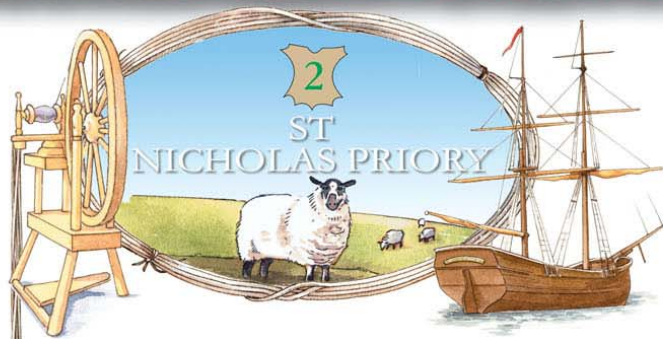


# Exeter Woollen Trail



Exeter City Council



## From Monks...

St Nicholas Priory is one of the earliest surviving buildings in Devon. Founded in 1087 as a Benedictine monastery, the Priory housed monks for nearly 500 years. When the Priory was dissolved in 1536 by Henry VIII, the religious buildings – the church and the chapter or meeting house - were knocked down. The remaining West Range and Refectory were converted into a fine house where two of Exeter's most prominent figures in the cloth trade later lived.

## ...to Merchants

One, William Hurst, lived here during the second half of the 16th century. He built a fulling mill near the quay and employed many local people. In the mid 18th century Nathaniel Cosserat also made the Priory his home. He was a skilled craftsman who leased the fulling mill and dry house at Cricklepit, which is also on this trail. He was

a Huguenot refugee from France who sought asylum in England to escape persecution for his Protestant beliefs.

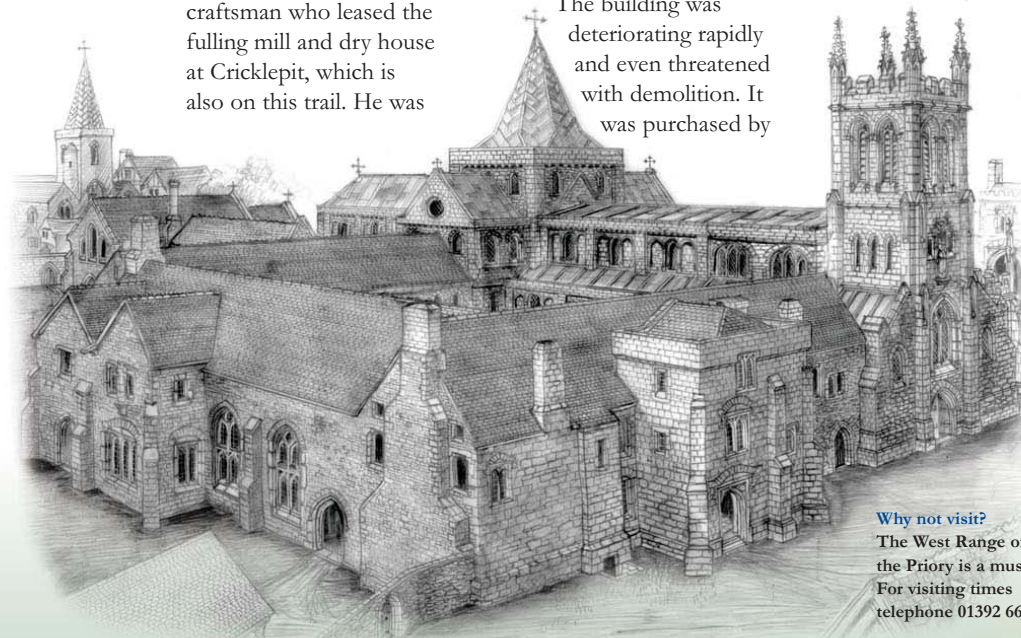
The Priory's fortunes changed and by Victorian times it had been split up and was described as 'a rookery of tenements'.

The building was deteriorating rapidly and even threatened with demolition. It was purchased by

Exeter City Council in 1913 and extensively restored, before opening as a museum. The building to which this board is fixed is the West Range, with a cellar on the ground floor and a fine hall for guests above. On the opposite side of Mint Lane, is the old Refectory, which has been recently conserved.



The Priory Guest Hall (Exeter City Museums)



Re-construction drawing of the Priory around 1500 (R.W. Parker/Exeter Archaeology) The West Range is the building in the right foreground



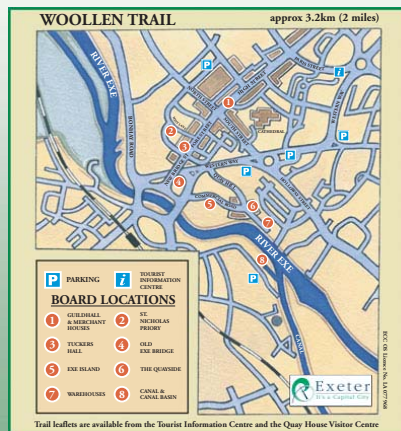
A silver crown struck at Exeter Mint (Exeter City Museums).

This coin is on display in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum.

Mint Lane where you are now standing acquired its name during the English Civil War as Charles I set up a mint nearby to pay his West Country troops.

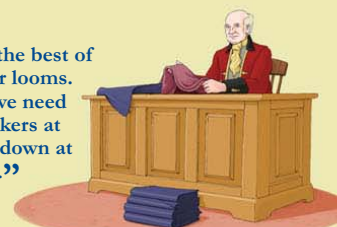
### Why not visit?

The West Range of the Priory is a museum. For visiting times telephone 01392 665858.



“Looks like this year's going to be a good one for the woollen cloth trade. The fine weather means the wool's coming off clean which makes the spinning easier, and the weavers are in good

spirits making the best of the light at their looms. Just as well as we need to keep the workers at the fulling mill down at Cricklepit busy.”



Back and forth the shuttle goes. Making cloth for brand new clothes.

