



To offer friendship through social and educational activities

## **EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter**

**Number 34**

<http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>

**March 2018**

**April to June 2018**

### **Future events**

#### **Thursday 26 April 2018: Talk about Mercy Ships**

In this talk, Lynn Eastlund will tell us about the charity called Mercy Ships. Their ship, the *Africa Mercy*, is the world's largest charitable floating hospital. With three-quarters of the world's population living within 150km of a port city, the floating hospital can reach people who live with little or no healthcare in some of the poorest parts of the world.



No local hospital facilities are required in-country, because the ship *itself is* a hospital, with five state-of-the-art operating theatres and all the facilities needed to carry out life-changing treatments. It provides a safe, clean, controlled environment, ideally suited for both patients and crew.

Almost all their staff are volunteers. They have a team of nurses, doctors, surgeons, and other crew members from all over the world, donating their time to help out on board the world's largest non-governmental floating hospital.

<https://www.mercyships.org.uk/>

With the help of their supporters, who contribute towards essential medical supplies and ship repairs, they have helped to transform the lives of more than 2½ million people in the poorest countries of the world since 1978.

We shall meet for lunch at the Royal Oak, 68 Okehampton Street, Exeter from 12.15pm, with the talk starting at 2.00pm.

*To book, please contact Louise Clunies-Ross (louisecluniesross@btinternet.com or 01884 242606) by 18 April.*

### **Wednesday 16 May 2018: Visit to Norman Lockyer Observatory**

The Norman Lockyer Observatory in Sidmouth is both a historical observatory and home to an active amateur astronomical society. It is a centre for amateur astronomy, meteorology, radio astronomy and the promotion of science education. The observatory is staffed entirely by volunteers.

We shall be attending an Open Afternoon, so other members of the public will be there. Payment of the entry fee (£8 per person) must be by cash or cheque, not by bankcard. Meet at the Observatory at 2.15 pm. The programme starts at 2.30 pm, and will last about two hours. It will include a short talk, a planetarium presentation, and a visit to the historic telescopes.



The observatory is 2 km east of Sidmouth, on Salcombe Hill, EX10 0NY. The grid reference is SY 139883. From Sid Road, which goes along the east side of The Byes in Sidmouth, turn up Salcombe Hill, and the observatory is on the left. There are two car parks at the Observatory. For more information on the Observatory, visit [www.normanlockyer.com](http://www.normanlockyer.com)

We shall meet for lunch at 12.15 pm at Dukes Hotel and Restaurant on Sidmouth Esplanade. [www.dukessidmouth.co.uk](http://www.dukessidmouth.co.uk) For those without transport, please take the bus to Sidmouth, and car share arrangements will be sorted out at lunch.

*To book, contact Gwyneth Garner ([gbvgarner36@btinternet.com](mailto:gbvgarner36@btinternet.com) or 01392 881330) by 9 May.*

### **Wednesday 13 June 2018: Visit to Port Eliot and St Germans, Cornwall**

Port Eliot is a Grade 1 listed house, and its park and gardens are also Grade 1 listed. The house at Port Eliot has been lived in for over 1,000 years, and it is believed to be the oldest continually inhabited dwelling in the UK. The earliest written reference to Port Eliot is from the 5th century AD. Augustinian monks were there from the year 937 AD

St Germans Church dates from the 12th century. It is a Grade 1 listed Norman priory church, built on the site of Cornwall's first cathedral. It features original twin towers, a magnificent carved West Door, beautiful stained glass and fascinating monuments.

We shall have lunch at Scholars, a popular local wine bar – see reviews on Facebook and Tripadvisor.

We expect to have our own private guide throughout our visit. St Germans Church is a 5-minute walk from the station, and Port Eliot is a further 5-minute walk.

Port Eliot and St Germans are in Cornwall, just across the county boundary. St Germans is on the main train line from Paddington to Penzance, so it is recommended that we go by train. The proposed trains are the 09.26 train from Exeter, which arrives at St Germans at 11.04. Coming back, we shall take the 18.25 train from St Germans, which gets to Exeter at 19.48. The cost of a return ticket is £13.40, or £8.85 with a railcard.



The detailed programme is as follows:

- 11.04 Met at St Germans station by our Guide
- 11.30 Tour of St Germans Church
- 12.30 Lunch at Scholars Wine Bar, St Germans.  
There is a special two-course pensioner lunch at £7.50.
- 1.30 Guided tour of the whole house at Port Eliot (£12.50)
- 3.30 Free time to visit the garden - direct exit from bottom of garden to Scholars
- 5.00 Tea and biscuits at Scholars (probable cost £2)
- 5.45 Depart for station

For more information, visit [www.porteliot.co.uk](http://www.porteliot.co.uk) and [www.stgermanspriory.info/](http://www.stgermanspriory.info/)

To book, contact Peter Wingfield-Digby ([pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com) or 01392 424781) by 6 June.

## Event reports

### Christmas lunch, Thursday 7 December 2017

The newly refurbished Cowick Barton provided a lovely magical setting for our Christmas lunch this year. I think the consensus was that the service and food were good but above all the company as always was special.

As our secretary was not with us this year- missing his Christmas lunch of the EUC Exeter Branch – we raised a glass at 2pm to him and the EUC. Peter had decided to escape the British winter and was in Goa but promised to also raise a glass to us at that time as he sat on the beach in Goa!



Cowick Barton

Special thanks must go to Gwyneth Garner for organising the event which worked like clockwork.

*Susie Hewitt*



Goa

## Visit to the Devon Heritage Centre, 15 January 2018

A group of thirteen, slightly depleted by various seasonal illnesses, was shown round the Devon Heritage Centre by Brian Carpenter after a select lunch had been enjoyed by eight members at the nearby Miller and Carter Steakhouse, better known to many of us as the Barn Owl.

It was a fascinating afternoon. The Centre, now contracted out to the South West Heritage Trust, a charity based in Taunton, manages the archives held by the Devon Record Office and the printed and published books and images in the Westcountry Studies Library, and also houses the archives of the Meteorological Office. Its reading room is much more spacious than the old premises in the centre of Exeter and Brian had looked out items relating to the University from the collections of the Westcountry Studies Library, including a run of the EUC bulletin from the 1950s to the 1990s.



*An early University Club Bulletin*



We were shown the various finding aids and reference works in the reading room, including parish registers from 1538 onwards, census returns for 1841 onwards and runs of newspapers extending back to the 18th century – all of them on microfilm or microfiche.

But it was the maps that stole the show, both in the reading room and the massive air-conditioned strong rooms that we were also shown round – the 1:500 plan of central Exeter from 1890, so detailed that the broad and narrow gauges of the railway tracks could be distinguished, the tithe surveys from about 1840, all neatly wrapped in calico, some of them so massive that they had to be located immediately opposite the strong room door to provide a straight run to the search room, the colourful map of Halberton, a pictorial view of the watercourses in the village dating from as early as 1607 and, in the document reception room, a magnificent coloured version of the map of Exeter engraved by John Rocque in 1744 that the Centre had just acquired.



*The conservator making calico sleeves for the maps.*



Not all accessions are as welcome as the Rocque map and among the equipment in the document reception area is an industrial freezer used to freeze to death any minibeasts that might infest some of the records. Once decontaminated and admitted, many records require conservation and we were also shown the conservation room. Among the many items currently being conserved and refurbished are the Quarter Sessions records which cover a wide range of county administrative activities in an unbroken sequence from the 1590s to the 1970s. The contents are being cleaned and their original vellum packages repaired. Particularly remarkable was the massive light wall in the conservation section onto which the largest maps were pasted to facilitate meticulous work on their preservation.

Recording is an important behind the scenes task. Digital cameras have now replaced microfilm in making preservation copies and we were shown a camera with lighting and a table that could take documents the size of newspapers. We were also able to speak with an archives assistant who was cataloguing the 80,000 master negatives of Beaford Archive photographers Roger Deacon and James Ravilious which are now held by the South West Heritage Trust.

And finally, some of the group were able to establish an immediate link with some of the wealth of historical records held in the Devon Heritage Centre by identifying themselves on the collection of school photographs, which because of their panoramic format were stored with the maps. Such personal encounters with the records enthused members of the group, in some cases to pick up their own researches in the collections, in others to keep their eyes open for material that could be added to the collections and so not lost to posterity.

*Ian Maxted*

## **Talk – Dr Stephen Manning, The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, 5 February 2018**

We met again at The Royal Oak on 5 February 2018 to welcome Dr Stephen Manning, an Honorary Research Fellow of the History Department at the University, who gave us an interesting talk on this part of Britain's colonial activity in Africa.

British policy for South Africa at the time was to form a confederation, similar to that successfully created in Canada, which would bring together various British and Boer colonies, some tribal states and the Zulu Kingdom. HM Government had no desire to impose this by force as they were heavily involved in wars elsewhere, and King Cetshwayo of the Zulus was generally friendly towards British colonials. However Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of The Cape Colony, acting on his own initiative decided that the Kingdom presented a military threat and in December 1878 presented the King with an ultimatum which he knew could not be accepted.

When it expired in January 1879 he authorised an invasion of Zulu territories which, after a few preliminary encounters, resulted in an overwhelming defeat for the British Army at Isandlwana, news of which reached Britain before it was known at home that a state of war existed. Lord Chelmsford, the British commander, having lost more than 1000 men and all his supplies was forced to withdraw from Zululand. A border post at Rorke's Drift was gallantly defended in a 10 hour-battle against a much larger force of Zulus. Eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded to the defenders.



Isandlwana



Redvers Buller

Dr Manning gave descriptions of the subsequent battles: Hlobane, which was a defeat for the British but at which Col. Sir Redvers Buller won the VC for bravery under fire, by returning to retreating troops and rescuing some of the wounded; Gingindlovu (a British win); and Kambula where the Zulus were decisively beaten. A letter home by a private describing the “great murder” done to retreating and wounded Zulus (700 were killed) by mounted troops resulted in widespread condemnation of the forces involved; it might today be considered a war crime. When massive reinforcements arrived from India, Zululand was invaded again in June. During this time the Imperial Prince Napoleon Eugene of France, who had joined the British army while in exile, was killed during a scouting foray. There was a final battle at Ulundi after which the defeated Zulus dispersed and Cetshwayo became a fugitive.

Dr Manning described the significance of the press in the South West of England during the war. Because most reports arrived from Africa by sea, reporters were able to intercept ships arriving in Plymouth and gain advantages over other British papers.

*George Garner*

### **Lunch at @34 Restaurant, Exeter College, 28 February 2018**

Fourteen of us made a return visit to this restaurant, located in the Laurence Building on the main Exeter College campus. It was a challenging time for all of us to get there. The Beast from the East was already causing high winds, and Storm Emma was due to strike Exeter the following day (it did, and dumped several inches of snow).

@34 is a training restaurant – part of the Michael Caines Academy – which aims to nurture the region’s future generation of restaurateurs, chefs, restaurant managers, waiters and front of house staff. We were pleased to be able to enjoy our lunch in the company of Clive and Pamela (our Treasurer); Pamela was celebrating her birthday and had brought along her sister and brother-in-law.

Although the menu did not initially look as appetizing as on some previous occasions, most of the dishes turned out to be excellent, and the students provided efficient and friendly service. We enjoyed the fact that we were all seated at one big table, rather than being dispersed.

*Peter Wingfield-Digby*

## Exeter University (EUC) Reunion and Annual Outing 2018

This three-day event is centred on Montacute House (NT) in Somerset, from Tuesday 12 to Thursday 14 June. Members of all EUC Branches are invited to come along to join part or all of the Reunion which offers a great opportunity to meet up with old friends from university days. For further details of events and how to book, please contact Louise on 01884 242606 or email [louisecluniesross@btinternet.com](mailto:louisecluniesross@btinternet.com)

### Sad news

We are sorry to have to report the death in February of one of our members, Cliff Wadey. In recent years Cliff and Val had moved to Chard where they were enjoying retirement, with Cliff making occasional visits to Exeter Branch events. Cliff read English at Exeter (1953 - 56) and completed an Education year there also, before embarking on a teaching career. Cliff was in both Kilmorie and Bradninch during his time at Exeter. From 1990 to 1996 Cliff was Chairman of Convocation. Our thoughts are with Val and the family.

### Jessie Montgomery

In the last issue, we highlighted the origins of some of the names connected with the buildings on the Streatham Campus. One unusual name is that of Jessie Montgomery, after whom one of the halls of residence on the old Duryard estate was named. While walking around Exeter Cathedral recently, Peter WD spotted this memorial in the north aisle of the nave which gives more background information about the life of Jessie Montgomery.

