

**The Ecology of the River Exe -
a talk given by Dr Tegwin
Harris.**

Dr Harris began his talk by showing an aerial photograph of the River Exe off Exmouth and Dawlish Warren. It showed a large mussel bed upstream from Exmouth, which caused tidal twirls in the river, and a cross section of mud, mud and sand, and dry sand. This mixture making the Exe estuary different to any other.

The mud off Topsham is very smelly and *gloopy*, the smell being hydrogen sulphide. Grasses grow in this mixture and these were responsible for holding the mud together. Cord grass and Eel grass were the most numerous, but other minute plants such as cyano bacteria were also present.

Animals also live in the mud and are a rich source of food for the bird and fish populations. Animals such as small snails, 2 million of which could live in a square metre of mud, shrimp-like creatures partly bury themselves and used modified limbs to sift for food.

Other animals present include Ragworm and King Ragworm, which can grow to over 2 feet and is a relative newcomer to the estuary.

and the Peppery Furrow shell which buries itself at depths dependent on its age.

The sand on the beaches are formed by tidal action into ripples which are very mobile and abrasive making it difficult for plants and animals to survive. Animals found here include cockles, which live on the surface or very close under and plaice which because of their shape can smell food in the sand. Plaice can survive being stranded when the tide ebbs by covering themselves with sand.

Also present are Lugworms, which build sand mounds at right angles to the tide for catching food, Glissera which are carnivorous and have a venomous bite and a thick skinned worm called Ophelia which is almost exclusively found on the Exe estuary

Margaret Wannell

**Heavitree
Local
History
Society**



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The next meeting of the Society will be held on ,
Wednesday, 12th December
commencing at 7:30 pm.

As usual it will be held in the **Rifford Room**, which is entered at the east end of St Michaels & All Angels Church, Church Street, Heavitree.

The speaker, Roger Brien, Librarian at the Devon and Exeter Institution, will give a talk entitled '**100 Years of Advertising**'.

Mince pies will be provided!

*This newsletter was published by the
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Diary Dates 2013

Wednesday, 10th April

Wednesday, 5th June

Wednesday, 4th September
(Annual General Meeting)

Life Expectancy in Heavitree

Near to the entrance to the Rifford Room is a well preserved gravestone commemorating the deaths of four Heavitree residents. towards the end of the 19th Century. The gravestone is of high quality, but what is perhaps surprising is the age of the two women.

Elizabeth died in October 1881, aged 98 and Charlotte, her daughter in law, died in February, also aged 98.

Julia Sharp, a member of Exeter Local History Society, has carried out extensive investigations into what became of the family and it seems that notwithstanding the longevity of these two women the family name, Garland, did not last long into the 20thC

Den Perrin