

To offer friendship through social and educational activities

## **EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter**

**Number 37**

<http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>

**December 2018**

**January to March 2019**

### **Membership matters**

#### **Venue for meetings**

At its meeting in August, the Committee decided that in future our meetings will be held at Cowick Barton. This was our old meeting place, but since we left there, the place has undergone a major refurbishment. The décor, quality of food and service are now much improved, and we look forward to returning there.

Our old meeting room has now been converted into an attractive restaurant (where we hold our Christmas lunches), so our meetings will usually be held in the smaller Monks' Room, with its attractive Elizabethan fireplace.

The details are:

The Cowick Barton, 121 Cowick Lane, Exeter EX2 9HF. Tel. 01392 491117.

There is a large carpark there, and the 'A' bus stops right outside the pub.

**It is early days, but we take this opportunity to wish you all:**

**A merry Christmas and a happy New Year.**

## Future events

### Tuesday 15 January 2019: Lunch at the Red Lion, Broadclyst

Enjoy the charm and rustic features preserved in this delightful 16<sup>th</sup> century inn, quietly located in the centre of Broadclyst. Sample menus can be seen online at their website, but we shall probably be asked to pre-order from a tailored menu.



**Meet at:** The Red Lion, Broadclyst, Exeter EX5 3EL Tel: 01392 461271 at 12 noon for 12.30 lunch. Further information is available at <http://www.redlionbroadclyst.co.uk>

**By car:** Broadclyst is only a few minutes' drive from Exeter. It is also 10 minutes by car from Cullompton and Junction 28 on the M5. The pub has a large car park.

**By bus:** There is a regular bus service (No. 1 bus) from Exeter to Broadclyst every 15 minutes, and the journey takes about 20 minutes. Please note that in Exeter the bus now leaves from Sidwell Street, not from the bus station. From the bus stop in the middle of Broadclyst village, a short road (Church Close) leads off to the pub.

**To book:** Please contact Clive Lee ([clive.lee3@btinternet.com](mailto:clive.lee3@btinternet.com) or 01392 841312) by 8 January.

### Monday 28 January 2019: Talk by John Allan on 'Exeter Cathedral's Medieval Glass'

We welcome a return visit by John Allan, to talk about 'Recent Work on the Medieval Glass of Exeter Cathedral'. In his position as Cathedral Archaeologist, John has been closely involved in the extensive conservation work on the Great East Window. This has provided an opportunity for careful study of the medieval glass. The scaffolding outside has recently been removed, and the window can now be seen again in all its glory.



His talk will take place at 2 pm at Cowick Barton, 121 Cowick Lane, Exeter EX2 9HF. Do join us if you can for lunch at the pub from 12 noon.

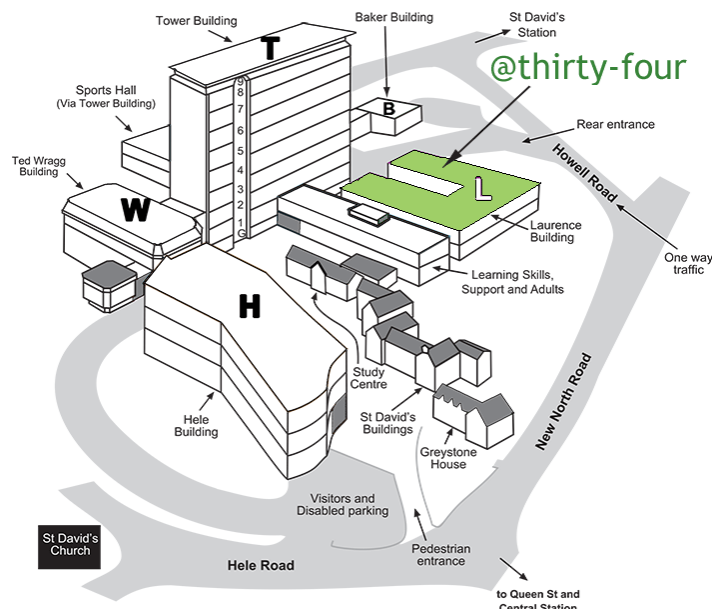
**To book:** Please contact Peter Wingfield-Digby ([pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com) or 01392 424781) by 21 January.

## Tuesday, 12 February 2019: Lunch at @34, Exeter College

We are visiting @Thirty-Four restaurant again. It has not disappointed in the past. The restaurant is a true culinary delight run by budding young chefs and enthusiastic waiting staff. The three-course set menu (no other options) costs under £10 without drinks, which are also reasonably priced. There is a choice of two or three dishes for each course, at least one of which is vegetarian. The actual menu can be seen after the start of the January term on the college website. Guests are expected to leave around 2pm.

**Meet at:** @Thirty-four restaurant, Exeter College at 12.15pm. The restaurant is located in the Laurence Building on the far side of the main campus, which is opposite St David's Church. <https://www.exe-coll.ac.uk/College/Restaurant> Visitors and disabled parking are by the main entrance. Wheelchair access is via a couple of ramps.

**By car:** The main parking area is at the front of the building, but it may be possible to enter the campus by means of the rear entrance on Howell Road, and park closer to the restaurant.



**By bus:** The 5 bus from Crediton and the 55 bus from Tiverton go past Exeter College.

**To book:** Please contact Clive Lee ([clive.lee3@btinternet.com](mailto:clive.lee3@btinternet.com) or 01392 841312) by 5 February.

## **Wednesday 27 February 2019: Talk by Julia Neville on 'Exeter War Hospitals 1914-18'**

The Devon Remembers Heritage Project commemorated the centenary of the First World War by exploring what life was like on the home front in Devon. The Stories of Exeter's War Hospitals, 1914-1919 was one study supported by the project, and we shall hear from Dr Julia Neville who was Research Coordinator of the Group. She is an Honorary University Fellow of the University's History Department.

There were seven sites in Exeter that were used as temporary hospitals, and in all some 35,000 patients were treated there. The attached photo – showing a familiar landmark - was one of the sites.



Her talk will take place at 2 pm at the Cowick Barton, 121 Cowick Lane, Exeter EX2 9HF. Do join us if you can for lunch at the pub from 12 noon.

To book, please contact Peter Wingfield-Digby ([pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com) or 01392 424781) by 20 February.

## **Monday 25 March 2019: Talk by Margaret Vickers on 'Devon in Sight'**

Founded in 1925, Devon in Sight is a local charity providing support to people affected by sight loss, with the aim of helping people with sight loss to live life to the full. It provides a Community Support Service for people with sight loss across many parts of Devon.

Our speaker is Margaret Vickers, mid-Devon Community Support Worker at Devon in Sight. She will tell us about the specialist services this charity offers to Devon residents who have a loss of sight that affects their daily lives.

As part of fund-raising efforts, she joined the Chief Executive Officer of Devon in Sight earlier this year for a sponsored 15,000 feet sky dive, entitled Jump for Sight 2018.



Her talk will take place at 2 pm at the Cowick Barton, 121 Cowick Lane, Exeter EX2 9HF. Do join us if you can for lunch at the pub from 12 noon.

To book, please contact Louise Clunies-Ross ([louisecluniesross@btinternet.com](mailto:louisecluniesross@btinternet.com) or 01884 242606) by 18 March.

## Event reports

### Lunch at the Smugglers Inn, Dawlish, 2 October 2018

At the beginning of October eleven members of Exeter Branch met for lunch at one of our more regular venues, The Smugglers Inn on the hills near Dawlish. It was a joy to see the sunshine and to have a clear view out to sea after the rain and cloud many of us living inland had experienced during the morning. We were joined by four local members, two of whom were within walking distance of this popular pub!

Our group made the most of the Smugglers' large and varied menu, with some choosing lighter dishes, others opting for one of the specials and many favouring the popular carvery. Puddings proved popular too!

Located towards the south-west of our area and with its pleasant outlook, extensive menu, large car park and nearby bus stops, it is likely that The Smugglers will remain on our list of favourite pubs for Exeter Branch lunches.



*Louise Clunies-Ross*

### Talk on the National Coastwatch Institution, 19 October 2018

#### *Eyes along the Coast*

Members were treated to a most interesting and informative talk by Jon Gifford, the President of the National Coastwatch Institution. The NCI was founded in 1994 to restore a visual watch along Britain's 11,073 miles of coastline after many of the Coastguard Stations closed. The NCI Stations do not replace the Coastguards but are there to support them. The first Station to be opened was at Bass Point in Cornwall following a tragedy when two fishermen lost their lives off the Cornish coast.

The Coastwatch use unoccupied Coastguard Stations where possible and there are now 51 stations and nine more under negotiation. Each Station is manned by fully trained volunteers who keep a daylight watch 365 days a year. Stations are equipped with telescopes, radar, telephone and weather equipment as well as up-to-date charts. The normal visual range is between 9 and 10 miles and requires a keen eye and good observation skills. Every volunteer - at present there are 2,093 - undergoes training and takes an exam at the end. There is no government funding and volunteers provide their own uniform and travel.



When there is an incident it is up to the persons on duty to make a decision about an emergency response. Who should be asked to respond: should it be the Coastguard unit, ambulance, air ambulance, or police? There could be anything from a yacht in trouble, possible smuggling, illegal immigrants, water sport enthusiast and so on. Every incident is logged and this is absolutely vital.

Jon raised our awareness that lookouts and watchkeepers are an important service provider to all those who use our coastal waters, footpaths and coastline. You are welcome to visit a station. The nearest one to Exeter is at Exmouth (see photo). There is a good website at [www.nci.org.uk](http://www.nci.org.uk) which shows all the stations. Information on how you can contribute to the valuable work of this organisation is also available online.

*Susie Hewitt*

### **Lunch at the Highwayman's Haunt, Chudleigh, 1 November 2018**

Thursday 1st of November was the date for the latest lunchtime get together of the EUC. Thirteen members were present at the Highwayman's Haunt, a pretty thatched pub on the edge of Chudleigh. This is the first time the pub has been used as a venue for our lunches. There was plenty of room for parking and the pub is set in pleasant countryside. We had a table for thirteen overlooking the patio garden. There was a good choice on the menu.

The Pub dates back to the thirteenth century as a dwelling. Its notoriety came with Jack Witherington whose career as a highwayman was cut short in 1691 at Tyburn. The original farmhouse served as a hiding place for Jack.

Everyone appreciated a day out in a countryside setting on a lovely sunny day.

*Phil and Rosy Larkin*

## Talk on Railway Resilience, 19 November 2018

Richard Westlake, one of our members, opened his talk with a dramatic picture of Dawlish Railway station enveloped in spray and seawater from storm waves that were battering the railway embankment. This location became world news in winter 2014 when storm waves washed out the embankment, leaving the rail line suspended in space. Just one picture illustrates so well the vulnerability of the rail link west of Exeter, subject along the coastal stretch to crumbling cliffs, frequent storms and slowly rising sea levels.



But it was not always like this in the west country. Richard showed us an impressive network of main and branch lines that reached deep into the SW peninsula, linking hamlets and villages to larger centres and helping to move agricultural products as well as people around and beyond the region. However, radical changes during the 1960s had a huge impact on the economy and way of life in the south west, as branch lines were closed, stations shut and many rural communities became isolated. These were the cuts made under Dr Beeching's plan to save money.

So stringent were these cuts in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that the SW peninsula was effectively left with a single track link from Exeter to Waterloo and a line to Paddington via Taunton and to Wales and the Midlands via Bristol. Many of the old routes had track taken up and bridges dismantled, so there were few, if any, diversionary routes available in times of need such as when bad weather struck.

Recent severe weather events have brought the SW to a standstill, and Richard outlined some of the possible alternative routes that could be used to avoid the SW becoming cut off from the national network every time there is a spell of bad weather. The line round the north of Dartmoor for example which still exists as far as Okehampton is a major contender, while other options could include a new line from Exeter to Newton Abbot, a new causeway off the vulnerable south coast section and strengthening the existing track and sea wall. All options cost millions and will inevitably take years to plan.

In the immediate future, we can look forward to some more modern rolling stock (albeit second hand), the installation of giant culverts at Cowley Bridge and further upstream to improve flood resilience, strengthening of sea walls along the most vulnerable part of the coast, a reduction in maximum speeds between Exeter and Penzance, improvement of the Southern route with new passing loops and exploration of a new route from Exeter to Plymouth. But what impact would the latter have on the communities of Dawlish and Teignmouth?

Richard left us with plenty to think about, as the questions that followed his talk showed!

*Louise Clunies-Ross*