



The trail starts and finishes from the Thatched House, Exwick Road, EX4 2BQ (bus F1 and F2 from the City Centre)

The route is about 2 miles (3km) and includes a steep hill. This section can be missed out if preferred. Allow about an hour, more for a large group.

'Living Here... West of the Exe' is a Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) initiative guided by local people in Alphington, Cowick, Exwick and St Thomas. Living Here nurtures neighbourhood heritage by exploring stories of the past, the present and the future. It is also helping people of all ages to hand on their local heritage to future generations.

With the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund volunteers created this trail in 2009 as a Living Here project.

If you have an idea for a Living Here project please get in touch: visit www.livinghere.org.uk or contact RAMM reception on 01392 665858

Acknowledgements and Research:

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Alan Mazonowicz - including photos and first draft

Brian Carpenter - including photos

Julia Sharp - co-ordination

Cover Photograph: Dennis Hammond by the drinking fountain in St Andrew's Road

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RAMM



Design by www.scribbleanddoodles.co.uk

A local history trail around Old Exwick

www.livinghere.org.uk



Living here
West of the Exe

RENAISSANCE
SOUTH WEST
MUSEUMS FOR
CHANGING LIVES



(1)

The Thatched House public house was the farmhouse of Foxhayes Farm, owned by the Buller family, in the hamlet of Foxhayes, becoming a pub in 1937.

(2)



Cleve House (2)

Winchester Avenue, opposite the Thatched House, was originally the drive for Cleve House, of the late 17th century, which became a training centre for the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association in 1950 and has since been converted into flats. The new Exwick Heights Primary School opened in the grounds in 2008.

Walk along Exwick Road, until you reach Mildmay Close on the right.

(3)

The houses of Mildmay Close were built by the Exeter Workmen's Dwellings Co Ltd for GWR workers, to be rented for 10s per week. It was formally opened in 1934 by Lord Mildmay of Flete, a director of the railway. The Exeter company also built the houses on the right of Exwick Road.

(4)

Four shops, two of which remain, were built at the same time as Exwick Villas in the 1930s. The estates on the hillside opposite were built from the late 1960s, with Fairhazel Drive the first road.



Exwick shops during the 1960 floods (4)

(5)

Before World War Two, Valley Road was cut as part of the planned Exeter northern bypass, but work was halted in 1939 when Delaney and Galley Ltd, a munitions factory that made radiators and wing tanks for Spitfires and other aircraft types, was sited there. The factory became a bakery in the late 1940s and many locals remember the smell of freshly baked Mother's Pride bread. The bakery closed in 1993 and Old Bakery Close was constructed on the site in 1997.

Continue along Exwick Road passing Exwick Villas.

(6)



Exwick School from Station Road 1908 (6)

Exwick School, beyond Exwick Villas, was built in 1861 and closed in 1971. Foxhayes First School took its place and this was in turn replaced by Exwick Heights School in 2008.

A Short History of Exwick

Exwick appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Essoic, a manor held by Baldwin and occupied by five serfs, nine villeins and a mill...

Baldwin's son gifted the manor to the Benedictine monks of Cowick Priory.

Mills were a part of Exwick life from the 13th century, and by the late 18th century the village was likened to Lancashire, with the three mills and a woollen factory supplying the main employment until after the coming of the railway.

The village, a small community until the end of the 1960s, underwent a period of growth, especially in the hills to the west, and by the present century it has become one of the largest residential areas in Exeter.

The Old Exwick Trail

Start from the Thatched House, Exwick Road, EX4 2BQ (bus F1 and F2 from the City Centre)



The Thatched House, right (1)

The Tollhouse on the corner with Station Road was built in 1853 to serve the turnpike to Exeter. From 1855 it was used to charge a toll on all apart from the 'labouring classes', on Station Road, which was privately owned by James Buller, who built wooden bridges over the leat and river in 1852. The City Council took over the road and tolls ceased in 1901.

(8)

Opposite St. Andrews Church is an old wall thought to belong to the original Exwick Manor House which was occupied until 1820 by Samuel Banfill of the Woollen Mill (see Section 12). A drinking fountain, now removed, was placed against the wall for Queen Victoria's Jubilee.



Exwick Manor House (8)

(9)



The Exwick War Memorial (9) and the Toll House to the rear (7)

The Village War Memorial by St Andrew's Church was designed by Mr T Easton and paid for with £107 10s raised by subscription from villagers. Inscribed on it are the names of fourteen men who fell in the First War and four from the Second War. It was dedicated on the 26 June 1920.

(10)

St. Andrews Church dates from 1842 as a Chapel of Ease for St. Thomas. It was decorated in the Pugin style and hailed by the Camden Society as 'the best specimen of a modern church we have yet seen.' The living was bought by William Gibbs of Tyntesfield in 1872 and the church extended in 1873.

Continue walking down St. Andrews Road

(11)



The Lamb Inn (11), and County Steam Laundry (13)

The Village Inn, which was called The Lamb between 1832 and 1987, is thought to be part of the stables of the old Manor House.

(12)

The ground opposite the Village Inn was the site of Banfill and Granger's woollen factory and mill, built in 1787 by Antony Gibbs, and which employed 200 people at its height. A flax mill from 1860, it was burnt down in 1862, rebuilt, and finally destroyed in a huge blaze in 1869. The ground to the left of the private road was the leat while across the site is the position of the old dye house, now Exe View Cottages, formerly known as Mill Cottages. Myrtle Cottage, No. 6 Exe Cottages, was previously Exwick Dairy Farm.

Almost next to the woollen mill was a fulling mill that is still remembered as the County Steam Laundry. Situated opposite Exwick Hill, it was built as a fulling mill in 1765, became a paper mill in 1805, from 1872 a corn mill and from 1893 the laundry. The top floor of the building was gutted by fire on 2nd December 1941, and several thousand pounds of officers' uniforms and workers' overalls were lost. Exwick House, behind, was used for the lost space, until the repaired mill returned to full service after the war. It closed in 1980 and was demolished in December 1982. Exwick House was built on Meadow Field around 1820 as the mill-house for the paper mill and is now flats.

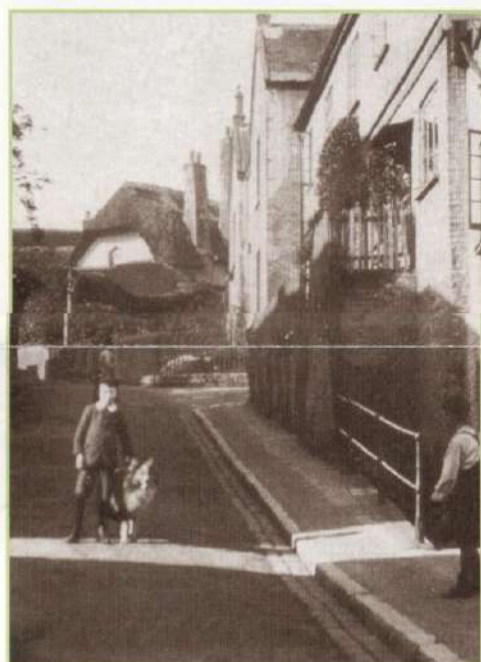
(14)

The distinctive black and white building on the corner, designed by Walter Cave and built in 1893 for Antony Gibbs, son of William Gibbs of Tyntesfield, was the village post office, which closed in 1966, and now comprises three houses. This can be considered to be the centre of the old village.

Cross the road by the Pedestrian Crossing, proceed up Exwick Hill. (Those who do not wish to walk up Exwick Hill should continue to the roundabout and resume the walk after 16 below)

(15)

No.7 Exwick Hill was a very small general store. Rackfield Cottages included a wash house which became a cobbler's workshop. Two cottages at the end of Rackfield Cottages and five other houses in Exwick Hill have been demolished. Houses in The Square and Eaton House were the site of a press shop, burling rooms and other requirements for Banfill and Granger's woollen factory.



Exwick Hill (15)

(16)

The Hermitage is a picturesque thatched building thought to be of 12th century in origin and believed to have been owned by Cowick Priory. It has been greatly extended since.

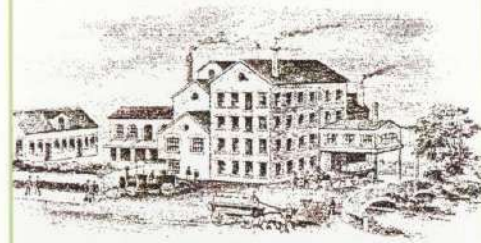


Hermitage Cottages (16)

Return down Exwick Hill, cross the road at the Pedestrian Crossing, turn left, walk to the roundabout and bear right. Continue with care down the narrow path until you reach the entrance for Hamlyn House on the left.

(17)

The ornamental stonework at the entrance to Hamlyn House was relocated from the old Georgian Exe Bridge, which was taken down in 1904. The house was built in 1905 by W R Mallett, the owner of Exwick Mill.



Exwick Mill (18)

Exwick Mill can be seen further along the road but it is not recommended that you get any closer. This is probably the mill that appears in the Domesday survey. It milled corn until 1958, and for a time, two of its wheels also fulled wool and another ground manganese. During the Civil War it was fortified when Exeter was under siege by Parliamentary forces commanded by Sir Thomas Fairfax. It was rebuilt in 1886 by William Rice Mallett and employed a dozen men during the early years of the twentieth century.

Return along the path to the roundabout.

(19)

Exwick Farmhouse is next to the roundabout - the section with small windows is the old dairy. The large building in the yard was a horse driven cider mill.

Walk back past the church and turn left into Station Road.

(20)

The Parish Hall, beyond the church, was known as the Exwick Parish Institute. It was built after World War One on land donated by General Buller, by volunteers. Funds were raised by local people and a loan obtained which was not repaid until the mid 1930s.



Exwick Station Road (20)

Continue as far as the two new walls flanking the road.

(21)

Exwick has suffered flooding for centuries. After two severe floods in October and December 1960, a flood relief channel was built. During its construction in 1974 another flood swept away the bridge to St. Davids and coastguards were needed to shoot a line across the river to re-establish telephone connections. The bridge was built by James Buller in 1871 from cast-iron girders to allow access from Exwick Mill to the station. In 2009 the two walls were built and a slot on each side of the road can take a removable flood barrier. This wall follows the course of the Exwick leat which had powered the mills, but was filled in when the flood relief channel was built.

From here you may either cross over the river to St. David's Station (Buses H1, H2, 56 and 379, and trains) or turn right along the top path by the flood channel as far as the Civil Service Club. Either turn right to return to the Thatched House or continue on path under railway bridge and across Flowerpot Field, before crossing the bridge at the end of the Flood Relief Channel and River Exe by Millers Crossing (23) over weirs near the Mill on the Exe (a rebuilt Mill). Return to the city following the signposts.



This is a faithful scan of the original Trail Leaflet produced by the society back in 2010.

draft errata v1.1:

- [1] the reference to five serfs and nine villeins in the Domesday Book is, we understand, a rather too literal translation of the original Latin manuscript. Apparently, the Domesday manuscript refers not to the total population but to heads of households, so by 'rule of thumb' the total population of the Manor of Exwick (rendered in Latin as 'Essaic') is likely to have been about five times the given number, i.e. approximately 70 people.
- [2] Where it reads 'Mills were part of Exwick life from the 13th century...' this should read 'Mills were part of Exwick life from at least the 11th century' because mills were part of Exwick life from before the time of the Domesday book.
- [3] The legend to the small route map mentions there are two pubs along the route: The Thatched House and The Village Inn. Today, only one of these is still in operation - The Thatched House.

Can You Help?

Are there one or two other points that could be updated in any new edition?
If you can spot anything of this kind, please contact the Society; we would be glad to hear from you.

[Exwick Local History Society June 2022]