

Exeter's Historic Guildhall



The Guildhall has served as the centrepiece of Exeter's civic life for more than 800 years.

HISTORIC USES OF THE GUILDHALL

Many of the dramatic events of Exeter's history were played out here. Since the Middle Ages kings have been received and entertained. In the 15th century men were confined overnight in the hall before facing execution the next day on a scaffold outside. Here the Tudor Chamber met to take action against rebellious armies outside the city walls, and determined the city's course as it rose to commercial prosperity. Judge Jeffreys presided over sessions of the 'Bloody Assizes' at the Guildhall following the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion in 1685.



1190 Richard I granted a charter placing the city under the rule of a Mayor. The first record of a mayor was in 1200. In the early part of the 13th Century the government of Exeter appeared to be in the hands of the Mayor assisted by bailiffs or stewards.



The guildhall was used for several courts; City Assizes court (Monarchy Recorder Judges), courts of general Quarterly Sessions (City Recorder Judge), Provost Court and the most important court was the City court, commonly known as the Mayors court which sat here each Monday. It was at the Guildhall that the Mayor and his council (also known as the Chamber of the City) regulated the affairs of Exeter. A separate room was used as a provost court. The latter two was demised with the establishment of the County courts in 1846. The Quarterly Sessions and the Assizes courts ceased in 1973.

Legal agreements between citizens were certified, leases and conveyances of property were ratified, and local justice was administered. The Chamber kept a tight grip on the guilds of craftsmen which grew up in the later Middle Ages, enforcing standards in the different industries and stipulating the conditions of trade. Annually the masters and wardens of the different guilds were sworn in and oaths were taken.

Related to the Guildhall's function as a court was that of a prison. For this purpose there was a pit at the front of the building (now under the Mace Sergeants' office) and 'the grate' at the rear. Here, too, were the city stocks and pillory for punishing offenders, the city's store of armour and its fire fighting equipment.

As late as the early 19th century men were sentenced to death here for crimes as minor as stealing a sheep or a cow; others suffered transportation for such offences as stealing a purse containing 1s 6d (7.5p). In 1483-4 the main hall was used as a temporary prison. The two prisoners were Richard 3rd brother in law, Sir Thomas St Leger and Thomas Rayne; both were tried and convicted for treason.

Among the many uses the Guildhall had, one was as an armoury mentioned above. During the Tudor period a large amount of arms were required as the city came under siege three times. It remained an armoury during the Stuart period. The watchmen (Night sentries) and wardsmen (Day sentries) were armed and the City supplemented the provision of arms for their duties. All inhabitants of the city were liable for this service.

The Guildhall was also used for musical entertainment and plays. In the 17th century the players who were licensed under the kings privy Signets would receive payments not to perform.

In 1558 after a fire within the City, the council faced with inadequate provisions for coping with fires, decided to purchase; 48 leather buckets, 4 Iron Crooks and 12 Ladders, over the preceding years the enactments of the council would decide who should keep fire fighting equipment. 4 ladders and 24 buckets were bought in 1640 for keeping at the Guildhall. The first reference to a fire engine is in 1652 when it was decided to procure an engine from London, but the records show that a payment was made for a carriage for an engine and a room to house a fire engine but no payment was made to purchase an engine.

Members of Parliament were also chosen. During the tumultuous mayoral elections of the 18th century rival mobs fought with fists and clubs outside its walls and respectable citizens were pelted with mud and offal.



By contrast, during the Second World War the Guildhall's use sometimes changed to that of a dance hall, the court benches being cleared for the purpose, whilst the frontage was encased in brick to avoid bomb damage. The Guildhall was considered too precious to be left without any protection from bombing. In February 1941 workmen built a brick wall in the front of the Guildhall to protect it from blast damage. It would have helped protect it from damage from a blast in the High Street, but it would still have been vulnerable from a direct hit.

It was also the centre of the city's ceremonial life. The hall provided a setting for feasts, often at great expense, not only for visiting dignitaries but for festive events in the yearly routine of the Chamber. Proclamations were read out here, a practice surviving today when the Mace Sergeants proclaim the new freemen and aldermen of the city and the opening of the Lammas Fair.

THE GUILDHALL BUILDING ITSELF

The Oak Door



Massively constructed, it was made by the Exeter joiner Nicholas Baggett, who was paid £4 10s (£4 50p) for his labours. Very similar doors can also be seen at 10-11 The Close and at Countess Wear House, the latter in a modern setting. Further examples were once to be seen in Sidwell Street (now lost) and the High School in High Street (now at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum).

Portico & Council Chamber

In the late Middle Ages a range of rooms had projected into the street frontage in front of the main hall.

The Elizabethan structure consists of an open portico on the ground floor which formerly extended back to the main hall, with the Council Chamber (now the Mayor's Parlour) on the first floor, and rooms above (now known as the Munement Room), once stuffed to the ceiling with ancient documents.



It included a chapel and a council room. We can gain some impression of its appearance from Hooker and Hogenburg's map of the city, drawn in 1584-5, although this is not accurate in every particular. This range fell into disrepair and must have seemed inadequate for the needs of the growing Elizabethan city, so in 1592 the city Chamber decided to replace it. The documents surviving from the building programme of 1592-4 are unusually well-preserved and provide many fascinating details of the work. These records are now kept in the archives at the Devon Records Office.

Costs

The cost of the entire project was £791 6s 7d, met largely from city revenues, although some guild companies contributed to the costs. We do not know who designed the portico, but the names of many of its craftsmen are known, with their rates of pay.

Masons were paid 1s to 14d per day (5-6p), labourers 8-10d, boys 6d. The most skilled stonemason, the sculpting of the Royal Arms and capitals on the façade, was the work of the local mason Arnold Hamlyn or Harrison, who lived in Guinea Street. He received 6s 8d (33p) for each capital. Other leading masons included Gabriel Moore from Chinnock in Somerset, who later built Chantmarle House in Dorset, and Richard and John Deymond of Exeter, whose workshop has been suggested by Mr Wells-Cole as the source of a group of distinctive Jacobean monuments in Devon.

Materials

The materials came from a variety of sources. The granite, of course, came from Dartmoor, and one of the expenses was the repair of the road at Whitestone (probably Heltor), no doubt to allow the passage of laden wagons. In addition to Beer limestone, much use was made of local volcanic rubble, quarried in Northernhay. Timber was brought from the city's own woods at Duryard, near the modern University of Exeter campus.

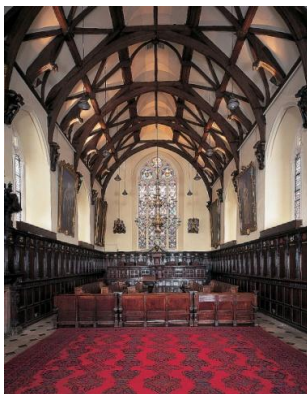


The main pillars are of granite; the rest of the façade is of white Beer stone, now much repaired. Pairs of Corinthian columns and capitals separate windows with mullions (uprights) and transoms (cross-members). The columns sit on boldly projecting, decidedly unclassical corbels. Above is a frieze incorporating the three-towered castle, emblem of the city. The first storey of the façade was originally surmounted by a second storey, likewise with paired columns, whose centrepiece was the Royal Arms of England set in a gabled niche. This was dismantled in 1718, but was depicted in Joseph Coles' map of 1709.

Later changes to the Portico

The iron railings at the entrance were added in 1784, and the rooms behind them were formed in 1838. The portico was sympathetically repaired under William Weir, an outstanding figure in the conservation of buildings in the years around 1900 whose most famous local work was the restoration of the great hall at Dartington Hall. Some replacement of the original masonry was carried out last century; sadly, many of the original capitals and some of the other pieces of masonry were removed in 1971, but they were retained at the city museum. In 1988-9 the fabric was once again cleaned and conserved; the stone is now protected by a layer of lime wash ('shelter coat'). In the course of the recent repairs it became apparent that many tiny fragments of colour survive, indicating that the façade was formerly brightly coloured, with red (later gilded) capitals, black and red columns and bands of blue, red and yellow.

The Main Hall



A guildhall has stood on this site since at least c.1160. Although it is not unlikely that portions of earlier medieval halls survive concealed above or below ground, however, all the visible structure of the hall dates to the late 15th century and later. Its walls are of large, finely dressed blocks of the red Permian breccia quarried from the river-cliff at Peamore in Exminster parish, close to the modern M5 motorway. Such stone was also quarried at Heavitree and Wonford, now in the suburbs of Exeter; these quarries became the most popular sources of building stone in the city in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Windows



In 1360 a large sum of money was spent on the windows, the two chief items bought were stone and iron work, but there was no mention of glass therefore it is believed the windows were not glazed but furnished with slates. In 1477 a large amount of money was spent, glazing the great window and two other windows. Three years later glass was purchased at a size of 34 feet at 10d a foot this is the measurements of the side windows. It is assumed that the great hall was not fully glazed until 1480.

The three lights above are of the Royal arms, the arms of the City and the Episcopal See.

The masonry of the windows is of white limestone from Beer, now much repaired. Those on the sides of the hall, in Perpendicular style, are in their original form. The

large window in the gable wall, however, was reconstructed entirely in 1772 by Edward Kendall, an Exeter stonemason who carried out various interesting local works in early Gothic Revival. Kendall's work in turn already needed repair by 1848, when another Exeter mason named Simon Rowe replaced portions of the stonework. The glass was added in 1863-4; it shows the names of the city officials of 1834-63, surmounted by the arms of the crown, city and cathedral.

The Roof



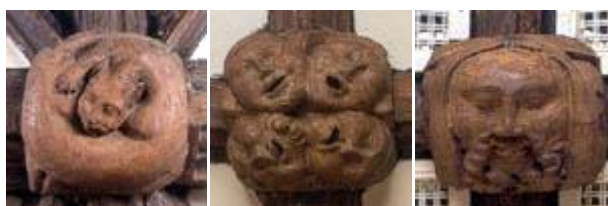
The hall's finest feature is its oak roof, one of a group of high-quality roofs built by local carpenters in the Exeter area in the 15th century. The other roofs in the group are two at Bowhill House (on Dunsford Hill in St Thomas), the Deanery, the Law Library and the Archdeacon of Exeter's House in Exeter Cathedral Close, and at Cadhay House near Ottery St Mary. Characteristic of this group is the 'coved' treatment of the apex, running like a little

barrel vault along the top section.

It is also typical of these roofs that the main trusses are supported by curved timbers ('arch braces') and alternate with slighter trusses ('intermediate trusses') with characteristic projecting cusps a little above their feet. At the feet of the principal trusses are stone corbels in the form of grotesque animals. Including a monkey with his tongue protruding at the high end of the hall. Detailed examination in 1996 showed that only six of the original corbels, including the two pairs at the top end of the hall, are original medieval works; the remainder are Victorian replacements. The present colour scheme of gold and brown is also Victorian. These corbels are sometimes claimed to represent the bear with ragged staff, the emblem of the Earl of Warwick, but this is a mistake.



John Hooker, the city's distinguished Elizabethan Chamberlain, stated that the order was given to rebuild the hall in 1466.



It is probable that the roof of the hall date from this time, but there have been uncertainties about the date of the roof. Sadly the crucial city accounts for the following year, which would have given us important information about this building programme, are lost, although accounts survive for most of the late 15th century. In order to establish the roof's date beyond doubt, samples from it were submitted for tree-ring dating in 1999. These unfortunately did not produce an exact date, but it could be calculated that the oak trees from which the roof was constructed were felled in the years 1463-97.

Panelling

The panelling date from 1590, there are 80 panels around the hall, all of them carved differently. The coats of arms are of people who put a lot of time, effort and money into the city, this also include the guilds.

Either side of the room at the north end of the hall were raised galleries, one side (West side) for the Jury and the other (East side) for the more well off people of the city. (East side) There was a passageway under this gallery which lead to the courtyard out the back.

In 1669 a passage was made, to the left of the north wall, this gave passage for the Jury to go into the back court from the gallery which stood on West side of the Guildhall. In 1863 the wooden galleries were taken down either side of the hall and that room was converted into a retiring room for the Judges.

The fire place was obscure by the panels until rediscovered during repairs in 1880. The old hearth was restored and the current fire place was installed in 1887 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee



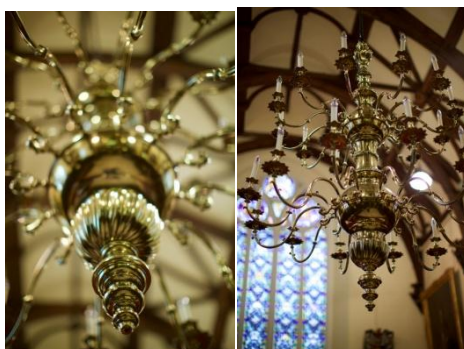
Gallery

During the Tudor period the council chamber was in a room on the first floor which projected into the hall. The two windows, one southeast & one southwest were blocked until the removal of the magistrate room/council chamber. Therefore the balcony was an enclosed room and the council meeting were not open to the public. In 1863 a beam was removed and a gallery was created. The Oak balustrade was installed, which matched the balustrade on the stairs to the council chamber, a canopy projecting over the balcony with a green curtain attached to separate the two rooms. That room became the magistrate's court and the council chamber was moved to the room above the entrance.



Chandelier

This chandelier was made in Bridgewater by Thomas Pyke in 1789, at a cost of £28.13s. Originally it was fitted with candles and recently it was adapted for electric in 1898. In 1841 24 brass candlesticks were ordered for use in the Guildhall. Gas replaced the candles in 1852 and in turn displaced by electricity. Also during the Victorian period a system of hot water pipes were introduced to heat the Guildhall.



Flooring

The hall was first paved in 1660 and again in 1682. Prior to this the floor was beaten earth and in preparation of ceremonies of the Mayor choosing men and boys were employed to clean the hall and adjoining chambers and strew the floor with clean straw and rushes. In 1863 the floor was paved with Portland stone and Slate diamonds

During the 2nd World War the tiles at the north end of the hall were lifted and a wooden floor was laid. The hall was used as a dance hall during this period.

Coat of Arms

On the upper end wall of the hall are two coats of arms. To the left are the Royal Arms of Hanover of 1801-37. On the right are the City Arms.



Exeter received confirmation of the City's Arms from William Hervey, Clarenceux King of Arms during a visit to Devon in 1564. The original draft in handwriting is preserved at the College of Arms.

The motto *Semper Fidelis* (Ever Faithful) was suggested by Elizabeth I in a letter addressed to The Citizens of Exeter in 1588 in recognition of a gift of money towards the fleet that defeated the Spanish Armada.

The correct heraldic description is: Party per gale gules and sable (divided vertically red and black), a castle triple-towered with a portcullis or (gold) crest (helmet) upon a wreath or sable (gold and black), a demi lion gules langued and armed azure (a half-lion with silver tongue and claws), supporting an orb, a cross thereon, batons or Supporters Two



Pegasus argent, (flanked by two silver Pegasus), hooped and maned or (gold) winged, barry wavy divided horizontally of six argent and azure (in six wavy bands of silver and blue).

Mayor's Chair

The Mayor's chair, with its rather grand brackets and pediment, was made in 1697 but has since been heavily restored. The other furnishings were added in the 1860s and 1880s.



LORD MAYOR'S PARLOUR



1483 the new block was constructed at the front of the building. It was believed to be of wood and housed a chapel of St George and St John. The chapel was dissolved in 1547 under the dissolution of the Chantry Chapels by Edward 6th. This room was quickly adapted for other use. In 1553 it was used as a temporary prison for Sir Arthur Champernowne for his part in the great mutiny about the Queen marriage. (Queen Mary married Phillip of Spain in 1554).

In 1592 it was resolved that the forepart of the guildhall, being ruinous and in decay, should be re-edified. The reconstruction work continued for a little over two years. The stone was from Beer and the timber was obtained from Duryard (where the University is). In 1863 this room was used as the council chamber and the room above was the receiver's office, which was used as the committee room when the council chamber was no available and also known as the Grand Jury Room as the Jury would retire to consider the Bills presented to them. If this room was used by the council the Jury would go upstairs to the receiver's office. The Council Chamber is now the known as the Lord Mayor's Parlour and is used as their official office whilst the Receiver's Office has become the Muniment Room.

CELLS

This area to the north of the main hall (rear courtyard) has been a service area for the building since it was first constructed. It was used as a garden or herbarium for many years, with shops to the rear. 1473 extensive work was carried out, a new wall with a strong door was built and the Provost Court was converted to a women's prison. This court yard was paved in 1495 and the prison was rebuilt in 1535 with further modernisation in 1557.

In 1694 the roof was removed from the prison and a cistern was placed on the top of the prison, this cistern held approximately 600 hogsheads of water (31,500 gallons), the water was pumped from the river Exe into 2 cisterns within the city; one in Northernhay Park and the other above the prison at the back of the guildhall. This

water was for domestic use, the water bearers would come into Waterbeer Street to collect water to take it around the City.

In 1838 the rumours were, a prisoner died in one of the cells and the inquest jury denounced the cells, as they was unfit for humans, due to the damp and cold, it appears that the cistern above the prison was leaking and the prisoner was thought to have consumed some of the water, this prompted the Council to remove the cistern, sell the lead and build the present building with the frontage on Waterbeer Street, which containing 4 cells on the ground floor and a room on the first floor.

JURY ROOM

Above the cells now stands the Jury Room was built in 1838 and it became the city records room. In 1930 the window in the north elevation were inserted and the 17th century oak panels from St Katharine's Priory, at Polsloe, were put in place. This room remained the city records room until 1900 when the muniments were moved to the City Library and are now stored at Devon Heritage Centre, Sowton.



CELLAR

There has been a cellar underneath the entrance as far back as records go. The entrance to the cellar was through a door in the cellar of the Turks Head, now Prezzo, this doorway is now bricked up. It is assumed that the cellar was used as a prison from 1339 as a penny was spent on a lock for the door. 1365 two shilling was spent for a grating to the cellar and the cellar was divided into two with a wall being erected down what is now the centre of the room. The Fabric of the north wall extends further east than of the wall today, so it is believe the cellar was the width of the portico prior to the rebuild in 1593. In 1388 money was spent to repair and make a better adaptation of the prison. It remained a prison until the early Stuart Period when provisions for prisoners where provided elsewhere on the outskirts of the city. The current barrelled vault and walls were constructed in 1900. The cells at the back of the building were still used as temporary incarceration of prisoners after 1600, particularly during the Assizes and the Quarterly Sessions.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was commonplace to have shops against public buildings. There was a shop either side of the entrance. After the rebuild in 1483 the forefront of the guildhall on the ground level was used for letting stall during fairs and public holidays. In 1738 (1784/5 (DAS)) the iron railing and a gateway were installed. In 1836 two station houses were erected either side of the entrance, the room to the west, currently used by the mace sergeant was converted into a room for the Superintendent of the Police. After complaints from the Chief constable about the size of the office, an office on the first floor of 59 High Street (Across the Road) was rented until the completion of the Police Station in Waterbeer Street was completed in 1888. In 1864 the outer stairs leading upstairs were constructed and the room to the east became a storeroom.

REGALIA

The Waits' Chains



The waits were the city Chamber's own band of musicians, who wore these chains over fine cloaks provided by the Chamber. They performed in the streets and outside the Mayor's house at Christmas; they also celebrated coronations, victories and anniversaries. Three of the silver waits' chains were made in the 15th century; they are believed to be made in 1476-7 at a cost of 14s (70p); the fourth is of the early 16th century. Each chain consists of alternating letters X and R, each enclosed in a circle and joined to its neighbours by rings. They are now amongst the city's greatest treasures. In 1957 a replica set was made, since the originals are fragile and irreplaceable. The replicas are now worn by the Mace Sergeants on Civic occasions.

The Cap of Maintenance



In 1497 Exeter's citizens successfully resisted the rebel army of Perkin Warbeck, who besieged Exeter in his bid to win the English throne from Henry VII. Grateful for the city's loyalty, Henry awarded symbols of his special favour: the Cap of Maintenance and the Ceremonial Sword. The original cap, a simple affair of black felt without a brim, may actually have been the king's own; it was intended to signify a close personal tie between the giver and the receiver. Nowadays it is believed to be enclosed within a richly embroidered brimmed version of crimson felt, bought in 1634 at a price of £21 and 'renovated' in 1766.

This cap has recently been "retired" from day to day use as after more than 240 years, it was becoming too fragile to be regularly handled. It is however on permanent display at The Guildhall. In 2009, a replica of this Cap was made by Hand & Locke of London so that the ancient tradition could be continued for many generations to come. It was first used when the 3rd Commando Brigade had a homecoming parade in July 2009, at which its Captain General (HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh) took the salute.



The Ceremonial Sword



With the Cap of Maintenance, Henry also gave a sword - a symbol of nobility and bravery. He also ordered that a sword bearer should be appointed by the Corporation to carry the sword before the Mayor in all civic processions. This tradition is maintained today; the sword is carried by the Senior Mace Sergeant followed by the Lord Mayor and the rest of the procession. This sword has long been treasured. The simple original was enriched at the expense of

the city very soon after it was given; the scabbard and chape (the mount at the tip) were added in 1556; Tudor roses were added to quillons (the arms of the cross-piece), followed in James I's reign by the shield



bearing the Royal Arms; the velvet covering of the scabbard with its embroidery in silver gilt thread was added in 1634 and renovated in 1766. Again like its partner (the Cap) above, a replica scabbard was made in 2009, by Hand & Locke of London and local metalwork craftsman Neil Bollens. The original lies alongside the Cap on permanent display at The Guildhall. Part of the history surrounding the Cap and Sword of Maintenance is that the hilt of the sword should be offered to the Monarch on each and every occasion that they visit the City - this reaffirms the association of

loyalty between the two. This was last done on Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's visit to the City on 2 May 2012.

The Mourning Sword



King Edward IV, visited this city in the year 1473 with his Queen and the Prince his son: he was presented by the citizens with a purse, containing 100 gold nobles, and the Queen and Prince with 20l in gold each: this was most graciously received; and the King, in return for their loyalty, at his departure, took his sword from his side, and gave it to the Mayor, to be carried before him and his successors on all public occasions.

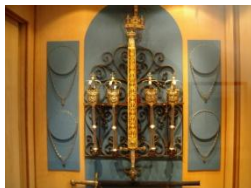
In Charles II's reign it was put into mourning, to be carried on the anniversary of Charles I's execution in 1649. It is carried on occasions of public mourning and other solemn occasions wrapped in crepe. The Mourning Sword was brought out for the memorial service to Sir Winston Churchill in Exeter Cathedral in 1964. The Mourning Sword is now brought out on the death of a National Figure or local Civic Officer, as a sign of respect.

The Maces



The four maces are of silver gilt were made by the goldsmith George Weeks for a total cost of £88 in 1730 and repaired in 1766. They are successors to ancient maces; Exeter had four Sergeants-at-Mace by the 1260s.

Mace Rack



A series of Georgian mace racks survives in the city today; there are four mace racks: one at Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter Cathedral and two at the Guildhall. It was believed that these racks were used to hold the mayoral sword and maces in churches or town houses to which the Mayor walked in procession, accompanied by the mace-bearers.

These were reputed to have been used in the old East Gate, which was demolished in 1784.

The Mayor's Chain



The Mayor has worn a chain only since 1874. In 1873 the Royal Archaeological Institute held its annual congress in Exeter. So pleased were the members with the city's reception that they commissioned this chain. Designed by the distinguished architect William Burges, the 'arch-Goth' of high Victorian design, it incorporates city motifs of the triple-towered castle alternating with the crowned letter X. It was made in 1874 by Parker & Stone of Bloomsbury, London. It has the Assay mark of the crown and X prior to 1701 and the Castle with 3 turrets from after 1701. It has long

been admired; Llewellyn Jewitt, who wrote the standard text on the subject of civic regalia (1895), commented on its 'extreme beauty of design and workmanship.'

The Sheriff's Chain



When in 1537 Henry VIII conferred on Exeter the status of a separate county he also gave the citizens the right to elect a Sheriff of the County of the City of Exeter - a privilege lost in 1974. The Sheriff's chain, of gold linked 'SS', was presented in 1878. The badge contains the design of the crossed swords and the date of the establishment of Exeter as a County. Nowadays it is worn by the Deputy Lord Mayor.

The Buller Sword



This sword was presented to the Rt Hon. General Sir Redvers Buller by the County of Devon in recognition of his services in South Africa in 1899-1900. The hilt is of silver decorated with gold, rubies, diamonds and sapphires; it was made by T. & J. Bragg of Birmingham in 1900-1.

Lord Nelson's Sword



The sword was presented by the city to Lord Nelson in 1801. It passed through various hands after his death and was eventually returned to the city in 1934. The scabbard bears the City Arms with the inscription 'Horatio Nelson (Vice Admiral of the Blue) enrolled as a Freeman of the City of Exeter, 21st January 1801. Thomas Floud Mayor.'

Silver



The silver on display in the gallery is the accumulation of gifts by past mayors and sheriffs to mark their year in office. Other pieces are gifts by various benefactors or are on loan to the City.

The Guildhall Chapel Bell

A bell cote was constructed in 1457 on the eastern parapet of the roof incorporating chimneys of the adjoining building. There is an assumption that there were more than one bell because of repairs mentioned in 1485 to the great bell and the common bell. The bell now kept at in the entrance of the Guildhall is the smaller of the two, the common bell, forged in Exeter by Robert Norton. The common bell may believe was bought for £1 13s 4d and hung in 1463/4. There is a similar bell in St Pancras church, Exeter. Over the years the bell was used as a summons to the guildhall meetings, all occasions for rejoicing, when the chapel was here to proclaim the daily service and its last function was to ring the alarm of fire. A new bell cote was constructed in 1817 (DAS), unfortunately the parapet was deemed unsafe and was removed without notice in December 1986.

The inscription reads: Celi regina me protégé queso ruina (Queen of Heaven, protect me I pray from ruin).

SOME OF THE PROTRAITS

Princess Henrietta Anne (1644-70)



Daughter of King Charles I, always his favourite and he nicknamed her "Minette". She was born in Exeter, at Bedford House, during the English Civil War, and was baptized in the Exeter Cathedral. Two weeks after she was born her mother Queen Henrietta fled the country leaving her in the care of Lady Morton. After her father was beheaded in 1649 and the monarchy abolished, Lady Morton took Henrietta to France, to live at the court of her cousin King Louis XIV, at the age of seventeen she married Louis's younger brother Philippe, Duke of Orleans.

The marriage was not a happy one, there were rumours that she became the mistress of Louis XIV, The couple nevertheless had four children. Henrietta was popular in the French Court she was a patron of arts and an accomplished dancer. She was close to her brother King Charles II of England and assisted him with the political negotiations with France, the secret treaty of Dover. Henrietta Died in 1670, two weeks after the treaty was signed. It was widely believed that she was poisoned by one of her husband's jealous male lovers. An autopsy revealed that she had died from peritonitis (Inflammation of a membrane which lines part of the abdominal cavity). After Henrietta's death King Charles II, visited the city and given £500 in gold. In return he commissioned the portrait of his deceased sister.

General Monk KG, 1st Duke of Albemarle (1606-70)



Was born at, Potheridge near Great Torrington, North Devon. After assaulting the Undersheriff of the County for a wrong done to his father, he was forced to go abroad and becoming a soldier. He fought in Cadiz (1626) and at the siege of 'Ile de re' (1627). In 1629 he went to the Netherlands, then the centre of warfare, and there he gained a high reputation as a leader and a disciplinarian. He threw up his commission in consequence of a quarrel with the civic authorities of Dordrecht (1638).

He returned to England where he ascended through the ranks of the army. He showed his skill and coolness at the battle of Newburn (1640), where he saved the English Artillery, even though they had little ammunition. His talent made him indispensable during the Irish rebellion (1641) there after he was appointed Governor of Dublin by Lord Leicester, but this was short lived because it was overruled by King Charles I. Monck with great shrewdness, surrendered this appointment without protest. Charles I gave Monck command of the army brought over from Ireland during the English Civil War. Monck was captured at Nantwich (1644) and spent two years in the tower where he wrote his 'Observations on Military and Political Affairs'. Monck's experience in Ireland, lead to his release and he was made Major General in the army and sent to Ireland by the parliamentarians. He was made Commander in chief in Scotland after a resounding victory at Dunbar. 1652 Monck became a General at sea, in the first Anglo-Dutch war, which ended in a decisive victory and lead to the climb of English supremacy over the Dutch at sea. On return he was requested to go to Scotland as Governor by Cornwell.

John Tuckfield, MP for Exeter 1745-76, artist unknown.



The Tuckfield family estate was at Shobrooke near Crediton. He was the donor of the site of the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital in Southernhay.

The election of Tuckfield with John Rolle Walter (see below) as MPs for Exeter in 1761 was amongst the most violent ever recorded. As polling began a mob supporting their opponents took control of the Guildhall, preventing others from voting. Thereupon the managers of Tuckfield and Walter assembled 400 farm labourers armed with mopstaves, who drove out their opponents. The opposition in turn drafted in a bigger mob, including a crew of sailors from Lypstone, who finally made the countrymen flee. One man died and many were seriously injured in the fray.

Henry Blackall (1770-1845)



Painted by James Leakey in 1833. Henry Blackall was three times Mayor of Exeter in the period 1819-32. His ancestor, Mr Bishop Blackall was founder of the Bishop Blackall School for Girls in Exeter. During the reign of Queen Anne (1708-1714), Bishop Ofspring Blackall was responsible for the founding of four charitable schools in the city through the Episcopal Charity Trust. The Episcopal Charity Schools were founded in 1709, funded by voluntary subscription and collections made at the Cathedral and churches of Exeter.

Bishop Blackall died of his injuries after he fell off his horse in 1716. His overseeing of the founding of his schools lasted only seven years, but he left a legacy.

The single building was divided into separate schools for boys and girls. The four schools were quickly reduced to two by Henry Blackall, one for boys and one for girls. They became know as 'middle' schools, based on their middle class intake, rather than age.

In 1920 the school was renamed the Exeter Episcopal Modern School and then in 1934 it was finally named Bishop Blackall School for Girls in honour of its 19th century founder Henry Blackall and his ancestor, Bishop Blackall. The school was damaged in the bombing during the Second World War. Another re-organisations in Exeter saw the school merge with Hele's Grammar School and become St Peter's Church of England High School. The Hill's Court site was taken over by Exeter College. The premises have since been relinquished by the college and is now residential accommodation.

George II as Prince of Wales (shortly before 1727)



This portrait is by the successful portrait painter Thomas Hudson (1701-79). Hudson, who was master to Sir Joshua Reynolds, himself presented this portrait to the city. Described by Andrew Bruce in his Geographical Dictionary as an 'ingenious work and a generous present of the celebrated Thomas Hudson

Duke of Wellington mounted on a charger (signed and dated 1829)



The original portrait is of Napoleon on his horse Marengo by James Northcote and it bears his signature. The picture was in Paris when the very name of Napoleon was anathema (a hated person), the head was slashed out and the painting was discarded. The painting was returned to England the head of Wellington was inserted, the cross on the breast is also a substitute.

The painting was offered to the city in December 1859 by Sir Joseph Sawle on condition it was hung in the guildhall. It arrived in August 1861. In July 1862 there was a complaint by Sawle that it was not prominent enough. In a council meeting it was agreed that he would be told that none of the existing paintings would be moved to make room for it. One councillor said that the painting was so poor that it could not be pawned.

Benjamin Heath DCL, Town Clerk 1752-1766



The city commissioned Robert Edge Pyne (1730-88) to paint this portrait from an original and ordered that it should be placed in the most conspicuous part of the Guildhall. Heath was a member of a family of Exeter merchants and fullers. He was an able if conventional scholar. He led the opposition in the South West to the hated Cider Tax.

John Rolle Walter, MP for Exeter 1754-1776



The portrait, painted by James Leakey from an original by Sir Joshua Reynolds, was presented about 1835. Lord Rolle was MP for Exeter 1754-1776

Sir Charles Pratt, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas



Painted by Thomas Hudson. Sir Charles was presented with the Freedom of the City in 1764 for his famous judgement in the Wilkes Case, maintaining public liberty and the property of the subject. His portrait was placed here 'as a monument to his ...unbiased integrity and superior abilities'.