

To offer friendship through social and educational activities

EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter

Number 41

<http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>

December 2019

January to March 2020

Future events

Monday 13 January 2020: Talk by Steve Aves on 'Yeast in Science'

At least seven Nobel prizes have been awarded in the last two decades for scientific breakthroughs that were discovered using yeast. Yeast studies were central to the foundation of disciplines as diverse as biochemistry, genetics, cell biology and genomics.

Steve Aves, who was until recently Associate Professor of Molecular Biology at the University of Exeter, has for many years performed yeast research, working on cell division, genome sequencing and biofuel production. In this talk he will give a flavour of why yeast have proved so useful in science.

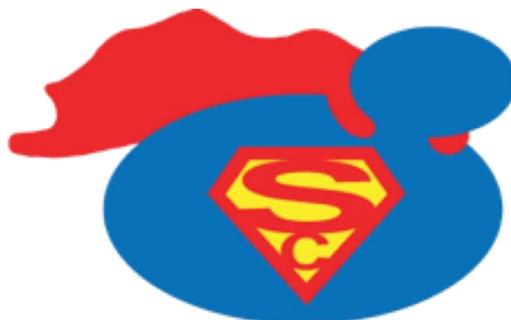


Image of a superyeast

Speaker: Steve Aves
Topic: Yeast in Science
Venue: Cowick Barton, 121 Cowick Lane, Exeter EX2 9HF
Time: 2.00 pm, with lunch beforehand from 12 noon.
To book: Contact Susie Hewitt (susiehewitt@gmx.com or 01392 273 895) by 6 January.

Thursday 13 February 2020: Talk by Edward Neather on 'Common origins of music and language'

We are delighted to welcome as speaker one of our members, Edward Neather, who previously taught modern languages at the University.

He tells us that the idea of a common origin to music and language is not new. In 1772, the German philosopher Herder wrote, "the tradition of Antiquity says that the first language of the human race was song. Ten years later Rousseau wrote, "With the first voices came the first articulations or sounds...Rhythm and sound are born with syllables...Thus verse, singing and speech have a common origin..."

Music and language share some essential features. In common, they have pitch, volume, stress, tone, pauses and rhythm. Rhythm is fundamental, not just to language and music but to life – the beating of the pulse is the body's own metronome.

The performance and appreciation of music is a universal feature of the human race, found in all societies. Somehow, like language, music has been encoded into the human genome.

In this talk Edward looks at ways in which ideas about the common origins of music and language have developed since the 18th century.

Speaker: Edward Neather
Topic: Common origins of music and language
Venue: Cowick Barton, 121 Cowick Lane, Exeter EX2 9HF
Time: 2 pm, but with lunch beforehand from 12 noon.
To book: Contact Frances Canning (francesandedward@blueyonder.co.uk or 01392 209 542) by 6 February.

Wednesday 4 March 2020: Lunch at The Redwing Restaurant, Lympstone.

The Redwing Restaurant in Lympstone has fast been gaining a good reputation. We shall be eating in the main restaurant area. There will be a limit of 14 people, since otherwise we would have to go up in the loft. Pre-booking will be required, from the A La Carte menu.

<http://www.redwingbar-dining.co.uk/menus/>



Meet at: The Redwing Restaurant, Church Road, Lympstone EX8 5JT
Tel. 01395 222 156. <http://www.redwingbar-dining.co.uk/>

Date and time: Wednesday 4 March from 12 noon for 12.30 lunch

By car: The Redwing is located on Church Road, a little to the east of the railway station. There is a small carpark at the inn. If necessary, double parking is permitted, but please inform the staff at the bar.

By train: There is a regular half-hourly train service from Exeter St Davids and Exeter Central; for instance the 11.16 from St Davids (11.20 from Central) arrives at Lympstone at 11.43 am. From Lympstone Station, turn left up Church Road and walk for five minutes.

By bus: There is also a regular bus service (number 57) every 15 minutes from Sidwell Street Stop 19, Exeter; for instance, the 11.15 am bus arrives at 11.50 am. The bus stops at the Saddlers Inn on the main road to Exmouth, and there is then a 10-minute walk down Longmeadow Road, and on to the Redwing in Church Road.

To book: Contact George Garner (georgegarner@btopenworld.com or 01392 881 330) by 26 February.

Wednesday 25 March 2020: Talk by a speaker from Devon Wildlife Trust on 'Exeter Wild City'

We shall welcome a speaker from Devon Wildlife Trust, who will tell us about the Exeter Wild City Project. Working closely with Exeter City Council, the project aims to:

- a) Support and advise on community wildlife initiatives in the city
- b) Enhance and protect the wildlife value of green space in the city
- c) Provide opportunities for people to experience and enjoy our amazing urban wildlife.



Exeter is striking proof that cities can be the homes to abundant wildlife. But, as everywhere, wildlife is under threat. The city now has a human population of 120,000 – and it's growing. We want to ensure that Exeter's future development will protect its wildlife and give it space to thrive.

Contact with nature and wildlife is also hugely important for people; quite simply, contact with our natural environment makes us happy! The project works with people across the city on projects that are great for wildlife and, importantly, improve our quality of life too.

Speaker: From Devon Wildlife Trust www.devonwildlifetrust.org/

Topic: Exeter Wild City

Venue: Cowick Barton, 121 Cowick Lane, Exeter EX2 9HF

Time: 2.00 pm, but with lunch beforehand from 12 noon

To book: Contact Susie Hewitt (susiehewitt@gmx.com or 01392 273 895) by 18 March

Event Reports

Lunch at Bickleigh Mill, 10 October 2019

On October 10th fourteen members met at The Bickleigh Mill Bistro for lunch. We were seated at a long table in the attractive restaurant which was surprisingly full for a weekday lunchtime. This may have been the reason for the rather long wait for food after ordering and for the surprising removal of an item from the “Specials of the Day” menu before 12.30pm, which rather upset one member who fancied it. However, the remaining choice was varied, in due course everyone was served more-or-less simultaneously, and the food was good.



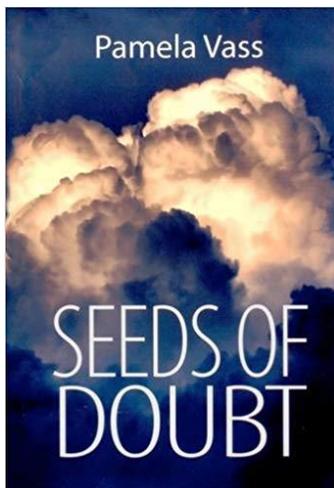
One rather unusual dish was “Raspberry and Vanilla ice-cream bread and butter pudding” which really was one item as it appeared on the menu, and not two without punctuation! Those who chose it rather enjoyed it.

A pleasant gathering enjoyed by everyone.

George Garner

Talk by Pamela Vass on 'Seeds of Doubt: the Lynmouth flash floods of 1952', 30 October 2019

Pamela came to the meeting with an impressive CV – she had been a social worker with Barnardo's and two local authorities, had been the Director of The Whodunnit Company offering murder mystery events in the UK and abroad, and had published several books, both fiction and works of historical research and investigation. She has strong links with Exeter, having worked in the Social Services Department at George Street in the 1970's and completed a Master's degree at the University on socio-legal aspects of the Children's Act 1975.



The title of her talk, *Seeds of Doubt*, is also the title of one of her books, a conspiracy thriller built on the monumental Lynmouth flood disaster of 1952. This grew out of a chance remark which gave her the germ of an idea. She had been in Lynmouth making arrangements to stage a murder mystery when she became aware of suspicions that the flood disaster of 1952 was not necessarily or completely an Act of God but that other, human, agencies had played a part.

In the course of her talk, Pamela drew on geology, meteorology, local history and local geography to show that this theory was not so audacious as it first might seem. She backed this up with some of the results of meticulous research she had carried out into archive material including a communication between the Met Office and the Colonial Office of 1951 to the effect that although the science of rainmaking was in its infancy there was a definite possibility that rainfall could be increased by artificial means. Unusually there is an extensive bibliography appended to her novel. This research indicated a background of experimentation in this country and the US into the technique of 'cloud seeding', impregnating clouds, of the right sort, with crystals, usually silver iodine, to produce planned rainfall.

The result of these researches was to the effect that the devastating floods at Lynmouth in which 34 men, women and children lost their lives, many more their homes, and widespread destruction was left behind, with roads, bridges and even complete cottages being swept away, could have been contributed to by 'cloud seeding'. Pamela could have called her novel 'Clouds of Doubt', as the interaction between divine activity and human activity over the town of Lynmouth in 1952 cannot be said to be clear. But 'Seeds of Doubt' is the better title, for seeds are what gives rise to growth and as she suggested at the end of her talk, there is still work that could be done on the topic.

Edward Canning

Talk by Shaun Curtis on 'The University of Exeter: Present position and future prospects', 21 November 2019

On 21 November Exeter Branch members gathered to hear an interesting and informative talk given by Dr Shaun Curtis, Director of Global Advancement at the University of Exeter, who also leads the university's fundraising campaign, 'Making the Exceptional Happen'. Shaun is, like many of us, an Exeter graduate.

First, Shaun reminded us of our University's early beginnings in the city centre where the school of Art was housed in the Royal Albert Memorial building – now the Museum – in 1855. One hundred years later, the University of Exeter on its Streatham estate received its Charter from HM the Queen: it followed a century of transformation that was supported by a number of major benefactors and philanthropists along the way. Today, Exeter is among the top 100 global universities. Student numbers have grown substantially and the university has strong links with education establishments across the globe. Exeter is now a world leader on research into dementia and diabetes, reflecting the 21st century growth in the sciences.

With some 24,000 students (undergraduates as well as postgraduates) on sites in Devon and Cornwall, the University exerts a significant impact on the economy of the south west, in particular in Exeter where some 5,000 jobs are directly related to the university and a further 850 at Penryn in Cornwall.

Shaun ended this part of his talk by outlining the latest development on the Streatham campus, Project North Park, a centre for climate science research and teaching, which is due to open in 2024



Moving on to the second aspect of his job, Shaun spoke about the campaign he has led called 'Making the Exceptional Happen', the largest and what has proved to be the most successful fundraising venture the University has ever run, as it has reached 95% of its target of £60 million well before it is due to finish. As part of this campaign he highlighted a 21st century philanthropist's contribution to the university with the building of the new Mireille Gillings Neuroimaging Centre at the RD&E Hospital site, due to open in April 2020. Housing MRI and PET scanners, this centre will undertake dementia research and was funded by an alumna's gift of £10 million. Shaun hastened to add that most alumni gave much smaller sums, typically around £50, and also pointed out that many alumni volunteer to mentor students and offer careers advice.

Exeter has a growing population of alumni around the world and Shaun explained that the University will look to them for support with Exeter's future development. There followed a lively question and answer session after which Dr Clive Lee, a pioneer in research design who helped to develop the famous Exeter Hip at the university, gave the vote of thanks.

Louise Clunies-Ross

***We offer Season's Greetings to our members
and look forward to seeing many of you at the
Christmas lunch***