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| | WELLS CATHEDRAL Timeline |
| c100 AD | There have been natural springs from the Mendips which have been exploited by settlements since Roman times |
| 710 AD | It is supposed that a Church or Minster was established by King Ina of the West Saxons at this time 'for the better service of God in the Church of St Andrew'. This is recorded in a Glastonbury Charter of 725 granted by King Ina to record a new Diocese of Somerset. Archaeological evidence on the site confirms the existence of a Chapel and burial ground from the 8 th century close to the 'Great Spring' (Holy Well of St Andrew) |
| 909 AD-1088 | Bishop Athelm, previously a Glastonbury monk, began building a new Saxon Cathedral positioned obliquely across the present cloister on the axis of a line from St Andrew's Well to the market place. Athelm was transferred to Canterbury in 923 as Archbishop. 11 Bishops follow on from Athelm, bringing us to Bishop Giso, a native of Lorraine who served the diocese for 28 years and retained his post for 22 years after the conquest. Very few of the Saxon Cathedrals survived at the end of this period which was to become the Norman settlement of infinitely superior new major churches attached to a Castle and defensive town walls. However, the Saxon font of c 1000 did survive and serves its purpose in the south transept of the present Cathedral. |
| 1088-1174 | John de Villula (of Tours) was the new Bishop and was given the Diocese of Wells. Two years later he was made Bishop of Bath where he purchased land from King William to build a new Cathedral Priory, a Castle and fortified walls for the Precinct and Town of Bath in 1090. Meanwhile Wells Cathedral was left to deteriorate for 100 years whilst the 4 Bishops that succeeded Bishop John, vacillated over the opportunities available to them. The new Bath Cathedral building programme was very slow taking 47 years to complete the east end in 1137. This was followed by a serious fire but it was all finally completed in 1155 under Bishop Robert of Lewes. Towards the end of his tenure there were moves to restore Wells Cathedral to its former glory, and return the Bishopric to Wells. Work began on the east end of the chancel, followed by the transepts and crossing tower complete c1200. However these changes were slow to take effect and Bishop Savaric fitz Geldwin opted to move the Cathedra to Glastonbury Abbey (a very wealthy Abbey) until significant progress had been made rebuilding Wells. |
| 1192-1206 | Bishop Savaric now called himself Bishop of Bath and Glastonbury, but was not liked by the incumbent Abbot and his Benedictine community. Savaric had to move back to Bath awaiting completion of rebuilt Wells. He died in 1206 . |

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| 1206-44 | <p>Bishop Jocelyn was the new Bishop of Bath and he oversaw the development of the radical early English (SW style) in the emerging Nave and West Front of Wells Cathedral. Tall lancet windows proliferate, Purbeck marble is attached matrix like to frame niches which later will contain 293 images depicting Bishops, Kings, Saints and Martyrs. The MM for this exceptional work was Adam Lock and followed by Thomas Norreys. Bishop Jocelyn also funded the south and west cloister walks in this period. The West End Towers were completed much later (1380-1430).</p> <p>The Bishop's 'Cathedra' was returned to Wells in 1244 and since then has remained the seat of the Bishop of Bath and Wells.</p> |
| 1260-1300 | <p>The Chapter House at Wells is very similar to the one completed 1250 at Westminster Abbey. At Wells work began c1260 with the undercroft (at floor level) the stone stairs leading to the Chapter House followed, then the Chapter House itself all in 'geometric' decorated style with central pillar and tierceron vaulting, finally completed c1310. It is a work which has to be seen to be believed.</p> |
| 1310-50 | <p>The Crossing Tower was raised in height and given a tall lead clad spire c1315, which burnt down 115 years later and was not replaced. The magnificent Lady Chapel at the east end was built, all windows have the same 'reticulated' tracery, and the stellar lierne vaulting is quite special, all completed 1326. The radical addition of scissor bracing to the piers below the central tower was done 1339-49 by MM William Joy to prevent collapse (remember Selby). The building of the Vicars Hall north of the Chapter House with 42 houses, for the Vicars Choral, was completed in 1348, the year of the 'black death'.</p> |
| 1380-1480 | <p>A generation after the plague, the man power and finance for rebuilding was assembled to continue the work on the West Front with the building of the SW Tower in 1380, with the NW Tower in 1430, both in the (now) retro 'decorated' style with a hint of 'perp' panelling. The overall effect is a unique blending of 'Early English' with 'Dec and Perp' features, more horizontal than vertical. Pevsner did not approve! It was designed by MM Wm. Wynford 1365-91 (also worked at Winchester at this time rebuilding the nave)</p> <p>The Chain Bridge gatehouse was built in 1459 to connect the Vicars Hall north of the N. Transept to the Vicars Choral houses.</p> |
| | <p>Bishop Nicholas Bubwith funded the NW Tower rebuild in 1430 but he also funded the building of the eastern cloister, the Library over it and a group of almshouses, all completed by 1436. The rebuild of the western cloister walk was funded by Bishop</p> |

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| | Beckynton (d.1465) and completed c1480 to exactly match Bubwith's eastern cloister. |
| 1540 | At the Reformation Wells Cathedral escaped the difficulties suffered by Bath Abbey and nearby Glastonbury Abbey both of which were dissolved, being Monasteries. Bath Abbey became a parish church and Glastonbury Abbey was mostly demolished for the disobedience of the last Abbot concerning his refusal to accept the King's authority as head of the Church of England, for which he was burnt at the stake. The Cathedral had to remove mural paintings or whitewash them over, they also had to close the chantry chapels, but not destroy them. |
| 1645 | The West front lost several of its ground level statues at this time, and more at the end of the Civil War. Most of these have been restored in successive campaigns of conservation, restoration and cleaning in both the 19 th century and 20 th century |