

# Telling Our Stories, Finding Our Roots: Exeter's Multi-Coloured History

## **Multi-Cultural Exeter 1500-1800**

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(The River Exe- Harbour)

### The Exe

#### **'Devon Harbours', Boyle, Vernon C. and Payne, Donald, London: 1952**

Exeter in the 17<sup>th</sup> century: 'her wool trade was at its zenith and her harbour full of schooners loading serge for Amsterdam or bringing back wines from Oporto and Bordeaux'

1700 – 4/5 people were employed in the wool trade, the 2<sup>nd</sup> greatest wool market in the country. £262,000 of serge exported to Holland. In Exeter 123 ships were devoted to the wool trade.

Returning vessels brought linen from Antwerp, wines from France, Portugal and Spain, tobacco from the West Indies, and dried cod from Newfoundland. A number of houses in Exeter and Topsham were built from Dutch brick. By 1700 Exeter was the third largest city by population.

1750: prosperity began to decline (competition from the North-East, the Topsham-Exeter canal was in poor repair and not deep enough).

Topsham gradually overtook Exeter as a port. A selection of ships from one month in 1862:

Type of Ship	Tonnage	Route	Cargo
Swedish Barque	271	New York to Exeter	Wheat
Norwegian Brig	249	Kronstadt to Exmouth	Timber
Dartmouth Schooner	156	Greece to Exmouth	Currants
American Schooner	54	London to Topsham	Manure
British Barque	306	Sweden to Exmouth	Rye
British Brig	236	Galatz (Romania) to Exmouth	Maize
British Schooner	149	River Plate (Argentina) to Exmouth	Hides

'Crews from foreign parts used to gather together at the riverside inns bringing with them news, often dubious in quality, but surely adding much to the richness of life along the banks of the Exe. Much of the colour and variety of this foreign trade has now faded away...'



Barque



Schooner



Brig