

What makes a Golden Age

1642 to 1800

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1 - Proceedings about the Storming of Exeter

Printed 1646

Printed tracts were the newspapers of their day: they conveyed news and propaganda, often in a highly sensational way. This one gives a blow by blow account of the final storming of Exeter by the Parliamentary forces of Sir Thomas Fairfax.

2 - Articles agreed on the Surrender of Exeter

Printed 1646

A printed tract dealing with the surrender of the Royalist forces to the Parliamentary general Sir Thomas Fairfax at the end of the war.

3 - Printed letter from General George Monck

1660

General Monck was born in Devon and was a successful military commander and politician. In the Civil War he served King Charles I, then, following defeat, became a general to Oliver Cromwell. This letter was printed after Cromwell's death and deals with Monck's role in the restoration of King Charles II.

4 - Penny, Charles I

Made 1644

Minted in Exeter

The smallest denomination coin made by the Exeter mint during the Civil War.

5 - Half groat, Charles I

Made 1644

Minted in Exeter

6 - Threepence, Charles I

Made 1644

Minted in Exeter

7 - Groat, Charles I

Made 1644

Minted in Exeter

A groat was worth four pence.

8 - Sixpence, Charles I

Made 1644

Minted in Exeter

9 - Half-crown, Charles I

Made 1643-1644

Minted in Exeter

Paying an army was an expensive business – a foot soldier was paid eight pence a day. When the Royalist forces took control of Exeter in 1643 a mint was set up to produce coin to pay the troops. Although the full range of denominations were struck, they were mainly silver crowns and half-crowns.

10 - Half-crown, Charles I

Made 1643-1646

Minted in Exeter

Worth 30 pence.

11-13 - Crowns, Charles I

Made 1643-1645

Minted in Exeter

Worth 60 pence.

14 - Half-crown, Charles I

Made 1644

Minted in Exeter

The inscription on this coin is a piece of Royalist propaganda. It states the war aims made by Charles I at the beginning of the war: to fight for the Protestant religion and the laws of England. His opponents believed they too were fighting for the same principles.

15 - Half-crown, Charles I

Marked 1642, but issued 1644

Minted in Exeter

This coin shows the king galloping over the weapons of his enemies. It was probably issued to mark Charles I's visit to Exeter or a Royalist military triumph.

16 - Scottish Rebellion medal

Issued 1639

Made of silver

The triumphal design of this medal was later reused for the Exeter half-crown dated 1642 (see 15).

17 - Helmet

Made around 1645

From Rougemont Castle armoury Cavalry soldiers of both sides wore this type of helmet. The bars across the face gave some protection from sword slashes.

18-20 - Cannon balls

Around 1600-1700

Made of iron

Cannon were heavy, slow to move and difficult to aim. They were at their most effective during the sort of siege warfare that Exeter endured.

18 St Thomas

19 St Davids

20 Budleigh Salterton

21 - Musket balls

Fired July 1643

From Hayes Barton, near Exeter

These are shot from the fierce fighting that took place around this farm. They are made of lead, and would have been cast in moulds. Such ammunition needed to be made speedily at short notice – even the lead pipes supplying the city with drinking water were torn up for the purpose.

22 - Hand grenade

Around 1600-1700

From North Street, Exeter

A pottery vessel packed with explosives and lit with a fuse. It must have been a frightening weapon during the close combat fighting in the Exeter suburbs. When originally found it was identified as a hand warmer!

23 - Weather vane in the form of a wyvern

1750 or earlier

From the North Gate, Exeter

Said to have been used as target practice during the Civil War, it originally sat on top of the city's North Gate until it was demolished in 1769. A replica now stands on the Iron Bridge.

24-49 - Finds from a merchant's house

Around 1680-1690

From North Street, Exeter

This spectacular group of finds illustrates the quantity of imported goods owned by the wealthiest households of the city.

Hundreds of fragmentary pots, glasses, clay pipes and bones were found packed into a stonelined garderobe, or toilet pit.

24-25 - Stoneware drinking jugs

Made in Frechen in the Rhineland.

26 - Chamber pot

It is perhaps not surprising to find this in a toilet pit.

27 - Drug jar

Dutch delftware ointment pot.

28 - Wine bottle

Made around 1690-1720.

29-30 - Wine glasses

Made in Venice or in England in the Venetian style.

31 - Glass bottle

With ornate, trailed glass decoration.

32-33 - Apothecary bottles

Used to hold medicines.

34 - Drug jars

Used to hold household ointments and medicines.

35 - Delftware bowl

Chinese porcelain was rare and expensive, so delftware pottery was made in Holland and London to copy the Chinese style.

36 - Chinese porcelain dish

Showing a landscape with fishermen and boats. This was made around 1590-1620.

37 - Delftware dish

Made in Holland, but painted with a Chinese-style floral scene.

38 - Sherd with prancing stag

From a rare Italian maiolica dish.

39 - Key

Probably from a clock.

40 - Delftware dish

Made in Holland, but painted with Chinese-style scenery and a bird.

41 - Portuguese dish

The decoration copies Chinese patterns and symbols.

42 - Cockshead hinge

A type of hinge often used on cupboard doors.

43 - *Sgraffito* dish

The potters of Barnstaple were highly skilled in the making of this pottery. It was traded across Britain and to the new American colonies.

The figure on this dish may be King Charles II hiding in an oak tree.

44 - Delftware porringer

Probably made in London.

45, 47 - Jug bases

Made in Westerwald, Germany.

46 - Tankard

Made in Westerwald, Germany.

48 - Knife handle

Made of silver.

49 - Wine bottle

Its shape suggests a date of about 1720-1740.

50-83 - Finds from a rubbish pit

Around 1350-1700

From Trichay Street, Exeter

Many houses had rubbish pits in their back yards. This pit, however, was in use for an extraordinary length of time. The objects are a curious mixture: there is local pottery but also exotic vessels from China and Spain. Drinking jugs, glasses, dice and balls all show an interest in life's pleasures.

50 - Leather boot

Around 1350-1400.

51 - Leather shoe

A woman's or youth's shoe from 1450-1470. It is made of fine leather in a fashionable style with an elongated toe.

52 - Leather shoe

A plain, utility woman's or youth's shoe dating to 1500-1550.

53 - Bowling ball

Bowls was a popular game in the 1500s and 1600s.

54 - Stoneware drinking jug

Made in Frechen, Germany.

55 - Leather knife sheath

56 - Horseshoe

Probably dating to 1550-1650.

57 - Leather belt

This may have been part of a horse's harness.

58 - Pottery jar

Locally made for storing food.

59 - Evidence of forgery

These two iron dies were for making coins – the gold noble and half-noble from 1351-1413.

No official coins were made in Exeter at this time, so these were used for forgeries.

60 - Animal bones

The inhabitants of the house had a varied diet. These bones are from a goose, a crow, a chicken, a duck and a hare.

61 - Dog skulls

The remains of pets and guard dogs.

62 - Pottery jar

Locally made for food storage.

63 - Clay tobacco pipe

Dating to around 1630.

64 - Wooden comb

Made of apple wood between 1400 and 1600.

65 - Glass flask

Probably made in Spain in an Islamic style.

66 - Pottery bowl

Locally made for cooking and mixing food.

67 - Shoemaker's leather

Used to protect the palm of the hand.

68 - Delftware plate

Made in London in the 1660s and decorated in a Chinese style.

69 - Cup

Made in Portugal around 1650, it imitates Chinese porcelain.

70 - Clay tobacco pipe

Dating to around 1660-1670.

71 - Porcelain dish

Made around 1585-1600 in China.

The two prancing deer were a popular subject for the Ming pottery painters.

72-73 - Wooden bowls

Made of maple, they date to around 1660.

74 - Gaming counter

For a board game or used as a gambling chip, it dates to around 1660.

75 - Bone dice

From around 1660.

76 - Clay tobacco pipe

Dating to around 1660-1670.

77 - Tennis ball

Used to play 'real' tennis or fives. It is made of a leather case densely packed with moss.

78 - Clay tobacco pipe

Dating to around 1660-1690.

79 - Stoneware drinking jug

Made in Westerwald, Germany.

80 - Wine bottle

Dating to 1650-1660, it bears the seal of William Piers, Bishop of Bath and Wells.

81 - Clay tobacco pipe

Dating to around 1660-1690.

82 - Clay tobacco pipe

Dating to around 1660-1690.

83 - Cup

Made in Bristol around 1740-1750.

84 - Bucket pot

Around 1660-1690

From Goldsmith Street, Exeter

Used to carry water from the well.

85-86 - Chamber pots

Around 1660-1690

From Goldsmith Street, Exeter

The size of your 'potty' depended on your status. Large ones were designed for use by a household, while richer people used smaller, individual pots.

87 - Jar

Around 1650-1700

From Cricklepit Mill, Exeter

Jars were sealed with fat and a cloth tied over the mouth.

88 - Delftware bowl

Around 1620-1640

From The Close, Exeter

Found in a toilet pit, this bowl was made in London and decorated in a Chinese style.

89 - *Maiolica* dish

Around 1620-1640

From Catherine Street, Exeter

Brightly coloured *maiolica* pottery from Italy would have been prized possessions for wealthy Exeter households. This dish was recovered from rubble after the bombing of Exeter in 1942 and shows damage from fire and smoke. It was probably hanging on the wall of the Country House Inn, Catherine Street.

90-91 - Bellarmine jugs

Around 1640-1660

From Sidwell Street, Exeter

These jugs are decorated with the angry-looking German mythological figure of the 'Bartmann' or 'Wild Man'. Dutch and English merchants gave these jugs the nickname 'bellarmines' to poke fun at the anti-protestant Cardinal Bellarmine. They said his face resembled that of the wild man.

92 - Dish

1718

From Topsham

Topsham was the port for Exeter and so received a lot of imported pottery. This dish was made in northern Holland and has its date of manufacture painted on it.

93 - Drug jars

Around 1660-1690

From Exeter sites

People relied on home-made drugs, consisting of plants and other natural substances, which were made to recipes passed down through the generations.

These small jars stored such medicines in the home.

94-95 - Cups

Around 1730-1750

From Bartholomew Street East, Exeter

Richer Exeter households of this period enjoyed a variety of crockery on their dining tables. These are both Bristol slipwares.

96 - Cup

Around 1720-1780

From Lower Combe Street, Exeter

Made in south Somerset, the green colour comes from adding copper to the glaze.

97 - Bowl

Around 1660-1690

From North Street, Exeter

Decorated in *sgraffito* style, meaning scratched decoration. Typical meals might have included milk and barley gruel, porridge, beans and peas, dried fish with meat a few times a week.

98 - Plate

Around 1660-1700

From Goldsmith Street, Exeter

This is a product of the Barnstaple or Bideford potteries. Much of the pottery in use in Exeter came from either North Devon or south Somerset.

99 - Plate

Around 1660-1690

From Goldsmith Street, Exeter

The pattern of wavy and spiralling lines is made by trailing liquid clay, or slip. This striking design is a typical product of the south Somerset potteries.

100 - Plate

Around 1650-1700

From Goldsmith Street, Exeter

A sgraffito decorated plate, made at Donyatt, south Somerset.

101 - Delftware tiles

Around 1700-1715

From Bartholomew Street, Exeter

These tiles were made in Holland and England and were used to cover walls and decorate fireplace surrounds. They were mass produced and so were available to a far wider market than earlier decorated tiles. Dutch landscapes and biblical scenes, such as these, were favourite subjects.

102 - Sweetmeat glass with 'teared' pedestal stem

About 1740-1750

Made in England

Wheel cut scalloped rim with further cut decoration on the sides of the bowl.

103 - Wine glass with six-sided 'silesian' pedestal stem

About 1715-1720

Made in England

The engraved inscription 'AUREA LIBERTAS', or 'golden liberty', may refer to one of the political Whig clubs which supported George I's accession to the throne in 1714. The white horse comes from George's coat of arms.

104 - Wine glass with facet cut stem

About 1790-1800

Made in England

The wheel engraved decoration of a bird, floral sprigs and a heart may commemorate a christening.

105 - Wine glass with multiple spiral air twist stem

About 1750

Made in England

The bowl is wheel engraved with a Jacobite rose, bud and oak leaf, and inscribed: 'Fiat', meaning 'let it be done'. This decoration supported the return of the exiled Stuarts to the English throne.

106 - Wine glass with incised twist stem

About 1740-1750

Made in England

Green tinted glasses may have been used for drinking German hock wines.

107 - Glass goblet with 'teared' heavy baluster stem

About 1700-1710

Made in England

108 - Sweetmeat glass with moulded pedestal stem

About 1740-1750

Made in England

'Sweetmeat' is an old-fashioned name for desserts or confectioneries.

109 - Glass goblet with double series opaque twist stem

About 1760

Made in England

The bowl is wheel engraved with a flying pheasant and vine.

110 - Firing glass with ‘teared’ air bubble stem

About 1750

Made in England

Firing glasses were rapped loudly on tables to silence drinkers prior to a toast or song. The sound resembled gunshots – hence the name. They needed to be solidly constructed and were sometimes engraved with masonic or drinking club emblems.

111 - Wine glass with ‘teared’ air bubble stem

About 1740-1760

Made in England

Wheel engraved with a fruiting vine and the initials: ‘MW’.

112 - Wine glass with air twist stem

About 1750

Made in England

113 - 'The Exeter Flute'

About 1660-1670

Made in England or the Netherlands

Engraved with a portrait of King Charles II and a truncated oak tree with a sprouting branch.

114 - Wine glass

About 1760-1770

Made in England

Unusually, this glass is made from soda glass, as opposed to lead glass which was standard for this period in England.

115 - Port glass

About 1825-1850

Made in England

This glass belonged to the Revd Jack Russell who hunted at South Molton, Devon. Although his favourite drink was gin and water, it is said that he enjoyed a glass of port after the hunt. This would explain why this glass is engraved with a fox.

116 - Wine bottle

About 1708

Made in England

With the inscription: 'Thomas Carlyon St Blazey 1708'. Bottles from the 1700s were rarely marked by the maker, but were often sealed with dates and the names of people, taverns or monarchs. Inns and taverns at this time were centres of entertainment and business.

117 - Deceptive toastmaster's glass

About 1710

Made in England

The bowls of these glasses were solidly made and contained small measures. It is probable that some were used by toastmasters to prevent rapid intoxication.

118 - Jelly glass

About 1775-1795

Made in England

Jelly glasses were made in England from the late 1600s and were used for serving desserts such as jellies, creams and trifles.

119 - Wine glass

About 1750

Made in England

The bowl is engraved with an inscription which probably translates to 'I will go more boldly', with rose and thistle sprays and a portrait of Prince Charles Edward Stuart. The decoration supports the exiled Stuart monarchy.

Glasses with Jacobite emblems and inscriptions were made long after Charles Stuart was defeated at the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

120 - Cordial or dram glass

About 1770

Made in England

Similar to firing glasses with short stems and heavy feet.

121 - Wine glass with eight-sided moulded pedestal stem

About 1730-1740

Made in England

Pedestal stems were first made with four sides to celebrate the coronation of George I in 1714, and six- and eight-sided versions soon followed. The design probably originated in central Europe which led to them being called 'Silesian' – after Silesia which is now largely in Poland.

122 - Ale glass

About 1740

Made in England

Wheel engraved on the bowl with hops and barley.

123 - Tillet block insert

Around 1700-1750

From the Customs House, Exeter

Used to stamp bales of woollen cloth. The cloth industry was the source of Exeter's wealth and so it seems fitting for this block to show a weaver at his loom.

124 - Pipeclay lion

Around 1690-1720

From Batholomew Street, Exeter

A toy or ornament.

125 - Pipeclay figurine

Around 1660-1690

From Exeter

Originally a male and female pair of figures, the woman's fan is still just visible.

126 - Pipeclay figurine

Around 1660-1675

From Queen Street, Exeter

This toy, which was once painted, is dated by its dress style.

127 - Clay tobacco pipe

Around 1620-1640

From Flowerpot Lane, Exeter

Tobacco was so expensive when it was first imported that early pipe bowls were very small.

128 - Clay tobacco pipes

Around 1630-1642

From Paris Street, Exeter

Exeter soon had its own pipe-maker, but his business was destroyed during the Civil War.

129 - Clay tobacco pipe

Around 1690-1720

From Dawlish Warren

130 - Wig curlers

Around 1660-1800

From Exeter

Fashionable men and women wore wigs in the 17th and 18th centuries. These curlers were used to set the curls in wigs.

131-133 - Coins of the Great Recoinage

1696-1697

Minted in Exeter

By the late 17th century many coins in everyday use were old, worn and clipped, so King William III set up the 'Great Recoinage' to introduce a coinage of uniform standard. Exeter was chosen for one of the mints and produced nearly £500,000 worth of coins.

134 - Half-crown, William III

1697

Minted in Exeter

The 'E' for the Exeter mint has been struck over a 'C' for Chester – where the original die must have been destined for.

135 - Halfpenny token

Made in 1792

Issued in Exeter

In the 18th century there was a shortage of usable small change, and so many traders issued their own tokens. This one, issued by Samuel Kingdon in Exeter, reads 'SUCCESS TO THE WOOLLEN MANUFACTORY'. Sadly this sentiment was misplaced, as the industry collapsed entirely at the end of the 18th century.

136 - Half-halfpenny token

Made in 1792

Issued in Exeter

Featuring Bishop Blaize, the patron saint of clothworkers, with a wool comb – the bloody symbol of his martyrdom.

137 - Silver candlesticks

1826-1827

Made by John Burdon, Exeter

Both are engraved under the base with a crest of an arm gripping an arrow and with the initials: 'MS'.

138 - Silver two-handled cup

1716-1717

Made by Thomas Furlong, Exeter

The engraved decoration includes two duellists and the inscription: 'R.P. 1716'. Cups of this type were commonly used for ceremonial drinking or served as prizes or commemorative gifts.

139 - Silver chocolate pot

1755-1756

Made by William Parry, Exeter

Engraved in the rococo style with armorials and cartouches. A French style, rococo was fashionable in England during the mid-1700s, and is recognised by intricate, flowing lines, C and S curves, shells, flowers and scrolls. In Exeter, plainer styles were generally preferred.

140 - Silver beer jug

1732-1733

Made by James Strang, Exeter

Engraved with the Walrond family coat of arms. The inscription mentions 'Bovey', which refers to Bovey House near Beer, Devon, which belonged to the Walronds in the 18th century.

141 - Silver chocolate pot with 'duck's head' spout

1729-1730

Made by John Burdon, Exeter

Chocolate was first imported from the West Indies during the mid-1600s and at first, like tea, could only be afforded by the rich. The removable lid finial allowed this thick, syrupy drink to be stirred through the lid with a molionet or stick.

142 - Silver cream jug

1726-1727

Made by Joseph Collier, Exeter

Inscribed under the base with the initials: 'F GA'.

143 - Silver candlesticks

1707-1708

Made by John Elston, Exeter

Candlesticks in the form of classical Greek and Roman columns were briefly fashionable during the late 1600s and early 1700s but did not become standard until around 1765-70.

144 - Silver bowl

1704-1705

Made by John Elston, Exeter

The handle is inscribed with the initials and date 'ME 1724', and the body with 'EEV'.

145 - Silver beer jug

1717-1718

Made by John Elston, Exeter

The engraved family crest has not been identified.

146 - Silver tea canister

1716-1717

Made by Samuel Blachford, Plymouth, but marked in Exeter

Engraved with the arms of the Kempthorne family of Cornwall. The wide-necked tea caddy was introduced in the mid-1700s. 'Caddy' is derived from the Malay word Kati which was a unit weight for tea. Later they came in sets and each contained different types of tea such as black, green, 'Bohea' or 'Hyson'.

147 - Silver teapot

1713-1714

Made by Pentecost Symons, Plymouth, but marked in Exeter

Engraved on the side with a griffin – a mythical creature with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle. They are often used as family crests and within coats of arms.

148 - Silver tankard

1715-1716

Made by John Elston, Exeter

The engraved coat of arms has not been identified but probably belonged to a West Country family.

149 - Silver two-handled cup and cover

1709-1710

Made by Edmond Richards, Exeter

With chased and embossed relief decoration. There are several variations of chasing in silver-making but all involve the indentation of the metal with a variety of punches and a hammer. Embossing usually describes punching and hammering of the metal from the back, so as to raise the design in relief at the front – an ancient technique requiring great skill.

150 - Waste from a horner's workshop

Around 1720-1730

From Shooting Marsh Stile, Exeter

These are the bone cores from cattle horns. Hundreds were found in two barrels on this site. Horners made products such as spoons and lantern glasses from the outer sheath of the horn. The core was thrown away as rubbish.

The riverside areas of Exeter were full of industries working on animal products: wool, meat, skin, fat, bone and horn were all used.

151 - Horn spoon

Around 1750-1850

From Exeter

Horn was widely available. It was a cheap manufacturing material.

152 - Horn spoon

Modern replica

153 - Waste sheet of horn

Modern replica

154 - Manilla mould

Around 1625

From Cowick Street, Exeter

Manillas were bronze castings used in trade with West Africa. Slaves were among the goods traded, but it is unclear how far Exeter merchants were involved in slave trading. From its context at the site of the Birdall foundry in St Thomas, this seems to be the earliest evidence for manilla manufacture in England.

155 - Manilla

Around 1800-1900

Collected in south-east Nigeria

Manillas were used as currency and for trade in West Africa.

156 - Silver teakettle and spirit warmer stand

1713-1714

Made by John Elston, Exeter

From about 1600 the Chinese and Japanese custom of tea drinking travelled to Europe. However, the fashion did not catch on in Britain until after 1660, and did not reach some provincial areas, including Devon, until the early 1700s. Tea was an expensive luxury: the equivalent of about 35p per pound, when daily agricultural wages were around 10p.

157 - Silver sugar tongs

About 1718

Made by Pentecost Symons, Plymouth, but marked in Exeter

At this time sugar was not provided refined and ready for use as today. Instead it was supplied in hard loaves (see 161). Before serving, pieces of sugar were broken off with tongs such as these.

158 - Silver caster

1716-1717

Made by John Elston, Exeter

Engraved on the side with the coat of arms of Windsor.

159 - Silver sugar box

1705-1706

Made by Thomas Furlong, Exeter

160 - Silver chocolate pot

1707-1708

Made by John Elston, Exeter

Both chocolate and coffee were bitter drinks and needed sugar to make them more palatable. Much of the sugar imported to Britain was stirred into these drinks. This pot has a detachable lid finial to allow the drink to be stirred.

Elston demonstrated his skills in the making of this decorative piece which combines several techniques: chasing, embossing and a cut-card work mount on the handle.

161 - Sugarloaf from a mould

A type used from 1600-1900

From Exeter

Most households bought sugar in this form until granulated and cubed sugar was invented. Sugar 'nips' were needed to cut off pieces.

162 - Syrup jar and sugar mould

Around 1680-1720

From Goldsmith Street, Exeter

Raw sugar was imported from the Caribbean. Factories in Exeter and Topsham processed it into refined sugar. It was first boiled and poured into conical sugar moulds which sat upon syrup jars. The sugar crystallised in the moulds and was whitened by the repeated pouring of water and white pipeclay through the sugar.