



To offer friendship through social and educational activities

EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter

Number 50

<http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>

March 2022

April to June 2022

Club news

Your Committee is currently preparing the programme for the second half of this year. If you have any suggestions for possible events, such as talks or outings, please do inform a member of the Committee.

With national Covid restrictions recently lifted, we had our first lunch together on 23 March, after a gap of two years, and 15 members attended. It gave us the chance to try out the facilities at the City Gate Hotel, which has recently been refurbished.

However, with Covid cases rising again in the south west, we have no immediate plans to restart physical meetings or our regular lunches. For the time being we shall limit ourselves to online Zoom meetings and to outings. One of the advantages of these Zoom meetings is that we have been able to welcome some of our members who live a long way away and who cannot easily get to meetings in Exeter.

We are pleased to welcome two new members, Maria and Ron Henderson, who have moved to Torrington. They were previously members of the Bristol Branch, which is sadly closing at the end of March due to a decline in membership.

Future events

Monday 4 April 2022: Talk (on Zoom), 2 p.m., by Jon Curtis on 'Exeter Food Action'

Exeter Food Action grew out of Devon and Cornwall Food Action, becoming an independent organization in 2017. It rescues excess food from shops and suppliers, and redistributes it to charity organizations that feed people in Exeter.

EFA also works in partnership with Fareshare SouthWest to supply food for their community food members in Exeter, East Devon and Torbay.

Every year EFA rescues 30 tonnes of food, which would otherwise go to waste. Their website shows 12 suppliers and 17 recipient organisations.



For more information: <https://exeterfoodaction.org.uk/>

Date: Monday 4 April 2022
Time: 2 p.m. on Zoom
Topic: Exeter Food Action
Speaker: Jon Curtis, Secretary of EFA
To book: Please contact Richard Westlake by 28 March on 01392 273895 or by email at rawestlake@phonecoop.coop. You will then receive a Zoom link a day or two before the talk.

Monday 23 May 2022: Talk (on Zoom), 2 p.m., by Dr Elisa Franco on 'What is neonatal diabetes'

Exeter University are world leading experts in neonatal diabetes research; their capacity for testing this rare condition is ten times that of any other faculty in the world. Neonatal diabetes is typically diagnosed in babies within the first six months of life. In contrast to type 1 diabetes which is caused by autoimmunity, neonatal diabetes results from a change in single genes which are involved in keeping insulin-producing cells in the pancreas working properly. This genetic change results in life threatening diabetes soon after birth.

Our speaker is Dr Elisa Franco, who is a molecular geneticist based at the University of Exeter College of Medicine and Health. She is the scientific lead for the Exeter neonatal diabetes testing service. She was awarded a prestigious RD Lawrence Fellowship in 2019, which provides five years of funding for her research into the genetic cause of diabetes in babies soon after birth.

For more information: www.diabetesgenes.org

Date: Monday 23 May 2022
Time: 2 p.m. on Zoom
Speaker: Dr Elisa Franco
Topic: What is neonatal diabetes?
To book: Contact Susie Hewitt by 16 May on 01392 273 895 or by email at susiehewitt@gmx.com, and you will then receive a Zoom link a day or two before the meeting.

Thursday 26 May 2022: Visit to Okehampton by rail

It is not possible at this stage to give the exact timing of the activities on this day, because we await an updated rail timetable for 2022, but the day is likely to include the following:

Travel to and from Exeter on the newly opened Exeter-Okehampton railway line

Visit to the Arthur Westlake Museum at the station, named after Richard's father

Visit to Simmons Park

Visit to the Museum of Dartmoor Life

Date: Thursday 26 May 2022

Time: TBC

Visit: Visit to Okehampton

To book: Contact Richard Westlake by 19 May on 01392 273 895 or by email at rawestlake@phonecoop.coop

Thursday 9 June 2022: Talk (on Zoom), 2 p.m., by Trish Oliver on 'Exeter, City of Sanctuary'

Our guest speaker will be Trish Oliver, City Councillor and currently Lord Mayor of Exeter (May 2021 to May 2022). During her Mayoral year she has raised money for *Inclusive Exeter*, a community group which promotes integration in Exeter between people of all cultures.

The Leader of Exeter City Council has reaffirmed that Exeter is a City of Sanctuary and would do all it can to assist Ukrainian refugees.

Trish will talk in a personal capacity about the City of Sanctuary initiatives in Exeter with which she has been involved including the support provided to Afghan citizens evacuated after the fall of Kabul last year, and the plight of displaced Syrians in Lebanon. She will also discuss the differences between 'migrants', 'asylum seekers' and 'refugees', and the ways to support and include them in our communities.

Date: Thursday 9 June 2022

Time: 2 p.m. on Zoom

Speaker: Trish Oliver

Topic: Exeter, City of Sanctuary

To book: Contact Frances Canning by 2 June on 01392 209 542 or by email at francesandedward@blueyonder.co.uk and you will then receive a Zoom link a day or two before the meeting

Wednesday 22 June 2022: EUC Annual Outing to The Vyne, 11 a.m.

This year's annual outing will be a day trip to the beautiful house and gardens at The Vyne, just north of Basingstoke. Originally built as a Tudor palace, the Grade I listed building became the home of the Chute family in the 1600s, who continued living there until it was passed to the National Trust in the 1950s. The plan is to take a lunchtime picnic, and then to meet for an evening meal in a nearby restaurant.

For more information: Contact Mike Aspray: mikeaspray@btinternet.com, 01884 242 606

Friday 1 July 2022: Visit to Ugbrooke House and Gardens, 12 noon

This is our third attempt to organize this visit – let's hope it works out this time.

Ugbrooke House has been the family seat of the Clifford family for over 400 years. In the mid-18th century the house was remodelled by Robert Adam and the gardens by Capability Brown. Both are well worth exploring. There is also a very impressive chapel that is still in use.



The gates open at 12 noon.

Meet: At 12 noon at the entrance to the house. Ugbrooke House, Chudleigh TQ13 0AD. Website: www.ugbrooke.co.uk Tel. 01626 852 179

We shall probably be given a tour of the house first. If we have 15 or more members visiting the house, we shall get a private tour to ourselves – otherwise we shall have to be part of a public tour. We shall then sit down to what promises to be a splendid lunch. The lunch will be served in the conservatory, but eaten in the library. The total cost for the tour of the house, visit to the gardens, and the lunch, will be £35.

Transport:

By car: Take the A30 road from Exeter, then the A38 and A380. Turn off at the slip road at Olchard Ideford Dip (GR 50.59, -3.58). Turn left at the junction, and continue for 1 km to Ugbrooke. There is ample parking.

By bus: The use of public transport for this visit is not recommended. It is hoped that members will car-share.

To book: Contact Frances Canning at francesandedward@blueyonder.co.uk or on 01392 209 542 by 15 June.

Monday 4 July 2022: Exeter Branch Annual General Meeting, 11 a.m.

Zoom meeting. Please support your Club by attending this meeting. If you have suggestions for events, or if you are able to serve on the committee, that would be much appreciated. The duties of a committee member are not onerous !

To book: Contact Peter Wingfield-Digby at pwdigby@btinternet.com) or on 01392 424 781 by 27 June, and you will be sent a Zoom link a day or two before the meeting.

Event Reports

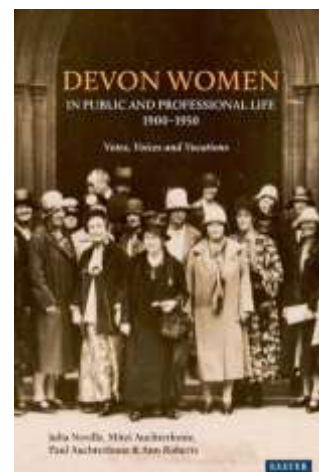
Talk by Julia Neville: 'Devon women in public and professional life', 18 January 2022

On 18 January Dr Neville spoke about the changing role of women in this country during the first half of the 20th century. Her talk, based on the book that she and colleagues have recently published, focused on eight Devon women and is the outcome of some twelve years' research, using mainly local sources such as archived regional newspapers.

In just 100 years much has changed for women in our society but it is all too easy to forget the battles – both literal and figurative – that were fought during the campaign to achieve equal status with men. Even the right to vote was restricted initially to property ownership and a specific age range, and the campaigns and actions of the suffragettes served to highlight these injustices.

Julia drew attention to the way in which women's roles were transformed during both World Wars as men were called up and so women took on many jobs previously done by men in order to keep the country fed, its transport system functioning and its factories producing everyday necessities as well as armaments and supplies for troops. In addition, many women served as nurses in the armed forces and in civilian life began to take on more senior roles in education, social care and medicine. The period following WW1 in particular, provided many opportunities for women, following some years of better education and encouraging girls to stay on at school, with the first female university graduates and barristers taking up posts in the 1920s.

Amongst these women were Clara Daymond, the first woman elected onto Plymouth Borough Council's Public Health Committee, and Dr. Mabel Ramsay who became a surgeon following her pioneering work in WW1 and who went on to found the Medical Women's Federation. We were particularly interested to hear about Jessie Headridge who was head of Exeter's Episcopal Modern School for Girls – later known as Bishop Blackall School – where she encouraged girls to stay on at school beyond 14, the statutory leaving age.



While much took place locally, few women had national roles. However, Eleanor Acland from Killerton was the first Devon woman to stand for Parliament in 1931 although she was not elected. Most of the women in Julia's study did not need to earn their own living; they had the benefit of a good education and also the time, energy and in some cases the money to make significant changes to the society in which they lived.

Louise Clunies-Ross and Mike Aspray

Talk by Gwyneth Garner: 'You only live once!', 8 February 2022

Gwyneth was born in Liverpool and on leaving school in the 1950s was not sure what she wanted to do! So, like many girls, she took a secretarial course. This equipped her for her first job, which was in a solicitors' office in Brighton. However, in spite of her employer offering further training, Gwyneth decided the life she was after was all happening in London and this was where she wanted to be.

A schoolfriend training to become a nurse in London suggested a change of career and Gwyneth applied successfully to the Middlesex Hospital, close to central London. Despite the beige uniforms, long hours, hard work and no make-up, Gwyneth and her friends managed to enjoy and to observe many aspects of London life – which was certainly colourful in the late 1950s. Graduating as an SRN in 1959, Gwyneth decided that she wanted to travel. Ever enterprising, finding that BOAC were not recruiting, she took a job in Sweden, learning some of the language and was subsequently successful in gaining a post as stewardess with BOAC.

It was an exciting time during the 1960s as the Comet and 707s came into service and many long-haul flights with stopovers for the crew in good hotels in far-flung places were the norm. Gwyneth spoke about some of the well-known people she had looked after and memorable places she had visited during this time. We heard some lovely anecdotes and saw some delightful slides of sunny locations. During the 1960s Gwyneth met George Garner, an airline pilot and they married in 1968.

However the 1970s brought sadness and personal tragedy to Gwyneth and George, with the loss of two baby boys, each under the age of two, due to a genetic disorder. After much heart-searching they adopted a little boy in 1975 and enjoyed family life in Hampshire while he was growing up and George was still flying. Gwyneth did some work as a Family Planning Nurse as time permitted.

In the 1980s George took early retirement and embarked on an OU degree, after which he taught in Exeter following the family's move to Devon. Gwyneth, meanwhile, started a degree in French at Exeter University, graduating at the age of 50! Shortly afterwards a job was advertised by the NHS, that as Gwyneth said 'had my name on it' - a genetics nurse counsellor for Devon.



With her nursing background, her personal experience and her understanding of the impact of genetics on certain inherited conditions, Gwyneth was able to give great personal support to families who were experiencing significant stress. As she explained, much progress has continued in this area of medicine with many recent advances.

Following retirement in 1999 Gwyneth has been a churchwarden, served on her local town Council and is presently learning to play the church organ! Thank you so much, Gwyneth, for a most absorbing, entertaining and at times poignant talk; our largest Zoom audience ever is testament to the affection and respect our members have for you. And thank you for donating your fee to the Exeter Hospice.

Louise Clunies-Ross

Talk by Meriel Fishwick on 'FORCE cancer charity', 10 March 2022

We welcomed Meriel Fishwick, Chief Executive of Devon-based cancer charity FORCE, to our meeting on Zoom. This charity works throughout Devon, providing support to people who have a diagnosis of cancer, normally relying on personal contact and individual one-to-one counselling, therapy, massage, exercise classes, craft groups, outreach services and so on. Meriel's presentation focused on the significant impact that the pandemic has had on the work of this charity over the past two years.

Those with a cancer diagnosis face a double whammy as immuno-suppressed people are in particular danger from coronavirus, so it took a great deal of creativity to continue to make support accessible. However, Meriel explained, some services were made available on line within one week of lockdown – not the same as their usual 'hands-on' approach, but individual contact and discussion was still possible at a time when so many were in need of help. For example, consultants were offered the opportunity to speak on-line or by telephone with their patients at the FORCE centre which is located in a quiet spot on the Wonford Hospital site. Staff at FORCE all had to work from home during lockdown and for some this meant learning new skills.

What did FORCE as an organisation learn from these major challenges? Meriel reported that many team members benefited from new skills and stayed with FORCE instead of looking for other jobs; some complementary therapists for example became Zoom trainees and are still ready to return to their initial role when times permit. Also, by increasing its presence on-line FORCE was able to reach some people it had not been in touch with before – mainly younger people who are used to using on-line services.



Today, as the pandemic eases, FORCE uses a mix of some face-to-face meetings, together with telephone calls and Zoom. It is important to make a personal link first, wherever possible, said Meriel, and to follow this by creating opportunities for peer support and for friendships to develop. There are many challenges remaining, as FORCE seeks to continue to support research into cancer, to resume its outreach services to rural towns in Devon, to address the psychological and other needs of people who have waited a long time for a diagnosis due to the pandemic, and to support those young cancer patients who have become particularly anxious during lockdown.

Funding is now a huge issue as, without fundraising for so long, the deficit is growing, and hope is pinned on a National Lottery bid – for which we wished them success. We thanked Meriel for her wide-ranging talk and were glad to make a donation to FORCE (Friends of the Oncology and Radiotherapy Centre in Exeter).

Louise Clunies-Ross

University news

University Chancellor

Lord Myners, who had been Chancellor of the University since 2016, stepped down from that role towards the end of 2021. He in turn had succeeded Baroness Floella Benjamin, who had been Chancellor from 2006 to 2016. As Financial Services Secretary to the Treasury at the time of the 2008 financial crisis, Lord Myners had led the 500-billion-pound rescue package for banks. Sadly, it was reported in January this year that he had died.

The university now has a new Chancellor, Sir Michael Barber, who took up his role on 1 January 2022. Sir Michael is a world-leading authority on education and public service delivery, and has frequently provided advice to UK governments on education matters.