

Carlisle Cathedral: Building timeline and significant historic events

Pre Conquest

- AD78 A wooden fortress called Luguwallium was built as a garrison to support and defend Hadrian's Wall. A settlement arose around the garrison and the fortress was rebuilt in stone and town walls were built. The Roman occupation finished in 399 and the settlement declined.
- 685 Cuthbert Prior of Lindisfarne exercised Episcopal functions in Carlisle and founded a monastery. Cuthbert was briefly Bishop of Hexham but returned to his Farne Island retreat where he died in 687.
- 876 Viking raids result in the sacking of Carlisle and the monks are driven out of the monastery

Post Conquest

- 1069 William the Conqueror consolidates his conquest of England in the Harrying of the North and crushes resistance from Edgar the Atheling and King Malcolm of Scotland.
- 1092 King William Rufus conquers Cumberland and Westmorland, ending Scottish occupation and strengthens the surviving Roman defences of Carlisle erecting a wooden fortress.
- 1102 King Henry 1st succeeds William Rufus and builds the Norman Keep and strengthens the defensive walls to castle and town.
- 1122 Henry 1st and Archbishop Thurstan of York found an Abbey of Austin Canons at Carlisle which is deemed to be within the Archdiocese of York. The abbey is close to the castle, and has nave, transepts, a short choir and modest claustral buildings, all in a Romanesque style.
- 1133 Henry has the Abbey refounded as a Cathedral Priory under Bishop Athelwold, with a prior and Community of Augustinian monks. The nave serves as the parish church. The Bishop of Glasgow writes to the Pope complaining that his Diocese of Strathclyde has had two counties removed by the Norman King in breach of church law.
- 1135 King David of Scotland invades and retakes the two counties and Carlisle Castle after the death of King Henry. The papal legate Alberic comes to Carlisle in 1138 and reinstates Athelwold as Bishop and his right to the new Diocese of Carlisle which he holds until 1155.
- 1135 King Stephen is made King though the succession is disputed by Matilda, daughter of Henry 1st. Nineteen years of famine and strife follow during an anarchic reign, which ends with the death of Stephen and the succession of King Henry 2nd in 1154. Henry retakes territory lost in 1135.
- 1220 Bishop Hugh extends the choir eastwards, (completed in 1290) in an 'Early English' lancet style. The new choir was made 12 feet wider than the nave, and longer than the nave.
- 1290 The Cathedral roof was destroyed in a fire, causing damage to the masonry at clerestory level. The clerestory was rebuilt in the 'curvilinear' style and the new roof was put in place with its magnificent barrel vault in 1315.
- 1340 The new East Window was completed in 'curvilinear' style and is considered one of the finest in England alongside York Minster and Selby Abbey. The glazing was completed 1350, much of which has survived.
- 1380 The Norman tower and spire collapsed destroying the north transept. Bishop Strickland rebuilt the transept and tower (not the spire) by 1419, reusing the Norman columns, but adding
- 1410 The excellent oak choir stalls with 46 misericords were completed.
- 1460 The pulpitum is erected 2 bays west of the crossing, enlarging the choir/ monastic area, taking space from the parish church.
- 1465 Prior Gondiborn upgrades the claustral buildings during his 35 year tenure. The Tithe Barn (1470)

the Priors Tower and lodging (c1495}, the Refectory (c1490) were rebuilt. In 1528 Prior Slee rebuilt the precinct Gatehouse.

Post Reformation

- 1540 The Priory was dissolved by Henry 8th. The Prior, 23 monks and 3 chantry priests were replaced by a Dean and Chapter of 4 prebendaries in 1541.
- 1567 Mary Queen of Scots held as a prisoner in Carlisle Castle
- 1603 After the union with Scotland under King James 1st of England, Carlisle loses its garrison status and the Town declines.
- 1650 The siege of Carlisle by the Scottish Presbyterian Army. English soldiers defending the town demolish 4 bays of the nave to provide building stone to strengthen the Castle. Some of the former claustral buildings are demolished for the same reason.
- 1666 The Cathedral west front is reconstructed on the truncated 2 bay nave, completed 1669.