



To offer friendship through social and educational activities

## **EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter**

**Number 33**

<http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>

**December 2017**

**January to March 2018**

### **Editorial:**

After his move to Germany, Ian Thomson has now given up his role as Newsletter Editor. The newsletter was his 'baby' for so long, that it will be hard to imagine it without him as the Editor. Many thanks to Ian and Elisabeth for all the support they gave to the Exeter University Club over many years, and we wish them well in Lübeck.

An exciting programme is being developed for next year. This includes six talks, four lunches, and four visits, as well as our traditional Christmas lunch. The full programme for the year will be available in paper form in the near future and on our website (<http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>).

Two of the talks – on the Zulu Wars and on a life around indigo – take place early next year, and are described in detail below. We have also included details of a planned visit to the Devon Heritage Centre – there is a limit of 15 on the numbers for this visit, so book soon - and of a lunch planned at the superb catering students' restaurant in Exeter College. Do please make a note in your diary of these dates, and support your club by attending these events.

*Peter Wingfield-Digby, Club Secretary*

## Future events

### Thursday 7 December 2017: Christmas lunch

This year we are returning to Cowick Barton. The pub has been refurbished, and is under new management. Full details were given in our last newsletter. Bookings have now closed. The organizer is Gwyneth Garner (Tel. 01392 881330 or [gbvgarner36@btinternet.com](mailto:gbvgarner36@btinternet.com)).

### Monday 15 January 2018: Visit to Devon Heritage Centre

**Meet at 1.45 pm at the entrance to the Devon Heritage Centre, Great Moor House, Bittern Road, Exeter EX2 7NL.**

We shall have a two-hour conducted tour of the Devon Heritage Centre, including the search rooms, finding aids, stores and conservation unit. This will give us a chance to discover historic archives, printed books, maps, illustrations and other documents relating to all aspects of the county of Devon. The Heritage Centre is closed to the public on a Monday, so our guide will be able to show us around without disturbing anyone. Further details about the Heritage Centre can be found at:

<https://www.swheritage.org.uk/devon-archives>



#### Directions

Great Moor House is located behind the Honiton Park and Ride. The P&R bus stops by the car park, as does bus on route 4 (Exeter to Honiton and Axminster).

**Further information:** The number for this tour will be limited to 15. There will be a charge of about £3 for the tour.

We shall meet for lunch at 12 noon at the Miller and Carter Steakhouse (formerly the Barn Owl) which is located directly opposite the Park and Ride. You are welcome to join us for lunch, even if you are not going on the tour. The lunchtime menu is shown on <https://www.millerandcarter.co.uk/restaurants/south-west/millerandcarterexeter/daytimemenu>

*Book with Ian Maxted ([ianmaxted@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ianmaxted@hotmail.co.uk) or 01392 277 041) by 8 January. There will be a small charge for this tour (about £3).*

**Monday 5 February 2018**

**Talk by Stephen Manning: The Zulu Wars with Devon Connections**

Dr Stephen Manning, Honorary Research Fellow in History at the University of Exeter, will be explaining how Britain became engaged in conflict with the Zulu nation in the second half of the nineteenth century, and he will give a brief overview of the War. Dr Manning will then highlight some important Devon links to this brutal period of British history, which will surprise and perhaps shock the audience.



Stephen is evangelical about writing and telling the story of Britain's military exploits in the Victorian era. His passion for this period has led him to move into the field of fiction where he has recently written a thrilling, thoroughly researched, 'campaign journal' of the British army's attempts to rescue General Gordon from Khartoum, which is one of the most enduring and iconic images of the Victorian age.

He is the author of many books, on a wide variety of topics but often with a military connection. His list of titles makes interesting reading: Evelyn Wood VC, Soldiers of the Queen, Quebec, Thorverton and the Nile, It was Never my Ambition to Become a Hooker, The Martini-Henry Rifle, and Think like a Pheasant. Find out more at:

<http://www.stephen-manning.co.uk/index.html>

We shall meet for lunch at the Royal Oak, 68 Okehampton Street, Exeter from 12.15 pm, with the talk beginning at 2 pm.

*Please book with George Garner (01392 881330 or [georgegarner@btinternet.com](mailto:georgegarner@btinternet.com)) by 29 January*

## **Wednesday 28 February 2018**

### **Lunch at @Thirty-Four Restaurant, 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, where there is also a map of the campus. Guests are expected to leave around 2pm.

<https://www.exe-coll.ac.uk/College/Restaurant>

Meet at 12.15 pm outside the @34 restaurant at Exeter College. The table is booked for 12.30pm. The restaurant is located in the Laurence Building on the far side of the main campus, which is opposite St David's Church. Visitors and disabled parking are by the main entrance. Wheelchair access is via a couple of ramps.

*To book, please contact Peter Wingfield-Digby (01392 424781 or [pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com)) in the first three weeks of February.*

## **Wednesday 14 March 2018**

### **Talk by Jenny Balfour-Paul: A Passage through Indigo**

Jenny, an Honorary Research Fellow of the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, is a writer, artist, traveller and lecturer. She has been working with indigo for over 20 years, and has written several books on the subject.

Mainly used as an organic blue dye, indigo is also used in traditional Ayurvedic medicine as an antiseptic, insect repellent and natural hair dye. In its pigment form, it can be used for non-toxic paints, cosmetics and other products.

Her current projects include collaborating with shipwreck experts on recovered dyestuff cargoes and encouraging worldwide revivals of sustainable natural dyes. In November 2017 she was in Kolkata for Indigo Sutra, a four-day international event featuring discussions, demonstrations and workshops about indigo.





Her latest book, 'Deeper than Indigo' (<https://deeperthanindigo.com>), traces the life of Thomas Machell, a forgotten explorer from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is a mixture of biography, memoir, detective story, travelogue and history within an enthralling love story.



© British Library

Jenny will talk about some of her life experiences, from her days on the hippy trail, through living in the Arab world, and on to research at Exeter for her Ph.D. That led on to various publications and more extensive travels. Further information about the speaker can be found at: <http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/iais/staff/balfour-paul/>

Meet for lunch from 12.15 pm at the Royal Oak, Okehampton Street, Exeter. The talk will be at 2 pm.

*Please book with Peter Wingfield-Digby (Tel. 01392 424781 or [pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com)) by 7 March*

## Event reports

### Visit to Quicke's Cheese, Newton St Cyres, Tuesday 22 August 2017

A group of sixteen visited Quicke's Farm in August. We were welcomed with coffee and very delicious chocolate brownies. After our wake-up coffee, Stewart – our guide for the morning – explained the workings and history of the farm and their stock – a Kiwi Friesian, Swedish Red, Montbeliarde and Jersey mix. These cattle have been specially bred to give the perfect milk for cheese making.



We were then given a tour of the cheese dairy but not before we had all donned our safety clothing – white overalls, a hairnet and white wellington boots! Health and Safety is taken very seriously and there were two lots of hand washing and wading through a boot wash (all somewhat reminiscent of the foot and mouth days). At last we were able to enter the dairy where we saw milk being transferred into huge vats where rennet is added. The curd and whey are separated and the latter is used to enrich the pastures so nothing is wasted. When the curd has settled it forms a dense golden blanket, which is cut into blocks.

This is where the real physical hard work begins with each block being continually turned by hand to get out the last of the whey – this process is called “cheddaring”. Cornish sea salt is then added before being milled to give the cheese texture. The cheese is then put into moulds to a certain weight before being compressed and then each cheese is wrapped in a muslin cloth to allow it to breathe as it matures, which takes place in the cool stores on wooden racks in the ripening room, before being moved into the ‘Cathedral of cheese’ to continue the ripening process.



The clothbound truckles are turned every day to maintain an even texture and they can mature for up to two years. It opened my eyes as to the reason we pay more for “proper” cheddar – it is a long process and mostly done without machinery but the taste is so much better! Before being let loose in the Farm Shop we had a tasting of the various cheddars, Quicke’s produce six varieties from Vintage to Oak Smoked and even Goat’s Milk cheese.

We left clutching our ‘goodies bag’ and also cheese and other items sold in the shop. Even if you don’t do a tour it is well worth visiting the café and Farm shop.

*Susie Hewitt*

## **Talk – 50 years on: The Streatham campus then and now**

### **Peter Wingfield-Digby, Thursday 14 Sep 2017**

Fifty years on.....and what a treat Peter Wingfield-Digby had for us! Members of Exeter Branch enjoyed a nostalgic afternoon looking back at our familiar campus with the aid of Peter's photographs and material sourced from the University Archives. Those of us who were students in the 1950s and 1960s have witnessed a transformation on the Streatham Estate in subsequent decades – and more change is to come.

First, however, Peter outlined the University's origins in the 1850s, the move to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Queen Street in the 1860s, and on to Bradninch Place in Gandy Street in 1900 when it was renamed the Royal Albert Memorial College. In 1922 it became The University College of the South West of England. That same year Alderman Reed gave Streatham (now Reed) Hall to the new University College, and the first Principal (Hector Hetherington) persuaded the university council to purchase a large part of the Streatham estate.

Since then the University has flourished, growing in status and size whilst retaining the magnificent arboretum, ponds and streams that enhance the setting of its early buildings and those being built today. In 1955 when Exeter received its Charter and became a University it had many significant buildings on site. We saw early pictures of the Washington Singer, the Roborough, The Queen's Building, Northcote House, the Hatherley Laboratories and Devonshire House as we remembered them in the 1960s, all looking rather new and with a decided absence of cars nearby!



*Great Hall and car park in the 1960s - from Special Collections, University of Exeter*

We enjoyed looking at familiar buildings as well as some under construction in the sixties when Car Park C was a muddy slope beside Stocker Road used by builders' vehicles. We saw the original pre-fab structures at the bottom of Rennes Drive that are now part of a smart enclave of Finance buildings, remembered the peaceful Upper Hoopern Valley with its ponds (pleased to see descendants of the ducks are still in evidence!) and looked at pictures of the engineering building along North Park Road where Clive proudly pointed out his office windows!

In conclusion, Peter reminded us that our university is now a member of the prestigious Russell Group and was recently rated as first for overall student satisfaction in a national survey of student opinion. Thank you, Peter, for a most interesting afternoon.

*Louise Clunies-Ross*

*Note: Following Peter's talk, it was suggested that it would be a good idea to include more information in the newsletter, so here are a few questions to test your knowledge of the history of our university. (Answers on page 11)*

### **University challenge**

1. Why is Reed Hall so named?
2. What was the previous name of this building?
3. Which important Devonian in Victorian times was a driving force behind the establishment of higher education in Exeter?
4. The Exeter School of Art was formed in 1855, and the Exeter School of Science in 1863. What event had inspired the opening of these two schools?
5. In 1868 they were brought together in what building?
6. Can you name five buildings on the university campus for which Vincent Harris was the architect, and place them in order according to their date of construction?
7. Why is Devonshire House so named?
8. Why is Queen's building so named?
9. Why did the architect of the chapel not charge the university for his architectural services?
10. The Northcott Theatre is named after Mr G V Northcott, a local businessman. What other building in Exeter did he want to support with his finance, but the negotiations failed and the site was sold?
11. Where on the Streatham campus can you find a plaque recording a gift made by the Exeter University Club? What was the gift, and why did the EUC give it?
12. What was the approximate size of the student population on the Streatham campus 50 years ago, and what is it today?

### **Lunch at the Victoria Hotel, Sidmouth – Wednesday 27 September 2017**

The planning of this lunch proved rather problematic, with the hotel cancelling the initial booking and then demanding a massive deposit in advance. But in the end, all worked out well, and we had a lovely lunch. We were a group of 18, and were given exclusive use of the main Jubilee Restaurant, sitting at two tables which were beautifully prepared for us.

The hotel offers a special two- and three-course lunch menu that provides excellent value, and we were all very happy with the quality of the food and the attentive service. After the meal we adjourned to the bar, where we were served complementary coffee and mints.

If the weather had been kinder, we could have made the most of this visit to Sidmouth and explored the shoreline after lunch but with the weather against us we retreated homewards.

*Peter Wingfield-Digby*



## Talk – Derek Gore: The Vikings in the West Country, 9 October 2017

The Club welcomed Derek Gore who is an Honorary Fellow of the University. He was previously a part-time lecturer in the Department of Archaeology, where he lectured on the Viking Age in the British Isles and Europe.

He explained that the early activities of Scandinavians, probably mostly Danes, in our territory were motivated by the desire to acquire portable wealth that could be taken back home. Illustrations were shown of their craft, which were powered by a mixture of sail and oar. They had open hulls, giving plenty of space for cargo which could be taken on board rather in the manner of a modern container ship. Our coastline with its many estuaries, including the Teign and the Exe, offered opportunities for easy landfall to the highly manoeuvrable shallow-draft Viking ships, bringing scope for the invaders to seize, first land and even eventually political power. In 1001 AD they got as far as Exeter.

Derek covered the impact of the Vikings on what we now know as the West Country from the late eighth to the eleventh centuries. He reviewed the sources that are available to historians in this field, including written records such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Archaeological work has uncovered many stone sculptures from the period including crosses and memorials. Also important were finds of metal objects, some uncovered by amateur metal detectorists. Of particular local interest was a find of not only fragments of metal, but also a number of glass beads on the Island of Lundy off the North Devon coast. The origin of these is not entirely clear but they could indicate there had been a female Viking burial on the Island. Place-names too are an area of interest to scholars. The name Lundy itself is Old Norse for puffin island. Given its strategic position in the Bristol Channel with prospect of safe anchorage it is difficult to see that the Vikings could have ignored the island.

This short talk was a much-condensed version of a well-established course that Derek had taught, but it gave us a flavour of a fascinating period. The Viking impact on our history was crystallised when we considered the figure of William the Conqueror. In 1066 AD after the death of Edward the Confessor, the Norwegian king Harold Hardrada and William Duke of Normandy, a direct descendant of a Viking leader, both brought armies to England to fight for the throne; the outcome we all know. After the talk there were several very well-informed questions and comments from the members, which drew forth more interesting information.



*Hogback stone sculpture*

Mr Gore has written a very readable book, *The Vikings in the West Country* (published by the Mint Press). I have found it an invaluable aide-memoire in writing this short report.

*Edward Canning*

## Lunch at the City Gate Hotel, Exeter – Thursday 26 October 2017

With the closure of Moore's Restaurant in Newton Poppleford, which we had originally planned to visit, a decision was made to sample the food at the City Gate Hotel in Exeter. The hotel is under new management, and has undergone an extensive refurbishment since the days when we used it for our meetings. There were 13 of us for lunch. Our old meeting room has been turned into a pleasant restaurant area, with casual seating. We enjoyed the setting and the company, but the food turned out not to be quite up to the standard that we had been led to hope for.

*Peter Wingfield-Digby*

## Talk – Christopher Pidsley: Dialect Stories and Songs of Jan Stewer Wednesday 8 November 2017



The Reverend Christopher Pidsley gave us an informative and highly entertaining talk, as he introduced us to Jan Stewer, the well-loved character created by Albert John Coles. We learnt something about the life of Coles and joined in singing a couple of Jan Stewer's own songs, including Jan's song about his wedding day, "Out stepped mother and me".

The highlights of the talk were when Reverend Pidsley donned an old brown felt hat such as Jan Stewer himself might have worn, and read extracts from three of Jan's Stewer's short stories, all full of wit and humour. Jan told us of the night when, instead of using their well-worn bed-warming pan, his wife used a hot water bottle which leaked. In "The Swell Dinner", we see Jan going for the first time to a grand hotel, and being confused by the variety of cutlery provided, and the waiter's unexpectedly prompt removal of his plate after each course during the meal. Reverend Pidsley finally read "Jan and the Census Paper". Jan was reluctant to fill in what he refers to as the "Senseless Paaper". He finally fills it in, with his wife Ann and daughter Jane overseeing proceedings. Jan speaks first in this extract:

*I wraut down me name, and then her said:*

*"Now what's up over the nex' cullum?"*

*"Whether I be head o' the vam'ly or no. Must write done Eees, I spause."*

*"Aw! Who said you was?" says Ann.*

*"Wull, if I ban't head o' the vam'ly who is, I shude like to know."*

*"And if you be head, what be I then? Tail, I spause?"*

*"Git along, mother," says Jane. "Of cou'se father's head o' the vam'ly on paaper."*

*"Well," I says, "tis mortle hard if I can't be head o' the vam'ly once in ten years."*

*"Get on, then!" says Ann. "Putt down head, and make it a sheep's head while you'm about it."*

Jan Stewer lives on. Although the books may be out of print now, they are still available in charity and second-hand book shops and on the internet.

*Dorothy Wagland*

### ANSWERS TO QUIZ – SEE PAGE 8 FOR THE QUESTIONS

1. Named after Alderman Reed, former mayor of Exeter, who gave the building to the university in 1922. That was the beginning of the Streatham campus
2. Streatham Hall
3. Sir Stafford Northcote
4. The Great Exhibition of 1851
5. Royal Albert Memorial Museum
6. Washington Singer (1931), Mardon Hall (1933), Roborough (1940), Hatherly (1952), Chapel (1958)
7. After Mary, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, first Chancellor of the University (1955-72)
8. To commemorate the Queen's visit to Exeter in 1956 to present the University's Charter
9. Because it was to be named in memory of his mother Mary Harris
10. The old Theatre Royal in the city, which closed in 1962
11. At the end of North Park Road, by the path down to Taddiforde Valley. The gift consisted of a selection of trees, in tribute to former students who had died in the two World Wars
12. c. 3,000      c. 20,000

### You might be interested to know the origins of the names of some campus buildings:

**Roborough** – named after Henry Lopes, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Roborough, who was an early benefactor.  
He was President of University College of the South West of England 1936-38

**Washington Singer** – named after Washington Singer, a generous donor in the early days.

**Peter Chalk** – named after a former Chair of the University Council

**Newman** – named after Prof. Newman, Professor of Physics, 1923-52

**Geoffrey Pope** (formerly Chemistry Building) – named after former Pro-Chancellor.

**Laver** – named after a former Chair of the University Council.

**Harrison** – named after Sir David Harrison, former Vice-Chancellor, 1984-94

**Kay** – named after Harry Kay, Vice-Chancellor, 1973-84

**Amory** – named after Derick Heathcoat-Amory, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Amory, Chancellor 1972-81

**Lopes Hall** – named after Henry Lopes, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Roborough, an early benefactor

**Hope Hall** – named after Helena Hope, a generous benefactor

**Mardon Hall** – named after Flight Lieut. Evelyn Mardon, a major contributor to its building

**Holland Hall** – named after Sir Geoffrey Holland, Vice-Chancellor 1994-02

### Duryard:

**Moberly** – named after Walter Hamilton Moberly, Principal of the UC of the SW of E, 1925-6

**Murray** – named after John Murray, Principal of the UC of the SW of England, c. 1930-50

**Hetherington** – named after Sir Hector Hetherington, Principal of UC of the SW of E, 1920-24

**Jessie Montgomery** – she had been Secretary of the University Extension Committee, 1888, after the death of Sir Stafford Northcote.

### **Urgent message from our Chairman**

Dear Member

You are listed as a member of Exeter Branch but we have not seen much of you recently. Our Committee is keen that Exeter Branch retains its lively and varied programme of events that we hope will appeal to members.

During this autumn, attendance at our monthly meetings has been disappointing. We want to understand why, and we need your help. The Branch has over 70 members, but when only a dozen or so turn up for a talk, this is disappointing for both speaker and organiser.

If attendance does not rise during the early months of 2018 then one option is to close Exeter Branch – the oldest and largest branch in the country. We want to avoid this but it can only be achieved with your help and support.

Please email me or a member of the committee listed below to give your views on:

1. Why you come to so few events.
2. What events you would prefer instead.
3. Anything else you wish to share.

Your comments are needed **now** to help us decide how Exeter Branch is to continue and to thrive. I look forward to your input as soon as possible.

**Susie Hewitt**

Chairman, Exeter Branch email [susiehewitt@gmx.com](mailto:susiehewitt@gmx.com) and 01392 273895

Other contacts: [mikeaspray@btinternet.com](mailto:mikeaspray@btinternet.com)  
[louisecluniesross@btinternet.com](mailto:louisecluniesross@btinternet.com) and 01884 242606

**Note: If you are one of the few regular supporters of our events – and you know who you are – your views are just as welcome!**

*Season's greetings to all our members*