

## Ely Cathedral: Building timeline and significant historic events

### Pre Conquest

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| 673  | St Etheldreda (daughter of Anna, King of the Angles) restored an existing church creating a double monastery (monks and nuns) dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. |
| 870  | Etheldreda's monastery destroyed by raiding Danes.  |
| 970  | Ethelwold Bishop of Winchester, having already purchased the isle of Ely, refounded the monastery as a Benedictine Abbey, also founding a school.                   |
| 1010 | Edward the Confessor attended the Ely school (as Prince Edward), Edward later grants a charter to Ely.  |

### Post Conquest


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| 1070 | Danes and English rebels, under Hereward the Wake, occupy the Isle of Ely until defeated by William I in 1071.  |
| 1081 | New abbey church began to be rebuilt under the first Norman Abbot, Simeon, with the Saxon Benedictine Abbey demolished in stages to make room for the new buildings from 1102 onwards. New build mainly Barnack limestone, from Northamptonshire. |
| 1108 | Diocese of Ely created, out of see of Lincoln. The first bishop was Herveus, formerly Bishop of Bangor, consecrated in June 1109.   |
| 1143 | Geoffrey de Madeville, a supporter of Mathilda in her civil war against King Stephen, seized Ely and began a reign of terror in Cambridgeshire.   |
| 1174 | The Cathedral nave was completed.   |
| 1189 | Tower at western end of cathedral completed, with elaborate pair of western transepts.  |
| 1215 | Galilee porch started at western end, under Bishop Eustace.   |
| 1234 | Original apsidal East end of Bishop Simeon's cathedral is dismantled and replaced with a rectangular presbytery.  |
| 1250 | The choir and presbytery is rebuilt to enhance the setting for St Etheldreda's shrine and the cathedral is re-dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Peter and St Etheldreda.   |
| 1265 | After Simon de Montfort's defeat at Evesham some of the rebels continued to hold out on the Isle of Ely, until surrendering to Prince Edward in June 1267.  |

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| 1321  | Work Started on the Lady Chapel. When it was completed in 1349 it was the largest Lady Chapel in England. It was all in curvilinear style under the direction of William Ramsey (3) with nodding ogee canopies over the perimeter seating, a large stone lierne vault, and a sumptuous display of stone carving. Sadly much of this was vandalised by Cromwell's soldiers in 1653.   |
| 1322  | The Norman crossing tower collapsed, destroying the choir. The tower was replaced by a new octagonal structure crowned by a timber lantern over the crossing. The work was instigated by the sacrist, Alan of Walsingham, the masonry was rebuilt by John Ramsey (Norwich Master Mason), and the timber structure was constructed by Edward III's master carpenter for south of the Trent, William Hurley. The lantern was completed in 1342. John Ramsey rebuilt the choir arcades, tribune gallery and clerestory windows in a sinuous curvilinear style completed 1340, followed by William William Hurley's new choir stalls, required after the originals had been destroyed by the tower collapse. |
| 1324  | Prior Crauden's chapel completed.  |
| 1325  | Goldsmith's Tower and the Sacrist's Gate built by Alan of Walsingham.  |
| 1381  | Ely was actively involved in the Peasants Revolt.  |
| 1405  | A new gatehouse was constructed on the site of the Norman Porta, in the South of the abbey site.   |
| 1400s | Much of the north-west transept collapsed, there was some repair, with the corner pillars of the West tower being strengthened but the transept was not rebuilt. A new Bishop's Palace was also constructed, south-west of the cathedral, in this time.  |

## The Reformation

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| 1539 | The cathedral was surrendered to Henry VIII's agents on 18 <sup>th</sup> November 1539. Much statuary, carvings, brasses and stained-glass windows were destroyed but the bishopric was retained. The last prior (Robert Steward) of the abbey became the first dean of the cathedral. Henry re-endowed the school and it was re-named the King's School. The existing prior's accommodation, infirmary and guest halls were adapted to new uses but other monastic buildings fell into disrepair or were demolished. |
| 1566 | The large Lady Chapel served as a parish church from 1566 right through to the twentieth century.   |
| 1636 | Oliver Cromwell became a local tax collector and lived in Ely for several years   |
| 1642 | Ely was garrisoned for Parliament at the start of the Civil War.  |
| 1660 | At the Restoration of Charles II the Cathedral administrations were restored also.  |

 Saxon

 Tudor

