

“Chosen by ourselves”

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” Telling Our Stories, Finding Our Roots”; Exeter’s Multi-Coloured History

Many people living and/or working in Exeter come from different countries and cultures around the world. I was curious about what kind of items they would choose to represent their culture, religion or background from where they come from.

This project will show you how the city of Exeter is today and it has been a very multi-cultural place, the project also finds out and shares with people in Exeter items and artifacts which are chosen by people from multi-cultural backgrounds to represent their cultures.

When I was looking for some ideas for my project I wanted to involve the items from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in some way. I am interested and fascinated by artifacts and the stories related to them.

I had a few training days at RAMM which were very interesting and gave me great insight into work behind the scenes at the museum. It also gave me some ideas for my research. While I was looking around the museum for more inspiration for my research, I realised that most of the artifacts in the museum were brought back to the UK by British people, and chosen for display by British people. These items are not chosen by the people from the places where the artifacts originally came from. I think that it would be interesting to have some items/artifacts on display which were chosen by us, people from around the world, to show the people in Exeter what these artifacts mean to us. Also I'm interested in connections between Exeter and their backgrounds and also any connection to items/artifacts of their choice which they feel represents their background.

According to the data by the Devon County Council (Ethnicity) web site and Office of National Statistics (Ethnic group) web site, in 2001 there were about 2600 BME(Black Minority Ethnicity which includes Mixed/multiple ethnic, Asian/Asian British, Black African/ Caribbean /Black British, Other Ethnic) which means about 2 % of residents in Exeter were BME. In 2006 there were estimates of 6000 BME, about 5 % and in 2011 there were about 8000 BME, 14 %.

From this data you can see the number of Exeter’s BME population has been increasing rapidly, I assume there are much more than 8000 BME people living in Exeter today. In my research, I have included all the BME groups and White ethnic groups who come from outside of Exeter.

Process: I have made a questionnaire and asked people who live, work and/or study in Exeter to complete it. To collect answers I have visited some places where international people attend classes and contacted different international groups, such as English lessons at Exeter College, English classes and Information Café at Belmont Chapel, Devon Grapevine, my friends and their friends and families, also some of the volunteers from this project “Telling our stories, finding our roots”.

Questionnaire:

1. Where do you come from?
2. Which culture or religion do you belong to?
3. What kind of items would you choose to show the people of Exeter to represent your country, culture or/and religion?
4. How long have you or your family been in Exeter?
5. Why did you choose to live/work/stay /study in Exeter?

Result of the questionnaire: I have collected the answers from about 100 people who come from more than 40 countries, belonging to many different cultures and religions from around the world.

Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Gambia, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Ivory coast, Jamaica, Japan, Kurdistan, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korean, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, USA, Zimbabwe.

Most of the people who answered the questionnaire have been here for a couple of years or less as I mostly collected from English language learners. However some of the other people have been here as long as over 20 years. Exeter is not just a passing trade city between large cities like Bristol and Plymouth as depicted in history or a predominantly white ethnicity place as some people think but also people come from near and far away who stay and make Exeter their home town.

Here is the summary of what I found from my research which shows how many different nationalities, cultures and religions there are that live, stay, work and/or study in Exeter now and learn what kinds of items/artifacts they choose to show us.

Country	Culture/ Religion	Items/Artifacts	Length stay in Exeter	Reason
Afghanistan Panjshir	Islam	Lapis Lazuli(A relatively rare semi-precious stone that has been prized since antiquity for its intense blue colour), Handmade rugs	2 years	
Afghanistan	Muslim	Afghan clothes	6 years	Work family
Afghanistan	Muslim	Traditional clothes, food, wonderful weather	10 years	
Afghanistan	Muslim	Traditional clothing, foods and picture of country	2 years	
Afghanistan	Muslim	Traditional dress	6 years	Husband work
Algeria	Muslim	Food(couscous),dishes and glasses	3 years	Husband work
Bangladesh	Muslim	Village culture	5 years	Husband work
Bangladesh	Muslim	Dress	1 year	marriage
Brazil	none	Native outfits, craft, big cultural diversity	13 years	marriage
Brazil Rio de Janeiro	Brazilian (German influence) Christian	Berimbau: a single-string percussion instrument musical (a musical bow) that is played when people do Capoeira (the practice of the Afro-Brazilian martial art). When I hear the sound of Berimbau it takes me back to people playing Capoeira on beaches in Brazil	13 years	Study
Bulgaria	Christian	Picture or statue of where I come from	3 years Mother 11years	Mother
Bulgaria	Christian		3 years	
Bulgaria	Christian Orthodox	Rose oil, Rose water (The essential oil extracted from the petals of various types of rose. Rose water, itself a by-product of the production	1 year	work

			of rose oil for use in perfume, distillate of rose petals), wine, Banitsa, custom		
China Hong Kong	Chinese Christian (monotheist)		Dragon flag of Qing Dynasty	1 year	
China	Christian			8 months	study
China	none		Chinese flag	5 years	
Cyprus	Greek orthodox		Jewellery, antiquities, lace, food, architecture	17 years	
Egypt, Cairo Heliopolis	Muslim		Hijab veil	8 years	Joining husband
Gambia	Islam		African made clothes which wear during cultural activities	2 years	
Germany	German		The first car invented by Carl Benz, Typical beer glass	7 month	study
Germany North	Christian		Lakrite sweet(special black looking sweet liked by people from North Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Netherland)	6 months	study
Germany Berlin	Christian		Bread	4 years	Work
Country	Culture/ Religion		Items/ Artifacts	Length	Reason
Germany Hamburg	Christianity		All area: Cars, bread South: Beer, carnival, sausages North: harbours, sea, Lakrite black sweet	9 months	Study
Holland	Christian		Food, arts, festivals	2 years	Work
Hong Kong	Islam		Cuisine	1.5 years	Son study
Hungary Debrecen	Hungarian culture		Tradition and gastronomy	5 days	
Hungary	Eastern European Hungarian culture		Music, costume, history, science	6 months	Work
India, Kerala	Hindu		Mundu (Dhoti) a garment worn around the waist in Kerala, is made by hand loom	6 years	Wife work
Parents from India	Sikh, Indian		Indian flag, a sculpture of Hindu god, art works, herb and spices, Clothing, picture of land marks and landscape, a temple, gurdwara, mosque, turban, a pooja thali (tray)	Uncle 53 years Parents 43 years	Family
India	Anglo/Indian with Portuguese, English culture, Roman catholic		Passion of Christ Illustrates devotion to the act of ' Holy Communion ' as defined by the Roman Catholic church	40 years	
Indonesia	Far east Asia		Batik, Puppets	5 years	Husband
Iran	Persian		Soil from Zanjan which has very rich [burns?], grape in my area is the best I ever had	10 years	
Italy	Christian		Sky, St.Peter's Church Chapel (Sistine)	8 years	
Italy Sicily	Christian		Lava stone from Volcano ETNA	5 months	
Italy Rome	Catholic		A photo of Exeter(Isca) in Roman time it was one of the first city	6 months	Study

			founded by Romans in England		
Italy Naples	None		Food(Pizza, spaghetti), Music, Art,	7 years	Family
Italy, Rome	Catholic church pregnant with Theology of Liberation		Author; Dante Alighieri La Divina Commedia-Inferno- Purgatorio-Paradiso	8 years	Partner
Ivory coast	Roman Catholic		Traditional wedding dress	9 years	Study
Parents from Jamaica	Black British Christian		Bob Marley album (reggae music), Ackee and salt fish Jamaican national dish, Some Jamaican proverbs and sayings	12 years	Work
Japan	Buddhism(Jyodo-shu)		Wooden statues of Buddha, Yuzen Kimono, Pottery	9 months	Husband work
Japan	Japanese culture No religion		Food, Custom	5 years	Husband work
Japan			Uchikake(wedding Kimono), Netuke	25 years	
Japan	Christian		Sushi, Sumo	2 years	Husband Study
Japan	Asian		Sushi, food	14 years	
Country	Culture/religion		Items/Artifacts	Length	Reason
Japan, Mie	Shinto, Buddhism		Old wooden buildings-Tera and Jinja (Temple and shrines)	2 years	Marriage
Japan, Chiba	Japanese		Incense, Kimono and Obi(traditional clothing), Traditional Pottery and china, Tea ceremony items	23 years	Marriage
Japan	Japanese		Temple/skyscrapers(buildings) Kimono/Street fashion (clothes) Ukiyoe/Manga(paintings) Japanese people love traditional things as well as modern things. The Old and The New exist side by side.	2 years	Marriage
Japan	Far east Asian Buddhism		Kimono - It says a lot about us, looking at this artifact, very intricate and beautiful. It requires skilled work and highest quality in materials. It reflects the way the Japanese people make other things, too.		work
Japan	Japanese atheist		Kimono(wedding) Shinto priest robes	28 years	Marriage
Kenya	Asian Muslim		Exeter Mosque and culture centre, Praying mat	10 years	work
Kurdistan	Muslim		Traditional clothes	1 year	
Libya	Go to Mosque			5 years	
The Netherlands	Christianity		Coco, Sinterklaas paintings, Plantain	2 years	Mum
New Zealand			Maori club	5.5 years	Daughter
Nigeria	Christian		Culture, dress, food	5 months	
Malaysia West	Christian Chinese Hokkien		Spicy Food,	20 years	

Mexico	Christian catholic		Mayan Calendar, Mayan history, Frida Kahlo picture	4 months	family
Morocco	Muslim		Food ,culture	1 year	study
Palestine	Arabic, Islamic		Clothes	11 months	Husband
Philippines	Christian		flag	2.5 years	work
Poland	Catholic		History, culture	7 years	work
Poland	Catholic		Sunday ceremony in fjord park	6 years	
Poland	Catholic		Picture of Jean Paul the II, Vodka, Landscapes(seaside, mountains)	1.5 years	brother
Poland Wroclaw	Christian		Mountains, city of Wroclaw	2 years	work
Poland	Catholic		Food, clothes, tradition	5 years	work
Poland	catholic		Food, culture, history	15 months	Husband work
Portugal	Christianity		FADO(music style), food	3 months	family
Romania	Christian		Food, wine	5 years	family
Romania	Orthodox		Food(Sarmale, Mici)	2 years	
Romania	Orthodox		Churches with amazing paintings, Traditional costumes and dances, very old traditions(2000 years)		
Country	Culture/Religion		Items/Artifacts	Length	Reason
Slovak Republic	Christian		Picture or video of High Tatras	6 years	work
South Africa	Christian		Nelson Mandela	13 years	Travel
South Korea	Christian		K Pop music	8 months	
South Korea	Christianity		Costume, lucky bag	10 months	Husband
South Korea	Christian		Korean Language	2 years	Study 29
Spain Elche	European		Spanish way of life(being outside on street up to 10-11 o'clock at night), the weather, joyful people, Food	6 months	Work
Spain	Spiritual, Buddhist philosophy		Food, dance, regional costume	3 months	
Spain	Islam, Muslim		Fish, Olive oil, dressberber, Kaftan	10 months	children
Spain	Musulmana		Kaftan, couscous	2 months	work
Spain	Catholic		Paella	4 months	work
Spain Santander	Catholic		Jam, Paella, omelette, wine, breakfast with milk and colacao	2 weeks	work
Spain Granada	Catholic		Ceramic painted in blue and green	5 months	
Spain	Mediterranean		Food(Spanish omelette, Paella), Dance (Sevillanas) Religion(Easter week processions)	6 months	study
Spain	Muslim		Mosque ,food	1 year	work
Spain	Roman Catholic		Paella, food, friendly people, Social life, Sun and beach	8 years	work
Spain	Catholic		Spanish flag, Churros maker	9 years	Husband work
Spain	Roman Catholic		Flamenco dance, bull fighting, Paella, nightlife, sun & beach, family	9 years	Work

		value (very close)		
Spain	Roman Catholic	Football, Social life, food	8 years	work
Taiwan	Tao	Taipei 101 building, temple, bubble milk tea	9 months	Family work
Thailand Bangkok	Buddhism	Food, Elephant	6 years	Marriage
Thailand	Buddhism	Elephant	1.5 years	stay
Tunisia	Muslim	Food, weather	1 year	family
Turkey	Muslim	Sunni, Dolma	8 months	Husband study
Turkey	Muslim	Food(Kisir, dolma, borek ,Sunnii)	6 months	Husband study
Turkey	Muslim	Food(Sunni, Sarma, Dolma, Kisir)	1 year	Husband study
Ukraine	Orthodox Christian	Church, mountains, sea, nature	5 years	Husband work
USA South California	Black American	Films(Clueless, Boyz in the Hood, Chinatown, Mi Vida Loca, Crash, Falling Down, Swingers and the documentary Dog Town & ZBoys)	2 years	Study marriage
USA	American	Model covered bridge	20 years	family
United states	Roman Catholic	Freedom, sports culture, multi-diversity,	6 years	study
Zimbabwe Harare	Greek orthodox	The big 5 (Lion, African Elephant, Buffalo, Leopard and Rhino), landscapes, pictures/icons of bible stories and of saints and crosses. Lots of pictures of Mary and baby Jesus.		Work

Comment on the items and stories of their choice: As I gathered the responses I realised most of the items or things they have chosen to show the people of Exeter are not all items or artifacts such as Traditional clothing/costumes, Arts and Crafts, Paintings or Literature but they have also chosen Food and Drink, Scenery landscapes (Mountain, Sea and nature), Music (song and dance), History and Culture (custom and tradition), Architecture (building and houses), Weather (Sun& Sky). These are things you need to be there at local places to experience (to see, hear or feel).

I think people choose the items/things they miss from where they come from as well as what they would like to represent their backgrounds. Some people mentioned that they can easily find food ingredients in the Exeter area and produce food themselves but it's not the same as the original food so they want to show the people of Exeter what the real authentic food tastes and looks like from their countries.

I was expecting that they would choose more famous sightseeing landmarks, well known places or cultural objects, instead of choosing the obvious ones they chose something from their local area or what they were most familiar with, more closer to their heart.

Connections with Exeter: One of the main aims of this project is to find multicultural connections in Exeter. I wanted to find out about any connection with countries or the items of their choice in Exeter, I have found some interesting connections to some countries and items:

Brazil: Exeter City football team made a historic tour of South America in 1914, during which time they played matches against Brazil in Rio de Janeiro. They are planning a rematch in 2014.

Egypt: Egypt Lane (Now known as Chapel Street). Egypt Lane was probably first laid out when Alfred the Great re-founded Exeter in the late 9th century, it has probably undergone more name changes than any other street in Exeter, but in the middle of the 18th century the name had changed to Egypt Lane.

Germany: The first German Christmas Market was held at Cathedral Green in Exeter 2012.

Italy, Greece: They were here as Romans and Greeks around 200 BC.

Holland: The Dutch House. The house called The Dutch House in Topsham near Exeter. Also there is an address, Dutch Court in Exeter. There is Exeter Korfbal (Dutch sport) Club, which has been running since 2003.

Jamaica: Bob Marley's son Julian "Ju Ju" Marley ended his UK tour in Exeter. Marley and The Uprising headlined performances in July and August of 2010 at venues throughout the UK, including the final night was at Exeter Phoenix on Sunday 8th of Aug.

Japan: There are quite few Japanese martial arts groups (Aikido, Kenpo Karate, Jiu Jitsu, Kendo and Judo) and there is a music group (Kagemusha taiko) in Exeter.

New Zealand: The first All Blacks rugby team from New Zealand faced Devon in Exeter in the first match of the tour, 16 September 1905. There is a Maori Rugby Union player called Hoani Tui (born 29 May 1984) who is playing for Exeter Chiefs in the Aviva Premiership.

Nigeria: There is the famous sculptured bronze head of a King from Benin in RAMM

South Africa: The Exeter and District Anti-Apartheid Group was one of the longest established and most active groups in the UK anti-apartheid movement. It was established as the Exeter and District Anti-Apartheid Committee in 1966. The Group was non-political and was affiliated to the national London-based Anti-Apartheid Movement. Although primarily concerned with South Africa, the group also addressed problems associated with racism and human rights elsewhere in the world. University of Exeter holds the entire archive of the organisation, covering the period 1970s-1990s.

USA: Henry Chadwick (known as "The father of baseball") was born in Exeter in 1824 before his family moved to the USA. Once there he became interested in baseball and eventually became a pioneer in generating many of the statistics still used in the game and helped to turn it into the major sport in the USA that it is now. There is a baseball team The Exeter Spitfires, who were formed in 2000 and are named after the Polish Spitfire pilots who were stationed in the city during World War II. Following promising seasons in 2000 and 2001 the club was disbanded following the 2001 season due to lack of opposition. In 2012 the club was re-born and became members of the South West Baseball League.

Cultural Diversity in Exeter

There are about 35 multi-cultural societies at Exeter University: African and Caribbean, Arabic and Middle Eastern, Asian, Azerbaijani, Balkan, Baltic (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), Bulgarian, Chinese, European, German, Greek and Cypriot, Hispanic, Hong Kong, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Kazakhstan, Korean, Kurdish, Latin America, Malaysia, Nigerian, Palestine, Portuguese, Russian, Saudi, Scandinavian, Singapore, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese, West Slavic (Polish, Czech, Slovak)

According to Devon Grapevine web site, there are about 70 nationalities in the Devon area and many community groups for foreign people to join and attend meetings in the Exeter area (Religious, cultural and languages).

Twin towns/cities with Exeter: Rennes in France, Bad Homburg in Germany, Terracina in Italy and Yaroslavl in Russia.

International Food: World Food shopping can be done in various shops around the city: Chinese, Thai, Japanese, Indian, Polish, African,

There are many eating places which serve world cuisine. According to Trip Adviser web site, there are about 300 restaurants in the Exeter area of which more than 100 restaurants serve international cuisine. There are quite a few Chinese (about 20 restaurants, the first one was opened in 1958), Indian (about 20) and more than 60 European/continental cuisine restaurants.

Here are some of the other world cuisine restaurants in Exeter city centre:

- Japanese: Steak & sushi, North Street (since 2011). Yo Sushi, Bedford Street (since 2012).
- Morocco: Al Farid, Cathedral Green, Exeter (since 2007?).
- Taiwan: To try Bubble milk tea at Bubble Bubble co. High Street, Exeter (since 2012).
- Turkey: Dinosaur Café, New North Road (since 2000); Blue Eye, Blackboy Road (since 1999)

Reasons for choosing Exeter: The main reasons for choosing Exeter are; Study, Work, Marriage, Family. Others came here to study and found partners or/and work, some had their family already living in Exeter. A few of them have been sent by agents for work and chose to stay. Some of them came along with their partners who study at University, sometimes not their own choice.

Most of them have positive impressions of the Exeter area. Quite a few of them chose Exeter to live because of its setting in beautiful countryside and nice friendly people.

Here are some comments about why they have chosen to stay and live in Exeter:

- It offers the advantages of a big city with the tranquillity of a town. It is a good place for children and family. It offers lots and is in continuing development.
- A friendly town, it has a good College, is not so big and its better weather than the rest of England
- Beautiful landscape and friendly people
- There are more opportunities here compared to the last city in England we lived in
- Beautiful countryside of Devon
- High rank of university, security
- A very quiet city
- To find a better job, to know the English culture
- Good future for my children
- To improve English
- It's a beautiful place. Exeter is a city but has a nice town feel to it. It has history, culture and is close to many beaches and the moors.
- Because the people are nice and friendly
- Good mix of countryside and a big city

- Close to the beach
- Better work opportunities and improve English
- Very beautiful little city

Conclusion: It was very exciting to find out that there are many people who come from around the world in Exeter for various reasons. This research broadened my mind, from learning lots of facts about BME numbers and using resources from existing documents, to the answers to the questionnaire I found from my research. Before this research started I was not sure how much of a multicultural place the City of Exeter actually is. Now I know from facts and figures, history and personal contributions from people, Exeter is and always has been a very multicultural city.

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African activist archive (<http://africanactivist.msu.edu>)

Nelson Mandela centre of memory (<http://www.nelsonmandela.org>)

Acknowledgements:

Sue Booty, Belmont chapel, Information café and English classes

Mark Rawlins, Exeter College

Tat Ruck, Devon Grapevine

RAMM

Ghee Bowman, Project coordinator at Global centre