

2015 Heritage Lottery Grant funding enabled the rebuilding of the roof, review of governance and staffing, widening participation and renewed partnership with the University of Exeter.

In **2016** a survey of books was conducted by the National Preservation Office of the British Library.

2020 In March, we secured a grant from the National Heritage Lottery Fund for "The Next Chapter". This 3-year project will see us make our building more accessible; carry out essential conservation work and a collection review; and increase our educational and events programmes. We are very proud that the Institution is embarking on yet another chapter in its long and vibrant history.



The Institution is cherished by members for its calm and peaceful atmosphere in the heart of the city, and its ability to bring a wide range of people together.

Today our two galleried libraries hold a unique historical book collection, virtually unchanged since 1813, and collections of maps, prints, drawings, fine and decorative art. The Library and collections lie at the heart of the Institution and provide inspiration and a place for research and reading, educational activities, cultural events and lectures. Our beautiful libraries are available to hire for cultural activities, and we offer meeting rooms for business hire. We open for public tours every Wednesday afternoon from 1pm – 4pm.

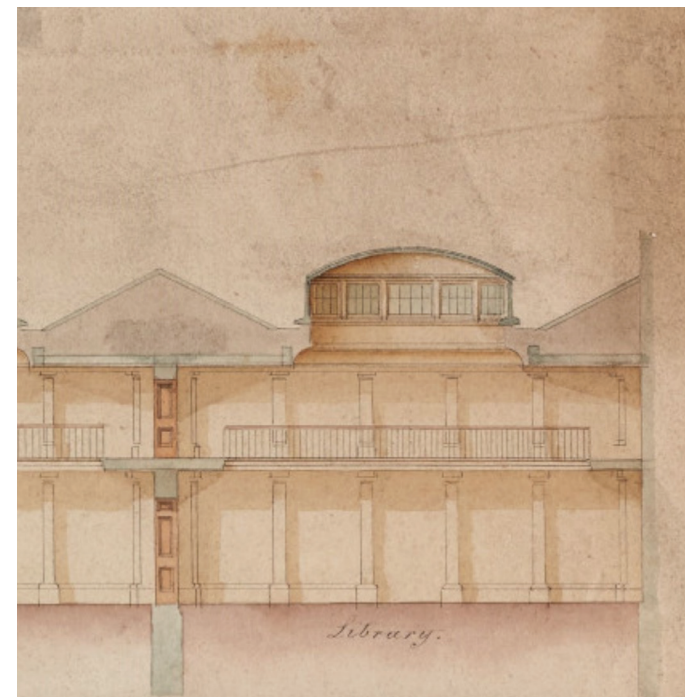


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The Devon and Exeter Institution is a thriving independent library and educational charity in the heart of the city. We welcome new members and visitors of all ages. Our founders established the Institution in 1813 to promote *'the general diffusion of Science, Literature and the Arts, and for illustrating the Natural and Civil History of the county of Devon and the History of the City of Exeter'*. This resolution remains at the centre of our strategy today.

About us

The Institution occupies a Medieval building, originally owned by the Cathedral. In **1662**, it was leased to the Courtenay family, and used as their town house for over 150 years. In **1814**, '200 Gentlemen of the City' took ownership of 7 Cathedral Close. The double-courtyard layout was adapted, and two elegant Georgian rooms functioned as a library and museum. (The museum objects were later donated to form part of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum's founding collection in **1868**).

Timeline

1813 Negotiations took place for the lease of Courtenay House. In **1814**, the lease was successfully purchased by the Institution, and contracts signed by Trustees for building works. A meteorological register was kept, and readings published in the local press.

1816 The Outer Library was completed and museum specimens kept in the gallery.

By **1819** the Lecture Room (Inner Library) was complete and the ground floor and both galleries held museum specimens, including an Egyptian mummy.

1820 Mr Squance was the first live-in Librarian. His nephew delivered books to members in their homes. By **1831**, 222 members (Proprietors), paid £40 each with an annual membership fee of £2.

1833 Dean and Chapter rejected a plan to build a lecture theatre. A meeting was held in the committee room for the Cholera Subscription Fund.

1842 A model of Exeter was donated by Caleb Hedgeland. In **1847** a Ballot Box and other items were given to the Institution by the Exeter Literary and Philosophical Society

1846 The side walls and roof of the Reading Room were raised.

1849 The Librarian's assistant, John Cross, was found guilty of removing pages from books (which he sold as paper to local shopkeepers.) He received a custodial sentence.

1849 John Squance died and his daughter, Eliza Squance, was appointed Librarian. There was criticism in the press of the decision to appoint a female librarian.

1863 Reports appeared that Sir John Bowring was trying to popularise the Institution and make its museum open to all.

1867 During the 1860s the Cathedral's estates passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. They refused an extension to the lease.

1868 Many rare items from the museum collections were donated to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, including a Tahitian mourners dress. (Fossils and minerals in the collection were later disposed of in 1887).

1881 The spiral staircase was ordered from Glasgow for £12.10

1890 A special committee discussed how to improve finances and membership numbers. Novels were purchased at this time and women were allowed to join four years later. (Ladies Cloakroom in 1908)

1898 The Reading Room was divided to create a Smoking Room.

1899 The Institution connected to the telephone exchange with an instrument to be placed in the lavatory.

1907 The Institution purchased Freehold of the building from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for £2000

1917 A map of the area affected by war was displayed in the smoking room. In **1939** the windows were painted over for blackout.

1931 Daphne Drake was appointed as Librarian, encouraging women to join.

1942 Bombing saw the area to the rear of the DEI destroyed. The Institution received £12.13s from the War Damages Commission. In the **1950s**, some Institution land was compulsorily purchased for the rebuilding of a shopping precinct on the bomb-damaged area (Princesshay).

1953 A well was 'discovered' in the Outer Library and the purchase of new ashtrays with coronation pattern approved.

1967 Books sold at Sotheby's and coin collection sold to raise funds.

1989 The DEI became an Educational Charity.

2010/13 Heavy snow fall caused damage to the roof and it was in severe danger of collapse. The building was put on the 'At Risk' register.