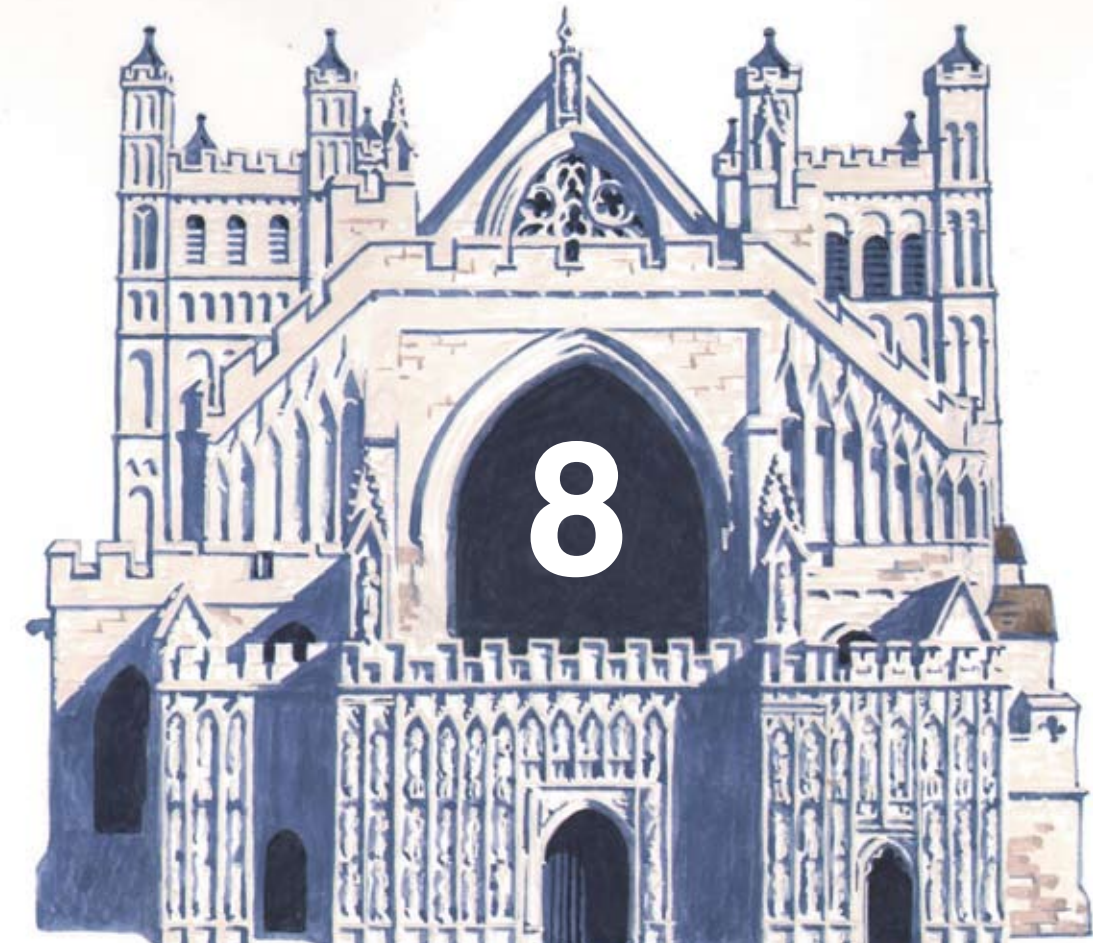


Exeter Medieval Trail

Princesshay
Exeter

Exeter City Council



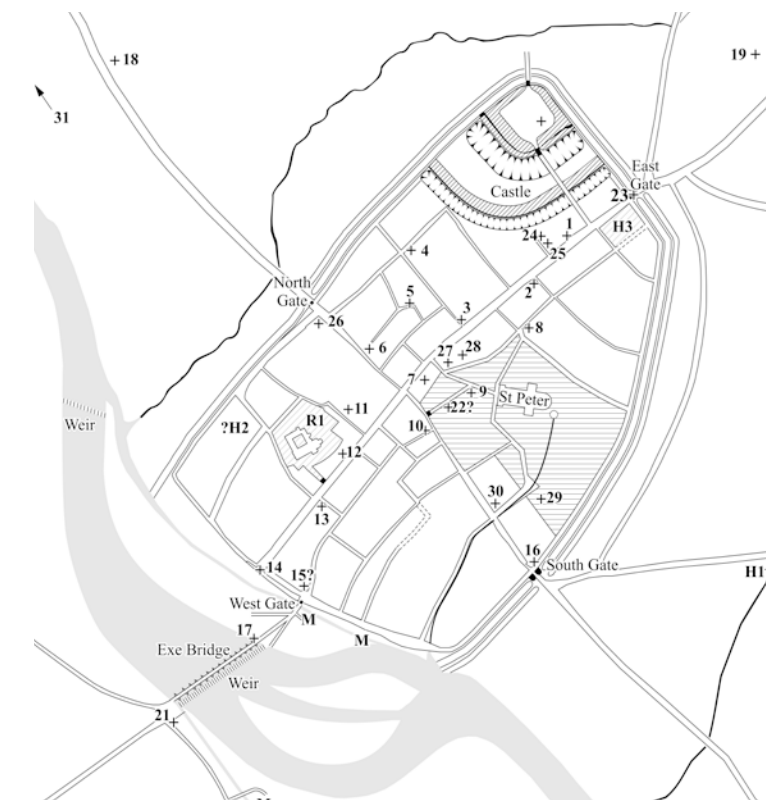
CATHERINE SQUARE

Medieval Religion

In the Middle Ages Exeter was a great ecclesiastical centre. The Church was very powerful and around one third of the land within the city walls belonged to it. As well as the Cathedral there were over 30 churches and 7 monasteries.

Parish churches

Exeter is famous for its medieval stone churches including St. Stephen's (behind you), St. Martin's, St. Petrock's and St. Olave's founded in 1053 by King Harold's mother, Gytha.



Locations of Exeter's Medieval Parish Churches
(© Exeter Archaeology)

Churches and chapels

- 1 St Lawrence
- 2 St Stephen
- 3 All Hallows Goldsmith St
- 4 St Paul
- 5 St Pancras
- 6 St Kerian
- 7 St Petrock
- 8 St Martin
- 9 St Mary Major
- 10 St George
- 11 St Mary Arches
- 12 St Olave
- 13 St John
- 14 All Hallows on the wall
- 15 St Mary Steps
- 16 Holy Trinity
- 17 St Edmund
- 18 St David

- 19 St Sidwell
- 20 St Leonard
- 21 St Thomas
- 22 St Mary Minor
- 23 Bartholomew
- 24 Christ Church
- 25 Holy Trinity
- 26 St Cuthbert
- 27 SS Simon and Jude
- 28 St Peter Minor
- 29 St Radegund
- 30 St James
- 31 St Clement

Hospitals

- 32 St Mary Magdalen (leper)
- 33 St Alexis
- 34 St John

By the Norman period so many churches had been built that there was no room for any more clergy houses, so many clergy moved instead into Preston Street.



St. Nicholas Priory as it would have looked circa 1500
(© R.W. Parker, Exeter Archaeology)

Monastic houses

The first monastic house in Exeter was St. Nicholas Priory established in 1087 by Benedictine Monks from Battle Abbey in East Sussex. By the 13th century several others existed; St. Andrew's Priory (Cowick), St. Katherine's Priory (Polsloe), St. Mary's (Marsh Barton), and St. James' Priory (Exe Bridge). St. Nicholas Priory can be visited today!



Medieval betrothal ring found in the Blackfriars graveyard
(© Exeter Archaeology)

Whereas monks retired from the world, friars went out to preach. The Franciscan Greyfriars started life in the West Quarter in 1230, later relocating outside the city wall near South Gate circa 1290. Shortly afterwards came the Dominican Blackfriars Friary established in 1232 with lands stretching around what is now Princesshay. Recent excavations of the Blackfriars site unearthed 52 burials in the former monastic church with a beautiful gold medieval betrothal ring found inside one of the coffins.



Some of Exeter's surviving medieval churches: St. Martin's, St. Stephen's, St. Olave's, St. Pancras and St. Petrock's



A day in the life of a monk

A monk's life was ruled by three vows.

- The Vow of Poverty
- The Vow of Chastity
- The Vow of Obedience

During the day monks worked hard in the Monastery and on its lands, including:

- Washing and cooking
- Growing food
- Providing medical care for the community
- Educating local boys and novices
- Copying manuscripts
- Providing hospitality

