

Instructions for visiting Canterbury Cathedral

Welcome to Canterbury Cathedral.

The Cathedral is 1400 years old and has witnessed many changes and events through its history. This leaflet is intended to help guide you through our new one-way system, but also provide some historical facts and information to help you enjoy and understand some of our significant spaces.

Visitor safety is paramount to us, particularly during these difficult times, so please ensure you follow the route signs; maintain physical distancing and avoid touching surfaces as much as possible. There are hand sanitiser stations located around the Cathedral so please utilise them. For everyone's safety, please do not enter if you have any Covid symptoms.

You will enter the Precincts through the Visitor Centre. The entrance is in the Buttermarket. Please use the automatic doors.

Inside the Precincts you will enter the Cathedral through the North door. A member of staff will be there to direct you. As you pass the West end of the Cathedral, you will see our processional entrance. This is where Archbishops knock on the door to enter when they come to be enthroned. On either side are four royal statues; on the left is Queen Victoria with her consort, Prince Albert and on the right, the new addition of our current Queen, Elizabeth II and her consort Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The Queen visited in March 2015 to unveil the statues commissioned by the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The entrance to the Nave is around the corner, through the large wooden door on your right.

The Nave

This is the newest part of the building, constructed between 1377 and 1405 and built in a style called English perpendicular. The stone is from Caen in Normandy.

The Cathedral has three different types of architecture and you will see them all as we pass through the building.

Directly above you is the safety deck. This was installed as part of "The Canterbury Journey" project which has allowed us to re-lead the Nave roof and clean the roof bosses whilst keeping visitors below safe from falling debris.

It is in itself a feat of modern engineering, 53 metres long and 11.5 metres wide. It weighs 33 tonnes. The space is the equivalent of three tennis courts and can take the weight of 5.5 African Bush Elephants.

Both sides of the Nave are lined with war memorials, and those of archbishops and notable citizens of Canterbury through the centuries.

You will leave the Nave from the south aisle. You will always know when you are on the south side as that is the sunny side, much lighter than the north. As you reach the end and enter the Transept you will see a tunnel to your left. This will give you access to the Martyrdom.

Please follow the directional signs and maintain physical distancing. The tunnel is narrow, so please do not enter if there is someone already in the tunnel.

The Tunnel

After the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket in 1170, the Cathedral became a major pilgrimage site. As the number of pilgrims grew, they caused much disruption to the monks and their daily routine, so in the early 1400-'s this tunnel was put in place to allow pilgrims direct access to the Martyrdom.

The Martyrdom

Please take particular care when entering, as this area can become very congested. Please pass through as quickly as possible to prevent blocking the access, remembering to ensure physical distancing of 2 metres. The markings on the floor will help to maintain that distance.

The Martyrdom is the place where Archbishop Thomas Becket's murder took place on 29th December 1170. Four knights, Reginald FitzUrse, Hugh de Morville, William de Tracy and Richard le Breton, believing they were carrying out the wishes of Henry II, burst through the door shouting Becket's name. When Thomas descended the staircase to confront them, he was brutally murdered. His name is now written in red letters on the floor.

The modern sculpture that hangs above the new altar is by Giles Blomfeld of Truro; the centre is shaped like the jagged end of a sword with a red tip to represent the sword that broke in two when Thomas was first struck and on either side a sword, with the light casting two shadows, representing the four knights who killed Thomas.

After visiting the Martyrdom you will need to return to the Nave via the tunnel. Please make your way to the North door through which you entered, and retrace your route around the West end to the South side of the Precincts. There will be a member of the team to show you the way to the Crypt.

On your way to the Crypt you will pass our conference centre and hotel, The Cathedral Lodge. On the North side, the route is marked. The entrance to the Crypt is on your left opposite the magnificent Norman water tower. Here you can also visit the herb garden. This does have disabled access and is a good place to enjoy the peace of the Cathedral Precincts.

The Crypt

The Crypt is much darker and is the oldest part of Canterbury Cathedral. This architecture is called Romanesque or Norman and was completed around 1100. As you pass through it you will see several chapels.

Cross to the South side where you will find the Huguenot Chapel, originally constructed as the Black Prince's Chantry. In 1575, Elizabeth I gifted the Western Crypt to the Huguenots who fled to England during religious persecution on the continent. As the community moved away from Canterbury, the need for the space reduced, so in the late 19th century, the Black Prince's Chantry became the place for the Huguenot community to meet for worship. A Service still takes place, in French, every Sunday at 15.15, although these Services are currently suspended due to the Corona Virus.

Beside it is St Gabriel's Chapel. It is very small, so do not enter if others are already there. The sanctuary has beautiful early medieval wall paintings. The thick central column and the four sides of its capital are richly carved with fantastic beasts playing musical instruments.

A ramp will give you access to the Eastern Crypt. This was completed around 1181 and was the original resting place for the murdered Archbishop Thomas Becket. The architecture is early gothic or transitional and there is much more light than in the Western Crypt. On the wall is a large Perspex sheet protecting a large piece of medieval graffiti. It depicts Christ in Majesty surrounded by the symbols of the four Evangelists; Matthew, the angel, Mark, the lion, Luke the bull and John, the eagle. If you look above it, you will see two windows. This is where two monks, Benedict and William, would sit to watch over Becket's tomb. They recorded the miracles that happened at the tomb, and these were the transcripts for the stories that are represented in the Miracle windows that are in the Trinity Chapel above. In the centre, suspended between two Purbeck columns, is a sculpture by Antony Gormley. It is called Transport and is made from medieval nails that were removed from the roof of the

South East Transept when it was last repaired. The sculpture was originally hung East to West to reflect the position of the Cathedral, but as he is made of iron, he is inclined to move to find magnetic North.

As you reach the curve of the ambulatory, you will see the Jesus Chapel. This forms the foundation for the Corona Chapel above. The M and I decoration in the ceiling stand for Mary and Jesus.

When you have finished looking in the Crypt, retrace your steps to come out of the same door. The lift to the Quire will be on your right.

Please reverse in to the lift as when it opens on the next floor the space is small and there is a steep flight of stairs on the right.

The Quire

Enter the central Quire through the iron gates.

In 1174, the Quire was destroyed by a great fire and William of Sens, a master mason from France, was commissioned in 1174 to rebuild it. The building went well, but in 1178, whilst on scaffolding under the Lamb and the Flag ceiling boss that you see above you, the scaffolding collapsed and William was mortally wounded. His work was continued by his young assistant, known as William the Englishman.

Some of the things to look out for here include:

- The lectern- completed in 1663 showing the eagle, the King of the Birds, carrying the Bible, spreading the Word of God;
- The Cathedra- the Archbishop's chair behind the High Altar. Known as St Augustine's chair it is used for the enthronement of Archbishops, most recently Justin Welby's in 2013;
- The Throne of the Archbishop- with its ornate gothic canopy, it is a more recent addition to the Cathedral, given to Archbishop Howley in 1844.

Leave the central Quire as you entered. Immediately on your right is the elaborate tomb of Archbishop Chichele. He was the Archbishop of King Henry V and welcomed him to the Cathedral on his victorious return from Agincourt.

It is called a cadaver or transi tomb and depicts the Archbishop as in life, resplendent in his robes and underneath, as in death. The inscription around it serves as a reminder that for all of us, no matter how important we are in life, in death we are all the same. This was installed some years before Chichele's death in 1443, so would have served as a constant reminder to him when he walked past it daily.

Chichele founded All Souls College in Oxford and they undertook the maintenance of the tomb. It is surrounded by many key figures, but one that is instantly recognisable is at the top right- hand side. Another Archbishop; if you look closely you will see the sword sticking out of his head. No prizes for guessing who this is.

At the bottom of the steps beyond Chichele you will see a display screen. There is no disabled access to the upper level, but the screen will give you information about those spaces.

You can access the South Quire Aisle by returning to the central Quire and crossing the Transept.

The Bossanyi Windows.

You are now approaching the end of your tour inside the Cathedral. You cannot fail to notice these bright colourful windows that were commissioned in the late 1950s and created by Ervin Bossanyi. Bossanyi was a Hungarian Jew who escaped from Nazi occupation. The windows are full of symbolism and you will find a description on the left and right hand columns.

To exit the building, you will need to return to the lift.

When you exit the lift, please take the opportunity to enjoy some of the outside spaces of the Precincts. To your right, you will see the **Herb Garden** and if you continue left down the dark passage you will find yourself in the **Great Cloister**. This was the main thoroughfare for the monks and joined the functional living areas with the body of the Cathedral.

As you move around the four sides look above you. You will see shields displaying family crests, 20th century stained glass, Green Men and other mythical creatures. The central area of grass is called "The Garth".

To exit the Precincts you will need to retrace your route around the East end of the Cathedral.

We would like to thank you for visiting Canterbury Cathedral. We hope you have enjoyed your visit despite the restrictions we have had to implement. Your feedback on your experience today would be much valued as we strive to continue to provide a safe but enjoyable environment.

Please take a few moments to email christine.pascall@canterbury-cathedral.org

If you would like to join the Cathedral's "fan club" and help us sustain this building, please go to <https://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/support-us/friends/> to find out how to become a Friend of Canterbury Cathedral.