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# Annual Conference 1997

## Welcome from the local secretary

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**Royal  
Geographical  
Society**

with IBG

Advancing geography  
and geographical learning

All of us in the Department of Geography, University of Exeter extend a warm welcome to you and wish you a profitable and enjoyable RGS-IBG Annual Conference. Now that you have registered we hope this Handbook contains all the information you will need to navigate your way through the academic and social programme. On facing pages inside the back cover you will find a map of all the conference venues and a quick-reference timetable of all the sessions, events and venues.

... This year's lead themes are : '*Regulation: Processes, Institutions, Outcomes*' and '*Europe: Cultures and Environments*'. Judith Rees, Vice-President and Chair of EXETER'97, will give a lecture entitled: '*The Place of Regulation*' on the evening, of Tuesday, 7 January and she has convened a session on *Regulation* for Wednesday 8 January. Allan Williams, on behalf of the Exeter Geography Department, has arranged a full day discussion on *Europe in Crisis* for Thursday 9 January. RGS-IBG Research/Study Groups have convened more than 40 paper sessions which will run with up to 14 meetings concurrently over the two full days and two half days of the Conference. We hope that the plans we have made to minimise the friction of movement between the two principal venues (The Peter Chalk Centre and The Queen's Building) will help you to move through the more than 450 papers scheduled in the programme in a way to suit your own personal interests. There will, though, be times when you would like to be in two places at once!

Our Department of Geography is located in Amory Building, Rennes Drive and, although there are no meetings arranged in the Department, you are most welcome to visit. We are a medium-sized department (18 staff and c.300 undergraduates) housed in purpose-designed accommodation built in 1974. Geography has been taught at Exeter since 1927 when the Reardon Smith chair was established in what was then the University College of the South West, an institution which awarded University of London degrees. Today the Department is organised around five research foci (historical geography, economic development and planning, medical geography, hydrology, and palaeo-environmental studies). This broad balance between research in human and physical geography is reflected in the content of our undergraduate curriculum, driven as this is by a philosophy of teaching in the context of research. As a Department wedded to an holistic vision of Geography, we are pleased to see that 'our' Annual Conference has substantial natural science and humanities content in addition to social science contributions.

EXETER'97 has been on our departmental agenda for some two years and the cast list on the previous page testifies to its being a truly collegiate effort. And, with so much working towards fission in disciplinary endeavour these days, Conference planning has exerted a positive, centripetal influence on us! Everyone has done his or her 'bit' when asked; all contributions have been indispensable. By the nature of things, some of us have done more, others rather less, but we academic members of the Department are as one in recognising that without Rodney Fry and his technical staff and, above all, Marilyn Webb's work as Conference Administrator, EXETER'97 would not have been.