



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Exeter
City of
Literature

Designated
UNESCO Creative City
in 2019

Exeter City of Literature

Made of
our stories

Press Pack



umber win
beneath scented
morning dew that glist
birds sang as if every
Mr Pickwick fell in

Contents

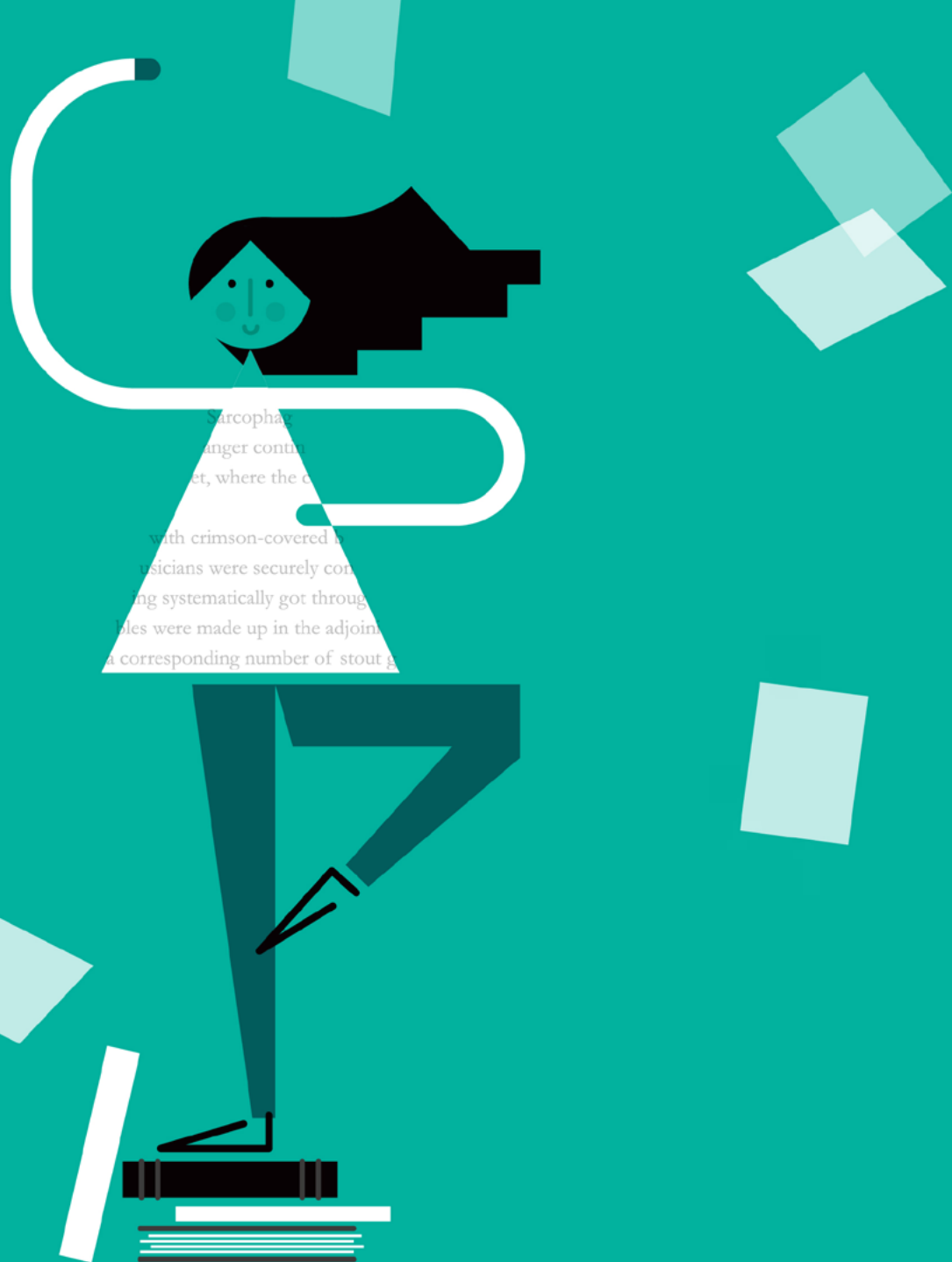
Welcome. We are Exeter City of Literature, and we are Made of Our Stories.

UNESCO Cities of Literature

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UNESCO - Fast Facts

The UNESCO Cities of Literature Network has

39 within **30** across **6**
cities **countries** **continents.**

The UNESCO Cities of Literature network boasts a combined population of over 26 million, 1250 libraries, 130 literary festivals, over 1200 bookshops, the world's oldest book, the world's tallest monument to a writer, the world's first Master of Fine Arts Creative Writing programme, the oldest university in central Europe, and the only train station named after a book.

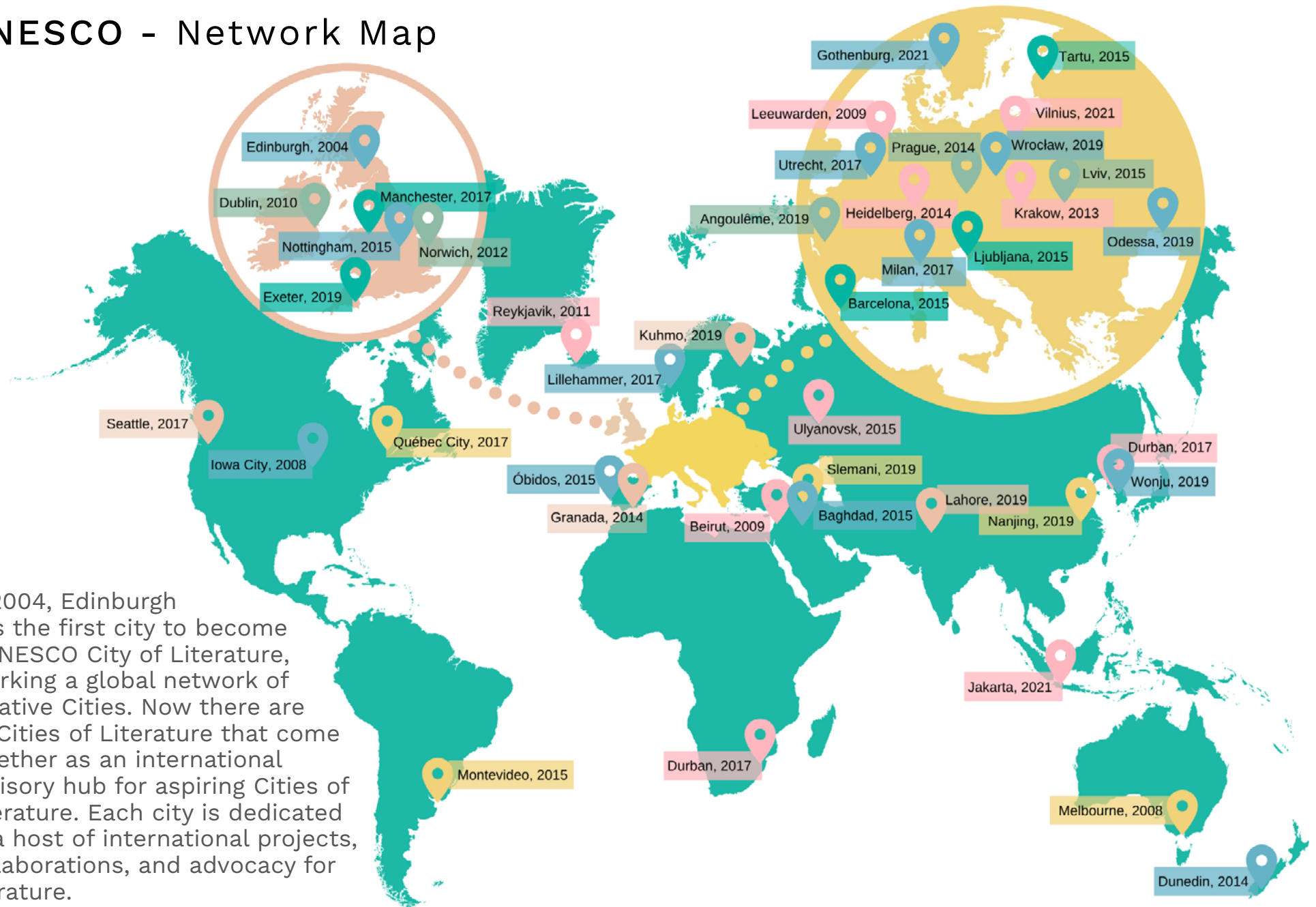
The range of activity is impressive, from the world's largest book festival to the most unusual literary hotels. Individual authors from the

cities are commemorated in public celebrations such as Bloomsday and Robert Louis Stevenson Day. Poetry is celebrated in the Young Poet Laureate scheme, poetry entryphones, live literature performances, and several poetry festivals in different cities. Celebrations of heritage – from paved walkways to statues and bridges named after writers – work alongside citywide programmes to nurture new readers.

Emerging writers' festivals and programmes are championed by the cities, as well as several children's

literature festivals, reading initiatives, and library campaigns. Numerous prizes, writing residencies, and scholarships play a large part in advancing the creative output of the cities, celebrating works of translation, poetry, fiction, design, illustration, and much more. A Book-Flood Before Christmas, book fairs, curated tours, A Writer's Studio, and the Children's Culture House - these are just a few of the activities and projects that recognise the importance of books, publishing, reading, and writing, in each of our cities of literature.

UNESCO - Network Map



In 2004, Edinburgh was the first city to become a UNESCO City of Literature, sparking a global network of Creative Cities. Now there are 39 Cities of Literature that come together as an international advisory hub for aspiring Cities of Literature. Each city is dedicated to a host of international projects, collaborations, and advocacy for literature.

UNESCO - UNESCO Creative Cities Network

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.

The 246 cities that currently make up this network represent 28 countries across six continents, and work together towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.

There are 7 Creative City designations: Craft and Folk Art; Design; Film; Gastronomy; Literature; Media Arts; and Music. The designations are granted in perpetuity, and operate across four-year programme cycles.

In November 2019, Exeter joined a global network of 39 cities that specialise in Literature. The other UK Cities of Literature are Norwich, Nottingham, Manchester and Edinburgh. The UNESCO designation 'City of Literature' recognises excellence and places an obligation on cities to nurture and support their artform and collaborate internationally. This is achieved by sharing best practice, supporting freedom of speech, and instigating projects that ensure literature reaches as wide and diverse an audience as possible, locally and internationally.

By becoming a Creative City, Exeter has made a commitment to UNESCO's Sustainability Goals, specifically:

- Good Health and Wellbeing
- Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Reduced Inequalities
- Partnerships for the Goals

The City of Literature designation gives us the opportunity to partner with the other 38 Cities of Literature globally and provide opportunities for new projects and commissions because of these new relationships.



UNESCO - Shared Opportunities



Košice, 2021

Media Arts Residency

Košice UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts offered media artists a two-month stay in Košice, Slovakia.

This residency created space for a media artist from one of the UNESCO Creative Cities to develop their own artistic project around the topic of 'Human Responsibility.'



Granada, 2021

Writers In Residence

Granada UNESCO City of Literature offered writers a month stay in Granada, Spain.

This residency gave emerging writers the opportunity to participate in the city's literary life - arranging contact with local writers, and getting them involved in workshops and teaching activities.



Bucheon, 2021

International Literacy Day

On October 8th, nine UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature celebrated International Literacy Day Together.

Recognizing the essential role of literature, its ability to enhance life outcomes and its part in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the cities used this special day to coordinate their actions.

Check out current
creative opportunities

Creative Opportunities



UNESCO - Who are the Cities of Literature?

2004

Edinburgh (UK)



2008

Iowa City (USA)



Melbourne (Australia)



2010

Dublin (Ireland)



2011

Reykjavik (Iceland)



2012

Norwich (UK)



2013

Kraków (Poland)



2014

Dunedin (New Zealand)



Granada (Spain)



Heidelberg (Germany)



Prague (Czech Republic)



2015

Baghdad (Iraq)



Barcelona (Spain)



Ljubljana (Slovenia)



Lviv (Ukraine)



Montevideo (Uruguay)



Nottingham (UK)



Óbidos (Portugal)



Tartu (Estonia)



Ulyanovsk (Russia)



2017

- Bucheon (South Korea) →
 - Durban (South Africa) →
 - Lillehammer (Norway) →
 - Manchester (UK) →
 - Milan (Italy) →
 - Québec City (Canada) →
 - Seattle (USA) →
 - Utrecht (Netherlands) →
-

2019

- Angoulême (France) →
 - Beirut (Lebanon) →
 - Exeter (UK) →
 - Kuhmo (Finland) →
 - Lahore (Pakistan) →
 - Leeuwarden (Netherlands) →
 - Nanjing (China) →
 - Odessa (Ukraine) →
 - Slemani (Iraq) →
 - Wonju (South Korea) →
 - Wrocław (Poland) →
-

2021

- Gothenburg (Sweden) →
 - Jakarta (Indonesia) →
 - Vilnius (Lithuania) →
-





Exeter - About Us

In November 2019, Exeter joined a global network of 39 cities that specialise in Literature.

Exeter was awarded the UNESCO designation in recognition of the city's wide variety of historical assets, including The Exeter Book, a 10th-century collection of old English verse, and itself recognised by UNESCO as one of the world's principle cultural artefacts.

The designation also acknowledges the strong connections between literature and wellbeing and the strength of the literary and cultural partnerships in and around Exeter.

The City of Literature designation is a positive step for Exeter, and provides us with opportunities to celebrate, amplify and nurture the city's creative energies, so that everyone feels they can get involved and reap the benefits.

FACT ONE

Exeter Cathedral is home to The Exeter Book, a 10th-century anthology of Anglo-Saxon poetry and riddles and the largest known collection of Old English literature still in existence.



FACT TWO

The Devon and Exeter Institution, an independent library located at 7 Cathedral Close, can claim having the earliest known professional woman librarian: Eliza Squance beat 20 male applicants to the job in 1849, though her appointment was conditional on her remaining unmarried.

FACT THREE

Allen Lane, the founder of Penguin Books, was inspired to create the paperback imprint while waiting at St David's train station. Lane was returning from a meeting with Agatha Christie in Devon in 1934 when he found himself at Exeter St David's with nothing to read. He conceived of paperback editions of literature of proven quality which would be cheap enough to be sold from a vending machine.



FACT FOUR

The University of Exeter's Special Collections department hosts the archives of famous writers such as William Golding, Ted Hughes, Charles Causley, Agatha Christie, Daphne du Maurier, and Sir John Betjeman.

FACT FIVE

Exeter Library received more than half a million visits in 2019, making it one of the busiest buildings in the city and the 18th most visited public library in Great Britain. In the same year, the Library loaned more than a quarter of a million items, the fifth most issues in any public library in Great Britain over that period.



FACT SIX

Charles Dickens covered the Exeter City Council elections in 1835. Dickens later rented a cottage for his parents in Alphington and took libation at the Turk's Head Inn on the High Street.

Exeter - Our Vision & Values

Our Vision

The vision for Exeter City of Literature is for Exeter and the wider region to be a place of readers and a beacon for the literary arts. Across all art forms and all communities, we aim to:

- Share a love of words and storytelling.
- Amplify our creative residents and provide them with meaningful opportunities.
- Invite others around the world to share in the making and consumption of our literary arts.

The underpinnings of everything we do must fall under at least one of the following categories:

- Wellbeing
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Global outlook, grounded in a sense of place

We are Made of Our Stories.

Our Values

City of Literature staff, Partnership Network members, and collaborative partners will:

- Treat all individuals and groups with dignity, respect, fairness, and compassion so that we create an environment that is welcoming to all.
- Strive for excellence in all that we do, pushing boundaries and reimagining realities wherever possible.
- Champion a literary culture and the literary arts in and around Exeter, expecting the highest quality and innovative imagination in our programming, projects, and funding support.
- Uphold values that oppose racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, ageism, religious prejudice, and other covert and overt forms of discrimination and bias.
- Recognize that words and actions matter and understand that the absence of words and actions also matter. Impact is just as crucial as intent.
- Appreciate that becoming truly inclusive and respectful is a continuous process and that we all act in imperfect ways sometimes. Remain self-aware of our own limitations and flaws, recognizing when we are not at our best and communicating openly to resolve problems.
- Ensure the experiences, values, and needs of under-represented, minority, and/or oppressed groups are represented and increased in policy, programs, practices, sponsorship, and Advisory Group membership.

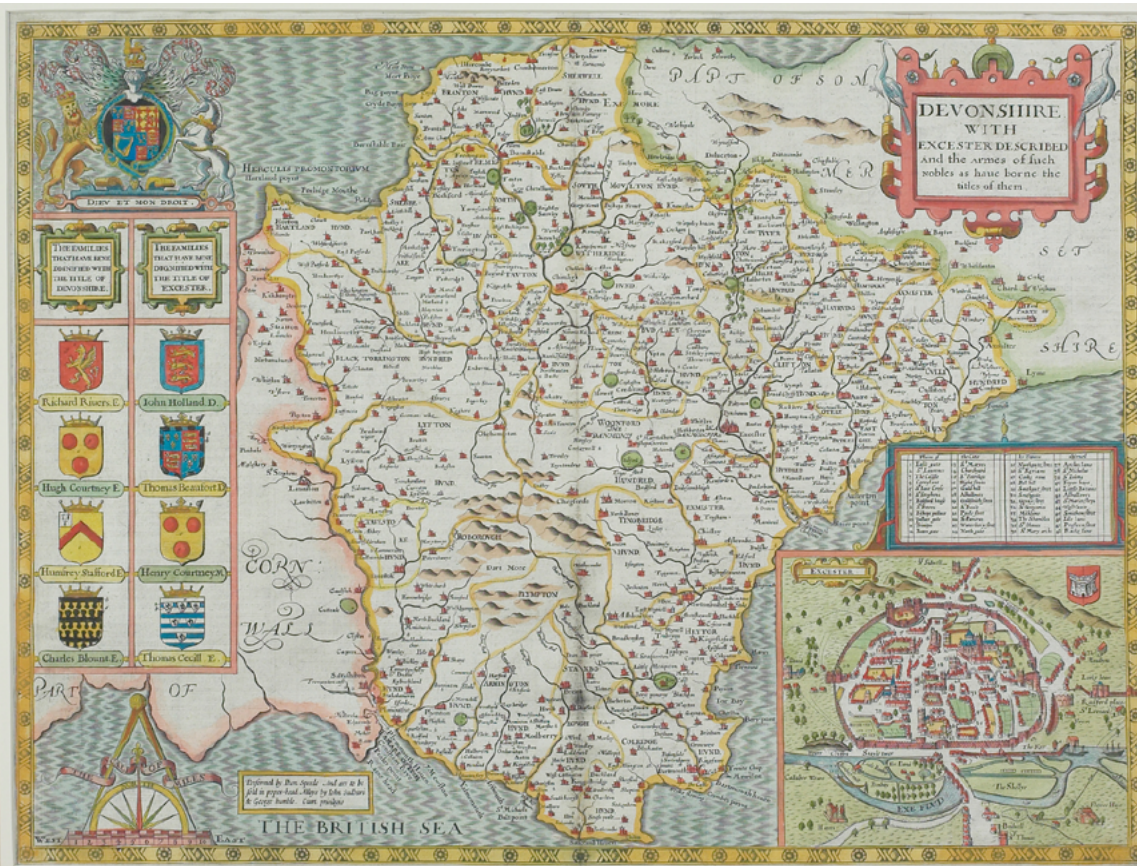
Exeter - Literary Devon

The Exeter Book

Exeter Cathedral is home to The Exeter Book, a 10th-century anthology of Anglo-Saxon poetry and riddles. The book was donated to the Cathedral library in 1072, and is the largest known collection of Old English literature still in existence, predating Beowulf. In 2016, UNESCO recognised the book as one of the 'world's principal cultural artefacts'.

Powderham Castle

The Courtenay family were consumers and collectors of books as far back as the 1400s, at a time when even the Royal Family had not yet established a library. The family commissioned the Courtenay Cartulary, which contains one of the earliest histories of Devon and traces the building of castles, abbeys, and Exeter Cathedral. In 1740, local craftsmen—including John Channon, a renowned furniture maker from Ottery St. Mary—fabricated the upstairs library at Powderham Castle showing early expression of private display of books in the home.



Independent Library and First Woman Librarian

The Devon and Exeter Institution (DEI) is a subscription library founded in 1813 for 'the general diffusion of science, literature and the arts'. Located at 7 Cathedral Close, in what was formerly the city townhouse of the Courtenay family of Powderham Castle, the DEI houses more than 45,000 books and periodicals, a great many relating to the history of Devon.

The Devon & Exeter Institution admitted women, unusual for independent libraries at the time. In 1849, Eliza Squance beat 20 male applicants to succeed her father John Squance as librarian for the Institution. She ranks as the earliest known professional woman librarian in England, though her appointment was made conditional on her remaining unmarried.

University of Exeter

The University of Exeter's Special Collections department hosts the archives of famous writers such as William Golding, Ted Hughes, Charles Causley, Agatha Christie, Daphne du Maurier, and Sir John Betjeman. The Creative Writing department has strong links with a number of African cities, crucial to UNESCO's Sustainable Development goals, and the university offers a master's degree in Publishing.

JK Rowling

JK Rowling, creator of Harry Potter, studied French and Classics at the University of Exeter, graduating in 1986.

Penguin Books

Allen Lane, the founder of Penguin Books, was inspired to create the paperback imprint while waiting at St David's train station. As the Managing Director of Bodley Head, publisher of Agatha Christie's novels, Lane was returning from a meeting with the mystery author in Devon in 1934 when he found himself at Exeter St David's with nothing to read. He conceived of paperback editions of literature of proven quality which would be cheap enough to be sold from a vending machine – and Penguin Books was founded in 1935 as part of Bodley Head.



Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy, a Dorset native, set most of his novels in the South West. Four of his books – The Trumpet Major, Jude the Obscure, A Pair of Blue Eyes and The Woodlanders – include scenes in Exonbury, which was Hardy's name for Exeter.

Sabine Baring-Gould and Bram Stoker

Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924) – a writer, scholar, priest, and collector of folk tales and music – was born in St Sidwell's, Exeter. It's said that his *Book of Were-Wolves* (1865) and his vampire story *Margery of Quether* (1892) inspired Bram Stoker's thinking when writing *Dracula*. Stoker repaid the inspiration by having the character of Jonathan Harker leave for Transylvania from an office on Cathedral Close. Bram Stoker's brother, George Stoker, died in 1920 in Reed Hall at the University of Exeter (which was then a hospital) and is buried in Exeter Higher Cemetery.

Agatha Christie

Famous crime writer Dame Agatha Christie was born in Torquay in Devon. Known throughout the world as the 'Queen of Crime', Torquay's most famous resident has sold more than two billion copies and her books have been translated into over 100 languages. She remains the unrivalled, most successful female playwright of our time. Christie lived in Devon for much of her life and purchased a holiday home, Greenway House, near Brixham, in 1938. As a result of her love and extensive knowledge of the area, many of her books were either set locally, such as *And Then There Were None*, or were inspired by the surrounding Devon scenery.

Exeter Library

Exeter Library received more than half a million visits in 2019, making it one of the busiest buildings in the city and the 18th most visited public library in Great Britain. In the same year, the Library loaned more than a quarter of a million items, the fifth most issues in any public library in Great Britain over that period.



Charles Dickens

In 1835, Charles Dickens covered the Exeter City Council elections for the newspaper he worked at. During this time, he became friends with Thomas Latimer, editor of the *Western Times*, based at 143 Fore Street, which is where Dickens stayed whenever he came to Exeter. Dickens later rented a cottage for his parents in Alphington and took libation at the Turk's Head Inn on the High Street.

Hilary Mantel

Hilary Mantel is the two-time winner of the Man Booker Prize for her bestselling novels *Wolf Hall* and its sequel, *Bring Up the Bodies*. *Wolf Hall* has been translated into 36 languages, *Bring Up the Bodies* into 31, and sales for both books have reached over 5 million copies worldwide. She is the author of fourteen books, including *A Place of Greater Safety*, *Beyond Black*, and the memoir *Giving Up the Ghost*. In 2014 she was appointed DBE. She lives in Budleigh Salterton in Devon and holds an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Exeter. Mantel is Patron of the Budleigh Literary Festival.

Luke Kennard

Luke Kennard, poet, novelist and critic, received his bachelor's, master's, and PhD at the University of Exeter. While studying, he wrote monologues for drama students to perform at a fortnightly sketch revue in a pub basement. *The Solex Brothers* (winner of the 2005 Eric Gregory Award) and *the Harbour Beyond the Movie* (shortlisted for the Forward Prize in 2007) were both published during his time in Exeter.

Phillip Reeve

Award-winning illustrator and writer Philip Reeve also lives on Dartmoor. In 2013, he created *The Exeter Riddles*, an exclusive short story for the Animated Exeter Festival that inspired an interactive street game in which history 'leaked' into the contemporary world. *The Exeter Riddles* was inspired by the many riddles in *The Exeter Book*.



Michael Morpurgo

Dartmoor resident Sir Michael Morpurgo OBE is an author, poet, playwright, and librettist, who is known best for his children's novels, including *War Horse* (1982). His work is noted for its 'magical storytelling' and for vivid settings such as Devon and the Cornish coast. Morpurgo became the third Children's Laureate, from 2003 to 2005. He was an ambassador of our Exeter City of Literature UNESCO bid.

Exeter - Our Projects

The Book Market

On 20th June 2021, Powderham Castle and Exeter City of Literature hosted a brand-new Book Market in the Castle grounds, featuring a plethora of independent booksellers and literary arts groups from across the county.

Thirteen bookshops and booksellers filled the atmospheric Old Riding School barn, alongside local food and drink vendors, The Novel Cure bibliotherapy, Inky Fingers notebooks, CircleTales board games, a vintage typewriter station, and a Reading Nook.





Stagecoach Little Free Library

The UNESCO City of Literature status celebrates not only the region's rich literary heritage, but the ways in which literary culture can support our well-being.

The Little Free Library was commissioned by Exeter City of Literature in honour of the new bus station, which opened in 2021. The extraordinary volunteers at Men in Sheds built the beautiful structure.

We invite everyone to Take a Book or Leave a Book during their travels.



Bibliotherapy

Families from Whipton Barton Junior School signed up to participate in free bibliotherapy sessions with Susan Elderkin from The Novel Cure.

Bibliotherapy is a therapeutic approach that uses literature to help clients better understand and cope with the world around them. Research has found that reading increases personal confidence, reduces social isolation, improves concentration, and increases self-awareness. One study found that reading was a more effective way of reducing stress than drinking a cup of tea, walking the dog, or even listening to music!

Each family will receive a 'book prescription' tailored to their individual reading levels, interests, and well-being needs. Exeter City of Literature will provide three of the books from each family's list.

Quaywords 2020-2022

Quay Words is a celebration of words and stories at the historic Exeter Custom House on the Quayside, showcasing literature as a vibrant, diverse and accessible art form.

Thanks to funding from Arts Council England's National Lottery Projects Fund and the ongoing support of Exeter Canal and Quay Trust, the development of Quay Words and Exeter Custom House as a hub for literature is secure now for a further two years. The programme comprises a range of opportunities with something for everyone, from live literature, readings and discussions to zine making, outdoor performance, courses and workshops.



African Literary Production: Networks and Exchanges

Stemming from collaborative research by Dr Kate Haines Wallis at the University of Exeter, this is a stream of Africa-focused programming, produced in partnership with Africa Writes and Saseni!, that expands creative writing and creative industry connections between south-west England and east Africa. Planned activities include writing residencies, a book club, an event and research exchange series with African and African diaspora writers and literary producers, and writing workshops exploring narratives of mental health.



Exeter - Testimonials



I'm honoured to be the inaugural Director for Exeter UNESCO City of Literature, an initiative committed to well-being, inclusivity, and bolstering culture within the city and beyond. In these times of stress and uncertainty, we need to remember what makes humanity strong: a sense of place, a global and interconnected outlook, and an acknowledgement for the ways in which the arts speak to and for us. My office will work with passionate community members, educators, organisations, and local businesses so that together we can grow and promote the richness of Devon's literary culture.

Anna Cohn Orchard
Exeter City of Literature
Director



Exeter's UNESCO City of Literature status was definitely a consideration when opening Bookbag. As an indie bookshop, we feel part of a wider collective, a literary movement, and there's a real sense of pride from our community. And we love that the City of Lit team is all about action: setting up partnerships, collaborations, and events with organisations, community groups and educators, both locally and globally.

Charlie Richards
Owner of Bookbag
Bookshop, Exeter



“

We are thrilled to be part of Exeter City of Literature. This partnership creates an opportunity for our literary heritage collections to be explored and enjoyed by a wide range of people; locally, nationally and internationally. The Devon and Exeter Institution is a living library and a portal through which visitors travel to forms of knowledge created in the past. We seek to remain relevant by constantly adapting ourselves to the present and hope to create new and innovative ways to connect through the City of Literature network.

Emma Dunn

Director of Programmes & Projects,
Devon & Exeter Institution

”

“

Before last academic year, we had never heard of bibliotherapy! Working with the City of Literature was seamless and the project was transformational for many of the families who took part. The chance to sit with Susan, the incredibly knowledgeable bibliotherapist, and to focus on books, reading, and wellbeing was a unique opportunity for our families. For some, it opened doors which had been closed for a long time and for others it further fed their already existing passion for reading. Being a UNESCO City of Literature is such a positive for Exeter and we were thrilled to take part in one of the projects!

Gary Read & Amy Hardinge

Headteacher & Deputy Head
Wipton Barton Junior School

”

Photo Library

Looking for images to support your stories and features?

Access our photo library



Exeter City of Literature

Made of
our stories

Branding

Want to use Exeter City of Literature branding?

Apply for branding



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Exeter - Meet the Team

Anna Cohn Orchard Director

Anna joins us as the inaugural Director from a background rich in literature and partnership-building. Since 2004 she has lived in Pennsylvania, Sydney, New York, and now Exeter, studying and working in all those places with authors, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, cultural producers, and educators. At the Museum of Food and Drink in Brooklyn, Anna turned public programming into a robust and successful outfit, creating and producing sold out event series such as Eat*Drink*Read and Global Cultures, Global Cuisines. In 2016, Anna ran the US celebration of Roald Dahl's centenary, designing immersive campaigns that attracted thousands of participants nationwide. Anna began her career interning at Scholastic under David Levithan, later becoming Assistant Editor. Anna received her Master's from the University of Exeter and her B.A. in English Literature from Lehigh University.

Belinda Dillon Development Officer

As a writer, editor and arts journalist, Belinda worked in publishing for many years, including for Petro Publishing in Washington D.C., Pearson Publishing and Archant Regional, and holds a B.A. in English Literature from the Open University and a Master's in Creative Writing from the University of Exeter. In addition to the City of Literature programme, Belinda works for three days a week on Exeter Culture, the city's arts development programme. She is an alumna of the National Arts Fundraising School.

Ben Dickenson Bampton Engagement & Campaign Support Officer

A writer, editor and recent Exeter graduate, Ben has a background with arts magazines such as LensCulture, Mouthing Off, and Exetera, where he worked as Editor-in-Chief. While at university, Ben wrote and edited for several student publications and published his first short story in the Riptide Journal, Volume 12. In addition to the City of Literature programme, Ben provides engagement and campaign support for the University of Exeter's Innovation, Impact and Business partners. He received his B.A. in Philosophy and Politics from Exeter University.



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