

A changed land

1945 to present

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1 - Platform sandals

Mid 1970s

Printed cotton uppers and plastic soles

2 - Mini dress

About 1969

Bought in Exeter

The donor wore this dress while a student at university in Exeter. She took up the hemline as it was not short enough for current trends.

3 - Mini dress

About 1969

Made and worn in Exeter

Crocheted yellow cotton yarn, with diamanté trim. There was a craze for crocheted dresses in neon colours towards the end of the 1960s. Skirts were at their shortest between 1969 and 1971.

4 - Vogue dress pattern magazine

Showing summer dresses for June to July 1956.

5 - Design for evening dress

Early to mid-1950s

By Mabel Early

Mabel was interested in fashion and commercial art. She studied at the Sheffield School of Art, and later taught at Rolle College in Exmouth. RAMM has a large collection of her work. Some of the drawings are copies of dresses seen at fashion shows, while others, like this, are her own designs.

6 - Dress pattern

1950s

Simplicity pattern, 4994

Patterns for home-made dresses were first published in the late 1800s. For many women in the 1950s, the Simplicity brand offered style on a restricted budget.

7 - Dress pattern

1950s

Simplicity pattern, 4649

8 - Dance dress

Mid 1960s

Synthetic net and lace with plastic sequins and beads. This gown was made by the donor and later worn in a heat of the BBC's Come Dancing. This T.V. ballroom dancing competition ran on and off from 1949 to 1988.

9 - Hat box and hat

1960

From Olivia Duff, haute couture, milliner and retailer, 4
Cathedral Close, Exeter

Olivia Duff sold high class womenswear as well as accessories.

10 - Brown rat

Rattus norvegicus

Watcombe, Torquay, 1965

Many people hate the brown rat. But how and why did it gain such a bad reputation? In the past it was known as the Hanover rat – a name derived from prejudice shown towards the Protesant Hanoverian, William of Orange. When William's army landed at Torquay in 1688, they supposedly introduced the brown rat into Britain. Today, brown rats thrive in urban areas, feeding on the waste carelessly discarded by city dwellers.

11 - Hedgehog

Erinaceus europaeus

British

The hedgehog is a familiar mammal to most of us, but it is rarely seen by day as it prefers to feed at night time. It likes a varied diet of small creatures, such as snails, beetles, earthworms and caterpillars.

The typical mix of parkland and gardens found in urban areas provides good hedgehog habitat, although they do suffer high casualty rates on our busy roads.

12 - American mink

Neovison vison

Tavistock, Devon

The first established populations of feral American mink in the British Isles were recorded in South Devon in the early 1950s. By 1977, when this specimen was trapped, the animal was reaching pest proportions. Since then it has become widespread in Britain, although recent evidence suggests a slight decline in numbers.

13 - Oxford ragwort

Senecio squalidus

From the walls of Wadham College, Oxford, 22 May 1850

This plant has its origins on the volcanic slopes of Mount Etna, Sicily. Around 1700 some seeds were introduced to a garden in Badminton. Subsequently this plant or a hybrid was grown in the Oxford Botanic Garden.

From there it escaped to grow on walls all over Oxford. With the advent of railways, plants were spread around the country as the parachute-like seeds were drawn along behind speeding trains.

14 - Grey squirrel

Sciurus carolinensis

Exeter

The grey squirrel is larger and more aggressive than the native red squirrel. Visitors to North America were clearly impressed when they saw the eastern grey squirrel in its natural habitat.

From as early as 1828 people attempted to introduce this animal to Britain, with mixed success. Around 1902 a number of squirrels were introduced into Rougemont Gardens, just behind this building.

15 - Red squirrel

Sciurus vulgaris

British, from the collection of Miss Lethbridge of Launceston, Cornwall

Around 1900, William D'Urban recorded that the red squirrel was "Common in woods and plantations throughout the county especially among firs". He later wrote that they had "Totally disappeared from Newport & Northbrook in 1910-11". It is often claimed that the greys drove the reds to near extinction in this country. However, D'Urban recorded a fatal disease in the reds some time before the greys were even introduced into Devon. These losses may have enabled grey squirrels to expand into areas with no existing red squirrel populations.

16 - Peregrine falcon

Falco peregrinus

Cornwall, 1942

Birds of prey have suffered persecution by gamekeepers for many years, but their most severe decline came about through poisoning by the pesticide D.D.T.

This caused hen birds to lay eggs whose shells were too thin to take the weight of the incubating adult. Since a ban on the use of D.D.T., peregrines have made a marked recovery and are now breeding in many English cities, including Exeter.

17 - Rock dove

Columba livia

Ireland, 14 August 1940

The flocks of town pigeons we are so used to are the descendants of captive and domesticated rock doves. They continue to nest in the equivalents of cliff ledges, caves and recesses that they find in built-up areas. The wild bird has been driven to the edges of its previous range, mostly sea cliffs backed by varied farmland and set-aside land.

18 - Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

Sowton, near Exeter, 1933

The starling favours the built environment where it lies close to open fields and managed land. Buildings provide many favourable nest sites, usually holes or cavities in roofs and walls. This individual was ringed as a nestling at The Hague, Holland in August 1931. A winter visitor, it would have been expected to return to the Netherlands to breed.

19 - House sparrow

Passer domesticus

North Devon, 1982

It is sometimes held that the sparrow or spuggy is the most familiar of wild animals. It has spread naturally or been introduced throughout the world, initially following the spread of agriculture from the Middle East.

Recently its populations have seen significant declines. This may be partly due to more efficient and tidier handling of grain and animal feed, but a general reduction in insect numbers may be reducing breeding success.

20-21 - House martin

Delichon urbica

Exeter and Axmouth, Devon

In the prehistoric environment these birds nested on cliff faces. These days they usually build their mud nests under the eaves of houses that border on open countryside.

22-23 - Swift

Apus apus

Exmouth, 1984 and Exeter, 1912

Swifts are characteristic birds of the cityscape. Their screams, as they chase around the urban skies, help form the soundtrack of a summer's day. But where would they have nested before buildings became their places of choice?

24 - Collared dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Britain, 1975

Historical records show this species has undergone a dramatic expansion of its range. Originally confined to India, it expanded into western Asia and then the cooler climates of Western Europe. The first British records come from 1955. It is now well established throughout most of the country, favouring suburbs rather than city centres.

25 - Fittings from war-damaged buildings

Made around 1400-1600

Collected in Exeter in the 1940s

Many of Exeter's ancient buildings that were destroyed during the Blitz had never been studied or recorded. These door hinges and fittings were recovered from amongst the rubble by a local archaeologist concerned by the destruction. They provide a tantalising glimpse of the elegant houses that were destroyed.

26 - Model of the 'House that Moved'

Modern

This model shows the building called the 'House that Moved' which originally stood at the corner of Frog Street and Exe Bridge until 1961. Medieval buildings like this were once very common in Exeter but many were demolished as they became decrepit.

The model suggests how the building was originally used, with a shop on the ground floor and living space above. Today the building is still used as a shop, proving historic buildings can find a successful modern use.

27 - Photograph album of the 'House that Moved'

December 1961

The 'House that Moved' gained its name in 1961 when the building was moved 70 metres (230 feet) to avoid imminent destruction by the building of a new road. The 700-year old building was carefully jacked onto wheels and inched very slowly to its new location.

The saving of this building marked a new era for Exeter's historic buildings. Historic sites that had survived the destruction of slum clearances and the Second World War began to be appreciated.

28-30 - Roman cremation burial

Around 1,900-2,000 years old

From Cullompton, Devon

This burial was discovered in 2009.

Archaeologists were expecting to find medieval evidence. Instead they unearthed an important Roman site. Without the modern planning laws that protect archaeology, this site would have been destroyed by building new houses on the site.

28 Black-burnished ware jar containing a cremation burial

29 Small black-burnished ware jar

30 Decorated shale board, possibly a table top

South West Archaeology and Millwood Homes