



Exeter City Council

EXETER ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE 14th February 1986

Report to Committee

Reports will be given at the meeting on the following items:

1. EXCAVATIONS AND WATCHING BRIEFS

- (i) Exe Street (leaflet enclosed)
- (ii) The Quay (leaflet enclosed)
- (iii) Flowerpot Lane
- (iv) Holloway Street

2. HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND ANCIENT MONUMENTS RECORDED

- (i) Bishop's Palace (note enclosed)
- (ii) Cathedral (note enclosed, Exeter Archaeology, 31)
- (iii) Exeter Guildhall
- (iv) Exeter Castle Gatehouse (Exeter Archaeology, 18)
- (v) 47 High Street + Upper Paul St.
- (vi) Stepnote Hill (Exeter Archaeology, 36)
- (vii) City Wall at Cricklepit Street and Quay Lane

3. CONSERVATION OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS

- (i) Medieval Exe Bridge
- (ii) St Catherine's Alms-houses
- (iii) 1 Upper Paul Street

4. FUTURE SITES

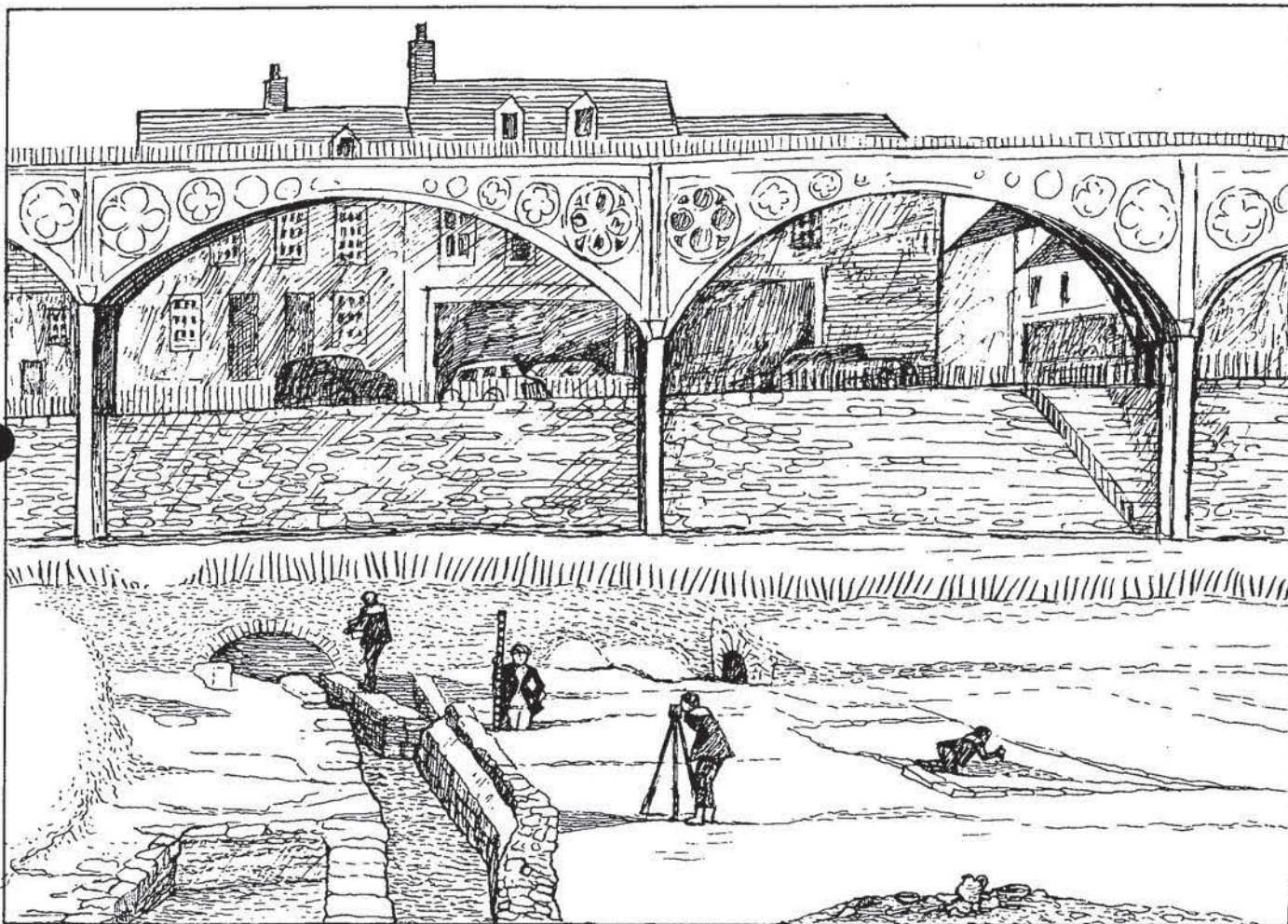
5. PUBLICATION AND POST-EXCAVATION PROJECTS

- (i) Exhibitions
- (ii) Interim reports series
- (iii) Booklets
- (iv) Archive reports
- (v) Synthetic reports

C.G. Henderson  
Director, Archaeological Field Unit

# Archaeological Excavations

## Exe Street, Exeter 1985



### Background to the excavations

Archaeological excavations at Exe Street, next to the Iron Bridge, have uncovered remains dating from early Roman to recent times.

The excavations are being carried out by members of an MSC Community Programme team (formed to undertake rescue archaeology investigations on development sites in Exeter and the surrounding area) in association with archaeologists from Exeter Museums and volunteers from the Devon Archaeological Society. Flats will be built on the site in 1986 by the Devon and Cornwall Housing Association.

### Longbrook stream

The earliest feature on the site is the Longbrook stream, which formed the valley flanking the northern side of the Roman and medieval city. The bed of the stream, exposed next to Exe Street, was culverted over its entire length in 1843 as a measure to improve sanitary conditions in the aftermath of the terrible cholera outbreak of 1832, when 440 people died in Exeter and St Thomas.

Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit

Exeter City Council MSC Community Programme Agency



### **Roman remains**

The site lies outside the Roman fortress (AD c 55-75) and town (late 1st to early 5th century) to one side of the main road leading up to the Roman north gate, situated at the head of modern Lower North Street (in front of the Crown and Sceptre). A timber bridge probably carried the Roman road across the Longbrook in the valley bottom. Considerable quantities of pottery and animal bones have been recovered from early Roman ditches and pits, and a Roman timber building has been found lying within the shelter of a small combe overlooking the Longbrook stream. In the 3rd century layers of clay and domestic refuse were tipped down the hillside to infill the combe to a depth of 2-3 metres.

### **Medieval period**

The medieval street leading up to the North Gate was very wide immediately above the Longbrook crossing and it is possible that the area outside the gate was used as a market place in Saxon and Norman times. The street frontage between the Longbrook and the gate had become built up with houses by the later 13th century. Deeds preserved in the Devon Record Office show that in the early 15th century a row of shops stood just above the Longbrook crossing. The house whose foundations can be seen next to the street in the excavation dates from the 16th century; it may overlie the remains of medieval buildings yet to be uncovered. A pit behind this house produced part of a fine jug decorated with shields, which was made around 1300 in the Bordeaux region of S.W. France.

### **Tudor and Stuart developments**

In the early 17th century the channel of the Longbrook became partially silted up with muddy organic ooze which has preserved wooden and leather objects not often found in excavations. For example, a number of childrens' shoes have been recovered from the stream bed as well as fragments of a leather garment thought possibly to have been a jerkin. A length of revetment wall built in good quality Heavitree stone probably flanked the southern abutment of a bridge built soon after 1600. The arch of this bridge must lie just outside the excavation. The stream channel adjacent to the bridge was culverted in the mid 17th century and from this time onwards houses began to encroach across both sides of the infilled stream bed and also onto the street next to the bridge. At the same time, the intensity of occupation in this area was increased further by the subdivision of the original large medieval tenements and by the erection of back blocks in previously vacant gardens behind the houses. By the 18th century many tenements seem to have been in multiple occupation.

### **Post-medieval industry**

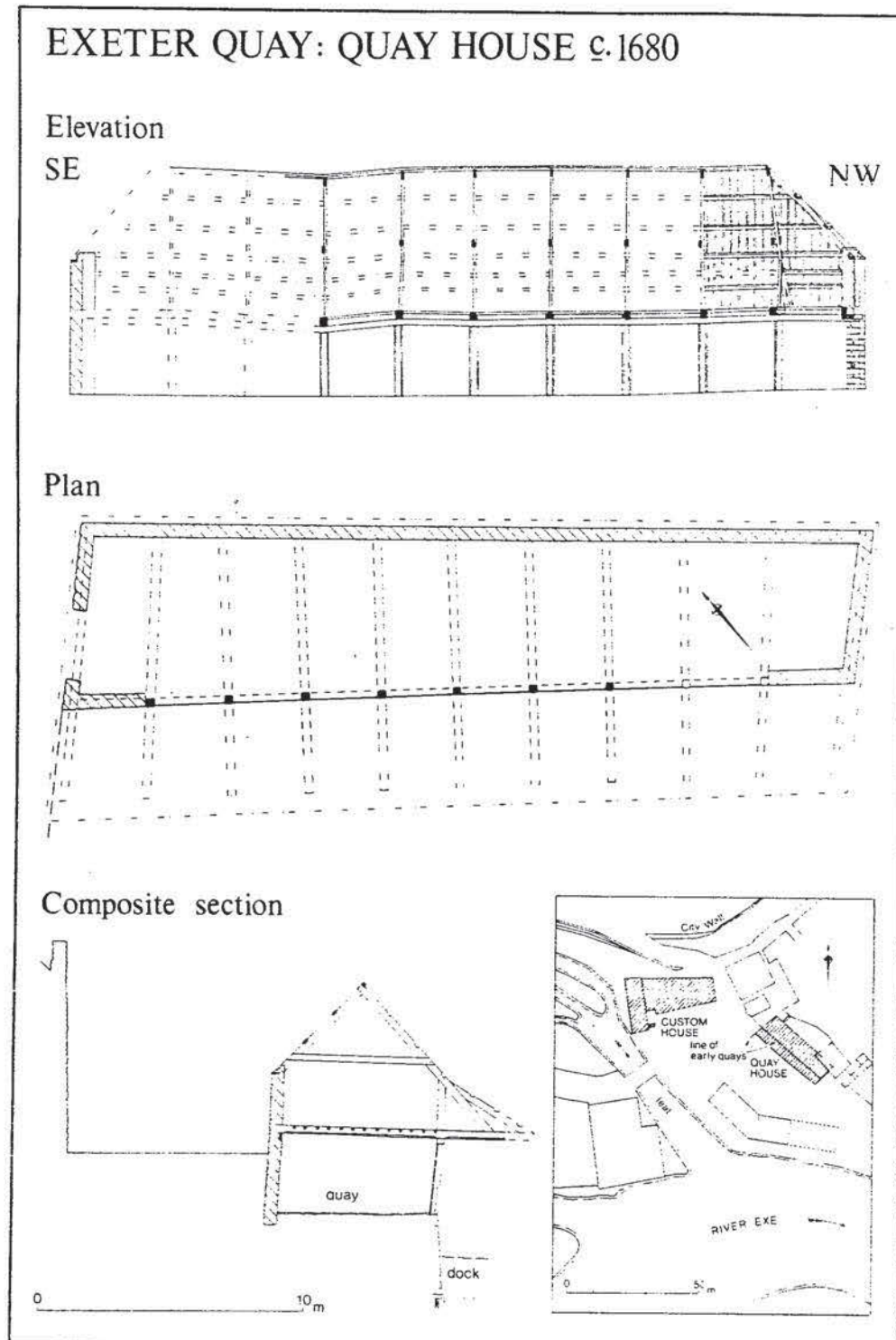
In the late 17th century the house on the higher part of the site was occupied by a blacksmith named Anthony Gay, the remains of whose forge were excavated during the summer. For a brief period in the mid 18th century this building was the Spotted Dog alehouse; later a woolcomber named John Lavers lived in part of this tenement. The brick base of a stove or 'comb pot', used for heating the long-tined combs employed in combing wool, was found in Lavers' workshop.

Evidence for another aspect of the Exeter woollen industry comes from a building at the back of the site which contains the base of an 18th-century copper probably used for dyeing yarn. A building erected in the late 17th century overlay the Longbrook culvert and encroached onto Exe Street. This was known for many years in the 18th century as the Angel Inn, and from the late 19th century until World War II was occupied as a wheelwright's shop.

# Archaeological Discoveries at Exeter Quay

## Introduction

A remarkable archaeological find has been made at Exeter Quay inside the former Do-it-yourself Centre, an old warehouse adjoining the Prospect Inn near the Custom House. The warehouse has been recognised for some years as a rare survival dating from around the same period as the Custom House, but its true character has only now become apparent. It was recently acquired by the Exeter Canal and Quay Development Trust for conversion to form an arcade of shops. Contractors' excavations dug to check the condition of the foundations exposed a well preserved quay wall running the full length of the building. The Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit and members of an MSC Community Programme team have undertaken further excavations to establish the date and extent of the early quay.





## **Elizabethan quay wall**

The recently discovered quay wall stands to a height of 3.2m (10' 6") and is seated upon a foundation of oak piles driven into the gravel river bed. It is hoped eventually to date the construction of the quay by dendrochronology (tree-ring analysis). The quay may have been built in 1565-6 at the same time as the Exeter Canal. The Hooker/Hogenburg view of Exeter in 1587 shows the Quay with a warehouse called the 'Crane Cellar' roughly on the site of the Do-it-yourself Centre. By 1661 this building seems to have been known as the Quay House.

## **Seventeenth-century lighter dock and transit shed (Quay House)**

In 1676 the Exeter Canal was extended to Topsham and made deep enough for barges of up to 16 tons. At this time the Quay was enlarged to provide a 483' waterfront, more than double the 230' run of the Elizabethan quays. This probably involved the construction of a new dock 100' long with an entrance facing down river, open quays on two sides and the Quay House occupying the fourth side.

The Custom House was erected in 1679-80 and the old Quay House rebuilt at the same time. The Quay House is best described as a transit shed. Its ground floor served originally as a covered quay 20' wide and 100' long, extending under the later Prospect Inn. It was furnished with a cobbled floor and entered from the main quay through an 8' wide doorway. An open arcade of massive moulded oak posts, seven of which are still preserved inside the building, ran along the edge of the dock. The upper floor was probably used for the temporary storage of goods delayed in transit. It is supported on massive oak beams more than 30' long which project forward across the arcade line to carry the roof out over the dock as a cantilevered canopy originally about 14' wide.

The Quay House and sheltered dock were designed to accommodate lighters and small boats; the depth of water in the dock would not have exceeded about 4-5' except when the river was in spate. The City had its own lighters, seven in number by 1691, which plied daily between Exeter Quay and the ships anchored in the tideway at Topsham and Starcross.

## **Woollen exports from the Quay**

The Quay House represents a remarkable monument to the enterprise of the City Council and the merchants of Exeter during the period when the City reached its greatest prosperity.

In the late 17th century Exeter ranked with the leading industrial cities and the largest ports in the land: 4th or 5th in population and wealth after London. The mainstay of the City's economy at that time was the manufacture of woollen cloth and its exportation to the Continent. The new lighter dock and transit shed built in the 1670s were provided primarily to serve this trade.

## **Later history of the Quay House and its national significance**

The lighter dock was filled in and the Quay House subdivided to form a number of separate stores around 1700, at which time the Exeter Canal was made deep enough to allow the passage of ships of over 100 tons. The brick front was added this century. Finds from the excavation include the glass bottle seal of T(homas) Potter dated 1690 illustrated below.



### **National significance**

The Custom House and Quay House were the two principal buildings on Exeter Quay in the period when Exeter was one of the largest provincial ports in Britain. In national terms the Quay House appears to be a unique survival of the greatest importance. Nothing comparable is known to remain elsewhere in Britain and the next oldest warehouse preserved on a public quay is well over 100 years later. Further afield, a warehouse in Rockport, Massachusetts is believed to be of similar antiquity.



### THE BISHOP'S PALACE

In July and August 1985 the A.F.U. conducted a partial survey of the residential portion of the Bishop's Palace. It became accessible during a period when minor alterations and redecoration works were being carried out by the Church Commissioners.

It was found that the building underwent various phases of radical replanning and alteration in the 19th and 20th centuries. These have obscured or destroyed much of the evidence for the structural history of this part of the palace. Nevertheless sufficient remains to give some indication of the interior form of the building both in its original state and after its refurbishment in the late 17th century.

Of the medieval building only the shell and some fittings remain: the north, east and west walls; Bishop Oldham's tower, originally the entrance to the screens passage; the Courtenay mantelpiece, repositioned from a parlour in the western wing of the building (now Diocesan offices and the Cathedral library); and various fragments of re-used timber. Of the latter the most spectacular are lengths of the aisle posts of the early 13th-century hall which are re-used in the post-Restoration axial partition. The survey of the Palace made by order of Parliament in 1647 describes the hall as having 'a high rooffe supported with foure great pillars of squared tymber' (quoted by J.F. Chanter: The Bishop's Palace, Exeter (1932) 85). Such a plan is closely comparable to the late 12th-century Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace at Hereford.

The same survey of 1647 records that the building was in a state of some decay. Neglect continued throughout the interregnum when the Palace and its buildings found various humble uses. At the Restoration the Palace needed substantial rebuilding work to restore it to a habitable condition. This probably took place under Seth Ward (1662-67), the second of the post-Restoration bishops, or his immediate successors Anthony Sparrow (1667-76) or Thomas Lamplugh (1676-88).

These repairs involved a major rebuilding in the Great Hall of the Palace. The south wall contains no medieval work and may well have been rebuilt at this time, when a new roof was constructed. The roof is a double A-frame of eight bays with collars secured to principals by notched lap joints fixed with pegs and iron spikes. The inner ends of the principals of the two roofs are butted together and halved onto posts within a longitudinal partition on the central axis of the building. The partition is now free-standing but originally comprised posts resting on lateral beams which supported three floor levels and tied the partition to the walls. It was infilled with brick and rendered with plaster of mud and chopped straw. Fragments of this infilling survive in areas undisturbed by later alterations. Sections of the 13th-century aisle posts were cut up and re-used amongst new timber in the partition. They show the form of the posts as a lozenge with attached shafts with two examples preserving fragments of stiff-leaf capitals. Subsequent alterations to the building have removed most of the lateral beams, leaving only their stumps within the partition which now receives support from a motley collection of inserted features belonging to later periods of work under Bishops Keppel (c.1764) and Philpotts (c.1846) and in the post-war period (c.1947-8).

The ornamentation of the original carpentry of this period (chamfers with plain or scroll stops), the roof structure and types of brick and plaster used all suggest a date of c. 1660-80, consistent with the suggestion that these

alterations were made to rehabilitate the Palace after the Restoration.

To record and illustrate the findings of the survey drawings were made of a specimen roof truss, a long elevation of the roof and of the accessible portions of the longitudinal partition. A new plan was made of the ground floor of the building and the opportunity was taken to produce an accurate scale drawing of the Courtenay mantelpiece.

### THE CATHEDRAL

As in previous years members of the A.F.U. have recorded areas of the building subject to conservation and repair works, funded by the Exeter Cathedral Preservation Trust.

#### West front

The south-west return (bays 33-35) of the image screen was conserved in the early part of 1985, bringing to an end the conservation programme of the sculpture and its surrounds. The archaeological record remains to be completed in the area around the south doorway (bays 27-32) which was conserved before the recording programme for the west front was established.

Although comprising only five full figures and three demi-angels the south west return yielded important results. The lower two tiers (A and B registers) although constructed c. 1340 remained empty of sculpture for a time, the niches being filled in the 1370's (B34) and 15th century (B33 and 35). This confirms observations made in previous years that whilst in the focal areas of the screen (e.g. around the main west door) the sculpture is contemporary with the construction of the A and B registers, isolated niches remained vacant for some time, even until the construction of the C register c. 1460-80.

New information was obtained on the early 19th-century repair works of John Kendall. Several figures had features recarved by him, giving a confusing combination of his distinctive style with good medieval work.

The insertion of new gates to the porches of the west front enabled the footings of the screen to be inspected. A raft of mixed mortared rubble at least 0.5m deep underlies the front. This is levelled off with layers of chippings and sealed, at least in the porches, by a rough construction surface. One of the holes dug for the gateposts contained fragments of an early 14th-century Purbeck marble cross-slab.

#### South tower

Recording of the north face of the belfry tier was completed in July and August of 1985, and the north and west faces of the next tier below begun. This contains a different repertoire of decorative motifs, some of which are preserved in good condition within the roof of the south transept, where it abuts the north face of the tower. Occurring for the first time are capitals carved with stylised leaf motifs, and the use of bitumen as a bonding agent on external ashlar.

Three sheila-na-gig carvings discovered in the corbel table of the north face were conserved and moulds have now been made from them in order to produce a three dimensional record of these unusual carvings.

S.R. Blaylock (February 1986)



Exeter City Council

EXETER ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 12th September 1986

Report to Committee

Plans and other material illustrative of the sites dealt with in this report will be displayed at the meeting.

1. EXCAVATIONS AND WATCHING BRIEFS

Hayes Barton excavation

Excavations funded by Exeter City Council and MSC are in progress on the site of medieval Hayes Barton in St. Thomas. The site lies at Flowerpot Lane on the west bank of the Exe at the end of Okehampton Street, where it is proposed to build houses.

This area is marked on OS maps as the site of St. Andrew's Priory. However, there is ample evidence (reviewed recently by Geoffrey Yeo in Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries) to show that the priory was in fact at Cowick Barton. Medieval documents make it clear that the site now under excavation at Flowerpot Field was Hayes Barton.

The excavation project in combination with detailed documentary research on the medieval and early modern estates of St. Thomas is producing a most interesting picture of the history of the Hayes Barton mansion and its lands which will be outlined more fully in EA 85/6.

The medieval estate known as the prebend of Hayes was created in the late 11th or early 12th century to support one of four prebendaries attached to St. Mary's Chapel in Exeter Castle. A house is documented on the site of Hayes Barton from the later 13th century. This would perhaps have been occupied by the bailiff of the prebend who is mentioned in deeds and presumably farmed the demesne lands.

The excavations have to date reached medieval levels in one area only; here a 13th-century ditch has been found which may have defined an enclosure around the demesne farm. On the evidence available at present there seems every prospect that the remains of the medieval farm and any outbuildings will prove to be well preserved. This is potentially a most exciting and important site; no medieval lowland farm of sub-manorial status has ever been excavated in Devon or elsewhere in the South-West. Hayes Barton is especially suitable for excavation since it is fairly well documented and, most important, was abandoned in the 17th century and has not been subject to disturbance by later building activity. Opportunities to investigate this type of site are so rare that every effort must be made to excavate Hayes Barton as fully as possible.

The last prebendary, John Stephens, sold his prebend (with royal licence) in 1548. In 1563 the 'mansion place' of Hayes was acquired by John Petre, customer of Exeter, who took up residence there. Petre was eventually succeeded by William Petre. In 1620, the property was purchased from Sir George Petre by William Gould of St. Thomas (one of the Gould family of Staverton), passing eventually to his son, another William.

The excavations are gradually laying bare the entire layout of the later 16th and early 17th-century mansion house complete with its outbuildings (comprising stables, wainhouse and barn) and about 90% of the walled enclosure that surrounded them. The enclosure wall, which probably dates from the time of John or William Petre, can be seen with the house on the Hogenburg view of Exeter in 1586. The house was probably much enlarged by William Petre in the 1590s. The Goulds probably constructed a system of well made cambered cobble paths, some containing simple decorative lines

picked out in white pebbles.

Documentary and archaeological evidence attests to the dramatic end of Hayes Barton, in all probability on July 31st 1643. Both house and outbuildings were destroyed by fire, and the recovery of about 30 musket balls and a 11lb (2" diameter) cannon ball strongly suggests destruction as a result of military action during the Civil War. The house was certainly gone by 1660, and an early 18th-century deed records the tradition that it was destroyed 'as said in the Rebellion'. Research by Mark Stoyle has shown that many houses in St. Thomas were probably burned down on July 31st 1643 when a party of about 1000 Parliamentarians from the City crossed over the medieval Exe Bridge to engage Royalists occupying St. Thomas. One of the Royalist positions to come under attack on this occasion was a 'very strong house', a description which fits Hayes Barton very well. The distribution of the musket balls found on the site confirms that the attack on the house came from the direction of Okehampton Street and Exe Bridge: the main concentration of musket balls occurs just outside the boundary wall facing towards Okehampton Street. The balls must have hit the wall and fallen to the ground in front of it.

It is hoped to complete the excavation by the end of October. It is proposed to complete post-excavation analysis and report preparation on all the sites excavated in St. Thomas by the end of 1986-7. Publication will probably be in the Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society.

#### **Observations at Gandy Street and Bradninch Place**

Observation of contractor's excavations occasioned by the laying of granite sets in Upper Paul Street and Gandy Street located the inner defensive ditch on the NE side of the legionary fortress of c. 50-75 close to the northern corner. This is a most important observation since it completes the outline plan of the fortress and establishes its full size for the first time. The intended dimensions of the fortress were probably 1200 x 1600 Roman feet or about 355 x 474m, an area of 16.82 ha or almost 42 acres including the ditch.

Exeter Castle was started in 1068 following William the Conqueror's siege of the city in that year. It is sited upon a volcanic outcrop in the northern angle of the Roman town wall. Little Norman stonework survives today, the most important structure being the remarkable early gatehouse (described in Exeter Archaeology 1984/5). The castle comprised two defended areas or wards. The inner ward, enclosed by a curtain wall and a massive ditch still partly visible in Rougemont Gardens, houses the Law Courts and remains a prominent feature in the landscape. The larger outer ward was defended by a rampart and ditch which by contrast have left little trace visible to the casual observer on the ground. The imprint of the Castle's outer perimeter is nevertheless discernible in the lines of streets and property boundaries depicted on maps such as the 1876 1:500 scale OS map. Of particular significance is the boundary between the Bradninch Precinct and the parishes of St Paul and St Stephen, which may reflect the position of the front of the Norman rampart in the Bradninch Place area.

The nature and the precise course of the outer defences have never been established. In 1933 the ditch, said to be 16' deep, was observed when foundations were dug for the Telephone Exchange in Castle Street. The same year the Exeter Excavation Committee located the ditch in a small excavation at Argyle House, behind Gandy Street. Unfortunately there is no record of the exact location of either 1933 sighting.

Additional evidence for the line of the ditch may be obtained by



plotting the distribution of shear cracks in buildings which have subsided over it. The most prominent of these occurs in the NW wall of Gallery 2 in the R.A.M. Museum next to Bradninch Place. This crack has increased in size in recent years as a result of subsidence at the northern corner of the block, probably amounting to about 7cm since it was erected in the late 19th century. In August 1986 the AFU excavated three small trenches, up to 1.7m deep, against the wall of the museum to enable structural engineers to examine the foundations and the fill of the ditch. These confirmed that the main crack marks the outer lip of the ditch and that the corner of the building probably overlies its deepest part. Two augered boreholes were drilled subsequently to establish the full depth of the ditch. The maximum depth logged was 4.1m from the modern ground surface, itself thought to be roughly equivalent to the early medieval ground level at the outer lip of the ditch. The upper 1.5m of the ditch fill consisted of fairly homogeneous reddish brown clay with charcoal flecks which yielded a few sherds of medieval and Roman pottery. This appeared to represent redeposited natural clay and Roman material. It served to seal off the deeper primary fill, a dark moist silty claysoil with a high organic content.

The outer lip of the ditch was observed in May 1986 in a watching brief on construction work at the rear of 24 Gandy Street 100m SE of the museum trenches. The ditch contained a dark fill with a high organic content. Similar material was encountered against the outer lip of the ditch in a small trench dug in advance of landscaping in front of the Exeter and Devon Arts Centre in Gandy Street in August 1986. A second trench uncovered the inner lip of the ditch, which at this point was filled with fairly clean reddish-brown clay very similar to that found in the trench next to the museum. The ditch was about 12-13m wide at this point. The relatively clean uniform nature of the upper fill over a 50m length of the ditch suggests that after a period of neglect when deep silt deposits were allowed to accumulate the ditch was backfilled with relatively clean mixed clay derived from a single source. The only sizeable source of such material in this vicinity would have been the outer rampart of the Castle. The pottery collected from the ditch layers is broadly datable to the 12th and earlier 13th centuries. We must therefore conclude that the rampart of the Castle outer ward was probably slighted in the 13th century. Since the ditch was also eliminated at this time, the rampart was presumably replaced by a non-defensible boundary feature such as a fence or wall.

#### **Magdalen Street/Southernhay excavations**

Excavation commenced on a small scale in August 1986 on a three acre site outside the South Gate where a large hotel will be built in 1987. The project is funded at present by Exeter City Council and MSC; it is hoped that English Heritage and Trust House Forte (the developers) will also eventually contribute to the cost of investigating this large and important site. The construction of the hotel will result in a major loss of archaeological deposits and additional damage is likely to be caused by the re-routing of services in front of the City Wall.

The site lies entirely within the statutory Area of Archaeological Importance; it abutts a 200m length of the City Wall, (a scheduled Ancient Monument) and extends up to 65m out from the front of the wall. A number of aspects of the archaeology of this area are of outstanding importance, requiring thorough investigation prior to development.

This is the last undisturbed site likely to become available for excavation in the foreseeable future in which the full range of defensive features at the front of the City Wall can be examined; only here, for example, is it possible to obtain a complete transect across the ditch

systems of every period from later Roman times through to the Civil War; and only here can a link be forged with observations made on sites excavated further out from the wall in the 1970s. Of particular importance are late Roman ditches and a possible early medieval siege work glimpsed in a trial trench cut in 1976, and a double-ditched ravelin (an outwork protecting the South Gate) constructed during the Civil War which was partially explored at the top of Holloway Street in 1974 and 1978.

The course of the Roman and late Saxon ditches in front of the medieval round tower in the Trinity Green car park requires elucidation by excavation prior to the diversion of telephone ducts in this area. At this point alone on the whole circuit of the City Walls is there a reasonable chance of demonstrating whether the late Roman town was provided with external towers, a point of very considerable interest in the study of urban defences in Roman Britain.

The other main field of interest requiring investigation concerns the evolution of the road system outside the South Gate and the history of settlement in the area. Holloway Street is a proven Roman road; excavation next to Magdalen Street, the other main road leading to the South Gate, should establish whether this road dates from the Roman period or later. The Magdalen Street frontage will be severely affected by the hotel development. A row of mid 17th-century houses which stood here was recorded by the AFU prior to demolition in 1976. There are known to be very few basements on this site and the street frontage at this point has not been subjected to road widening in recent times. The house sites on the Magdalen Street frontage therefore represent a most important archaeological resource, since there are likely to be preserved here the remains of successive houses dating from the late Saxon period onwards and possibly from Roman times. These require careful excavation and recording prior to the commencement of building operations. Small cottages were built from the late 17th century on the NW side of Trinity Street, running parallel with the City Wall to the rear of Magdalen Street and Southernhay. Their remains are well preserved, and although relatively late in date, these buildings are of considerable interest for two reasons. First, pre 19th-century urban houses of low social status no longer survive in Exeter and cannot therefore be studied except by excavation; second, these particular houses occupied land owned by the City Council and are thus very well documented, enabling us to establish who lived in them. This quality of documentation is most unusual and should be exploited as fully as possible by excavation in advance of development.

#### **Exeter Quay excavations**

Structural survey and small-scale excavation in 1985-6 within a former warehouse at 45-7 The Quay has uncovered a remarkable sequence of quays and transit sheds commencing in the 1560s when the construction of the Exeter Canal provided the City with a direct outlet to the sea for the first time in 250 years.

A superficial survey made by the AFU in 1984-5 showed Nos 45-7 and the adjoining Prospect Inn to have been erected as a warehouse of some kind in the later 17th century. A full picture of the warehouse's original form and purpose began to emerge only when structural engineers dug trial holes to inspect the foundations shortly before work was due to start on the conversion of the building to shop units by the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust (ECQT). A watching brief on the trial holes revealed a stone quay wall running the full length of the warehouse immediately below the modern floor. The Trust very kindly postponed their building programme to allow excavation and detailed fabric survey to be undertaken to elucidate the full



history of the warehouse and its site. The site investigations and documentary research and post-excavation analysis undertaken subsequently were funded by Exeter City Council, ECQT, Devon County Council and the Manpower Services Commission (through the Exeter City Council Community Programme Agency).

The results of the investigations far exceeded expectations. The warehouse was shown to have been erected in 1680 at the same time as the Custom House 20m to the NW. This is probably the earliest warehouse standing on a public quay in Britain. In addition, it is unique in possessing a sheltered dock. The warehouse is now undergoing conversion to shop units as planned originally. Part of the quay wall will be displayed and three bays at one end of the building will now be rented by Exeter City Council for use as an interpretation and information centre.

Despite their limited extent, the excavations beneath the Quay House have revealed the full history of its site, with the discovery of two earlier warehouses and a sequence of quays and wharfs.

Primary post-excavation analysis is now almost complete and a full archive report on the project should be ready before Christmas. The final report will probably be submitted for publication in Post-medieval Archaeology.

#### **Quay research project**

Following the completion of excavations on the Quay, funds have been made available by Exeter City Council for additional documentary research to be undertaken to enable a fuller picture to be built up of the history and development of the Quay area, drawing on documentary and pictorial sources. The project has uncovered a surprising wealth of material; because the Quay and the Exeter Canal were built and administered by the City Council, comprehensive financial records survive which throw considerable light on the history of the successive structures on the Quay as well as showing the way in which the Quay was administered. The information gained in the research carried out under this project will be used in publications and displays about the Quay. A series of about 8 reconstruction drawings showing the Quay at different periods is being prepared by Jane Brayne.

#### **Quay buildings survey project**

The City Council is providing funds for an archaeological fabric survey of the Custom House and warehouses of the Quay and basin. This survey will be carried out this autumn.

#### **ABC Cinema site**

The site of the ABC Cinema and London Inn Square just outside the East Gate is due to be redeveloped early in 1987 when a large block of shops and offices will be built. The St. Sidwells suburb was the main area of extra-mural occupation from the early Roman period when in all probability a canabae (civil settlement) was established outside the east gate of the legionary fortress. By the end of the Middle Ages a quarter of Exeter's population lived in St. Sidwell's. Very little is known about the archaeology of Exeter's eastern suburb since no excavation has ever taken place there. The ABC Cinema site is very important because unlike most of the buildings immediately outside the East Gate it does not contain deep basements, and despite some disturbance from cellars and services this site

is likely to retain sufficient deposits to make excavation well worth while.

The first priority will be to establish the layout and date of the road system outside the East Gate. Sidwell Street is generally assumed to be Roman in origin and Longbrook Street may also have been created in the Roman period. The site extends over London Inn Square where the two streets merged, and there is every chance that their earliest levels will be preserved. The excavation project will aim to examine the evidence for settlement next to the roads in the Roman and medieval periods and attempt to determine whether an early medieval extra-mural market place existed here.

A unique feature which may be encountered in the site is a Norman sappers' tunnel discovered nearby in the 1930s and probably dug during William I's siege of the City in 1068.

Of great importance are the Underground Passages, a medieval aqueduct system whose earliest element probably dates from the late 12th century. The tunnels visible today are the product of additions and modifications to the original system and may contain parts of aqueducts supplying three medieval institutions: the Cathedral Dean and Chapter, the City, and the Blackfriars. The copious documentary evidence which survives concerning their construction, upkeep and use is probably unparalleled elsewhere in Britain. The proposed building straddles two sections of the tunnels in London Inn Square, necessitating excavation in this area. It is intended to test theories about the development of the aqueducts by excavation, internal fabric survey and documentary research. Within the new building a basement room will be provided for displays on the history of the passages which will function as a waiting room connected to a new entrance into the passages. Provided funds are forthcoming from the developers, the excavations are expected to be phased over a six month period.

## 2. HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND ANCIENT MONUMENTS

### Guildhall

Reconstruction of the front block of the Guildhall this year has provided an opportunity for the AFU to make a survey of the structure of the building in a project funded by Exeter City Council. The exceptionally fine documentary evidence for the rebuilding of the front block in 1593-4 adds greatly to the study of the building and combined with material from the city records relating to the maintenance and periodic alterations between 1600 and 1900 provides an unparalleled opportunity to integrate structural and documentary analysis.

The building of 1593-4 replaced an earlier front block which is represented on the Hogenburg map of Exeter (1587). It seems to have had an open structure on the front which was replicated in the colonnade projecting into the High Street of the 1593-4 building. The accommodation intended in this new building was an open colonnade at street level, a first floor Council Chamber (now the Mayor's Parlour) with small rooms variously referred to as for a Receiver's office, and for storage of records, on the second floor. A flat lead roof, as at present, was provided above the projection into the street.

The main external elevations were drawn at a comparatively large scale of 1:10 and will be used to record the dating of repairs and alterations to the front. Internal sections on N-S and E-W orientations have been measured, together with many details of construction (the roof, partitions etc). Several cores have been taken from suitable timbers for dendrochronological analysis. It is hoped that one of these, from a re-used timber, may provide a date relating to the earlier front block.



The internal structure and external ornament of the building combine to demonstrate how much of an effort was made to produce a prestigious building. The frontage was originally painted in colours, and the council chamber had oak wainscoting and coloured armorial glass in the windows. Of special materials and work by craftsmen, the Receivers' Accounts of 1592-4 are full of interest. The granite columns supporting the colonnade were probably brought from Blackingstone Rock in Bridford parish, since payments for them are accompanied by reference to 'mendinge the waye at Whitston'. Purbeck marble, from Dorset, was used extensively for paving although none of this survives. All of the carved stonework of the exterior is of Beerstone; some of the more complicated carving such as the capitals of the columns at first floor level, was entrusted to a specialist, in this case one Arnold Hamlyn or Haryson who received 6s 8d apiece for them. One Nicholas Baggett received £4 10s for making the intricately carved oak door which still leads at the entrance to the main Hall at ground level.

### SB Cathedral: South Tower

Recording funded by the Dean and Chapter has preceded masonry repairs, cleaning and sheltercoating on the western half of the south tower. In the past year the north face of the belfry tier (level NB) has been completed and the next tier of blind arcading recorded on the north (NC), west (WC) and western half of the south (SC) faces. Recording work has also been commenced on the tier below (WD) in preparation for the commencement of cleaning and masonry repairs.

The records comprise a basic elevation drawing at a scale of 1:20, with vertical and horizontal sections at the same scale. These show the present state of the masonry, the extent of weathering and the positions of repairs and inserted stone.

Certain areas of the arcading are drawn at a larger scale of 1:5. These include samples of the ornament of the arcade shafts and the voussoirs of the arches above, all of the capitals of the arcade shafts which retain sufficient detail for their form to be established, and sections of string courses and abaci. This treatment was also accorded to those blocks which preserve important detail, either well preserved examples of typical form or those with singular decoration; these have had latex and fibre glass moulds taken from them from which casts have been made to preserve a three dimensional record of their form. This has proved a successful way of recording complex detail and is now employed more frequently than on the upper levels where only a few specimen moulds were taken. It is hoped thereby to acquire a collection of casts representing the ornamental repertoire of the tower.

The drawn record is complemented by photographic coverage in black and white and colour transparency. The whole will eventually form a complement to the practical records of the stonemasons which are made for the purpose of cutting new stone. These comprise 1:1 outline drawings of arches etc, dimensions of each block recorded on a record card, with reference to the relevant section and face-mould cut from a metal sheet.

A few blocks that have been removed bear detail which warrants their preservation, but normally the stone which is removed has lost all trace of its cut surface. Where possible blocks that retain detail in areas which are replaced, if not left in situ, are moved to another position adjacent to areas which are to be preserved, thereby preserving the maximum amount of original work.

The core of the walls has been seen where blocks are removed for replacement: it is generally composed of mixed rubble, mainly volcanic trap but with small fragments of waste Salcombe stone occurring frequently, set

in a pinkish brown coarse mortar. Replacement of stone is normally block-by-block, but some opportunities have arisen to see a larger area of the core at one time and from these it has been seen that the walls were built up course by course with the core being levelled off with small stones and mortar at the top of each course of facework. The courses are generally of constant depth, although occasionally slates, oyster shell or even tile fragments are inserted in joints to level the courses. A finer mortar is generally used for pointing, white or buff in colour with smaller inclusions. The stone of the facework is almost exclusively from Salcombe, although repairs have employed a wide range of stone types including Beer, Portland, Bath, Doultling (Somerset), and Ketton and Weldon (Northamptonshire). The present repairs are in Salcombe stone once again.

SB Cathedral: west front

A short season of work funded by Exeter City Council, Devon County Council and the Society of Antiquaries of London was conducted on the west front of the Cathedral in August 1986, when six bays of the front around the south porch (numbered 27-32 after the system of E.K. Prideaux) were drawn and recorded. This area had not been examined before since it was conserved in 1980-82 before the AFU had become involved in recording the front prior to its conservation, and the overall record of the west front remained incomplete through the omission of this area. Whilst some information was lost or obscured by the conservation (chiefly the loss of information on past repairs to the figure sculpture and details obscured by mortar repairs) every effort was made to achieve the same standard of recording for this area as was reached on the rest of the front.

Of the first phase of the front (built c. 1340) comprising the lower two tiers (A and B registers), the six bays around the south doorway contain some of the finest sculpture preserved on the screen. Particularly noteworthy are the seated kings of the B register; the figure between the doorway and the buttress (B27) wears an elaborately ornamented garment of embossed leather covered in roundels containing a wide variety of bird motifs. The one figure in armour (B31) also retains many fine details of clothing and fittings.

Of the angels beneath, one (A32) was inserted before the 1790s, since it appears on the drawings of that date by John Carter, another is the one carved by Verity and inserted in 1982.

A major discovery of this work was the identification of fragments of the original canopies above the seated kings encased within the present versions of c. 1905. These may be parts of a form of canopy employed in the 14th-century work and subsequently altered to support the figures of the C register above when they were added in c. 1460-80. These replacements, incidentally, were the subject of a controversy aired in the letters column of 'The Times' in 1906, ('The shock of this work is almost more disturbing than any example of "restoration" I have ever seen', 'the evil deed...').

The figures of the C register above are slightly smaller than their counterparts elsewhere, with simpler draperies to their garments, and an extravagant selection of headgear. As with those to the north of the northern buttress they hold scrolls, on which their names, or identifying inscriptions were once painted. One figure (C28) is much taller and noticeably different. In style he resembles the 14th-century figures of the B register, with tightly folded draperies and an S-shaped pose. The bare feet of this figure suggest an apostle, and his bald head might support a tentative identification as St. Peter, although this is beyond proof.

*cf. B.A.A. monograph.*



### 3. POST-EXCAVATION PROJECTS 1987-8.

The following projects have been submitted to English Heritage for grant-aid in the financial year 1987-8.

#### **Roman Finds 1971-86 publication project**

The 40 or so sites excavated in Exeter between 1971 and 1986 have produced large quantities of Roman artefacts. The pottery is of key importance to the creation of a chronology for local wares in the South-West, being by far the largest stratified assemblage from the region.

The finds from Cathedral Close (the legionary baths and basilica) are already published in EAR 1. Other small finds excavated to 1977 were drawn in a previous DOE-funded project, and the Roman pottery excavated 1971-80 was worked on by Paul Bidwell in a DOE/HBMC-funded project.

The present project is designed to prepare for publication all classes of Roman artefacts excavated in Exeter between 1971 and 1986 not already published. The main sites requiring pottery reports are Bartholomew Street 1980, Friernhay Street 1981 and Paul Street 1982-5.

The main elements of the current project for which funding has been requested are:

- a) Drawing of all finds not dealt with under previous projects.
- b) Quantification of pottery excavated 1981-6.
- c) Creation of a database containing information on all stratified Roman pottery from excavations 1971-86.
- d) Specialist report by Denise Allen on the glass and expenses for Paul Bidwell (co-author) and G.B. Dannell (samian).

Publication will be in Excavations on Roman sites in Exeter 1971-86: The Finds by P.T. Bidwell and N. Holbrook, a monograph to be published by Exeter City Council and The University of Exeter as EAR IV. It is hoped that the volume will be completed by December 1987 for publication late in 1988.

An outline of the contents of the volume is given below. The pottery will be presented as a type series. A fiche section will contain details of groups and stratified sequences; the occurrence of fabrics by context; concordances of contexts; cross references; and some specialist reports (summaries in text).

#### EXETER ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS VOL. IV

#### Excavations on Roman sites in Exeter, 1971-86: The Finds

Synopsis of contents:

Approximate Number  
of pages (printed)

Introduction

6

#### Section A: Pottery

I	Type-series of coarse wares (No. of illustrated pots <u>c.</u> 1200)	140
II	Samian: (i) Stamps by B.M. Dickinson (ii) Decorated Samian by G.B. Dannell	60
III	Mortaria by K. Hartley	15

IV	Amphorae by ? D.P.S. Peacock	8
V	Pre-Flavian Fine Wares by K.T. Greene	5
VI	Post-Flavian Fine Wares by V.G. Swan	20
VII	Terra Nigra by V. Rigby	5
VIII	Lamps by D.M. Bailey	2
IX	Petrological Analysis by D.F. Williams	5
X	Conclusions: The Supply of Pottery to Exeter	20
Section B: Coins by N. Shiel (500 coins)		20
Section C: Other finds		
I	Bronze Objects (Including Brooches by D. Mackreth) no. of illustrated objects <u>c.</u> 150	
II	Bone Objects no. of illustrated objects <u>c.</u> 25	
III	Shale Objects no. of illustrated objects <u>c.</u> 20	
IV	Iron Objects no. of illustrated objects <u>c.</u> 40	
V	Stone Objects no. of illustrated objects <u>c.</u> 10 Marble Head and Figurines by R. Ling and the late J. Toynbee	
VI	Glass by D. Allen (Including Intaglios by M. Henig)	
VII	Building Materials (Including Slates by R.G. Scrivener)	
VIII	Metal Working Products of <u>Fabrica</u> by H. Howard and J. Bayley	
Summary of stratified deposits		15
Index		5
Total number of pages (including pp of of line illustrations)		400
Fiches		4

Presentation of the coarse wares as a type-series

A large proportion of the stratified Roman pottery from Exeter has been recovered from a comparatively small number of deposits which depend for their dating evidence on Samian and coins rather than coarse wares. These deposits include:

- (i) fortress demolition deposits.



- (ii) the infilling of successive defensive ditches.
- (iii) miscellaneous pits and wells.

Only a small proportion of the pottery comes from sites with complex stratigraphy.

More than half of the coarse wares are black-burnished ware types. The remainder is represented by the products of a small number of centres, the fabrics of which are readily distinguishable; the general location of some of these minor production centres is already known.

Thus the coarse wares from Exeter are mostly derived from well-dated contexts and can be assigned to a small number of fabric types. Bearing in mind these two factors, the most economical way of publishing the pottery would seem to be a type-series.

The type-series will be sub-divided according to the fabric-types. It will include all the pottery from Exeter, and will be supplemented by material from other sites, where relevant.

The 'summary of stratified deposits' will serve as a link between the type-series and the excavation reports, both published and unpublished. It will consist of a list of deposits with a summary of the dating evidence and stratigraphical relationships.

This method of approach should lead to a substantial reduction in the amount of pottery which will require illustration in future reports on excavations in Exeter. It may also be of great benefit to those working on Roman pottery from other sites in East Devon, West Somerset and parts of Dorset where types of pottery similar to those from Exeter occur.

#### **Exeter defences publication project**

Excavations and watching briefs on development sites and fabric surveys in advance of consolidation and repair have been carried out at about 20 locations on the circuit of the City Walls since 1973. This work has produced a comprehensive range of structural evidence for the town's defences from the Roman period onwards concerning the wall itself, defensive towers, the rampart and pre-wall bank, intra-mural streets, and defensive ditches (Roman to Civil War).

It is proposed to complete archive reports and prepare summary reports for printed publication on excavations and surveys carried out in advance of development and consolidation works at Magdalen Street, Cricklepit Street, Beedles Terrace, Snayle Tower, Quay Lane, Paul Street and Bradninch Place.

Exeter has probably the best surviving documentary evidence for building and maintenance work on its medieval and early modern town walls of any town in Britain. Documentary research will be undertaken on the City records relating to the defences where this is relevant to the sites investigated.

It is proposed to complete this project by the end of 1987/8 and to publish the excavation reports and ancillary research on these sites in an EAR monograph devoted to this topic to go to press in 1988.

#### **High Street area sites publication project**

The sites in the High Street area embraced by this project lie within the legionary fortress and the upper part of the walled town between the Guildhall sites and the Cathedral Close sites, which have already been published or are nearing publication. The aim of the project is to provide for the preparation of archive reports and summary reports for printed publication on four sites and six important watching briefs on which little or no post-excavation work has previously been undertaken. This will bring

to completion report preparation on all sites in the upper part of the walled town.

The main sites to be dealt with in the project are Queen Street/High Street 1978-9 (many phases of Roman buildings including legionary barracks; medieval and post-medieval levels); 41-2 High Street 1980 (legionary portico, via decumana, aqueduct, tabernae; later Roman building; medieval lime kiln; Tudor building); 196-8 High Street 1975-6 (legionary granaries and aqueduct, Tudor building); Nat-West bank 1977 (post-Roman levels). In addition there are six watching briefs on trenches in the High Street which have provided sections through road levels and buildings of all periods of great importance in reconstructing the street system in the upper town.

The programme provides for the completion of archive reports and summary reports for printed publication within the financial year 1987-8. A limited amount of documentary research will also be undertaken. The sites will be published in the EAR monograph series.

#### **Exeter Bellfoundries publication project**

The bellfoundry sites excavated at Mermaid Yard, Albany Rd (St. Thomas) and Paul Street in Exeter were the principal bronze foundry businesses operating in the South-West between c. 1400 and 1720, serving a large market in the region. This sequence of sites is without parallel in Britain and provides an exceptional opportunity to advance our knowledge of founding techniques and furnace development through a period of 300 years.

The stratigraphic archive reports for these sites are almost complete, although some work on these remains to be done under this project.

The mould material from the foundry sites has not been drawn or analysed yet; this task is an important primary element of the project. The material will be studied by Stuart Blaylock with a view to reconstructing vessel types and technological techniques employed at different periods. John Evans of North London Polytechnic will undertake the analysis of organic residues; Hilary Howard will study the composition and thermal history of the clay moulds, and Vanessa Straker of Bristol University/HBMC will examine botanical remains in the mould fabric. Alloy analysis will be carried out by Roger Brownsword of Coventry Polytechnic.

Historical research will be undertaken to place the founders in their social and economic context and to augment the documentary evidence available at present on the tenements occupied by the founders. In addition, evidence obtained for furnace construction and operation elsewhere (eg. Keynsham and Bodmin) will be reviewed and an attempt will be made to compare the range of British evidence for furnace technology with the early Continental written sources (eg. Biringuccio).

It is hoped to complete reports on the foundries by December 1987 for submission to Post-medieval Archaeology (who have asked to publish a paper on the Exeter foundries).

#### **4. OTHER POST-EXCAVATION AND PUBLICATION PROJECTS**

##### **Exe Street post-excavation project**

The archive report on the 1985-6 excavations at Exe Street outside the North Gate, funded by Exeter City Council and MSC, is now well advanced, and it is hoped to have the publication report completed by April 1987. Publication will probably be in the EAR monograph series.



### **Pamphlet series**

The first in a series of folded A3 pamphlets on aspects of Exeter's archaeology is with the printers. This deals with the legionary bath-house in the Cathedral Close. Others are planned over the next year for the Quay, the City Walls and possibly the bellfoundries. The pamphlet is an attractive, good quality production printed in three colours. It is hoped to cover a range of topics in future years so that the general public, teachers and popular writers on Exeter's past will have available brief, cheap, authoritative statements on the present state of archaeological knowledge.

### **Booklets**

Funding has been made available for a series of popular booklets. It is hoped to produce over the next nine months booklets on the Quay and Saxon and Roman Exeter. The first of these should be ready early next year.

### **Exeter Archaeology 1985/6**

This report on the results of projects undertaken by the AFU in the year ended August 1986 is in preparation and should be available in early November. Members will be sent a copy when it appears.

C.G. Henderson  
Director, Archaeological Field Unit

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Quinnell

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