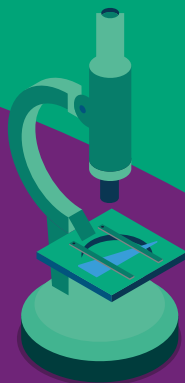
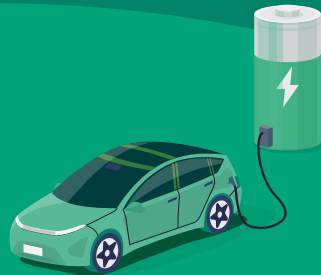


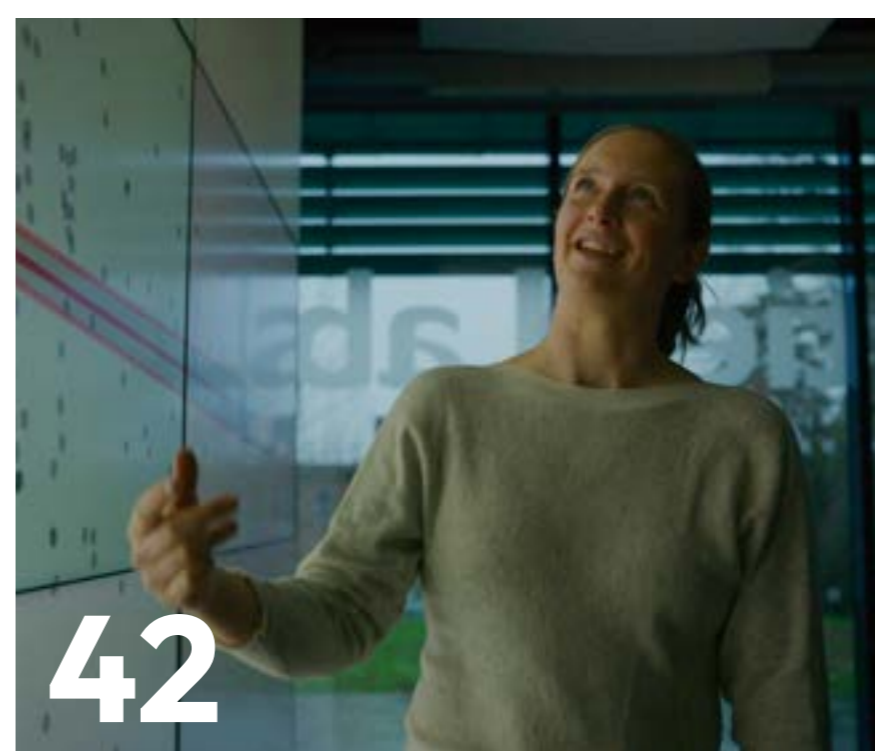
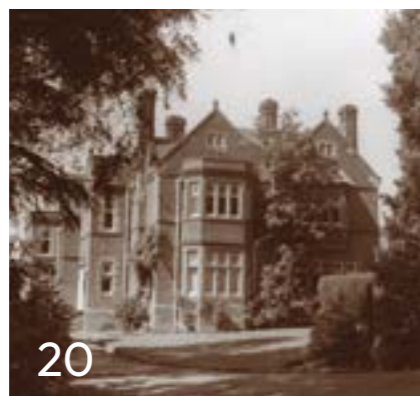
Exeter

The magazine for alumni and supporters | 2026 issue





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Welcome



Hello and welcome to your Alumni Magazine 2026. Within the pages of this year's edition, you will find stories and achievements that demonstrate the breadth of work taking place at Exeter, including research looking into rare genetic diseases in children, the impact of AI, as well as lots of updates from our alumni community. We also feature an interview with Sir Sajid Javid, the new Chair of our Campaign Board which is well worth a read!

I have now been President and Vice-Chancellor of this wonderful University for more than five years, and like yourselves, Exeter is permanently embedded in my heart. In this time we have made huge gains in our global ambitions, partnering with fantastic institutions across continents, whilst also becoming a trusted partner and engine of economic growth in our region. Every day I am proud of our University, our students, colleagues, and alumni community.

Since the last magazine, we have made significant progress towards our goal of tackling the climate emergency and ecological crisis. This includes hosting the inaugural Exeter Climate Forum, which saw more than 1,000 academic, government and industry figures attend an exciting week of events. The Forum shaped priorities ahead of COP30, and contributed to global scientific debate, whilst also showcasing the incredible strength of environmental science research at our University.

Exeter has an ambition to transform human health and wellbeing, and every day our brilliant teams are finding new and innovative ways to combat disease. This year we took the lead on a £28.5m Human Functional Genomics Initiative, with the aim of understanding how genomic variation influences human health, how it changes over time, and how it impacts disease.

Added to this, our Centre for Medical Mycology's FAILSAFE project received £1.7m to launch fifteen investigations into antimicrobial resistance, so that we can lead the global fight to develop effective drugs to treat a wide range of diseases, long into the future.

We also have a deep commitment to forging a fairer and more inclusive society, and this year colleagues in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences have explored the barriers faced by unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to accessing Further and Higher Education. This project, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, aims to shape policy and practice, to support the thousands of children left in this terrible position each year.

We're also committed to improving opportunity here at Exeter. We were thrilled to have been named *University of the Year* in the UK Social Mobility Awards, recognising our *Success For All* programme, a fund offering financial support for students experiencing unexpected hardship. This vital initiative would not be possible without the generosity of you, our wonderful alumni, so thank you to everybody who has contributed to this – you really have improved the lives of our students.

Globally, work is well underway for a pioneering educational partnership with Ain Shams University in Cairo, which will see us become the first Russell Group university to establish a teaching presence in Africa. Additionally, we are in the advanced stages of setting up a Joint Education Institute with Zhejiang University of Technology, which will see Exeter's world-class education delivered in China.

Added to this, we have been heavily involved in the creation of a world-class Marine Science Research Centre at the University of Khorfakkan in Sharjah, that will see researchers working to find global solutions to ocean challenges.

We're also incredibly grateful for the support of the Ruler of Sharjah, His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, whose generosity towards our University has most recently seen him make a significant pledge towards the construction of the Al Qasimi Building on Streatham Campus. Recognising the longstanding friendship and significant contribution he has made to our University during four decades, last summer we were honoured to bestow upon His Highness our inaugural Chancellor's Medal.

We have made wonderful progress this year, but we cannot deny that the UK higher education sector is facing unprecedented financial challenges. Responding to this has been our major focus for more than two years, and much work has been done to sustain our financial resilience against the headwinds, whilst also protecting and enhancing the student experience and outcomes. I want to reassure you that this is of the utmost importance to me and my senior team.

Thank you again for your ongoing support. As the pages of this magazine show, it makes all the difference to our students and our global research. We continue to be so proud of our alumni community, and I hope to meet many more of you at events in the coming year. Until that time, I hope you enjoy catching up on the latest news from your University.

With very best wishes,

Lisa

Professor Lisa Roberts FRSB FRSA
President and Vice-Chancellor

Ruler of Sharjah receives inaugural Chancellor's Medal

In July 2025, the University of Exeter proudly awarded His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, the Ruler of Sharjah, with the prestigious Chancellor's Medal.

The historic award recognises His Highness' outstanding contributions to education, research, and international collaboration, as well as his longstanding friendship with the University of Exeter.

Forty years ago to the week, on the morning of 18 July 1985, His Highness graduated with a PhD from Exeter.

The medal represents a celebration of the enduring and transformational impact made by His Highness on the life and work of the institution over four decades. It was presented by Sir Michael Barber, Chancellor of the University of Exeter, in front of distinguished guests at a special ceremony at the Streatham Campus on Thursday 24 July 2025.

Those gathered included His Highness Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Sharjah and President of the University of Sharjah, Her Highness Sheikhha Bodour bint Sultan Al

Qasimi, President of the American University of Sharjah, and His Excellency Mansoor Abdullah Khalfan Juma Abulhoul, the United Arab Emirates Ambassador to the United Kingdom

Professor Lisa Roberts, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter, praised His Highness's "vision, leadership and generosity" during her oration at the ceremony.

"Your legacy, Your Highness, is not only felt here in Exeter but extends across Devon, Cornwall, and far beyond," added Professor Roberts. *"It lives in the buildings you have helped to create, in the partnerships you have fostered, and in the students and scholars you continue to inspire."*

The University's relationship with Sharjah has extended over four decades and includes teaching and research collaborations in the humanities, education and science. His Highness' support has enabled wide-ranging collaborations

between Exeter and institutions across Sharjah, including initiatives in marine science, sustainable development, higher education leadership, mining and geology, and global studies.

In 2022, the University announced a ground-breaking partnership with the University of Khorfakkan to help construct a new marine research facility in Sharjah, which opened in Autumn 2025. Together, the Universities of Khorfakkan and Exeter have developed marine programmes that position the emirate as the regional hub for the delivery of the United Nation's (UN) '30x30' commitment to conserve the world's oceans and build capacity by developing the next generation of Emirati and Gulf Cooperation Council marine scientists.

Twenty-six University of Khorfakkan students also joined for the occasion and spent three weeks on a marine summer programme at Exeter's campuses in Devon and Cornwall.



During his return to Exeter, His Highness unveiled the foundation stone for the Al Qasimi Building, funded by a transformational philanthropic donation to his alma mater.

His Highness Sheikh Sultan is the 18th Ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah in a chain of Al Qasimi Rulers since 1600 AD. He has been at the forefront of the emirate's cultural, economic and social development and also played a significant role in promoting cultural interaction and dialogue among nations at local, regional and international levels.

Speaking after the event, Professor Lisa Roberts said, *"I am truly delighted that the University of Exeter can bestow the Chancellor's Medal to His Highness Sheikh Sultan. This award reflects the enduring friendship, impact and partnership between Exeter and Sharjah over the past 40 years."*

“It is an honour to be able to welcome His Highness back to Exeter once again, and share our pride in how this partnership has continued to grow from strength-to-strength. This award recognises His Highness' vision, leadership and generosity towards Exeter, our research community and students.

We look forward to developing and nurturing this partnership for many more years to come.”



University of Exeter

Impact of giving

At Exeter, we're using the power of education and research to create real change: **but the biggest challenges need us all**. Your support helps accelerate discoveries, empowers students from every background and creates lasting impact for generations to come. Here are some stories of the impact your generosity has.

Celebrating three decades of impact with FORCE Cancer Charity

For more than 30 years FORCE Cancer Charity has generously supported critical research projects and individuals like Rahmaneh Moosavi (pictured) at the University of Exeter.

Rahmaneh began her MPhil in Medicine and Medical Biosciences at the University of Exeter Medical School four years ago and was fortunate to receive a scholarship award from FORCE Cancer Charity. This support made a profound difference to her academic journey. Rahmaneh also shared that the support inspired her to upgrade her studies to a PhD degree which has helped her get closer to her goal of contributing to



research that leads to better prevention and improved treatments.

Rahmaneh shared, "Support from FORCE was integral to my journey and I know deeply that this path wouldn't have started, let alone be finished, without it. My project was on 'Breast Cancer Metastasis to the Brain'. Metastasis is when cancer spreads from where it first started to another part of the body. I am proud to share that my research has offered a window into potential future strategies to help reduce the risk of metastasis to the brain. I'm extremely grateful for the massive support that FORCE has provided for my research."

“It is no exaggeration to say that this support has had a life changing effect, and I am extremely grateful that my life has been touched by their kindness and generosity.”

Student support

Thanks to your generous support, we are able to offer scholarships, student aid, and awards that help us attract and nurture the brightest students, regardless of financial challenges. Thanks to your generosity, students like James (pictured) are pursuing their dreams of an Exeter education.

James Chatfield began his academic journey at Exeter as a Marine Biology undergraduate. During his studies, his passion grew for marine conservation and for how ecological understanding can inform conservation efforts. James is now the proud recipient of the Osborne-Harvey Studentship pursuing a PhD in Marine Turtle Conservation supported by alumnus Neil Harvey (Accountancy Studies, 1985) and Sally Osborne Harvey. James shared what receiving this scholarship has meant for him: "This funding has been key in both my personal development as a researcher, and in furthering our knowledge of the ecology of Mediterranean green turtles, and how we can continue local successes in their conservation."

“Our work, supported by this funding, investigating the genetics and life histories of this unique population will provide insight into issues that are key for future conservation efforts, especially in a changing climate.”

James is currently working to understand the life history variation of Mediterranean green turtles (pictured), which nest on Alagadi beach in Northern Cyprus. James' research focuses on the exploitation and status of marine turtles, utilising satellite tracking and 'mark and recapture'.



These techniques help him to understand the thermal ecology, sex ratios, habitat use, navigational abilities, growth rates and fertility of individuals. Given the importance of the thermal environment on these reptilian species, the potential effects of global climate change are a significant issue and a major focus of James' research.

James' supervisor Professor Annette Broderick shared: "Understanding how marine turtles are impacted by threats such

as fisheries and climate change requires knowledge of their life history, especially how long they live and how long they breed. The little information we do have suggests they may well live longer than humans, but there have been no studies long enough to find out! The genetic analysis that James is conducting for his PhD will examine the relatedness of individuals and from this allow us to estimate how long they live, giving us the data we badly need for conservation assessments."

Every gift creates change

Whether you give monthly, make a single donation or leave a gift in your Will, you're part of something bigger. You're helping us to solve the most urgent problems the world is facing. Thank you.

Love at Exeter

The University of Exeter holds a special place in the hearts of our alumni community, particularly for those who fell in love whilst studying here:



Carrie and Joe Reevy

Carrie (English and Latin, 1975)

Joe (Psychology, 1975)

Joe shares: "Carrie and I met through a group of school friends from Somerset. As well as Carrie's excellent dress sense and great humour, I was impressed by her ability to drink schooners of sweet sherry! We did post-graduate work at Southampton, married at Guildford Register Office in 1977 and moved back to Devon at the first opportunity - our house overlooks the Streatham Campus! I still worship the ground Carrie walks on."



David and Nerys Bint

David (Mathematics, 1998)

Nerys (Accounting and Finance Studies, 1998)

David shares: "I moved into Haldon House in Birks Hall at the start of October 1995. On the first Wednesday, I was in the Boot Bar in Birks Central Block chatting to friends on my Mathematics course. One of them was joined by their neighbour, Nerys Crosby, studying Accountancy and Finance. We became friends straight away with a shared love of 80s music and football. By the end of the month, we had started dating and, in our second year, we shared a house in Brunel Close with four other students. We got engaged aged 20 and graduated on the same day in 1998 with first class degrees, before joining KPMG in London. We married in Watford in 2001 and are looking forward to celebrating our silver wedding anniversary in 2026."



Edward and Gillian Wagner

Edward (Physics, 1968)

Gillian (Maths and Physics, 1968)

Gillian says: "Eddie and I met in October 1965 at the Freshers' Hop. After graduating, we married in September 1968 in Leeds. Eddie became a Physics teacher, and I became a radiographer in a cancer hospital. Eddie and I have recently visited Exeter for a couple of days to visit our 'old haunts'."

Edward comments: "I will be forever grateful to the University of Exeter for giving me the opportunity to make a living as a Physics teacher in Leeds, as well as meeting my very posh wife Gill who came from Haywards Heath! During my time at the University, I was also introduced to Bob Dylan by a fellow student. I still listen to Bob Dylan's greatest hits, and they remind me of my time at Exeter."



Elizabeth and Craig McPherson-Staples

Elizabeth (English, 2017, and MA Education, 2024)

Craig (BA Education (Secondary) with History and PE, 1993, and MA Education, 2024)

Elizabeth says: "Craig and I met at work; we're both secondary school English teachers. The 'Beast from the East' of 2019 brought us together when Craig valiantly rescued me from being stranded in the snow! One of our first dates was at the Ram Bar where I used to work. We're both Exeter graduates, albeit at different times. Once we'd established a relationship, we took the plunge and signed up for our MA in Education with Language and Literacy, which we graduated together in July 2024 (on my birthday!). We got engaged at Exeter Cathedral in April 2024 and married in Cornwall in May 2025. Our wedding was attended by our university buddies, of course!"



Bibi and Steve Rodley

Bibi (Greek/Roman Studies and Italian, 1995)

Steve (Geography, 1995)

Bibi says: "I was introduced to Steve by a friend in 1993 after returning from my year abroad. We were in the Ram Bar. We became friends before we became a couple that year. Our son Ben also attended the University of Exeter and stayed in Birks in 2020 (where I resided in 1991!). Ben studied Geography (the same subject as Steve) and graduated in 2023, so we had the opportunity to come back to spend time on the beautiful Streatham Campus and celebrate another graduation."

Steve comments: "I had heard of Bibi from her friends in second year, but we only met in our final year when she returned to Exeter after her year abroad. I limped across to speak to her in the Ram Bar with a leg in plaster having broken it playing for the University football team!"



The University of Exeter holds special memories for us. We always stop to run down memory lane every time we are passing. I often visit to support the Exeter Football Club alumni events."

Steve Rodley (Geography, 1995)

University news

A tribute to Peter Jewell

In early 2025, Peter Jewell, the Honorary Patron and founding donor of The Bill Douglas Cinema Museum, passed away at the age of 90.



Together Peter and his great friend, the renowned filmmaker Bill Douglas, put together an amazing collection of 50,000 artefacts on the history of cinema and the moving image.

After Bill's death Peter gifted the collection to the University of

Exeter to establish the museum because he wanted everyone to share their joy and fascination with moving pictures.

Peter was immensely supportive of Bill's work as a filmmaker and gave him the emotional strength he needed to navigate the stressful

and frustrating world of the film industry. After Bill's tragically early death in 1991, Peter dedicated much of his life to Bill's legacy, and he was proud that many new audiences discovered Bill's films and that his genius and vision was finally appreciated and understood.

Exeter hailed University of the Year for its outstanding support of social mobility

Exeter has been named 'University of the Year' at the prestigious national awards programme celebrating outstanding support for social mobility.



The University triumphed at the Social Mobility Awards in London, in recognition of its work across multiple national and regional projects dedicated to championing equal opportunities and improving life outcomes for young people.

These include the Success for All programme, which focuses on widening participation, closing gaps in student outcomes, and building a diverse and inclusive learning environment, and the work undertaken to embed social justice and inclusion at the heart of its strategy, and in its curriculum and teaching.

The award also recognises the University's leadership of the South West Social Mobility Commission, new educational programmes to develop skills that improve employment opportunities, and engagement with policymakers through its Centre for Social Mobility.

Two leading UK charities support pioneering planetary health science in Cornwall

A University of Exeter, Cornwall team has received two grants totalling £1.45 million to understand and remediate the effects of climate change at a microbiological level.

The funding from the Wolfson Foundation and Garfield Weston Foundation supports the newly established Centre for Microbiology and Planetary Health (CMPH) at the Penryn Campus.

With the rise of climate change, antimicrobial resistance, food insecurity and energy and mineral supply there is greater need to understand and target these issues from a microbiological level. The Centre for Microbiology and Planetary Health will be the first in the world to bring an interdisciplinary approach to Planetary Health based on the study of microbes and the use of innovative microbial technologies to identify solutions.



Paul Ramsbottom, Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation, said: "Microbes go largely unnoticed and unappreciated in everyday life, and yet they play a critical role in all kinds of biological and ecological processes – and in fields as diverse as health, soil productivity, carbon storage and decontamination of polluted landscapes and waterways. The University of Exeter is well placed to accelerate

research on how best to harness the power of microbes for good, and we are delighted to support the new Centre for Microbiology and Planetary Health procure essential equipment to underpin this effort."

Sophia Weston, Deputy Chair and Trustee of Garfield Weston Foundation, said: "We believe in supporting a diverse range of

charities across the UK. From local community initiatives to large national projects, the common thread is that all our grantees make a real positive difference, improving lives and strengthening communities throughout the country. We are delighted to be supporting the work at the University of Exeter as they work towards finding a solution to some of our greatest global challenges."



Stay up to date with the latest developments at the University of Exeter. From groundbreaking research to campus news and alumni achievements, explore the stories shaping our community. Discover more at news.exeter.ac.uk/category/university

University secures Top 20 status across major rankings

Concerted action to support a 'greener, healthier and fairer' future resulted in the University of Exeter being ranked inside the top 15 higher education institutions in the country and named the second most sustainable.

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026 – one of the most respected annual league tables in the country – has placed Exeter 14th out of 133 universities in this year's table. We also increased our standing in the top 20 UK universities in the Guardian University Guide 2026, climbing one place to 17th in the latest guide. Additionally Exeter climbed to 11th place in the Complete University Guide 2026 and this year 20 of Exeter's disciplines were ranked inside the top ten.



The results mean the University has secured a top 20 place in all three major national university rankings.

We additionally placed 155th globally in the latest QS World

University Rankings, and saw a 14-place rise globally placing us among the very best institutions worldwide. Exeter also ranked 23rd nationally.

Transatlantic philanthropy supports diabetes research

Researchers at the University of Exeter have received almost £4 million of funding for their work in understanding type 1 diabetes.

The awards have come from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust and are the latest example of the extensive financial support the US-based charity has given to the University over the past decade. To date, the Trust has awarded \$10,637,854 (£8 million) for Exeter scientists to investigate the causes of, and treatments for, type 1 diabetes.

This latest funding supports Dr Matt Johnson for his genetic research into discovering new drug targets in type 1 diabetes. Meanwhile, the charity is also supporting the work of Professor Richard Oram to understand type 1 diabetes that presents in infants.

Ben Williams, Program Officer at the Helmsley Charitable Trust, said: "At Helmsley, we are committed to supporting innovative research with the potential to improve the lives of people with or at risk of type 1 diabetes. These projects at University of Exeter hold promise to help advance our understanding of disease mechanisms – which is critical to developing new therapeutics."



The life and legacy of an ocean giant

The story of a giant whale that died after becoming stranded on a Cornish beach, before being 'inherited' by the University of Exeter, has been told in a new BBC podcast.

The podcast, *The Whale, Secrets of a Stranding*, picks up the story of the Fin whale after it beached on Parbean Cove in February 2020. Specialists from the British Divers Marine Life Rescue team tried to keep the animal alive, dousing it with water in the hope that it might be refloated during high tide. But the whale, which was later found to be severely malnourished, was too weak to survive.



Some weeks later, the two-tonne head of the whale was given to ecologist Robbie McDonald, then a Professor in the Environment and Sustainability Institute. Professor McDonald saw the research potential in studying its decomposition and so arranged for it to be buried in specially prepared soil in the research field close to the Penryn Campus.

For five years, the whale remained submerged, two metres down, until last April, when she resurfaced once again. Over the course of ten hours, a team used specialist vacuum excavation equipment to remove the soil, with the BBC team filming the operation. Organisms in the soil had, but for one piece of blubber, stripped it clean.

University researchers ranked among the most influential in the world

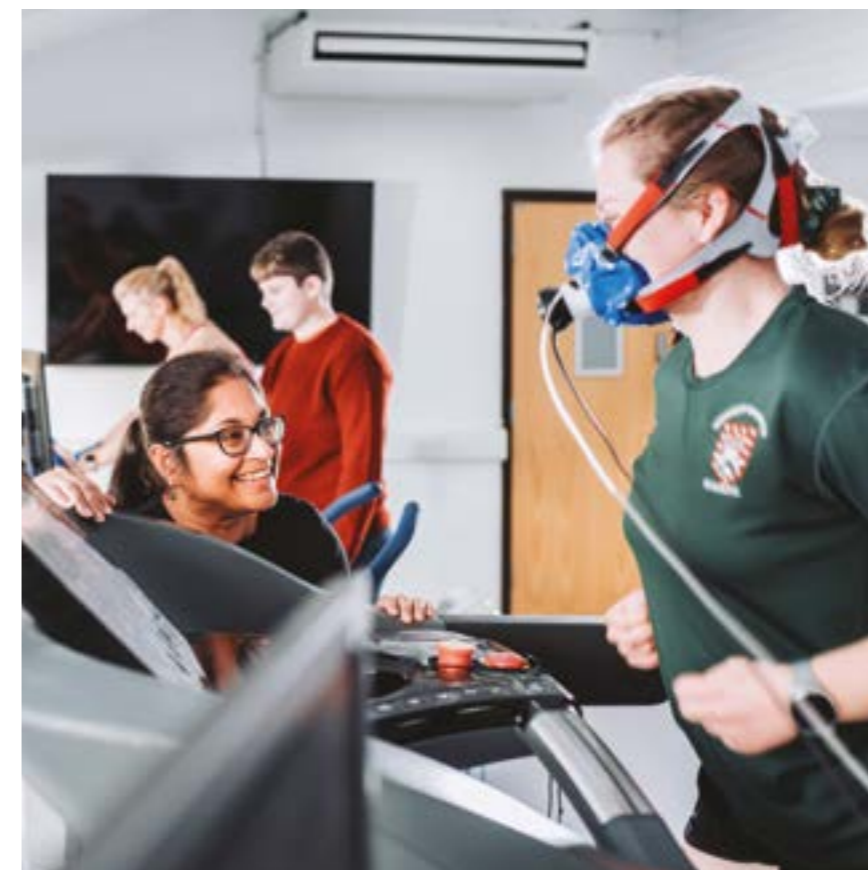
Twenty Exeter academics, and a further four who are affiliated to the University, were included in the Highly Cited Researchers™ 2025 list, produced by Clarivate – marking them among the top 1% most influential and respected in the world by citations in their research field.

Now in its 12th year, Highly Cited Researchers™ recognises those scholars who demonstrate significant influence in their chosen field or fields through the publication of multiple highly cited papers over the last decade.

Professor Lisa Roberts, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter, said:

"It is fantastic to see our world-renowned research community represented here in such great numbers and across such a diversity of areas. It is a testament to the global importance, quality and academic impact of the work they, and their colleagues, are undertaking here at the University of Exeter.

"Of course, while recognition is always welcome, it is the desire to tackle some of the most pressing and urgent issues affecting our world that is the force behind this work. From conserving our environment and ecosystems to supporting medical breakthroughs and social wellbeing, the work of our researchers is leading the way towards a greener, healthier and fairer future for everyone."



Alumni news

George Clarke dons sequins for Strictly

The 2025 season of *Strictly Come Dancing* featured a familiar face for the University of Exeter, as alumnus George Clarke (Exercise and Sport Sciences, 2021) took to the ballroom floor, sequins and all.

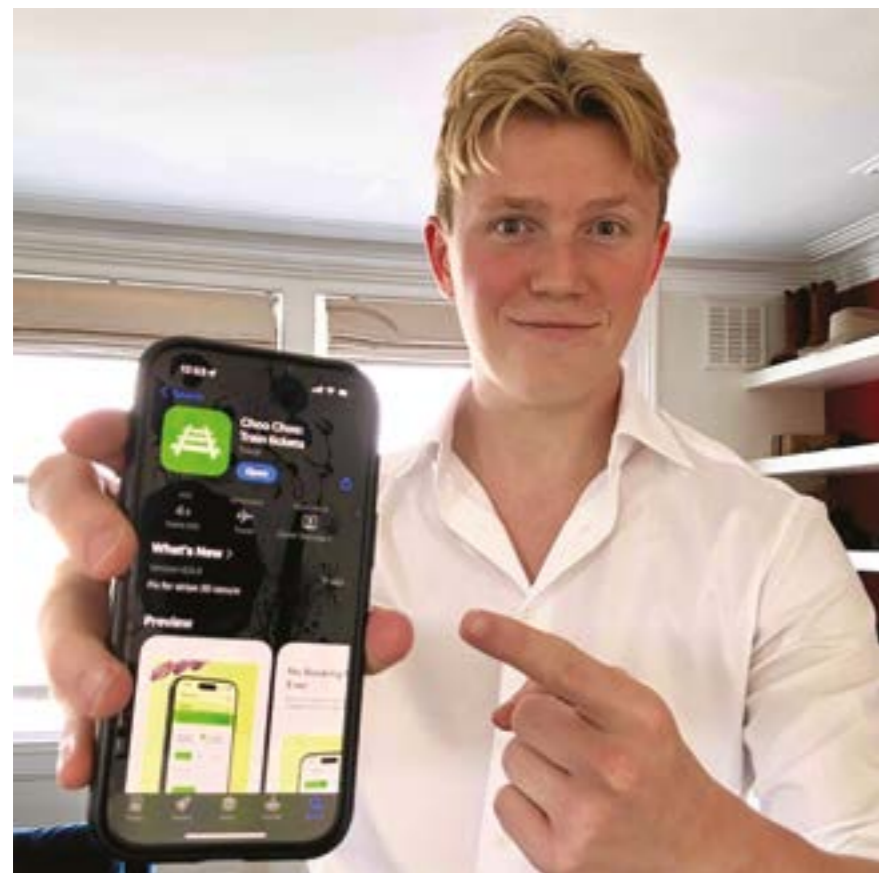
Dancing alongside his professional partner, American dancer and choreographer Alexis Warr, George quickly became a standout competitor. An influencer, YouTuber and co-host of the UK's number one charting podcast, *The Useless Hotline*, with Max Baledge, George made it all the way to the final. He is the third YouTuber to compete on *Strictly*, following Joe Sugg and Saffron Barker, and will return to the dancefloor with Alexis as one of the couples on the highly anticipated 2026 *Strictly Live Tour*.



Exeter alumnus launches train travel app

Since graduating from Exeter, alumnus Alfie Willis (Business Economics, 2024) has wasted no time turning a personal frustration into a nationwide business idea.

In August 2025, Alfie launched *Choo Choo*, an app simplifying UK train travel by allowing users to buy tickets and see when they are eligible for compensation, how much they can claim, and why. Reflecting on his time at Exeter, Alfie credits the University with shaping his entrepreneurial mindset. "One module that stood out was 'The Economics of Financial Crises', taught by Gary Abrahams," he says. "It pushed me to think critically and question the status quo, which is exactly what I'm trying to do with 'Choo Choo' - making train travel simpler, cheaper and more transparent for customers."



Alumni duo drive ambulance to Ukraine

A friendship formed at the University of Exeter more than 50 years ago has led two alumni on a remarkable humanitarian mission.

In September 2025, Bob Budge (Politics and Economics, 1971) and Jonathan Callaway (German, 1971) took their Exeter connection on the road, driving an aid-filled ambulance in a convoy to Ukraine to support humanitarian efforts. The pair lived together during their first year at Exeter and reconnected during retirement, more than five decades later, through a mutual friend.

Travelling 1,260 miles as part of a five-ambulance convoy, they delivered vital hospital equipment and supplies to support civilians trapped under collapsed buildings. Reflecting on the journey, Jonathan described



it as a "physically tiring but emotionally powerful experience for all of us drivers." Bob added, "Driving was intense... but if we have all made a tiny difference to what is going on, then it has all been worth it."

The ambulance driven by Bob and Jonathan will now be used by a rehabilitation centre supporting wounded veterans.

Alumnus appointed to government position



Exeter alumnus Luke Pollard MP (Politics, 2001) was appointed to the Government post of Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence in September 2025. He has been the Labour and Co-operative Member of Parliament for Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport since being elected in June 2017 and he was re-elected in both 2019 and 2024.

Luke was born and lives in Plymouth and is the first MP from Plymouth since Michael Foot represented the city in 1945. Many congratulations to him on this new position.



Alumna wins national award for innovation to detect water contamination

Congratulations to alumna Kathryn Thomas (Medical Science, 2025) who won the Big Ideas Runner Up prize at the Engineers in Business Fellowship (EBSF)'s Champion of Champions competition in 2025.

This recognition is for her FluoroGlow device (currently in prototype) which is designed to detect *Cryptosporidium* in water - a parasite that can cause severe illness and even death, especially in children and vulnerable people. Previously, it has been difficult to detect without slow laboratory-based tests, but FluoroGlow aims to change that by providing rapid and reliable results directly at the water source.



Molly named as one of Twenty in Data & Tech in 2025

Exeter alumna Molly Bevan has been recognised for her impact at the intersection of data, technology and social change.

Molly Bevan (Economics and Finance with European Study, 2019) was recently named one of the Women in Data Twenty in Data & Tech for 2025. She is the founder of Impactic, a social enterprise that delivers skills-based volunteering initiatives for corporate teams.

Self-taught in data analytics, Molly uses her technical skills and entrepreneurial drive to create measurable outcomes for a wide range of charities. Through the Impacathons she leads, Molly also provides a safe and supportive space for women to build confidence, develop their skills and feel empowered.

Many congratulations, Molly!



Remembering Evelyn Lintott

This 1907 photograph depicts alumna and England international footballer, Evelyn Lintott, who was capped while studying teacher training at St. Luke's College, Exeter. The College was incorporated into the University of Exeter in 1978, and 2026 marks the 110th anniversary year since Evelyn was tragically killed on 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

Image credited to Special Collections: University of Exeter Archive.



Congratulations in order as alum's ground-breaking work recognised

Exeter alumnus Professor Sir Michael Berry has been recognised with one of the highest honours in physics for his lifetime of ground-breaking research.

Professor Sir Michael Berry (Physics, 1962) was awarded the Isaac Newton Medal and Lecture in October 2025 for his pioneering work on the geometrical 'Berry phase' of quantum states in topological physics, as well as his seminal contributions to mathematical physics, including quantum chaos, catastrophe theory and singular optics.

Reflecting on the honour, Sir Michael described the award as an "unexpected recognition for six decades of obsessive scribbling." Presented annually by the Institute of Physics, the Isaac Newton Medal and Lecture is its most prestigious award, recognising world-leading, ground-breaking contributions to the field of physics.

Alumni receive recognition in 2026 New Year Honours List

Nine alumni and one honorary graduate of the University of Exeter received awards in the 2026 New Year Honours List. We're very proud of all the members of our community who have been recognised in this way. A huge congratulations to the following:

Louise Ansari
(English, 1988)
MBE for services to Health Equity

Fiona Bloor
(Geography, 1986)
MBE for services to the Law of the Sea

Hilary Evans-Newton
(BA Politics, 2002 and Hon DSc, 2017)
CBE for services to Charity

Nicholas Fowler
(History and Spanish, 2002)
OBE for services to the Protection of Children

Louise Holliday
(Psychology, 2000)
OBE for services to National Security

Julie Kapsalis
(English, 1999)
MBE for services to Economic Development

Laurence Newman
(Geography, 1970)
MBE for Charitable Service

Simon Nokes
(Economics, 1987)
MBE for services to Regional Economic Growth, Policy Development and Investment Strategies

Amanda Pritchard
(Hon LLD, 2023)
Damehood for services to the NHS

Dr Philip Wadey
(BSc Pure Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, 1986 and PhD in Engineering Science, 1990)
MBE for services to Public Rights of Way



Keep up to date with the latest alumni news by following us on Instagram at [exeter_alumni](https://www.instagram.com/exeter_alumni) and discover more alumni news at [exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/news](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/news)

We're always happy to hear and celebrate your news and you can contact us via DM or email us at alumni@exeter.ac.uk

A home away from home

Halls on our Streatham Campus

Leaving home to go to university is a big moment in our students' journey to becoming alumni. The places that they call home are often a space where friendships are formed, and independence explored. The halls of residence experience gives an opportunity to meet a diverse range of people, and provides the background for many adventures.

Despite having changed over the years, these 'home away from home' of halls often loom large in the memory and play an important puzzle piece in alumni connections; here are just a few of those pieces.



Birks Grange Village/Birks Halls

Birks Halls were in place from 1966-2004 before completing a redevelopment in 2005. The halls included a bar named 'The Boot' until 10 years ago when it closed, which has lived long in alumni memories. Due to its proximity to 'Cardiac Hill' (the steep path leading from halls up to the main Streatham Campus), its residents left not only with a degree but also with excellent cardio!

In 2011, we completed building works providing enhanced self-catered accommodation which collectively became known as Birks Grange Village. The University is currently converting the remaining catered halls to self-catered, and a new accommodation block will be constructed on the site of the Central Block dining hall. This is part of the wider West Park Student Residences project.

Memories include:

"I remember the white pudding for breakfast, and the lovely porters like Jock. Cider 14p a half. Queuing to use the pay phone..." – Yvette Staelens (Archaeology, 1981) lived here from 1978-79.

"My dad was in Birks back when he was at Exeter in the 70's. I accidentally also came to Exeter and ended up staying in the brand-new Birks Grange the first year it opened. Cardiac Hill though, I still wheeze just thinking about it." – Katharina Rayner (BA Drama, 2010 and MA Applied Drama, 2013) lived here from 2006-7.

"Great memories of The Boot and formal dinners in the dining hall. Some of the best years of my life. Would go back in a heartbeat." – Anne Kidgell (German, 1997) lived here in her first year.



Hope Hall

These halls accommodated around 60 students in three converted family homes. Originally opened in 1915 as an all-girls residence (later expanded to all genders) and named Hartwell House, it was reopened and renamed Hope Hall in 1925 by the Duke and Duchess of York after Helena Hope, due to her generous donations.



It was a catered residence with a small kitchenette on each floor, and, in 2013, it was refurbished to provide additional office and research space for university staff.

Did you know that alumnus Thom Yorke (English and Fine Art, 1991) was resident there during his Exeter days?

Memories include:

"I made some lovely friends there and have fond memories of the breakfasts in Hope Hall – hash browns and scrambled eggs in particular." – Lucy Harvey Gay (BA Music and French, 1996 and PGCE, 1997) resided there during 1992-3.

"As President in my third year I could choose my room and picked one meant for two students, upstairs overlooking the tennis courts. When I went back for a reunion, my old room was the manager's flat and it had become mixed sex accommodation, which it always was, but covertly in the 1960s!" – Mave van der Werff (English, 1967) lived in the Lazenby Annexe and then in the main building.

Mardon Hall

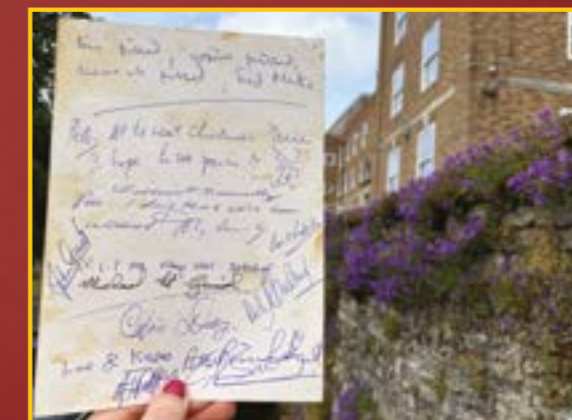
Designed in a 'country house' style by E. Vincent Harris, Mardon Hall opened in 1933, and was extensively refurbished in 1996, but retained its wood-panelled library (now used as a study room) and grand staircase. It was the University College of the South West's first purpose-built hall of residence. This was 22 years before the University gained its charter, becoming the University of Exeter in 1955, and the halls are still used as accommodation today.



Memories include:

"Formal meals... five each week, were 'formal', and academic dress was obligatory; woe betide anyone improperly dressed. Invitations to High Table were by rota, and those invited either took sherry with the Warden, Frank Oliver, in his flat before the meal, or coffee afterwards." – Ryder Cowan (Mathematics, 1971) lived in Mardon Hall, 1967-68, and 69-70.

Alumnus Pete Renaut (Geology and Geography, 1972) got in touch recently to share a copy of a Christmas dinner menu from 1969 which was signed by many Mardon Hall residents at the time (pictured right). He lived in a shared room in Mardon from February 1969 – June 1970 and recalls,



“ If it was someone's birthday or special occasion we used to bang our spoons on the table. Hence all Mardon's spoons had flat bottoms.”



In conversation with...

Sir Sajid Javid

(Economics and Politics, 1991)

A household name, Sir Sajid Javid's highly successful career has spanned both private and public sectors, having held some of the most prominent roles in government, including Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as enjoying international success as an investment banker working across the financial hubs of New York, London and Singapore.

We caught up with Sajid to learn more about his journey from student to statesman.

What inspired you to become a politician after a successful career in banking?

Well, I was always interested in politics at a very young age. My earliest memory is the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979, I was 10 years old and I remember watching it on the television. I used to chat about politics with my dad but that didn't mean I wanted to be a politician. However, after 20 years in finance, I started thinking that one day I might give politics a go, and then that day came in 2009, where I just thought, you know, if I don't do it now, I'll never do it. It's a way to give back, to make a difference, to make sure to do your bit and to ensure people still have opportunities when it comes to social mobility in the country. So that was what really motivated me in the end.

You studied Economics and Politics at the University of Exeter. Why did you choose Exeter and how did your time at university shape your career?

Whilst I was doing my A-levels, my intention was not to go to university. I'm one of five boys, and I just assumed I'd go into work like they did at 18. But then I heard about this thing called university, and I didn't really know what it was. Back in those days to research it I had to go to the library in Bristol to look at the prospectuses and, for me, Exeter ticked all the boxes. Had I not gone to university and had I not got the degree, I wouldn't have also learnt how to build confidence, live away from home, make new friends and understand people from different backgrounds. All of that contributed to the person I have become.

What has been the biggest challenge you've faced in your career?

The biggest challenge in my government career was being the Health Secretary during the pandemic. I took over halfway through when the country was still in lockdown, everyone wanted to know when it was going to end, and it was tough. Everyone is looking to you for answers, but you haven't got answers to everything.

How do you approach leadership in times of crisis, such as during the pandemic?

I think what I learnt was to be clear in your own mind about what your objective is, but also what your objective isn't. Don't be afraid to make decisions. It's very different to working in the business sector. You need to have a very thick skin as a leader in politics and be clear in your mind what you want to do, and just do it.



Had I not gone to university and had I not got the degree, I wouldn't have also learnt how to build confidence, live away from home, make new friends and understand people from different backgrounds."

What advice would you give to anyone who is currently aspiring to be a politician?

First of all, before you try to become a politician, do something that's got nothing to do with politics. Get some other experience as you'll have more to contribute if you've done something else before getting into parliament. Secondly, make sure you're doing it for the right reasons. Don't do it for status or recognition, do it because you want to make a difference.

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing British politics today - and what's the solution?

The lack of trust in politics and institutions. That in turn makes everyone sceptical about politics which leads to people not voting or showing an interest in it. I also think the current financial situation of the country is a big challenge we're all facing. The solution is having people in politics for the right reasons. We need better qualified and better motivated politicians.

You've recently been appointed Chair of the University of Exeter's £150 million fundraising campaign, ahead of a public launch in 2026. What is your message to fellow alumni about supporting the campaign?

Exeter is doing very well and I'm very proud of it. But this doesn't happen by accident, it takes a lot of effort and focus, and it also requires resources and funding. I'd say to alumni if you agree that Exeter was a pivotal moment in your life and it changed your life chances, whether that's academically, professionally, or personally, then this campaign is about giving current and future students the same opportunities that you had.

What's next for you personally - politics, business, or something else?

Not politics! I had a good innings of 14 years, but it was time for me to get back into business. I'm working in asset management, but I haven't lost my desire to do good. I want to still help change lives, so that's one of the reasons I'm doing the Exeter role, and I'm also chairman of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. I'm also co-chair of a new independent commission on Community and Cohesion, working with former Labour MP Jon Cruddas. So, I'm certainly keeping busy!

Interested in learning more about Sajid's life? He has just written a book called *The Colour of Home*, which provides more details. You can order the book via the QR code.



Shaping our future:

the University of Exeter and AI

In a fast-moving, complex, and still-being-understood sector, we wanted to share a little peek behind the code of what we've been working on here at the University to achieve our aim of being a globally renowned thought leader in AI and data science.

At Exeter, our academics facilitate interactions between data science researchers and problem owners to develop innovative approaches to the use of data in modern society, considering the social implications as well as technical aspects. To achieve this, academics work closely with other researchers, industry, government, and key partners like the Alan Turing Institute.

In 2023, we announced a £50m investment in the development of our data science and AI capabilities: Project ADA (Accelerating Data Science and Artificial Intelligence). One part of this is our Centre for Environmental Intelligence, where we work across disciplines and sectors, from tech to conservation, in the UK and beyond to tackle urgent environmental and sustainability challenges through the application of data science and AI. Environmental intelligence has the potential to make a vital contribution to tackling many problems including climate resilience, food systems-security, and public health.

This shared learning approach is key to many of Exeter's interactions with AI, and in July 2025 we also held a flagship event to help Devon businesses harness the potential of AI: the 'Devon AI Summit'. The event was opened by Exeter Professor of Digital Economy, Mark Thompson, and in November 2025 we held a 'Cornwall AI Summit' at the Eden Project, which featured practical sessions offering step-by-step guidance on applying AI in business.



Dr Andrew Ng (Hon DSc, 2025)

Building on this, in August 2025 we joined a pioneering initiative to realise the potential of AI for the public good and Exeter was the first official member of the Responsible AI Consortium. Launched by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) in collaboration with École des Hautes Études Commerciales du Nord (EDHEC) Business School, Imperial College Business School and Luiss Business School, the Consortium offers universities and business schools worldwide a forum for integrating and advancing AI in higher education. Through collaborative research, project-based learning, and innovative AI pilot programs, it also will advance the responsible use of AI and prepare graduates for the modern world of work.

Last summer, we were also delighted to welcome Dr Andrew Ng (Hon DSc, 2025) to our Streatham Campus to receive an honorary degree from the University of Exeter. This reflected our recognition of how Andrew, as Founder of DeepLearning.AI (and

involvement in many other avenues beside), has been making strides in this field.

More than eight million people have taken an AI class from Andrew. He was the founding lead of the Google Brain team, which helped Google transform into a modern AI company. In 2023, he was named in the 'TIME100 Most Influential People in AI' list.

Speaking about his experience visiting Exeter for the honorary degree, Andrew shared,

“ Just as every company is becoming an AI company, every university must become an AI university – not just teaching AI, but using it to advance every field of study... Like almost all other universities and businesses worldwide, Exeter’s AI transformation is just beginning. But the enthusiastic embrace of AI by its leadership will give it momentum.”

At Exeter this momentum has certainly been building as the University is keen for AI to be a transformative force and to empower our community to explore AI with confidence. As such, in autumn 2025 we launched our 'Enabling AI at Exeter' initiative that gave staff and students access to a suite of information and resources, including our Enabling AI Strategy.

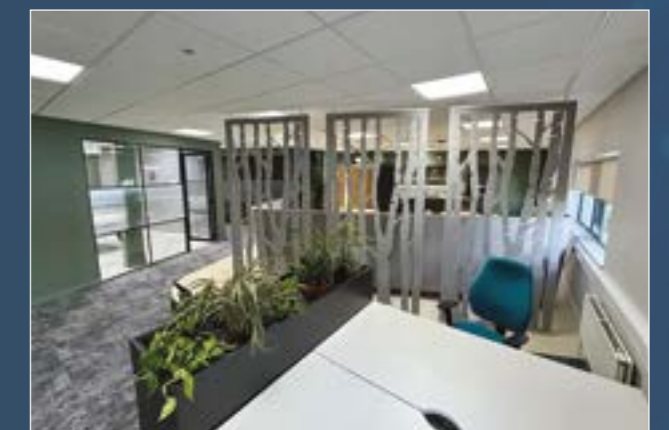
We will continue to share the latest developments in this emerging field – both in how it influences our curriculum here at Exeter, our research, and the careers of our alumni community – with you all. Because, as Andrew said to the Class of 2025 when he received his honorary degree, *“The world is changing very quickly, and many of the tools you’ll be using five years from now may not even exist today. So, what will matter is your ability to keep learning and keep adapting.”*

If you are interested in keeping up to date with our developments in this area or have any particular questions, do let us know via email at alumni@exeter.ac.uk

Introducing the Kathleen Booth Building

Following recent investment and growth in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence at the University, refurbishment works at Innovation Centre One on our Streatham Campus were completed in autumn 2025.

To reflect our commitment to recognising pioneering figures in computing, the building has been renamed the Kathleen Booth Building, after the trailblazing British computer scientist and one of the earliest pioneers of modern computing.



Alumni network spotlight

After graduating from the University of Exeter, we continue to share the Exeter experience with you beyond your university years.

Our range of alumni networks help our alumni connect with others in their area or with those who share similar interests, as well as supporting students and alumni to network professionally.

Our choice of networks includes international alumni communities which span the globe, and interest-focused groups, like sport and academia, and provides moments to reconnect or make new connections with those who have Exeter in common.

From joining EXODUS (the University of Exeter alumni choir) to keeping in touch with the Students' Guild in Exeter or the Students' Union in Cornwall, we've got a range of opportunities to meet the interests of our diverse alumni community.

In this spotlight article we'll delve into three of our networks: Exetra (the recent alumni group), the Law Alumni Network and the Exeter China Alumni Association (ECAA).

Discover more alumni networks

No matter where you live or what your interests are, our alumni networks and groups will support you throughout your life and career.

Browse the alumni networks page on our website to find out more: [exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/networks](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/networks)



Exetra

Created in 2009, Exetra (the group for recent alumni) organises professional networking and social events for alumni in the London area who graduated in the last ten years. Run by a committee of alumni volunteers, Exetra enables graduates to meet fellow alumni, allowing them to expand their personal and professional networks.

The group has now held more than 30 events which more than 700 individual alumni have attended. Recent events have included picnics in London, Christmas quizzes and social networking events at the Institute of Directors.

Forthcoming Exetra events are listed on the alumni events page: [exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/events](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/events). Potential members can find out more by emailing us at alumni@exeter.ac.uk



Law Alumni Network

The Law Alumni Network brings together more than 12,000 graduates from 120 countries, forming a dynamic global community of legal professionals. This vibrant network reflects the Law School's long tradition of academic excellence and professional achievement.

The Law Alumni Network exists to strengthen connections between graduates, the Law School, and the wider University community, fostering a strong sense of lifelong belonging and collaboration. Through active engagement, it provides a platform for alumni to remain connected to Exeter, share expertise and contribute

to the continued success of future graduates. The network plays a vital role in supporting student and alumni success through curriculum enrichment, employability initiatives and global networking opportunities.

Beyond supporting students, the Law Alumni Network celebrates the achievements of its members and helps to build long-term

partnerships. United by a shared connection to Exeter, Law alumni form a global community that continues to inspire, collaborate and give back. The network provides a platform for professional growth and long-term success.

If you would like to get involved or join the network, please email alumni@exeter.ac.uk

Exeter China Alumni Association (ECAA)

The Exeter China Alumni Association (ECAA) connects University of Exeter graduates living and working across Mainland China. With a vibrant community of more than 13,000 alumni, the mission of the group is to keep the Exeter spirit alive beyond our campuses by supporting professional development and employability, as well as creating meaningful connections between alumni and current students.

The ECAA host a range of events, including networking gatherings in multiple cities and industry talks featuring alumni leaders. Each event offers a welcoming space for alumni to share experiences, exchange ideas and strengthen ties within the ever-growing Exeter community in China.

A big milestone in 2025 was the launch of the ECAA WeChat Mini Program, a brand-new digital

hub designed to make staying connected easier than ever. Through the platform, members can register for events, access the latest news and resources, unlock exclusive alumni perks, log their volunteering and connect directly with fellow graduates.

The ECAA are always on the lookout for enthusiastic volunteers to help shape the future of the network. The ECAA can be found

on the social media channels below where potential members can find out more:

- **WeChat Mini Program:** Search for “埃克塞特大学校友会” or “埃大校友会”
- **Weibo:** 埃克塞特大学校友会
- **Rednote:** 埃克塞特大学校友会

We also have a vibrant alumni chapter in Hong Kong - the Exeter Hong Kong Alumni Group (EHKAG). The group, led by volunteers, brings together graduates living and working across the region, offering plenty of chances to reconnect through social meet ups and professional events. It's a warm, supportive community where alumni can grow their networks and keep the Exeter spirit alive in Hong Kong. You can find out more about the group and how to get involved on our website: [exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/networks/exeter-hong-kong-alumni-group](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/networks/exeter-hong-kong-alumni-group)





Spotlight on our stunning grounds

One of the major attractions for studying at the University of Exeter is undoubtedly the beauty of our gorgeous grounds. Streatham Campus is a registered botanic garden and recognised as being the most beautiful and botanically interesting of any UK University. *The Independent* describes it as “sublime” and *The Times* describes it as the “best-gardened campus in Britain.” The Campus’s enduring glory is thanks to the amazing team of 34 grounds staff who work on the 153 hectares of the University’s estate, 365 days a year and in all weathers.



The grounds staff take care to protect the biodiversity of our campuses, and they are responsible for the upkeep of all of the grounds’ various outdoor environments – ponds and watercourses, the cherry orchard, the wildflower meadows and the wooded areas of the Taddiforde/Hoopern Valley. Indeed, their dedication and expertise in horticulture and environmental responsibility has been recognised with a Double Gold Award at the 2025 Britain in Bloom South West Awards. A richly deserved honour for a team who contribute so significantly to the enjoyment of life and learning for students and staff on our campuses, as well as the local community and visiting alumni.

On two occasions in 2025 our alumni community were treated to a very special experience by this wonderful team: Alex Adams, the University’s Arboricultural Manager took time out of his busy schedule to lead groups of alumni on guided tours of the Streatham Campus gardens, and in particular the amazing trees by Reed Hall.

Alex has worked as an arborist at the University since 2018, after more than 10 years’ experience in the industry. He has an extensive knowledge of, and love for the myriad of trees on our grounds (there are around 10,000 in total) and his enthusiasm for their care is infectious.



Reflecting on our grounds, Alex shared: *“Having such a wide and diverse collection of trees with such an historic link to the Veitch family and their team of plant collectors is one of the main draws to the Streatham Campus. Having their care under my custodianship is a pleasure.*”

“Trees are central to how people experience the University. By caring for them, our team are directly enhancing the daily environment of thousands of students, staff, and visitors (including alumni). Shade on hot days, calm during stressful moments, seasonal colour, wildlife corridors and habitats all come from trees that are present on our campuses. We continue to add to the collection and look upon every addition as a way of increasing the resilience of our collection and increasing the biodiversity of these beautiful spaces.”

On the tours we heard about the phenomenon of Champion Trees – trees that have been awarded a supreme honour for their size, age, rarity or historical significance. We also learned about the history of the Reed Hall gardens, which date back to the 19th century when the grounds of Reed (then Streatham) Hall were planted by the Veitch family of nurserymen. Attendees also heard about the techniques used by Alex and the grounds team to propagate, protect and cultivate the plethora of rare and delightful plants which abound. It was a fascinating experience and there were numerous questions which Alex answered without hesitation. Afterwards, many alumni said that they wished everyone could be as enthusiastic about their job as Alex is!

After the autumnal tour in September, attendees congregated in Reed Hall for a well-deserved glass of wine and some delightful reminiscences

about their time on Streatham Campus as undergraduates. Many remarked with regret that they had no idea this fascinating wonderland of flora existed at that time.

If you would like to find out more about the diversity of plant life in Exeter or to visit Streatham Campus to investigate it yourself, there is a wealth of information about the grounds on the University website: [exeter.ac.uk/about/gardens](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/about/gardens)

Alumni are always welcome to visit any of our three campuses: Streatham Campus and St Luke’s Campus in Devon and Penryn Campus in Cornwall. Our University website includes various downloadable horticultural highlights guides, maps for official walking trails and our historical Tremough heritage gardens in Penryn. Opportunities to join guided tours of some of these walks are advertised on our sustainability events webpages.

Do keep an eye out for invitations to future alumni guided tours with Alex, as we have found that places often get snapped up within hours of release! Details are also advertised on our alumni events webpage: [exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/events](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/events)



The collection has year-round interest as there is always something putting on a show whatever the time of year that you visit.”

Alex Adams, Arboricultural Manager

Transforming clinical care for rare genetic conditions

A rare condition is any condition that affects less than one in 2,000 people. There are more than 7,000 rare conditions with more being discovered all the time through scientific progress.



Around one in 17 people will develop a rare condition at some point in their lifetime. This equates to approximately 3.5 million people across the UK. Eight out of 10 rare conditions are also genetic conditions (the result of a change in a person's DNA sequence). Around 75% of rare genetic conditions have their onset in childhood and rare conditions are thought to be responsible for around 25% of deaths in the newborn period.

In partnership with the Exeter Genomics Laboratory, Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and NHS England, the University has revolutionised diagnosis and management for the sickest babies and children with rare

genetic conditions. Together, we have developed the pioneering NHS England National Rapid Genome Sequencing service for critically unwell babies and children on intensive care. Available through the NHS across England, this cutting-edge service uses a single test to look for more than 6,000 genetic conditions, including metabolic problems, severe forms of epilepsy and disorders affecting growth and development.

A genetic diagnosis often changes the course of treatment and can be lifesaving. The service has been transformative - the first in the world to provide a swift genetic diagnosis accessible to all children and families who need it across an entire country, sometimes in as little as four days; whereas previously families faced long waits of months, and often years, for a diagnosis.

Currently, our ground-breaking service provides a diagnosis for around 41% of the 1,200 acutely ill babies and children tested each year, as well as identifying potential new approaches to treatment. With more than 6,000 families now tested through the service, this

national success story epitomises the promise of genomic medicine in transforming clinical care and improving healthcare outcomes, while generating significant cost savings for the NHS.

The service builds on more than three decades of our University's major discoveries of the genetic causes and mechanisms of disease, and our ongoing search for improved diagnostic testing and new treatments. The University has led the way in the application of new and emerging technologies in diagnostic practice, and new approaches to analysing and interpreting genetic data, which collectively underpin this revolutionary NHS service. Working in partnership with the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and NHS England, families and clinicians worldwide, we have developed a rare disease NHS diagnostic centre which serves patients and clinicians across the entire country.

The most impactful endorsement of all comes from families who have received a diagnosis and seen their child's care transformed as a result.



Casper is pure joy and is making really good progress. Now we can put aside our worries and think positively about the future."



“ In Exeter, we are privileged to have seen the rewards of advancement in genomic medicine and how it's changing lives for children and families affected by rare genetic conditions.”

Casper had a cardiac arrest and was found to have an enlarged heart at 11 months of age. The intensive care doctors noticed that Casper had some other clinical features that suggested his heart problems may be due to an underlying genetic condition. The clinical team requested our rapid genome sequencing test which identified a genetic change that had never been seen before.

The NHS scientist team contacted researchers across the world and found a team who had identified 10 other children and adults with similar genetic changes to Casper. The research team confirmed that Casper was affected by a rare genetic condition called CAMK2D-

related disorder that they had only recently discovered and was not yet published in the medical literature. Without this diagnosis, Casper would never have been eligible for a heart transplant.

Casper's father said, "It is important to never forget that it changes children's lives." His mother said, "Casper is pure joy and is making really good progress. Now we can put aside our worries and think positively about the future."

Professor Emma Baple, who is the medical lead for the service, said, "It has transformed how rare genetic conditions are diagnosed. The faster we can get answers, the

greater chance we have to change that child's care and their outcome. Any child in England who is acutely unwell and needs a rapid test can have it - and it can be life changing and lifesaving in many cases - but without the NHS we simply wouldn't be able to provide it. There isn't anywhere else in the world that offers this service to every child and family that needs it."

Dr Andrew Parrish, Head of the Exeter NHS Genomics Laboratory said, "In Exeter, we are privileged to have seen the rewards of advancement in genomic medicine and how it's changing lives for children and families affected by rare genetic conditions."

Keeping languages alive

Languages are a key tool in how we express our identities, cultures, heritage, and communicate. Over time languages can become endangered due to a variety of reasons; often reflecting pressures, injustices, or traumas in a community. There are more than 7,000 languages today, but it is estimated that nearly half are at risk of being silenced. According to the Endangered Languages Project's (ELP) Catalogue of Endangered Languages, language loss is now happening faster than at any time in human history.

Here at Exeter, we have been working to not only explore these issues but actively work to reclaim, revitalise, document, and promote at-risk languages. We seek to turn the tide of language loss by teaching them to new generations, and exploring them through translation and research. We spoke to several academics to gain an insight into this work.



Exeter's Evening Language Programme

Our Language Centre runs evening courses that are open to our students, staff, the general public, and alumni (who receive a discounted rate). Whether you're a beginner or looking to advance your skills, they offer more than 15 languages through in-person and online opportunities.

Discover more online via language-centre.exeter.ac.uk/evening or contact the team at elp@exeter.ac.uk



Catalan

With more than 10 million speakers, Catalan is larger than many official EU languages. For this reason, Catalan sociolinguists prefer the term 'minoritised' to 'minority' (emphasising the power dynamic): it is spread across four countries (Spain, France, Italy and Andorra), yet it is always in competition with larger, 'official' languages.

Nevertheless, Catalan culture and literary tradition is rich and vibrant and is used in education, media, and public administration in the regions where it has official status. From our Department of Languages, Cultures and Visual Studies we work to promote awareness of Catalan culture and translation more widely. This is done through our visiting writer scheme with Barcelona and Exeter UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) City of Literatures, as well as through public events with the Devon and Exeter Institution, and Bookbag, Exeter's independent bookstore.

Dr Richard Mansell (pictured above) is a Senior Lecturer at Exeter and an elected member of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans. This is the Catalan national academy and the body legally tasked with protecting the language, and his research engages with the repercussions of multiculturalism in the urban environment on individuals, society and cultures.

Cornish

The Institute of Cornish Studies (ICS) is based on our Penryn Campus and includes research on the Cornish language and dialect. It is the home for all academic

research linked to Cornwall and seeks to understand the histories that define Cornwall, what it is like now and futures we can move towards. Their research themes are: Cornish Democracy Unit; Cornish language and dialect; Culture and heritage; Society and Economy; and The Cornish overseas.



Alongside this research, the ICS also carries out consultancy work regarding Cornish. In 2024, Cornwall Council's Cornish Language Office commissioned the ICS to undertake a major review of the 2015-2025 Cornish Language Strategy, Cornish Distinctiveness Impact Analysis, and Cornish National Minority Status.

The 2025 publication of Exeter academic, Dr Kensa Broadhurst's, *The Cornish Language In The Nineteenth Century*, also offers a major reinterpretation of the state of the Cornish language during the period it was popularly believed to have died out. (This was drawn from Kensa's PhD which was supervised at the ICS.)

Kurdish

There are an estimated 30-40 million Kurdish people living stateless, mainly living within Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Kurds are one of the Middle East's largest ethnic groups; preserving this culture, as well as advancing and promoting Kurdish languages and cultures is at the heart of our research activities.

Founded in 2006, the Centre for Kurdish Studies, based at our Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, is unique outside the Kurdish homelands for its commitment to studying Kurdish history, culture and language. Exeter is the only British university to have developed a strong research focus in this field. Alongside teaching Kurdish language (Sorani and Kurmanji dialects) our researchers have produced ground-breaking research on Kurdish literature, cultures, and societies.

Exeter is home to unique Kurdish archives which we have worked to make accessible through Digital Archives of the Middle East platform. Dr Farangis Ghaderi, director of the centre, noted that the Kurdish language's prominence on the platform contributes to its global academic visibility. She engages with translations and has co-edited *Women's Voices from Kurdistan: Selection of Kurdish Poetry (2021)*. Translation is significant for language revitalisation, and to make Kurdish rich literature known and accessible.

Endangered languages are not doomed – they can be revitalised; Exeter's commitment to speaking them, and to preserve their history plays a small part in this. Languages reflect all our multifaceted ways of being human. As such, sustaining language diversity means investing in a world with a wider range of knowledge and encouraging the connections that exist between the words.



Currents of success

In 2025, Emily Cunningham, an Honorary Associate Research Fellow at the University of Exeter, was awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List for 'services to marine conservation and coastal communities'.

“Society understands that the ocean is our life-support system.”

Emily is a multi-award-winning expert at the forefront of driving positive change for our waters and the communities that depend on them. Her love for the marine world began whilst growing up in Staffordshire. She had a CD-ROM about endangered species and remembers worrying about a future without marine mammals. So, aged eight, she decided she wanted to become a marine biologist when she grew up so that she could help conserve wildlife.

This dream became a reality. Emily was the first person in her family to go to university when she went to Bangor University to study Marine Biology. She has since worked in

ocean conservation for more than a decade.

Emily has been part of the Centre for Ecology and Conservation at our Penryn Campus since 2024 as an Honorary Associate Research Fellow. During this time, she's supervised students, given guest lectures in conservation-focused modules, and spoken at the annual Women in Conservation conference.

Her work doesn't stop there as she also leads the World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) global River Dolphin Rivers Initiative, which works across 12 countries in Asia and South America to conserve the six

remaining species of freshwater cetacean: five river dolphins and one freshwater porpoise. All six are endangered or critically endangered, with threats including drowning in fishing nets, habitat fragmentation, climate change, and direct killing.

In these 12 countries, WWF works with local communities, governments and partner organisations to try and reverse the river dolphin numbers decline. They've seen success in Pakistan, where the population of Indus river dolphins has doubled in recent decades, and in China, where the population of Yangtze Finless Porpoise has risen by 20%.



Her career has also curated moments that have taken her breath away and Emily notes that this was particularly the case working in Antarctica; from walking amongst thousands of penguins at a breeding colony (pictured bottom left) to getting to dive to the seabed in a submarine. Adding,

“ it was like being in a David Attenborough documentary and it only strengthened my resolve to protect our ocean.”

However, the seas and wildlife of Cornwall are still her favourite.

Looking to the future, Emily's dreams are as vast as the ocean itself. They encompass the realisation of her 15-year long dream to write a book about how we can all help save the ocean, which will become a reality in 2026. Emily adds that her wider dream is that “society understands that the ocean is our life-support system.”

For that to happen, we need the value of our ocean to be part of the curriculum and for more people to experience the wonder of the ocean first-hand. Emily is excited that an Ocean Literary Strategy for England is underway and that many local authorities are committing to ensuring that all school-aged children in their area get a first-hand experience of the ocean through passing a Motion for the Ocean. This is the world's first Local Government Ocean Recovery Declaration, co-founded by Emily, which has been passed by 38 local authorities and counting, and commits each council to taking action locally to benefit our rivers and seas.

Reflecting on how the general public can contribute to marine conservation, Emily suggests: “No matter where we live, we impact, and are impacted by, our ocean. People can help by writing to their local Council and asking them to pass a Motion for the Ocean. You can help the ocean by being ocean-friendly in what you put down the drain, buying sustainable locally-caught seafood, reducing your climate footprint (meat consumption, pension and banking, and travel are easy beginning areas), and



raising awareness of what our ocean does for us.”

So, how did it feel for Emily to find out she'd been awarded an MBE?

She explains that she didn't believe it at first and it wasn't until she rang the number on the letter and spoke to someone that she believed it was genuine. She adds, “Once it had settled in, it was a feeling of gratitude – both that my work had been recognised and that marine conservation was seen as a valuable contribution to our society.”

In April 2025, Emily received her MBE from the Princess Royal at Windsor Castle which she remembers as a “real pinch-me moment.” She wore a dress with sea creatures on it and took her parents and her husband, Daniel, as her guests. Emily shares, “I remember taking both my parents' hands as we walked out of the presentation room and us all welling up as the gravity of the moment hit us. As a working-class girl, it felt huge to be there as a recipient of an MBE.”

Find out more about Emily and keep up to date with her work: emilycunningham.co.uk



Going for gold: track superstar Innes FitzGerald

An Exeter student dubbed the ‘Greta Thunberg of Sport’ has been smashing European running records alongside her environmental activism. At just 19 years old, Innes FitzGerald, a second year Sport and Exercise Science student at the University of Exeter had already broken two European U20 records.



Nicknamed after climate activist, Greta Thunberg, by both *The Times* and *The Telegraph*, for her environmental stance, Innes has been turning down competitions where she believes a single race does not justify the emissions of the travel.

When she does travel, Innes chooses the most carbon-efficient routes – including a 20-hour journey she took by bus, train, and bike to reach Turin for the European Cross-Country Championships in 2022.

Innes has only been running for three years but is already faster than Olympic legend Paula Radcliffe was at the same age. Her coaching team now includes five-time Olympian Jo Pavey – who has won World, European, and Commonwealth medals – as well as Pavey’s husband and coach, Gavin. Jo was awarded an Honorary Degree by the University in 2016.

Initially making her mark in 2022, Innes smashed the UK under-17 women’s record to win SIAB Schools International and has been going from strength to strength ever since. In early February 2025, Innes competed in the 3000m race in Ostrava, as part of the World Athletics Indoor Tour Gold.

Using her growing platform, Innes has been aiming to raise awareness about the environmental cost of high-level sport. Her activism around the carbon footprint of sporting events earned her the Young Athlete of the Year award at the BBC Green Sport Awards in 2023.



In December 2025, Innes won gold at the European Cross-Country Championships, bagging her a triple gold win in her age bracket. Innes won the 4.5k race in Lagoa, Portugal for a third consecutive year, and this year it was with a time of 14.35. Her 32-second lead is the biggest margin of victory in women’s under-20 racing in the history of the events. It caps a year that has seen the rising star smash a number of under-20 records.

In January 2026, Innes broke the UK female record for completing the fastest Parkrun. She completed the 5km run, which took place in Exmouth on New Year’s Day, in 15 minutes and 27 seconds.

Innes has also been named British Under-20 Female Athlete of the Year by *Athletics Weekly*, the latest accolade for a runner committed to making sustainable choices.

Innes is also a SaSkCo scholar here at the University. SaSkCo Scholarships are awarded to male and female student athletes who have aspirations of competing at an Olympic Games, enabling recipients to balance the demands of training and competing in international-level sport with the time commitments of studying for a degree at a Russell Group university. SaSkCo Scholarships were initially supported by alumnus Simon Greenberg (History, 1990). Following Simon’s death in 2021, a group of his Exeter contemporaries led a fundraising appeal to enable the University to continue to award SaSkCo Scholarships in his memory.

Delivered through Exeter’s Performance Sport programme, SaSkCo Scholarships are tailored to the needs of the individual athlete and typically provide

funding towards scholars’ sporting expenses, alongside a comprehensive package of support services including sport-specific coaching and elite level strength and conditioning, physiotherapy, sports psychology, and nutrition support.

We recently caught up with Innes after a busy year of events: *“Following a long summer of racing where I ran under 20 European records in both the 3000m and 5000m, won double gold at the European U20 champs and made the GB team for the world athletics championships in Tokyo, I was relieved to have a couple of weeks off.*

“Luckily this coincided with the start of term, so I was able to ease back into uni life a bit more gently. But before I knew it, we were back training again, with the focus on the winter season and therefore cross country.

“Mid-November I raced my first cross country race in Cardiff before the European trials in Liverpool a couple of weeks later. Winning this gave me automatic selection for the GB team heading out to Lagoa, Portugal for the European Cross country Championships. Having won the European U20 title the past two years in a row there was quite a lot of pressure and expectation riding on me going into the championships. Training had been going well, however you never know what is going to happen. Luckily come race day I was feeling good and I was able to come away with the win! It was also my final year competing as an U20 so a nice way to close that chapter.”

We look forward to keeping an eye on what Innes achieves next!

Alumni on screen

Our alumni community is full of talented individuals and many of them have gone on since graduating to grace our television and cinema screens through their acting careers. We're taking a moment to highlight several of our alumni actors.



Baroness Floella Benjamin OM, DBE DL (Hon DLitt, 2006)

Floella has enjoyed a busy career as an actress, singer, presenter, writer, politician and campaigner. She has also experienced strong links to Exeter as its former Chancellor from 2006 – 2016.

In her time on screen she is most well known as one of the presenters of the television series *Play School*. Between 2007 and 2011, she guest-starred in the *Doctor Who* spin-off *The Sarah Jane Adventures* as Professor Rivers of the Pharos Institute. Floella received her OBE in the 2001 New Year Honours list for services to broadcasting and at that time, she was chairperson of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA). She also won a Special Lifetime Achievement award from BAFTA in 2004 and, in 2024, was awarded a BAFTA fellowship (its highest honour) for her outstanding contribution to television.



Cush Jumbo OBE (Hon DLitt, 2024)

Cush Jumbo is a British actress and writer best known for playing Lucca Quinn in *The Good Wife* and in the subsequent *The Good Fight*. She starred as the lead – Megan Pierce – in the television mini-series *Stay Close* in 2021 and appeared in shows such as *Torchwood*, *Vera* and *The Beast Must Die*.

She was Olivier nominated for the role of Marc Anthony in an all-female production of *Julius Caesar* and in 2023/24 appeared as Lady Macbeth opposite David Tennant in *Macbeth*. She was awarded an OBE in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours List for her services to drama. In 2024, she was given an honorary degree by the University to mark her astonishing acting career.



Julian Richings (English and Drama, 1977)

With an incredible career, Julian's face has been a familiar one on our screens.

After graduating from Exeter, he performed extensively in theatres across the UK, and in 1984 settled in North America where he became an established presence in Toronto's theatre and film scene. A familiar figure in horror and genre films he starred in *Anything For Jackson*, for which he received a BITS (Blood In The Snow) Award. He has also appeared in Robert Eggers' *The Witch* and the blockbusters *X-Men: The Last Stand*, *Man of Steel*, and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. Among his hundreds of television appearances, Julian is perhaps best known for recurring roles in Stephen King's *Kingdom Hospital* (Otto), *Patriot* (Peter Ichabod) and perhaps most significantly as Death in *Supernatural*.



Kate Fleetwood (Drama, 2014)

Alumna Kate has shone on the stage, television and film with nominations for a Tony Award and an Olivier Award (Best Actress in a Musical) for her theatre performances in *Lady Macbeth* and *London Road* respectively.

Her film roles include Mary Cattermole in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* and Alice Riley in *The Negotiator*.

Within television she can be found in *The Wheel of Time* as Liandrin Guirale, *Fate: The Winx Saga* as Queen Luna, as Clara in 2024's comedy *Big Mood*, as well as roles in *Victoria*, *War and Peace*, and *The People Next Door*.



Marc Wootton (Drama, 1996)

Drama alum Marc is an actor, comedian and writer. He is best known as the creator of the beloved Mr Poppy character from the *Nativity!* film franchise.

He also lent his voice acting talents to the character of Peter the elf in *Arthur Christmas*, and featured in *The Bad Education Movie*. Marc has additionally starred in television series including *My New Best Friend*, as Moose in *The Completely Made-Up Adventures of Dick Turpin*, *La La Land*, Duncan in *Gavin & Stacey*, and *High & Dry*.



Stephen Dillane (History and Politics, 1978)

After his Exeter days, alumnus Stephen has gone on to star in diverse roles in film and television. Stephen found critical success on the stage, and by the late 1980s, he had ventured into screen acting. His film career took off in the 1990s, with significant roles such as Horatio in *Hamlet* and *Welcome to Sarajevo*.

His portrayal of Virginia Woolf's husband, Leonard, in *The Hours* earned him critical recognition, while his role as Stannis Baratheon on *Game of Thrones* solidified his status in mainstream entertainment. Throughout his career, he has also starred in various television series, including *The Crown*, *The Tunnel* - for which he won an International Emmy Award - and British-made *Alex Rider*. In 2024, Stephen shone in the Netflix comedy *Kaos*, in which he played the Greek god Prometheus.



Vanessa Kirby (English, 2009)

Alumna Vanessa is a stage, television and film actress who has had a range of roles in her acting career. She is well known for her role as Princess Margaret in Peter Morgan's Netflix series *The Crown*, for which she won the BAFTA Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role in a Television Series in 2018.

Vanessa was nominated for an Oscar in 2021 for her role in *Pieces of a Woman* which told the tale of a women struggling with the emotional impact of a heart-breaking home birth. She also starred as Estella in the BBC adaptation of *Great Expectations*, Joanna in Richard Curtis' romantic comedy *About Time*, featured in the *Mission: Impossible* series and *Fast & Furious: Hobbs & Shaw*. One of her recent big screen moments included starring as Sue Storm/The Invisible Woman in *The Fantastic Four: First Steps*.

In conversation with... Jinisha Sharma

(Business and Management, 2018)

Jinisha Sharma is a business graduate from the University of Exeter. After Exeter, she pursued her further studies before returning to India to focus on sports management. Jinisha is the Director of Capri Sports, the sports business arm of Capri Global, a major Indian financial services firm. Capri Sports aims to promote accessibility, equality and growth in the sports ecosystem in India.



Born in the year 1998, in India, Jinisha has been inspirational in promoting women's cricket, driving sustainable investments, and supporting social impact initiatives. Her vision emphasises empowering female athletes and expanding opportunities in Indian sports.

We loved getting the chance to catch up with her!

Your journey into sports ownership and management is quite unique. Could you share a bit about where you started?

In my final year at Exeter, I took two contrasting finance courses, one on traditional finance and another exploring finance through social lenses (gender, class, race, social impact), which I found fascinating and something clicked in me to pursue this career further within the sports industry. I loved everything about that class and I felt like a lot of things in my life were coming together, so I knew that that was my calling. I wanted to do something that was going to be in the realm of finance and make a positive impact. I started working for Capri Global in the Environmental, Social and Governance team at the time, where I still do some work today. Subsequently I took a sabbatical to finish my masters, post which I decided to move into sports.

Looking back at your time at Exeter, which experiences or lessons have most influenced your career and leadership style?

I had a very interesting move to Exeter because I didn't do my first year there. I was a transfer student, so I did my first year in India and I transferred to Exeter in my second year, which was a bit of a challenge as there aren't many students who do that. I had to figure how I was going to find things I was interested in. I saw an events coordinator job advertised for the UNICEF Society, which I applied for and was successful. Working with that society and meeting so many different people was a huge part of where I discovered managing teams, managing workload, and learning more about leading with empathy. It was an honour that I got to lead the society, next year as the President. I wanted to do things with purpose and lead activity

which has a greater goal; all things I learned about myself whilst I was a student.

What have been the biggest challenges you've faced in leading a major sports franchise, and how have you navigated them?

I think one of the biggest challenges was that I wasn't coming with experience of having worked in sports. There is quite a difference in terms of how you operate a sports business and I had to learn on the job and do so quickly. For me it was extremely important that I was doing the day-to-day jobs as well as learning more about the organisation, while also building the trust of the team. I was very much there in the trenches with them when we were problem solving and they could see me as a team player. I also wanted them to know I was there to support them, and at the same time challenge them as a Gen X leader in the company with fresh ideas.

Women's representation in sports leadership is growing but still limited. How do you see your role in shaping opportunities for women in this space?

Currently the number of women in sports that you can bring on board is very limited. And I think we're all equally part of the problem, because we're not scaling up fast enough or giving women the experience and opportunities we should. I am trying to balance this out by giving more opportunities to women. It's not something that can be taught in a classroom, you need to be there to come in and experience it in a team environment. I think there's a lot more that needs to be done and we're definitely still figuring it out.

Capri Sports focuses heavily on community engagement. Which initiatives are you personally most passionate about, and why?

What I'm really enjoying, is seeing the outcome of some of the school programmes that we're doing. The biggest gap when we look at why there is a lower percentage of girls and women in sports, is because for the longest time they've been watching men play sports. The representation for women was very poor, but luckily this is starting to change. The school



An overview and understanding of the whole sports ecosystem is essential because when companies are hiring, they are looking for individuals that bring a range of skills to the table to work in a sports company. It's a great industry to be a part of, and I hope more young people get involved!"

programmes play a huge role in this as they curate experiences and opportunities for young women and girls. We started this initiative last year, and we went to 11 cities and multiple schools to start looking at how we can scale this up.

What skills do you believe the next generation of sports executives need, and what advice would you give current Exeter students aspiring to join this industry?

I would say that it's very important to be as intersectional as you can be. An overview and understanding of the whole sports ecosystem is essential because when companies are hiring, they are looking for individuals that bring a range of skills to the table to work in a sports company. It's a great industry to be a part of, and I hope more young people get involved!



Protecting minds

It is raining steadily outside when Professor Anne Corbett arrives for filming at the Research, Innovation, Learning and Development building – the centre of the University of Exeter’s health education and research. Inside, studio lights are being adjusted and researchers move efficiently around a working laboratory where experiments cannot be paused for the cameras.



This is the first day of filming for Exeter’s new dementia research campaign. “We’re at a genuinely exciting point,” Anne says, during a pause between takes. “Exeter can boast some of the world’s leading dementia researchers. We have invested in critical resources and people to answer some of the toughest challenges in dementia. For the first time, we have real momentum – better tools, better data, and a clearer understanding of how dementia risk can be reduced. Earlier detection is becoming possible, prevention is no longer theoretical, and thousands of people are already contributing to that progress from their own homes.”

Anne, who leads Exeter’s PROTECT study (Platform for Research Online to Investigate Genetics and Cognition in Ageing), has been asked to front the campaign not simply because of her expertise, but because her work sits at the point where research, prevention and real-world impact now meet.

PROTECT began more than a decade ago with a simple concept: participants complete highly sensitive cognitive tests each year, share information about their health and lifestyle, and provide a DNA sample by post. Everything can be done remotely at home, on a phone, tablet or computer.

What followed exceeded expectations. Today, more than 30,000 people in the UK are involved, contributing to one of the richest datasets on brain ageing in the world. “We never expected engagement on this scale or with this longevity,” Anne says. “People don’t just take part – they stay, year after year. They are invested in the research and are passionate to shape it.”

The scale of PROTECT has unlocked discoveries that would once have been impossible. Its data has helped researchers understand how factors such as hearing loss, sleep, physical activity and lifelong learning influence dementia risk. Other studies have shown that even where genetic risk is higher, lifestyle factors such as smoking and inactivity can outweigh an unfavourable genetic profile.



Some of the findings are surprisingly tangible. A philanthropically funded Exeter trial exploring beetroot juice – rich in nitrates – has produced promising results, strengthening the case for prevention through simple, everyday lifestyle choices. PROTECT research has also highlighted the role of lifelong cognitive stimulation – such as brain training or learning a language or musical instrument – in supporting better health outcomes in later life.

A machine hums quietly in the background. It doesn’t look dramatic, but it can process dozens of biological samples at once – a task that would once have taken days by hand. “Technology has transformed what’s possible,” Anne explains. “When I did my PhD, we could only process a couple of samples at a time. Now we’re working at a completely different scale.”



Perhaps the most transformative work, though, lies ahead. Exeter is helping pioneer blood biomarkers that could detect dementia risk using a simple finger-prick test at home. Combined with computerised cognitive testing, early studies show that this at-home testing produces signals that align well with blood tests and brain scans that would usually be done in a clinic. Yet they are far cheaper and easier to do at scale.

“This is the most disruptive technology we’re working on,” Anne says. “It could genuinely change how we detect Alzheimer’s and other dementias – earlier, and more efficiently.”

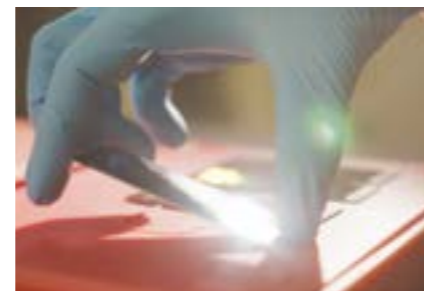
That work feeds directly into Exeter’s REACTIVE app, a brain health monitoring programme designed to identify subtle, progressive cognitive decline, allowing people to be flagged and triaged far earlier than is currently possible. Participants showing faster-than-expected decline could be referred back to their GP, opening a pathway to earlier diagnosis and treatment.

“We know that most people with early cognitive impairment are sitting at home unsupported,” Anne says. “We simply can’t bring everyone into clinics. So we have to rethink the pathway, and that’s what REACTIVE is about.”

There is optimism in the lab that day, and a sense of shared purpose. Exeter’s approach to dementia research is unique, collaborative by nature, and spanning prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care. *“There’s never been a better time,” Anne says. “While big pharmaceutical companies are investing more in dementia drug development, Exeter is perfectly positioned to provide solutions to the complementary challenge of preventing and reducing the risk of dementia. This is where we can make the most difference.”*

As filming wraps up, the conversation turns to participation. PROTECT depends on people. And while engagement has been remarkable, Anne is clear about what’s needed next. *“We need our participants to reflect the diversity of the global population,” she says. “If we want research that works for everyone, we need everyone involved.”*

That inclusive and hopeful invitation sits at the heart of Exeter’s work. Breakthroughs don’t happen overnight. Research advances because people show up, year after year, believing that we all have a part to play in creating a positive future for everyone.



Watch. Support. Take part.

Watch the film and please get involved in protecting minds and shaping the future of dementia research.

exeter.ac.uk/protecting-minds



Powered by philanthropy

Behind every research breakthrough is a brilliant mind that needs the opportunity to shine. At Exeter, philanthropic support plays a vital role in turning promising ideas into evidence – and in supporting the people who make that progress possible.

Dr Joshua Harvey (PhD in Medical Studies, 2024) was supported by a scholarship at Exeter, where he conducted cutting-edge research into the intricate mechanisms underlying Alzheimer’s disease. His work sits at the earliest stages of the research pipeline, helping to build the foundations for more personalised treatments in the future.

“My scholarship gave me the ability to live and work at the University, along with an opportunity to learn new techniques and strengthen my skills as a researcher,” Josh says. “I am hugely grateful.”

From molecular biology to nutraceutical trials, philanthropy enables researchers to explore bold questions – often at an early, high-risk stage – accelerating discoveries that now sit at the heart of Exeter’s dementia research.

That support is driven by people like Tim Rault-Smith (Computer

Science, 1990), a donor to Exeter’s Dementia Research Fund, whose motivation is rooted in personal experience (pictured right).

“When my mother first showed signs of dementia, I realised how uncertain and overwhelming those early stages could be,” Tim says. “I wanted my donation to do something practical – to help people get answers sooner and improve the experience for families like mine. Exeter’s research gives me hope that future generations will have better ways to detect dementia earlier.”

Today, Tim’s generosity is helping to accelerate vital research into detection and diagnosis – strengthening the evidence that underpins new tools, technologies and pathways, and connecting the work of researchers like Josh with the families who stand to benefit from earlier insight and intervention.



Exeter’s research gives me hope that future generations will have better ways to detect dementia earlier.”

Tim Rault-Smith (Computer Science, 1990)

Pre-2010



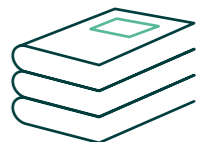
Only one dementia-focused researcher at Exeter

Today



Exeter home to a world-class dementia research community working on prevention, treatment and care

Key Stats



150+ peer-reviewed publications from PROTECT alone



37,000+ people recruited to clinical trials during 10 years



15,000+ DNA samples collected for genetic research

Major milestones

- **2014 PROTECT study launched** – now 50,000+ participants worldwide and more than 2.5 million cognitive assessments conducted
- **2019 DEMON (Deep Dementia Phenotyping) Network initiative** established by Exeter – now a global community of 1,600+ members across six continents connecting AI specialists with dementia clinicians and academics
- **2020 The Mireille Gillings Neuroimaging Centre** opens – a purpose-built facility with state-of-the-art MRI and PET-CT scanners for research, clinical diagnosis and therapy
- **2022 Exeter awarded first new Biomedical Research Centre designation** in almost 20 years and named an Alzheimer’s Society Centre of Excellence
- **2023 REACTIVE programme launches** – focusing on earlier detection and triage, with clinical study commencing in 2026

Supporting your success

On completing your studies, you have joined a community of University of Exeter alumni, a supportive global community willing to help you achieve your full potential. The careers support you received whilst studying also continues after you graduate. Take a look below at what's on offer to you as an alum and visit our website for more information.

Careers services

The Career Zone's goal is to help prepare you for life and work after university, offering quality assistance and advice which continues once you've graduated. As an Exeter alum, you are entitled to all of the fantastic resources that we offer, as well as access to the Career Zone support for three years after you leave and some elements of our online support forever.

Job opportunities for graduates

The Career Zone supports you as an Exeter alum to discover employers and opportunities, submit applications, and attend

career fairs and other events. We can help you find the jobs that you're looking for. You also have access to Exeter's Graduate Business Partnership scheme which promotes early-career roles at the University and with employers in the South West and beyond. The best way to stay up to date with the latest opportunities is to join the bulletin which is issued every Friday.

Find out more about alumni access to Career Zone systems online: exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/benefits/careerssupport

Events and webinars

As an alum, you will be invited to join our variety of events which take place both in person and virtually throughout the year. Previous

topics have included 'building your personal brand', 'lessons from alumni in business', and 'job hunting in a difficult economic climate'. A full list of upcoming events can be found online: exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/events. Additionally a list of previous recordings can be found on our website: exeter.ac.uk/alumnisupporters/events/eventrecordings

Mentoring and ask an alum

Exeter's Career Mentor Scheme is one of the largest and most successful employability schemes in the UK. Exeter graduates up to three years post-graduation can apply to be matched with an experienced professional to meet regularly for sessions during a six-month period. You will gain sector insights, and advice and guidance that can accelerate your confidence and help you to make informed decisions about your future career. Visit our website to learn more: exeter.ac.uk/students/careers/employability-schemes/careermentorscheme

As an alternative to the six-month mentoring scheme, you can utilise Ask An Alum to connect with another one of our alumni to answer your questions in a shorter email exchange. This is available for you up to three years post-graduation. Learn more about Ask An Alum online: exeter.ac.uk/students/careers/employability-schemes/aaa



Student Circus

The University has partnered with Student Circus, a global job-readiness platform for international students and alumni. Student Circus was founded and created by international alumni of UK universities who understand the challenges of being an international graduate in a tough labour market, both in the UK and back in your home countries.

Through Student Circus you can look for pre-filtered UK sponsored jobs (via the Graduate Visa

Route or Skilled Worker Visa), check immigration guides, attend webinars and online events, plus read blog posts on key issues that are relevant to international graduates. As a valued alum, you have two years free access to Student Circus and you can sign up, using any email, via their website: exeter.studentcircus.com

Other Career Zone support for international graduates can be found online: exeter.ac.uk/students/careers/jobsandworkplacements/internationalstudents

Postgraduate/ Further study

The University of Exeter invests heavily in scholarships for talented prospective postgraduate students. We offer a 20% discount as part of our Alumni Scholarship Award to any alumni who wish to continue their studies with the University of Exeter and details of this can be found online: exeter.ac.uk/study/funding/award/?id=5609. The UK government also offers postgraduate loans and other funding opportunities. Learn more about our available funding and how to apply on our website: exeter.ac.uk/study/funding





University
of Exeter

THANK YOU

“The continued generosity of the Exeter community – measured in time and funding – creates a profound and far-reaching impact. From funding life-saving medical research to supporting the next generation of Exeter graduates, your support drives teaching and research excellence across the University and beyond.”

This philanthropic commitment, from supporters in over 95 countries, reflects the strength and reach of our shared mission. Thank you for being part of Exeter’s exceptional community.”

Dr Shaun Curtis, Director of Advancement