



To offer friendship through social and educational activities

## **EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter**

**Number 53**

<http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>

**December 2022**

**January to March 2023**

### **Club news**

#### **Christmas Lunch**

Our Christmas lunch was held on Tuesday 6 December; the venue, appropriately, was The Stables. The event was ably organised by our Chairman, Frances Canning, and 20 of us sat down to a splendid meal. The traditional fare of turkey and Christmas pudding still proved popular with some of us, but a third chose another main course and two-thirds a different dessert.

We send all our members greetings at this festive time of the year, and best wishes for your health and happiness in 2023.



## Future events

### Wednesday 18 January 2023: Talk on the work of the Churches Conservation Trust

We are delighted to welcome Xiomara Farthing for this talk. We had frequent contact with Xiomara when she was our main point of contact in the Alumni Office at the University, and she participated in some of our events in the past. Now she is head of fundraising at the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT).

CCT is the national charity that protects historic churches at risk. It currently looks after more than 350 churches around the country. Ten of those churches are in Devon, and nine of them are Grade I listed. They are all kept open, so that the public may appreciate their beauty. Xiomara will talk about her national fundraising efforts, and focus especially on those ten churches in Devon, including St Martin's Church in Exeter, shown here.

([www.visitchurches.org.uk](http://www.visitchurches.org.uk))



- Date and time:** Wednesday 18 January 2023 at 2 p.m.  
**Place:** The Stables, Cowley (Lunch from 12)  
**Speaker:** Xiomara Farthing  
**Topic:** The work of the Churches Conservation Trust  
**To book:** Contact Peter Wingfield-Digby by 11 January on 01392 424 781 or at [pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com)

### Thursday 16 February 2023: Zoom talk on WaterAid

When a community gets clean water for the first time, it's the start of something truly life-changing. Some 771 million people in the world – one in ten – do not have clean water close to home. Without these basics, overcoming poverty is just a dream. But when you help WaterAid dig a well or install a tap in a community, you're changing the lives of people for the better. Clean water helps people dream again.

WaterAid has been in existence for more than 40 years. It works in 27 countries around the world to provide clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.

Our guest speaker for this meeting will be Fazlul Islam from WaterAid.



**Date and time:** Thursday 16 February 2023 at 2 p.m.  
**Place:** On Zoom  
**Speaker:** Fazlul Islam  
**Topic:** WaterAid [www.wateraid.org](http://www.wateraid.org)  
**To book:** Contact Susie Hewitt by 9 February at [susiehewitt@gmx.com](mailto:susiehewitt@gmx.com) or on 01392 273 895. You will then receive a Zoom link a day or two before the talk.

## **Tuesday 14 March 2023: Audio-talk on Classic Film Music**

Join Keith Feltham for an hour of film classics !

Keith, an active member of our club, will be playing and introducing some of the great film themes of all time, beginning with the expansive opening theme of *Gone with the Wind*, the romance of *Brief Encounter*, and the swashbuckling adventures of Errol Flynn. We shall hear beautiful music from *The Mission*, Roman epics, Spaghetti Westerns and the wonderful sweeping melody from David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Movie music makes the cinema experience great!

**Date and time:** Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 2 p.m.  
**Place:** The Stables, Cowley (Lunch from 12)  
**Speaker:** Keith Feltham  
**Topic:** Classic film music – an audio-talk.  
**To book:** Contact Peter Wingfield-Digby by 7 March on 01392 424 781 or at [pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com)

## Tuesday 28 March 2023: Lunch at the Manor Inn, Lower Ashton

This restaurant/pub is a family-owned and run business in Lower Ashton, close to the River Teign. It is more than ten years since we last visited this pub for a club lunch, and we enjoyed that visit. The pub still has the same owners (Mick and Jan). They offer their customers fresh, local seasonal produce sourced from the local area where possible.

**Date and time:** Tuesday 28 March 2023 at 12 for 12.30 p.m.  
**Place:** The Manor Inn, Lower Ashton  
**Address:** Manor Inn Restaurant and Pub, Lower Ashton, Exeter EX6 7QL  
Tel. 01647 252 304 <https://manorinn.co.uk/>  
**To book:** Contact Anne Mayes by 18 March on 01647 252 603 or at A.C.Mayes@exeter.ac.uk

### Getting there:

**By car:** Coming from Exeter, the best route is on the B3212, going through Longdown towards Moretonhampstead. At Farrant's Cross (before you get to Dunsford), turn left onto the B3193, signposted for Chudleigh and Christow. Cross a humpback bridge over the River Teign, then turn left at the T junction, still on the B3193. After 2.5 miles turn left, signposted Lower Ashton and the Manor Inn. Go over the River Teign again on another humpback bridge, and go past the old railway station on the Teign Valley line which ran alongside the river. You will see the Manor Inn from the turn off. The carpark is by the pub.

**By bus (not recommended):** There is a 360 bus leaving Exeter (Sidwell Street Stop 40) at 11.15, arriving Christow Church at 12.02. It would be best to get out at Gidley Turn just before Christow, but it is still nearly a mile's walk to the pub. Car-share for the return journey.

## Event Reports

### Visit to Moretonhampstead Motor Museum, 12 October 2022

After a splendid lunch at the Union Inn, we all met up at the Moretonhampstead Motor Museum, where the owner Frank – an alumnus of the University of Exeter - welcomed us and gave an introduction to his collection of old cars and motorcycles.

What a varied collection of motoring throughout the post-war years. There were the everyday cars which are not seen except in museums or on Classic Car Shows and some quite unusual examples. The motorcycles on display went back even further, and to me the most interesting one was a tricycle fitted with a Wall Auto Wheel. This is a bolt-on engine/wheel, basically for fitting to the side of a bicycle, but this one had been re-engineered to mount behind the tricycle.

Some of the vehicles to note were an early Mk I Cortina Estate dating from 1963 and a rather nice Mk II Lotus Cortina. These genuine Lotus versions are now fetching eye-watering prices in auctions. Oh, I wish I had bought some in the sixties! The 1954



Austin A40 Van is a rarity, and when did you last see one on the road? They were just general work horses and had little respect from the people using them.



Bentley Special



Austin Ulster



Rolls Royce

Three of the more unusual cars were the 1963 Rochdale Olympic with a one-piece fibreglass body moulding and a monocoque body–chassis. These cars used BMC mechanical parts. The second one was the 1959 Berkeley T60. These were using motorcycle engines and gearboxes, and again had fibreglass bodies. These were front-wheel drive and were either three- or four-wheel vehicles. Quite a few, in later life, had mini engines fitted which made them rather hairy to drive. The rarest of the three is the Austin 7 Ulster which were basically re-bodied Austin 7s with a modified engine. Some of the survivors are still used for motorsport today - not bad for cars that are 80-plus years old.

The Museum is well worth a nostalgic trip back in time - the number of times I heard "we had one of those".

**Mike Fenner**

## **Talk on Exeter Cathedral memorials, 10 November 2022**

On 10 November we met for lunch at The Stables, our new regular venue near Cowley Bridge. After lunch we adjusted curtains, lights, chairs and screen in preparation for the illustrated talk from our Secretary, Peter Wingfield-Digby. Peter explained that much of his research on this topic had been carried out during the enforced period of Covid lockdown, when he was unable to continue as a volunteer guide at the cathedral.

Peter gave everyone a handout with a plan showing where each memorial is located in the cathedral. Some memorials are on the wall, others (ledger stones) are in the floor, and remarkably, 63 have links with the old British Empire, commemorating the lives of soldiers, sailors, missionaries, explorers and their families, as well as others, including employees of the East India Company and plantation owners in overseas colonies producing sugar and tobacco.

We were amazed at the stories that lay behind some of these memorials. One records the death of Arthur Corfe Angel, officer on the steamship '*London*' that foundered in Bay of Biscay storms in 1866 on its way to Melbourne. Arthur was the son of the cathedral organist. He was 'seen by the survivors with his hand still upon the engine of which he was in charge, calmly awaiting death when the waters closed over the ship'.

Another memorial records the death 'of a fever' in 1895 of George Knight-Bruce, a Devonian who had served as Bishop of Bloemfontein in South Africa before becoming the first Bishop of nearby Mashonaland. Not all the memorials record the lives of men: one rather poignantly notes the death of Rachel O'Brien, wife of army captain E J O'Brien while he was stationed in Exeter, due to severe burns after her clothes caught fire as she was playing with her baby – unfortunately, too close to the fireside. She was only 19.

While half of the memorials are dedicated to those who had served in the armed forces, one very impressive memorial in the south transept has nothing to indicate whose lives it commemorates. In fact it honours Sir John Gilbert and his wife Elizabeth Chudleigh. Sir John was High Sheriff of Devon in 1572. The squirrel at his feet is not only the crest of the Gilbert family but is also the name of the ship that carried his brother Sir Humphrey Gilbert across the Atlantic in 1583. He landed at St Johns, and claimed Newfoundland for the crown. This was the first British overseas colony.

There are many other fascinating and well-researched accounts recorded in a compact book that Peter has recently published, entitled '*Exeter Cathedral memorials with links to Empire*'. Unsurprisingly he sold out all the copies he had with him, in minutes! Our thanks to Peter for an excellent talk, given at short notice in place of our scheduled speaker. Please do contact Peter direct if you would like a copy of his book.

**Louise Clunies-Ross**

## **Campus news**

Some of our members may remember the visit our club made to the new Living Systems Institute (LSI) building back in 2016, not so long after it had opened. The LSI pioneers interdisciplinary research aimed at understanding and controlling the individual and collective properties of cells, the basic units of all life. Now the LSI has a new name. In October a special renaming ceremony took place. Instead of being the LSI building, it is now called the Sir Steve Smith building, in honour of the contribution made by our previous Vice-Chancellor.

Readers may be surprised to learn that in the last academic year there were about 30,000 students enrolled at the University of Exeter, across all four campuses; 23,000 of these were undergraduates, and 7,000 were post-graduates. What a contrast to the situation for many of our older club members, whose experience of university in the 50s and 60s would have been of a single campus with fewer than 3,000 students.

## **City news**

Unfortunately there is still no sign of building activity to restore the Royal Clarence site, even though it is now all of six years since that terrible fire which destroyed the hotel. In October this year planning permission was given by the City Council for a revised scheme, which will see a restaurant and bar on the ground floor and 23 luxury apartments above. The proposals will also see the front of the building restored to its former glory.

There is much happier news for another building. The old House of Fraser building is about to open as the 104-bed Hotel Indigo. It will also include a restaurant, bars and spa complex as well as a High Street shopping arcade. In tribute to the building's historic past, the former Colson's sign, which was uncovered at the front of the building on the High Street when renovation began, has been retained, and the restaurant will be named Colson's. The store had been part of Exeter's history for more than 200 years. Mrs Colson, a milliner, opened the store in 1792, and it was later renamed Dingles, before becoming the House of Fraser. The main entrance to the hotel will be in Catherine Street.



When the reconstruction work first started in 2020, Louise Clunies-Ross, a long-time member of our Branch, recalled her visit there:

“Colsons was my aunt’s favourite shop in Exeter! When we visited her on holidays spent in Devon, it was a real treat to have lunch in the restaurant which was located on, I think, the second floor towards the back. It had views along Catherine Street and also towards the Cathedral. I remember a meal in the 1950s of breaded plaice, peas and chips followed by peach melba. The cutlery was heavy and silver-coloured, and the salt and pepper pots on every table matched the silverware. I recall it was also rather quiet – probably due to the carpet – and people spoke quietly too! Well before the era of screaming kids!”

## **Exeter University Club (EUC) Exeter Branch**

### **Programme for the first half of 2023**

**Wednesday 18 January 2023: Talk on the work of the Churches Conservation Trust** by Xiomara Farthing. 2 p.m. at The Stables, Cowley.

Contact: Peter Wingfield-Digby at [pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com) or on 01392 424 781.

**Thursday 16 February 2023: Talk on Water Aid** by Fazlul Islam. 2 p.m. on Zoom.

Contact: Susie Hewitt at [susiehewitt@gmx.com](mailto:susiehewitt@gmx.com) or on 01392 273 895.

**Monday 20 February 2023: Branch Committee meeting: 11 a.m. on Zoom**

**Tuesday 14 March 2023: Audio-talk on Classic Film Music** by Keith Feltham. 2 p.m. at The Stables, Cowley.

Contact: Peter Wingfield-Digby at [pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com) or on 01392 424 781.

**Tuesday 28 March 2023: Lunch at the Manor Inn, Lower Ashton.** 12 for 12.30

Contact: Anne Mayes at [A.C.Mayes@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:A.C.Mayes@exeter.ac.uk) or on 01647 252 603.

**Tuesday 25 April 2023: Lunch at the Smugglers Inn, near Dawlish.** 12 for 12.30

Contact: Louise Clunies-Ross at [louisecluniesross@btinternet.com](mailto:louisecluniesross@btinternet.com) or on 01884 242 606.

**Wednesday 10 May 2023: Talk on The History of Bideford** by Peter Christie. 2 p.m. at The Stables, Cowley.

Contact: Peter Wingfield-Digby at [pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com) or on 01392 424 781.

**Wednesday 24 May 2023: Pub lunch and walk in Topsham or visit to Topsham Museum.** Meet at the Lighter Inn on the quay at 12, or at 2 for the walk or museum.

Contact: Louise Clunies-Ross at [louisecluniesross@btinternet.com](mailto:louisecluniesross@btinternet.com) or on 01884 242 606.

**Monday 19 June 2023: Visit to RHS Garden Rosemoor, Torrington.**

Meet at 12 in the Garden Kitchen Restaurant, or at 1.30 p.m. to tour the garden.

Contact: Maria Henderson at [tmaria33@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tmaria33@hotmail.co.uk) or on 0180 938 927.

**Monday 3 July 2023: Annual General Meeting: 11 a.m. on Zoom**

**Monday 7 August 2023: Branch Committee meeting: 11 a.m. on Zoom**