

Exeter UNESCO City of Literature



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Exeter, named a UNESCO City of Literature in 2019, is part of a global network of cities recognised for their rich literary heritage, dedicated cultural communities & partnerships, and commitment to celebrating literary culture locally and globally.

Known for its historic university, world-famous writers, and literary landmarks, Exeter celebrates storytelling in all its forms through publishing, theatre, filmmaking, and public programming. This designation supports local authors, highlights diverse voices, and fosters community connections through literature. As a charity, Exeter UNESCO City of Literature aims to create accessible spaces for literary exploration and cultivate a love for reading across the region.

What makes this UNESCO Designation special?

Exeter is a city of readers and earned its UNESCO City of Literature title by weaving together over a thousand years of literary heritage and community engagement.

Anchored by the Exeter Book - a 10th-century anthology recognised by UNESCO as “*the foundation volume of English Literature*” and “*one of the world’s principal cultural artefacts*” - Exeter stands as a testament to enduring storytelling. This cultural treasure, filled with poems and riddles, embodies the city’s literary roots, nurtured through centuries by an avid book trade, early personal libraries, and celebrated local authors like Agatha Christie and Hilary Mantel.

The city’s impact is unmistakable: Exeter Library was the 18th most visited in Great Britain in 2019 and Devon’s Libraries Unlimited welcomed over 2.2 million visitors in 2022, underscoring the community’s deep commitment to reading.

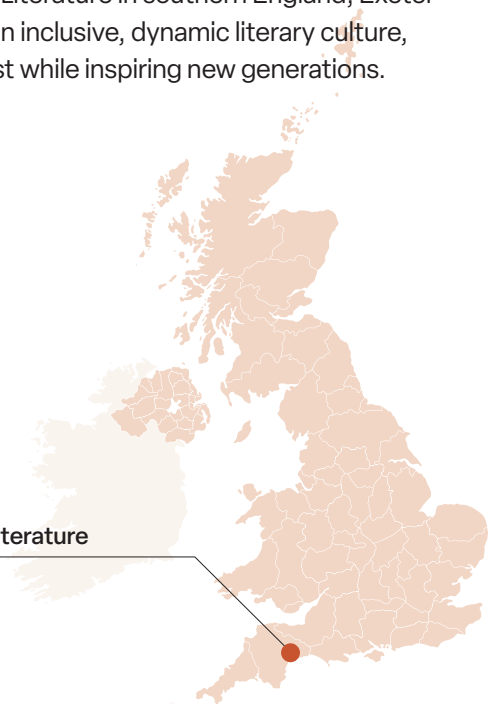
Exeter is also famously the birthplace of Penguin Books, a revolution in accessible literature. Today, as the only

UNESCO City of Literature in southern England, Exeter proudly fosters an inclusive, dynamic literary culture, honouring its past while inspiring new generations.



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County:
Devon



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