

Start your walk in the High Street at the Guildhall



1 Guildhall and Merchant Houses

For over 800 years the Mayor and Council have regulated the affairs of Exeter from the impressive Guildhall. The homes, shops and offices of wealthy merchants were also built in this area - you

can still see the beautiful timber fronts of some of them.

From the Guildhall walk along the High Street then down Fore Street. Halfway along this road turn right onto Mint Lane to.....

2 St Nicholas Priory

Part of this historic building was home to two of the city's most prominent wool merchants. The priory was built almost a thousand years ago as a Benedictine monastery and partly destroyed during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536.

Retrace your steps to Fore Street, turn right, after about 100 metres you will be at.....

3 Tucker's Hall



First floor Tucker's Hall (Nicholas Toyne)

Members of the Clothworkers Guild met here to make decisions about their trade. They would discuss such things as quality standards and apprenticeships. You can see the tools of their trade

in the ironwork on the gate.

Cross Fore Street and continue down New Bridge Street. On your left you will see.....

4 Old Exe Bridge

This is where the first bridge across the River Exe was built in 1200. During the boom years of the woollen cloth trade packhorses and horse-drawn carts trying to get in and out of town would regularly get held up on the narrow bridge.



Exe Bridge

Walk to the end of New Bridge Street, turn left then go through the pedestrian underpass. At the end turn left up the steps, then turn right onto Commercial Road, 200 metres on your right you will be in the middle of.....

5 Exe Island

This site was once the very heart of the Devon cloth industry packed with mills, fulling stocks, cloth drying sheds and racks. You can imagine the noisy activity of workers with heavy hammers pounding the newly-dyed cloth. The fulling mills were powered by water via man-made channels called 'leats'.

Carry on along Commercial Road, passing the Custom House. Across the road to the right of the Wharfinger's House you will find out more about.....

6 The Quayside

Standing on the quay you can imagine barges and larger sea-going vessels being loaded with bales of finished cloth for export to Europe. Historic buildings of interest in this area include the Quay House, the Custom House and Wharfinger's House.

Walk past the Quay House and along the Quay to the.....

7 Warehouses

After the decline of the woollen cloth industry this area of the quay was still busy with the storage and transportation of grain, wine and oil. Today, the area is popular for crafts, antiques, and places to eat and drink.

From here you need to cross the river, either use Butts Ferry, or one of the bridges. Continue to the projecting wall between the river & canal basin to discover more about the.....

8 Canal and Canal Basin

Exeter Canal is the oldest ship canal surviving in England. It was built in the 16th century so that vessels could reach Exeter. Previously, the canal cargoes had to be unloaded at Topsham.

Length of walk approx 3.2km (2 miles)



BOARD LOCATIONS

1 GUILDHALL & MERCHANT HOUSES	2 OLD EXE BRIDGE	3 WAREHOUSE
4 ST NICHOLAS PRIORY	5 EXE ISLAND	6 CANAL & CANAL BASIN
7 TUCKER'S HALL	8 THE QUAYSIDE	

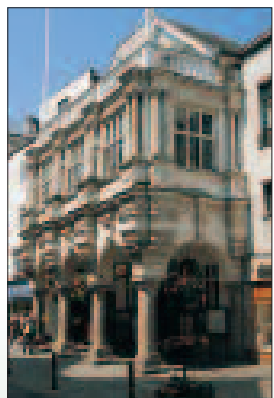
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P PARKING

i EXETER VISITOR INFORMATION

i QUAY HOUSE VISITOR CENTRE

Exeter Guildhall



Wharfinger's House



Exeter Quay



Weave your way through Exeter's historic past.

By the early 1700s Exeter was a very wealthy city, thanks to wool. Exeter's prominence in the cloth industry was due to its proximity to spinners and weavers throughout Devon, and the fact that the cloth was finished on Exe Island.

The cloth was loaded onto ships at Exeter Quay and exported to France, Spain, Holland and Portugal. Business thrived until the effects of the Napoleonic Wars and the dominance of the mechanised mills of the North of England led to the decline of the woollen cloth trade in Exeter.

Using this leaflet guide yourself to 8 different information panels. At each site discover Exeter's 'Age of the Golden Fleece'. For children there are quizzes and puzzles to solve along the way so bring paper and a pencil with you.

Interesting places to visit along the trail:

Exeter Guildhall

This is a working building so opening times vary. Admission free. Tel 01392 665500

St Nicholas Priory - A Tudor Home.

Experience Tudor life in the heart of the city. Tel 01392 665858

Tuckers Hall

Open June to September: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 10.30am-12.30pm.
Rest of the year: Thursdays only, 10.30am-12.30pm. Tel 01392 412348

Quay House Visitor Centre

Open April to October: Daily 10.00am-5.00pm.
November to March: Saturday and Sunday: 11.00am-4.00pm. Tel 01392 271611

Other places linked to Exeter's woollen cloth trade to visit:

Coldharbour Mill, Uffculme

The mill has been involved in spinning and weaving since the 17th century. Guided tours to see the working machinery are available on special event weekends. There are also riverside walks, a shop and a licensed restaurant (open daily). Tel 01884 840960 www.coldharbourmill.org.uk

Topsham Museum

Cloth was exported to the Netherlands from the Town Quay in Topsham. The museum building is designed in a unique Dutch style and has displays of local maritime history relating to the cloth industry. Open April to October: Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Wednesday: 2.00-5.00pm. Admission free. Tel 01392 873244

Enjoyed this trail?

Why not discover the rich & colourful history of Exeter's City Wall on the 'City Wall Trail', or explore Exeter's medieval sites of interest on the 'Medieval Trail'. Trail leaflets are available from Exeter Visitor Information & Tickets or Quay House Visitor Centre.

Red Coat Guides

To find out more about Exeter's rich history and heritage why not join a free guided tour with Exeter's Red Coat Guides. Tel: 01392 265203



For information about Exeter contact Exeter Visitor Information & Tickets, Dix's Field, Exeter EX1 1GF
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Exeter City Council



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Explore many of the key sites of Exeter's most important industry of the past, the woollen cloth trade.

