

Mirrors and Windows 2023

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Guests

Roeland Paardekooper (DK) and Matilda Siebrecht (DE)

Introduction

It's getting closer to the end of the year, which means that it's time for our next episode of Mirrors and Windows. This year, founding member and current director **Roeland Paardekooper** chats with **Matilda Siebrecht**, who will be taking over the role of director in January. Together, they talk about what's happened in 2023 - from the conference in Turun to this year's EXARC award winners - and look ahead to what's coming in 2024 - such as the culmination of projects such as RETOLD and TELT. They also look even further back, with Roeland sharing some of his experiences and stories from his time in EXARC (although he insists he wasn't sitting in a rocking chair by the fire during the recording!). And of course, they also look further ahead, as Matilda shares some of her plans and ideas for the future of EXARC.

Transcript

It's time for our annual episode of Mirrors and Windows where leading members of our EXARC community look back at the amazing events and activities from the last 12 months and also look forward to our exciting plans for the year ahead.

Matilda: Hello and welcome to the latest episode of Mirrors and Windows as we move towards the end of 2023 and the start of 2024. My name is Matilda Siebrecht and I'm here with Roeland Paardekooper and today we're going to chat about what has happened in 2023 and what will be happening in 2024. We might even go a bit further back in time and a bit further into the future, but you'll just have to listen in and find out. So, Roeland, first of all, how was your 2023? Has it been a good year?

Roeland: When my job here in Denmark as museum director ended, I actually spent most of my time this year with EXARC, visiting open-air museums here in Denmark and other countries, conferences, events there. So I was quite happy to meet friends again, colleagues and that's a bit what I missed in my busy years when I was a director in one spot, so to say.

Matilda: Were you going to multiple different events? Were there some exciting EXARC-related events on, was it more kind of keeping in touch with people within the EXARC network?

Roeland: More the latter. I've been in Sweden visiting a few open-air museums, here in Denmark obviously, Baltic states. And when I look back at the end of the year, I think, well, I've actually visited quite a number of countries already. Again, something I didn't do in the years before.

Matilda: Yeah. And were you at the EXARC conference this year? You were there in person, weren't you? How was that?

Roeland: It was good. It was also a challenge because it was the first time we did something hybrid. What we did two years ago, the World Tour in the middle of Covid, was absolutely a highlight. It was also the first time we went totally online. But this hybrid thing is really quite challenging. We had I think over 80 papers and posters, about 60 participants on the spot. Lots of people online and many views on YouTube, where you will find everything. But this hybrid thing... it worked well, but I feel there's room for a few changes in the future.

Matilda: How was it being there in person from the participant perspective, in terms of hybridization?

Roeland: In a way it felt like you are in a cinema and you get a preview of these presentations. Nothing beats the real thing, if you can. And the extra thing is indeed that contact with all these other people. And honestly, I think 60 participants on the spot is fine. It's manageable. You can speak with everybody, sit in the pub together, have a chat. But all the presentations were pre-recorded and had subtitles. So it felt special, but sometimes a bit like I'm sitting in the cinema, but with a lot of friends...

Matilda: ... with a lot of friends and you get to see behind the scenes and chat with the director afterwards. I must say I also agree that hybrid conferences are a way to go though, because I attended one this year in person, not an EXARC one, with my baby. I could only have done that because it was hybrid, because when I couldn't be in the session, for example - I did present a paper in the EXARC session and then obviously I had to be there in person with her on me. But apart from that, I could just sit in the corridor and watch it online with her giggling and gurgling and crying or whatever loud noises she was making. So I definitely think we're going to try and continue the hybrid format for the future. The conference is obviously quite a big highlight for 2023, but what other highlights would you say, when looking back on this year, were the big ones for you?

Roeland: Well, we have that cooperation with Ukraine, with our colleagues there, SUN, thanks to help of the YEAR institute in the UK, with Aimée Little. And thanks to the support of EXARC members, we could get some of our colleagues from Ukraine coming to our conference in Poland and that was really good. They are now setting up a good and independent network of people in open-air museums, living history professionals, archaeologists. What surprised me is that they had several meetings in Ukraine in the middle of a war. We try to help them where we can but they tell us what they need. So we are just facilitating what they're doing. We are currently working on several funding applications. The networking thing, something EXARC is good at... it works this time and I'm quite happy with that.

Matilda: I'm glad to hear that indeed it's sort of continuing independently because, I guess, that's the problem when people see something as a facilitator, you depend too much on the facilitator in a way. Okay, cool and a very nice project. Are there any other interesting projects that have been going or are there any kind of continuous EXARC projects, I suppose, that have done well again this year?

Roeland: Looking back on '23, we have the EXARC Journal and the EXARC Journal online, very much one of our key things. We try to get it into the Web of Science. That's a database of peer-reviewed literature and that's very useful for academics who want to publish because, to put it simply, they get points for publishing in peer-reviewed accepted journals. We looked at the beginning, should we do this or not? And then we realised actually we only need to make small changes in our format, our online format. We don't need to change the journal itself. So the journal itself remains as accessible as it is. Also, what I like when I looked through all the authors, we have a lot of independent researchers and I think that's great and we'll keep doing that. So that's what we've been doing with the journal this year. I also see many members, after COVID, are back active again and some of them tell us about winning awards. For example, there's Natalie Roy from the USA for her Ancient Olympics project...

Matilda: Oh, that sounds cool!

Roeland: She won the award '23. The project will run in '24 and I think we will soon hear more about what they're planning because it sounds like a big project with schools and education and it's going to be good.

Matilda: She's doing a reenactment of an Olympics? I haven't looked at this project!

Roeland: We only published a little bit about it and we'll soon tell more. We'll share also that news via EXARC. But it's quite a big cooperation project, with different schools, different universities, et cetera.

Matilda: Nice!

Roeland: Another highlight, award, was The Scottish Crannog Centre, which moved from one place a bit further up the loch to the other side. They took the challenge of using the Sustainable Development Goals as core of their acting. So they don't change who they are. They're still an archaeological open-air museum but they say, okay, in every aspect of all the changes they're going through now, we're looking at the Sustainable Development Goals and that actually brought a lot of opportunities.

Matilda: You can also hear a little bit about that in one of our recent podcast episodes because we had Amy, who is one of the curators at the Crannog Centre. She came and joined us to talk about the Sustainable Development Goals. So if you're interested in hearing more, do listen in to that podcast episode. But indeed, that's a really nice way to - it's almost one of the pros - I mean, it's unfortunate the reason why they had to rebuild, of course. But in one way, it's nice to be able to rebuild from the beginning and you can do things differently, which is very cool. Are there any other things that have kind of come back into play or new things potentially?

Roeland: A bit new maybe. EXARC is part of ICOM, the International Museum Federation and NEMO, the Network of European Museum Organisations and we recently joined the European Heritage Alliance - that sounds maybe very bureaucratic - it's based in Brussels...

Matilda: That sounds even more bureaucratic!

Roeland: ...but to be honest, we meet with 30/40/50 European organisations and it's for us as EXARC very good to talk with colleagues, not about what our members do, but how we as organisations thrive and what our challenges are, opportunities. So it's actually a good 'boardroom' to chat with colleagues, mostly online, I must say again.

Matilda: That sounds very good.

Roeland: We also have of course, if we are still talking about awards, John Kiernan, our member, sponsors the Experimental Archaeology Award, where we had two candidates who won that this year. It's a micro-bursary, so to say. But it's very useful. We usually get a lot of applications and people are very happy when it works. A bigger thing is the Colonial

Williamsburg Foundation EXARC Fellowship, which after Covid also returned. That is also something nice. And we will of course report about that in the EXARC journal and maybe one of them will pop up in one of our podcasts.

Matilda: Yeah, that would be a nice idea, actually, to have a podcast focussed on that. I know that, for example, John Kiernan is also keen to have more people be aware of the Experimental Archaeology Award, and I think a lot of people don't know about the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Award either. It's a really unique experience, I would say, to be able to go and do research in place. All of the projects that I've seen that have come out of there look really interesting. Any other exciting news from the members or any other interesting facts we can share with people?

Roeland: Well, the nice thing is not just EXARC doing itself all these things. We have several members going to conferences and festivals. You've been at the EAA in Belfast where there was an EXARC session organised by some of our members and I think that will happen again next year in Rome. The EAA is one of these nice conferences where you can... it's like a big box of cookies and within two, three days you can pick a lot of small bits here and there and be up to date with what's happening in Europe in archaeology. It's definitely a nice place to be.

Matilda: Yeah, I think so. So, that's sort of from our members. But in terms of the EXARC team, I guess, because even though I think a lot of people do think that just you and Magda run it, it's not really the case, because we have a lot of volunteers behind the scenes who do things. Do you have any updates on the volunteer team?

Roeland: You're right, it's not just Magda and me running the show, especially not since about 2019 when we started to get a lot more volunteers. And of course the EXARC Journal has a team of 20/30 volunteers running already for over 10 years. But we were looking at the social media and we thought, well, that can be improved (it can always be improved). We've got some new volunteers there and expect that will expand next year. We have about 430 members right now and that's a bit more than before. They are from 48 countries. But I must also say we lost a lot of members this year. We also gained 53 members so far. So in the end, it's a bit more than a year ago.

Matilda: How has the membership expanded in general? Do you see a lot more people from these other countries joining? Do you have different, I don't know, possibilities for people who are less financially stable to join as well?

Roeland: I can say indeed that in the beginning when we were more in Holland, Germany, UK area, slowly expanding into the rest of Europe, I feel that we're now indeed gaining also more members who are not in Europe, some in India, some in other parts of the world. That goes very well. We decided, I think two years ago or so, that we should have a simple, cheap membership of about 10 euro, just to support EXARC. It means you don't get the EXARC

journal digest sent by post to you but you have access to everything. What is important also, if you join EXARC it's not so much you get a lot of extra luxury benefits or so, it's to support the goal. So with that 10 euro minimum, cheapest membership it's still accessible for people from many parts of the world. We're coming to the end of '23 and I'm also looking forward that I will be stopping as Director of EXARC. And right now - it sounds a bit sad but it it's actually not - we are abandoning our EXARC office in Holland and you know why Matilda! So, you as being the new director very soon, what are your ideas for '24?

Matilda: Well, of course there's still a lot of things that I'm kind of jumping onto the bandwagon, so to speak, as they're still in progress...

Roeland: It's not just a bandwagon, it's a running train!

Matilda: There's a couple of big projects that are sort of still going that started back in 2020. So the first of those is the TELT Project or Putting life into Neolithic houses, which is based in the Netherlands. EXARC is one of the partners of this project. It's funded by the NWO, the Dutch Research Council and it's running until next year, until 2024. It's been a really big, really interesting project - I've been really enjoying looking through it - which looks at domestic craft and subsistence activities, but they're looking at it in a lot of detail through different experiments, through materials analysis. I think a lot of people are familiar with the idea of house reconstruction, but they're going almost one step further and looking not just at the house reconstruction, but sort of, "oh, but if the house burnt down and people happen to be cooking a lamb roast and weaving a plate at the same time, what would it look like?" So there's a lot of stuff going on and there's lots of articles and news stories on our website. There was also a [podcast episode about it](#) in June of 2022 when it was sort of halfway through, so you could go and listen in to that. You also have the RETOLD project, which is also finishing next year, although finishing is sort of the wrong word to use, because it's the final product, which will be, I guess, the RETOLD app, or how would you explain it, Roeland?

Roeland: We don't call it indeed the finishing but more the launch of the app. We've always said the RETOLD project is about the stories in open-air museums where we document them, we digitise them and we share them and for that the app is the core. We have still a lot of work to do in the next 12 or so months. We hope we will end with a conference in September in Holland. But this will be a conference not just for the RETOLD project, it will be an EXARC conference.

Matilda: At this conference will be the official, shall we say, launch, even though it will hopefully be around a little bit earlier than that, in some testing periods, but will be the official launch of the RETOLD app. So yeah, keep an eye on our socials for that as well. We're going to be sharing a little bit about the reasons for the project and how it was developed and how it's been going for the last few years and all of that kind of stuff through our different social media channels throughout the years. I think the first ones are actually already up, little mini blog posts that we're sharing on social media. So do follow that to learn more.

Roeland has already mentioned a couple of times the Sustainable Development Goals and how it's been really great that, for example, the Crannog Centre was able to do something more with that and kind of focus on that. So I would say that potentially there's potential for more on the Sustainable Development Goals. Would you agree?

Roeland: Absolutely! I must honestly say, we did not do as much as we wanted to do with the Sustainable Development Goals this year, partly because of lack of time. But I feel that the SDGs are the perfect platform where you can cooperate with anybody. Because everybody needs to do something about that and there's also funding. A lot of people and foundations are very willing to get something done in this respect. So I think EXARC should also look at what is happening around the world. Where can we maybe facilitate?

Matilda: I agree. I think that it's one of those things as well that a lot of people don't really realise that they are involved with it, as a topic, and it's sort of only when you point it out to them, they go "oh yeah, I suppose so". So it's one of those things I think that can definitely be expanded. One of the things that I would really like to improve is the sort of communication within EXARC and the collaboration possibilities, I suppose, that relate to that. There's also a lot of other things. Roeland already mentioned the different awards that are on, the journal, the fact that there'll be a conference and of course we're going to continue with things like our podcast. Actually one of our new volunteers is Jess. I'm slightly biased in this because of course I'm quite involved with the podcast team, but I would like to welcome Jess to the team, Jess Shaw. She's going to be a third host, to take a little bit of a weight off my back, so that I have two hosts to share with, rather than Phoebe just taking all of the load when I offloaded all on her. The podcast has done really well. I'm really happy that it's still continuing. For those who aren't aware of how it all started. I assume you are if you're listening, but just in case. So it was following the sort of success of our online conferences in 2020 we decided to start this podcast to kind of do a way to keep the community of EXARC involved in what's going on within EXARC. I have some lovely statistics here. We've had 13,000 downloads since we started and actually 5,000 of those were this year. So it seems to be picking up the pace a little bit... So quite a lot of things in the pipeline and there's plenty of other longer term plans as well, we'll get into that in a second. But before we get into that since I have you here, with all of your years of experience, Roeland, I thought, there is a reason why people think you and Magda are the ones that do everything in EXARC because you are two of the founders. You have done so much. You've kind of literally built EXARC up into what it is today. And I know you'll say, "oh, but it was part of a team", which I'm sure it was, but still you've been a major part of it since the beginning. So if we look further back than 2023, further back than just this year, what would you say have been kind of the best moments, the most exciting moments, the worst moments, the tensest moments in your experience?

Roeland: Well, I won't talk about the most tense moments! We started back then with 13 people sitting around a table in a small museum in Germany and now we are more than 400 people as a member and the community is even much bigger than that. You put me in a

place like I'm the old man sitting at the fireplace on a winter evening and I have to tell the grandchildren "it was way better back then!"... There are some fun memories, of course, or memories which at that moment were maybe not that funny, but later on you think, ah, okay, that's something to remember. In the very early years, I think it was 2002, we had a conference in Latvia. EXARC had just started and we were just a handful of foreigners. The rest of the 80 people were all from Latvia. Most of us had never been to Latvia before and we decided to stick together a bit. And one of us said "well, you know what? I think it's good to have cash", Latvian lats, because at that moment there was no Euro then. And he went to the ATM and he had no clue of the exchange rate. Then he was in front of a screen that says a 100 lati. What can a hundred lati be? Let's take 1000 Lati. Well, 1000 Lati is about 1400 euros!

Matilda: So he was treating you all for the rest of the conference!

Roeland: Well, we were there just for a couple of days and 1400 euro, that's a whole lot of cups of coffee! As we organise conferences every year or every second year, you sometimes get funny mails. One time we organised a conference somewhere and I received an email from someone not in Europe I know. And that person wrote, well, it's my pleasure to announce that Her Royal Highness of some entity I never heard of will attend your conference and we should please prepare for Her arrival. And she would also bring 20 people of Her staff. And I thought how should I reply, because EXARC is a small volunteer organisation with not a huge budget. And I thought, you know what? If she wants to come, then she has the budget to come. So I said, well, here's the registration form and we would welcome you all at our conference, but I never heard of them again....

I was recently here in Denmark at a weekend on experimental archaeology in a Viking Age open-air museum. We were about 20 people, I think, and one of them was a student and he said "I'm interested in doing something with experimentation, of course, with 12th century coins from Scandinavia. I doubt that there's anybody else who does this". So I said "what, hang on...". It's not that I know everybody, but thanks to our social media, for example, our Facebook group on experimental archaeology has 12,000 members alone. So I posted a little message there. I said "does anybody have experience, not necessarily in Scandinavia, but with making coins or using coins from that period?" and within, I think, one day we had five people who responded, and one of them said "yeah, I have 30 years experience with it". So I went back to that student and said, well, I have these people you can follow up on, and he absolutely didn't expect that. No, I didn't mean it like I'm the grumpy old man sitting there who said, "what you're doing is totally useless. It has all been done before. You shouldn't do it." That's not at all what we mean. It's knowing what relevant previous research has been done and build further on that.

Matilda: Which sometimes might mean that you completely criticise it and do it a very different way, but at least you know what's happened before.

Roeland: But that's not a problem. You've had your own research and you probably bumped into old experiments before, didn't you?

Matilda: Definitely and that's the nice thing. And also there's always gaps. Inevitably, there's something that you'll be able to find, even if you don't want to just completely redo the same experiment that was done before, there's bound to be a gap that you can fill somehow, either using a different material, using a different style, using a different technique, or from a different cultural background.

Roeland: I think 20/30 years ago, it was good to say: "I'm unique, I'm the first one doing this experiment. Please fund me." But things have changed now and it's more indeed like building on previous work, doing your own thing. What EXARC is doing is bringing people together with mutual interests in what I call stories based on archaeology. What I very much like about EXARC, it's not just one kind of people. We have the professor and the blacksmith. We have the newbie and the artists and it's of course good to have friendly neighbours you can work with, but far friends - and that's what I call EXARC - I think they're equally important.

Matilda: What I love about EXARC as well is that it has got that kind of collaboration with, or that sort of meeting of different people from different backgrounds and no one's ever - at least this is the feeling I've got anyway - no one is ever superior to anyone else. Like there's not a hierarchy in terms of "Oh, if you're a professor, then you're bound to be considered higher than this person who's been working in blacksmithing for 40 years". Because the blacksmith probably knows a lot more about the technicalities of the professor's ancient metallurgy research. Everyone brings their own level of experience and their own kind of background to it, and I think it's a very nice equal playing field, which is something that I personally find important. But it sounds like it's been an experience! Now that you are stepping down, what are the next plans now that you are handing over, I suppose, to this weird woman in Germany...

Roeland: Well, when the news got out that I would stop as a director, I would get messages like, "oh, but is EXARC going to stop? Is the journal going to stop?" No, of course not! I mean, you will tell what's going to stop or not. But in general, I think most of what we're doing will continue one way or the other. And I will not necessarily leave EXARC completely. I would like to see myself as a senior advisor. I don't know if I can tell smart things but I would like to be a senior advisor both for EXARC as an organisation, so behind the scenes, but also for open-air museums. And that advising of open-air museums is something within EXARC and also other non-EXARC members I have done already for 20/30 years. I really like travelling - sorry to say - and actually I'm going to Japan and China in a few days and that will be a great road trip. I will see a lot of museums, talk with colleagues, a conference here or there. It's also nice that this is an area where EXARC is not very much present, but the people I speak with are very interested in international contacts. Speaking of which, Brazil is also still on my bucket list. And therefore, Magda and me, we will go where our next

museum job will take us. What I like about EXARC is that you do something small, but for a lot of people, you facilitate a lot of people with small bits here and there, small contacts, et cetera. But it's also good to work on a single spot and to make a bigger change locally. So the combination of, let's say, globally and locally is something I really like very much. And of course there's EXARC also in the background, these two projects you mentioned where we need to finish them by the end of '24. Of course we will be helping you settling into your role. I don't dare to ask and I think you should... when you are sitting in the driver's seat, you should do it as you feel is good... but, what are your rough plans for the near future or the longer future?

Matilda: To be honest, I only really was happy to accept this position knowing that you and Magda were happy to still be a little bit in the background for at least the next year or so. In some ways it's good to be thrown into the deep end, but yes, I'm still very glad to have that support at the beginning.

Roeland: But you are not new to EXARC, you know EXARC already for a couple of years...

Matilda: Yeah, exactly. And that was also why I sort of felt comfortable accepting it as well. It was funny actually. I remember when we spoke to the board about this - I think I can say this - there was one member that said "Matilda, do you know what you are signing up to? Do you really know what you're doing?" I was like, "well, I think so...". Obviously it's going to be a steep learning curve, very big shoes to fill, but I'm very much looking forward to it. Like we've said, there's not going to be any overly drastic changes, so stop panicking everyone! It's fine, it's going to stay as EXARC. And I guess what I mean by that is that it's going to stay as what the core values of EXARC are. We've had a couple of meetings with different volunteers, with board members, with other members of the EXARC community to kind of discuss what those values are and what those things are so that we're all on the same page because, obviously, it's not just me, just like Roeland hasn't been doing this solo for the last however long. It's not going to be me just making all these decisions. It's going to be the community, it's going to be a lot of people from different aspects of EXARC, so hopefully everyone's voices will be heard in some way or another. And if by the way anyone feels that their voice isn't being heard, you're always very welcome to contact me or the EXARC team and make suggestions. This is a community. That's the whole point of it.

So the core values that would be emphasised are more about personal relationships. So when we were chatting about it before and we realised that yes, EXARC is about... on the one hand you do have institutions that are members, you have institutional members, you have a lot of open-air museums. That was like you say, Roeland that's how it started, but at the end of the day, it's about who you know at those institutions and who you know at those museums and those sort of personal connections. That's kind of what we're going to be building on a little bit and that idea then of kind of sharing resources, sharing knowledge that you already mentioned with this student with the coins, and you know, the fact that he didn't even know that there were so many other people who were doing this. I get so many

messages from people who know I do experimental archaeology saying, "oh, hey, I was wondering if you could help me with this because I need to know about this" and dah, dah, dah. I don't necessarily know about that material or that technique or anything like that, but I always say, go check out the EXARC website because there's definitely this person doing this and I know that this contact has this contact. So it's a network and it's a community, and that's kind of what we want to focus on. So on that line... there's going to be a few little changes, which might seem big, but they're not really, they're just emphasising the core.

So, for example, the website, it's developed over a long period of time. It's a very pretty website. However, it's gotten a little bit jungley, I would say, a little bit out of control, so we're going to tame it a little... we're going to start from scratch a bit and revamp it a little bit to make it more user-friendly, to try and work out exactly what information needs to be where. There might be a few changes with that in terms of how you can see the different information. It's probably going to be more like a platform that can link out to the members and to all of that kind of thing. So you'll still have the same information, but it will hopefully be presented in a slightly more accessible way. We're still going to have the journal, all online and everything. We're still going to have the podcast somewhere as well. We just need to work out exactly where we're going to do what and how we're going to do it. So that's going to be the next year or two I'm going to be working on that, hopefully with a team of helpers. Also in line with wanting to work on this idea of a community and relationships, we're going to try and strengthen the membership network or the communication, shall we say, between different members and with members of the outside world as well. Outside world - it makes it sound like we're some sort of commune - but you know what I mean. For example, we have a Discord server. Dunno how many people are aware of it or who remember it. I think we had a lot of people join it during the World Tour Conference a couple of years ago, and then it just kind of petered off and it's sort of falling a little bit silent now. But we have at least one new volunteer whose main task is to see if they can revitalise it. Hopefully we'll have a little bit more help with that as well. So we're going to aim to have that as kind of our community centre, I guess.

Roeland: Networking doesn't mean that somebody sits in the centre and pushes every button for everybody. The networking is more between each other and every member, every person has to push that button themselves. But we just help showing where to do that.

Matilda: When it was active the Discord server was great. We had different channels with the different materials and everything. And so many people would message in there being like "hi, I'm curious about...", I actually saw that someone had posted in there earlier asking about, you know, hinge mechanisms and "is anyone familiar with how you would create a hinge on this gate?" Ask in the Discord, maybe someone does and you'll suddenly get 20 people saying, "yes, I've been making hinges my whole life, since I was a little boy and this is exactly how you do it, apart from in this culture where they do it this way." But indeed it's supposed to be a member-led initiative, we'll be providing the platform and we might be providing some events on there as well, we're going to have to see. I'm very, very happy to

receive any ideas or suggestions from our members on what they might like to see happen in the future, because indeed, EXARC is here for the members. We're here to help facilitate, basically. We're sort of getting towards the end of this episode. But Roeland, as you're sitting in your armchair by the crackling fire with your mug of hot cocoa in your hand, all the children gathered at your feet, staring up at you in awe, maybe you could say a few final words to just round it off...

Roeland: Well, I think EXARC must go with the time. It's not going to be a revolution, but we've always made small changes here and there and I think that constant change has to continue. And I see there are a lot of opportunities. It's good to focus on certain things because we cannot do everything in one go. It's only so many people we have and so much time we have. But yeah, grandpa talking, Matilda, I was about your age when I started with EXARC and it feels very old, but I think it's very positive that we get a generation change in the driver's seat, so to say. That's very important because I think you will look... and your generation, people look differently at things than me 20 years ago. You have many good ideas, enough experience, I believe, and also a lot of good people around you to make it happen and you are probably willing to learn as well. Learn to know a lot of new people and see what's happening around the world because what I hope is that EXARC will also indeed, as I said before, more active in parts of the world where we currently are not active. Because when I go there, when I speak with people, I hear that they're interested in the subjects we work with, that they maybe define reconstruction a bit different, for example, than in Europe or experimental archaeology a bit different. But in the end, it's about the same subjects. And it gives us also new ideas to look at things in a bit different way. I'll be happy to stay with EXARC, join conferences, et cetera, but more as an active participant... I wouldn't say as a fly on the wall...

Matilda: You'll be that awkward one in the front row going 'I have, it's not really a question, it's more of a comment'...

Roeland: Yeah, of 10 minutes, right? But I would like to thank everybody for a great time and I'm looking forward to a lot more in the future. Thank you so much.

Matilda: Thanks everyone.

We hope that you enjoyed this overview of EXARC's past and future plans. Join us again soon for one of our many activities and make sure to listen in to our monthly podcast episodes. To keep up to date with current events don't forget to follow us through exarc.net and our associated social media channels.