



NEWSLETTER ISSUE NO 48, MAY 2020

Chair's Message

Greetings to all members,

So what strange times we live in and I do hope that you are all coping and in good health. I broke my wrist on the first day of lockdown so have been "enjoying" the challenge of being left-handed - cutting your fringe not recommended!

The UERSA Committee "met" virtually in early May and agreed the few things that we could move forward on and Sandy kindly agreed to put together a newsletter to keep us all connected. A great job given the lack of events able to take place. I think that the new photography group is the only one currently operating!

I suggest that you just pencil in the dates for the Summer Party and Christmas Buffet. The Committee have not yet fixed the date for the AGM but further information will follow on all of these.

I do so hope that we can meet together again soon, even if distanced!

Chris Austin

GROUP NEWS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

UERSA general events are found on the [website](#). If any member would like to advertise their forthcoming event in the newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact the newsletter editor [Sandy Day](#)

Please note that due to the current coronavirus restrictions, the following planned events may be cancelled.

A quick reminder of some of the UERSA and [special interest groups](#) booked events for 2020:

Summer Party
Exeter Cricket Club Pavilion
Wednesday 24th June

A further update will be circulated in due course.

Gardens Group

Provisional dates have been made for the following garden visits:

Tuesday 14th July
Shutelake, Butterleigh

[Shutelake's NGS garden link for your interest](#)

Wednesday 16th September
Coombe Trenchard

Click [here](#) to browse Coombe Trenchard's website.

Music and Opera

As most of you will know, the group used to book discounted tickets at the Theatre Royal, Plymouth, for two top-class touring opera companies, WNO in the Spring and Glyndebourne in November. Being organiser(s) therefore does not involve much activity outside these two events. We have developed a good routine (booking tickets (maximum discount for 40+ people), ordering the coach, booking the restaurant (View Pan Asian across from the theatre), getting payments in and escorting the group). It is a very enjoyable and relatively hassle-free way of seeing live opera and I hope it can continue. I have a fat file full of bumf from past operas as well as being happy to explain in detail what is involved. We do ideally need two people to share the job. Please do seriously consider volunteering.

Alastair Logan

Christmas Buffet
Reed Hall
Thursday 10th December

Judy Mead has kindly agreed to arrange the Christmas Buffet 2020. Final time and details to be confirmed at a later date.

GROUP NEWS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Photography Group

The Photography group is a new group aimed at members who enjoy all aspects of photography but are not necessarily experts!

We formed the group with 10 enthusiastic members just before lockdown so sadly we could not hold our planned inaugural meeting in the Imperial. However, we have not let that hold us back and so we agreed to hold a weekly themed photo competition to keep us going until we can meet in person. Themes so far have been 'Spring', 'Lockdown' and 'Home' and we have had some lovely, imaginative entries which the members have voted for each week.

When we can all finally get together, we will discuss and agree what we all want from a photography group and how we can have fun learning and sharing from each other.

If anyone is interested in joining this friendly and supportive group, please contact me. You can join as a contributor or just to view and vote on your favourite pictures.

[Sue Milward](#)

Here are some of our winning entries.

Any topic

Week 1.

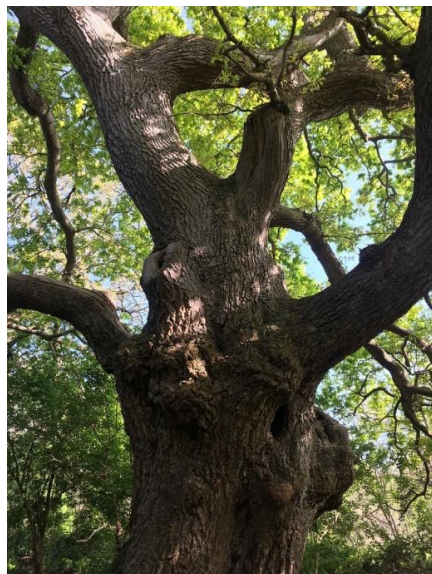
1st Turf



2nd Sunset



Joint 3rd Walk and Tree



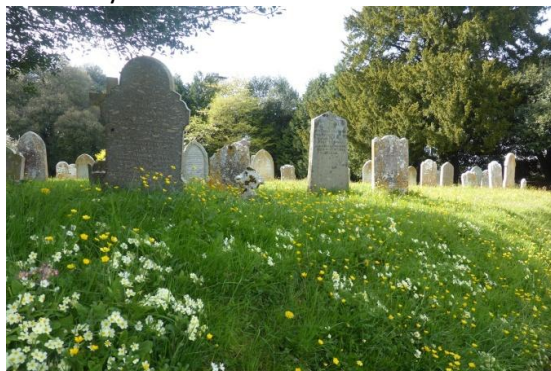
Spring
Week 2
1st Lambs



2nd Lilies



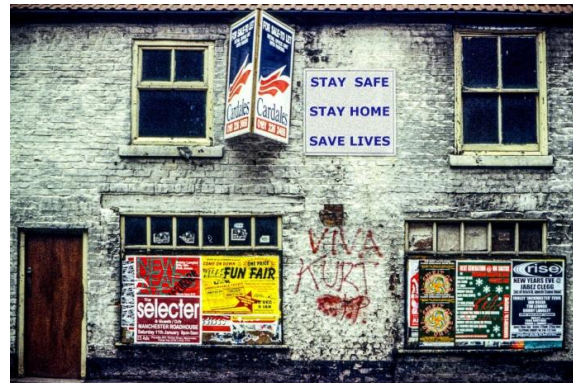
3rd Churchyard



Lockdown
Week 3
1st A38



2nd For Sale



3rd Jigsaw



UNIVERSITY OF EXETER IN THE NEWS

Elite Russell Group universities including Nottingham and **Exeter** had offered students cash and their first choice of accommodation for taking a gap year. (The Times, February 4th)

Economics lecturer **Eva Poen** has been accused of transphobia after a series of tweets sent from a private account were uncovered. The tweets read "Only female people menstruate. Only female people go through menopause." And have been criticised by LGBT+ Society and Exeter Feminist Society, who say the attitudes shown are damaging to the wellbeing of trans students on campus. Eva Poen strongly denies the allegations, stating there was "no evidence" of transphobia in the tweets. (The Exeter Tab, February)

The **University of Exeter** has apologised over its decision to kick 27 students out of their accommodation in Block A of Pennsylvania Court to make room for others returning from Italy who need to self isolate. The university released a statement apologising for not giving the students enough warning and said they would not be moved for the time being. (DevonLive, March 11th)

Exeter University stopped 'face-to-face' teaching and moved to online teaching on 23 March. (BBC, March 16th)

Freedom of Information (FOI) figures report the number of students at the **University of Exeter** returning early from a year abroad has trebled in four years, amid complaints of a lack of mental health support provided overseas. Over the 2018/9 academic year, 66 out of the 567 University of Exeter undergraduates who went on an Erasmus programme asked to come back early from their placement, up from 18 out of 577 in 2015/6. (Telegraph, April 17th)

An **Exeter University** project to predict the spread of covid-19 in the UK and evaluate the impact of quarantine restrictions has been boosted by a grant nearly a quarter of million pounds. The £220,403 goes to the work of **Dr Leon Danon**, Senior Lecturer in data analytics at Exeter's computer science department, who is developing a new tool to forecast where and when the disease will spread. (RadioExe, April 19th)

Dr Bharat Pankhania, Exeter University's communicable disease and public health expert has hailed Devon 'very lucky' due to its rural areas, population, and the timing. If Covid-19 took hold in the summer months, the spread across the county could have been significantly worse. (DevonLive, April 26th)

Professor Lorna Harries and her team at the **University of Exeter** are developing a test to detect how much active virus an infected person is harbouring - known as viral load. This new test will specifically look for active virus, and tell us how much of it is present. "It would be incredibly useful in helping people safely to return to frontline duties, or patients return to care homes." A grant of £52,000 from Animal Free Research UK has been awarded. (ITV News, April 24th)

Professor Maggie Shepherd, Lead Nurse for Research at the RD&E NHS Foundation Trust, **Honorary Clinical Professor** at the **University of Exeter Medical School** received the prestigious Arnold Bloom lecture at Diabetes UK annual conference in 2019. She was the first ever nurse ever awarded this lecture which recognised her role in improving awareness of monogenic diabetes and leading the Genetic Diabetes Nurse project. (Clinical Research Facility, annual newsletter 2019/2020)

NOTICES

Deaths:

Professor Roger Fieldhouse, a long-time supporter of UERSA, died on the 2nd February after a battle with cancer.

We were sad to learn of the death on 1st March of **Dr Kate Thomas**, formerly the University's Senior Medical Officer on the Streatham Estate, at the early age of 61.

Brian Selwood passed away in mid-March from cancer. Brian was a long serving lecturer in the University's Department of Geology before it closed. At the request of the family, there were no press or funeral announcements.

Derek Bridson passed away on Saturday 4th April. Derek joined the University initially in the mid-1970s. Originally attached to Chemical Engineering, Derek worked in the Wind Power Research Unit which received funding from the Energy Technology Support Unit developing and testing a novel vertical axis, variable blade-pitch device which was located on "Top-Field". With the subsequent demise of the Wind Power Unit, he transferred to a Research Fellow appointment in the Engineering Science Department, where he remained for a number of years. Prior to joining the University, Derek, a New Zealander by birth, had served in the RAF as a pilot on various planes including the Jump Jet.

REMINDER

UERSA committee members list can be found [here](#)

NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION DATES

End of May

End of September

End of January

JUST FOR FUN

Where am I in Devon?

1.



2.



3.



PLACES TO VISIT AFTER LOCKDOWN?

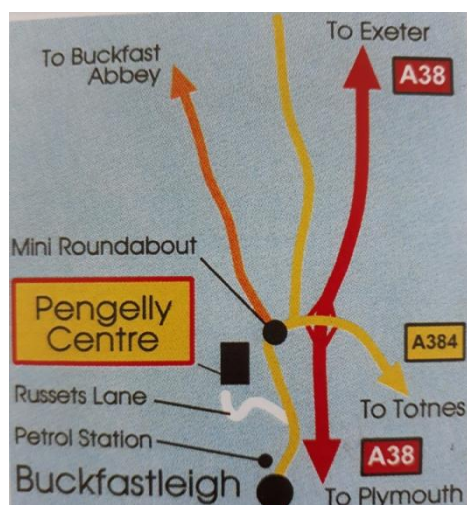
WILLIAM PENGELLY CAVE STUDIES CENTRE AT BUCKFASTLEIGH



Although currently closed the centre is open for guided walks every Wednesday and Thursday in August. Walks start at 11am and 2pm and last for approximately 1.5 hours but you can stay longer if you wish.

In Joint Mitnor Cave you can see the remains of elephant, bear, bison, hyena and other creatures that lived in Devon 120,000 years ago and find out about the geology of the area and how the caves were formed.

As part of Heritage Open Days (usually in September) you are free to walk around the cave centre and visit Joint Mitnor Cave, Reeds Cave that is home a 'Little Man' formation and Rift Cave housing a colony of horseshow bats.



No booking is needed and a modest charge is made. Parking is free, but it's not easy to see the entrance as you travel along Russets Lane so I suggest you use your satnav.

[Pengelly Trust website](#)

It is possible to walk up the steep path to the spectacular ruins of Holy Trinity Church from the cave centre.



The spire is visible above Buckfastleigh and Buckfast Abbey sitting proudly on a rocky outcrop, but in 1849 and 1992 the church caught fire and is an empty shell although a well preserved one. The fires are believed to be a cause of arson.

In 1884 the spire was struck by lightning and in WWII a number of stained glass windows were destroyed after a bomb exploded in the vicinity.



You may find this [link](#) an interesting read!

THE TAMAR CROSSING

Although the Bridging the Tamar Visitor and Learning centre, which opened in 2019, is closed until further notice due to Covid-19 it was established to celebrate the engineering legacy of the estuary's bridges. One aim of the centre is to help inspire young people to engage with STEAM subjects through hands-on workshops as part of a school programme. The free interactive exhibition brings the bridges to life, and there is a lovely picnic and garden area overlooking the river and free parking.



In 1846, following the Cornwall Railway Act which stipulated Plymouth and West Cornwall was to be bridged across the Tamar. Isambard Kingdom Brunel was appointed Chief Designer and Engineer resulting in the Royal Albert Bridge opening in 1859.



Vehicles used the Saltash Ferry but in 1950 Plymouth City Council and Cornwall County Cornwall agreed a further bridge was needed, and in 1961 the Tamar Bridge opened and approximately 4,000 vehicles use it daily.



The River Tamar is the natural border between the South West Counties of Cornwall and Devon.

It begins less than 4 miles inland from the north coast and flows southwards for a total of 61 miles to Plymouth Sounds.

There are many interesting bridge locations across the Tamar that you may wish to visit after lockdown :

Royal Albert Bridge, 1859

Tamar Road Bridge, 1961

Calstock Viaduct, 1904-7

New Bridge at Gunnislake, c1520

Horse Bridge, c 1437

Greystone Bridge, c 1439

Dunheved Bridge, 1975 and replaced 2006

Polson Bridge, first known use in 12th century and interestingly by Charles 1 to enter Cornwall in 1644, replaced 1833 and 1934

Higher New Bridge, 16th century and Nether Bridge, 1986 built to bypass Higher New Bridge

Druyton Bridge, 16th century

Boyton Bridge, c 1614, concrete replacement 2005

North Tamerton Bridge, 1851

Bridgerule Bridge, 1923

NATIONAL COASTWATCH INSTITUTION (South and East Devon)

| National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) Station Summary South and East Devon | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Location | Exmouth | Teignmouth | Torbay |
| Visual, radio, radar and AIS watch. | 1000 – 1600 Fri/Sat/Sun/Mon Nov – March, 0900 – 1800 April – October 0830 – 1900 July & August | 0900 – 1600 October – April 0900 – 1800 April – October 0900 – 2000 July & August | 1000 – 1600 October – April 1000 – 1800 April – October |
| Lookout phone | 01395 222492 | 01626 772377 | 01803 411145 |
| VHF Ch 65 call sign | Exmouth NCI | Teignmouth NCI | Torbay NCI |
| Local weather broadcast on VHF Ch 65 | No | Daily 09:30, 12:30, 15:30 | No |
| Local weather & Inshore Waters Forecast* | Phone or call on CH65 | Phone or call on CH65 | Phone or call on CH65 |
| VHF Radio watch | CHs 00, 08, 16, 63, 65, 67 | CHs 00, 16, 09, 12, 23, 31A, 37A, 63, 65, 67, 73, 11 | CHs 00, 09, 16, 14, 16, 23, 63, 65, 67, 73 |
| Weather station, webcam(s) and info. | www.exmouthcoastwatch.co.uk | www.teignmouth-nci.org.uk | www.torbaynci.org |
| Position | 50° 36' 78N 003° 24' 63W | 50° 32' 9N 003° 29' 45W | 50° 27' 29N 003° 30' 89W |

The NCI is a registered charity and voluntary organisation set up in 1994 after many small coastguard stations closed. Today, 52 stations keep a visual eye on our shores. Exeter's nearest NCI stations are Exmouth, Teignmouth and Torbay. Each station is manned by a team of fully trained and dedicated volunteers equipped with radar, weather instrumentation and telecommunication systems linked to all emergency services.

The NCI station at Teignmouth is located at Eastcliff and welcomes visitors (temporarily suspended due to Covid-19 closure). I was very lucky to be shown around by the dedicated staff prior to lockdown so thought I would share my photos with you.

Sandy Day



For those of us who live inland and pine for a view of the sea, the NCI webcams are:

Exmouth:

www.exmouthcoastwatch.co.uk

Teignmouth:

www.teignmouth-nci.org.uk

Torbay:

www.torbaynci.org

(NCI is temporarily suspended but if you follow the link to Local Webcams, it is possible to view Brixham and Torquay Harbour)

Answers to Where Am I in Devon?

1. My Dear Mother Clock, Buckland in the Moor, Dartmoor
2. The Banjo, Kingswear (opp bus shelter)
3. Quicke's Cheese Store, Crediton

LOCAL EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

Please note the following scheduled events may be cancelled due to coronavirus restrictions.

Countess Wear Evening Cruise

[Stuart Line Cruises](#)

21 July

19 August

Shakespeare in the Garden

[Exeter Cathedral](#)

30th June

Frido Khalo Exhibition on Screen

[Exeter Phoenix](#)

8 July, 12 July

Mid Devon Show

[Knightshayes, Tiverton](#)

25 July

Samuel Taylor Coleridge in the West Country

[North Devon Records Office, Barnstaple](#)

11th August

British Fireworks Championships

[Plymouth](#)

12 -13 August

Spotlight on the Exeter Book

[Exeter Cathedral](#)

15th August

Plymouth Seafood Festival

[Barbican, Plymouth](#)

12-13 September

Heritage Open Days

[National](#)

11-20 September

Mayflower Ceremony

[Plymouth](#)

16 September

Ben Fogle

Tales from the Wilderness

[Plymouth Pavilions](#)

26th September

29er Grand Prix

[Beacon Quay, Torquay](#)

3-4 October

Daniel O'Donnell

[Plymouth Pavilions](#)

4th October

Diesel Gala at South Devon Railway

[The Station, Buckfastleigh](#)

9-11 October

Brewery Tour

[Salcombe Brewery, Ledstone, Kingsbridge](#)

29 October

Sir Ranulph Fiennes

[Plymouth Pavilions](#)

30 October

Rowcroft Carol Service

[Buckfast Abbey](#)

13 December

Music in the Castle

Messiah, Handel

[Powderham Castle](#)

18th December

Ed Byrne: If I'm Honest

[Babbacombe Theatre](#)

11th March 2021 (rescheduled from June 2020)

For further updated information please visit the UERSA [website](http://groups.exeter.ac.uk/uersa/index.html)
<http://groups.exeter.ac.uk/uersa/index.html> (Web Editor: Roger Coles)