

To offer friendship through social and educational activities

## **EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter**

**Number 29**

**DECEMBER 2016**

**January to March 2017**

### **Events and Lunches:**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

**A Leisurely New Year Lunch at The Barn Owl, Exeter EX1 3PE**

“The Barn Owl in Exeter is a country pub oozing rural charm and rustic character. Our picturesque surroundings provide the perfect backdrop for savouring the hearty, seasonal pub-food on our menu, and the carefully nurtured cask ales and fine wines gracing our bar.”



Copyright “The Barn Owl”

***Book with Louise by telephone only please 01884 242606 by Tuesday 10 January. Be prepared to leave a message!***

Welcome in 2017 with a leisurely lunch at The Barn Owl in Honiton Road Exeter. Louise has reserved a table to the right of the main entrance, by the far corner windows and will be there from 12 o'clock.

Arrive any time between 12 noon and 2.00pm; select and pay for your meal and drinks and spend a convivial time with EUC friends in this pleasant pub run by Vintage Inns. There is no need to pre-order but to whet your appetite you may wish to look at the extensive menu on their website <http://www.vintageinn.co.uk/restaurants/south-west/thebarnowlexeter>

How to get there:

Bus: 4A from Exeter bus station stops close by at Honiton Rd Barn Owl.

Car: The inn has a large car park, shared with the Holiday Inn Express, reached via Guardian Rd, a turning off the A30 Honiton Rd just opposite the Park & Ride and close to M5 junction 29.

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February**

**Visit the Met Office, Exeter**

Our EUC club is planning a visit to the Met Office on Saturday 11 February 2017. The Met Office is the UK's national meteorological service. It is a world leader in providing weather and climate services and employs more than 1,700 people in 60 locations throughout the world. It is recognized as one of the world's most accurate forecasters, and provides 3,000 tailored forecasts and briefings each day, to a huge range of customers.



We shall be shown round by a senior forecaster. Besides seeing the usual sights – computer hall, the Street, and the instrument enclosure – we shall also visit the main

Operations Centre, which is not included in public tours. The number of visitors in our group will be limited to 10 people, so as not to disrupt ongoing Met Office work, which continues 24x7. The tour will last about 90 minutes. We shall meet inside the main entrance at 12, and then proceed to the café for a snack lunch before the tour.

From Exeter, the easiest way to get there is to take the red Park and Ride bus service. If coming by car, parking is possible in the grounds of the Met Office, provided you have given the organizer in advance the details of your number plate. Alternatively, one can use the Park and Ride car park, and walk across to the Met Office. On arrival, all visitors will be required to show a photo ID. Please note that photography is not allowed anywhere in the Met Office building.

**To book, please contact Peter Wingfield-Digby (01392 424781 or [pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com)) by 1 February 2017.**

**Wednesday 22nd February 2017**

**Talk by Mark Baker, Canal Manager of the Grand Western Canal Country Park and Nature Reserve**

“The Grand Western Canal Country Park and local nature reserve meanders through beautiful Mid Devon countryside and quiet villages between Tiverton and Lowdells (near the Somerset border).

The canal was originally part of an ambitious scheme to link the Bristol Channel with the English Channel; the Grand Western Canal was proposed as a way for shipping to avoid the long and perilous journey around the Cornish peninsular, and as a route for transporting goods, including coal from South Wales, into the heart of Somerset and Devon.”

It was never fully completed and other parts of the canal that were built have fallen into disrepair or are derelict.

The country park is managed and owned by Devon County Council and Mark Baker will tell us a little on the canal’s history and the task of the rangers to look after the park. Their task is to maintain the canal park and tend to its rich and vibrant variety of flora and fauna.

The canal has a length of 11.25 miles, which can be explored by boat, bike and on foot or by horse drawn barge. It has the great advantage that there is no road traffic.



We meet from noon onwards for lunch at 12:30 at the Ruffwell Inn, Thorverton

Book with Ian by 12<sup>th</sup> February, preferably by email on [eucexeterbranch@gmail.com](mailto:eucexeterbranch@gmail.com) or 01626 867363 if you do not have email access.

Please note that we have a call guardian on our phone to cut down on spam calls and you may have to give your name or simply say EUC.

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

**Lunch at the Smugglers Inn (between Dawlish and Teignmouth on the A379)**



“The Smugglers Inn is one of the only restaurants in the area that provide a full lunch and evening menu alongside our famous 'Farmers Feast Carvery' every day of the week. Situated in the beautiful town of Dawlish in Devon, you can expect to be surrounded by stunning panoramic views of the ocean and the surrounding countryside. A view that is not to be missed.” From <http://thesmugglersinn.net>

Members of the EUC, both from our branch and from other regions, have returned here on numerous occasions and have not been disappointed with either the service or the meals. The Inn is situated on the A379 between Dawlish and Teignmouth and has convenient bus stops on the No 2 Exeter to Newton Abbot route. The busses run at 20 min intervals midday weekdays in both directions. There is a generously sized car park at 27 Teignmouth Rd, Devon EX7 0LA.

We meet from noon onwards for lunch at 12:30.

Book with Ian by 25<sup>th</sup> February, preferably by email on [eucexeterbranch@gmail.com](mailto:eucexeterbranch@gmail.com) or 01626 867363 if you do not have email access.

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**Please Note!**  
**From March Onwards:**  
**A new meeting venue for EUC Exeter Branch – the Royal Oak beside the Exe River**



For the last two or three years we have been meeting at the City Gate Hotel by the Iron Bridge in Exeter. We recently discovered that the meeting room there was about to be converted to form a new kitchen, so it will no longer be possible to hold our meetings there. Your committee has been exploring other possible meeting places in or near Exeter. We are pleased to tell you that we have found a pub, which appears to meet our requirements very well. This is The Royal Oak, a pub on Okehampton Street in Exeter. It is on the right hand side of the road, very close to the Exe Bridge, and the pub has a good-sized car park (20 spaces). The Sat Nav address for The Royal Oak is: EX4 1DY or 68 Okehampton Street, Exeter.

Many city buses pass by St Thomas Station in Cowick Street, from where it is only a short walk to The Royal Oak. The main entrance to the pub is on Okehampton Street, but there is also a back entrance from the car park, which provides entry directly to the pub and to the meeting room and is suitable for the disabled. A wide range of pub food and drinks is available. The meeting room is spacious, and there is a projector and screen.

The Royal Oak gained public attention in the devastating floods of October 1960, when about 20 barrels, some of them full of beer, were washed away down the River Exe. One barrel was picked up two months later by a minesweeper a few miles off Portland. To commemorate this event, the barrel was later turned into a seat, complete with explanatory brass plaque, and was placed in the public bar at The Royal Oak.

The Committee looks forward to seeing you at its meetings at the Royal Oak. Please take careful note of the dates of all meetings, lunches, and visits, and, if you would like to attend any of them, contact the organiser by the deadline date shown in the programme.

*Peter Wingfield-Digby. Club Secretary*

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017**

**Talk and Slide Show by Paul Rendell:  
The Industrial Archaeology of the Moor**

This talk will look at how man has changed Dartmoor by mining for tin, copper and silver and quarrying for granite and china clay. Man has dug for peat, made ice and started many small industrial enterprises.



Haytor Granite Quarry

We meet from 12 noon at the Royal Oak, 68 Okehampton Street, Exeter for lunch, the talk begins at 2pm

Please Book with Susie Hewitt by March 14<sup>th</sup> 2017  
on 01392 273895 or [susiehewitt@gmx.com](mailto:susiehewitt@gmx.com)

**A Forward Look to June 2017:**

**27/28/29 June 2017: EUC Annual Outing.**

On Wednesday 28 June there will be a visit to Canons Ashby, a National Trust property in Northamptonshire, NE of Banbury, and a club dinner in the evening at The Holt Hotel, south of Banbury.

*Further information can be obtained from Louise Clunies-Ross (01884 242606).*

## Remembering Genie Ridgeon

We have just learned that Genie died on 18th November, at the age of 94. Many Exeter Branch members will have fond memories of Eugenie – Genie to us – who took part in our events for many years. Following her retirement from the role of Secretary to the Department of Philosophy at Exeter University, Genie continued to live in the city where she took an active part in a number of clubs and associations. Despite failing sight, Genie continued to travel around by bus and we enjoyed her cheerful company at Branch events until she moved to Surrey to be closer to her son and his family. We have sent a card to the family on behalf of the Exeter Branch.

*Louise Clunies-Ross*

### Attention:

Dear Members, the normal cut-off date for paying subscriptions is 31 December. After this date, non-payers will not receive the Newsletter and can only attend meetings if they pay their subscription before the meeting. Payment of 2 pounds fifty pence can be made by cheque - made out to Exeter University Club, Exeter Branch - and sent to Mrs P F Lee, The Laurels, Rewe, Exeter EX5 4EU.

## Event Reports

### “The Normans in Devon”, a talk by Sarah Bennett - 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Sarah kindly returned to us to give us another talk. On this occasion, it was about the Normans in Devon. We had asked her back as we had really enjoyed her first talk on Conan-Doyle. Once again she was a mine of information. Her talk was illustrated by a number of pictures, for example, the Bayeux Tapestry. Although the tapestry has a French name, it is embroidery actually thought to have been made in England.

The Norman William was an illegitimate son of the unmarried Duke of Normandy (Duke Robert the Devil) and one of his mistresses. This “bastardry” remained a stigma for him throughout his life.



A Norman castle with figures from the tapestry. This is very much a Norman version of the battle and begins by depicting King Harold II as a brave and successful warrior.

*Better for your propaganda to win against a strong opponent than a weak one.* Harold Godwineson, the last Anglo-Saxon king, had been busy in the North of England and had defeated the Vikings at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. He had marched south immediately afterwards to meet William at the Battle of Hastings.

The Norman invasion was not over with the Battle of Hastings (It actually took place near a town now called Battle), but continued for some time with pockets of resistance under Harold's sons; these had to be eliminated. In fact, the rest of William's life was taken up with suppressing rebellion within the country.

William was crowned King of England at Westminster Abbey shortly after the battle. He had claimed that the deceased King Edward (his 2<sup>nd</sup> Cousin) had promised him the Throne.

In the South West, an important event was the siege of Exeter in 1068, where Harold had owned a lot of land. The siege lasted for 18 days with fierce resistance from the Saxons of Devon, Somerset and Dorset. His mother Gytha had refused to pay the taxes William had imposed. Gytha was in the city during the siege, however, she was able to flee to Flanders after the capitulation.

Following the siege, the Normans built Rougemont Castle to impose their rule, but they neither harmed the inhabitants nor confiscated their possessions or increased the amount of tax they paid. The remaining castle tower being one of the oldest standing Norman buildings in England.

It even contains a Saxon window!



William went on to suppress the north of England turning it into wasteland from which it took a long time to recover.

In 1086 William took a census of England on the basis of Anglo Saxon principles, using their methods and officers. The Anglo-Saxons were replaced by Normans after the census had been completed, so that Anglo-Saxon power and influence was diminished if not obliterated. The census record is known as the Domesday Book. This was a good, but not complete, survey.

This gave William the information on all possessions, and he was then able to divide them up and distribute lands and property amongst his allies. It led to the dominance of Norman rule.

*Ian Thomson*

## **“Carry on Up the Jebel”**

**Talk by George Garner on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November**

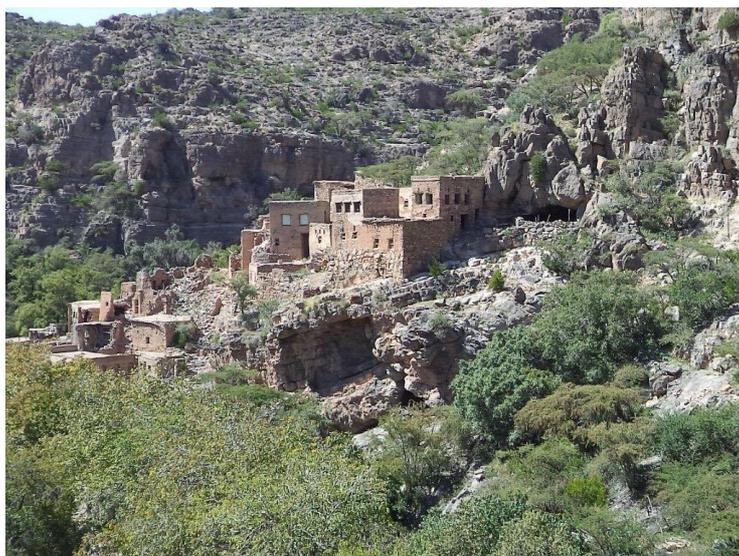
George gave us a most informative and at times amusing talk on his time in the RAF in the 1950s. It seemed quite a complicated political situation in Oman at the time arising from The Treaty of Seeb (1920), which granted sovereignty over the whole of Muscat and Oman to the Sultan of Muscat while control of “Oman Proper” (the interior including the Jebel Akhdar (Green Mountain)) was in the hands of the Imam of the Ibadi sect of Islam.

The Sultan granted licenses to the Iraq Petroleum Company to explore for oil, disregarding the fact that the largest potential oil fields lay inside the Imamate. Saudi Arabia wished to lay hands on this area and had been rebuffed with British help in 1954. In 1957 the current Imam, Ghalib bin Ali al Hinai, together with his brother Talib and other tribesmen, aided by Saudi and Egypt, seized control of the interior, repelling the Army of the Sultan.

The Sultan called on help from Britain and as a result George was stationed with the 249 squadron in Sharjah, Trucial Oman (now UAE), flying Venoms carrying rockets and cannon. Its role was to attack historical forts (later to become World Heritage Sites) belonging to the rebellious sheikhs. The Sultan’s army succeeded in recapturing the plains areas but the leaders of the rebellion escaped to the Jebel Akhdar. At this stage George was attached to the Sultan’s army as air liaison officer; his job was to call up air support when necessary. He took part in two unsuccessful attempts to reach the plateau at the top of the mountain before re-joining his squadron. The “Jebel War” ended in 1959 when the SAS climbed the side of the mountain and abseiled down onto the plateau.

George was awarded the Order of the Green Mountain medal for his part in the conflict.

*Susie Hewitt (with help from George)*



Village of Tanuf – destroyed in the fighting

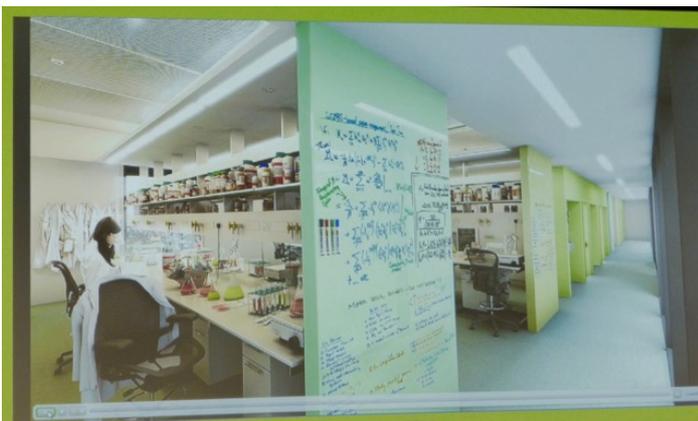
## Visit to the Living Systems Institute on 28 November 2016

After many months it was at last possible to view this remarkable modern building from the inside, and to learn much about its design and purpose. Located next to the Geoffrey Pope building at the top of Stocker Road the LSI is the University's latest addition to the skyline of the Streatham campus.

The Living Systems Institute will house a new inter-disciplinary research facility, bringing together specialist researchers from different disciplines in an environment that fosters collaborative work, building on Exeter's current global reputation for research in human, animal and plant diseases. Professor Philip Ingham FRS, the inaugural Director, is building a strong research team that already has specialist scientists drawn from nine different countries.

The modern entrance is through the Geoffrey Pope Building where we found social and meeting spaces decorated in muted colours with much use made of natural light wherever possible. A sheltered open terrace offers views across the city and down to the Exe estuary. That said, the building is dug deep into the hillside and has several floors below ground level where the environment is carefully controlled. We were told that the LSI building had taken just 4.5 years from concept to reality, at a cost of £52 million.

A presentation by architects and a discussion led by researchers followed the welcome by the Vice-Chancellor, and tours of the building were also available. It was good to see 19 members of Exeter Branch at this prestigious event. The architects' presentation outlined the thinking behind the innovative design of the building, which fosters multidisciplinary research in both laboratory design and in the location of many small informal social spaces where discussion can take place. Research laboratories, support laboratories and research offices are all designed to encourage collaboration and it is anticipated that researchers will get used to 'hot desking'.



Computer "Mock up" of the research benches



Viewing the large open plan office

The session billed as 'Why does basic research matter and who should fund it?' focused initially on the importance of basic, curiosity-led research which can lead to new discoveries

that can make a significant difference to our understanding of the world. Next our attention was drawn to the vital role of targeted, funded research that should ensure that discoveries benefit the human condition – also it was concluded that such findings should therefore be made available to pharmaceutical scientists.

Exeter's Living Systems Institute is intended to become a world leader of this new approach to science, where multidisciplinary collaboration can lead to new inventions and fresh insights that can challenge some of the diseases that face humanity, from chronic and infectious human diseases to plant diseases that threaten the world's food supply.

This impressive facility has its official opening in July 2017.

*Louise Clunies-Ross*



In the LSI biology facility



View of the Exe valley from the LSI

*The Committee of the EUC Exeter Branch wish our members and their families a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year*

