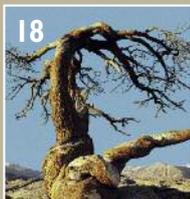




**Life of an aid worker in Darfur**  
**Eden visionary Tim Smit**  
**Science Strategy launched**

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UNIVERSITYNEWS is edited by Ben Norman with contributions from Liz French.

**Your feedback** We welcome your comments and contributions about what you would like to see in your magazine. Please contact Ben Norman, Communications Officer, on +44 (0)1392 269014 or email [b.e.norman@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:b.e.norman@exeter.ac.uk)

**For information on the alumni programme** contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office, Northcote House, The Queen's Drive, Exeter EX4 4QJ Tel: +44 (0)1392 263141 or email [alumni@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@exeter.ac.uk)

Please send **address changes** to the above address.

**For information about supporting current University projects** call +44 (0)1392 263360 or email [annualfund@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:annualfund@exeter.ac.uk)

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**I**n my last column in January I posed the question: What next for the University of Exeter? I'm now in a position to answer that question. The focus of our ambition over the last five years has been getting Exeter up among the top 20 universities in the UK. Now that has been achieved our attention is shifting to our next challenge – breaking into the top 10.

The latest league tables to be published this year show a further improvement in our performance. *The Times* puts Exeter in 13th position and *The Guardian* ranks Exeter in 14th position, so we are getting closer to our goal. However, the higher you go the tougher the competition becomes; so we are under no illusions about the scale of the task.

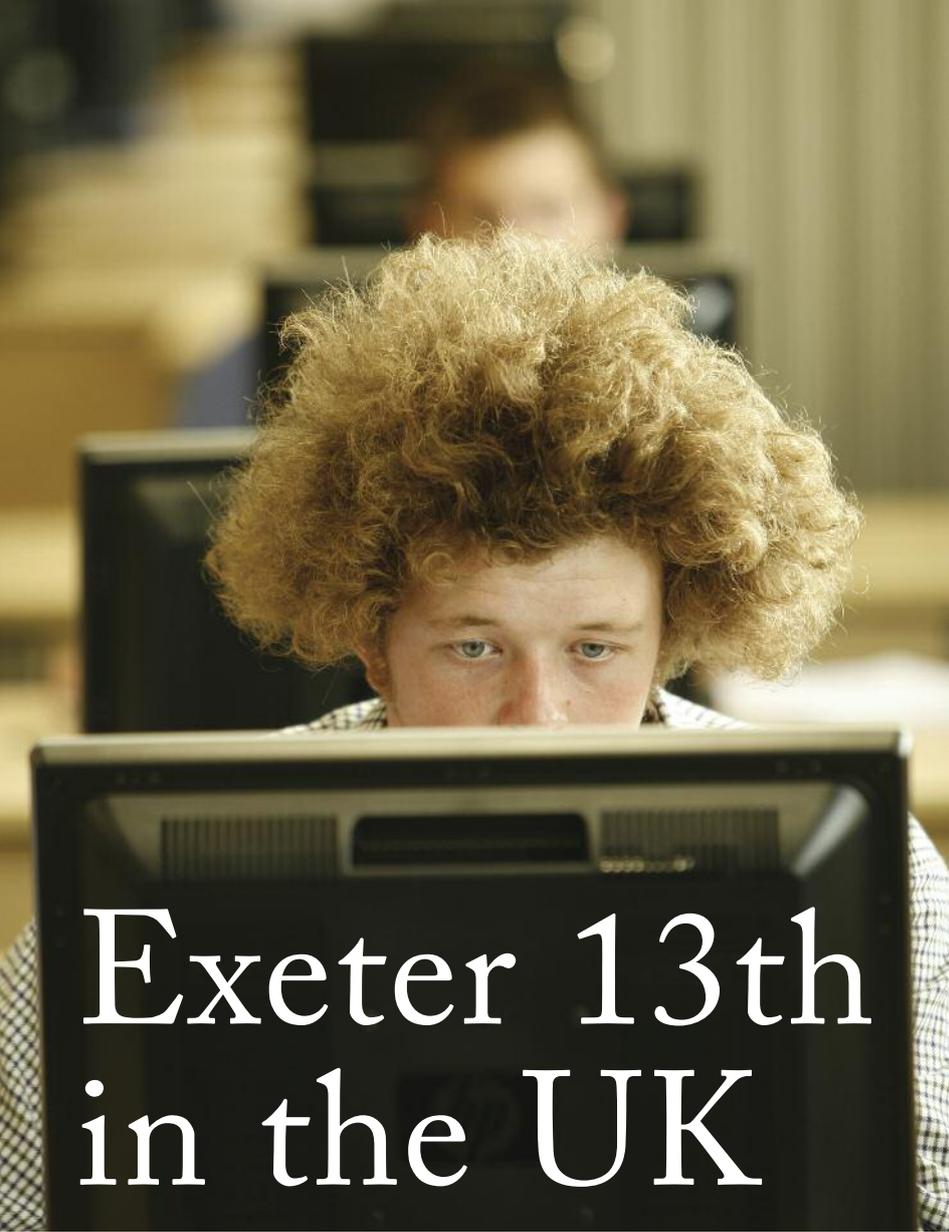
People sometimes ask me why the University sets such store in league tables. The reason is that they are compiled from the 'real world' measures that universities use to measure their own performance: employability, the number of students completing their degrees, facilities spending, entry standards and so on. We have had a big drive on graduate level employability and thereby improved by nine points to 72%. Of course as we rise in the league tables, the value of a degree from the University of Exeter also rises to potential employers.

Cementing Exeter's position as a research-led university is a key goal. With this in mind, we have recently launched a new Science Strategy, which is looking to invest £80 million in five major themes of research. Another vital ingredient of becoming a top 10 university is having world class facilities, so we are planning a £450 million investment programme in our campuses.

Exeter is capable of achieving a top 10 position. It's very exciting to work in a university which is constantly changing and going forward. It is also great to see more alumni than ever sharing our vision and keeping in touch with their University. I hope you are excited as we are by the University's progress and will wish to support our ambition.

**Professor Steve Smith** *Vice-Chancellor*





# Exeter 13th in the UK

**T**he University of Exeter is ranked 13th out of 117 higher education institutions in the 2009 *Times* league table. According to all four major league tables – *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* – Exeter is among the top 20 universities in the UK. Exeter is also the current *Times Higher Education* University of the Year.

The *Guardian* says: 'Students at Exeter are likely to have permanent smiles on their faces: it has campuses in the cathedral city and also near Falmouth, in Cornwall, as well as plenty of coastline, countryside and glorious weather. Add to that the fact that the Streatham campus is widely regarded as one of the most beautiful in the country and that Exeter is rated one of the best universities in the UK for 'ents', and it's no wonder that increases in applications far exceed the national average. Of course, you'll have to do some work, too – Exeter has an excellent academic reputation.'

With an annual turnover of more than £170 million, the University has 14,000 students and 2,800 staff. Created by Royal Charter in 1955, its origins date to the mid 19th century. Now, the University is looking to the future with a £450 million investment plan and is aiming to be among the top ten universities in the UK by 2012.

## New Director



**Susie Hills** is the University's new Director of Development and Alumni Relations. Her role is to build lifelong relationships

between the University and its more than 60,000 alumni, as well as raise philanthropic income. The University has raised in excess of £3 million in donations from alumni and other supporters so far this academic year.

Ms Hills has a BA Politics from Durham University and previously worked for a number of charities, including ActionAid, the Samaritans and Barnardo's. She managed an appeal to raise £12 million for the Young Vic theatre appeal in London and was Corporate Responsibility Manager at Tesco. She joined the University as Deputy Director in July 2006 and became Director in March 2008.

'The University is at an exciting phase of its development; it is a top UK university, with great ambition,' she says. 'Support from our alumni and other funders will be absolutely vital if the University is to progress further in the years ahead.'

Meanwhile, Holly Peterson is the new Head of Alumni Relations for the University. Holly, originally from the United States, holds a BA in Communication Studies from Hollins University, as well as an MSc in New Media from the London School of Economics. Holly has more than 10 years of experience in alumni relations and development in the US and UK, during which time she was Donor Relations Manager for the Nature Conservancy and Director of Alumni Relations for World Learning.



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# Cornwall Campus building named

In a ceremony attended by Dame Daphne du Maurier's direct descendants, the main building completed as part of the first phase of the development of the Tremough Campus officially became the Daphne du Maurier Building in May this year. The University shares the site with University College Falmouth and the building is home to the campus library as well as the University's Camborne School of Mines and Centre for Ecology and Conservation.

Professor Matthew Evans, Provost of the University of Exeter's Cornwall Campus, says: 'We wanted a name that would capture our firm commitment to Cornwall while also reflecting the international reach and ambitions of our research and teaching.'

The University of Exeter has a long-standing interest in the works and life of Dame Daphne du Maurier, arguably the most successful writer ever from the South West. Original manuscripts and letters of the du Mauriers form part of a special collection at the University's Literary Archives.

Son of Dame Daphne du Maurier, Kits Browning, says: 'The du Maurier family are proud and honoured that the University of Exeter has resolved to call the Tremough Campus building after our mother. It is a very fitting tribute to her memory.'

In other news from the Cornwall campus, the first woman to lead the Camborne School of Mines (CSM) in its 120-year history has been appointed. Professor Frances Wall replaces Professor Robert Pine, who is retiring after six years in the post.

## Alumni inspire scholarship

Two alumni have inspired their law firm to set up a scholarship to give financial assistance to students. Tim Langton (Politics 1974) and Patrick Swaffer (Law 1973) who are partners at Goodman Derrick LLP, London, hope the scholarship will help a new generation of University of Exeter law undergraduates to succeed. The Goodman Derrick LLP Scholarship is for an undergraduate in the

School of Law and may be used to pay for tuition fees, maintenance, accommodation and living costs. The value of the scholarship is £5,000 per year, initially for three years. If you are interested in supporting a scholarship, please contact Shirley Lovegrove on [s.m.lovegrove@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:s.m.lovegrove@exeter.ac.uk) or telephone +44 (0)1392 269015.

## New Business School Director

**P**rofessor Richard Lamming, currently Director of the School of Management at the University of Southampton, is the new Director of the University's Business School. The appointment comes at a time of growth for the Business School, which is benefiting from a £25 million investment in new facilities. For more information about networking events for alumni working in finance and business, please see our website [www.exeter.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/alumni)



## Science the next generation

**M**ore than 700 schoolchildren experimented with solar energy, explored the origins of the universe and got up close to insects during National Science and Engineering Week in March. Children attended a packed programme of events in Exeter and on the University's Cornwall Campus. Many of the events gave children the chance to do hands-on science, including experiments involving sports physiology, renewable energy, and electronic circuits. The pupils, aged between eight and 18 from 25 schools across the South West, also heard about the latest discoveries in science.



Children participated in a range of activities at the University's campuses as part of the National Science and Engineering Week.

## Historic Reed Hall reopened

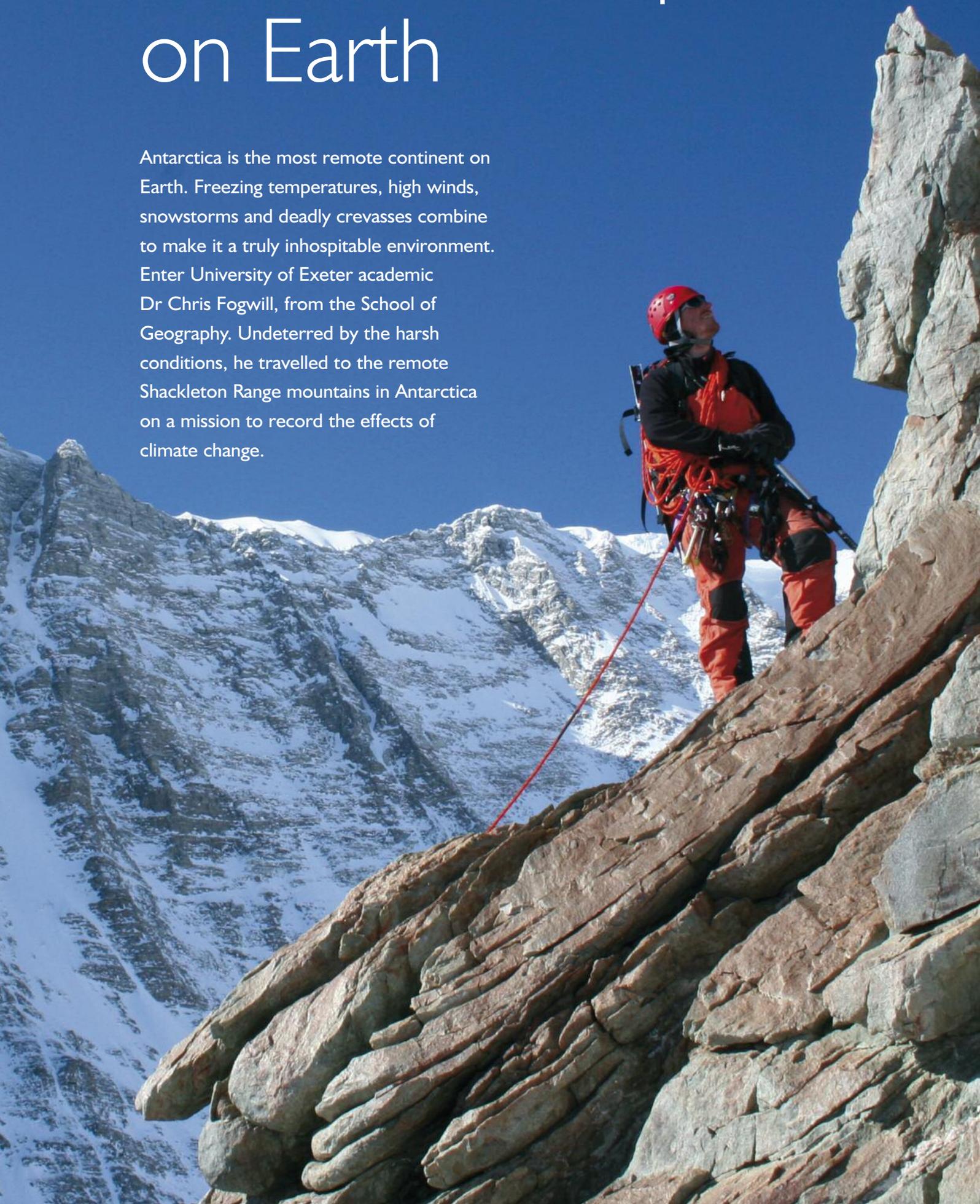
**T**he great granddaughter of the man who donated historic Reed Hall to the fledgling University of Exeter has celebrated its reopening after a £1.5 million restoration project. Katherine Howard, whose great grandfather, WH Reed, gave the house and grounds to the University, attended an event to reopen the restored hall in May. WH Reed's generosity was undoubtedly one of the most important milestones in the University's history and shows what a difference philanthropic giving can make.



PHOTOGRAPHY: KATE BAILEY

# The remotest place on Earth

Antarctica is the most remote continent on Earth. Freezing temperatures, high winds, snowstorms and deadly crevasses combine to make it a truly inhospitable environment. Enter University of Exeter academic Dr Chris Fogwill, from the School of Geography. Undeterred by the harsh conditions, he travelled to the remote Shackleton Range mountains in Antarctica on a mission to record the effects of climate change.





**T**he aim of the expedition, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council, was to collect rock samples from the mountains protruding through the Antarctic ice sheets, to estimate past changes in the ice sheets, which cover 98 per cent of Antarctica. This research gives an indication of how ice sheets are responding to long-term changes in climate and sea level. This information will be used to investigate the stability of the Antarctic Ice Sheets, which will help to improve predictions and models of global climate change.

The team hope to achieve this by analysing the rock samples they collect for rare isotopes, which build up in certain minerals at the Earth's surface. These isotopes form slowly but continuously through time when a rock or mountain is exposed to constant incoming cosmogenic energy from the solar system. This technique is termed Cosmogenic Isotope Analysis, and provides a new way of measuring the rate of change of the giant Antarctic Ice Sheets.

Fellow academic Professor David Sugden, from the University of Edinburgh, joined Dr Fogwill on the expedition. At the start of the trip, bad weather meant that it was too dangerous for them to leave the base camp, and they were stuck for 5 days. When the weather cleared, the pair were dropped by plane in the Shackleton Range mountains.

Once the plane had taken off the pair were entirely by themselves, with their base camp 750 miles away. From aerial photographs assessed in the planning stages of the trek, the site had appeared to be covered in thick snow. But when they arrived, the pair discovered that thick blue ice, a surface on which it is almost impossible to secure a tent properly, covered their intended campsite. Luckily, they were able to find an alternative location for their tents.

Once they had established their camp, the scientists were able to start their sampling. Braving temperatures as low as  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ , they used skis and ski-doods to collect rock samples from mountains along the edge of the Slessor Ice Stream. Things seemed to be going well and the weather conditions were generally good, but disaster struck two weeks into the expedition when Professor Sugden stumbled and fell. What at first seemed a relatively minor injury soon proved much more serious, as Professor Sugden realised he had broken his ankle. In need of urgent medical attention, he had to be airlifted to safety.

For more on the expedition see  
[www.exeter.ac.uk/geography](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/geography)

'Luckily the plane that was bringing our second ski-doo was preparing for take off from Patriot Hills, and so with the addition of two more passengers, Dr Hans Christian Florin and Stuart Norman, David's stand in, help was on the way,' says Dr Fogwill.

'I was very sorry to see David leave, but while waving goodbye at the end of the runway, I could not help but think that perhaps this was no accident, but was David's elaborate ploy to get out of sharing a tent with me for the next few weeks.

Was it my cooking, my company, or perhaps my socks?'

After the accident, Dr Fogwill carried on with the sampling of the rocks, although the weather did take a turn for the worse. Braving high winds, he climbed the mountains to collect more samples. The wind resulted in particularly treacherous climbing conditions as it sent large chunks of snow tumbling down the mountainside. However, the team was able to reach Mount Provender, the summit that was closest to the grounding line, the place where ice sheets start to float.

The fortunes of the expedition took a turn for the better when the team was able to catch a lift on a plane flying to Mount Sheffield, a summit much further inland towards the centre of Antarctica. This allowed them to collect many more samples than they had originally

hoped. Fighting against the clock, Dr Fogwill worked non-stop to collect more samples. Finally, with their food supplies running low, they were picked up and flown back to their base camp at Patriot Hills.

“Knowledge of the timing of these changes will enable us to reconstruct the glacier’s behaviour as sea level and global climate have changed”

By the end of the expedition, the team had covered 120km along the length of the Slessor Glacier and had collected 250 samples.

'By collecting so many samples along this transect we should be able to reconstruct the changing thickness of the Slessor Glacier from close to its grounding line to an area well inland,' adds Dr Fogwill.

'Knowledge of the timing of these changes will enable us to reconstruct the glacier's behaviour as sea level and global climate have changed, and therefore help us to predict the possible future response of the Antarctic Ice Sheets.'





# Research findings

## Noah's flood kick-started European farming

**E**uropean farming appears to have been kick-started by the flood behind the Noah's Ark story. The consequences of the collapse of the North American (Laurentide) Ice Sheet, 8000 years ago, which caused sea levels to rise, is now widely believed to be behind the various folk myths that led to the biblical Noah's Ark story.

## New technique for malaria diagnosis

**E**ngineers have created a new technique for diagnosing malaria. Early results, published in the *Biophysical Journal*, reveal that the technique might not only be as accurate as the rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) currently used in the field but also far cheaper and faster.

## Are you an 'Eco-hypocrite'?

**P**eople's green and not so green lifestyles have been put under the spotlight in a recent study. According to researchers, people can be divided into three broad lifestyle categories when it comes to the environment. The next stage of the research will involve focus groups and in-depth interviews to explore the motivations for participating in environmentally responsible behaviour.

For more information on these research stories and more, see [www.exeter.ac.uk/alumni/research](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/alumni/research)

## Mathematicians solve traffic jam mystery

**M**otorists are often left baffled when they finally reach the end of a tailback to discover no visible cause for the traffic jam. Mathematicians from the Universities of Exeter, Bristol and Budapest showed that when a motorist slows down below a critical speed, the driver behind slows down, and the next, until the vehicles behind eventually come to a halt in a traffic jam.

## A tall story: the genetics of height

**T**he genetics behind why some people are taller than others is being revealed. Last year a team of researchers discovered the first common version of the gene that influences height. The same team has now found a further 20 parts of the genome which together can make a height difference of up to 6cm. Thanks to the study by the Peninsula Medical School, published in the journal *Nature Genetics*, scientists now know of dozens of genes and genetic variations that influence our height.

## Not just dead-end kids in dead-end jobs

**Y**oungsters who are in jobs that need little training are typically seen as having few prospects. Researchers in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning have completed a large scale project to improve understanding of this phenomenon. The study found that these young adults are not a homogenous group who lack social or work skills.

# The Garden of Eden



Eden Project co-founder  
Tim Smit.  
© JOEL CHANT

**T**im Smit freely admits that he has not followed what you might call a conventional career path. The co-founder and chief executive of the award-winning Eden Project, near St Austell in Cornwall, has always been a dreamer. And his dreams have led to great things. Tim, an Honorary Graduate of the University, who was the guest speaker at the Annual Gala Dinner in London, talks to *University News*.

'Life is an accident that with post hoc rationalisation appears to be carefully crafted for maximum signs of intelligent life,' says Tim. 'The truth is I am like a kitten distracted by a piece of cotton blowing in the wind.'

Born in Holland, Tim started his working life as an archaeologist. Then, he swapped digging up artefacts for record labels. For ten years, he worked in the music industry as a composer and producer. Soon came another major change of direction. In 1987, he moved to Cornwall and together with John Nelson 'discovered', and then restored, the Lost Gardens of Heligan. Eden started as an idea in 1995. Six years later, it opened its doors to the public and the rest is history.

The Eden Project transformed a barren pit into an iconic architectural and environmental wonder of the world. Eden's two Biomes, the biggest conservatories in the world, are teeming with plant life. The massive domes are home to a staggering 1,000,000 plants covering 5,000 species from climatic zones spread across the globe.

Turning Eden from an idea into reality was not easy. It was a lot of hard work, which took all of Tim's powers of persuasion and energy. 'At Eden we never said if, just when, and we asked everyone whether they wanted to have written on their tombstones that they were the ones who said no,' he says.

He is keen to pay tribute to the supporters of the project who 'stood up to be counted' and who are owed a huge debt of gratitude. He adds: 'We too easily fall for the cliché that public sector equals jobsworth. This is rubbish. I have met more passionate people of talent and integrity in the public sector than anywhere else.'

Eden has certainly been an unprecedented success. Since it first opened, more than six million people from around the world have visited the project. Tim believes that Eden's secret is that it avoids 'nut cutlet eating sanctimony'.



Instead, it 'treats adults as grown ups and children with respect' and the fact that it adopts a 'generally curious and delighted approach to life' while reminding us about just how precious Mother Earth is and why we need to protect her.

When it comes to tackling climate change, he is passionate... 'We need to harness a spirit of war to a time of peace or else we will blow it and many people will be displaced and many will die. If we don't rise to the challenge, we will not deserve the title Homo sapiens. Everyone knows they could consume much less and much more intelligently. To do this requires sharing stuff, not losing the capacity.'

As well as raising the profile of the environment, Eden has played a central role in the regeneration of Cornwall. By 2006, the project had contributed £700 million to the local economy.

In recognition of his achievements to date, Tim has received a variety of national awards including The Royal Society of Arts Albert Medal. In 2002, he was awarded an Honorary CBE and was voted 'Great Briton of 2007' in the Environment category of the Morgan Stanley Great Britons Awards.

His message to alumni who want to do something special with their lives and at the same time be happy is to discard self-help

manuals and medical dictionaries. 'Follow your heart and your dreams', Tim advises, 'and don't waste the first part of your life trying to be the person you think your parents would be proud of. When you get to their age you will realise they haven't got a clue. Secondly, trust in your dreams and distrust those who would kill them off. They are simply jealous people who should be put mercilessly to the sword. Dreams have their own dynamic; if you can persuade only four other people to join you, it will almost certainly happen, if you choose the right people'.

As well as running Eden, Tim, who lives in Fowey, Cornwall, is busy as a writer, trustee, patron, and member of a number of statutory and voluntary bodies. He is also in high demand as a public speaker. So for someone who has achieved so much already, does Tim have any more dreams that he wants to fulfil?

'To wake up each morning, but as Woody Allen famously quipped: If you want to make God laugh, tell him your future plans.'

This year's Annual Gala Dinner was held at Middle Temple, London, on 15 May and attracted more than 250 guests. For photographs from the dinner and more information about alumni events see: [www.exeter.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/alumni) The 2009 Gala Dinner will be held at The Inner Temple, London, on 20 May. Contact [angela.evans@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:angela.evans@exeter.ac.uk) for more details.

# The aid worker



Aid worker Ed Walker with his wife Rachel.

**A**id worker Ed Walker (Geography 1998) cradles a malnourished baby in his arms at a remote feeding station. From her appearance, the child looks six months old. Her clothes are tattered and dirty and she is unable to bear any weight on her legs.

'It turns out she is 18 months, the same age as my daughter who could walk 8 months ago,' says Ed. 'Mother is blind, the father has left, she is displaced by the war, living in a camp and has no relatives to look after her.'

'I am left trying to work out if there is anyway she could be any poorer: sightless, homeless, husbandless, displaced. At least, I thought, she had use of her limbs and was able to hold, kiss and hug her little malnourished child whom she clearly loved.'

The mother and child are just two of the victims of the humanitarian crisis that has engulfed Sudan's western Darfur region. More than 2 million people, mainly farmers and villagers, have been displaced since the conflict in Darfur began in 2003.

According to the United Nations, around 200,000 civilians have been killed after being caught in the middle of fighting between rebel groups, nomadic

militia and government soldiers. After graduating from Exeter, Ed decided that he wanted to help alleviate suffering in some of the world's toughest hotspots.

'I think I always had an interest in overseas development,' he says 'The part of studying Geography I enjoyed the most was looking at issues such as those faced in the developing world.'

Over the past nine years, he has worked in war zones across the world, including Burundi, Sierra Leone and Liberia. As Programme Director for Tearfund's operations in Darfur, he has overseen the delivery of aid to thousands of displaced civilians in the war-torn country. For those who have lost everything, the charity's aid operation provides basic essentials such as food and water, as well as helping to improve sanitation conditions and deliver medical care.

As the 31-year-old says, the violence that has engulfed Darfur makes delivering aid to remote parts of the region very difficult. In September 2005, armed men stopped five of the charity's vehicles. The 26 people in the vehicles were beaten up and held at gunpoint. 'Some were beaten so badly we had to fly them to Khartoum for emergency medical treatment,' recalls Ed.

“The part of studying Geography I enjoyed the most was looking at issues such as those faced in the developing world”



In another incident in July 2006, one member of the charity's relief team was murdered in a riot, while three other staff were almost killed.

'Dealing with those two incidents, their aftermath, the grief and shock of them, feeling responsible and guilty even, was one of the most difficult things I have ever had to do.'

Focusing on the daily challenges faced by those he is there to help, Ed says: 'People do not flee their homes, their farms, and their land and their families without good reason. They have done so because of force or the threat of force. This can come in the shape of bombings, soldier attacks, armed militias or a combination of all three. It is hard to relate to pictures of people suffering on the television, but when you walk around a camp and chat with some people you soon realise they are a human being exactly the same as you or me. They have emotions, desires and needs just like any other human being. They want to get married, have children, earn an honest living just as you do.'

If you have an interesting story to tell of your career and life since you graduated from the University of Exeter, please let us know on [alumni@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@exeter.ac.uk)

## Big questions

Human migration has been a major worldwide challenge for thousands of years. Yet the causes of migration and identity remain a mystery. When is migration a result of persecution or the search for a better life? In today's complex world, how can we find solutions to these problems?

The answer, according to English Professor Regenia Gagnier, is simple – bring the brightest and the best together in one place to find the answers. A native Californian who took her undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of California at Berkeley, Regenia is leading the Migration and Identity Research network. Although based in the School of Arts, Languages and Literatures, the network brings together researchers from many other academic areas, including biosciences, business and economics.

'Migration and identity is a complex problem and we can't really claim to understand the issue if we approach it simply from the perspective of, say, geography or politics,' says Professor Gagnier. She aspires to create an International Interdisciplinary Institute for the Arts and Sciences at the University to enable leading thinkers to come together to solve these problems.

If you would like more information about supporting the Institute, please contact Tess Nixon on [t.l.nixon@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:t.l.nixon@exeter.ac.uk) or telephone +44 (0)1392 269024.



© GEOFF CRAWFORD/TEARFUND

LEFT: Monitoring and improving child health in Masterie, Darfur.  
ABOVE: Water is a precious commodity in Masterie, in the Darfur region of Sudan.



Dr Fiona Mathews.

# Behind the headlines

**A**s lead author of research that provides the first statistical evidence of a link between what a mother eats and the sex of her child, Dr Fiona Mathews found herself at the centre of a media frenzy. Here she describes the experience:

The press release was sent out under embargo on Monday April 21, two days before publication of the results.

Our first inkling that the story might capture the public imagination had come the previous Friday. Word had somehow leaked out, and both *The Telegraph* and Channel 4 News were requesting interviews. Even so, there was no expectation that the story would run or, if it did, would become so prominent.

Monday convinced me otherwise. By now, the calls were arriving from all over the world: English-speaking countries came in early, but so did Sweden, Poland, Brazil, Germany, Portugal, Spain.

Wednesday started early, with a glance at the Internet to see that we had made it to the Google News main page (with 430 stories at that point), and a dash to work for a 6am start. First came a live-to-camera

interview with GMTV, filmed at the Geoffrey Pope building. Then it was off to the BBC studios for *5 Live* and the *Today* programme. When my taxi driver told me that he'd just been listening to the story on Radio 1, I realised that the BBC must be running it on all its national news bulletins.

It is not easy to explain the science – or its statistical methodology – in a 30-second slot on live television or as a soundbite for a foreign radio station. Nor is it possible to control the reception of a story with such global coverage. Occasionally, there were vox pops from mothers with a low-calorie diet and a family entirely of boys, or a high-calorie diet and a family entirely of girls, insisting that the results must be wrong. As the third of three daughters, I had had similar conversations with my own mother long before the research was published. But on the whole, the media presented the work responsibly and accurately. A special mention to the *Mirror*, which headed a very well written story with the unlikely title 'Manflakes'. I was given plenty of opportunity to emphasise both the primary importance of a healthy diet, and the difference between *influencing* and *determining* infant sex.

The research is the first clear evidence that a child's sex is associated with the mother's diet. The association was known in other mammals, such as horses and some species of deer, but this study shows that there is a clear link in humans between a mother's higher energy intake around the time of conception and the birth of sons.

# Shaping the Future

Former spymaster, University of Exeter  
Honorary Graduate and Shaping the Future  
speaker Sir Richard Dearlove talks about new  
threats and new approaches to national security  
for the 21st century.





Sir Richard Dearlove, former head of MI6.

**'I would guess it is nearer the 10 to 20-year problem than a 50-year problem,' says Sir Richard Dearlove, the retired head of the secret intelligence service (SIS), commonly known as MI6, when asked how long the current war on terrorism will last. 'For most of us, the reality is that we are not going to be affected**

**by terrorism in our daily lives.'** He continues: **'The chances of us being blown up by a terrorist bomb are very small. However, if some of our own citizens have decided to try to kill their fellow citizens in the name of some superior cause, that does generate great anxiety.'**

Sir Richard is a man who likes to take the long view. In his own lifetime, Sir Richard has seen the type of threats we face change dramatically. He joined MI6 at the height of the cat-and-mouse Cold War espionage struggle against the Soviets.

He retired four decades later after a career in which he rose to the highest rank in the service. As head of MI6 he, like all of his predecessors, was simply known in Whitehall as 'C'.

His time as 'C' coincided with some of the most momentous events in recent history; the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, as well as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. After leaving the service in 2004, Sir Richard took up Mastership of Pembroke College Cambridge and became an Honorary Graduate of the University of Exeter in 2007.

In May, he delivered a Shaping the Future lecture at the Streatham Campus entitled 'National Security for the 21st century: new threats and new approaches', which was video-conferenced to the Cornwall Campus.

'The general thesis that I put forward is that historically, if you look at the history of the intelligence and security community, which starts in the beginning of the 20th century, there are clearly defined periods,' he says. 'The types of threats that the community has had to deal with have varied tremendously.'

He describes very clear phases of the threats faced by the intelligence community over the last century, from the rise of Nazi Germany to the Cold War.

'Then we have the new threats, which are really symbolised by the events of 9/11,' says Sir Richard. In his opinion, aspects of today's world do make it easier for terrorists to operate to some extent. 'Terrorists are able to exploit the ease of international travel and use the Internet to communicate,' he says. Yet he points out that it is important to keep the scale of the threat in proportion.

'It is perhaps notable that Al-Qaeda has not carried out attacks of the size of 9/11 since 2001. There have been attacks of course, but not on the same scale. Terrorist groups are in the business of committing acts of terrorism. If they fail to do that, then they fade and start to lose their support.'

The question of how best to break-up terror plots is one that still very much occupies Sir Richard's mind. He points out that a major weakness of Al-Qaeda is that it is weak institutionally.

'Paradoxically it is also one of its greatest strengths, as it makes it challenging for the security services to infiltrate and take apart an alliance that is already fragmented and dispersed. Al-Qaeda is also very much focused around the personalities of its leadership. When those charismatic leaders go, as they certainly will, it is likely to be left weaker.'

Although he believes that the current threat will pass given time, Sir Richard supports the view that we have to develop new approaches to tackle the threat we face today. On the question of balancing citizens' civil liberties and the need to safeguard public security, his view is that the parliamentary approach we have taken in the UK to implementing measures has been the right one.

Above all, the causes of terrorism also need to be addressed in what he calls a 'battle for ideas'. This is where he feels that 'academia has the most to offer' in allowing us to 'take a step back, look at the problem, and identify trends in history.'

As a Cornishman, Sir Richard talks proudly about the emergence of higher education in his home county. 'I think the ongoing development of the Cornwall Campus is fantastic for the region,' he says. He is confident that the campus is well placed to be at the forefront of a number of research areas.

'The surrounding coastline and environment is not only beautiful, but it also makes an ideal place for research into climate change, the environmental threat that we all face.'

The Shaping the Future lectures are a series of public events held at the University of Exeter to provide a forum for distinguished speakers to present their views on major public issues. Speakers in this year's series included Honorary Graduate Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize winning economist, and fellow Honorary Graduate Lord Stern of Brentford, the head of the highly influential Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change. Videos of the lectures are available online at [www.exeter.ac.uk/business/networks/shaping](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/business/networks/shaping)



# Science with Impact

'The important thing is not to stop questioning,' Nobel Prize winner Albert Einstein once said. As Einstein understood, the first step to a new discovery starts with a question. At the University of Exeter, scientists are following Einstein's example. They are attempting to discover how quickly the Earth is heating up due to climate change, whether science can help solve the world food crisis, and searching for new planets on the edge of our Solar System.

As any academic will tell you, answers to such big questions are hard to find. Many take years of painstaking research without guarantee of success. Nevertheless, this research can bring immense benefits to society.

To ensure that our scientists can continue to compete with those at other top universities, the University is investing £30 million in science, medicine, and engineering over the next three years. With additional external funding, it is estimated that £80m will be invested in science by 2012. Given the scale of this investment, the University has devised a new strategy. Under the strategy, funding will be targeted towards five themes that build on our existing research strengths.

A key aspect of the strategy is the development of interdisciplinary research across academic disciplines. For example, mathematicians, engineers and physicists will work with social scientists to find practical ways to mitigate climate change. Many aspects of the investment are already underway, with state-of-the-art laboratories already being created as part of a major redevelopment of the Geoffrey Pope building, home to the School of Biosciences. If you would like to support science at the University of Exeter, please contact Shirley Lovegrove on [s.m.lovegrove@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:s.m.lovegrove@exeter.ac.uk) or telephone +44 (0)1392 269015.

## Our Science Strategy

**Climate change and sustainable futures:** The University will significantly develop its existing strengths in climate change research. This builds on its internationally recognised research in climate prediction, adaptation and mitigation, and close liaison with the Exeter-based Met Office, the UK's national weather service. One of our Met Office chairs, Professor John Thurn, is working on techniques that will provide earlier warnings of extreme weather events, like the Boscastle floods of 2004.

**Systems biology:** Already developing an international reputation in biosciences, the University will make further investment to provide world class facilities and new academics to develop models of key biological systems.

**Extrasolar planets:** In an initiative that will be unique in the UK, a centre for cross-disciplinary research into the physics of extrasolar planets – planets outside our solar system – will be established. Dr Suzanne Aigrain is a physicist who is a leading figure in the COROT space mission, which is using a satellite to discover new extrasolar planets. In less than a year, the team has already detected two planets.

**Functional materials:** The University will bring together its expertise in engineering 'smart' materials and fundamental physics research in photonics and nanomaterials to create innovative new materials. Injuries from explosions and terrorist attacks could be minimised, thanks to blast curtains currently being developed by Exeter engineers.

**Translational medicine, personalised healthcare and public health:** The University is internationally recognised for clinical and translational research in diabetes, mood disorders and interventions to achieve behavioural change for health. Funding will be directed towards accelerating the translation of clinical research from the lab to treating patients.



Exeter scientists are working with the Met Office to tackle climate change. Visit [www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/hadleycentre/exeteruniversity](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/hadleycentre/exeteruniversity) for more information.

# Interview: Dame Suzi Leather

Alumna Dame Suzi Leather (Politics 1977) speaks about her memories of the University of Exeter and her role as chair of the Charity Commission.

‘**T**he University of Exeter has been the most significant institution in my life’ says alumna Dame Suzi Leather (Politics 1977), the chair of the Charity Commission. ‘It was where I really became an adult and where I first debated interesting ideas. Without Exeter I very much doubt I would be where I am today.’

Dame Suzi has very fond memories of her time at Exeter. ‘The sun always seemed to shine.’ She pauses. ‘I think I was quite a serious student,’ reflects Dame Suzi, seated in the courtyard outside the refurbished Queen’s Building café on the University’s Streatham campus. Fortuitously, the sky is blue and the sun is shining.

It soon becomes clear that Dame Suzi has a rare quality. She makes you feel as though you are the most important person in the room. She really does. Along with having a sincere interest in other people, Dame Suzi has a clear set of social values that guide her working life. Above all, the mother-of-three is passionate about her family.

Traits like these have been the key to her success as the chair of the Charity Commission, where she is responsible for providing leadership for an organisation that has regulatory control of more than 190,000 charities in England and Wales. In recent years, the role played by charities in society has increased rapidly and so the job facing the Charity Commission has increased accordingly.

‘Charities have a very important role to play in society. The Charity Commission provides oversight to the sector, to protect the charity brand if you like.’

Dame Suzi joined the Commission after four years as the chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), during which time she also spent a year chairing the School Food Trust. During her tenure, the Trust recommended nutritional standards for school food – recommendations banning junk food, sweets and fizzy drinks that became law.

In the hot seat at the HFEA, Dame Suzi steered the organisation through important ethical issues: therapeutic cloning,aviour siblings, payment for gamete and embryo donation, donor anonymity and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, issues with far-reaching consequences for society and individuals.

At the HFEA and at the Charity Commission, she has managed to balance working life in London with living in Exeter. I ask Dame Suzi if she enjoys her hectic schedule of meetings in London with home life in Devon.

‘You only have one life and I think you should make the most of it. I think it is very important to find something that satisfies you.

There is no point sticking at something if it is making you really unhappy. For 18 months after I graduated, I worked in market research and I really hated it. It’s good to find something you love to do. I think that is why so many people are attracted to working or volunteering for charities.’

She returned to the University in the 1980s to train as a probation officer. ‘It was a fascinating and shocking experience. One of the things I soon noticed was the link between poverty, poor diet and ill-health – mental and physical.’ That realisation led her to campaign and publish on food poverty.

A concern for fairness and social good is an important one for Dame Suzi, who is a member of the Labour party. I ask her if she has ever considered a political career as an MP. She shakes her head. ‘That has not been something I have really been interested in. For me, there is a great satisfaction in working within organisations, particularly when those organisations have a wide reach – as regulators often do. I enjoy bringing individuals together – I suppose that is why I enjoy chairing organisations – it gives you the opportunity to have a real impact.’

Before our interview finishes, we discuss the University’s rise in the league tables and the *Times Higher Education* University of the Year accolade. ‘I am really proud of telling people that I went to the University of Exeter. The response I get from people is always positive. It really does give you a sense of pride.’

“The University of Exeter has been the most significant institution in my life”



# The CV

**Family** Married to Prof Iain Hampsher-Monk; one son and two daughters

**Education** University of Exeter (BA Hons Politics 1977; BPhil Social Work 1986); Leicester University (MA Eur. politics 1978).

**Career** 1979-84, senior research officer for Consumers in Europe; 1984-86, trainee probation officer; 1988-97, freelance consumer consultant; 1997-2001, chair of Exeter and District NHS trust; 2000-02, first deputy chair of Food Standards Agency; March 2002-06, chair of Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority; 2005-06, chair of School Food Trust; 2006-present, chair of the Charity Commission.

Staying ahead of

THE GAME



**A**lumnus Alex Lawton (Accountancy 1995) is helping talented hockey players fulfil their sporting potential. He played hockey with the University of Exeter Men's Hockey Club (EUMHC), where he was the club captain. Alex continues to be a passionate supporter of hockey at the University and recently made a financial contribution towards a sports scholarship.

Alex says: 'My time at Exeter was one of the most enjoyable and important parts of my academic life. A key reason for this was being a member of EUMHC during those three years and being fortunate enough to be club captain in the final year. Exeter and EUMHC helped me to develop in confidence as an individual, understand the importance and enjoyment of being part of a team and instill a love of competition.'

I understand I was very privileged to have had the chance to be a part of this Club and University. I wanted to be able to help and encourage individuals who may not otherwise have had this opportunity, and also help attract the talent to ensure the Club continues its strong record of success.'

Nick Beasant, University of Exeter Sports Performance Manager, says: 'Donations which help support the University's Sports Scholarship Scheme are vital to the continuation of the programme and are especially welcome from alumni who have themselves experienced the unique opportunities Exeter has to offer.'

Funding of a hockey scholarship will help support one of the University's leading high performance sports and ensure that we can continue to attract and develop some of the country's leading young players to both compete and study at Exeter.'

The University is considered to be one of the leading hockey institutions in the UK. The Men's Club has six sides and the 1st team competes in the Slazenger England Hockey League. In 2006, the club won the British Universities Sports Association (BUSA) National Championships.

### The sports scholar

The current captain of the 1st team is sports scholar Nick Page, who recently won his first international hockey cap after being selected for the England Men's Senior Indoor Hockey Squad in a match against Scotland. Nick is one of many students receiving sports scholarships, which are given to students who show exceptional sporting talent and who have the potential to compete at a national level.

Sports scholars not only benefit from financial assistance, they also receive help in improving their fitness and conditioning, time management and lifestyle mentoring to enable them to develop as athletes. Nick says: 'Support like strength and conditioning is a great help as it enables you to train hard and at the levels required in order to be an international hockey player. The financial burden of traveling long distances across the country for England training has also been lowered by the assistance given.'

There are currently 41 sports scholars at the University in the following sports: sailing, cricket, rugby, tennis, netball, golf, hockey, football, handball, rowing and lacrosse. Sports scholarships are tailored to the needs of the individual, but include financial support for sporting expenses and discounted accommodation costs up to a maximum of £1,000. For exceptional athletes this can rise to £2,000. A full package of support services is also available. If you would like to support a sports scholarship please contact Shirley Lovegrove on s.m.lovegrove@exeter.ac.uk or telephone +44 (0)1392 269015.

# Diary

2008

## Alumni Reunion

**Classes of 1953, 1958, 1963, 1968, 1973, 1978, and 1983**

**Date:** 19 - 21 September

**Venue:** University of Exeter

This is the year to return to campus and celebrate the anniversary of your graduation! You should have already received an invitation and booking form.

If you have not, please contact the Alumni Relations Office on +44 (0)1392 263141 (email: [alumni@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@exeter.ac.uk)). Information is also available on the alumni website: [www.exeter.ac.uk/alumni/events](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/alumni/events) The final date for booking to attend the reunion is the 12 August.

If you stayed in Mardon during the 1950s there will be a special mini reunion for you during the weekend. Contact the Alumni Relations Office for more details.

## Alumni Golf Day

**Date:** 18 September

**Venue:** Denham Golf Club, Uxbridge, Bucks

This is the third annual alumni golf day. The event follows the success of last year's golf day, which raised £6,000 towards golf scholarships at the University. For more information about the venue, see [www.denhamgolfclub.co.uk](http://www.denhamgolfclub.co.uk) If you would like more details, please email Rod Alexander [rodericscottuk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rodericscottuk@yahoo.co.uk), Chris Edge [chris.edge@allenbridgeepic.com](mailto:chris.edge@allenbridgeepic.com) or John Gilbert [John\\_Gilbert@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:John_Gilbert@blueyonder.co.uk)

## Annual Forum for Business Leaders

**Date:** 2 October

**Venue:** Hotel Russell, Bloomsbury, London

The annual forum brings together leaders in business, finance and the public sector to hear from experts in these fields. This year the topic is 'Executive behaviour, compensation and performance – determinants of success and failure'. Keynote speakers include Anthony Bolton, Director – Investments, Fidelity International; Phil Yea, Chief Executive of 3i; and organisational psychologist Prof Adrian Furnham. You are invited to join us; email [alumni@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@exeter.ac.uk) for more information or to reserve your place.

## Exeter Alumni Ball

**Date:** 25 October

**Venue:** New Connaught Rooms, Covent Garden, London

This special alumni ball is run by alumni for alumni and is a black-tie event to raise money for charity. Tickets include a sit down three-course meal, wine and entertainment. To book tickets and for further information, see [www.exeteralumniball.co.uk](http://www.exeteralumniball.co.uk)

## Media Network Event

**Date:** 6 November

**Venue:** Chelsea Football Club

Always a popular alumni event, places are expected to go quickly. If you would like to attend this event, please contact [angela.evans@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:angela.evans@exeter.ac.uk)

## London Lemmy

**Date:** 29 November

**Venue:** Shepherd's Bush Empire, London

London Lemmy is a club night run by alumni for charity. Tickets will be on sale in October. For more information, see [www.londonlemmy.com](http://www.londonlemmy.com)

## Business Network Group

**Date:** TBC

**Venue:** TBC

This alumni-organised event will bring together alumni with academics and other professionals with links to business and economics. Contact [alumni@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@exeter.ac.uk) to reserve your place.

## Networking success

Around 70 alumni, students and staff attended this year's Law Network Event in London. Dr Caroline Fournet, a specialist in International Human Rights Law, was the guest speaker at the event at Slaughter & May in April. Students from the School of Law attended the evening and networked with alumni working in the field of Law. Among the students were Law undergraduate Tom Staniford, a Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Scholar, as well as student representatives of the Bracton Law Society. Law alumni are supporting the School of Law by returning to give careers talks to current students.

Alumni from the financial world came together for the Alumni Finance Network at Butterfield Private Bank in February. One of the highlights

was a talk on visual marketing by Professor Jonathan Schroeder from the School of Business and Economics. Further networking events are planned.

## Celebration of Gulf links

The Ruler of Sharjah celebrated the growing links between the Gulf and the University at a recent event. His Highness Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Sharjah, hosted the Gulf Alumni Dinner held at the Dr Sultan Al Qasimi Centre of Gulf Studies, Sharjah, in March 2008. His Highness obtained a DPhil from the University in 1985 and an honorary doctorate in 1993. During his visit to the region to attend the event, Professor Steve Smith, Vice-Chancellor, held talks with the Ruler of Sharjah and with the Crown Prince of Dubai Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

His Highness Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasimi (pictured centre) with Professor Steve Smith, University Vice-Chancellor (left) and Professor Keith Atkinson (right), of the University of Exeter, at the University of Exeter Gulf Alumni Dinner 2008.



**Do you want to organise an event for alumni? If so, please let us know. We can offer advice and help to publicise your event. Please contact [alumni@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@exeter.ac.uk)**

## ONLINE GIFT SHOP

If you are looking for a reminder of your time with us, or a present for friends and family, look at the new online Gift Shop. There is something for everyone – from car stickers, sweaters, mugs, ties, pens, to cufflinks and teddy bears. See [www.exeterguild.org/shop](http://www.exeterguild.org/shop)

For details about University events see: [www.exeter.ac.uk/news/whatson.shtml](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/whatson.shtml)

For information about events for alumni see: [www.exeter.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/alumni)