

	<h2>Peterborough Cathedral Timeline</h2>
641-655 AD	Following a bloody period of hostility between the kingdoms of Northumberland and Mercia which had seen King Oswald killed in Battle by King Penda's soldiers in 641, and then King Penda killed in battle in 655 by Oswald's successor and brother Oswiu, Penda's son and successor Peada King of Mercia extended the hand of peace to King Oswiu and they agreed jointly to build a new monastery to the glory of Christ and St Peter at a place called Burh on the border between the two kingdoms, later to be called Peterborough. The granting of land by Peada to the monastery enabled a monk who was of noble birth called Saxulf to plan the building of the monastery.
656-680	King Peada killed in battle was succeeded by his brother Wulfhere who continued peaceful relations with Oswiu and granted substantial land to the fledgeling monastery enabling Saxulf, now Abbot to build an Abbey and domestic quarters for a community of monks (in the celtic tradition) consecrated in 664 by Archbishop of Canterbury Deodedit. The monastery grew rapidly in size and influence, Saxulf became Bishop of Mercia and was succeeded by Cuthbald as Abbot. In 675 King Wulfhere of Mercia died and was succeeded by Aethelred. In the same year Pope Agatho decreed that the Abbot be made a Legate of Rome, and that he be answerable only to Rome and not to his Bishop or King. This was confirmed in a Deed brought by Wilfrid Archbishop of York and affirmed by King Aethelred and 125 Bishops.
865-954	The Viking invasions from Denmark became much more serious than the sporadic raids of the 840-60 period which had affected much of the south and east coast settlements. In 865 a huge heathen army arrived as a permanent army of occupation in East Anglia, moved on to York and then Nottingham and Peterborough, laying waste to the land, burning churches and all who resisted including King Edmund. In Peterborough in 870 they killed the monks and Abbot and burnt all of the churches. The destruction of the Abbey was recorded by the monks on the 'Hedda Stone' now preserved at the Cathedral. The eventual settlement followed King Alfred's successful campaign at Edington in Somerset which left Wessex in Saxon control but much of Mercia and Northumbria in Danelaw control until King Aedred of Wessex defeated Eric Bloodaxe at York in 954 ending the Scandinavian dominance in the North and Midlands. For almost 100 years the church in much of the Danelaw had been broken in both fabric and organisation although surprisingly it had survived in York and other places.
964	Bishop Aethelwold of Winchester visited Peterborough Abbey and found it destroyed, with broken walls and overgrown. He appointed Aldulf as Abbot and gave him resources to begin the rebuilding of the Abbey with the full backing of King Edgar (King of England) reinstating their previously held estates and privileges. Under the influence of Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, the monastery would be under the rule of St Benedict. The new Monastery and Abbey would be in the Saxon Romanesque style.
	<h2>Post Conquest</h2>
1070-1116	Four years after the conquest there was still much 'resistance' in Peterborough to the Norman invaders. The resistance was led by Hereward the Wake, assisted by Danish mercenaries. William established a garrison of 50 knights close to the monastic precinct, he ordered the construction of a defensive fort and embankments around the precinct. The Abbey had most of its treasures taken away supposedly for safe keeping at Ely, but none was seen again and the monastery and domestic quarters were sacked and burnt by

	the Danish Mercenaries. A Norman Abbot Turolf was installed by William c1071 in order to rebuild and defend the site, which was done but in 1116, when John de Seez was Abbot, the Abbey was again burnt down, but by accident! Only the chapter house and dormitory survived the fire.
1118-1200	A new Romanesque abbey was started in 1118 on a much grander 'Norman' scale beginning at the east end and extending as far as the crossing tower, consecrated in 1140 under Abbot Martin during the turbulent reign of King Stephen. The nave and transepts were completed by 1178, and further extended westwards by 3 bays, c 1200 in the same Norman style as the east end producing a unified design, memorable for its scale and grandeur, most of this work has survived to this day.
1200-50	The magnificent West Front was commissioned by Abbot Benedict in the 'early English' gothic style, and has unique features with its 3 giant portals each as tall as the nave, each surmounted with highly enriched gables, pinnacles and rose windows. Flanking towers were also added completing the composition in 1230. The Abbey was consecrated in 1238, by the Bishop of Lincoln, and its superb timber nave roof with 'lozenge' pattern and painted images was finally complete in 1250. There are only 4 surviving nave ceilings of this type from the 13 <sup>th</sup> century in Europe, Peterborough is the only one in England.
1350-80	The Norman crossing tower of 1140 became unstable in 1335 and was largely rebuilt above roof level in the 'decorated' style, though 2 tiers of Norman windows on the tower have been retained. Internally the crossing piers and arches were made more robust and Romanesque arches and capitals were Gothicised. The lady chapel was built on the north side of the presbytery. The Galilee porch in the centre of the west front was built (to help stabilise the central piers).
1372-86 1375-80	
1496-1539	At the east end of the Abbey, a retro choir was added by John Wastell MM, a very talented mason better known for his work at Kings College Cambridge (begun 1509) designing and supervising the fan vaulting there. The new retro choir at Peterborough was built 1496-1508 and it has a similar vault to Kings College. The retro choir with its tombs and chantry chapels, was a processional device similar to Lincoln, separating the pilgrim route from the Sanctuary and high altar, and at Peterborough retaining the magnificent apsidal east end unchanged.
1536	Katherine of Aragon, first wife of Henry 8 <sup>th</sup> buried inside the Abbey.
1539	The Monastery dissolved and monks pensioned off.
	<b>Post Reformation</b>
1541-50	Henry 8 <sup>th</sup> refounded the Abbey as Peterborough Cathedral dedicated to St Peter, St Paul and St Andrew. Their statues sit on the 3 gablets over the west end portals. The 'New Foundation' replaced Abbot and Prior with Bishop and Dean, with 6 Canons (prebendaries) and 6 minor Canons. the King also required a grammar school to be founded in the precinct, the King's School.
1587	Mary Queen of Scots was buried in the Cathedral, but later reburied in Westminster Abbey on the orders of her son King James 1 <sup>st</sup> of England, James 6 <sup>th</sup> of Scotland.
1643-1700	During the Civil War, Peterborough was a royalist town and was ravaged by Oliver Cromwell's men, the town was sacked and the Cathedral desecrated, with destruction of all stained glass, church furnishings, altars, organ, demolition of the cloister, lady chapel, library and Bishops Palace. Some of the monastic buildings survived this period to the present day, the Almoner's Hall, Infirmary's Hall, outer walls of the Infirmary, and fragments of the Cloister and Refectory. The Cathedral was restored at the 'Restoration of the Monarchy' but much of the medieval interior was gone forever.
1653-4	The Bishops Palace and medieval cloister were demolished and the masonry reused in the construction of Thorpe Hall for magnate Oliver St John, Lord Chief Justice of England. At the Restoration, under King James 2 <sup>nd</sup> the Dean and Chapter were returned to office.

	Nineteenth Century Restorers
1822	A well meaning restoration and repair campaign was begun by Dean Monk but had to be undone 1880
1880-1900	The crossing tower was rebuilt, new choir stalls installed, and a new marble pavement laid in the eastern arm. A new tomb was (finally) installed for Queen Katherine of Aragon.