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### The 'Marlands' Madonna discovered in the garden of a former FCJ Convent



In the late nineteenth century, a statue of Madonna and Child was discovered in the garden of the former FCJ Convent in Exeter, Devon. Since the initial supposition was that it had belonged to the Sisters who left 'The Marlands' in 1893, it was placed on a rockery by Mr Frederick Wheaton who at that time owned the property.

Expert research, however, discovered that the statue was much older than the Society! The depth of the base led the experts to say that the statute which is itself approximately three feet high, had at one time stood some forty feet above ground level. It would seem to have belonged to Exeter Cathedral and been buried for safety at the time of the Reformation.

The statue is made of English Alabaster, mined from the Fauld Hills near Tutbury, in Staffordshire and is believed to have been carved in Nottingham in the early sixteenth century.

There are still traces of colour on the robes. Parts of the original were missing – for example part of Our Lady's right hand and the top of her sceptre as well as part of the Child's right hand. These were made good by delicate restoration work .



In 1931 the statue was given to Fr. Clement Russell, Rector of [St George's Roman Catholic Church in Sudbury](#). Since the church is built in pre-reformation style, the statue known variously as *The Exeter Madonna*, *The Marlands Madonna* and *Our Lady of Sudbury* fits in wonderfully well.

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***Our little Society has for its end  
to glorify the heart of Jesus  
by every means in its power ... (Marie Madeleine)***

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