

Southwell Minster: Building timeline and significant events

Pre Conquest

- c.350 Site of large Roman villa and estate, mosaic fragments survive.
- 627 Paulinus, first Archbishop of York baptised Christians in the River Trent and establishes a church at Southwell.
- 865-8 The first Viking invasions by Danish forces along the east coast result in large scale settlements being established in Northumbria and Mercia.
- 954 King Eadred conquers the Scandinavian Kingdom of York and negotiates new boundaries with the King of Northumbria and establishes many of the county boundaries which survive to this day. A quarter of a century of peace follows.
- 956 King Eadwig of England gave an estate to Oskytel, Arch Bishop of York for a Minster church to be built at Southwell, served by a community of secular priests. Southwell would later become the mother church of the southern region of the arch-episcopal Diocese of York with Arch Bishops residence attached.
- 1066 The Norman conquest and defeat of the English armies gave William control of southern and midland counties. By 1069 following the 'harrying of the North' this control was to extend across most of England, though resistance continued in some regions until 1075.

Post Conquest

- 1108 The Minster was rebuilt on a much grander scale in the Romanesque style, starting at the east end. The transept was complete c. 1120 and the nave by 1150, the west towers by 1170. Some small parts of the Saxon church survive in the new building, a tessellated floor in the transept and a Saxon tympanum panel. A new Arch Bishops Palace was also created adjacent to the east end, the ruins of which can still be seen. The Minster was refounded as a Collegiate Church for theological learning with prebendaries living within the precinct.
- 1234 The Norman style chancel was considered too small (the Minster now had 16 prebendaries) so was demolished and a new enlarged choir and east end was built in the Early-English (lancet) style, 7 bays long and completed in 1250. The retrochoir, a further 2

bays in length was completed c. 1280 in the same style.

- 1288-98 The octagonal Chapter House was added to the north side of the chancel with vestibule, all in the 'decorated' style. It is considered to be a masterpiece of stone carving unsurpassed in quality. The Chapter house is the only octagonal one with stone vault and no central support column (York Minster has a timber vault). Amongst the carved stone images are several 'green men', perhaps a reference to the proximity of Sherwood Forest. This masterpiece in stone was commissioned by Arch Bishop Romeyn.
- 1350 Erection of Pulpitum choir screen another excellent example of intricately carved stone which has some similarity to the pulpitum at Lincoln.

Post Reformation

- 1543 The prebendaries were pensioned off and their houses sold and the Minster became a parish church for 14 years.
- 1557 Queen Mary refounded the Minster as a Collegiate Church governed by Chapter. In 1581 Queen Elizabeth 1st consolidated this under a new Statute which lasted until 1841.
- 1646 During the Civil War King Charles 1st was captured by parliamentary forces at Southwell. The Minster was badly damaged during this period, when it was used for stabling by the army. Many of the fittings , glass, statuary were destroyed including the Arch Bishops Palace.
- 1711 The SW spire was struck by lightning causing significant fire damage to the nave roof, the crossing tower, bells, organ, etc., but repairs and restoration was completed in 1720.
- 1805 The lead clad timber spires were removed from the west front due to their poor state of repair but were restored in 1881 under cathedral architect Ewan Christian who also restored the high nave roof and stone vaults of the chancel.
- 1884 The Minster was refounded as Cathedral of Nottinghamshire and Derby City. The diocese was again reorganised and divided in 1927 when Derby Cathedral was founded to serve the new Diocese of Derbyshire.