



University
of Exeter



University of Exeter **Retired Staff Association**



UERSA NEWSLETTER 60 MAY 2024

Cover picture: 'Winter Storm' by John Pratts, the winner of the Winter photography competition.

Letter from David Batty, Chair of UERSA 2022-2024

Dear Friends

Despite writing this opening sentence on a day when a Walking Group outing was cancelled because of an atrocious rain forecast, I hope that recent signs of the onset of warmer weather will encourage many of you to sign up for the annual UERSA summer party, to be held on Thursday 27 June at 3 pm at the Exeter Cricket Club pavilion. Details, already circulated separately, about registering your attendance are included later in this newsletter. Do join us for an afternoon of convivial conversation and a traditional English tea.

Reviewing some of our recent UERSA activities, the annual quiz, held in mid-March, was less well attended than the previous year, but we had much fun in attempting to answer the challenges set by Stuart Martin, our gentle question master, and the most ingenious of which was the picture round involving the identification of 50 UK prime ministers and US presidents. (One team achieved 100% in that round due entirely to the expertise of a constitutional historian!) Later, in May, I enjoyed an outing with the Gardens Group to Dartington Hall where we were given a most informative tour of the courtyard area and grounds which were transformed in the 1920s and '30s when the Elmhursts took over ownership of the estate. During the tour, we were reminded of the many distinguished cultural figures who stayed and worked at Dartington on either side of World War II; in addition some major national social agendas were developed there. Joining our UERSA activities certainly widens your knowledge of the world!

You will know that UERSA is always anxious to welcome new members, and the opening of the University's new voluntary severance scheme (the Exeter Release Scheme) reported in a recent edition of the *Weekly Bulletin* opens up an opportunity for new recruits to the Association. If you happen to know any folk taking advantage of the scheme, then do please encourage them to join us. Also, one or two retirements leave gaps on the Executive Committee which we'd like to fill; an active Committee is important in ensuring the Association promotes a varied diet of activities for members. Do contact me if you think you could help.

To remind you, the UERSA website (<https://groups.exeter.ac.uk/uersa/>) contains a calendar and details of upcoming activities. I look forward to meeting up with many of you at some of them over the coming months!

David Batty

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My uni just started an acting troupe called the Footbridge

It's like the Footlights, but more pedestrian.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED RECENTLY?

COFFEE MORNINGS

Our monthly coffee mornings continue at the pavilion of Exeter Cricket Club. Dates and times will be announced by email.

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"A man went to his doctor and complained that every time he drinks coffee, he would get a stabbing pain in his right eye. The doctor said, "Well, have you tried taking the spoon out?"

WINE GROUP

11 members of the wine group had an interesting and informative tasting on N American wines at Majestic Exeter on March 20th. We were given a real treat with tasting some of their premium wines.

The stand out wine of the evening was Orin Swift Palermo 2019 a sumptuous Cabernet Sauvignon. Retailing at around £60 per bottle it was one good reason for group tasting.

Other tastings of S African wines and others are in preparation for the rest of the year.

John Jacob

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A friend said a wine he tried recently was bitter and not properly fermented. Sounds like sour grapes to me.

RESTAURANT GROUP

The Restaurant Group met at the end of April for lunch at the Hotel du vin. Thirteen of us enjoyed an excellent meal along with good company.



A lunch is being planned for June at the New Inn in Sampford Courtney.

We are dependent on more members being able to help organise future events. With a variety of contributors we are then able to discover new interesting venues around the area.

Frankie Peroni

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"I went to a restaurant and ordered my naan bread. I don't know why, she doesn't even like it."

GARDENS GROUP

We had a very successful visit to Dartington Hall and Gardens. It didn't rain and we had a very informative guide who gave a very comprehensive history of the buildings and estate together with a list of all those who've had a connection with Dartington.

As we left, the sun came out very strongly!



July's visit is on the 9th to Pounds at Hemyock.

A very friendly group, do join us.

Anne Mayes

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*Yet again, someone has added more soil to my allotment
The plot thickens...*

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Not a lot to report I'm afraid. Can just mention the lovely photos submitted to the winter competition and remind all members to take their winter pictures and send them to me by 31st May.

Sue Milward

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*We all have photographic memory.
Just some of us are lacking the film.*

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WALKING GROUP

Our Winter programme covered January, February and March.



We opened the Winter Programme with a short circular from Darts Farm in Topsham. A lovely day and 18 joined! The walk was a nature ramble with some interesting information on the history of Topsham, ending the morning with a welcome pub visit for lunch. Thoroughly enjoyed by all.

East Devon countryside once again offered some delightful walking, around Harpford behind Newton Popleford and then along the Otter to view the successful changes at the mouth of the estuary.

The Quantocks beckoned at the beginning of March and we thoroughly enjoyed a beautiful, longer walk.





Rain curtailed a few walks planned in March but we had a lovely short walk at Steps Bridge ending the Winter Programme - to look at the carpets of wild daffodils. The sun shone for us at last on this day - a beautiful start to the Spring.

I have given details of just some of our walks - all were well led and interesting and it is always fascinating to see the difference a change of season can make to a well known walk.

Join us! Judy and Jan

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A couple of hikers were tramping through the countryside and had lost their way so by the time they arrived at the "George and Dragon", the village pub where they'd arranged to stay the night, the doors were locked and the owners had gone to bed. They knocked timidly on the front door.

A head appeared ...at an upstairs window and shouted, "Go away. Don't you know what time it is? We're closed," and the window slammed shut.

Undeterred, the hikers knocked again. "What is it now?" demanded the head. "Could we speak to George this time please?" asked the hikers.

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CINEMA GROUP

Any member of the group can suggest a film on a particular date (generally at the Picture House) and invite others to reply to the group email if they intend to be there.

We usually meet for tea or coffee beforehand and may grab a quick word afterwards to exchange views about the film.

Silver Screen viewings on Thursdays are cheaper than the usual rate and there is a free cup of tea or coffee once you have your ticket.

See the UERSA website:

<https://groups.exeter.ac.uk/uersa/sig-cin.html>

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Last night I paused the film to make a cuppa...

Lost my job at the cinema!

TABLE TENNIS GROUP

The Table Tennis group has been meeting at the University Sports Hall to play indoors from January to May, and we have one session left before we adjourn to play outside during the Summer months - weather permitting!

There have been some good competitive games with plenty of laughter and fun.

If anyone is interested in joining the group, please contact Anne Dinan (e.a.dinan@exeter.ac.uk) to be notified of the dates.

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Why was the table tennis club's website down?

They had problems with their server.

FROM THE UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education praises our apprenticeship programme



We were described as “revolutionary” in our commitment to providing degree apprenticeships by the UK’s Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education during a visit last Tuesday. The Right Honourable Robert Halfon MP visited us during National Apprenticeship Week to hear more about our apprenticeship provision, as well as meet with apprentices and our employer partners. He joined Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lisa Roberts, our Degree Apprenticeship team and some of our partners, including the NHS, Amazon, South West Water, Rowe IT and the SW Apprentice Ambassador Network, for a discussion of the opportunities and challenges apprenticeships can bring for employers, as well as the collaborative relationship they have with us.



The new centre will aim to develop circular approaches to metals, construction and critical minerals. Image: Freepik

New partner for world’s first UN-backed centre for circular economy research

Our University is now a partner in a new United Nations-backed centre that will propel the transition to a future circular economy. The International Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Resource Management in the Circular Economy, announced by Resources Minister Robbie Moore, will look to develop new approaches to the circular economy in areas such as metals, construction and critical minerals. It is the first centre of its type in the world, established in the UK in recognition of the world-leading expertise in circular economy at UK institutions. The new centre, which will formally open in April, is a collaboration between ourselves and University College London (UCL), Brunel University, Swansea University and the British Geological Survey. It will develop new approaches to the circular economy and resource efficiency to enable carbon reduction and the transition to a greener future.



Our teaching is out of this world

Our University instagram account recently shared this amazing picture of NASA astronaut Dr Mike Barratt, wearing a University t-shirt ahead of piloting his latest mission to the International Space Station. NASA Headquarters are seen in the background. Mike teaches on our MSc Extreme Medicine module which is delivered in partnership with World Extreme Medicine. We wish Mike the best of luck with his mission!



SETsquared named UK's top startup hub in FT ranking

The SETsquared Partnership, our unique enterprise collaboration with five other universities, has been named top startup hub in the UK and Ireland by the Financial Times – and third best in Europe.

The South West-based business incubator received the accolade in a special report on Europe's leading start-up hubs by the Financial Times and Statista. SETsquared, a collaboration between ourselves, Bath, Bristol, Southampton, Surrey and Cardiff universities, provides a wide range of support programmes designed to help turn ideas into thriving businesses. It supports tech-based businesses throughout their lifecycle, from idea through to investment and scale-up, and develops entrepreneurial thinking for students, academics and businesses.



Exeter subjects ranked amongst very best globally in influential rankings

We are excited to report that subjects from both Science and Arts and Humanities at the University have been recognised as being amongst the very best in the world, according to an influential global league table. 17 of our subjects are now positioned in the world's top 100 – with 10 in the top 50 – in the latest QS World University Subject Rankings, published on Wednesday 10 April. The highest ranked subject is Mineral and Mining Engineering which is placed 14th in the world, rising one place over last year's position.

The 2024 edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject, provides independent comparative analysis on the performance of more than 16,400 individual university programmes, taken by students at more than 1500 universities in 96 locations around the world.



Leading institution in the country for ecology and evolution research

We're excited to announce that the quality of our research in the fields of ecology and evolution has been ranked as the best in the country by a new international league table. The rankings, compiled by Research.com, also place us 14th in the world for the discipline, above the likes of Oxford, Cambridge, Stanford and University of California, Berkley. The league table is based on an analysis of more than 166,000 scholars and includes more than 800 universities from around the world. We are home to 40 of the most highly cited researchers, including Professor Kevin Gaston, who was ranked second overall.

He was among five Exeter scholars listed in the world's top 500 – all of whom were also placed in the top 100 in the UK. Congratulations to everyone whose hard work contributes to the success of our university.



Our Business School leaps up the QS International Trade Rankings

Our Business School has been placed 17th in the world in the latest QS ranking for International Trade programmes. Our MSc International Business programme climbed 70 places in the prestigious rankings, placing it among the very best programmes available globally. It scored highly across all categories and was sixth in the world for 'trade programme content', a category that judges whether what is being taught ensures graduates have the skills that employers in international trade require. This is the second edition of the QS International Trade Rankings, which are sponsored by the Hinrich Foundation, and this year's ranking featured 73 institutions across 26 locations. Well done to everyone whose hard work has made this possible.



Exeter Maths School 10-year celebration event

On Wednesday 24 April, our Exeter Maths School (EMS) and Exeter College jointly hosted a celebration event to mark ten successful years of the Exeter Maths School. The school is one of the first maths schools opened in the UK and has gone from strength to strength over the last decade. It's recognised as an Ofsted Outstanding, state funded 6th form specially designed for young people who love maths, physics and computing. The day saw hundreds of school-aged pupils fill the Alumni Auditorium to attend talks and demonstrations about pure and applied mathematics from renowned speakers, Ben Sparks, James Grime and Katie Steckles.

UERSA NEWS

Award for UERSA Member



David Smith with his wife Tina

David Smith, the UERSA Treasurer, has been awarded membership of the Order of St Boniface by the Anglican Diocese of Exeter.

The awards, to about six people each year, are given to people who are judged to have contributed exceptional service to the Anglican church in the county. David retired in 2023 after serving as the lay chairman of the deanery covering the city of Exeter for over 20 years. In this role, he represented the churches of Exeter in many committees, and meetings with the bishops, participated in the appointment of clergy to nearly every church in the city, including three new churches. He has also contributed to the Christian life of the city as a preacher, having taken a three-year part-time training course while on the university staff. (St Boniface is the patron saint of Devon and Germany; he was born in Crediton about 680 AD)

UERSA visit to Princesshay Bees

On the roof of the Princesshay shopping centre, above the HVM shop, there is a small garden with trees, flowers and vegetables. At the end of May, a small group of UERSA members went to see and to learn about Princesshay's bees. There are currently four hives, maintained by volunteers and a professional beekeeper.



After taking the service lift through the hidden workings of the centre, we reached "Bee HQ" for a safety briefing, an introduction to the bees via an observation hive, and finally the chance to dress up in full protective gear with veils, gloves and boots. In the open air, we had a chance to see some of the vegetation growing between the air-conditioning units. Cherries were ripening; Jason, our guide, said "The pigeons have already started to eat them".



We learnt about the damage caused by Asian hornets (the trap for them was empty) and then Jason opened one of the four hives and showed us inside it. There were developing honeycombs on the frames, the queen bee, workers and drones. With bees buzzing around our veils, we could bend over the open hive and smell the fresh honey. The bees range about 3 miles around the hives, so if your garden is within that radius, you are helping support the Princesshay Bees!

Dr David Smith (UERSA treasurer)

Friends and colleagues who have recently passed away

On 23 February Dr Bob Burn, formerly Reader in Mathematics Education in the School of Education from 1988 to 1997 passed away. Before taking up the post at Exeter, he taught at Homerton College, Cambridge and, for a short time after leaving his Exeter position, at Agder University College, Kristiansand, Norway.



Newsletter Quiz:

Purely for fun here is a general knowledge quiz focusing on Britain - answers are on the last page of the newsletter.

1. Which London establishment had the first escalators installed in the UK in 1898?
2. What are the four animals that guard Nelson's column?
3. The Lion and the Unicorn appear on the Royal Coat-of-Arms. The lion represents England, what does the unicorn represent?
4. What name is given to a street, typically in London, that today is used for residential purposes but was previously used for stabling?
5. Which of London's theatres is the oldest to still be operating on its original site, despite being rebuilt four times?
6. Which Second World War Royal Navy ship is permanently moored on the River Thames in London as a museum?
7. In Britain during the 20th century because of two wars with Germany, what alternative name was given to German Shepherd Dogs because of the German part of their name?
8. Which city was the first in the UK to adopt the postcode system?
9. In which city was the first organised municipal fire brigade in the world established?
10. What is the name of the open area off Whitehall where the annual Trooping the Colour takes place?
11. Which Somerset town is believed to be the cradle of Christianity in England and the burial place of King Arthur?
12. The Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain and Statue prominently situated in the middle of the West End of London is better known as what?
13. Which town in England contains the largest castle in Europe?
14. In which county is the historic Bluebell Railway to be found?
15. Which British seaside town has the highest average property prices in the UK?
16. The Central Criminal Court of England & Wales is better known as what?
17. What was the name of the first ship to bring citizens from Caribbean UK territories to post-war Britain which gave its name to a Generation of immigrants to the UK?
18. Name the former Car Assembly plant in Birmingham which employed 25,000 workers that became embroiled in disputes with the Trade Unions in the 1970's led by Derek Robinson, better known as Red Robbo?
19. Excluding all native languages and dialects, what is the most spoken language in the UK?
20. The current London Bridge dates from 1967. Where, today, would you find its predecessor which spanned the River Thames in London from 1831 to 1967?
21. By what name are the 100 cast iron figures facing towards the sea just north of Liverpool known?
22. In London each year, in which month is the Lord Mayor's Show held?
23. Devon is home to the only place in the UK with an exclamation mark in its name. Can you name it?
24. Name the walking route which follows the line of the Stover Canal, which was once used to transport clay and granite to the coast?
25. Which picturesque car-free fishing village is located on a 400 foot cliff?

Future events:

Dates for your diary:

- UERSA Summer party - Thursday 27th June at Exeter Cricket Club's pavilion
- UERSA Christmas Lunch - Monday 9 December at the Devon Hotel

The weekly programme of Exeter Forum talks for June through August 2024.

Meetings take place in the Mint Methodist Church, Fore Street, Exeter, EX4 3AT on Wednesday mornings. The talks start at 10:45am, while coffee is available from 10:15am. Descriptions of talks and speakers also appear on the Exeter Forum website www.exeterforum.org and in the weekly newsletter sent to Forum members and to visitors who wish to be so notified.

Visitors are welcome subject to a small charge for each talk. Late programme changes will be shown on the Exeter Forum website at: www.exeterforum.org

Wednesday 5 June 2024

John Davidson

Impact of the railways on Exeter - A Festival of Steam.

To introduce the 2024 Festival of Steam at Exeter's Heritage Harbour on the weekend of 8/9 June, John will show how the arrival of the railways and steam engines changed Exeter. The talk will also explain the important links between Exeter's Canal Basin, steam power and coal.

Wednesday 12 June

Lawrence Sail

Devon Delights.

Local poet Lawrence Sail, who has lived in Devon for nearly three-quarters of his life, celebrates the influence on his work of the county's coast and landscapes. Lawrence has published thirteen collections of poems, most recently *Guises* (Bloodaxe Books, 2020), two books of essays and two memoirs. He has also edited a number of anthologies, including *First and Poems: Poems for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital* and *Light Unlocked: Poems for Christmas*.

Wednesday 19 June

Dr Martin Grossel

Andrea Angel - Local hero.

Andrea Angel grew up in Exeter, attending Exeter School. He won an Open Exhibition to study Chemistry at Christ Church Oxford, graduating with a First in 1899. In the First World War, he was Chief Chemist overseeing the manufacture of TNT at the Brunner Mond factory in Silvertown, London when it caught fire. He showed great heroism in saving many of the workforce before the factory exploded.

He was awarded the Edward Medal of the First Class, the highest award for civilian bravery, equivalent to today's George Cross. Dr Martin Grossel is a tutor of Chemistry at Christ Church and has researched the life of Andrea Angel from his time in Exeter to the events of World War One.

Wednesday 26 June

Dr Catherine Ross

'Sorcery to Supercomputers' - the origins of forecasting and the history of the office.

The Met Office has been providing weather forecasts for the country for over 150 years. Catherine will show how the Met Office evolved from providing a service to shipping through its key role in two world wars and on to the advancements made with the introduction of very powerful computers. Catherine completed her PhD in Ancient History at Durham, qualified as an Archivist and worked for the Museum of Military Medicine. She joined the Met Office in 2012 first as the Archivist and latterly as the Library and Archive Manager.

Wednesday 3 July

Philip Badcott

The March of William of Orange through Devon.

Author and Historian Phil Badcott will tell the exciting story of William of Orange's march through Devon with 15,000 soldiers after he landed at Brixham on November 5, 1688. He will show how Exeter played a key role in this very significant historic event.

Wednesday 10 July

Helen Hume

From Red Rose to Redcoat.

Exeter Redcoat guide Helen Hulme will tell the fascinating and often amusing story of her rugby playing journey, from early days in Exeter to becoming a Red Rose.

Wednesday 17 July

David Oates

The Man who moved Two Windmills - Jordan Ison, an Extraordinary Village Carpenter.

David will tell the fascinating story of Jordan Ison, an innovative and gifted village carpenter who dismantled, moved and reassembled two historic two windmills as well as building gun carriages and a wooden carriage.

Wednesday 24 July

John Ellis

The Stover Canal - 1790 to today's restoration.

The Stover Canal connects the Teign Valley to the sea. It played a very important role exporting products from the ball clay industry and granite building stones. It was linked to Haytor Quarries by a granite tramway. The canal is currently being restored and sections can be visited on walks.

Wednesday 31 July

Adrienne Hesketh

Devon Composers.

Devon based musician and composer Adrienne Hesketh will give a talk featuring various composers from Devon and their music, with some live musical interludes.

Wednesday 7 August

Di Hatchett

The role and importance of guide dogs for the blind and partially sighted.

Di is Co-ordinator, Exeter and District Fundraising Group, and will talk about the selection, training and work of dogs for the blind. She will be accompanied by Suzanne Bailey, with her working Guide Dog Alice, and Emily, a Guide dog Puppy in training, Emily. She will bring along some Guide Dogs' information leaflets for those who wish to know more.

Wednesday 14 August

No meeting Summer holiday break

Wednesday 21 August

No meeting Summer holiday break

Wednesday 28 August

No meeting Summer holiday break

Wednesday 4 September

John Davidson

Who really discovered the North Pole?

The story of the race to reach the South Pole in 1911 is well known but the search for the North Pole started back in the 1700s and continued for over 150 years. This talk will look at the many attempts, by land, sea and air to be the first person to stand at the top of the World.

Newsletter Quiz Answers:

1. Harrods
2. Lions
3. Scotland
4. A Mews
5. Theatre Royal, Drury Lane Originally built in 1663
6. HMS Belfast
7. Alsatian
8. Norwich
9. Edinburgh
10. Horse Guards Parade
11. Glastonbury
12. Eros The monument was erected in 1892–1893 to commemorate the philanthropic works of Lord Shaftesbury in Child Labour and Factory Reform.
13. Windsor
14. Sussex
15. Sandbanks, near Poole in Dorset
16. The Old Bailey
17. Empire Windrush brought Caribbean immigrants to Britain from the 1940's to 1970's and became known as the Windrush Generation.
18. Longbridge
19. Polish
20. Lake Havasu City, Arizona
21. Gormley Men The entire site is officially called Another Place but the statues are better known as the Gormley Men after their sculptor, Sir Antony Gormley who was also responsible for the Angel of the North.
22. November
23. Westward Ho!
24. The Templar Way
25. Clovelly