



## *The Gardens of Mars: Madagascar, an island story*

*An illustrated talk by John Gimlette (Jesus 1982) in the Cobham Sports and Social Club near Wimborne, on Saturday 26 February 2022.*

John Gimlette will tell us the story of his three-month journey amongst the fantastical landscapes, beguiling creatures and isolated tribes of Madagascar.

He will focus on the humans rather than the lemurs, walking us through the remarkable history, as he did. Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world, and yet humans only arrived a few thousand years ago and the road network is as small as tiny Jamaica's. Since then, the story has been about eighteen warring tribes, slavery, a bungled French invasion (1896), a curious little side-show in WW2, and now the chaotic somewhat medieval present. He has written that "It says everything of my travels that I came back with three spears, some magic charms, a tear-gas cannister, and some eggshell from the elephant bird, which once stood 10 feet tall."

John has been travelling all over the world, since crossing the Soviet Union by train at the age of seventeen. He has written a most impressive list of thoughtful and amusing books about his travels, lectured widely about his journeys, and won numerous prizes and awards for his travel writing. Somehow, he also managed to read Law at Jesus, and he runs a parallel career as a barrister in London.

We shall **meet at 10:30 in the Merley Room in the Cobham Sports & Social Club, Merley Park Road, Ashington, Wimborne, BH21 3DA**. For those of you who know the area, this is just behind the old Ashington Post Office on Gravel Hill. Drive through the big blue gates and follow on to the spacious car park near the main building. The excellent sporting facilities will be evident. It originated as a club for the staff of Flight Refuelling, which was such an important part of our local industrial history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the Club's buildings contain many mementoes of Sir Alan Cobham and aviation history.

You will be welcomed with a cup of coffee, and after the talk there will be a hot buffet from a wood burning oven. Special arrangements can be made for a vegetarian alternative or other dietary requirements.

The cost of this event is £27 per person.

Please fill in the booking slip on the next page, and return it, with your cheque if appropriate, **by Saturday 12 February** to Mr Graham Pay, Linden, The Avenue, Sherborne DT9 3AH, or by email to [grahamdavidpay@gmail.com](mailto:grahamdavidpay@gmail.com). Please note that the Cobham Club also require visitor's addresses.

Numbers are strictly limited to 50 for this meeting, so **please book early**, and only bring **one guest**. If you do particularly wish to bring further guests, please notify Graham separately, and we will see after the closing date whether that would be possible or not. Please remember to notify us on the slip if you have any special dietary requirements.

Payment can be made by bank transfer or cheque to The Cambridge Society of Dorset. If you pay electronically this must be done at the same time as you return your booking slip. Please remember that the Society has had to change bank accounts, and it is now with **NatWest, Sort Code 51-81-18, Account 87294168**. You had an email from the Treasurer David Frith about this, dated 6 January, and some notes are appended below the booking slip. Use your surname and Madagascar as the reference.

**Booking Slip**

Madagascar talk and hot buffet lunch at the Cobham Sports & Social Club, Saturday 26 February 2022.

To Graham Pay, Linden, The Avenue, Sherborne DT9 3AH.

I/We wish to come to the Madagascar, Gardens of Mars talk at a cost of £27 per person. I enclose my Cheque..... OR I have paid online.....(please tick as appropriate) for.....Members and Guest. (The online reference should be your surname and "Madagascar")

Name ..... Contact Phone.....

Postal address (The Cobham Club requires this information in advance)

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.....Email .....

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**Note from the Treasurer:** If you currently pay to the Society through on-line banking, would you please edit or replace your entry in Existing Payees of your on-line banking. You may have multiple entries to delete, as some banks store the payee separately each time you use a different Reference. If you leave the old entries in place, your banking system is likely to direct you to the existing entries when you try to make payments.

Our new account details are:-  
Bank NatWest  
Account type Business  
Account Name The Cambridge Society of Dorset  
Sort Code 51-81-18  
Account 87294168

**When you make your first payment, please ensure that the account name is verified against the account sort code and number.**