



**To offer friendship through social and educational activities**

## **EUC Exeter Branch Newsletter**

**Number 56**

<http://eucexeterbranch.org.uk>

**September 2023**

### **October to December 2023**

At this year's AGM, a new Chairman, Steve Pooley, was appointed, and following Peter Wingfield Digby's decision to stand down as Secretary, a decision was made at a subsequent Committee Meeting to split the responsibilities of Branch Secretary to reduce the workload on any one individual. We are very grateful to Peter for his excellent work on behalf of the Branch for the last seven years, and we are very pleased that he will be staying on the Committee as our Webmaster.

Frances Canning, our previous Chairman, has now become our Correspondence Secretary, responsible for co-ordinating the preparation of the programme, notifying members of individual events, and maintaining the archives of the Branch. Susie Hewitt is staying on as Branch Treasurer for one more year and is also responsible for membership and membership records. Steve Pooley as Chairman is responsible for the production, printing and distribution of the Newsletter, as well as preparing notes for Branch Lines, and informing members of the annual programme. Louise Clunies-Ross is responsible for Branch liaison with the University, and sending the programme to the Alumni Office. Mike Aspray is now our Accounts Examiner.

The new Committee list is:-

Chairman:	Steve Pooley
Vice-Chairman	Louise Clunies-Ross (and EUC Finance Group)
Correspondence Secretary:	Frances Canning
Treasurer and Membership:	Susie Hewitt
University Liaison:	Louise Clunies-Ross
Webmaster:	Peter Wingfield-Digby
Committee Members:-	Anne Mayes (3 years)
	Keith Feltham (1 year)
	Maria Henderson (2 years)

## Future Events

### Tuesday 26 September 2023: Talk on Exeter Community Initiatives

Exeter Community Initiatives (ECI) is a dynamic local charity working not just in Exeter but across Devon. It helps people facing poverty, inequality and homelessness to get their lives back on track. It does this by involving people in community projects to improve their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing, increase their sense of belonging and provide skills to help them succeed in life.

**Date:** Tuesday 26 September 2023

**Speaker:** Tim Goodwin, Chair of Exeter Community Initiatives

**Topic:** Exeter Community Initiatives

**Place:** The Stables, Cowley. We shall meet downstairs for lunch (order food and drink at the bar) from 12, and the talk will be upstairs at 2 p.m.

**Access for wheelchairs:** Using the direct route from the car park to the meeting room requires negotiating a few small steps. A better alternative for a wheelchair user is to go back down the slope a little way from the car park, and then enter the meeting room via the Fire Door from the patio. Here there is only one small step into the meeting room.

**Transport:** The pub is located on the Crediton Road, just after Bernaville Nurseries. There are excellent parking facilities. Turn left up the slope just before the pub, then immediately right.

**Bus:** There is a good bus connection (5, 5A, 5B, and 5C) from Exeter every 20 minutes or so. For instance, there is a Stagecoach bus 5 running from Exeter bus station (Stand 7) at 11.45 which reaches Bernaville Nurseries at midday.

**To book:** Contact Frances Canning before 19 September on 01392 202542 or at [francesandedward@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:francesandedward@blueyonder.co.uk)

### Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – Lunch at Three Crowns Chagford



The building is early Tudor and Grade 2\* listed, originally the home of Sir John Whiddon who died in 1575. It became an inn in the 19th century. Chagford has been

a designated Market Town since before 1220. It grew due to the wool trade and tin mining. It was made a Stannary Town in 1305. In St Michael's Church there is a memorial to Mary Whiddon who, on the day of her wedding on 11th October 1641, was shot and killed by a jealous suitor as she left the Church. The novelist, R D Blackmore, who stayed at the Inn, is thought to have based his famous novel 'Lorna Doone' (published in 1869) on this event.

**Location:** Three Crowns Inn, High Street, Chagford, TQ13 8AJ

**Directions:** The Three Crowns is opposite St Michaels Church in Chagford

**Website:** [www.threecrowns-chagford.co.uk](http://www.threecrowns-chagford.co.uk)

**Transport:** There is limited on-street metered parking and a pay-and-display carpark. Stagecoach service 173 from Exeter will stop at Chagford town square.

**Time:** Meet in the 'Three Crowns Inn' from 12 noon. After lunch you may wish to explore the town. There is a 'Town Trail' on the above website. Copies should be available at the 'Three Crowns Inn'.

**Booking deadline date:** Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Contact:** Mike Aspray, [mikeaspray@btinternet.com](mailto:mikeaspray@btinternet.com) or on 01884 242606.

### **Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – Talk on 'Churches Conservation Trust'**

We are delighted to welcome Xiomara Farthing, Head of Fundraising for the Churches Conservation Trust. 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.

**Speaker:** Xiomara Farthing

**Topic:** Churches Conservation Trust

**Place:** The Stables, Cowley. We shall meet downstairs for lunch (order food and drink at the bar) from 12, and the talk will be upstairs at 2 p.m.

**Access for wheelchairs:** Using the direct route from the car park to the meeting room requires negotiating a few small steps. A better alternative for a wheelchair user is to go back down the slope a little way from the car park, and then enter the meeting room via the Fire Door from the patio. Here there is only one small step into the meeting room.

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**To book:** Contact Peter Wingfield-Digby, [pwdigby@btinternet.com](mailto:pwdigby@btinternet.com) or on 01392 424781.

## **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – Lunch at @34 Exeter College**

Lunch at **@34 restaurant, Laurence Building, Exeter College** We are revisiting this restaurant at Exeter College. We have been there several times, and always enjoyed our visits. The food – nearly always excellent – is cooked by the students who are enrolled on the catering course at the college, and they do the serving of food and drink as well. More details will be available at the beginning of term. You will be able to view the menu online at the end of September.

**Location:** Exeter College Restaurant. The entrance is reached from Howell Road  
There is a very clear map on the website

**Website:** <https://exe-coll.ac.uk/>

**Transport:** Parking is difficult, but there are several buses the UNI, the H from the High Street or Queen Street and the 5A, B, and C from the Bus Station.

**Booking:** On or before Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Organiser:** Frances Canning, 01392 209 542,  
[francesandedward@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:francesandedward@blueyonder.co.uk)

## **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – ‘Tales of a Devon Tour Guide’**

Alex Graeme is a professional Devon tour guide and tells a very witty and informative story of his exploits and experiences in conducting tours over Devon, including Dartmoor, and beyond.

**Speaker:** Alex Graeme

**Topic:** Tales of a Devon Tour Guide

**Place:** The Stables, Cowley. We shall meet downstairs for lunch (order food and drink at the bar) from 12, and the talk will be upstairs at 2 p.m.

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**To book:** Contact Steve Pooley by 5 September on [steve.pooley7@gmail.com](mailto:steve.pooley7@gmail.com) or at 01803 293976

### **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – Christmas Lunch**

We will be holding our Christmas Lunch at the Stables (12.00 for 12.30)

Further information to follow.

**Contact:** Susie Hewitt, [susiehewitt@gmx.com](mailto:susiehewitt@gmx.com)

## **Event reports**

### **Monday 19 June 2023: Visit to RHS Rosemoor**

A group of 11 of us enjoyed a lovely day out in near-perfect weather at RHS Garden Rosemoor near Torrington. Many of us had come long distances. The gardens are quite difficult to find, and some drivers had taken wrong turns on the way. Those of us coming by bus were given a special reduction on the entry fee, in acknowledgement of our car-free travel.

After a lovely lunch in the courtyard café, some wandered around by themselves, and others in small groups. We were intoxicated by the smells and sights of the flowers. In addition to the two rose gardens, there are many other garden areas to visit, such as Hot, Cold, Exotic and Mediterranean. It was a hot day, but luckily there are plenty of benches where one can rest, and even some little huts that give lots of shade.

Over the years Rosemoor has been encouraging biodiversity by creating areas of wildlife meadow. These many grasses and wildflowers attract a diversity of insects (bees, butterflies, moths, flies and beetles), which in turn attract bats, birds, spiders, small mammals and grass snakes.





Many of us rounded off the afternoon by meeting up for a cup of tea and a chat. We had had a lovely day out.

Maria Henderson

### **Wednesday 19 July 2023: Visit to Ugbrooke House and Gardens**



*Source: Wikipedia*

We sometimes refer to important or significant buildings as being a magnificent pile. Ugbrooke House, a Grade 1 Listed building, certainly qualifies for that description, but the word 'pile' here is particularly apt; centuries seem stacked on centuries and styles and trends on styles and trends. Soon after beginning his session the conscientious guide made it clear that the Clifford family, still in residence, wanted at all stages to do what was right; reflected in their choice of Robert Adam and Chippendale in the house and Capability Brown in the gardens and, not to mention further for the moment, the Pope in Rome for spiritual matters.

The House was taken over by Henry VIII at the time of the Reformation but was never ransacked or pillaged but instead was given by the King to a favourite The Duke of Somerset. Subsequently, after it had been acquired by the Clifford family who are in residence today. Adam the celebrated Scottish architect was engaged to refashion the building and he completely altered the Tudor manor footprint, raised roofs and ceilings and erected Medieval style castellated towers. Meanwhile Capability Brown carried out his more familiar magic in the gardens.

There are a large number of portraits of the family exhibited throughout the House; it feels as though the House is still populated by many generations of the family. Several members achieved significant personal success in their lifetimes. Others were frustrated in their ambitions by the legal restrictions placed on those who wished to practice the Catholic faith. After the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act in the nineteenth century, individuals achieved considerable personal distinction. Among them can be numbered, in descending order of status, the family would probably say; a Cardinal, a Victoria Cross recipient, an Admiral of the Fleet, and a

Major-General. There was also an eccentric amateur scientist, known as Silly Willy, who despite a spectacular business failure, is now regarded as someone whose work could be regarded as being of real importance. On the other hand there was a Duchess who thought that Chippendale's brown furniture would be much improved if coated in white paint, which in a more enlightened age took much time and expense to put right.

A four-poster bed can be seen with vestiges of the white paint remaining in carvings of the uprights. In an adjacent reception room there is a much more inspired example of paintwork. High up against the ceiling there is a frieze all the way round the room which from floor level looks like incredibly detailed plaster relief work. It is in fact not three dimensional but is entirely flat, the three-dimensional effect being achieved by the use of many shades of grey. A masterpiece of tromp l'oeil; never could the eye have been more delightfully deceived.

A memorable part of the house is the chapel, which is in constant use. We didn't have access to its main part but had a good view from a gallery which is entered from the library. The door is concealed behind bookshelves which open by means of a secret catch, although many years of use have left their obvious mark on the books. The books themselves are part of a collection of diverse volumes reflecting many subjects. Prominent among them is a large number of Hansard reports of proceedings in the House of Commons, some of them well-thumbed indicating that some of the Clifford family were keen to keep their fingers on the pulse of the Nation.

Outside the House the sumptuous Devon landscape needs no further description, but there were several rather surprising features. An impressive maze of intricate design executed with fine topiary was eye-catching especially as the shrubs were barely knee-high; never going to lose anyone unless they were fairies or some other little folk. Nearby there were some quite abrupt and dramatic changes in levels which had warning signs erected simply saying 'Sheer Drops'. Difficult to see what Capability could have had in mind. They could conceivably make life difficult and dangerous for advancing cavalry but there appears to be no record of Ugbrooke being subjected to any violent attack. Much less challenging was the elegant nineteenth century Orangery which serves now as a coffee shop and restaurant.

Finally, one of the most memorable features of our visit was the enthusiasm of the official guide who combined erudition with clear and infectious affection for Ugbrooke. He particularly impressed us when he told us that the immaculate condition of the house and furnishings was maintained by a cleaning staff of only three members.

Frances Canning



## **Streatham Campus News**

### **Centre for Resilience in Environment, Water and Waste (CREWW)**

In our issue number 52 (September 2022) we reported that construction had begun on this new building on North Park Road, opposite Laver and Harrison Buildings. As this photo shows, work is almost complete, only a little behind schedule, and the building is due to open this month.

