



University  
of Exeter



University of Exeter *Retired Staff Association*



**UERSA NEWSLETTER 59    JAN 2024**

Cover picture: 'Otter Sunrise' by Nigel Skinner, the winner of the Autumn photography competition.

## Letter from David Batty, Chair of UERSA 2022-2024

Dear Friends

A happy New Year to you all!

Looking back on a couple of UERSA events held towards the end of 2023. I was pleased that many of you were able to come to our AGM in late October. Rescheduling the time for an afternoon certainly appeared to encourage a higher attendance than in recent years. The innovation of inviting a member of the academic staff to speak about their research, in this case Professor Levi Roach and his work on the Normans, was also well received, and we intend repeating both experiments for the 2024 occasion. And while referring to AGM business, can I repeat what I said at the meeting, that we would welcome new faces on the UERSA Executive Committee? Please contact me if any of you might be interested.

Also well attended was our Christmas lunch on 11 December. This time, holding the occasion on a Monday, a day which perhaps attracts fewer commitments for members than other weekdays, proved to be a success with over 50 of us enjoying seasonal fayre and conversation in the brightly decorated function room at the Devon Hotel. I must thank Judy Mead for organising the event, while the enthusiastic cooperation of the Hotel staff should be noted.

Looking ahead, we are expecting to hold another UERSA quiz afternoon later in the winter. Last year's was much enjoyed, so do look out for information about the event when it is circulated. Elsewhere, most of you will know that some of our special interest groups continue to operate over the winter months. The table tennis group is back to playing indoors on a fortnightly basis up at the University sports hall while outside, despite (as I write) somewhat cold temperatures, the walking group has a full programme that takes us through to the end of March. No doubt the photography group will be receiving entries on a wintry theme to its next competition, while the wine group will be back to tasting in the not-too-distant future, indoors of course! Another indoor group is the cinema group; more about this and all the other groups is to be had later in the newsletter. Do remember that all these groups will gladly welcome new members at any time: see the UERSA website for details. One disappointment, perhaps, was that suggestions for new book, church visiting and bridge groups, the last a reintroduction, attracted insufficient interest to get them off the ground.

As ever, do let me know if you have any suggestions of outings or other activities that could be of interest to members.

David Batty

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*What's the difference between a full professor and a terrorist?*

*You can negotiate with a terrorist*

# WHAT HAS HAPPENED RECENTLY?

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

UERSA's Annual General Meeting was held on 19 October at the Exeter Cricket Club. The draft minutes can be accessed via the UERSA website (<https://groups.exeter.ac.uk/uersa/index.html>). Wojtek Krzanowski will serve as President for the current year, while the meeting appointed Linda Hale to serve as President-elect (to serve as President from the next AGM). At the conclusion of the formal business, members welcomed Professor Levi Roach, Department of Archaeology and History, who gave a talk on his recently published work about the Normans.

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*The first AGM of the camouflage club was disastrous.  
It looked like nobody showed up.*

## CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Photographs from the Christmas lunch at the Devon Hotel.



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*Over Christmas dinner, I accidentally let it slip that I'd lied about my degree in biology.  
Me and my big face-hole thingy.*

## 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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*"Coffee helps me maintain my 'never killed anyone streak.'"*

## WINE GROUP

The wine group has nothing really new to report. We are having a break over the festive period imbibing our favourite wines. The next tasting will be in March.

Best wishes

John Jacob

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*A bottle of wine contains more philosophy than all the books in the world. – Louis Pasteur*

## RESTAURANT GROUP

The Restaurant Group met on three occasions in the last year. The lunches were very enjoyable and very well supported. We are expecting a fuller programme in the coming year but this depends on more members being able to help organise future events. With a variety of contributors we are able to discover new interesting venues around the area.

Frankie Peroni

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*"I went to a restaurant that serves "breakfast any time" so I ordered French toast during the Renaissance."*

## GARDENS GROUP

Only one visit since the last Newsletter, our October visit to Dunley House. Given it was late autumn and this was a garden with several thousand trees. We were hoping for autumn colour but the weather had had other ideas and many plants such as roses and salvias were ignoring the calendar and still in full bloom.

A good year for visits in the dry and of the six we went to, five were new to us, a real achievement given that this coming season will be our twentieth. (I started before I fully retired.)

Next year's programme is work in progress! A very friendly group, do join us.

Anne Mayes

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*Sherlock Holmes was doing some gardening, Watson asked what he was planting. He replied "A lemon tree, my dear Watson".*

## PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Not a lot to report I'm afraid. Can just mention the lovely photos submitted to the autumn competition and remind all members to take their winter pictures and send them to me by 29 February.

Sue Milward

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*Why was Cinderella so hopeful about her photos? She knew her prints would come one day.*

## WALKING GROUP

Our Autumn programme covered October, November and December.

Our first walk was an 8 mile circular in the Ivybridge area, on the edge of the moor and starting by the wonderful viaduct. A great walk to start the programme.

We then visited Clyst Hydon and enjoyed a great walk over hills and through lovely farm land.

Quite a few walks in this programme had to be postponed or changed because of the weather but we were able to substitute in most cases - a trip to Turf Lock along the sea wall was very interesting. We had good sightings of wading birds and a kingfisher. The newly managed Inn is great and is open all the time, offering very good lunches.

One of our local walks around Upton Pyne, offered some interesting alternatives to cows and sheep!



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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*Came Across Two Talking Stones  
While I Was Out Hiking. One Was Big  
But Shy. The Other Was A Little  
Boulder.*

## CINEMA GROUP

Several films at Exeter Picturehouse have been suggested since the last Newsletter. A Haunting in Venice, Past Lives, The Great Escaper, Anatomy of a Fall, Napoleon and Maestro failed to appeal, but three members did see Ken Loach's most recent film, The Old Oak, in October. In January, a member suggested One Life, the true story of Sir Nicholas Winton who rescued many children from the Nazis in the lead-up to WW2, but at least two of those hoping to attend the film were prevented from doing so by illness or severe weather.

A reminder that any member of the group can suggest a film on a particular date and invite others to reply to the group e mail 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.

Sue Odell

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*I went to the Cinema yesterday...  
...I was buying popcorn, a drink and  
some sweets.*

*As I went to pay I said, "I'm ever so  
sorry, I've only got a £50 note."*

*The lady said, "That's ok, you can put  
the sweets back!"*

## TABLE TENNIS GROUP

The Table Tennis group has been meeting at the University Sports Hall to play indoors from October to December. There have been some good games with plenty of laughter and fun. We have also sometimes met outside at Heavitree Pleasure Grounds, weather permitting, on alternate weeks.

We will be returning to the Sports Hall to play indoors from January to March 2024.

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

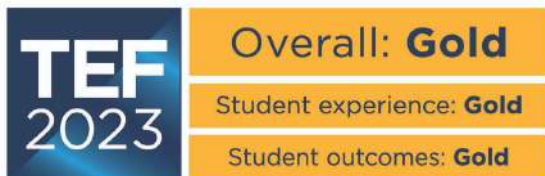
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*What do you call the game where you  
throw furniture at each other?*

*Table tennis.*

## FROM THE UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

Our 'solid gold' standard for teaching excellence amongst best in the UK



Teaching Excellence Framework

We are proud to have secured a 'solid gold' standard for our commitment to providing world-class teaching, in the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) assessment. The overall Gold rating is also supported by Gold ratings in the two aspects of the assessment – Student Experience and Student Outcomes. Amongst the Russell Group, only four universities received this recognition: Cambridge, Exeter, Oxford and Warwick, each recognised for consistently providing outstanding teaching, learning and student outcomes. This rating has been awarded in recognition of our unwavering and sector-leading commitment to delivering outstanding teaching quality, a world-class learning environment and outstanding outcomes for our students for graduate employment. A huge thank you and congratulations to all our colleagues and students for collectively working over recent years to achieve this recognition. In addition, thanks go to the colleagues in the education leadership team and to our TEF Steering and Advisory Groups who helped to marshal our submission to completion. It is a real testament to the dedication, hard work and focus on students that is so characteristic of our University community.

## Top 50 positions in influential rankings



We are delighted to announce that the University has been placed in the global top 50 for two key areas in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking. Exeter has been ranked 38th worldwide for International Outlook, as well as placing 38th and 40th for Research Quality. The rankings are based on 18 indicators grouped into five key areas – teaching, research environment, research quality, industry and international outlook. More than 1900 universities are assessed as part of the rankings. We have placed 177th in the world in the overall rankings, and 23rd in the UK. This fantastic achievement follows our successes in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024, the Guardian Good University Guide 2024 and our nomination for University of the Year as part of The Times Higher Education Awards.

## The Princess Royal launches new Degree Apprenticeship programme



Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal has been welcomed to the Camborne School of Mines (CSM) by colleagues, students and representatives from the Cornish community, during a special visit. The Princess Royal toured the mining school to learn more about its vital role in developing the UK's Critical Minerals Strategy, and global sustainable mining, on Wednesday 4 October. After the tour, The Princess Royal was invited to unveil a special plaque to officially commemorate the opening of the Camborne School of Mines' new Degree Apprenticeship programme. The visit comes as Camborne School of Mines celebrates the 135th anniversary of its inception, and 30th anniversary of being located at the University in Cornwall.

## University honoured in UK Social Mobility Awards



We are excited to announce that the University has won recognition for its commitment to achieving success for students. The UK Social Mobility Awards recognise and celebrate UK organisations that are making strides and creating initiatives, to advance social mobility within their own workforce and beyond. We received silver awards for 'Leadership' and 'University of the Year', which celebrates the priority given to widening access to higher education and enabling pupils across the region to realise their potential, regardless of background. The awards also recognise the University's role in shining a light on inequalities within the South West and leading the South West Social Mobility Commission. This is down to our colleagues who have worked with thousands of young people around the country, and who are leading regional initiatives to boost social mobility.



## Bid success for data science and AI



We are delighted to announce that Project ADA - Advancing Data Science and AI has been successful in its recruitment bid. The project aimed to recruit 45 new posts within this area but has since been approved for growth of 79 new appointments. The project aims to build our capability and infrastructure in this rapidly growing sector.

## Exeter Law School celebrates centenary



Exeter Law School celebrates its centenary this week on Thursday 7 December. Beginning life as the University College of the South West, Exeter Law School has grown from 26 students in its first cohort in 1923, to nearly 1,800 students today. To mark the occasion, students, colleagues and alumni came together for a Centenary Ball at Rockbeare Manor on 17 November. The event was also an

opportunity to recognise the contribution of Exeter Law alumnus, Steve Edge (Law 1972). Steve was presented with The Outstanding Contribution to Exeter Law School Award for his incredible support of the Law School and University for many years.


## Another successful Winter Graduation




More than 2,300 students from 84 different countries graduated over four days of ceremonies in this year's winter graduation. Honorary doctorates were awarded to renowned film producer, educator and environmentalist Lord David Puttnam (*pictured above*) and Amanda Pritchard, the head of NHS England, for her efforts in improving health. Thank you to all colleagues who gave their time to help make the ceremonies such a success.

## Friends and colleagues who have recently passed away


Mike Rouillard passed on the 14 September after a battle with cancer. He worked as a Technician (Experimental Officer) in Archaeology from 1979 until his retirement in 2013.




Dr Mark Davie, late of the Italian Department passed away in early December. Mark was Senior Lecturer in Italian and Head of the School of Modern Languages until his retirement in 2006. He was also the Italian Editor of *Modern Language Review*, 2003-10.




Again in early December Emeritus Professor Richard Seaford passed away after a long period of ill health. Richard was a long standing member of the Classics Department, publishing over 100 papers and books. Away from the Department, he was the honorary President of the national Classical Association in 2009.




Particularly for those of you with previous connections with University sport, especially the Erratics (one of the staff cricket teams), you will be sorry to learn of the death (only just notified to us) on 20 October of Dennis Lane, former Head Groundsman at the University.




In early December at the age of 96, Reg Erskine, former Deputy Registrar at the University passed away. Reg was a much respected member of the central administration for very many years and, amongst his many responsibilities, built up a significant knowledge of the University's archives and history.



On the 11 January, at the age of 96, Dr Ken Coe passed away. He was a member of the Department of Geology at the University before its closure in the late 1980s.



Bob Jones, Emeritus Professor in Theoretical Physics, died on 16 January at the age of 78 after a long illness with Parkinson's Disease. Bob was a staff member for almost 40 years with international recognition for his work in Computational Physics applied to the quantum structure of materials.



## Newsletter Quiz:

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

1. Who wrote the book Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang: The Magical Car?
2. In which part of your body would you find the cruciate ligament?
3. What is the name of the main antagonist in the Shakespeare play Othello?
4. What element is denoted by the chemical symbol Sn in the periodic table?
5. When was the movie the Titanic released?
6. How many of Henry VIII's wives were called Catherine?
7. What was the most popular girls name in the UK in 2021?
8. What is the name of the 1976 film about the Watergate scandal, starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman?
9. Which comedian was the second permanent host of Never Mind the Buzzcocks after Mark Lamarr?
10. What is the capital of Finland?
11. Which popular video game franchise has released games with the subtitles World At War and Black Ops?
12. In what US state is the city Nashville?
13. Which rock band was founded by Trent Reznor in 1988?
14. What is the currency of Denmark?
15. Which Tennis Grand Slam is played on a clay surface?
16. In which European country would you find the Rijksmuseum?
17. How many films have Al Pacino and Robert De Niro appeared in together?
18. What was the old name for a Snickers bar before it changed in 1990?
19. Who was the head of state in Japan during the Second World War?
20. What is the smallest planet in our solar system?
21. Who wrote the novels Gone Girl and Sharp Objects?
22. Which legendary surrealist artist is famous for painting melting clocks?
23. Which football club plays its home games at Loftus Road?
24. Continental United States has 4 time zones, can you name them?
25. What was the Turkish city of Istanbul called before 1930?
26. From which US city do the band The Killers originate?
27. How many human players are there on each side in a polo match?
28. In what year did Tony Blair become British Prime Minister?
29. How many times has England won the men's football World Cup?
30. What is the common name for the larva of a housefly?
31. Street artist Banksy is originally associated with which British city?
32. From what grain is the Japanese spirit Sake made?

## **Future events:**

**The weekly programme of Exeter Forum talks for January through March 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. Full descriptions of talks and speakers appear in the weekly newsletter sent to Forum members and on the Exeter Forum website. Visitors are welcome subject to a small charge for each talk. Any programme changes will be shown on the Exeter Forum website at: [www.exeterforum.org](http://www.exeterforum.org)

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### **Wednesday 31 January 2024**

**Lucilla Phelps**

**Fine Art photography**

Lucilla was principal photographer of Sotheby's auctioneer. She will talk about the photography for the huge and amazing castle auctions in Germany and France and about photographing the Duke and Duchess of Windsor's possessions in Paris for auction in New York. She will bring some example catalogues.

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### **Wednesday 7 February 2024**

**Clare Law**

**The life and work of a professional artist**

Clare is a full time Landscape artist working from her studio in the heart of the beautiful Tamar Valley in Cornwall. Her talk will look at how she developed her style as a professional artist and the range of her work from larger canvasses to greeting cards with scenes of rich vegetation and bodies of water exploring how nature is a lifeline, to be shared and celebrated.

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**Wednesday 14 February 2024**

**Robert Guyver**

**General Sir Redvers Buller VC: his life and controversies surrounding his legacy.**

Robert will make a welcome return visit to the Forum to tell the story of General Sir Redvers Buller's life and career, including the various controversies that are associated with him.

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**Wednesday 21 February 2024**

**John Davidson**

**Earthquakes: Where and why they happen, and how we can manage them.**

John will look at the causes of earthquakes and the places they affect, including parts of the UK. He will look at how the risks from earthquakes can be managed.

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**Wednesday 28 February 2024**

**Jonathan Turner**

**The Way to the Sea**

Historian and author and member of the South West Maritime History Society (SWMHS), Jonathan Turner will look at the links between Exeter and the sea and particularly the role of the Exeter Ship Canal.

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**Wednesday 6 March 2024**

**Reuben Ayres**

**Freemasonry in Exeter – History and Today.**

Reuben was Consultant Gastroenterologist at Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital from 1994 – 2022. He joined Freemasonry (St George's Lodge No.112) in November 2023. He is currently Assistant Provincial Grand Master for the Devonshire Freemasons. His talk will cover a general history of Freemasonry, the history of Freemasonry in Exeter, and Freemasonry Today (Exeter & beyond)

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**Wednesday 13 March 2024**

**Carolyn Southcott**

**FearFree Charity talk**

Carolyn is the Devon Fundraising Manager of the Charity FearFree. FearFree is a charity working to break the cycle of domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking across the Southwest. They support over 10000 adults and children every year by creating experience specific programmes tailored to a person's needs and experiences.

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**Wednesday 20 March 2024**

**Bob Ball**

**Isandlwana and Custer's Last Stand – British Style!**

Bob will present his latest historical talk showing how two events separated by 30 months and 9560 miles but identical in nature, resulted in the destruction of two famous indigenous races in South Africa and the United States.

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**Wednesday 27 March 2024**

**No meeting Easter break**

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**Wednesday 3 April**

**No meeting Easter break**

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**Wednesday 10 April**

**Forum restarts**

**The programme from April to August will be published in February 2024**

## Newsletter Quiz Answers:

1. Ian Fleming
2. Knee
3. Iago
4. Tin
5. 1997
6. 3
7. Olivia
8. All the President's Men
9. Simon Amstell
10. Helsinki
11. Call of Duty
12. Tennessee
13. Nine Inch Nails
14. Krone
15. The French Open (Roland Garros)
16. Netherlands
17. Four (The Godfather Part 2, Heat, Righteous Kill, The Irishman)
18. Marathon
19. Emperor Hirohito
20. Mercury
21. Gillian Flynn
22. Salvador Dali
23. Queen's Park Rangers
24. Pacific, Mountain, Central, Eastern
25. Constantinople
26. Las Vegas
27. Four
28. 1997
29. Once (1966)
30. Maggot
31. Bristol
32. Rice