrate the reluctance of the City Council to expend money, even in the most obviously deserving cases where relatively small sums would have alleviated some of the appalling conditions being suffered by the poor. Was this attitude a direct result of the ill-advised venture by the old Chamber? But that would mean that the repercussions of the earlier unfortunate scheme were still making themselves felt after more than sixty years.

There were other instances of municipal tight-fistedness. In 1895 grave disquiet was expressed by the public over the insanitary conditions of many of the houses of the working class but the Council refused to accept that there was cause for concern. Exeter was a small town whose slum areas were in close proximity to the main thoroughfares; ignorance of conditions was therefore scarcely possible. Insanitary conditions and their accompanying unsavoury odours were no advertisement to visitors to the town centre who may well have been considering Exeter as a permanent place of residence; the tourist trade could well have been similarly affected. A modern system of

sewage treatment was not adopted until 1900 and even at that time Exeter's water supply was only two-thirds that available in Preston half a century earlier. A full-time Medical Officer of Health was not appointed until 1913. There were a number of good schools, but many of these were private ones; there were many where conditions left a great deal to be desired and Shapter's Report on Exeter of 1845 revealed a higher rate of mortality in children under 10 than in England as a whole. It was fortunate for the city's children that the reforms proposed under the Education Act of 1870 had the powerful support of the Bishop of the Diocese, Dr. Temple, as there had been strong opposition from the traditionalists.

Exeter had no large civic buildings and this absence of visible evidence of civic pride could well have affected the attitudes of the citizens and the overall 'feel' of the city. The same lack of vision resulted in the splendour of the small ancient Guildhall, seat of the City Council throughout the nineteenth century, being lost in the narrow overcrowded main streets where it adjoined business premises. A comprehensive scheme for a town square could have been incorporated in the design of the new markets and Queen Street but the opportunity was lost. Even when the Royal Albert Memorial Museum was built, although ultimately beneficial, it proved initially difficult to raise sufficient funds.

Whilst Exeter was noted for its walks and open spaces, shady tree-lined promenades and small public gardens, it had no large-scale public park such as could be found in other towns. The offer of Streatham Hall and its fifty-eight acres of parkland in 1907 was rejected. Was this rejection yet another manifestation of a lack of confidence and foresight or merely complacency? The hall and the estate eventually became part of the University campus and thus had a permanent beneficial influence on the character of this area, but no credit can be ascribed to the local authority.

Two major events in the middle years of the nineteenth century had far-reaching consequences for the city: the outbreaks of cholera

and the coming of the railways. Although cholera caused many deaths in the area it led directly to an improvement in both the sewerage system and the water supply and the removal of some of the worst slums. The railways provided a number of employment opportunities within the city and suburbs and turned Exeter into a major rail centre for the West of England, but their coming was not entirely beneficial. London came within easier reach than hitherto and the need for the 'town house' in Exeter as the focus of 'the season' for the aristocracy was no longer vital. Some trade would probably have been lost to fashionable London shops. There may have been some diminution of business from the upper social strata of society, but there was an increase in the demand for small suburban houses for railway and allied employees and a proliferation of corner shops on the new housing estates. The trade of the central area may have been adversely affected as seaside resorts were now readily accessible and thus prospered, both from day trippers taking their business away from Exeter and long-distance travellers who no longer had to stop over in the city. This in turn would inevitably affect the fortunes of city merchants, some of whom were local property speculators.

During this period of change and fluctuation there were several cycles of building styles. Suburban development had commenced with large, elegant Georgian terraces. Regency St. Leonard's had been completed by 1840 and, although peripheral building had taken place in later years, its heart had remained unspoilt. The coming of the railways had coincided with a short-lived fashion for terraces in Gothic style, but these had been few and largely confined to the area round Queen Street station. Building in simple good taste had continued throughout the period, but the era of the classical tradition had ended in the 1860s with John and Charles Ware's terraces near Bury Meadow. After that came a sharp change in materials and styles. The elegant terraces remained but became surrounded by rows and rows of small terrace houses constructed in machine-made red bricks, frequently decorated in patterns of cream bricks, with red ornamental ridge tiles, decorative tiles to doorstep risers and cement 'ropework' between window frames. Whilst many older houses remained

with their pleasant front gardens, wrought-iron verandahs, acanthus topped gateposts and stabling at the rear, hundreds of houses had no front gardens at all: front doors abutted the pavement and backyards were reached by a central narrow alley at the rear, separating adjoining streets. Such were the estates to house the working classes. During the 1860s an abortive attempt had been made to build high-quality villas on part of the Duryard estate, but there was apparently no demand. A number of quite large villas of some architectural merit were built in St. Thomas's, but this area was predominantly one of rows of small terrace houses. At the beginning of the twentieth century there was another small change: a number of very large detached houses were built, some in rather extravagant architectural styles, on land hitherto vacant only a short distance from the city centre. As there was plenty of land available and population growth rate was slow, development was extensive rather than intensive. Two attempts at building tenement blocks had proved expensive. Exeter's suburbs therefore consisted of groups of separate family dwellings and although there was a certain amount of uniformity in some of the working-class streets, because the city had not expanded at the rate of some of the northern towns, the suburbs did not consist of vast acres of monotonous grey streets. The nature of the terrain added variation to levels and vistas; the river provided a complete separation of city and suburb in the south-western sector.

There were distinct and readily identifiable styles of houses. Although not every house conformed to a particular pattern, houses for the prosperous can perhaps be grouped: stylish elegance; classical simplicity; a few examples of Gothic revival; some unremarkable plain dwellings and, particularly around the turn of the twentieth century, some quite extraordinary elaborate houses in a complete mixture of styles with turrets and castellated rooflines not altogether commensurate with their size. As Dyos remarks in his study of Camberwell, "architectural taste, like manners, travels downwards". Was this a pompous imitation on a small scale of the mansions owned by the very wealthy? Fortunately they were few in number and their

location did not intrude on the magnificence of the early nineteenth-century groups.

Houses on some of the late-nineteenth century working-class estates might, at first glance, be thought to have arisen from some overall master plan. There appeared to be rows of commonplace brick terraces often rather garishly relieved by quantities of cream brick decoration. Although the names of a few local architects and builders appear regularly in official documentation, there were large numbers of small building firms involved in the building of suburban Exeter, as was the case generally throughout the country. Economic expediency no doubt led some small firms to copy plans which had already proved viable. Both time and money could be saved by adhering to well-proven designs. Speculators required small, cheap houses suitable for renting by the working class; individuality and elaborate architecture were the privilege of the wealthy middle-class private buyers. Exeter certainly had its streets of 'bye-law' houses, but close inspection reveals that many of the houses were not identical. Roof lines show breaks; decoration to frontages is slightly different; brickwork varies. Some estates which today appear to have been built as complete entities were, in fact, nothing of the kind. Some began with isolated blocks, doubtless dependent upon land ownership, and gradually grew by a process of addition and in-filling over a period of years. The overall result, in many cases, is harmonious; in other cases it resembles a pattern book of styles.

The naming of streets and houses serves a number of purposes. Apart from a means of identification a name makes a statement and conveys, even subconsciously, an immediate picture of the street or house. Gas Works Terrace and Railway Cottages do not convey the same images as Mont-le-Grand and The Grove. The naming of Exeter's streets and houses does, in many respects, reflect both corporate and individual attitudes. During the nineteenth century many of the decisions taken by the local authority displayed a very cautious

approach to change and many contemporary accounts of the city suggest it was living on past memories. Do the names of its streets and houses illuminate these viewpoints?

Approval or veto of a street name lay finally with the City Council and therefore street names that gained sanction must, to some extent, be a reflection of the attitudes held by committee members in office at the time of naming. In choosing names for Exeter's new suburban streets preference was given to naming them after people, and in particular royalty. This was a pattern that could be found throughout the country. 'Royal' names displayed both patriotism and conformity to fashion, although here no name incorporated the word 'royal' as such. Exeter lacked royal patronage and perhaps the city felt that none of its terraces merited quite such a grand name; for one of the city's several splendid terraces such a name would have been quite justified. Exeter was also keen on commemorating its local wealthy Devon families. This may have been a mark of respect for and a continuing deference to them or it may have been that Exeter was merely following a widespread fashion of honouring local aristocratic families. A preference for the aristocracy as a source for street naming resulted in the city failing to commemorate many of its local benefactors. Whilst some were remembered - Dinham, Hele and Blackall among them - many were ignored. If naming a street is a mark of respect for the person after whom the street is named, Exeter paid scant attention to some of the men who contributed in no small measure to many of its magnificent terraces and crescents which could well be compared with many of the finest in the country, if not further afield. Nosworthy is only one of the many men who were overlooked. There were very few references to the source of the city's former wealth. Perhaps the loss of the flourishing wool trade was too devastating and too immediate for permanent reminders. It was, in fact, the early twentieth century before many aspects of Exeter's history were recalled in its street names. In this respect at least Exeter could not be accused of looking backward rather than forward. In general the street names were somewhat lacking in imagination, but by and large were fashionable and dignified. The

city authorities' attitudes seem to have been cautious rather than innovative in street names as in other respects.

House names needed no official approval and therefore are a significant reflection of the attitudes of those who bestowed the names. Exeter's house names were straightforward and dignified and good use was made of the varied physical features of the terrain; hence many reflected the positions of the houses. As so many of the houses were rented, names which displayed pride in ownership were largely confined to groups of cottages which bore the names of the owners. Without accurate information for the reason for giving a house a particular name only very general assumptions can be made. Whilst the transferred place-name was as popular in Exeter as elsewhere throughout the country, the wealth of attractive Devon place-names was not used extensively. The transferred place-names used as house names came from various parts of the British Isles and further afield. This suggested that these house namers could possibly be immigrants who were less likely to have an interest in the immediate countryside. On the other hand, they could have been people who travelled or those with imagination who wanted an idyllic name. That people were interested in naming houses is evidenced by the fact that a number of the houses bore two names - one that of the terrace or pair of villas complemented by a further name for the individual residence. An instance has been cited of a house with a name of long standing being given in addition what amounted to a nickname - Mount Stamp - as its owner had a post in the stamp office in London. Whether this was intended as an affectionate or a derisive gesture is not known; the latter is probably the more likely. The name must have had some significance for it to have been thought worthy of recording when so much other information of interest and importance has been lost. The reason for the popularity in Exeter of the eagle as a house name (some illustrated by stone eagles or in one case an intricate eagle plaque) will probably remain a mystery. Patterns of house names in suburban Exeter were broadly similar to those found elsewhere and have been discussed in some detail. They adorned the homes of people who were anxious to conform. The flair and the bravado to make a new

gesture and to set a new fashion were more likely to appear in fashionable resorts or the suburbs of the larger cities where social ambition and civic pride were taking the stage.

Exeter was a small town which grew slowly. It did not suffer from large-scale mass development and thus was better able to retain its individuality. Freeman, writing in 1887, took a depressing view of Exeter's future, seeing it as "emphatically a city of the past" outstripped in trade by the great cities of the midlands and north; less attractive as a resort than neighbouring seaside towns; by-passed by travellers taking advantage of the railways whose arrival had initially been welcomed. Was this viewpoint justified? Probably not.

In the course of this study it has been shown that the nineteenth century was a period of varied fortunes and considerable change for Exeter. In the early years there had been an influx of the middle class with a variety of demands; during the middle decades there was a period of depression and stagnation, but had Freeman considered the socio-economic background in perhaps more detail he might have drawn a different conclusion. Although on a comparatively small scale, working-class housing estates were spreading and large extravagant houses were being built near the city centre; shops were improving and an arcade had been built; Willey's engineering works was expanding; a new bridge was built over the Exe and there was ample evidence of a bustling trade, both in the markets and through the carrier and waggoner services. The personal estates left by local tradesmen were some indication that trade was healthy. Public health was improved by the provision of better water supplies and improved sanitation; parks and public pleasure grounds had been provided in all the suburbs. For many, life in the central areas of Exeter was extremely unpleasant but for those with a job there was now ample opportunity if not to own, then to rent, a decent house with at least some modern amenities, within reach of shops and still located in largely rural surroundings. For such people Exeter was not a city of the past, but one which, despite its problems, was at long last preparing to come to terms with the world of the twentieth century.

APPENDIX A

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1

Population and No. of Houses in Nineteenth-Century Exeter and the Suburbs

	1801		1821		1841		1861		1881	
	Pop.	Houses	Pop.	Houses	Pop.	Houses	Pop.	Houses	Pop.	Houses
St. David	1854	313 19	2282	365 (a) 19 (b) 4 (c)	3508	572 67 5	4486	649 34 12	5186	891 31 -
St. Leonard	133	26 7	206	42 1 -	1129	178 16 34	1576	275 27 4	2097	292 24 -
St. Sidwell	2707	450 23	4372	665 20 25	9154	1533 161 34	10478	1842 71 15	13840	2585 188 73
Heavitree	833	163 14	1253	211 7 10	3048	528 81 31	3133	651 38 -	4549	845 55 25
St. Thomas	2189	424 18	3245	492 24 13	4301	758 69 7	4533	786 30 11	6161	1181 36 27
Exeter - A	17398	2692 144	23479	3256 118 58	31312	5122 450 67	33738	5381 189 27	37669	6576 515 74
Exeter - B	12837	1929 102	16825	2226 79 29	18650	3017 222 28	18774	2890 84 -	18643	3100 296 1

1 Census, 1801 - 1881. Boundary changes make later comparisons difficult.

(a) = Inhabited houses; (b) = uninhabited houses; (c) = houses being built - (b) and (c) not differentiated in 1801 printed census returns.

Exeter A = Figures shown in the printed census returns for the city include St. David's and St. Sidwell's.

Exeter B = Figures excluding St. David's and St. Sidwell's.

Table 1 Population and No. of Houses in Nineteenth-century Exeter and the Suburbs

1

Population and No. of Inhabited Houses in Exeter's Nineteenth-century Suburbs

Suburb	1801		1821		1841		1861		1881	
	Pop.	No. of Inhab. Hses	Pop.	No. of Inhab. Hses	Pop.	No. of Inhab. Hses	Pop.	No. of Inhab. Hses	Pop.	No. of Inhab. Hses
St. David	1854	313	2282	365	3508	572	4486	649	5186	891
St. Leonard	133	26	206	42	1129	178	1576	275	2097	292
St. Sidwell	2707	450	4372	665	9154	1533	10478	1842	13840	2585
Heavitree	833	163	1253	211	3048	528	3133	651	4549	845
St. Thomas	2189	424	3245	492	4301	758	4533	786	6161	1181
Total	7716	1376	11358	1775	21140	3569	24206	4203	31833	5794

1 Census, 1801 - 1881

Boundary changes make later comparisons difficult

Table 2 Population and No. of Inhabited Houses in Exeter's
Nineteenth-century Suburbs

1

Analysis of the Social Class Structure of the Suburbs 1851 and 1881

	1851							1881						
	Class						No. of Hsehlts Sampled	Class						No. of Hsehlts Sampled
	I	II	III	IV	V	X		I	II	III	IV	V	X	
St. David	10.8	16.9	32.5	15.7	24.1	-	83	8.0	23.0	36.0	12.0	11.0	10.0	100
St. Leonard	50.0	11.5	23.1	7.7	3.8	3.8	26	44.8	17.2	17.2	20.7	-	-	29
St. Sidwell	9.7	15.0	51.7	14.5	4.8	4.3	207	8.7	13.5	53.9	10.4	7.7	5.7	297
Heavitree	23.0	16.4	21.3	29.5	9.8	-	61	17.1	18.3	21.9	25.6	13.4	3.7	82
St. Thomas	11.8	7.5	39.8	18.3	22.6	-	93	3.8	11.3	43.6	21.0	16.5	3.8	133

1 Figures based on a 10% sample of Heads of Households in the Enumerators' Returns of the Censuses of 1851 and 1881. Classification based on Census, 1951: Classification of Occupations, HMSO, 1951.

For further information on the methodology see text.

Table 3 Analysis of the Social Class Structure of the Suburbs 1851 and 1881

1

Analysis of In-House Servants in Suburban Houses 1841, 1851 and 1881

Suburb	Pop.	Inhab. houses	1841 *				Av. per house	Pop.	Inhab. houses	1851				Av. per house	Pop.	Inhab. houses	1881				Av. per house
			M	Servants		Tot.				M	Servants		Tot.				M	Servants		Tot.	
				F								F							F		
St. David	3508	572	52	265	317	0.55		4125	631	24	373	397	0.62		5186	891	16	489	505	0.56	
St. Leonard	1129	178	23	262	285	1.60		1499	267	15	291	306	1.14		2097	292	17	300	317	1.08	
St. Sidwell	9154	1533	80	606	686	0.44		9663	1661	17	519	536	0.32		13840	2585	26	688	714	0.27	
Heavitree	3048	528	51	325	376	0.71		3112	608	40	378	418	0.68		4549	845	19	396	415	0.49	
St. Thomas	4301	758	47	189	236	0.31		4577	762	12	158	170	0.22		6161	1181	11	162	173	0.14	

1 Census, 1841, 1851 and 1881 and printed Census Returns 1841, 1851 and 1881.

* As the 1841 Census did not give relationship of occupiers to head of household, caution must be exercised in the interpretation of the figures for in-house servants for 1841. A few may have been servants employed in other households.

Table 4 Analysis of In-House Servants in Suburban Houses
1841, 1851 and 1881

1

Comparison of the Proportion of Owner-occupied and Tenanted Suburban Houses
c. 1841 and c. 1881

Suburb	c. 1841				c. 1881			
	No. of inhab. houses recorded	Tenanted	Owner-occupied	% of owner-occupied	No. of inhab. houses recorded	Tenanted	Owner-occupied	% of owner-occupied
St. David	509 [*]	437	72	14.1	806 [*]	673	133	16.5
St. Leonard	178	134	44	24.7	281	208	93	33.0
St. Sidwell	1507	1319	188	12.4	2535	2172	363	14.3
Heavitree	537	449	88	16.3	852	721	131	15.3
St. Thomas	738	677	61	8.2	1088	992	96	8.8

1 EVL, 1838; DRO ECA 3004A PO 27, 28 and 29 Overseers of the Poor Rate Books, 1841; DRO ECA F3 C2 Sanitary Rate Books, 1881; DRO ECA General District Rate Books, 1880-1; DRO ECA Apportionment to the Tithe Map of St. Leonard, 1841; DRO ECA Heavitree Poor Rate Book, October 1841; DRO ECA F3 C4 4416A/T 15-32 and F3 B8-9 and C1 Heavitree Poor Rate Books, 1881; DRO ECA F3 C5-8 St. Thomas Parish Poor Rate Books, September 1841; DRO ECA F3 C9-10 St. Thomas Local General District Rate Book, May 1881.

*As figures are based on the nearest (in time) records available, they will not necessarily coincide exactly with those in Census Returns.

Table 5 Comparison of the Proportion of Owner-occupied
and Tenanted Suburban Houses c. 1841 and c. 1881

Analysis of the Street Names of the Suburbs¹

	1816	1835	1855	1875	1895	1907
Total no. of street names recorded	34	163	194	203	337	400
Categories to which names are related:	%	%	%	%	%	%
People:						
Royalty	-	4.9	6.2	6.9	8.6	7.2
Aristocracy	2.9	2.4	3.6	3.4	2.7	3.2
Imp. local landowners	5.9	4.3	3.6	4.4	3.8	3.7
Nat. figures	-	0.6	1.5	1.5	1.8	3.5
Others	5.9	8.0	6.7	6.9	7.1	8.0
Transferred place-names:						
U.K.	-	6.7	12.9	12.8	11.3	12.0
Foreign	-	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.2
Local connections:						
Locality	14.7	6.7	6.7	8.4	5.0	4.0
Buildings	2.9	6.1	5.7	4.9	2.7	3.7
Other	8.8	2.4	3.1	2.9	4.1	4.5
Nature:						
Trees	-	2.4	2.1	1.5	2.4	3.0
Flowers	-	1.8	1.0	1.5	1.8	1.7
Birds	2.9	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.2
Other	2.9	2.4	1.0	2.0	2.1	1.7
Location	-	4.9	4.6	4.4	8.0	6.2
Field Names	-	4.3	4.6	5.4	5.6	5.2
Saints	5.9	4.9	6.2	5.4	6.2	4.2
Directional	11.7	4.3	5.1	3.4	4.1	4.0
Old estab. routes	26.5	8.0	6.7	6.4	4.1	3.5
Religion	2.9	3.7	2.6	2.9	2.7	3.5
War	-	0.6	1.0	-	0.3	2.2
Fashionable London	-	1.2	1.0	2.0	2.7	2.0
Gen. descriptive	2.9	5.5	3.1	1.5	3.0	1.7
Former land o/ship	-	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.7
Patriotic	-	1.2	1.0	0.5	1.2	0.7
Unusual	-	2.4	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.7
Former use	-	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5
Foreign expressions	-	-	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.5
Employment	-	0.6	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.3
General	-	-	-	-	0.3	0.3
Unclassified	2.9	5.5	4.1	5.4	4.7	5.5

1 HSI; R.J. Trewman, Exeter Pocket Journal, 1816, passim;
H. Mortimer, Handbook for Exeter and Its Neighbourhood,
1874/5, passim; Besley, 1835-1907, passim.

Dates selected depended on availability of records.
Some names fall into more than one category. The most appropriate
has been selected.

1
Analysis of the House Names of the Suburbs

	1828	1845	1855	1875	1895	1907
Total no. of house names on record	47	74	96	284	820	956
Categories to which names are related:	%	%	%	%	%	%
Transferred place-names:						
U.K.	6.4	6.7	7.3	16.5	21.0	22.7
Foreign	2.1	5.4	5.2	4.6	5.9	6.6
Nature:						
Trees	2.1	6.7	9.4	7.4	8.5	8.4
Flowers	8.5	9.4	5.2	5.6	6.0	5.6
Ferns	-	-	1.1	1.0	1.1	0.9
Birds	-	2.7	2.1	1.4	0.6	0.5
Animals	-	-	-	0.4	0.2	0.2
Other	6.4	2.7	2.1	3.9	3.7	3.5
Location	12.8	18.9	20.8	17.6	15.2	15.0
Local connections	27.6	21.6	15.6	12.3	7.6	7.6
People:						
Royalty	-	2.7	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.7
Aristocracy	-	-	-	1.0	0.8	0.8
Imp. local landowners	2.1	5.4	7.3	2.5	0.8	0.8
Nat. figures	4.2	-	-	1.8	1.3	1.3
Others	4.2	1.3	2.1	2.1	1.1	0.9
Personal forenames	-	-	-	1.0	2.7	2.4
Saints	-	4.0	4.2	2.8	1.9	2.3
Field names	4.2	2.7	2.1	4.9	1.9	1.7
Employment	-	-	-	0.4	1.2	1.3
Foreign expressions	4.2	1.3	4.2	1.4	1.2	1.0
Unusual	2.1	-	-	-	0.6	0.8
War	2.1	1.3	1.0	1.4	0.7	0.7
Former use	-	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.7
Historical refs.	-	-	-	0.7	0.6	0.6
Religion	-	-	1.0	0.4	0.6	0.5
Weather	-	-	-	0.4	0.8	0.5
Seclusion	-	-	-	0.4	0.4	0.4
Literature	-	-	-	-	0.4	0.4
Patriotism	-	-	-	0.7	0.2	0.3
Whimsey	-	-	-	-	0.2	0.3
Public houses	-	-	-	-	0.5	0.3
Colour	-	-	-	-	0.4	0.2
Architect. features	-	-	-	-	0.1	0.2
Geog. refs.	-	-	-	0.4	0.4	0.1
Folklore	-	-	-	-	0.1	0.1
Mythology	2.1	1.3	1.0	1.0	0.2	-
Music	-	-	-	-	0.2	-
General	6.4	4.0	3.1	1.4	5.8	5.7
Unclassified	2.1	-	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.3

1 BCI; Besley, 1828 - 1907, passim; Mortimer, 1874/5, op. cit., pp.28-72.

Table 7 Analysis of the House Names of the Suburbs

Growth of Towns 1801 - 1901¹

Town	1801	1821	1841	1861	1881	1901
Bath	33	47	53	53	52	50
Birmingham*	71	102	202	351	546	760
Bolton	18	32	51	70	105	168
Bradford	13	26	67	106	183	280
Bristol	61	85	124	154	207	329
Cheltenham	3	13	31	40	44	45
Chester	15	20	24	31	37	45
Derby	11	17	33	43	81	106
Exeter/	17	23	31	34	38	47
Halifax	12	17	28	37	74	105
Leeds	53	84	152	207	309	429
Liverpool*	82	138	299	472	627	685
Manchester*	75	135	252	399	502	645
Northampton	7	11	21	33	52	87
Nottingham	29	40	52	75	187	240
Norwich	36	50	62	75	88	112
Oxford	12	16	24	28	35	49
Plymouth	40	55	70	113	123	178
Sheffield	46	65	111	185	285	381
York	17	22	29	40	50	78
Greater London	1,117	1,600	2,239	3,227	4,770	6,586

Figures of population in thousands

* Including environs

/ Figures relate to Exeter City only

1 B.R. Mitchell and P. Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics, 1962, pp.19, 24-27; Census, 1801 - 1901.

Table 8 Growth of Towns 1801 - 1901

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TITLE OF THESIS: The Rise of Suburban Exeter and the
 Naming of Its Streets and Houses,
 c. 1801-1907

AUTHOR: Joyce C. Miles

ABSTRACT

This is a study of the rise of the suburbs of Exeter, the county town of Devon, between the years 1801-1907. The dates chosen coincide with the publication of the first detailed Census Return (1801) and the completion of the first Local Authority housing (1907). Fieldwork and an analysis of local archives have revealed the manner in which the suburbs developed and their role in contributing to a city which was undergoing a change in its economic base. Each suburb developed at a different pace and with its own characteristics. An investigation into the pattern of development is supported by a study of the naming of streets and houses in the new suburbs which sheds light on the aspirations and attitudes prevalent at the time.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century Exeter had lost its once-flourishing woollen industry, and trading through its port had diminished. It was a small, compact city - a provincial market centre without a thriving industrial base. An analysis of local authority committee minutes, parish records, newspapers and other relevant documents has revealed the gradual expansion of the suburbs. The magnificent crescents and terraces of the early years attracted prosperous middle-class residents who, in turn, generated a need for professional services from lawyers, bankers and doctors, thus contributing towards Exeter's economic recovery. It will be seen that by the end of the nineteenth century the city was showing signs of revitalization. It was ringed by suburban development of various kinds - from terraces which contain some of the country's finest architecture to rows of small, flat-fronted dwellings for the working class. A study of the rise of the suburbs of Exeter is a valuable guide to and reflection of the city's metamorphosis.