



To offer friendship through social and educational activities

## **EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter**

**Number 48**

<http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>

**September 2021**

**October to December 2021**

### **Club news**

Our Annual General Meeting was held by Zoom on 5 July, and was attended by 18 members. It covered a two-year period 2019-2021, since it had not been possible to hold an AGM last year because of the pandemic. The Secretary and Treasurer presented their reports, and the following officers and committee were elected for the coming year:

#### **Officers**

Chairman: Mike Aspray  
Vice-chairman: Frances Canning  
Secretary: Peter Wingfield-Digby  
Treasurer: Susie Hewitt

#### **Committee**

Retiring chairman: n/a  
Gwyneth Garner  
Anne Mayes  
Richard Westlake  
Louise Clunies-Ross (co-opted)

A problem was experienced over the position of Vice-chairman, for which there were no nominations. The retiring Chairman Frances Canning has kindly agreed to assume the role this year, but we urge all members to consider serving on the Club Committee, since a vibrant committee is essential if the Club is to survive and grow.

The new Club Committee met by Zoom on 5 August. It was agreed that club lunches would not be restarted while the effects of the pandemic were ongoing, and that for the time being all our talks would be held on Zoom. The Club has paid for an annual subscription to Zoom so that talks can continue beyond the Zoom limit of 45 minutes.

Given the present uncertainties over the likely duration of the pandemic, the Committee decided to plan ahead for only six months at a time, instead of the usual 12. Accordingly, a programme of talks and visits is being planned for the first six months of 2022, and the Committee will meet again on 14 February to map out a programme for the second half of 2022. Suggestions for possible talks are welcome.

## Future events

### Wednesday 6 October 2021: Talk at 2 p.m. on Devon Air Ambulance

We are delighted to welcome Steffan Anderson-Thomas from Devon Air Ambulance, who will tell us about the important work that they do. In an emergency, the Air Ambulance can be anywhere in the county within minutes - from the moors to the shores.

The patients saved are ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances: parents, partners, children. Nobody chooses to have an emergency, but thanks to the crucial support of the Devon community, the Devon Air Ambulance can be there when it matters most.

Earlier this year, the Express and Echo reported that an air ambulance had to abort a landing in Northernhay Gardens in Exeter because onlookers were taking pictures and blocking its path. A second landing attempt had to be made. A spokesman for Devon Air Ambulance said: "We expect people to be inquisitive and excited to see us and we often find that people on the ground are a great help – residents in the area can be particularly helpful, often pointing out the quickest routes for us to access our patient. Our main priority is for everyone to stay safe around the helicopter, and please be sensitive to the patient that we are attending."



<https://www.daat.org/>

**Speaker:** Steffan Anderson-Thomas, Supporter Engagement Officer  
Devon Air Ambulance Trust

**Topic:** Devon Air Ambulance

**Date and time:** Wed 6 Oct 2021 at 2 p.m. on Zoom

**To book:** Contact Susie Hewitt ([susiehewitt@gmx.com](mailto:susiehewitt@gmx.com) or 01392 273895).  
You will then receive a link a day or two before the meeting,  
which will enable you to access the talk online via Zoom.

## Monday 18 October 2021: Visit to Killerton House and Park

The Killerton estate is situated in the heart of Devon. Its fine 18<sup>th</sup> century house is set in 2,600 hectares (6,400 acres) of working farmland, woods, parkland, cottages and orchards. It had been the home of the Acland family for about 300 years.



On the ground floor you can experience the house as it was in the 1920s/1930s - the relaxed family home of Sir Francis Acland, 14<sup>th</sup> Baronet. His eldest son, Sir Richard Acland, succeeded him in 1939, but gave the estate to the National Trust in 1944, because ownership of it did not fit in with his own political beliefs.

Killerton estate has been in the news recently. The first Roman fort on National Trust land in Devon has been confirmed at a site on the Killerton estate. A recent dig has proven a long-held theory that a first century Roman fort was sited there.

**Killerton Estate** [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/killerton](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/killerton) 01392 881 345

### Hours of opening:

House (ground floor): 11 am – 4 pm (last entry 3.30 pm). Garden: 10 am – 5 pm  
Killerton carpark: 10 am – 5 pm. Wider parkland: 8 am – dusk  
Stables coffeeshop: 10 am – 5 pm

**Cost of entry:** £10 to non-members of the National Trust. Some of those who are NT members may be willing to use their vouchers to enable non-NT members to gain free entry to the house and gardens.

**Meet: at 2 pm** in the NT car park (close to the disabled parking area). There is a pay-and-display system operating in the car park for all visitors. Please follow the directions shown on parking meters. There is a parking charge for non-members.

**Please bring your facemask.**

### How to get there:

**By car:** Travelling on the B3181 from Exeter, there is a signed turn-off on the right at Budlake, just beyond Broadclyst, to Killerton (post code EX5 3LE).

**By bus:** The No. 1/1A/1C bus leaves every 15 minutes from Exeter, and there is a stop in Budlake at the turn to Killerton. It is then a 15-minute walk to Killerton.

**To book:** *Contact the organiser, Louise Clunies-Ross by 11 October at [louisecluniesross@btinternet.com](mailto:louisecluniesross@btinternet.com) or on 01884 242606. Once we know the numbers we shall pre-book, so as to ensure entry on the day.*

## Thursday 4 November 2021: Talk by Alan Puttock on 'Beavers'

Alan is a Research Fellow in the Geography Department (College of Life and Environmental Sciences) at the University. He is a world authority on beavers, and is currently researching the hydrological and environmental impact of reintroducing the Eurasian Beaver to Britain.

For more information about the speaker, please visit [https://geography.exeter.ac.uk/staff/index.php?web\\_id=A\\_Puttock](https://geography.exeter.ac.uk/staff/index.php?web_id=A_Puttock)

The re-introduction of beavers to the countryside can have a dramatic impact on the environment and the flow of water within it. Alan will talk about his research on this topic, with particular reference to sites in the south-west of England.



Earlier this year, a report in the Times said that beavers are to gain protection as a native species in England under government plans to enable hundreds to be released into the wild to multiply and spread in rivers across the country. Apparently they have no legal protection in England, whereas in Scotland they were declared a protected species in May 2019. Beavers have been reintroduced in enclosures in about 15 sites in England, but the River Otter is the only place where there is a wild population of beavers.

**Date and time:** Thursday 4 November at 2 pm on Zoom

**Speaker:** Dr Alan Puttock

**Topic:** Beavers

**To book:** Contact Louise Clunies-Ross, [louisecluniesross@btinternet.com](mailto:louisecluniesross@btinternet.com) Tel. 01884 242 606 by 25 October, if you would like to join us for this talk. You will then be sent a Zoom link a day or two before the talk, which will enable you to access the talk at 2 pm on the day.

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**Reminder:** Please remember to pay your EUC subs - £10 per person – which became due on 1 July. Thanks.



**Wednesday 17 November 2021: Visit to two local places of interest  
– Devon and Exeter Institution at 10.30, St Nicholas Priory at 2.30**

These are two historic sites in the centre of Exeter. St Nicholas Priory is the oldest roofed building in Exeter, and has a rich history. The Devon and Exeter Institution has a unique library with a period atmosphere, but with modern ideas for presenting the treasures in its collection.

Please note that numbers will be limited to 15 for each visit. Please book well in advance, and indicate whether you will be visiting both sites or only one. Places will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis, but reserve listings will be maintained for both locations. Please try to give good notice if you have to cancel, so that someone else can be offered your place.

**Please remember to bring your facemask.**

**Devon and Exeter Institution**

Meet at the entrance at 10.30 am, to await your tour guide.

Cost: £4 per head.

Numbers will be limited to 15.

[devonandexeterinstitution.org](http://devonandexeterinstitution.org)

Tel. 01392 274 727

7 Cathedral Close, Exeter EX1 1EZ



**St Nicholas Priory**

Meet at the entrance at 2.30 pm, to await your tour guide(s).

Cost: £4 per head. Numbers will be limited to 15, in groups of 5 or 6

[www.stnicholaspriory.com](http://www.stnicholaspriory.com)

Tel. 01392 276 255

Mint Lane, Exeter EX4 3 BL



**Lunch arrangements:** Because of Covid uncertainties, no arrangements have so far been made for lunch together. If circumstances change, we can make enquiries of eating places in the centre of town which can accommodate parties of up to 15. Please advise if you would be interested in meeting for lunch, or whether you will make your own arrangements. If you want to remain active over the lunch period, you might like to visit Exeter Cathedral and/or the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in the middle of the day.

**Transport:** Both locations are a short walk from the Cathedral. Parking in the centre of Exeter is always an issue. Car parking for 6-7 hours will cost £9.90 in Premium car parks (Guildhall, John Lewis, and Mary Arches), and £8.80 in Zone 1 car parks (e.g. Princesshay). A better option might be to use the Park and Ride.

**To book:** Contact Ian Maxted on [ianmaxted@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ianmaxted@hotmail.co.uk) or 01392 424781  
– first come, first served.

## Tuesday 7 December 2021: Talk by Paul Rendell on Okehampton

We are pleased to welcome back Paul Rendell. Last time we heard him speak about Dartmoor. This time his topic is 'Okehampton of Yesteryear'. He will tell us how the market town of Okehampton has changed over the years, and he will illustrate his talk with many old photographs from the last 100 years.



This is a very appropriate time to be having a talk about Okehampton. With the Government having provided £40 million of funding to reinstate passenger services on the Okehampton-Exeter railway line, it is now expected that the line will reopen around the end of this year, after being closed for nearly 50 years. This is the first line in the country to be reinstated under the Department for Transport's 'Restoring your Railway' initiative. Trains will run every two hours, seven days a week. During 2022 the service will be increased to hourly.

**Date and time:** Tuesday 7 December 2021 at 2 p.m. on Zoom

**Speaker:** Paul Rendell

**Topic:** Okehampton of Yesteryear

**To book:** Contact Susie Hewitt at [susiehewitt@gmx.com](mailto:susiehewitt@gmx.com) or 01392 273 895 by 2 December. You will then receive a Zoom link a day or two before the meeting.

## Event Reports

### River Tamar Cruise, 6 September 2021

A temperature of 27°C, daylong sunshine, and not a cloud in the sky! That was the weather we were treated to for our cruise on the River Tamar. It also meant a delightful journey by train to get to Plymouth, along the famous coastline near Dawlish, with its new sea defences.

The cruise started at 2.30 p.m., which gave me time to get reacquainted with some of the sights of Plymouth. I visited the famous Hoe – where Sir Francis Drake is reputed to have insisted on finishing his game of bowls before tackling the Spanish Armada – and explored the historic Barbican district which largely escaped the wartime bombing.

The cruise took us along the Plymouth waterfront past a vast number of shipyards – now largely idle – and then up the river itself. Passing under the old Royal Albert railway bridge, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and the much newer Tamar Bridge, used by road traffic, our boat headed north to Calstock, though at one stage – because of a twist in the river – we found ourselves heading due south. Some of us enjoyed a pasty on the boat, but there was also time to stock up with food and drink during a leisurely stopover at the Tamar Inn, beside the impressive Calstock railway viaduct, before heading back to Plymouth in the lovely late afternoon sun.



*Calstock railway viaduct*

Sadly, only a few members of our club chose to take this trip, but those that did were richly rewarded. We were particularly pleased to welcome our sole Cornish member, Alan Read. Thanks also to Val Ayres for proposing this trip.

*Peter Wingfield-Digby*

## Exploring South India by Train, 14 September 2021

When Peter Wingfield-Digby was researching his family tree, he discovered that he had a second cousin living in Kerala whom he had never met. The idea of visiting her, and of exploring South India by train, was born. He pre-booked accommodation online, and reserved his train seats through an agent in London. In advance of his talk, Peter provided us with a map of South India, pointing out the places he had visited.

After a short diversion by air to Aurangabad to see the caves at Ellora and Ajanta, Peter set out by train from Mumbai (Bombay) to Goa, and enjoyed the Portuguese architecture of old Goa as well as its palm-fringed beaches. Then on to see the Maharaja's magnificent palace in Mysore, before taking a bus through the hills to Kannur (Cannanore) to meet his cousin, living in a flat beside the Arabian Sea.

His next port of call was Kochi (Cochin) with its famous backwaters. A photo of Chinese fishing nets was a reminder to us that Kochi had been on international trade routes for many centuries. After travelling round the southern tip of India, he spent Christmas with British friends near Dindigul, doing side trips to the mountain town of Kodaikanal and to Madurai with its famous temple and the Gandhi Memorial Museum, which tells the history of the East India Company and the British Raj from an Indian perspective.

He spent a short time on the south-east coast – Puducherry (Pondicherry), Mahabalipuram and Chennai (Madras) - and then travelled on one of the earliest tooth rack metre gauge railways up to Ooty (Ootacamund), situated among mountain peaks of over 8,000 feet, with tea plantations lower down. Ooty was developed in the 1800s so that Europeans and wealthy maharajahs could escape from the heat of the plains in summer.



*The train to Ooty*

After Ooty, Peter visited Bangalore and Hyderabad, the ruins of Hampi, and the temples at Puri and Konark, before ending his train odyssey in Kolkata (Calcutta).

Thanks to Peter for sharing his photos with us. A truly memorable trip.

*Dorothy Wagland*