



UERSA NEWSLETTER 54

May 2022

Cover picture: 'Winter Dawn Swan' by Sean Goddard the winner of the Winter 2022 Photography Competition.

## Letter from David Batty, Chair of UERSA 2021-2022

Dear Friends

As a sign of our moving on from the Covid pandemic, I was glad recently to circulate the planned dates of two of the annual social functions that have featured in UERSA's calendar over many past years, the Summer Party and the Christmas Lunch. Both will see our return to well-known venues, with the former at the Exeter Cricket Club Pavilion on Thursday 23 June and the latter at the Devon Hotel on Thursday 8 December. Details about the Summer Party have already been circulated but are also attached to this newsletter. I do hope you will feel able to join us at either or both of these events and meet up with old colleagues.

In between time, there are now plenty of outside summer activities under the UERSA umbrella (though hopefully umbrellas won't be needed!) for you to enjoy – plenty of walks, some delicious garden visits, table tennis in Heavitree Park and sharing your enthusiasm for photography, while, inside, wine tasting and restaurant visits are there to be had. And don't forget our monthly coffee mornings, all occasions for catching up and chatting with colleagues about old times and new.

The circulation to members of the University's weekly bulletin continues to provide a summary of developments at the University, some seemingly far removed from the experience of many of us who are long-retired. Encountering Exeter news can come through other sources. Now, sport

might not interest all of you, but early in April, I unexpectedly encountered a live televised broadcast via YouTube of the BUCS Super Rugby Final between Exeter and Durham, played at Sixways, the home of Premiership team, Worcester. Joining the broadcast a third of the way through, this proved to be a thrilling, if low-scoring game which had me on edge for a good hour. Exeter came out on top 14-13, but only after Durham had missed a relatively simple penalty kick in the dying minutes. It was Exeter's first national rugby triumph since 2016. It's good to know that sport continues to flourish at the University. For instance, mens hockey is played at the highest level, with Exeter currently a member of the Premier Division of the National Hockey League. While womens hockey play in the BUCS Premier Division.

I cannot finish this message without recording our sadness at the recent deaths (as noted later in this newsletter) of Barrie Behenna and Jan Reynolds. UERSA owes them much for their input and support over many years.

I do hope you all have an enjoyable summer.

David Batty

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*A university committee was selecting a new dean.*

*They had narrowed the candidates down to a mathematician, an economist and a lawyer.*

*Each was asked this question during their interview: "How much is two plus two?"*

*The mathematician answered immediately, "Four."*

*The economist thought for several minutes and finally answered, "Four, plus or minus one."*

*Finally the lawyer stood up, peered around the room and motioned silently for the committee members to gather close to him. In a hushed, conspiratorial tone, he replied, "How much do you want it to be?"*

## WHAT HAS HAPPENED RECENTLY?

### COFFEE MORNINGS

Our monthly coffee mornings have resumed using the pavilion of Exeter Cricket Club. Dates and times will be announced by email.

### RESTAURANT GROUP

The Restaurant Group (co-ordinated by Frankie Peroni) has now emerged from pandemic lockdowns and held a well-attended lunch-time gathering at the New Inn, Coleford in April. The 16 of us enjoyed the varied menu, all presided over by 'Captain', the pub's resident 40 year-old Amazon Blue Parrot. Next stop for the Group is the Cridford Inn, Trusham for lunch on 26 May. If you would like to join the Group, please tell the UERSA Membership Secretary who will add your name to the circulation list.

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*The kids left food on their plates so dad asked the waiter if they could take the leftovers for their dog.*

*Immediately his kids shouted: "Hooray! We are getting a dog!"*

## GARDENS GROUP



An indication of how much colour there is in Devon gardens at this time of year.

Our first visit was to Lee Ford where 21 of us gathered to enjoy a large garden and estate followed by a first class afternoon tea - cream scones and cakes - in the truly luxurious surroundings of the Conservatory with bougainvilleas climbing the walls behind us. The time was used for a good post winter catch up!

Our next visit is on Thursday 19th May to The Avenue at Ashprington near Totnes. This is a garden reclaimed from a C18th landscape overlooking Sharpham House and the River Dart, it sounds idyllic.

Please contact me if you'd like to come, new members always welcome. Contact details on the web.

Anne Mayes

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*When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.*

## PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

*Thanks to the group for the cover picture*

The winners of the Winter photography competition at <https://groups.exeter.ac.uk/uersa/S-phoW2022comp.html>

Also there will be a summer competition and further photo meetings.

Don't forget our friendly photography competition open to all UERSA members. All you need to do is to take one or two 'Spring' photographs and email them to me (milwardsue@gmail.com)

'Rules' for the competition are simple:

- Submit one or two photos taken by yourself this spring
- Deadline for submission (email to Sue) is 31 May
- Photos will be judged in our usual way by photo group members
- The top 3 photographers will receive prizes!!

Sue Milward

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*In a freak accident today, a photographer was killed when a huge lump of cheddar landed on him*

*To be fair though, the people who were being photographed did try to warn him*

## TABLE TENNIS GROUP

The last meeting of the group in the Sports Hall pre-Covid was 19 March 2020.

The table tennis group has benefited throughout all lockdowns by playing outdoors in Heavitree Park whenever

permitted according to the rules specified by the Government.

In 2020, we increased our playing time to weekly and to 2 hours if anyone had the energy (and some did!). (The Sports Hall sessions were fortnightly for 1.5 hours.) The great outdoors and the increased frequency helped so much in the Covid years.

In 2020, the first lockdown commenced in March, a second was in November and then Christmas took precedence but we had 15 meetings in that year.

In 2021 third lockdown was January 5 until April 13, but by the end of November we had played 29 times.

A break for December and January, but the stalwarts played each week in February, March & April so we have again clocked up double figures

54 meetings to help us through all the terrible upheavals of the last few years. Up to ten players have come - on wet or windy days, there will be a few stalwarts and much laughter with the erratic direction of the (heavier weight) ball.

NEWCOMERS ALWAYS WELCOMED!

SO MANY WONDERFUL HOURS OF FUN AND LAUGHTER! THANKS FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT!

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## Doctors Orders

*A retiree has to take on some sport, on his doctor's orders, so he decides to play table tennis. After a couple of weeks his wife asks him how he's doing. "It's going fine, " he says. "When I'm playing and I see the ball speeding towards me, my brain immediately says, 'To the corner! Back*

*hand! To the net! Smash! Go back!"  
"Really? What happens then?" his wife  
asks. "Then my body says, 'Who? Me?  
You must be kidding!"*

## **WALKING GROUP**

The Walking Group's seasonal programmes over the last year have proved consistently successful attracting on average 10 to 15 people on each walk. We aim to provide a walk every 10 days and the programmes are varied covering coast path walking, mid Devon walking, lovely Dartmoor and we have been into Dorset and on to Exmoor.



This year we have also included a couple of nature rambles. Short walks with our resident experts explaining the flora and fauna of the area. These ambles have proved to be popular and we are aiming to include more, also encompassing the geology of an area.

One such walk is planned for Dartmoor this summer with two of our experts explaining the history of the area and also the 'bugs' who live there.

If you would like to try out our group with a couple of 'taster' walks or would like any further information, please do get in touch with either Judy Mead [judymead@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:judymead@hotmail.co.uk) or Janis Smith [Janis.r.smith@gmail.com](mailto:Janis.r.smith@gmail.com)

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*An orienteer was running along one day when he came to the narrowest part of the River Severn in England. Seeing another orienteer on the other bank, he called out, 'Hey, how do I get to the other side?'*

*The other orienteer, who incidentally came from Wales, looked carefully along the bank to the left, then carefully along the bank to the right, thought a bit, then called back, 'You are on the other side.'*

## **WINE GROUP**

The wine group had an exceptionally good tasting of some of Majestic's fine wines at Majestic on March the 31st. The majestic team made us very welcome we started with a comparison of English sparkling wine and champagne, there was a 50/50 split in which was preferred. Our next tasting is on May 19th when we will have a tutored tasting on Riesling by Rebecca Mitchell, at St David's Church 7.00pm. Some of our members have been shielding from Covid but hopefully we will be back to full strength from now. Future tastings are planned of Spanish wines and wines for the summer in June and October dates still to be confirmed.

We are always pleased to welcome new members to our very friendly group.

John Jacob

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*What's the secret to enjoying a good bottle of wine? Open the bottle to let it breathe. If it doesn't look like it's breathing, give it mouth-to-mouth.*

# FROM THE UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

## **REF 2021 results**

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 results have been published. The REF is a national evaluation of the UK's research base.

The results show that we've seen a significant growth in both quantity and quality of our research, with the number of researchers submitted increasing by 70% (from 736 to 1,251 full time equivalent), and the proportion of our research assessed as world-leading (4\*) growing by more than 60%. The results place us 18th in the UK for research power, up from 21st. More than 99% of our research is of international quality (4\* + 3\* + 2\*), with 89% assessed as internationally excellent (4\* + 3\*) and 46.9% as world-leading (4\*), up from 29% in REF 2014.

## **The University is looking at its brand - be part of the change**

Following the creation of our Strategy 2030, we now want to take this opportunity to review our University brand and visual identity to ensure this supports the delivery of our strategic goals for the next decade. A new visual identity must support and enable us to grow our global networks and connections, and help us to reach new audiences, as well as ensuring that internally we foster pride in our institution and our collective goals for

the future. We want all colleagues, students and alumni to get involved and be part of our rebrand journey so that together we can get the most from our University brand.

## **Lady Mireille Gillings opens our Neuroimaging Centre**

Global business leader and philanthropist Lady Mireille Gillings, PhD, Hon DSc, officially opened the cutting-edge new imaging centre which bears her name on International Women's Day, last Tuesday (8 March). The opening of the Centre was followed by a reception hosted by our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lisa Roberts. Our Medical School's new Mireille Gillings Neuroimaging Centre was funded by part of a £10 million donation from the Dennis and Mireille Gillings Foundation. The gift also funded three Mireille Gillings Fellows in Health Innovation, supporting female academics in leadership roles. Two years on, each of the three Fellows appointed is in a senior leadership position.

# Obituaries:

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Barrie Behenna, whom many across the University will have got to know during his long service to the institution, died on 10 March at the age of 84. Barrie joined the University's central academic administration in 1962 and progressed in time to the senior administrative role of Secretary of Faculties, finally retiring as Academic Secretary in 1997. His work for the University did not quite finish then, as into the early 2000s he worked on its behalf with some part-time international duties.

Beyond his administrative responsibilities, Barrie took a particular interest in developing Exeter's links with the military. He was instrumental in the establishment of the University Officer Training Corps and acted as secretary to the Military Education Committee. He also set up the Defence Studies Dining Club which, for a time, was an important link between the University, the military and the City and County. And, for something completely different, he was wicket-keeper for the largely academic staff Erratics cricket team!

Barrie was an enthusiastic member of UERSA from its inception and served as its President in 2007-8.

Outside of the University, Barrie had many interests as a volunteer, most notably with the local Health Authority, the local work of the Multi-Centre Medical Research Ethics Committee, the Step One Charity, and the Teignmouth RNLI.

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UERSA owes a huge debt to Jan Reynolds who sadly died at the age of 81 on 13 March. Jan was one of the people who were instrumental in setting up the Association in 2004 and, indeed, was the very first secretary of its Executive Committee. Bruce Coleman has observed that, 'Without her grasp of the power politics in Northcote House, I'm not sure that we would have succeeded in overcoming the obstacles that were being put in our way.' Many members will recall that over the years that followed, Jan, with the help of husband Mike, organised the annual quiz and the monthly coffee mornings at the Imperial, always with a merry smile and warm welcome. And nothing was too much trouble for her in providing assistance for other UERSA events.

Jan joined the University at the end of the 1970s, providing secretarial services for successive Directors of Buildings & Estate (Don Riches and Andrew Tait) based in Northcote House, later working for Sue Odell before transferring to the office of the Director of Personnel.

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We are sorry to report that Adrian Davey, whom many of us knew as a very helpful and affable member of the Finance Office, has died. Adrian was one of the 'friendly faces' in Northcote House, always ready to explain the intricacies of the finances to HoDs. He was generous with his time and help.



## RETIRED STAFF ASSOCIATION

(UERSA)

### SUMMER PARTY 2022

Exeter Cricket Club's pavilion is again the venue for this year's UERSA Summer Party, to be held on Thursday 23 June between 3.00 and 5.00 pm. We hope for fine weather to enable UERSA members to enjoy the pavilion's balcony and view while enjoying sandwiches and a cream tea. Do please join us for this always very sociable event.

As in previous years, there is no charge to members for the tea and with the same caterers as in 2019, the last such occasion, we are confident of an excellent standard. Glasses of Pimms – always a sign of summer and good cheer – will be on sale at £3.50 a glass at the pavilion bar.

Car parking will be available on the Cricket Club surrounds, accessible from along the left-hand side of the Squash Club.

As in the previous two years, we shall again be inviting voluntary contributions at the party in support of a needy charity, to be advised at a later date. Please be generous on the day.

For catering purposes it's important that we have accurate numbers of those attending, so please complete and return the form below to me at The Old Coach House, North Street, Topsham, Exeter EX3 0AP or reply by e-mail, **no later than 8 June**. And if you then have to drop out thereafter for any reason, please tell me ASAP.

The UERSA Committee looks forward to welcoming you on 23 June.

David Batty

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To: David Batty, The Old Coach House, North Street, Topsham, Exeter EX3 0AP

(D.F.Batty@exeter.ac.uk)

I/We should like to attend the UERSA Summer Garden Party on Thursday 23 June at 3.00 pm at the Exeter Cricket Club pavilion.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_