

## Durham Cathedral: Building time line with significant historic events

### Pre Conquest

- 634 Oswald reclaimed the Kingdom of Northumbria from Penda of Mercia, reigning for 9 years as a Christian King. He brought Aidan from Iona and installed him as first Bishop of Lindisfarne. 641 Oswiu, brother of Oswald was made King of Northumbria after Penda defeated and killed Oswald. Oswiu ruled for 28 years.
- 687 Death of Cuthbert, the ascetic Prior and later Bishop of Lindisfarne (born 625). After his death the monks at Lindisfarne elevated him to sainthood in 698. The Lindisfarne Gospels are completed around this time.
- 793 Following the Viking attack on Holy Island and the sacking of the monastery there, the monks moved to the old Roman town of Chester le Street in 795, carrying Cuthbert's coffin to the new priory site.
- 865-8 First Viking invasion by Danes, using the Humber, Trent and Ouse, they penetrated both Northumbria and Mercia appropriating territory for settlement. The Anglo Saxons called them the 'heathen army'.
- 954 King Eadred conquers the Scandinavian Kingdom of York, Yorkshire and Lancashire are carved out of Northumbria, and Northumbria's southern boundary moves from the Humber to the Tees.
- 995 Cuthbert's community of monks see the defensive potential of the rocky site at Durham situated on a loop of the River Wear and decide to move their church there and establish an Episcopal See under Bishop Aldhun. The first church constructed is of wood, but it is rebuilt in 998 in stone. 1020 The church is again rebuilt as a much larger stone Cathedral, completed in 1042 in the Saxon style, known as the 'White Church'.
- 1043 Edward the Confessor is made King following the death of King Canute.
- 1066 William the Conqueror defeated King Harold's English armies at Hastings but struggles to assert his control in the north of England, where resistance is building under Edgar the Atheling and Malcolm of Scotland.

### Post Conquest

- 1068 Robert, Earl of Northumbria appointed by William, is killed with 900 of his men by Northumbrian forces in Durham.
- 1069 Durham is sacked in the 'Harrying of the North' by William's forces, a castle is constructed on the peninsula close to the Cathedral to house a garrison to subdue the resistance. The rebel leaders retreat to Scotland.
- 1075 Norman Bishop Walcher appointed 1071, made Earl of Northumbria 1075, killed in 1080 at Gateshead by Northumbrian forces.
- 1080 Odo of Bayeux, brother of King William harries Northumbria and defeats Northumbrian forces. Bishop St William de St Calaise made Prince Bishop and given Palatinate powers over Northumbria, including his own parliament, mint, militia, and royal support. Bishop William brings 23 Benedictine monks from Jarrow Priory to replace the (unreformed) monks originally brought from Chester le Street. The See of

Durham becomes a Cathedral Priory with Prior and monks, all under the direction of the Bishop in 1083.

- 1085-7 Bishop William is Domesday Commissioner in SW England, and a senior advisor to King William. For much of his office he is absent from Durham at Court and relies on Prior Turgot to manage the development of both Priory and Cathedral.
- 1093 The Bishop has raised sufficient funds to commence the rebuilding of the Cathedral and demolition of the White Church, it begins 12 August. Choir and Transept are completed within 10 years. The name of the Master Mason is unknown but is thought to be an English mason who has mastered his trade on the new Castle and have worked on other northern Priories, Abbeys, or Minsters. The new Cathedral is designed to impress and is of similar size to St Peters in Rome (4<sup>th</sup> century). The Shrine to St Cuthbert is built at the east end of the Cathedral in 1104.
- 1099 Ranulf Flambard becomes Prince Bishop of Durham having purchased the post from King William for £1000 A controversial figure, he spends 5 years in exile in France to avoid suspicion of embezzlement but is restored to Durham by Henry 2nd and raises finance for the continuation of the Nave and the twin Towers at the west end. The work is completed in 1133, 3 years after Flambard's death. Flambard also finances the development of the Keep, the west range of the Castle and extension of defensive walls to secure the precinct. No other Norman or gothic cathedral was built from scratch in such a short period of time.
- 1174 Prince Bishop Hugh le Puiset constructed the Galilee Chapel at the base of the West Front, to serve as a Chapel to the Virgin, and a setting for the Shrine to St Bede, like St Cuthbert a local Saint of great following. The chapel was erected on the site of the Bishops house. It was completed in 1189. Bishop le Puiset was also responsible for the raising of the west towers in Early English style to their present height in 1190. From the fourteenth century until 1650 these towers had lead clad tall spires.
- 1242 Prince Bishop Richard le Poore commenced demolition of the unstable apsidal east end and replaced it with the eastern transept known as the Chapel of the 9 Altars (an idea borrowed from nearby Fountains Abbey). The work was completed in 1280 and the master masons name was Richard of Farnham. At the same time the round arched choir vault (1115) is removed and replaced by pointed arch rib vaults to match the nave vaults (c1130).
- 1333 Prince Bishop Thomas Hatfield constructed a gigantic Bishop's Throne in the choir which is still the tallest in Christendom. His chantry chapel is at the base of it.
- 1465 Prince Bishop Laurence Booth rebuilt the central Tower following lightning strikes in 1429 and 1457 in the perpendicular style from roof level upwards, completed 1487, by Master Mason Thomas Barton.
- 1539 In December Prior Hugh Whitehead handed over the ownership of the Priory Cathedral and all of its estate And possessions to the Crown as required by the Dissolution. Bishop Tunstall retained Prince Bishop status, the former Prior became Dean, 12 of his senior former monks became Prebendaries and members of Chapter, and a further 12 lesser monks became minor Canons of the refounded Cathedral Church.
- 1547 At the death of Henry 8<sup>th</sup>, his 6 year old son became King Edward 6<sup>th</sup>, guided by a Protectorate, Bishop Tunstall was initially appointed as a 'Protector' but later was put

under house arrest in London and held in the Tower in 1552 on the charge of Perjury 'minor treason' against the King. The Palatinate powers were taken from the Bishop and transferred to the King.

1553 Queen Mary becomes Queen on the death of Edward and reintroduces Roman Catholicism and during her short reign settles scores against many protestant senior clerics, but reinstates Bishop Tunstall at Durham as Prince Bishop with his full Palatinate powers.

1558 Elizabeth becomes Queen following Mary's death and becomes Head of the Church of England. There are No modifications made to the governance of the Durham Diocese, but a reforming Bishop Pilkington succeeds Tunstall at his death in 1560.