Heavitree Local History Society

Newsletter No. 102 **Sep 2026**

FORTHCOMING HLHS MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Unless indicated below, meetings are held at Heavitree United Reformed Church, on the second Wed of Mar, Jun, Sep & Dec, commencing at 7:30pm.

Wed 9th Sep 2026
AGM followed by 'A History of Exeter Hospitals' Mike Richards
Mike Richards will cover a great array of local health initiatives from the first leper facility in the city to the Nightingale Hospital built during the Covid outbreak. Responses to major events like the 1832 Cholera epidemic and the First World War will be discussed. Institutions described will include the old Workhouse, the original and subsequent RD&E hospitals, the eye infirmary and the Princess Elizabeth Orthopaedic Hospital.
Several of the hospitals to be highlighted were in or close to Heavitree including the Old City Hospital, off Heavitree Road, the 'new' city hospital in Gladstone Road and Mowbray House Maternity Hospital off Butts Road.
The talk will also celebrate major medical inventions and innovations in Exeter.

Sun 11th Oct 2026
A stroll around the Polsloe Park area
Meet at 2pm at the St Marks Road entrance of the Higher Cemetery

Wed 9th Dec 2026
'Wills as Windows on Tudor, Stuart and Georgian Lives'
Dr Laura Sangha, University of Exeter

Wed 10th March 2027
TBC

News from the Chair...

Northbrook project: The big news since our last newsletter is that the Society has been successful in its bid to Devon County Council's Locality Budget for a grant towards our Northbrook Project. Working with other local organisations and individuals the aim is to promote interest in and activities alongside the Northbrook – Heavitree's river. The plan is to produce a booklet about the Northbrook and to hold walking events to explore the river catchment. Many thanks to Councillor Thomas Richardson for his support for our grant application. We met with the Whipton History Detectives group in June and have another meeting with them planned for September. The group are investigating various aspects of the Northbrook including flooding in Whipton Village. Do let me know if you have any information, memories or photographs of the Northbrook. My details are at the foot of this article.

Talks: Julia Neville gave a well-attended talk on Devon in the 1920s at our June meeting. Plans are now being drawn up for our 2027 talks programme. Please do let me know if you have any suggestions for talks or speakers. Maybe you would like to give a talk yourself. Don't be shy – do get in touch to discuss.

Walk: A date for your diary. We are planning a stroll around the Polsloe Park area on Sunday 11th October at 2pm. More details to follow.

Parklife exhibition: A reminder that we will be exhibiting photographs of the Heavitree Pleasure Grounds through the years in the Park Cafe from January 2027. Do you have any photographs we could consider using? Maybe some nice family shots of the Grounds being enjoyed? Please do have a search for some and let us know.

Devon History Society: We joined the Devon History Society in June. The Society exists to support and celebrate new research to engage audiences with Devon's rich past. There is a particular focus on helping local history societies like ours. A twice-yearly e-newsletter is produced, and we will be sharing these with our members.

Sue Smith RIP: It was with great sadness that we learned this summer of the death of Sue Smith, wife of our longstanding member and officer, Mike. We send our condolence to Mike and all the family.

Martin Weiler, Chair, Heavitree Local History Society
Email: martinjohnweiler@gmail.com

Julia Neville – Devon in the 1920s: Shadows and Sunshine

At our June meeting, Dr Julia Neville, who has previously spoken to us about trams and homes for heroes, was welcomed back to talk about the latest Devon History Society project: Devon in the 1920s.

This cross-county research project was chosen because the first ten years after WWI have their own distinct flavour. There isn't a huge amount of deep national research on just this decade, but now the project has been completed, there are more than sixty essays on different topics about Devon in the 1920s available on the Devon History Society website. They can be found here Devon in the 1920s - Research Essays - Devon History Society, covering a huge range of topics.

At the beginning of this decade, Devon was still essentially a county of parson and squire, fishing and farming. The event that cast the longest shadow was the First World War, or the Great War as they would have known it then. On 28th June 1919 Prime Minister Lloyd George signed the Treaty of Versailles on behalf of the UK and British Empire, marking a formal end to the fighting. This was celebrated with Peace Day in July 1919; in Heavitree the Pleasure Ground was the focal point for the festivities. Of course, it poured with rain, so the turf was hardly in a suitable condition for dancing, but the band performances and firework display were greatly enjoyed.

Demobilisation took many months: there was much waiting around on beaches, there were prisoners of war to be released, and some occupying forces needed to remain, so they came home in dribs and drabs. Some were able to slot back into their old lives, but for many this was not so easy. One soldier said:

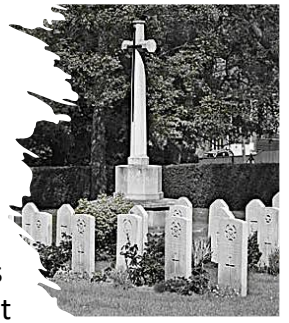
'When I came home my parents didn't know me. My mother cried when she did know twas me, because I'd altered so. Nobody knew me, not a soul, twas dreadful..'

And was there a job to come back to? Many had been promised their old jobs back, but in some cases circumstances had changed. Harold Western from Poltimore had been promised he would have his old job as a gardener back after the war, but when he returned the eleven gardeners employed had been reduced to two and a half. His parents had both died during the war so he came back to an empty house too.

Many also came back from the war with a disability that meant they could no longer do their old jobs. There was a government scheme to retrain men who could not return to their old positions, for example Alfred of Topsham had been gassed and injured on active service, and was able to retrain as a boot and shoe repairer, as he never recovered his health.

Unfortunately many were left without employment as the UK went into recession in 1920 and men were being laid off, not taken on. In 1921 the unemployment rate hit 23% (today it is 5%). The government had to extend the unemployment benefits scheme and make unemployment grants, known as 'the Dole', to avoid the visibility of ex servicemen begging. Many still had to find ways to make ends meet – in Plymouth song sheets were sold as an alternative to begging.

This was a time of grief, so many had lost a husband, brother or son. Pilgrimages began, to visit the battlefields of the Western Front. So many men had been hastily buried in temporary cemeteries behind the battle lines dash it was eventually decided that they would not be repatriated and permanent cemeteries would be made there. This was an unpopular decision, and even more controversial was that there was to be no distinction between the headstones, to show nationality, rank or wealth.



Every village in Devon lost a soldier, many more than one. The Devon Roll of Honour for the First World War lists over 11,600 names. Communities collected funds for suitable war memorials. In Heavitree, a tablet recording the names of the fallen was placed in the church and unveiled in 1921 on Easter eve. 207 men and one VAD nurse of the parish were

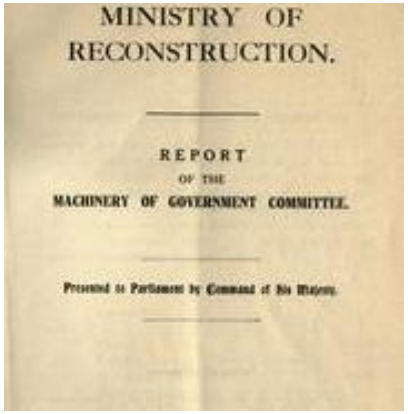
commemorated, and the 65 widows left by the war were mentioned in the service.

In Higher Cemetary, soldiers who had died in the Exeter war hospitals were buried there, with 188 in total by 1919. In 1922, the city unveiled a cross of Devonshire granite in what was described as a deeply moving scene.

Redundancy was another shadow across the decade - lots of jobs ceased to be as useful as they'd been since time immemorial. The petrol driven motor engine revolutionised transport. Although motor cars were only just beginning to be used for personal transport, the transportation of goods was affected.

The motor lorry and the motor van began to dominate in the 1920s and people employed on older forms of transport lost their jobs. Some breweries might have retained their Shire horses, like the team in the photo, but the City Brewery in Exeter moved on, first to steam wagons and then to motor lorries. Traditional sailing trawlers were being superseded by steam or petrol boats. Even the railways were threatened by the motor bus and the motor lorry. Bus services collected and delivered passengers closer to their homes and destinations. A lorry could take goods door to door rather than by railway. By the end of the 1920's the first railway stations on Devon's branch lines were closing.

At the end of the war, Prime Minister Lloyd George had promised to create 'a land fit for heroes to live in' - There was much to be ashamed of when looking back to the conditions of 1914. The Ministry of Reconstruction Produced a whole series of reports dealing with a wide range of policy areas such as housing, adult education and rural life. These led to legislation that created a strong foundation for a society of greater opportunity and greater security. This was threatened by a lack of funding (amongst other areas, armed forces; the police service and teachers pay were all cut) but there were men and women determined to make the original plans for reconstruction work.


MINISTRY OF RECONSTRUCTION.

REPORT

OF THE

MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE.

	1921–2[a]	1922–3	1923–4	1924–5	1925–6	1926–7
Army	*95.1*	45.4	43.6	44.8	44.3	43.6
Navy	*80.8*	56.2	52.6	55.6	59.7	57.6
Air Force	*13.6*	9.4	9.6	14.3	15.5	15.5
Education	*53.7*	47.4	46.3	46.6	47.1	48.4
Health	*13.6*	9.4	9.3	10.3	10.4	10.1
Housing	*9.1*	8.0	8.3	9.1	9.1	10.0
Old-age pensions	*22.0*	22.4	23.2	24.9	27.0	30.0
War pensions	*95.8*	80.6	72.6	69.9	67.3	63.6
Total	*383.7*	278.8	265.5	275.5	280.4	278.8
COL Index[b]	*220*	179	173	172	174	172

Departmental Expenditure Plans in £m

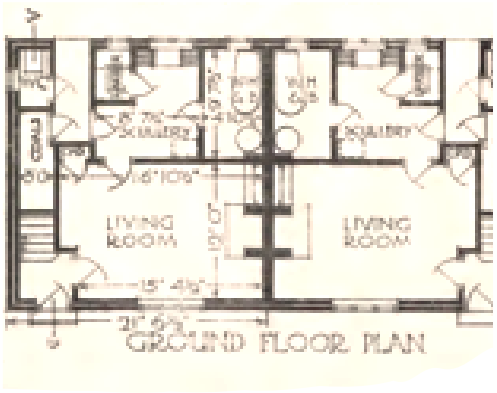
Some sectors did thrive during the 1920s. Traditional arable and pastoral sectors of farming were doing well and maybe even branching into poultry rearing. Market gardening flourished, particularly along the estuaries of Devon like the Tamar and the Exe. Daily trains rushed produce to markets in London and Birmingham. The climate was favourable, crops ripened early and there was a huge demand for early tomatoes and daffodils.

	Men	Women	Children
SPRING	Planting, flower work	Picking and bunching flowers, weeding	
SUMMER	Orchard fruit picking, flower work	Bush fruit picking, flower work	Bush fruit picking, weeding
AUTUMN	Orchard fruit picking, flower work	Bush fruit picking, flower work	Bush fruit picking, weeding
WINTER	Fertilising, pruning, repairs	Weeding, picking sprouts, pulling up root vegetables, mending sacks	

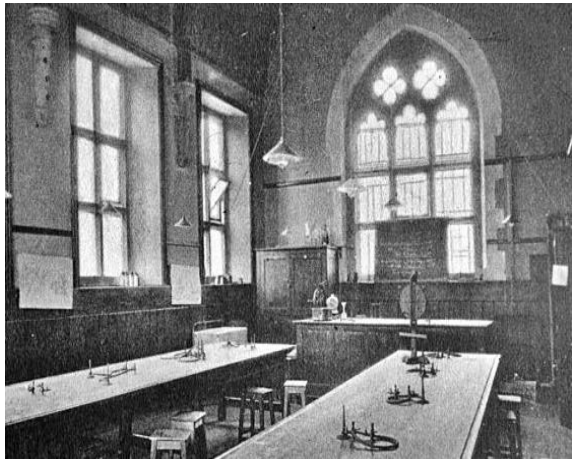
There was even a train from Dawlish to Covent Garden nicknamed the 'Violet Express'.

One of the core changes the government wanted to see was tackling the housing shortage. The 1910 census showed evidence of overcrowding in all local authorities. The government required local councils to build large numbers of houses quickly, they were even provided with a design manual based on a report by architect Tudor Walters. There was some discussion about whether a house really needed a parlour if it was only to be used on Sundays, and where the bathroom should be. In Heavitree there was huge growth in

housing: the council estates first at Polsloe Bridge, Buddle Lane and then in Burnthouse Lane, but also private developments off Ladysmith Rd and Hill Barton, and housing associations like the Church Army Housing Society homes in Rutherford St.



Despite the government initially trying to cut costs by raising the school starting age to 6 (abandoned after public complaint), the decade actually offered some young people a chance to get on in life. In 1918, the school leaving age was raised by two years from 12 to 14. There were many more opportunities for secondary education, and not just to stay on at the same school. There were more scholarship places available at schools like the Episcopal Modern School for Girls in Exeter or Hele's School for boys. In Heavitree you would've stayed at Ladysmith unless you got a scholarship to Hele or Bishop's Blackall. The county itself began to create more secondary schools.



There were new opportunities created by the advancement in scientific knowledge. The Marine Biological Association in Plymouth was founded to study marine biology and Seal Hayne College of Agriculture ran a range of courses for young men who wanted to get into farming, and supported scientific research.

There was also progress in medical science. Treatment offered to soldiers for the injuries received during the war and the illnesses that they suffered helped develop new civilian treatment, for example in orthopaedics. The understanding of how to use radium effectively to treat cancer was also increasing. Insulin for diabetics had been discovered in Canada. So more space and specialism in hospitals was needed. The Princess Elizabeth Hospital was founded in the 1920s in Heavitree, originally at Gras Lawn.

THE HOSPITAL THAT IS DIFFERENT

Care and Cure of Crippled Children at Exeter

Life at the Hospital is much happier and busier for the bedridden children than might be supposed. The pictures above are: (1) The Matron is seen helping a little girl to build her toy house; (2) Babies taking the air in the warm sunshine; (3) John Francis, of Exeter, entertaining a ward with his mouthorgan; (4) Boys at work making Xmas presents; (5) Three-year-old Margaret Graham shows off "Teddy."

Petrol driven motors increased the range of journeys that people took although there was a high accident rate. Some of the motor bus routes that we still have (the 2) were actually established in the 1920s. The charabanc, a cart with benches, had begun as horse drawn conveyances but by the 1920s were motor versions. Not everybody was thrilled about them - Honiton council created a bylaw prohibiting them from disturbing their peace: no horns or noisy instruments, loud singing or outcry was allowed.

There were new roles for women in the 1920s too. Some women were now allowed to vote, the Sex Disqualification Removal Act allowed women to be able to stand for parliament, serve on a jury or undertake various professions like being a barrister. Many women's organisations planned a peace pilgrimage that was to converge on Hyde Park - there was a strong impetus for 'never again'.

Despite all the doom and gloom, people did enjoy the light-hearted side of life in the 1920s too. Some did have more leisure time (the working week became more clearly defined) and those who had work, had more disposable income. There were more family picnics, more time in the water or on the beach. Amateur photography became popular, and there were days out such as picnics on Dartmoor, swimming at Exmouth, Teignmouth or Seaton.

The BBC began broadcasting in the 1920s, but few houses had wirelesses. Those who did, sometimes found themselves hosting neighbours when something special was on. There were many community activities organised at this time. There was the church, chapel and many associations organised with them such as bell ringers, choirs and the mothers union. Chapel outings were popular. Some people liked to take sociable walks with their friends after the morning service on Sundays. There were also secular organisations: local cooperative societies might organise; there was also an allotment society, a cottage garden society or, of course, the Women's Institute. Women there might listen to talks such as 'how our minds influence our lives', learn upholstery, play games, take tea or listen to gramophone music and folk dance.

HEAVITREE'S TABLEAUX IN THE EXETER CARNIVAL, SEPTEMBER 20th, 1905.

Much activity was focused on fundraising because few public services were funded by taxation, for example carnivals, concerts or special events like 'Motor Week'.

Cinema audiences grew massively during the 1920s and a seat there was much cheaper than at the theatre so more people could afford to go. In terms of music there were brass bands everywhere and an awful lot of music was rural traditional. There was a folk dance revival and in the 1920s the American influenced jazz bands and dance arrived. Traditionalists regarded this more modern music as corrupting. In Torquay, the largest of the ballrooms banned their patrons from dancing the Charleston, however a rival ballroom advertised that the Charleston could be danced on their premises. So there was the typical tension between old and modern.

After five exhausting years of warfare on the battlefields, on the high seas and on the home front, with grief hanging heavy in many households, people looked to enjoy themselves again both in traditional ways and by embracing the modern and exciting. There was a determination to make life better for the many, not the few. It was more possible to live in a decent house, receive a decent wage, grow your business, and see your children gain greater opportunities through better health and education. Not all the dreams of the land fit for heroes' were forgotten.

Edwardian Devon Crime and Policing will be the next project for Devon History Society, if anyone is interested in getting involved.

Lost Houses: Cross Park Cottage, East Wonford Hill

By Stephen Bees

At the bottom of Fore Street, Heavitree is the one milestone. Nearby, the entrance to Heavitree Social Club is a piece of ground where a cottage once stood known as Mile End Cottage.

Later known as Cross Park Cottage, The Ryalls and finally as No. 8 East Wonford Hill, the cottage fronted directly onto the road and marked the end of Fore Street and the beginning of East Wonford.

Built in the Georgian period, on land belonging to the Thomas U. Salter family of Heavitree, the rendered brick and stone cottage with rusticated quoins and slate roof was given listed building status in 1974. Sometime later, possibly in the same or next decade, it was demolished.

A description of the cottage, taken from auction and sales adverts, show it contained two attic rooms, two front bedrooms, a dining room and lounge, kitchen, bathroom, a scullery, a back yard together with a walled garden (a shared boundary wall with Wingfield Park / Heavitree Social Club).

A photograph on Heavitree Local History Society website of a tram at Cross Park Terminus shows the very edge of the cottage. The illustration below shows the cottage placed alongside the tram. The entrance to Heavitree Social Club is just beyond the tram:

Illustration of Mile End Cottage
Cross Park, Heavitree
Edited July 2026 SB

The cottage is shown on various maps, and the rooftop is the only feature on an aerial RAF photo of 1945. The census of 1841 listed the cottage as part of Fore Street. Later recorded as on the London Road, and then as East Wonford.

The occupiers:

A retired army surgeon William Thornton, (1778 – 1847) a retired army surgeon, had settled in Sidwell Street, Exeter and set up a business practice in Paris Street in 1834 as a surgeon, dentist and audiologist. William bid, unsuccessfully, for the position of eye surgeon at Exeter Eye Infirmary. It was probably the end 1830s when William moved from Sidwell Street into the cottage with his wife Matilda and their two daughters. But it was a brief stay, as the family were living in London in 1842. A retired naval captain The next tenant of Mile End Cottage was another retired military man, Capt. William Henry Higgs RN. William was born in Exeter and joined the navy as a volunteer at 15. His last appointment was as commander of the Packet Service based at Hobbs Point, Pembroke - for taking mail to Waterford, Ireland. William and his older sister Charlotte, both unmarried, moved into the Mile End Cottage around 1846. After William died in 1863 at 82, Charlotte went to live with a nephew in London.

A clergyman The next tenant of the cottage, which would be known as Cross Pak Cottage, was the Rev. Thomas William Chignell, the Unitarian Minister of George's Meeting in South Street, Exeter (now a Wetherspoon's pub). The reverend has the lion's share of comments of this article, but there is not enough space on the page to give a full account of his history. Thomas was one of the most eloquent and learned ministers in the West Country, and the oldest Nonconformist minister in the West to occupy the same pulpit without interruption for over forty years. Although a man of remarkable gifts, but of delicate health, some say he was never a popular preacher.

T.W.C picture from a scrapbook courtsey of Harris Manchester College

Born at Colchester, Thomas studied at Homerton, a dissenters' academy. He was an Independent minister at Portsea, Hampshire, and taught Latin, Greek and German privately. It was in 1862 when Thomas accepted an invitation of the Exeter Unitarians after he was proposed by Sir John Bowring. Sir John and Lady Bowring would be among Thomas's personal friends.

For sale: In 1866 Cross Park Cottage was put for sale. The owner of the Knoll (Heavitree Social Club) John Spark, a retired linen draper of Colsons and Spark, the High Street, Exeter, was selling the Knoll along with a small detached genteel cottage 'in the occupation of a good tenant'. The Chignell family were already sitting tenants, and continued to be tenants, having moved from Mount Radford a couple of years earlier.

Eyes closed: Now in his 50s, Thomas is described by one newspaper: 'A preacher whose style is peculiar. He has the habit of closing his eyes for emphasis of a sentence and his action consists of lowering the right shoulder in a succession of bows to the books before him. His delivery in the pulpit is very slow, and it is evident that every word is carefully weighed. The moulding of some of the sentences is exquisitely beautiful.'

Thomas had complied a hymn book which he used at the chapel, some of the hymns were his own. Dressed in a cassock, a gift from worshipers, Thomas's sermons were marked by constant 'references, drawn from a wide range of reading, to Aristotle, to Dante, to Gothe, to Carlyle, to Rousseau, perhaps, above all, to Spinoza.'

Thomas would advertise on a chalk board, put outside the chapel, the topic of his next lecture - raising a few eyebrows from the more conservative minded. He lectured at various institutions and societies; from the lofty Exeter Literary Society and the Exeter Institution to the more humble venue of the Working Men's Mutual Improvement Society in Preston Street.

Out of a tragedy: In 1871 Thomas's wife Martha died at 35, shortly after giving birth to a son – their seventh child. Staying with the family at the time of the tragedy was Martha's sister Jane, and their mother. Jane stayed on as a 'housekeeper' to support the family.

A few years later Thomas and Jane married, in Switzerland. In England at that time it was illegal for a man to marry his dead wife's sister. They married at Neuchatel in the Hotel de Ville (The Town Hall) in 1874. It was a feature at George's Chapel on Sunday evenings to hold lectures and orchestral concerts. Thomas's liberal views show he was in favour of Sunday opening of museums and libraries, and as an ardent promoter for adult and children's education, he was a trustee of New School House in Paris Street. Now old and frail,

Thomas would have witnessed the laying of the tram tracks in front of their home. After 43 years living at Cross Park Thomas died in 1906. He was buried at Higher Cemetery, Heavitree.

The extract below from The Devon and Exeter Gazette, was written by a friend of Rev. Thomas Chignell. 'As a preacher he managed to avoid entirely the preachers common-place of phrase, thought, and action. He loved nature with an ardour which I have never known surpassed. I connect him in my memory with walks near his own house under blooming orchard trees, along green lanes… sweet it was, too, to talk to him by his own fireside in his room, where the pictures reflected his own discriminating love of art, and his bookshelves were full to overflowing of his favourites and teachers'.

During the summer of 1907, a coach party of 80 Unitarians from Crediton, in horse-drawn brakes, passed through Heavitree on their way to Sidmouth. The party noticed the vacant cottage that had been the Chignell's home.

A Stained-Glass Window: Such was the regard for Rev. Chignell a memorial window was installed in George's Chapel. The design of the window, which was subscribed for by members of the congregation and friends, is a full-length representation of Spinoza, the philosopher, with a medallion of Carlyle at the bottom. There is also an inscription which states: This window was erected to the memory of Rev. T.W. Chignell. For over forty years Minister of this Chapel who died Dec 30th 1906 aged 82.

The Ryalls: With the departure of widow Jane Chignall, who went to live with her stepdaughter in London, Cross Park Cottage was sold in 1908. The new owners of the cottage were an older couple, John and Elizabeth Morgan. The Morgans ran a watch, clock and jewellers shop on the corner of South Street and Sun Street, Exeter and lived on the premises. It seems likely the new name for the cottage, The Ryalls, was chosen as reminder of when Elizabeth was the housekeeper to a clergyman at The Ryalls, Seaton. Shortly after they bought the cottage Elizabeth was widowed and she moved to Wynards House in Magdalen Street, Exeter and the cottage was let.

A newspaper sub-editor: The next occupier, Leonard Richards, was a sub editor of Exeter Flying Post. Leonard and the residents of Cross Park Terrace had to endure a 'duck pond' in 1915. For months 'motorists and pedestrians were spattered with liquid mud as they passed the tram terminus'. Eventually the nuisance problem was cured by raising the level of the rails for the road to be 'properly barrelled'. Leonard and his wife Bertha and their son Ronald appear to have been happy to live in Heavitree. After five or six years living at The Ryalls, they migrated uphill, Heavitree to live at Regents Park.

A bookbinder & leather goods craftsman: Alfred Noakes was a sitting tenant when Elizabeth Morgan died in 1916 and her cottage advertised for sale. It was sold for £270 to John Charles Lamacraft, a retired publican of the Coach and Horses, Sidwell Street. Lamacraft lived his retirement at Pinhoe and The Ryalls' tenant Alfred Noake, a bookbinder with a shop in Fore Street, Exeter continued to live there briefly. Alfred, a keen chess player, returned to live at St Leonards. The Ryalls, although recently sold in 1916, was once again advertised for sale in 1919, with sitting tenants.

A retired bank clerk: The sitting tenants, having moved from Oakford House, Kingsteignton, were another elderly couple, Jacob Jeans, a retired bank clerk, and Hannah his wife and their daughter Grace. They paid rent of £20 p.a.. Shortly after moving into The Ryalls, it seems family wanted to move to Topsham but their plans changed. Jacob died in 1921 at 75. Hannah and Grace moved to Kent. The summer of 1921 The Ryalls remained empty, but returning to visit her mother-in-law at Heavitree Park, Norah Richards, a widow, and an Irish actress of the Punjab, India, 'picked a flower in T.W.C's (Chignell) garden'.

The Richards family, had been Unitarian friends of the Chignells. (Norah Richards has her own illuminating history on Wiki, and elsewhere.) The same year, a motorcycle race from Exeter to Lyme Regis and back – just under 70 miles, saw the riders were checked in at the finish at Cross Park Terminus.

Born and bred at Heavitree: The electoral register of 1922 lists the next occupiers of the cottage as Robert and Jessie Branscombe and Jessie's sister Eliza Wakeham. Robert, who before moving into The Ryalls had lived opposite, had a long career with the HM Post Office in Queen Street, Exeter; a career perhaps inspired by his parents who had the post office and grocer shop on Fore Street, Heavitree.

The Ryalls with its walled garden might have been an asset, with Robert becoming the secretary of Heavitree Horticultural Society. Annual shows were often held in the meadow of Heavitree vicarage.

Numerous accidents happened with the trams, some more serious than others. On one occasion when Robert was about to get on the tram at the terminus he was knocked down by a car. Suffering with a bruised right hip and abrasions to both hands, he hobbled home. Not long after Robert wrote to the local press about the dangerous actions of car drivers frequently passing on either side of a stationary tram - both cars going in the same

direction! Robert was the only occupier of The Ryalls born and bred at Heavitree, though in the late 1930s when his wife Jessie died, he moved to live at Pinhoe. Before he left, he may have seen the tram rails torn up.

No. 8 East Wonford Hill: With new houses built on the north side of East Wonford Hill, so came a house numbering system. All houses down the hill that had 'names' were given numbers. The Ryalls became No. 8 East Wonford Hill and the row of old cottages on this south side of the hill no longer had odd and even numbers.

Semper Fidelis: Moving into No. 8 were Charles and Emily Wood. When they arrived from Kennford, both were in their 40s. The Exeter motto was used happily by various organisations. Charles had been foreman at the Semper Fidelis workshop, the only industry (mainly carpentry) in Exeter entirely run by WWI disabled ex-servicemen.

Later in life Charles worked as an agent distributor while Emily worked for an outfitter. During WWII Charles and Emily gave shelter to a blitzed out family and as such were entitled to an extra ton of coal, but strict regulations, and the departure of the family before the coal was delivered, cost the Woods a hefty £10 fine. By comparison, a few years later in 1946, Charles was fined a £1 with £2 11s 2d. costs for driving without due care and attention. Charles stated in court that he had 'almost completed a thesis on road accidents and how to avoid them.' (!) The bench refused a plea that he had a clean licence for 40 years.

After the Chignell family, Charles and Emily were the longest occupiers of no. 8. Charles died in 1951 and Emily continued to live there for another 20 years. Although Emily died in 1971 her probate was not settled until 1974. The same year, by coincidence, the Town and County Amenities Act came in to force and no. 8, along with many other houses in Heavitree, was given listed building status.

Demolition: It seems likely Cross Park Cottage was pulled down in the 1970s or 1980s. No record has been found at the Devon Heritage Centre, and old copies of The Express & Echo, which might have reported the demolition, have been digitised, but only as far as the early 1960s. A point of reference might come from the adjacent house. No. 10 was a small double-fronted house and known as The Cot. A descendant of one of the occupiers recalls The Cot was demolished between 1972 – 1976. (It was not on the 1974 listed buildings of Heavitree.) All that remains today on the site of Cross Park Cottage are the outline of a brick wall on the pavement, and a flight of 3 steps that are roughly in the correct place for the entrance. A larger wall of about 5' tall (1.5m) existed to the right of the cottage. I was a paperboy in the 1960s and cycled by the cottage. I wish I could remember it. Perhaps the best reminder of the cottage and the Rev. Chignell is the stained-glass window at George's Meeting / Wetherspoons in South Street, Exeter. A worthy place to visit the next time you are in Exeter. Admire the window, with a beverage of your choice!

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