

Winchester Cathedral: Building timeline and significant historic events

Pre Conquest

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| 636 | First church built for King Cenwalh. The small cruciform monastery building was soon designated a cathedral, later known as the 'Old Minster', and was the burial place of Anglo-Saxon kings including Alfred the Great and later on Canute |
| 860 | Winchester, then the main city of England, was attacked by Vikings, but the cathedral church survives. |
| 863 | Death of Bishop Swithun, his burial is at the West door of the Old Minster. |
| 879 | Winchester again under Viking attack, church and monastery once more survive. |
| 901 | King Alfred begins work on 'New Minster' standing next to the Old Minster and completed by his son Edward. |
| 960 | Bishop Ethelwold refounded the Cathedral as a Benedictine Priory dedicated to St Swithun. In 971 St Swithun's bones are removed from the front of the Old Minster and transferred to an ornate shrine within, where it becomes a great attraction for pilgrims. |
| 1043 | Edward the Confessor crowned in the Old Minster |

Post Conquest

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| 1070 | King William installs his relative, Waelin, as Bishop of Winchester, part of the national replacement of Anglo-Saxon Bishops by Normans. |
| 1079 | Work starts on building the magnificent Norman replacement for the two former co-existing Saxon minsters. Work starts with the crypt. The Saxon churches are demolished piecemeal as the new work progresses |
| 1093 | The new cathedral is consecrated (15 th July) and the bones of St Swithun and the Anglo-Saxon kings are installed. The following day the final remaining portion of the Old Minster is demolished. The new cathedral is 162m long, the largest in England. |
| 1100 | King William II dies whilst hunting in the New Forest and is buried in the new cathedral. |
| 1160 | The illuminated Winchester Bible is commissioned, it was worked on by seven monks for five years but the bible is never completed. It was probably commissioned by Henry of Blois, who was a grandson of William the Conqueror and also Bishop of Winchester for over 40 years. |

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| c1225 | The retro choir was added by Bishop de Lucy in the early English style enlarging the overall length to 190m |
| 1340s -1420 | The nave, and West front of the cathedral, are updated from Romanesque style to tall, soaring Perpendicular Gothic. In the process the Romanesque West front is demolished and nave shortened by 13m to 78m. |
| 1366 – 1404 | William of Wykeham Bishop of Winchester. His chantry chapel completed before his death. |
| 1403 | King Henry IV and Jan of Navarre married in cathedral. |
| 1404 – 1447 | Cardinal Henry Beaufort Bishop of Winchester, his splendid chantry chapel begun in 1447. |
| 1447 – 1486 | William Waynefleet Bishop of Winchester, chantry chapel started in 1486. |
| 1531-1551 | Stephen Gardiner first served as Bishop of Winchester, dismissed by Edward VI. |

The Reformation

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| 1538 | The monastery at Winchester is dissolved and Henry VII's men destroy St Swithun's shrine. |
| 1553 – 1555 | Stephen Gardiner again appointed Bishop of Winchester, under Queen Mary I. |
| 1554 | Mary Tudor marries Philip of Spain at the cathedral on 25 th July. |
| 1556 | Bishop Gardiner's chantry chapel built, in a mix of Gothic and early Renaissance styles. |
| 1634 – 1635 | Crossing vault constructed in timber, with circular bell hole, designer Inigo Jones |
| 1637 – 1640 | The crumbling Norman pulpitum was replaced by a classical screen designed by Inigo Jones, the choir and stalls modified in the process. Jones's screen was replaced in 1820 by a Garbett-designed medievalist one, until again replaced with a timber screen by GG Scott in 1875. |
| 1640s | Parliamentarian men and horses were housed in the cathedral during the Civil War and deliberate damage was done to medieval stained glass as well as to images carved in wood and stone. The mortuary chests of the early kings were toppled and their bones scattered. |
| 1660s | The cathedral was in a bad state of repair at the end of the war but the citizens petitioned Parliament to save the building from suggested demolition. Fragments of medieval glass were collected up and set into the rebuilt West window. Major restoration work continued from this point to present. |



Saxon

Norman

Plantagenet/Lancaster/York



Tudor

Stuart