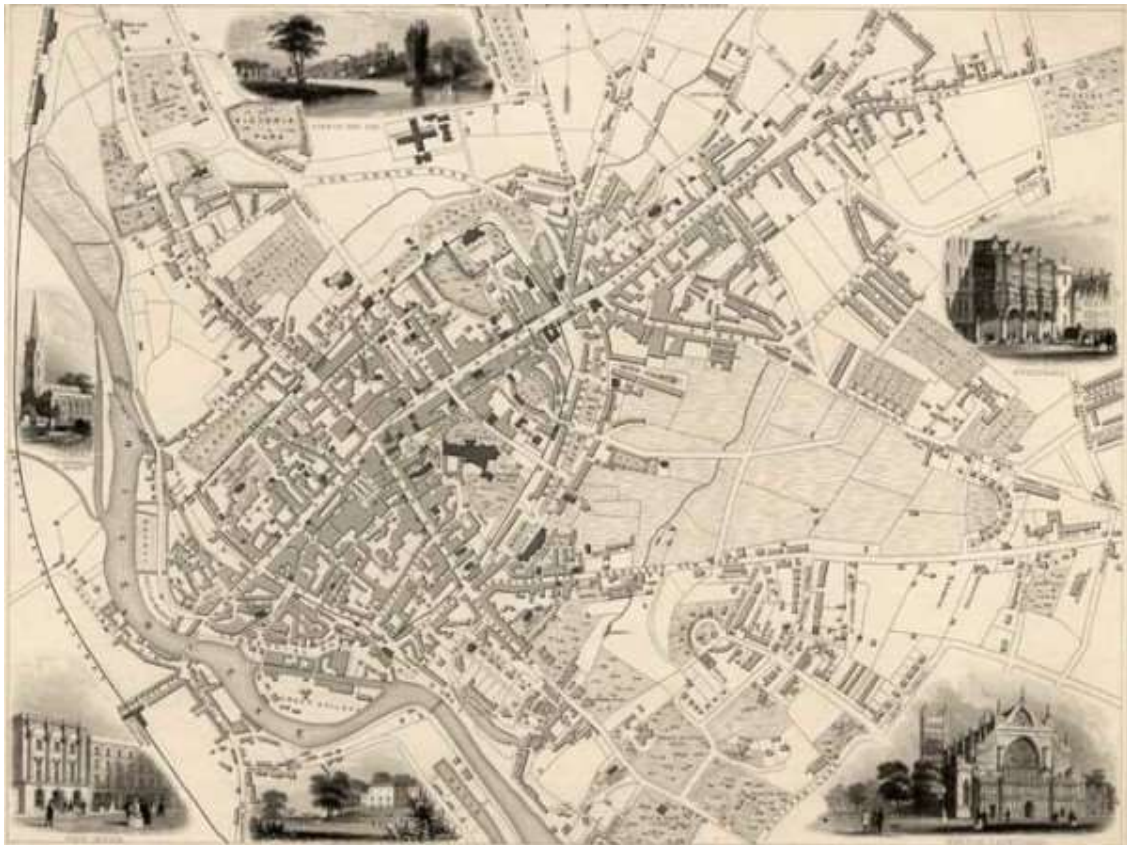


Gateways to Exeter's Past

Much of Exeter has changed from the way it is shown on the 1852 map below. Many of the buildings illustrated no longer exist. However, it is still possible to follow this map around Exeter to find the sites listed below. This walk will take you on a meander around old Exeter (2 hours maximum). You will find answers to the questions on this webpage during the course of your tour. Your walk starts at Exeter Central Library. This library has been in Castle Street since 1930 and was rebuilt following its almost complete destruction during the war. The location of the new building (re-opened on the 22nd October 1965) has been super-imposed onto the old map.



Exeter, John Tallis, 1852

On leaving the library, turn to your left, and left again when you reach Castle Street. This will bring you to:-

1. Rougemont Castle

On your way up Castle Street, stop to look at the remains of the old city wall and the Gatehouse in the Rougemont Gardens. This area looks very similar to the engraving, which was published in 1831. When was the Gatehouse built?



Image 1 SC0778, Rougemont Castle Exeter, G J C Sprake, 1831

Go back down Castle Street to the High Street. Turn to your left and look for the modern building of Eastgate House (on your right).

2. East Gate

The City of Exeter has been protected by a substantial City wall since the Roman period. During the last 250 years, all of the City gates have been demolished to allow easier access for large vehicles entering the City. Eastgate, one of the major gates of the City, was taken down in 1784. Exeter obviously had traffic problems in the 18th century, too! Which enemies of the City were repelled at this gate?



Image 2 SC0905, East Gate from the Exterior, C J G Sprake, 1831

Make your way towards the Cathedral. Some of the lanes in this area still retain the names shown on the old map. However, this area was badly bombed in the Second World War and there are new streets here which are not represented on this old map. Look for the plinth with an old metal cross on Cathedral green. This marks the site of:-

3. St. Mary Major Church

This was one of the ancient Parish Churches of the City. It was rebuilt in 1865, but was considered to detract from the appearance of the Cathedral's setting. When was this Church finally demolished?



Image 3 SC0799, Exeter Cathedral West Front with the Towers and Part of St Mary Major Church Devonshire, John Smith, 1808

Now look for the Old City Bank building and leave the Cathedral Close area by going down:-

4. Broad Gate

This gate was one of the seven gates in the internal City wall which separated the Cathedral Close area from the rest of the City (erected under an agreement made about 1286 after Walter Leclade, the first Precentor of the Cathedral, was murdered). Apparently the side of the gate which faced the Cathedral was far more ornate than the one leading into the City's High Street. What traces of the gate are still visible today? When was the Broad Gate removed?



Image 4 SC0901-1, Old Broad Gate Exeter, C J G Sprake, 1831

Turn left out of Broadgate, into the High Street, and then left again into South Street. If you walk down the left hand side of South Street, towards the very end, you will pass by:-

5. Old Trinity Church and the South Gate

The Old Trinity Church was demolished in 1819 and a new Church was constructed in its place in 1820. What is this building used for today? Try to locate the position of the South Gate when you reach the bottom of South Street. What other purpose was this gate used for until its demolition in 1819? All traces of this important gate above ground level have disappeared under modern footpaths, buildings and a major road junction, but, if you cross the road and look beneath your feet, much will be revealed! How has the exact position of this important Gate been recorded?



Image 5 SC0888, Old Trinity Church Exeter, C J G Sprake, 1831

Turn right at the bottom of South Street, and follow the footpath beside the modern dual-carriageway, until you reach the:-

6. West Gate

This was situated at the bottom of the old West Quarter of Exeter, one of the less salubrious, but very fascinating areas of the City, with lots of cobbles and stepped streets, with open gullies acting as drains running down their centres. (Take a look up Stepcote Hill.) There are still many interesting buildings in this area, although many buildings and streets were demolished during re-developments in the 19th and 20th Centuries. The West Gate was removed in 1815. What historic building stands near the site of the West Gate today? Who entered the City through this gate in 1688?

If you walk a little further down (following the inner city bypass), and look to your left, in the central grassy area of part of the modern Exe Bridges complex you can still see the remains of the:-

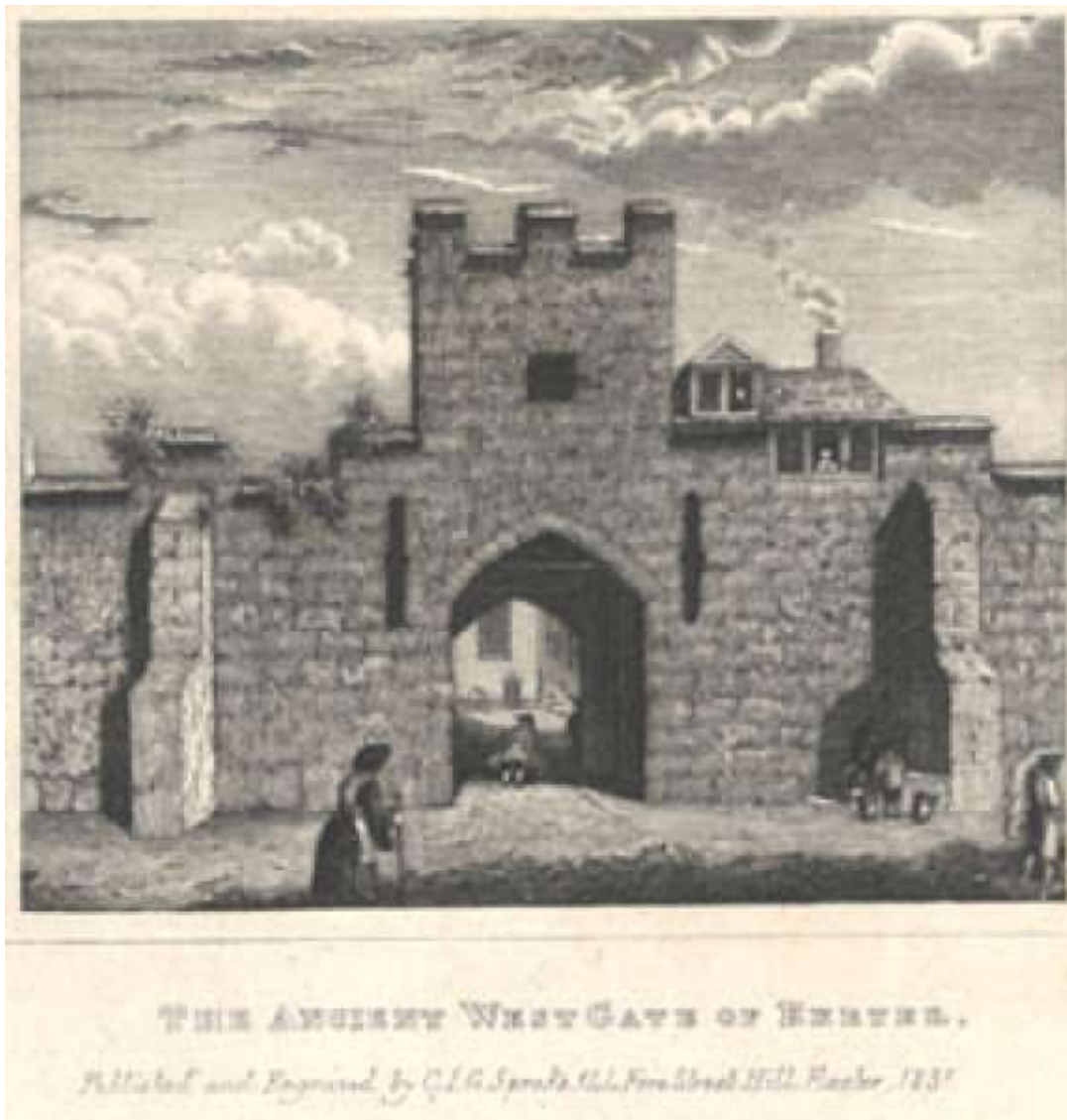


Image 6 SC0918, The Ancient West Gate of Exeter, C J G Sprake, 1831

7. Old Exe Bridge

A safe means of crossing the Exe was always of paramount importance to the ordinary citizens of Exeter. They must have been extremely grateful to Walter Gervaise who was instrumental in organising the building of the first Exe Bridge in the early 13th century. It is possible to stop for a rest on what was the former bed of the River Exe, amongst the surviving arches of this important bridge. What stood above the arches at the ends of the old Bridge? There are the remains of a Church tower on this site. What is the name of the Church which stood here in mediaeval times?



Image 7 SC0755, The Old Bridge Exeter, C J G Sprake, 1831

You can continue your walk by going up New Bridge Street and Fore Street, past Tuckers Hall, and turn left at the cross roads at the top, into North Street. An alternative route could be taken along Bartholomew Street. At the bottom of North Street, close to the Iron Bridge, you will find the site of the:-

8. North Gate

This Gate was taken down in 1769. It was reconstructed (in wood and plaster) to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (in 1897). What building reflects the fact that there was a City Gate in this area? This type of building may have provided somewhere to stay for anyone locked out of the City during the hours of curfew, when all of the City gates would have been locked.

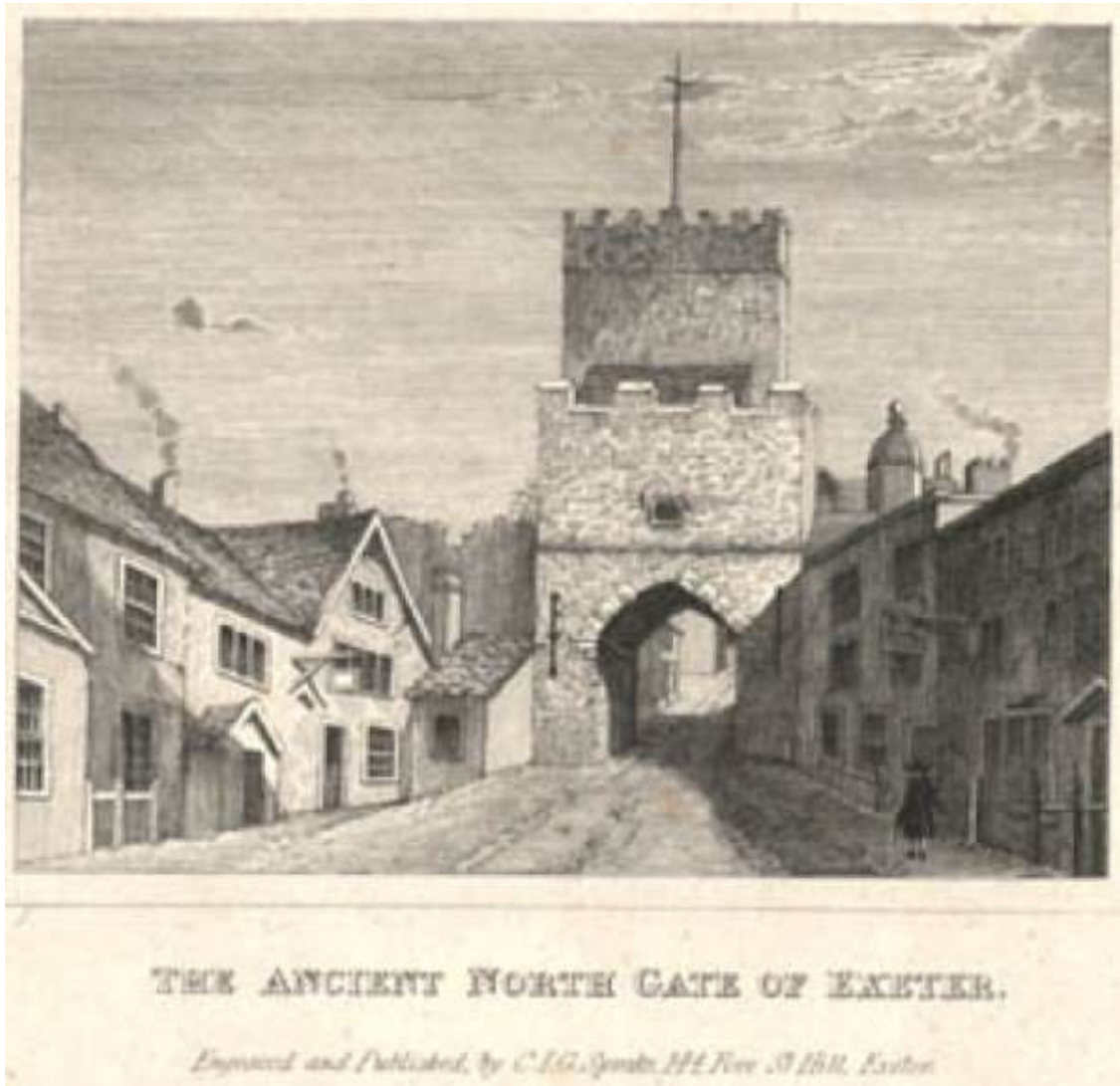


Image 8 SC0907, The Ancient North Gate of Exeter, C J G Sprake, 1831

Walk up to the top of Paul Street, to Queen Street, where you will find the impressive building of the:-

9. Royal Albert Memorial Museum

This marvellous building is still standing. You started your tour from the 20th century Library building and are now standing outside the building which housed Exeter's former Public Library. The Museum is run by Exeter City Council. Who was this building named after? Who was the donor of the site?

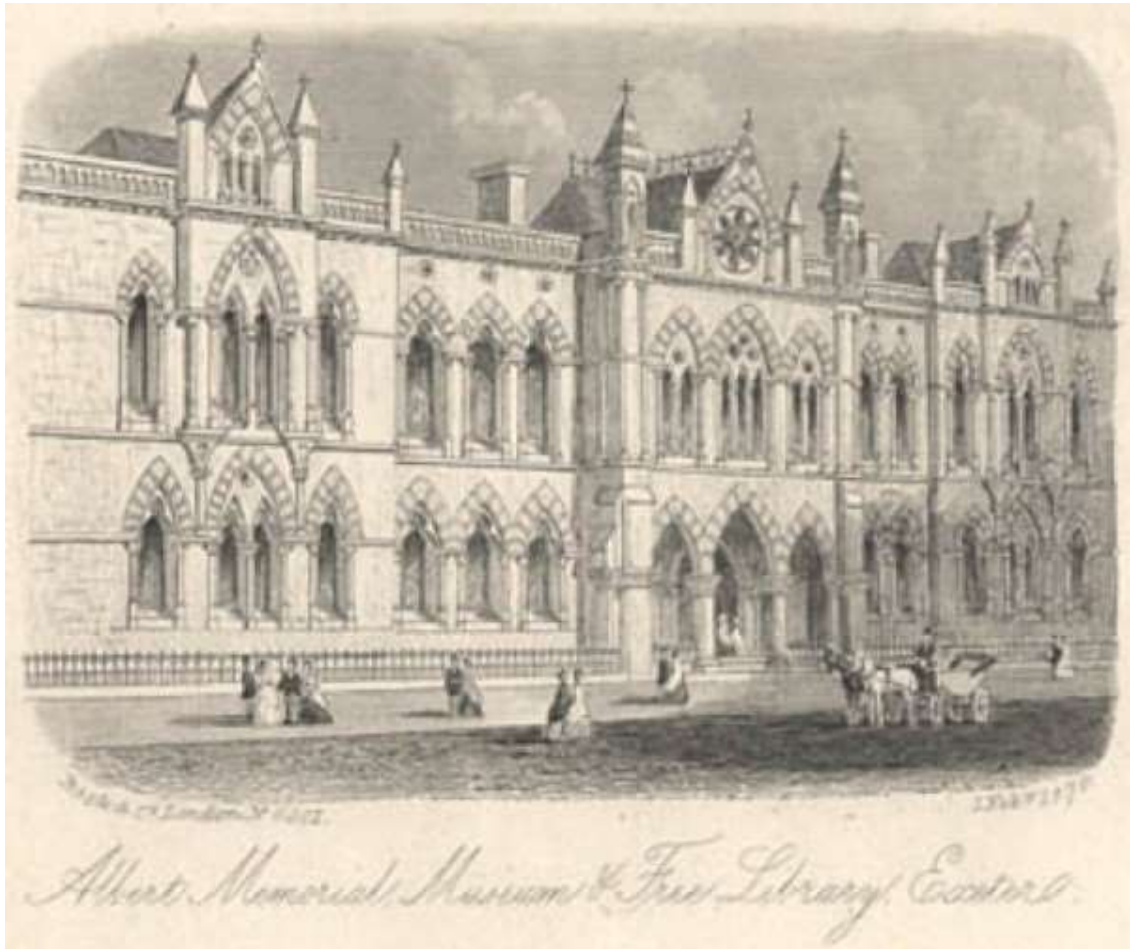


Image 9 SC1014, Albert Memorial Museum & Free Library Exeter, Rock & Co, 1876

Make your way along Gandy Street and the old narrow streets to the right of the Museum, to Rougemont Gardens (behind the 20th century library), to complete your tour.