

Ripon Minster: Building timeline and significant events

Pre Conquest

- 652 Wilfrid (634-709) a monk from Lindisfarne Priory went to Rome to study for ordination.
- 658 After serving 3 years as Bishop of Lyons he returns to England as Abbot of Ripon Minster.
- 669 After advocating successfully at the Synod of Whitby the use of the Roman rule of Bishops, Wilfrid is Installed as Bishop of York
- 670-2 Wilfrid Bishop of York rebuilds the wooden Ripon Minster in stone, in the style of a Roman Basilica. He brings skilled masons and glaziers from France and Italy to give the best and latest style to the new Minster. The Minster is re founded on the Benedictine Rule with Wilfrid as Abbot. The crypt from this Saxon Minster survives beneath the 'crossing' of the present Cathedral.
- 704 Wilfrid successfully petitions the Pope to keep both Ripon and Hexham Minsters within the Diocese of York and defeats the Archbishop of Canterbury's proposal to divide the diocese.
- 865-8 The first Viking invasion by Danish forces, the Minster is damaged but not destroyed.
- 946 Eadred succeeded King Edgar as King of England, including Northumbria and in 948 ravaged Northumbria to punish those who had accepted Eric Bloodaxe as King. During this conflict the Minster at Ripon was destroyed by fire and there was much destruction in the town. A new stone Saxon church was built to replace Wilfrids minster.
- 954 King Eadred completed the conquest of the Scandinavian Kingdom of York and establishes new county boundaries, creating Yorkshire and moving the southern boundary of Northumberland to the Tees.

Post Conquest

- 1069 The 'harrying of the North' by King William's forces ruthlessly puts down resistance in Yorkshire driving back the Scottish armies and those of Edgar the Atheling and laying waste towns and countryside. Ripon Minster is badly damaged.
- 1080 The damaged Saxon Minster is demolished by the Archbishop of York (Thomas of Bayeux), who funds the building of a new larger Minster on the site of the Saxon Minster in the Romanesque style. The Minster is re founded as a College of Augustinian canons (7no). Since the beginning of the 11th.century the Minster has along with Beverley and Southwell served as a suffragan bishopric of the Arch Diocese of York.
The Transepts have a lot of surviving Norman style features and Transitional features (the South Transept door surround, Romanesque window surrounds and pointed arch arcades).
- 1220 Archbishop Walter de Grey commissions the rebuilding of the twin towered West Front in the Early English (lancet) style, along with the new Chapter House, both completed c.1255. The twin towers had lead clad spires at this time. Archbishop Walter also completed the new Shrine to St Wilfrid c. 1250. Some medieval glass survives at the west end of the nave.
- 1300 The Great East Window and East Front was rebuilt in 'decorated' style (geometric). The Glass is Victorian (1858).
- 1390 The perpendicular style Lady Chapel was built as a second storey over the Chapter House south side of the choir. The former Lady Chapel is now the Cathedral Library
- 1450 The central Tower collapsed causing much damage to the to the nave and adjacent roofs.
- 1485 Rebuilding of the nave commenced with greater width than the Romanesque church, the Pulpitum screen was built in 1494, followed by the choir stalls and Misericords*. The south Aisle was commenced in 1502, followed by the north Aisle in 1515. The work to nave and aisles was mostly complete at the 'Dissolution' of the College of Canons in 1547 but not at the 'crossing' where arches and columns show a mismatch of style. At the Dissolution the King diverted the income from the Collegiate Church to the Crown, reducing the available funding for the clergy and building works.

Post Reformation

- 1604 King James 1st. issued a Charter of Restitution' reinstating the canonical Chapter at Ripon and their income.
- 1836 The Anglican See of Ripon was created and the Minster received Cathedral status with Dean and Chapter of Canons still within the Archdiocese of York. During the Victorian period a lot of restoration work was done by G.G.Scott.

* The extremely fine oak choir stalls with their filigree canopies and curious misericords are attributed to the master carver William Brownfleet of Ripon. Thematic and stylistic similarities exist between the Ripon stalls and others at Manchester Cathedral, Bristol Cathedral, and Beverley Minster, all believed to be the work of the Ripon master carvers.