



To offer friendship through social and educational activities

EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter

Number 24

September 2015

October - December 2015

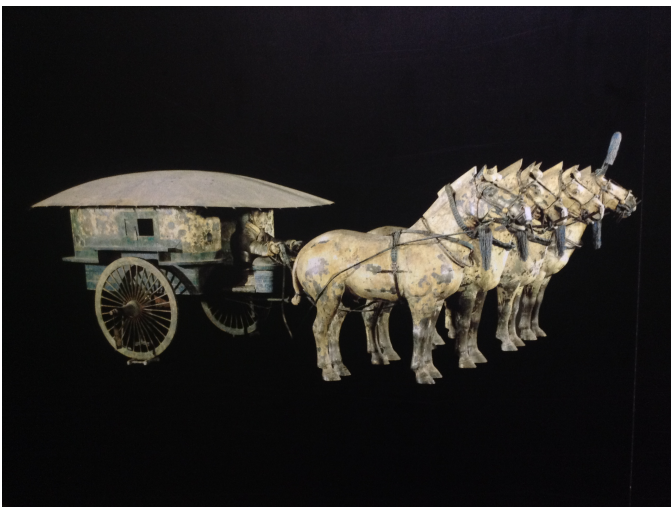
Future Events

Monday 5 October 2015:

Talk on 'Travels in China 2013', at the City Gate Hotel by our club member Peter Wingfield-Digby.

Following in the footsteps of his missionary great aunt and backpacking alone around Western China

We were treated to a wonderful introduction to this talk due to a speaker being slightly delayed. Such that those those present insisted that Peter should be persuaded to give an account of his adventures in 2015.



Peter will give an illustrated talk on his travels in China in 2013. On this holiday he journeyed with a backpack in the footsteps of his great aunt, who had been a missionary in western China at

the end of the 19th century. His travels took him overland and by river from Chengdu to Shanghai, and later (after a short stay in Hong Kong) overland from Xi'an back to Chengdu through the mountains of Sichuan.



Meet for lunch at the City Gate Hotel, Iron Bridge, Exeter from 12 onwards.
The talk will be in the Garden Room at 2 pm.

To book:

Please phone Peter Wingfield-Digby on 01392 424781, or email him at pwdigby@btinternet.com before 28 September 2015.

Monday 19 October 2015: Lunch at The Thatched House, Exwick.

“Home to real ales from Devon and beyond, craft beers, local ciders and locally sourced food”



“We work with a range of local suppliers to provide freshly cooked home made food from tasty, quality ingredients that has as few food miles as possible”.

Local historian David Cornforth has an excellent history of the Thatched House on his *Exeter Memories website*, and his book “Exeter Pubs”. The Express and Echo has in the past made reference to “The Thatch” as being the oldest pub in Exeter, but as David Cornforth explains, it

has only actually been a pub since 1937, although the building dates from the 1600's and has a varied and interesting history.

In May of this year we refurbished the pub completely and during the redecoration discovered many original features of the pub from 1937 and have kept these wherever possible.

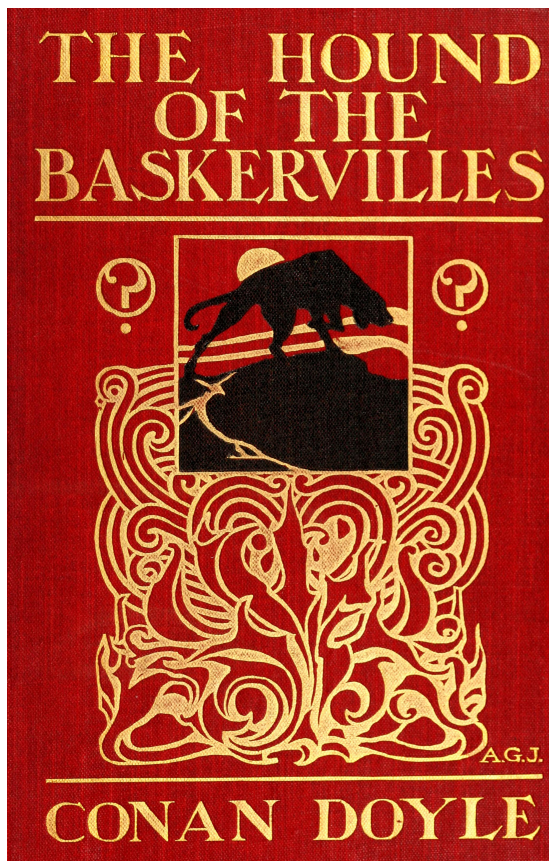
Contact: Ian Thomson by 11 October to book (01626 867363)

Wednesday 11 November 2015:

Talk on 'Sir Arthur Conan Doyle', at City Gate Hotel by Sarah Obermuller-Bennett

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a widely-travelled author, and literary tours and his later championing of the Spiritualist cause would take him across the world. Yet, closer to home, it was Dartmoor he chose as the setting for his most famous Sherlock Holmes story, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. This talk looks at the time he spent in Devon and his links with the area, including his days in Plymouth as a young doctor, a prospective sister-in-law in Topsham, publishing connections in Lynton and Lynmouth, cricket in Sidmouth and, of course, the landscape and stories that gave rise to the Hound.

Sarah Obermuller-Bennett studied at the University of London, collecting a First Class History Degree along the way, and then trained as a journalist. She moved to Sidmouth in 2013 and is thoroughly enjoying life by the sea.



The talk by Sarah Obermuller-Bennett will begin at 2 pm. Lunch available from 12 noon.

Contact: Ian Thomson by 1 November to book (01626 867363)

Thursday 3 December 2015:

Annual EUC Exeter Branch Christmas Lunch:

We meet at 12.15 for 12.45 at Reed Hall, Exeter University for our traditional Christmas lunch organised by Gwyneth Garner.

A menu and booking form accompanies this Newsletter. Please refer to this for further details. Parking is available in a car park close to the hall.

Please remember to obtain the barrier code number from the reception to allow your exit when leaving.

Send your bookings to Mrs G. Garner, The Garden House, Bradninch, Exeter EX5 4NL.

Cheques accompanying your booking should be made out to ***EUC Exeter branch***

Note: The closing date for booking is 22nd October 2015!



Reports

Report to Exeter Branch on EUC AGM July 2015

Exeter Branch is one of six similar groups of alumni across the country. (The others are in Bristol, Cheltenham, Wessex centred on Winchester, London and East Anglia which extends over counties to the north and east of London.)

The umbrella organisation is Exeter University Club, run by a small committee; it organises an Annual Outing and issues a magazine called 'Branch Lines' – available to all alumni.

On Saturday 20 June EUC held its AGM, as part of the Annual Outing. As no new volunteers came forward to serve on the committee, it was decided, regrettably, to wind up the EUC at the end of this calendar year.

For us and for all of the regional branches, this is not expected to make any discernible difference, as each branch runs its own programme. We will continue to do so and produce our own Branch Newsletter.

What the caretaker committee will need to review is:

EUC magazine 'Branch Lines' – available to members for a small fee

The Website – which we can all access

EUC holidays – open to all members from any branch

Club Directory – newly revised and shortly due for publication

Club funds – some of which are used to support today's students through a scholarship scheme.

As your Branch Representative on the National Committee I will continue in this role until December. In the meantime I am able to take your comments and observations to the national committee and report back to Exeter Branch as winding up procedures progress.

Louise

LCR July 2015

Exeter University Club Annual Outing: June 20th/21st 2015

In line with tradition, the Annual Outing began when EUC members from all Branches gathered for a picnic lunch at Hughenden Manor in South Buckinghamshire on Saturday. Undeterred by light drizzle, we chatted over our picnic as old friendships were renewed and new ones made.

After an excellent talk on the south terrace in front of the manor, overlooking the colourful formal gardens with their striking silver and crimson theme and the wooded Hughenden valley beyond, we dispersed to explore the house. From 1848 to 1881 Hughenden Manor was the home of Benjamin Disraeli, one of the UK's most charismatic Prime Ministers.



The domestic scale of the house, its décor and wealth of contemporary Victorian artefacts were most interesting and the rural views from the windows delightful. It was hard to credit that we were only a couple of miles from the bustling town of High Wycombe!

On this visit it was also possible to learn about the important role that Hughenden played during WW2 as a top secret map-making centre – an aspect of the history of this house that has only recently been revealed.



Most of us enjoyed afternoon tea and cake – with more chat and laughter – at the NT Courtyard Tearooms before leaving for the AGM in Gerrards Cross, close to our hotel where dinner was to be served. (AGM details are given elsewhere.)

After a leisurely evening meal some members said farewell and left for home while others, who were staying at the hotel, looked forward to the Sunday event.

Sunday dawned with a promise of sunshine, and we set out for the ancient Quaker Meeting House in nearby Jordans, where William Penn lies at rest in a peaceful burial ground bordered by tall trees.



All was quiet as we walked around the historic site, declining a kind invitation to join morning worship at 10.30am, since we were due at Milton's Cottage. Before leaving, however, we noted the charred roof timber placed in the grounds as a reminder of the major fire that ripped through the Meeting House ten years ago, destroying most of its roof and some of the interior. All is now fully restored. Just a few miles away we reached the village of Chalfont St Giles, where ancient brick and tile cottages and coaching inns still circle the village green and mallards swim on the duck pond, which is fed from the little river Misbourne.



It was to Chalfont St Giles that John Milton fled in 1665 to escape the Plague in London. I had arranged for the cottage in which he lived to be opened specially for Exeter University Club, and we greatly appreciated the talk from Keith Sugden who told us much about the poet and his work, the cottage and its fascinating contents and also about the garden, planted with many herbs, shrubs and flowers that are likely to have been there in John Milton's day. It was here that John Milton, who had by now lost his sight, completed 'Paradise Lost'. There is a first edition of this in the cottage. For lunch, most found something in the village – in fact one small pub ran out of sandwich fillings and had to send to the nearby delicatessen for supplies!

The final destination was a most unusual museum, located just beyond Chalfont St Giles on a big rural site, where lots of old – and not so old – buildings have been rescued from across the country, restored and re-built to create the 'Chiltern Open Air Museum'. For example, we entered through a rescued pavilion, bought an ice cream from inside an ancient barn, had a cup of tea in what was once a furniture factory and had fun exploring a pre-fab that had rather a lot of things in it that were strangely familiar!

During the afternoon we were also able to watch Shire horses at work at Hill Farm barn and later saw an impressive parade of heavy horses in Skippings field.



Many concluded the sunny afternoon with a welcome cup of tea before setting off for home at the end of an eventful and most enjoyable weekend.

Louise Clunies-Ross

Thursday 25th June

Lunch and a talk by Alan Salsbury on the History of Kents Cavern

Our speaker opened his comprehensive talk with a description of how the cavern was formed. Geologically 400 million years ago part of south Devon lay at the bottom of a sea full of organisms with shell and bone structures. When these organisms died the structures were broken up and, over time, (millions of years) it formed limestone (a form of calcium carbonate). Initially the tectonic plate on which they were formed, lay somewhere near the equator, and this has since shifted slowly northwards to its present position.

The Cave forming Kents Caverns is situated in the Wellswood area of Torquay, and we were told that it was formed over a long period in the Pleistocene era when the vegetation growing above the strata died and decayed. Together with rainwater this formed a weak acid that seeped through the layers, slowly dissolving the limestone and initially forming small cavities. Over millions of years these cavities have become the caverns we know today. The seeping of acidic rainwater has also led to the formation of the slow growing, straws, stalactites, helictites and stalagmites we can now observe in the cavern.



Kents Caverns in Torquay

Man and various animals have inhabited Kents Cavern their remains having been investigated at various times since Father John MacEnery first excavated the cavern in 1825. MacEnery was chaplain to the Cary family, who owned the area. A number of people were associated with the caverns until they passed into the hands of the Powe family. They presently own the caves as a family business and have developed it into a tourist attraction. Their ownership is in the fifth generation.

However, the cave should not only be considered as a tourist attraction because is the subject of considerable scientific interest and importance. It is one of the most important archaeological and paleontological sites in Britain. Acheulian biface flint artifacts recovered from the cave are amongst the earliest evidence of humans in Britain. There is evidence of both Neanderthal and Homo sapiens living there. The Homo Sapien fossil from 42,000 BC makes it the earliest anatomically modern human find yet discovered in North-Western Europe.

The cave bear remains are the most abundant and important from any British site. Kents Cavern has also played a central role in the 19th Century history of archaeological and paleontological

thinking with initial writings predating Darwin's theory of evolution. All relevant publications were suppressed by religious bodies at the time.

The region around Kents Cavern forms the English Riviera Geopark and is a landscape untouched by glaciation. It was formed by the action of tropical seas, scorching deserts, and drowned forests. It has seen hippopotami and mammoth, straight-tusked elephant and tigers along with earliest man. It is one of a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Devon and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The name Kents is likely to derive from the Cornish (Celtic) word Kent or Kant meaning a border or headland, so the name came from the "hole on the headland". Many places in Scotland have similar Celtic derivations such as kintyre meaning headland, kenmare meaning head of the sea and kinloch meaning head of the loch. P.S. we will have a follow up visit next April!

Ian Thomson

WEDNESDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2015

Visit to the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum on the Streatham Campus

After an excellent lunch at Reed Hall we walked over to what used to be the old library where the museum is located. It is named in memory of the filmmaker Bill Douglas of "Tolpuddle Martyrs" and "Comrades" fame who, together with his friend Peter Jewell, put together an extraordinary collection of over 75000 artefacts relating to cinema and the history of the moving image.



We started our tour in the upper gallery which concentrates mainly on cinema since its invention on the 28th December 1895. Here we saw many collections including the largest collection of Disney memorabilia in public ownership in the UK; over 1000 Charlie Chaplin artefacts and personal items such as Hitchcock's Christmas cards and a salver presented to a cameraman by Orson Wells. Memorabilia of many stars through the 20th and 21st centuries filled the cabinets. There was a section on silent movie stars and many of the post war stars were, of course, known to us including Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe on the female side and John Wayne and

James Dean on the male side. The current scene included 007 and James Bond, Star Wars and Harry Potter. The merchandising and marketing of films was also demonstrated from the early days of magazines, dolls and cigarette cards to the mass marketing of toys and the electronic games of today.



The walk to the lower gallery was via a stairway festooned with posters of films and acts throughout the ages. The lower gallery provided a treasure trove of pre-cinema optical entertainments from as early as the 17th century including shadow shows, magic lanterns, optical illusions, panoramas and early animated toys like the zoetrope and praxinoscope as well as flick books, kaleidoscopes 3D viewers and “what the butler saw machines”.

There was so much to interest all tastes and not just the committed film buff that many of our group will be returning to this fascinating and free museum on the campus.

Rob Simons



INTRODUCING OUR CHAIRMAN GWYNETH GARNER

Dear E.U.C. members,

For the benefit of those of you who did not come along to our AGM in July (rather a lot I'm afraid!), I thought I would introduce myself as your Chairman for the coming twelve months.

As you may guess from my Christian name, I am Welsh. Both sides of my family come from Llanidloes, a small town in Montgomeryshire, now part of Powys. It was a centre of Chartism in the 1830's, also Non-Conformism and Liberalism, but sadly not a Welsh speaking community. I have always regretted not being able to speak Welsh. In fact, this summer when I was in Owain Glyndwr's Parliament House in Machynlleth, I bought a "Teach yourself Welsh" book, so that is my project for the long winter evenings ahead. I read French with European History at Exeter University as a mature student in the 1980's. I was pleased and proud that although I was 50 when I graduated, both my parents came to my degree ceremony. I was unaware of the existence of Exeter University Club until about 4 years ago when the Alumni Office decided to contact all graduates in this area to tell them about it. I joined immediately, and am so glad I did. I have heard many excellent speakers, and enjoyed quite a few pub lunches and visits to outside locations. Its ethos is I think

somewhat similar to John Reith's vision of the BBC – "to inform, educate and entertain." You will read about what is planned for the coming year in our newsletter. I do hope that you will all support as many of our events and activities as possible. Like many clubs and societies we do need to attract new members. You are always most welcome to bring a visitor, even if that person is not connected to our University.



I am looking forward to my year as your chairman, and to meeting you all.

Gwyneth Garner

And - "Now for something completely different"!

A little story written by our member Nadine Norris from Barnstaple.

One day recently, Nadine had to go to the 'hygienist'. I don't really understand this, but when she came back her mouth smelt odd. I kept trying to sniff it. Anyway, then we went to Lidl's and I was able to go for one of my favourite walks. There is a little stream there, called 'The Coney Gut' which I think is a very peculiar name. Something to do with rabbits I believe, although I've never smelt any there. However, there are three rather nice ducks. Last spring they had some pretty ducklings. Nadine had to go into the shop to buy some food for Kitty-Pusskins, Betty's cat. She seems a rather fussy cat. You'd think she would be grateful to me for fetching her food, but she isn't. Possibly it's because, when we go to Betty's I like to grab her cushion and give it a good shake. Then I roll on it, to make it smell better. Well, anyway, after that we went to 'McDonalds'. That IS a strange place. We drive in. Nadine winds down her window, and this voice comes from nowhere, asking her what she wants to eat. Then we drive a little further and Nadine hands some money out through her window, then a little further and someone hands her a bag of food. Unfortunately, it's never food that I like. We were going to drive to a little park I know of to have our lunch, (Nadine had packed a picnic for me), but there was a lot of slow traffic, so we pulled into a lay-by and ate there. I think Nadine was afraid her Chicken Mac Sandwich' would get cold!

Eventually, we did get to the park. It was a bit cold and windy, but the sun was out, so I enjoyed my walk. I met two very gentlemanly Jack Russell terriers. They were very friendly, and

we had a nice chat. You do have to be cautious with Jack Russells. I think some of them must be short-sighted, or perhaps they have a cold and can't smell properly, because they seem to think I'm a rabbit!

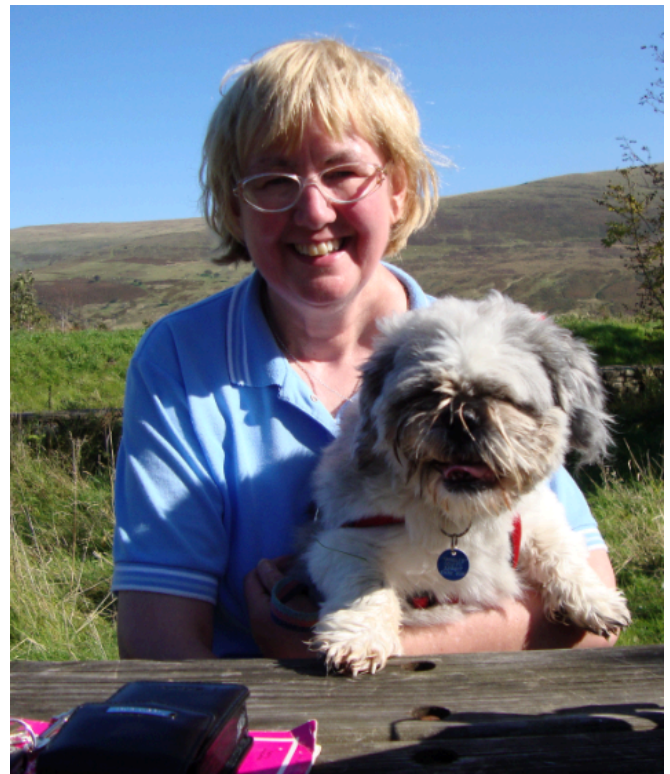
When we finally arrived home, Nadine told me that my friends Chris and Mark were going to take me out for the evening. I like that. Chris does my hair, and I can have a nice bath while I'm there. I like baths. Sheila (my breeder) often gave me one when I was a puppy, but Nadine's sink is too small, so I can't get in properly. However, Chris rang about half past five to explain that Mark (the driver) was stuck in traffic *the far side of BRISTOL!!* So, of course, I couldn't go. I was disappointed.

However, they came on Sunday morning instead. I was so excited. I waited in the window until I saw their car, then I rushed out to meet them. I always take them a bar of chocolate to say thank you. (I think Nadine gives Chris some money because he always comes in when he brings me home.)

I was a little chilly afterwards, but Nadine let me wear my fleece lining in my mac so I was nice and snug. That was necessary this morning because Nadine went 'Swimming'. This involves an early start so I was walking by the river near the Leisure Centre at quarter past eight. When Nadine comes back she always smells odd - like disinfectant or bleach. As soon as we get home she has a shower. I think this is strange - she's just been soaking wet, and now she gets wet all over again. People are strange!

After lunch we went for a walk. At first it didn't start well. My friend 'Ozzy' was in the Field. (The Field is very near our house. All we dogs meet up there - it's like a kind of Club Room for us. We play and chat - and just generally chill out together.) I was so keen to greet to him that I couldn't wait for Nadine to open the gate. Instead I squeezed under and the gate caught on my harness and hurt me. I was not happy. Nadine, however, let me off my lead, and I ran to join Ozzy. He was having a great time! His person, he told me, had been chasing him for half an hour. I didn't think his person (Mr Ozzy) looked too happy. I think he had got fed up with the chasing game ages ago. Well, to cut a long story short, Nadine began to call me back.

I did think about ignoring her, but she waved the little bag of treats that she keeps in her pocket. I decided it would be more fun to do as she asked. Ozzy followed, at a safe distance. It was very funny. Every time Mr Ozzy called 'Here boy' I went to him and grabbed Ozzy's biscuit! In the end, Nadine suggested to Mr Ozzy that we should all go back to our place (it is only just round the corner from the field) and probably Ozzy would follow. Well, we did that, and eventually Ozzy came into our back garden. Mr Ozzy closed the gate. I wanted to run round my garden with Ozzy, but Nadine kept me on my lead because Mr Ozzy was VERY cross with Ozzy, and told him that he'd never go off the lead again. I think Ozzy was silly. It was a good joke, but he kept it up too long. I hope I won't make that mistake. Poor Ozzy walked up the road with his tail right down. I hope he didn't get into trouble when they got home.



TANGLES Norris and Nadine.