



# Heritage Haiku The Exeter Renga



*Starting in grey rain  
A walk through whisper of stone  
Brings me to wonder...*

## **St. Nicholas Priory**

Cellar chants and chimes  
Benedictine to Tudor  
Stone, timber, combined

A dormant building  
History in walls – people  
Waken its senses

Candlelight flickers  
Shadows cast on oak timbers  
Time melts like warm wax

Thoughts and silent prayers  
Are stored inside this building  
Sit and play them back

Hands feel cool stone walls  
Leaving dust on fingertips  
Fragments of old times

Look down at oak floors  
Gaze up at timber beams  
Exist in between

## **The Parish Of Central Exeter**

St. Pancras Church  
Church shadowed by shops  
Commerce and faith sharing space  
Both pilgrim places

St. Olave's Church  
A man of few words  
Olaf asks about your faith  
His axe speaks for him

St. Petrock's Church  
A church split in two  
Homeless and housed side by side  
Both need your support

St. Martin's Church  
Church preserved in time  
Tablets and pulpit preaching  
To hard wooden pews

St. Stephen's Church  
Outside it's noisy  
Inside it's quiet, peaceful  
Both places for God

**St. Michael & All Angels**  
Beautiful beacon  
St Michael's Mount Dinham is  
Built to God's Glory

Acoustic of light  
Voices rise and sculpt the air  
Mystery of music

Peregrine falcons  
Nest in the spire with their young  
Screeching like old steel

## **Exeter's Underground Passages**

Hard-hat manoeuvre  
Listen to Health and Safety  
Prepare to descend

Life's necessity  
Pumped through Exeter's old veins  
Deep down underground

Darkness, dampness, dust  
Imagine working down here  
One person wide, cramped

I can taste the smell  
Of hard work and acrid tears  
The city sleeps on

These stones have seen war  
Bore witness to diseases  
Yet remain steadfast

## **RAMM**

**(Royal Albert Memorial Museum)**  
Sense of abundance  
Rousing curiosity  
A miscellany

Teapots, urns, jugs, spoons  
The beautiful silverware  
Exquisitely carved

Roman mosaics  
With terracotta highlights  
Craft of symmetry

The fossils and rocks  
Coral shaped like a sandal  
Where do they come from?

Victorian clothes  
Outstanding fancy details  
Chic for him and her

The birds are so cool  
I love coming to the RAMM  
Every time is fun

## **St. Clement's Church, Powderham**

Bells ring, voices sing  
Resound in stone and oak  
Stained glass windows glow

This ancient building  
Centuries of faith and hope  
Some found, some lost here

Civil War battle  
Lone brother against brother  
Oak door shows the scars

## **Veitch Floral Art Lamp Collection**

Exotic travel  
Collections Exeter-bound  
Sun, food, water, life

On rusty lampposts  
Visions from across the world  
Light shines on them all

## **The Devon And Exeter Institution**

Walk through heavy doors  
Breath-taking Georgian splendour  
The smell of old books

Books give us learning  
This heritage library  
How special to browse

Some two hundred years  
So many silent books talk  
Yet they speak volumes

Stepping back in time  
Books evoke a certain peace  
Feelings of the past

An historic gem  
What an oasis of calm  
In the city's heart

## **The Bill Douglas Cinema Museum**

Magic Lanterns, films  
Optical entertainment  
Cinematic thrills

All hooves in the air  
All hooves in the air again  
Seasons never change

Moving images  
Illusions before your eyes  
Curiosity

## **Exeter Cathedral**

Stones of history  
Telling their many stories  
To those who listen

Wood, stone, ancient bone  
Relics from the past entombed  
Standing, watching time

The Exeter Book  
Will pose riddles long after  
My short life is solved

The beauty of art  
Encased in this history  
Is unparalleled

## **Exeter Northcott**

Anticipation  
A silent wave sweeps the crowd  
The curtain rises

Unopened programmes  
Rustling worlds of colour and  
Promise of ice cream

An open folder  
Curtain drawn, researchers glimpse  
A play lost to time

Soliloquising  
A leading lady plays on  
Heedless of decades

## **Exeter Custom House**

Dogs barking, sun's out  
Reflections on the water  
Down on the Quayside

Climb on the cannons  
Pictures taken to recall  
Happy childhood joy

Swans silently glide  
The Quay no longer bustling  
Past ghosts still watch us

Lofty sail schooner  
Offloading wine, olive oil  
Fat bank balances

Tenter frames and hooks  
Surveyor balances books  
Import, export, took

Conduit for trade  
Government tax on hard work  
History preserved

## **Exeter Guildhall**

Dark brown chiselled wood  
Absorbs many a sad tale  
Retained forever

Life on tenterhooks  
Weavers, tuckers and shearmen  
Words from the wool trade

Fancy hat, golden  
Intriguing swords, beautiful  
Dormant weapons lie

Assizes sat here  
Jeffreys tries them to dangle  
Gallows, drop and snap

Surveying the scene  
Victoria, not amused  
Local politics

Semper Fidelis  
Central civic government  
Forever Faithful

*Be still and listen  
Exeter walls speak stories  
Breathe them in, live them*

*Written by members of the public with  
Sara-Jane Arbury  
September 2019*

*Sara-Jane Arbury is a writer, performer and practitioner.  
She was born in Exeter and now lives in Ledbury, Herefordshire.*

*A partnership between Exeter City Council, Heritage Open Days,  
the University of Exeter and their Places Of Poetry initiative*  
[www.placesofpoetry.org.uk](http://www.placesofpoetry.org.uk)

EXETER  
LIVE BETTER

