

## Hereford Cathedral: Building timeline and significant historic events

### Pre Conquest

c.650	Saxon settlement of Hereford
676	Hereford becomes the seat of Bishop. The sixth century church is refounded as a cathedral by Putta, the first Bishop (died c. 688)
794	King Ethelbert of East Anglia beheaded by King Offa of Mercia, just outside Hereford. He was buried in the timber-built Cathedral, which was rebuilt in stone soon after.
1056	The stone cathedral was enlarged but then plundered and burned in attacks by a combined Welsh and Irish force led by Gruffydd ap Llywelyn.

### Post Conquest

1079	The Cathedral remained in a ruinous state until the incumbency of Bishop Robert of Lorraine who started reconstruction on a grander scale in the Norman style. The new Cathedral was dedicated to St Mary the Virgin and St Ethelbert the King. This was not a monastic foundation but governed by a Dean and Chapter, secular priests who employed Vicars Choral, who lived a collegiate life in the Vicars Cloister.
1217	Hereford is one of four Cathedrals to house an early copy of the Magna Carta, the library here was established at a very early time and another notable item housed here is the early thirteenth century Mappa Mundi.
1131 1148	Construction of the Norman cathedral was completed during the tenure of Bishop Robert de Betun. Of this Norman Cathedral the choir, south transept and nave arcades survive largely intact.
c.1180 - 1280	Under a series of Bishops, the basic Norman shell was extended and reconstructed in a series of styles through Late Norman, Transitional and Early English Gothic. Notably the superb Lady Chapel of 1217-1225, an early example of Early English. The North Transept is considered to be one of the most perfect examples of Geometric Decorated Gothic, created by Master Mason Hugh Reyns 1250-68.
1315	Around this time the large central tower was raised, notable for the extensive use of ball-flower ornament. The spire is no longer extant. Also dating from this period was the Chapter House and the Choir has marvellous early fourteenth century carved timber stalls and misericords.
c.1480	A further ornate tower was added at the West end of the Cathedral, however this disastrously collapsed in 1786, causing extensive damage to the fabric, requiring a rebuilding of this end of the Cathedral.

## The Reformation and afterwards

- 1538 The shrine of St Thomas Cantilupe, in the Lady Chapel, is destroyed. However, as one of the nine Cathedrals of the Old Foundation its constitution remained undisturbed by the Reformation.
- 1642 Hereford was fought over and occupied by Parliamentary forces during the Civil War. Under the Commonwealth the cathedral administrations were abolished and properties confiscated. Considerable damage was done by Parliamentary forces to the cathedral fabric, to stained glass, monuments, the Vicars Choral College, etc during this period. Bishop Croft courageously opposed the wrecking of the cathedral and lost his life in the process.
- 1651
- 1660 At the Restoration of Charles 2<sup>nd</sup> the Cathedral administrations were restored also.
- 1786-1796 The west tower collapsed destroying the west front, as a result of long standing disrepair. The architect James Wyatt was engaged to design and supervise rebuilding of the west front at the second nave bay, shortening the length of the nave. The west tower was not rebuilt but the north and south Nave walls were entirely rebuilt from above the Norman colonnade.
- 1840-1908 Victorian restoration began under Dean Merewether and architect L. Cottingham in the choir and transepts which included rebuilding of the 'crossing' piers supporting the central tower. Later from 1860 GG Scott was engaged to repair and restore the East Front and introduce a new choir screen and encaustic tiles to the choir and retrochoir. His son Oldrid Scott reworked the West Front with elaborate detail replacing the great west window, the 3 west portals, and introducing the octagonal towers and large roundals to north and south of the frontage.

Saxon

Norman

Gothic

Tudor

Stuart