

# The Open Wall

**19<sup>th</sup> century to Roman**

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## **1 - Dead Calm: Sunset at the Bight of Exmouth**

Francis Danby (1793-1861)

1855, oil on canvas

Just visible is the pumping station tower at Starcross, part of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's atmospheric railway. This short-lived project propelled trains by atmospheric pressure rather than steam.

## **2 - Nadderwater near Exeter**

James Leakey (1755-1865)

Around 1820-1840, oil on canvas

Before the railway reached Exeter in 1844, people relied on the coach or horse and cart. The state of the road in this scene suggests how slow and uncomfortable road travel usually was.

## **3 - Exeter Turnpike Trust toll board**

1830-1884

From Copplestone Gate

The Exeter Turnpike Trust was one of the largest in the country. Copplestone Gate was on the road between Exeter and Barnstaple. The toll for using the road was calculated according to the type of vehicle and the goods being transported.

## **4 - Fan leaf**

East Devon lace

Designed by Thomas Kennet-Were (d. 1916), artist, scholar and philanthropist, and made by lace-makers in Sidmouth, on the occasion of his marriage in 1876 to Alice Sawyer.

## **5 - Honiton lace panel**

Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century

A manufacturer's advertisement depicting the royal coat of arms, boasting the skill of East Devon lace-makers. Esther Clarke's Honiton firm made lace by appointment to Queen Victoria.

In preparation for the 1851 exhibition a public meeting in Honiton resolved to submit work by seven local manufacturers. They co-operated in order to revive trade in the town 'by exciting attention to the surpassing beauty and excellence of the fabric.'

## **6 - Oil jar shop sign**

Around 1735-1797

From Upper Paul Street, Exeter

This jar originally imported expensive olive oil from Italy. As olive oil was sold as a medicine, many oil jars were reused as chemist shop signs. This practice was banned after several of these heavy jars fell down.

## **7 - Otton & Sons shop sign**

1900-1950

From 135-139 Fore Street, Exeter

Walter Otton chose a key as the sign to hang outside his ironmongers shop. Otton & Sons were renowned for selling a wide array of items, from metal screws to wooden deck chairs.

## **8 - The Golden Hammer**

Around 1850

Garton & King, Exeter

The Golden Hammer was a well-known shop sign in Exeter. It has advertised the firm of Garton & King for over 300 years. A replica of the hammer can still be seen outside the Garton & King shop in North Street, Exeter.

## **9 - Memorial card**

September 1887

The devastating loss of life at the Theatre Royal fire in 1887 made national newspaper headlines. It was one of the worst disasters in Exeter's history, and led to the establishment of national fire safety laws.

## **10 - Fire-damaged theatre tickets**

5 September 1887

These fire- and water-damaged tickets were found among the debris of Exeter's Theatre Royal following a devastating fire on 5 September 1887.

## **11 - Instructions in the event of fire**

June 1870

West of England Insurance Company

Before the provision of the national fire brigade, wealthy householders paid for private insurance to provide men, equipment and water to fight fire.

This notice provides instructions in the event of fire in Heavitree.

## **12-15 - Fire insurance plaques**

Between 1807 and 1894

West of England Insurance Company

Known as fire marks, plaques like these, from private insurance companies, were hung outside buildings. When a fire broke out they showed firemen which houses to tackle, and which to leave to burn. These plaques feature King Alfred, Saxon king of Wessex, who was the emblem for the West of England Insurance Company.



## **16 - Thomas Camble of the West of England Fire Brigade**

Anonymous, English school

About 1865, oil on panel

He wears a leather helmet. Brass helmets were only introduced from the late 1860s. On Thomas's jacket is the company badge. Also shown is one of the leather fire buckets, carried by the horse-drawn fire engine.

## **17-19 - Leather fire buckets**

1795

From the South Street conduit

Used to transport water for fighting fires, they are marked with 'Exon', meaning Exeter, and the city crest.

## **20 - Lace motifs**

After 1870

Sprigs said to have been designed and made by Louisa Tucker, a daughter of the Branscombe lace manufacturer John Tucker. These beautifully executed pieces are naturalistic representations of wild and garden plants. They were made on a lace pillow using bobbins wound with fine cotton thread. John Tucker's successful family firm, with an office in London, had the distinction of supplying lace for Princess Alexandra's marriage to Albert Edward in 1863.

## **21 - Longcase clock**

About 1750

Made by George Boutcher of Broadclyst

An eight day movement with hourly striking train which plays from a selection of six tunes at three-hourly intervals (2, 5, 8 and 11 o'clock). The musical work includes a pin barrel, hammers and nest of bells.

The case is pine with elm and yew veneer, with carved and inlaid decoration. The painted dial in the arch shows phases of the moon, and also a date aperture, tune selector and chime silencer.

## **22 - Longcase clock**

About 1750-1760

Made by Nicholas Lambert, London

An eight day movement with hourly striking train and chiming train which plays a descending octave at each quarter. The quarter chiming work, which includes a pin barrel, hammers and nest of bells, is visible through the right side of the hood. The case is of burr walnut veneered oak, and the dial includes a date aperture and strike silencer.

## **23 - Longcase clock**

About 1790-1800

Made by John Tucker, Exeter

An eight day movement with hourly striking train. The square, silvered dial includes a date aperture. The case is of solid mahogany and mahogany veneered pine.

John Tucker (1760-1829) was the son of a Tiverton clockmaker who, after a period in London, opened a shop in Exeter. Here he worked in Southgate Street and High Street.

Later in his career he maintained many of the city's chiming clocks.

## **24 - Fireplace**

Around 1710-1730

From Bradninch Place, Exeter

From a building which once stood near the museum.

## **25 - Exeter from Exwick**

Francis Towne (1739/40-1816)

1773, oil on canvas

Francis Towne spent most of his working life in Exeter, painting landscapes and working as a drawing master. Travellers from Okehampton would have had this view of the city as they approached it from the north-west.

## **26 - Virginals**

Dated 1679

Made by Charles Rewallin, Exeter

A stringed musical instrument, rather like a harpsichord.

Virginals were fashionable instruments for young women to play – they may derive their name from this association. The maker Charles Rewallin worked in St Sidwells.

We know of only two instruments made by him that still survive.

## **27 - Model of Exeter before 1769**

Caleb Hedgeland (1760-1839)

Made around 1820

Aged just nine, Caleb Hedgeland was taken by his grandfather to see the demolition of the city's North Gate. It left such a powerful impression on the boy that he later built this remarkable model to record Exeter as it had been in his childhood. It gives a unique view of the old city before the 'improvements' of Georgian and Victorian days. Some areas have changed dramatically but can you spot any familiar landmarks?

## **28 - Dr William Musgrave (1655-1721)**

Thomas Hawker (about 1640-1725)

About 1710, oil on canvas

William Musgrave was educated at Winchester College and New College, Oxford, where he was a fellow between 1677 and 1692.

In 1684 he was elected to the Royal Society for his work in natural philosophy and medicine. He was elected to the Royal College of Physicians in 1692 and later settled in Exeter where he practised until his death.

## **29 - Plaster ceiling**

Around 1680-1690

From the Half Moon Hotel, Exeter

The wreaths and garlands show that Exeter was following the London fashion for classical style. Such plasterwork was built up on a base of cob plaster containing horse-hair. A second layer of plaster and finely chopped animal hair was then applied, followed by a finishing coat of pure white lime plaster in which the detail was modelled and cast. Finally, flowers on sticks were poked into the wet plaster.

### **30 - Thomas Brown, Son of Susannah Brown of Combsatchfield**

William Gandy  
1720, oil on canvas

Thomas Brown was born in 1691. He married Philippa Musgrave in Exeter Cathedral in 1720 when this portrait was painted, along with another of his wife. Thomas inherited estates in Devon and Ireland. His Devon estates were at Silverton, Bradninch and Kingskerswell. At Silverton, the mansion house at Combsatchfield became the main family residence.

He died in 1728 at the age of 37.

### **31-32 - Gravestone sculptures**

Around 1600-1700  
From Exeter graveyards

The skull and winged cherub were common symbols on Exeter's gravestones in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. During a troubled period, they reminded people of their mortality and hopeful flight up to heaven. The skull is from St Lawrence church and the cherub from St Leonard's.

## **33-46 - Civil War armour**

Around 1585-1645

From the Rougemont Castle Armoury

To defend the city in the event of an attack, Exeter kept a large stock of armour at Rougemont Castle. Most was bought during the two emergencies of the period, the Spanish Armada of 1588 and the Civil War of the 1640s. The collection consists of 'munition' quality armour for the common soldier.

### **33-35 Pole arms**

**36, 38 Pauldrons, vambraces and gauntlets (armour for shoulders and arms)**

**37 Breastplate, backplate and tassets (armour for body and legs)**

**39-41 Gorgets (neck armour)**

**42-46 Helmets**

## **47 - Oak panelling**

Around 1550-1650

From High Street, Exeter

Houses were usually cold and draughty, so oak panelling was not only decorative, but helped to insulate rooms. The decoration on this panel is called linenfold.

## **48 - Overmantel**

Made 1584-1586

From High Street, Exeter

An ornate fireplace decoration. The dark wood is original oak carving, similar to panels in the Guildhall. The lighter inlaid panels were added in the 1930s in America. At this time, several entire rooms from Exeter houses were bought by American art collectors.

## **49 - Cornice**

Around 1580-1700

From Crediton

A decorative cornice used to finish the top of oak panelling. Only the most important rooms would have had this feature. This example features acanthus leaf and egg and dart motifs.



## **50 - Carved oak panel**

Around 1550-1650

From the Custom House Inn, Exeter

## **51 - Cornice**

Around 1600-1700

From the Harry Hems collection

## **52 - Fireplace lintel**

Around 1400-1500

From Larkbeare House, Exeter

This stone lintel stood above a fireplace. It is made from Ham Hill stone from Somerset. We know from an old engraving that it was decorated with a deer and hound.

## **53 - St Peter trampling the devil**

Around 1500

From High Street, Exeter

This oak figure of St Peter once formed the corner-post of a house at the junction of High Street and North Street, but has moved to various positions on the High Street before coming into the museum. It is probably the work of an immigrant craftsman from northern France, the Low Countries or Germany. City documents of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century record a sizeable immigrant community including people from all of these areas.

## **54 - Matthew Miller clock**

Made 1619-1621

From St Mary Steps church, Exeter

Matthew the Miller worked in nearby Cricklepit Mill and was so renowned for his time-keeping that this clock was named after him. The clock was made by the Exeter craftsman Matthew Hoppin.

It is puzzling that such an elaborate clock should be on one of Exeter's poorest parish churches. It may have been rejected by Exeter Cathedral when religious taste for such figures changed at the time of the Reformation.

## **55 - Doorway**

Around 1540-1570

From Larkbeare House, Exeter

Carved in Beer stone, this formed a grand doorway to the hall. Larkbeare was a large house on Holloway Street, built for the Hull family of wool merchants. It was later owned by the Baring banking family.

## **56 - Painted plaster panels**

Around 1630-1650

From High Street, Exeter

These are the in-fill panels from between the oak studs of a timber-framed house. They are made from cob – a mixture of clay and animal hair. A thin layer of decorative plaster has been laid on top.

## **57 - Decorative wooden frieze**

Around 1550-1600

From Fore Street, Exeter

Merchants displayed their wealth by decorating the fronts of their houses with carvings. There are flowers, scrolls of foliage mixed with strange beasts and human figures across the front of this house. You might be able to spot mermaids and a queen.

## **58 - Window**

Around 1500-1700

From Whitestone

A type of window used for attic rooms or smaller cottages.

## **59 - Slate hanging**

Around 1500-1700

Slates from various sites in Exeter

From the medieval period to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Devon was a major producer of slate. Slate hangings were a favoured weatherproof wall finish, especially in the south and west of the county.

## **60 - Lead guttering**

Around 1550-1650

From Exeter

An example of the decorative leadwork that grander Exeter houses used to control rainwater. Pump heads and cisterns were also made of lead and had similar decoration.

## **61 - Brackets**

Around 1600

From High Street, Exeter

Used to support an oriel window.

## **62 - Oriel window**

Around 1500-1600

From Bradninch

A projecting window, supported by brackets. It was designed to let more light into an upper room.

### **63 - Timber wall framing**

Around 1500-1600

From Preston Street, Exeter

Most houses of this period in Exeter were made using timber frames. Houses of all sizes and shapes could be made in this method. This section shows the typical makeup – oak timbers filled with split wooden lathes.

A mixture of clay, dung and straw was used to seal the wall.

### **64 - Fragment of a knight's tomb**

Between 1200 and 1260

From the Dominican Friary, Exeter

The head in chain mail resting on a pillow is all that is left of this tomb sculpture. It is carved in Caen stone from France and would have been brightly painted.

### **65 - Saint in niche**

Around 1470-1490

From the Guildhall, Exeter

A bearded saint or apostle who holds three balls, bags or buns. The head had been defaced in the 1590s and the whole block reused in later building work. The carving was only discovered during renovation work in the 1970s.

## **66 - Queen's head**

Around 1300

From Membury

One of a pair of carved stone heads reused in a fireplace of a house in Membury. Unfortunately, the king is now lost. They may have come from Membury parish church.

## **67 - Saint Bishop window**

Around 1460-1520

From south-west England

Little is known about where this window comes from. The inscription identifies the figure as 'SANCTUS MAVGHVS' or Saint Maugan. He is holding a bishop's mitre and wears a blue chasuble – the robe worn for celebrating mass.

## **68 - Angel window**

Around 1460-1470

From a Devon church

This beautiful figure wears a feathered suit and holds a censer. It was probably made by the so-called 'Exeter Cathedral Master' as it is very similar to windows provided for the Cathedral's Chapter House.

## **69 - Bench end**

Around 1450-1500

From North Lew Church, Cornwall

Carved with Christ's wounds – a heart surrounded by hands and feet showing the scars of nails.

## **70 - Bench end**

Around 1450-1500

Possibly from Tiverton

Bench ends in Devon churches display a wealth of decorative carvings. Some relate to local subjects, others have religious symbolism. This bench end is carved with a fleur-de-lys and a fruit – they are probably local heraldic arms.

## **71 - Bench end**

Around 1450-1500

From Kilkhampton Church, Cornwall

Seating for the congregation in churches was uncommon until around 1250. By 1400 most parish churches would have had oak benches.

## **72 - Roof bosses**

Around 1450-1550

From churches in south-west England

Decorative coverings for the joints between beams of a vaulted church roof. Most of the carvings are of flowers or foliage but you should be able to spot a king and a 'green man' staring down at you.

The Exeter church restorer, Harry Hems, built up a huge collection of carved medieval woodwork to inspire his team of carvers. All of the medieval woodwork in this section is from his collection.

### **73 - Roof angels**

Around 1450-1500

From churches in south-west England

These angels were positioned high up on the walls or in the roofs of many medieval churches. From tiny surviving traces of pigment and gilding we know that they would have been colourfully painted.

### **74 - Bell**

Around 1420-1450

From Halse, Somerset

This bell was made by Robert Norton, the first of the Exeter bell-founders. Norton's bells were admired for their tone. The Latin inscription 'Est michi collatum ihc istud nomen amatum' means 'To me is given Jesus that beloved name'.



## **75 - Rood-screen doors**

Around 1150-1200

From Ashprington church

The surviving paintwork shows how colourful Devon churches would have been. The figures show phases of repainting: the saint on the right started off as a king.

## **76-101 - Anglo-Saxon silver pennies**

Between 979 and 1066

Made at the Exeter mint

When King Athelstan united England under one ruler, he declared that there should be one coinage for the country. Production was centrally controlled, but coins were produced by mints around the country. Exeter was one of the most important mints. For quality control, the name of the man who made the coin, the moneyer, was marked on each coin. There were fearful punishments for making bad coins.

The silver penny was the only coin produced. It was worth a lot of money: a pig was worth five pence and a cow 20 pence. Big payments, such as for land, might have required thousands of pennies. Small payments meant cutting a penny in half or quarters.

## **76-85 King Aethelred II**

## **86-89 King Cnut**

## **90 King Harold I**

## **91-92 King Harthacnut**

## **93-98 King Edward the Confessor**

## **99 King Harold II**

**100 Cut farthing**

**101 King Cnut, made by the moneyer Hunwine**

## **102-122 - Norman and medieval silver pennies**

Between 1066 and 1300

Made at the Exeter mint

The Norman kings simply took over the system of coinage of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors, which in truth was more sophisticated than their own in Normandy.

Exeter continued to function as the major mint of the region, but its output was declining.

The standard of medieval coinage deteriorated. Many coins were badly made and more forgeries were in circulation. In 1124 several moneyers had their hands cut off for making poor coins. Coin design stagnated.

The short cross design issued by Henry II remained unchanged for 70 years. Indeed, many of the coins issued by King Richard and King John bore Henry's name.

The last coins to be minted in Exeter were those of Edward I. It is estimated that 900,000 were made.

**102-109 King William I**

**110-113 King William II**

**114-115 King Henry I**

**116 King Stephen**

**117-119 King Henry II**

**120 King John**

**121 King Henry III**

**122 King Edward III**

## **123-147 - Anglo-Saxon silver pennies from Devon mints**

Between 959 and 1086

Made at the Totnes, Lydford and Barnstaple mints

All Anglo-Saxon mints were set up in towns. It was easier to circulate money from towns.

They also had town walls, and so were able to protect such a valuable industry. Four Devon towns had mints: Totnes, Lydford, Barnstaple and Exeter.

Coins from the Totnes Mint:

**123-124 King Eadgar**

**125-129 King Aethelred II**

**130-131 King Cnut**

**132 King William II**

Coins from the Lydford Mint:

**133 King Eadgar**

**134-139 King Aethelred II**

**140 King Cnut**

**141 King Edward the Confessor**

Coins from the Barnstaple Mint:

**142-145 King Aethelred II**

**146 King Edward the Confessor**

**147 King William I**

### **148 - Hoard of coins**

Between 1205 and 1215

Found near Loxbeare

These may have been someone's savings, buried during times of trouble. The coins are from the reign of King John and show little everyday wear, so they must have been quite new when buried.

### **149 - Stone column**

Around 1150-1200

From St Nicholas Priory

These column parts probably come from an elaborate arcade in the cloister at St Nicholas Priory. They are made from Purbeck marble, indicating that it must have been the object of lavish expenditure.

### **150 - Doorway decoration**

Around 1100-1200

Possibly from St James Priory, Exeter

This block of sandstone, quarried at Salcombe Regis, shows two crudely carved heads with bulging eyes. One of the heads is bearded. There would have been a row of these grotesque heads around the doorway.



### **151 - Horse head corbel**

Between 1100-1200

From Yarcombe

This carved horse's head probably stared down from a wall of Yarcombe church. It gives an interesting idea of how a medieval horse harness worked.

### **152 - Fragment of carved doorway**

Around 1150-1200

From Hatherleigh Church

Carved from aplite, quarried from Meldon near Okehampton. It shows two heads sprouting foliage.

### **153 - Arch**

Between 1140-1180

From Preston Street, Exeter

Recovered from the Norman House, Preston Street, following its destruction in the Exeter Blitz of 1942. In fact the house was not itself Norman in date, but incorporated pieces from a Norman church – almost certainly St Nicholas Priory.

## **154 - String course**

Around 1140-1180

From Preston Street, Exeter

A band of decorative carving, originally from the wall of a Norman church.

## **155 - Cross shaft**

Around 900-1100

From Exeter

Made from Dartmoor granite, the cross arms were broken off hundreds of years ago. Originally, it may have stood outside Exeter's West Gate. During its long life it has been built into the Exe Bridge, a house on High Street and stood in the grounds of St Nicholas Priory, before moving to the museum.

## **156 - Gold aureus of Vespasian**

75-79

From High Street, Exeter

This aureus coin is made from almost pure gold and was equivalent to about six weeks' pay for a legionary soldier. The portrait shows the emperor Vespasian, who had previously led the Second Augustan Legion on campaign in south-west Britain.

As these coins were so valuable, very few were lost. Four of these gold coins have been found in Exeter, but this is the only one known to have survived in a collection.

## **157-160 - Coins used in Roman Exeter**

50-75

Found in Exeter

These are some of the numerous individual coins used in Roman Exeter. These coins have only survived because they were lost by someone at the time, and rediscovered during the last 150 years. The most common denominations were the *denarius*, *sestertius*, *dupondius* and *as*. At the time of the fortress one *denarius* equalled four *sestertii*, or eight *dupondii*, or 16 *asses*.

### **At this time:**

Legionary soldier's annual pay: 300 *denarii*

Legionary soldier's daily wage: 10 *asses*

Loaf of bread: 2 *asses*

**157 - *Denarius***

**158 - *Sestertii***

**159 - *Dupondii***

**160 - *Asses***

## **161-162 - Last coins from the Roman town**

387-392

Found in Exeter

These two coins are among the last Roman coins known from Exeter or Devon. They are *nummi*, which were copies of official coinage created during a time of coin shortage in the empire. Although Devon was officially part of the Roman Empire until the year 410, the incoming supply of coins seems to have stopped several years beforehand.

**161 - Magnus Maximus, 387-388**

**162 - Theodosian, 388-392**

### **163 - Coin hoard from the fortress**

Around 73-75

Found in Holloway Street, Exeter

This small coin hoard contains *sestertii*, *dupondii* and *asses*. It was hidden in a military building during the last few years of the legionary fortress. As with many coin hoards, it is unknown why they were concealed, or why their owner did not return to collect them.

### **164 - Hoard of silver coins**

Buried after 260

Found in Cathedral Close, Exeter

These coins are part of a hoard buried under the floor of a building in the Roman town. The hoard was discovered by workmen in 1715 who said it contained “about half a bushel of coins”. This is equivalent to thousands of coins, and is by far the biggest hoard recorded from Exeter or Devon. Sadly the whereabouts of only a very small portion of these coins are known. They are spread amongst the collections of several English museums.

## **165-166 - Mosaics from a townhouse**

Around 300-350

From Catherine Street, Exeter

Mosaics were an elaborate and expensive type of flooring. These fragments are from a house near the centre of the Roman town. The tesserae are made from pieces of red tile, and blue, white and cream stones. The larger fragment was from a corridor in the house and is one of the most elaborate corridor mosaics known from Roman Britain.

## **167 - Stone altar**

Made around 60-65

From the Roman bath-house, reused in the basilica-forum

This stone fragment is decorated with an axe and two animal knucklebones which were used in gambling. It was probably an altar in the legionary bath-house. The block was discovered among the foundations of the town's basilica building, which was built on the site of the bath-house.

## **168 - Stone mixing bowl**

Around 175-200

From Queen Street, Exeter

This bowl is called a mortar and was used for preparing food. It is made from a type of sandstone from Somerset.