



To offer friendship through social and educational activities

## **EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter**

**Number 35**

<http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>

**June 2018**

**July to September 2018**

### **Future events**

#### **Monday 2 July 2018: Annual General Meeting and Members' Lunch**

The AGM will be held at 11 am at The Royal Oak, 68 Okehampton Street, St Thomas, Exeter EX4 1DY. The meeting will be followed by lunch at 1 pm. There is plenty of parking space at the pub, and public transport (train and bus) are less than five minutes' walk away. If the pub carpark is full, there is a public carpark (50p an hour) nearby.

If you have suggestions for an interesting talk for next year's programme, or an outside visit or a good venue for a club lunch, please offer them at the AGM. If you are not able to come on the day, please pass your suggestions to a member of the committee.

Your committee would welcome some fresh faces. If you would like to take an active part in running the Club, please come along and put your name forward, or else speak to the Secretary. We are particularly keen to find someone who would be willing to take over the role of Treasurer in due course; it is an important role but does not require a lot of time.

The agenda for this AGM is included at the end of this newsletter. Please bring your copy to the meeting. Also included are the minutes of last year's AGM for your information.

*Please contact Peter Wingfield-Digby ([secretary@eucexeterbranch.org.uk](mailto:secretary@eucexeterbranch.org.uk) or 01392 424 781) by 25 June to indicate whether you are able to come to the AGM.*

## Tuesday 10 July 2018: Visit to Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton.

Please note that this visit has been cancelled. In its place, your Committee has organised a Jurassic Coast Cruise (see below)

## Tuesday 17 July 2018: Jurassic Coast Cruise

The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site exposes over 250 million years of the Earth's history. This Cruise will take in the oldest section, known as the Triassic Era, famous for its deep red colour. Our skipper will give us a live commentary during the cruise covering the changing history and appearance of the area as well as the wildlife and towns. Tides permitting, the vessel will sail in close to the cliffs for a detailed view and then sail further out to offer a panoramic view.

The cruise is a sea going trip and therefore can be affected by the weather, particularly the winds. If in any doubt about the weather, please call Stuart Lines (01395 222 144) to confirm the sailing before travelling to Exmouth.

This trip is normally suitable for manual wheelchair users and persons with reduced mobility; however, sometimes the method of boarding can be affected by the tides and require navigation of steps. If in doubt, please contact Stuart Lines with your requirements before making a booking with George.

Trip Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes

For more information, visit [www.stuartlinecruises.co.uk](http://www.stuartlinecruises.co.uk)



*Please note that this is a sea going cruise and can be affected by strong winds causing a rough sea state. Stuart Line Cruises reserves the right to cancel any sea going cruise should sailing conditions be unsuitable. In these circumstances a transfer to another date or a refund will be offered.*

**Cost:** The standard price for the trip is £10, but if there are at least 15 bookings we shall get a reduced rate of £8.50 per person.

**Food:** There is a bar on board, and some food is available, but you may prefer to bring your own sandwiches. Special offers onboard are a Devon Cream Tea for £3.50, or a Devon Cream Tea with Prosecco for £8.50.

**Meeting point:** Stuart Line Dock, Exmouth at 10.30 am. The docks are at 2 Mamhead Road, Exmouth, at the west end of the Esplanade. SATNAV is EX8 1DU. The boat sails at 11 am.

**Parking:** There is limited parking at the Docks or on the Esplanade. There is some free parking in the side streets. Metered parking is likely to cost about £1 an hour. An alternative is to take a bus to Exmouth, and then walk to the docks.

**To book:** *Please send a cheque by 7 July 2018 to George Garner at The Garden House, Millway, Bradninch, EX5 4NL, covering the cost of the cruise (hopefully £8.50) and the cost of a cream tea if you want one. George can be contacted on 01392 881 330 or at [georgegarner@btinternet.com](mailto:georgegarner@btinternet.com)*

### **Wednesday 8 August 2018: Lunch at Heathfield Inn, Walnut Rd, Honiton.**

The pub is located on the west side of Honiton, off the Sidmouth Road. The building is a 16<sup>th</sup> century thatched inn, that was previously an old farmhouse known as 'The Barn'. It serves a good selection of modern European dishes as well as local specialities from an a la carte menu, and the bar stocks a wide selection of wines and real ales. 'Lite bites' are available for those who are not so hungry.



**Meet:** at 12.00 noon for 12.30 lunch. We shall order food on the day. The menu can be seen at [www.healthfieldinn.co.uk](http://www.healthfieldinn.co.uk) Tel. 01404 45321

**By car:** Approaching Honiton on the A30 from Exeter, turn off (signposted Honiton) towards the town just before the Honiton Bypass. Join Exeter Road into Honiton, then turn right at the roundabout into Sidmouth Road. Go straight across the next roundabout, then right at the next roundabout into Old Elm Road. Take the first right turn into Chestnut Way and the first right again into Walnut Road. The pub is on the left; it has a large car park. The postcode is EX14 2UG.

**By bus:** There is an hourly No. 9 bus which goes from Exeter to Honiton via Sidmouth, stopping at Heathfield Roundabout. The 9.55 am bus arrives at 11.17 am and the 10.55 am bus at 12.17 pm. From there it is a 5-minute walk. There is a bus back to Exeter at 2.33 pm.

**By train:** Honiton Railway Station is quite a long way from the pub. From the station it would be best to take the No. 9 bus, which runs once an hour (e.g. at 11.25 am). Bus back to the station at 2.17 pm.

**To book:** Please contact Louise Clunies-Ross ([louisecluniesross@btinternet.com](mailto:louisecluniesross@btinternet.com) or 01884 242606) by 1 August.

### **Monday 13 August 2018: Lunch at the Royal Oak Pub, Exeter**

Members are welcome to join the newly elected committee for lunch at the Royal Oak pub at 1 pm. This follows a meeting of the committee that will be held at 11 am, to plan events for the coming year.

*If you would like to join the committee for lunch, it would be helpful if you could contact Peter Wingfield-Digby ([pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com) or 01392 424781) by 6 August. If you do not book but find at the last moment that you are able to join us, just show up on the day.*

### **7-11 September 2018: Alumni reunion**

A group of 20 or 30 alumni from around the country and overseas are organising another reunion long weekend in Exeter. Our EUC members are welcome to join any of their activities.

*For further information please contact Mike Aspray ([mikeaspray@btinternet.com](mailto:mikeaspray@btinternet.com) or 01884 242606)*

### **Monday 10 September 2018: Talk by Professor Jeremy Black.**

Professor Jeremy Black has held an Established Chair in History at the University of Exeter since 1996. He is a prolific author, writing on a wide range of topics, including maps and history, why wars happen, history of the British Isles, and rethinking military history.

For us as alumni and ex-staff, probably his most interesting book is *City on the Hill: A Life of the University of Exeter*, which was published in 2015 to mark the university's diamond jubilee (60 years since it received its Royal Charter). The book is packed full of beautiful imagery. The author has also drawn on a range of sources, from archive material to personal recollections of staff and students, past and present. You can follow the book launch, and spot one or two of our members, at:

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/diamondjubilee/ourhistory/book/>

**Time and venue for the talk:** Final details are being arranged. It is probable that the talk will take place at 11 am, somewhere on the Streatham campus, followed by lunch.

*For more information, contact Mike Aspray ([mikeaspray@btinternet.com](mailto:mikeaspray@btinternet.com) or 01884 242606)*



## Event reports

### Talk – Dr Jenny Balfour-Paul, *A Passage through Indigo*, 14 March 2018

Jenny Balfour-Paul gave an interesting presentation on Indigo, which had been the subject of her PhD thesis carried out at Exeter University, where she is now a Research Fellow of the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies.



*Jenny's hanging, natural indigo, at her Devon home*

She pointed out that for 5000 years all dyes came from natural resources – both insects (e.g. cochineal) and plants (e.g. Madder) for Red; Yellows came from practically anything yellow that grows; whereas all Blues were Indigo. Indigo is a double molecule with a unique and unchanging chemistry found in the leaves of many different plants from all over the world. We in the UK are all familiar with woad-indigo, product of the woad plant. The green leaves are soaked in water, the leaves are then removed, leaving a clear liquid, to which oxygen is added, miraculously turning the liquid blue. Indigo is totally colour-fast and coats and strengthens fibres.



*Bagru, Rajasthan*



*Zabid, Yemen*

In the process of her PhD research and more recently, Jenny has travelled widely, chiefly in India, the Middle East and China. She illustrated her talk with many fascinating pictures of locals producing and dying fabrics with indigo. She discovered that the last two indigo factories were in Yemen, which she visited in the mid-1980s. Tragically, many of the countries she visited are now suffering in the terrible civil wars raging in the Middle East.

Jenny also told us about her latest book *Deeper than Indigo* in which she traces the life of Thomas Machell, a forgotten explorer from the 19th century. She had been introduced to his diaries in the British Library, after being shown one of his watercolours entitled *Indigo Planters after Tiffin*.

*Gwyneth Garner*

### **Talk – Lynn Eastlund: Mercy Ships, 26 April 2018**

Exeter Branch members met at The Royal Oak, where we were joined for a pub lunch by speaker Lynn Eastlund (pictured below) and her in-laws who were visiting from Minnesota. Conversation flowed and all too soon it was time to move to the meeting room for the talk about Mercy Ships.



*Lynn*



*The team*

We were fortunate to have an exceptional speaker, as Lynn had only recently returned from several weeks on board SS Africa Mercy where she was a medical auxiliary volunteer on the anaesthetics team in Benin, West Africa. Her experiences gave us a real understanding of how the teams of professionals, all volunteers, work together to perform surgery and give medical care that transforms the lives of hundreds of men, women and children in some of the poorest parts of the world. All at no charge to the patients, many of whom walk for days to reach the ship in the hope that they might receive some medical attention. Everyone is screened to find out if their condition can be treated on board.

The charity was set up in 1978 by Don and Deyon Stephens with the purchase of a ship and in the ensuing 40 years it has given vital medical help to people in more than 70 of the world's poorest nations. In each port the ship visits, the charity also trains local healthcare staff and sets up a Hope Medical centre to provide community health care. In this way the charity sets out to transform people's lives and to leave a legacy of improved healthcare wherever they go.

We learned that the 'Africa Mercy' will only respond to the invitation of a national government that requests help for its people and guarantees a safe harbour for the ship and safe passage for its 350 crew. The usual length of stay is ten months, giving time for hundreds of people to be treated in a safe, hygienic environment and for a community medical centre to be established.

Typical medical procedures include correction of cleft palates, treatment of facial and other tumours, dental surgery, orthopaedic operations, surgery to repair the aftermath of severe burns, obstetric fistula repairs and many eye operations that quickly restore or improve people's vision. The skilled medical teams are all volunteers who fund themselves to work on board for a specified period of time and although they come from all over the world English is the language used by everyone on the ship.

We saw photos of some patients before and after their life-changing surgery and appreciated the tremendous impact the Mercy Ship teams have on the lives of the people who are fortunate to receive medical help. We could see the happiness on the faces of the men, women and children who had been treated and could look forward to better lives.



*Three young patients after eye surgery*

Exeter Branch made a donation to the Mercy Ships Charity. Lynn gave us all a leaflet which anyone can use to make a personal gift to support the work of this remarkable charity.

*Louise Clunies-Ross*

## **Visit to the Norman Lockyer Observatory, Sidmouth, 16 May 2018**

Twelve EUC members joined an open afternoon at the Norman Lockyer Observatory, outside Sidmouth. The Observatory, owned by East Devon District Council, is operated by volunteers, all members of the Norman Lockyer Astronomical Society. Sir Norman Lockyer was a pioneering late C19 astronomer. In his remarkably long and active life – he lived to 96 – he had many achievements. For instance, he discovered the important element Helium, and he was for 50 years the editor of the journal Nature which he had founded.





*Radio astronomy room*

The visit began with an introductory film about the sun, after which we split into three smaller groups to visit in turn the planetarium, two domes each housing an historic telescope, and the radio astronomy room. Our guides were without exception experts in their field, informative and witty speakers, able to explain an esoteric subject to a largely astronomically ignorant audience.

In the planetarium we observed the sky as it would appear that night over Sidmouth, the planets and various constellations pointed out to us. The planetarium was then rotated to show us how the heavens would appear to the Australians, and to the people of Central Africa. We were therefore enabled to see the Southern Cross, as well as our own Milky Way. The planetarium equipment had been “inherited” from Greenwich Observatory some years ago.

The radio astronomer who operates in a room full of computer screens, showed us how sunspot activity has affected climate over the centuries. We also saw evidence of asteroid showers, an asteroid being the size of a coarse grain of salt. There are links between the radio astronomy at NLO with astrophysicists at Exeter University, so the observatory is more than just an historic monument.

The two historic mid and late C19 telescopes we were shown were the Kensington telescope, designed and built by Norman Lockyer on land now occupied by the Science Museum in South Kensington, and the Norman Lockyer telescope which is still used regularly by members of the Society to scan the heavens every Friday evening.

I think we all felt it had been a most informative and enjoyable visit.

*Gwyneth Garner*



## Visit to Port Eliot, St Germans, Cornwall, 13 June 2018

Twelve EUC members travelled to St Germans – a sleepy village just over the county border in Cornwall – on one of the new and most regal of modern trains, seemingly laid on just for our group. We were met at St Germans Church by Richard, the Chair of the newly formed St Germans Priory Trust which was set up to ensure that the building and the grounds surrounding the church can be an effective community resource while retaining the church as a place of worship. He told us all about the history of the church and showed us some of the main monuments inside. An earlier building on this site was the cathedral for Cornwall, until the area was absorbed into the diocese of Exeter just before the Norman Conquest. The present Grade 1 church building dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps the best feature of the church is the beautiful Norman west entrance.



After a lunch break in Scholars Wine Bar, which has been tastefully adapted from the shell of the old school house, we headed on to Port Eliot itself. We immediately descended the narrow staircase into a vast basement kitchen, where we were introduced to 13-year old Albie, who is the 11<sup>th</sup> Earl of St Germans, and his mother Bianca, who is an ex-model. Venetia, the Chief Guide at Port Eliot, then took us on an extensive tour of the property, allowing us to visit parts of the property that are not normally shown to visitors.

Many of the rooms were very quirky. Everywhere were paintings of illustrious members of the Eliot family, many of them painted by Joshua Reynolds. A particularly remarkable room is the Round Room – 40 feet in diameter - designed by Sir John Soane, and with an enormous bizarre Riddle Mural circling the room. It was painted by Robert Lenkiewicz – perhaps the most famous artist in the South-West of modern times – who painted it in stages over a period of thirty years.

In the basement there were rooms devoted to various specific activities, such as a servants' hall with ancient rusty hip baths hanging on the wall, a china room, a gun room, a servants' beer and cider store, a knife room, and a butler's pantry. To bring in supplies to these rooms, there was an underground service tunnel running along underground outside, so there was no need for deliveries to come through the upper parts of the building. On the top floor was a variety of bedrooms and bathrooms, in various states of disrepair.

After exploring the house, it was a delight to relax beside the river in the wonderful park that surrounds this country house. There is clearly enormous work to do to restore the house to its former glory. It is to be hoped that more people will discover this hidden gem.

*Val Ayres & Peter Wingfield-Digby*

## EXETER UNIVERSITY CLUB – EXETER BRANCH

### Minutes of the 86<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Exeter Branch of Exeter University Club, held on Monday 3 July 2017 at The Royal Oak, Okehampton Street, Exeter

1. **The Chairman**, Clive Lee, opened the meeting at 11.05 am and welcomed to the AGM those members present.

**Attendance:** The following 17 members were present: Olivia Anderson, Mike Aspray and Louise Clunies-Ross, Eleanor Attfield, George and Gwyneth Garner, Susie Hewitt and Richard Westlake, Rachel Jackson, Clive and Pamela Lee, Jesslyn Lott, Mary Rogers, Hilary Stevenson, Madge Tomasevic, Dorothy Wagland, and Peter Wingfield-Digby.

**Apologies** were received from the following 37 members: Jess Barrett, Patricia Bisley, Barbara and Donald Bligh, Robina Brand, Maurice Criddle and Marion Wilkins, Harriet and Dick Croft, Melody Dougan, Janet and Keith Feltham, Gerald and Barbara Halls, Terry and Julia Harris, Renate Helmsley, Lucy Henley, David and Vicky Kernick, Ian and Jill Maxted, Anne Mayes, Peter Nickol and Hilary Noakes, Nadine Norris, Steve and Susan Pooley, Philip Rawlings, Simone and Paul Romain, Mike and Chris Rosenbloom, Rob and Margaret Simons, John Slate, & Cliff Wadey.

2. The draft **minutes of the 2016 AGM**, held at the Ruffwell Inn on 5 July 2016, had already been accepted as a true record by the Committee at its meeting on 9 August 2016, and had been signed by the Chairman. They had also appeared in the Branch Newsletter issue number 31. The Chairman asked the AGM to confirm its approval of the Minutes. This was agreed, and there were no matters arising.
3. The **Secretary's report** was then read to the meeting. He described the range of Club events held over the past year. Attendance at these events had not always been as high as hoped for, and he urged members to lend their support to future events put on by the Club. He reported on the sad news of the deaths of three present or recent Club members: Bato Tomasevic, Jane Dimsey and Genie Ridgeon (the latter two having recently moved away from Exeter). With extensive changes being made to the City Gate Hotel during the year, it was necessary to find a new location for the Club's meetings, and The Royal Oak in Okehampton Street, Exeter, was chosen as the most suitable venue. He reported that the Club now has its own website ([eucexeterbranch.org.uk](http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk)), but that the website manager and newsletter editor Ian Thomson was moving to Germany in July. The Club therefore needs to find someone to take on these roles, though in the interim period the Secretary will look after the website and Ian will continue to act as the newsletter editor. The Secretary's report was accepted, on the proposal of Mike, seconded by Susie.
4. The **Treasurer's report** was presented by the Chairman. It had been planned to display the year's accounts on the screen, but technical difficulties prevented this from happening; the Chairman suggested it would therefore be good to put the accounts on the website, so that members could see them, and this was agreed. It was also agreed that the accounts would be included in the next issue of the Club Newsletter. This year the Treasurer had prepared quarterly accounts, as recommended last year by the Examiner, and this had made it much easier to prepare the 12-month accounts at year-end. There was a slight overall deficit in the accounts this year, mainly due to the costs involved in setting up the new website (£212); there will be small recurring costs each year in maintaining the website. Receipts from subscriptions were down slightly, as there were about ten fewer members than last year. In fact, most receipts and expenditures were down compared with the previous year. It was pointed out that it may be possible to recover some costs from the larger EUC group (see next item), for instance in trying to recruit new members; such requests should be directed to Louise. The Treasurer's report was accepted, on the proposal of Susie seconded by Eleanor.

5. Louise Clunies-Ross, in her role as Exeter Branch representative to the **Finance Group** of the former Exeter University Club (EUC), reported on the activities of the Group. Funds have already been provided for continuation of an annual Sports Scholarship award of £2,000 over the next four years to postgraduate students who, in addition to their university studies, are pursuing sporting activity at a very high level. A further £3,000 per annum will be used to provide scholarships to support less affluent undergraduate students on academic courses. The Group also organised an annual reunion, held this at Canons Ashby near Banbury on 28 June.
6. The AGM proceeded to the **Election of Branch Officers and Committee** for 2017/18.
 

**Chairman:** the retiring Vice-Chairman, Susie Hewitt, indicated her willingness to serve as Chairman. She was duly elected unopposed, on the proposal of Clive seconded by Gwyneth. Susie was presented with her badge of office by the retiring Chairman. On behalf of the Club, she expressed her appreciation and thanks to Clive for his contribution as Chairman this past year.

**Vice-Chairman:** George Garner indicated his willingness to serve as Vice-Chairman. He was proposed by Dorothy and seconded by Pamela and was duly elected.

**Past Chairman:** Clive Lee, the retiring Chair, agreed to serve on the Committee for one year.

**Committee members:** Three positions were available, for one, two and three years. Mike Aspray and Madge Tomasevic were proposed by Eleanor and seconded by Dorothy, and duly elected, Mike for a period of two years and Madge for one year. There being no other nominations, Eleanor proposed, and it was agreed, that the Secretary should send round an email to members inviting someone to offer themselves for service on the committee.
7. Louise Clunies-Ross was co-opted onto the Committee as representative of the Finance Group. Ian Thomson had agreed to continue as Newsletter Editor for the time being, but the Chairman suggested that it would be good to enquire about the printing facilities available at the University Forum, which might prove more economic than doing the printing up in Tiverton.
8. Rob Simons had communicated to the Secretary his desire to step down from the position of Examiner of the Branch accounts. The AGM expressed a vote of thanks to Rob for his work as Examiner of the accounts, and asked the Secretary to pass on this message. Gwyneth Garner offered to undertake the role in future, with support from George, and her offer was willingly accepted by those present.
9. The date of 16 August originally scheduled for the Club Committee meeting was not convenient for all members, and the proposed date for the Committee was changed to Monday 14 August.
10. The Chairman spelled out the programme for the rest of 2017. One additional item has been added to the printed programme: a visit to the Cornwall campus at Penryn on Tuesday 25 July, which is being organised for us by the Alumni Office at the university. The lunch scheduled for Moore's Restaurant at Newton Poppleford has now been shifted to the City Gate Hotel in Exeter, because Moore's has closed down. The City Gate Hotel has also been chosen as the venue for the Christmas lunch on Thursday 7 December, but the arrangements will be discussed further when the Committee meets on Monday 14 August.
11. Suggestions were invited for the programme for 2018. Among the suggestions made were: visits to the Yeovilton Air Museum in Somerset, the Norman Lockyer Observatory in Sidmouth, and the Jurassic Coast museum at Seaton, and talks on the Exeter War Hospitals Project (Julia Neville), on the Mercy Ships charity, and on dousing in Devon.
12. There were no other matters arising.
13. The Chairman closed the meeting at 11.30am.

Chairman..... Date.....

**EXETER UNIVERSITY CLUB (EXETER BRANCH)**  
**2018 Annual General Meeting**  
**The Royal Oak, 68 Okehampton Street, St Thomas, Exeter EX4 1DY**  
**11.00 am, Monday 2 July 2018 (followed by lunch at 1.00 pm)**

**Agenda**

1. Chairman's welcome
2. Apologies for absence, and news of members
3. Minutes of the 2017 AGM (held on 3 July 2017)  
– to confirm approval already given by the Committee at its 14 August 2017 meeting
4. Secretary's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Report of the Exeter Branch representative to Finance Group of the former Exeter University Club (EUC)
7. Election of Branch Officers and Committee Members for 2018/19
  - a. Chairman
  - b. Vice-Chairman
  - c. Secretary
  - d. Treasurer
  - e. Committee members (one for 3 years, one for 2 years, one for 1 year)
  - f. Co-option of additional members if necessary
8. Election of a representative to the Finance Group of the former EUC if needed, and agreement to co-opt onto the Branch Committee if needed.
9. Appointment of an Examiner of the Accounts for 2018/19
10. Proposal on membership fees and charges for attendance at meetings:  
*'That with immediate effect members will pay a flat-rate annual membership fee of £10 but will not be charged for attendance at meetings. Non-members attending our meetings will be charged £2.'*
11. Date, time and venue for a meeting of the new Committee  
(Monday 13 August 2018 at 11 am at The Royal Oak is suggested)
12. Programme for the rest of 2018, including date and venue for Christmas lunch.
13. Suggestions for the 2019 programme
14. Other matters, by leave of the Chairman
15. Closure of meeting

Peter Wingfield-Digby  
Branch Secretary

**Please note the new EUC Exeter Branch website: <http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>**