



These pre-bookable tours are available to groups of 5 or more and must be booked in advance. These tours focus on areas of specific interest. To book please contact the Visitor Services Team on 01962 857 200 or email visits@winchester-cathedral.org.uk.

Cathedral Tour

See the Cathedral come to life with this guided tour. Experienced guides will point out some of the most treasured artefacts, tell some of their favourite stories and give a general overview of the Cathedral history. This is our most popular tour and offers a comprehensive introduction for first-time visitors.

How to Read a Cathedral (Architecture)

Follow the evolution of the monumental Norman cathedral through the subsequent development of the medieval period to the Reformation and early Renaissance. The interesting relationship between building materials, construction techniques and design will be explored

Service and Sacrifice – The Military Memorials

The Cathedral is home to over 50 different Military memorials. See what they reveal about our military, political and social history. Specific areas which may be covered include The Victoria Cross, the Crimean War, the Small Wars of Victoria's Reign, Local Regiments and others.

Close Encounters

Walk the Inner Close in the footsteps of Benedictine monks and explore over 1000 years of history. From monastic times, through the turbulence of the Civil War, up to the present day. Enjoy 'Close Encounters' with the people who lived in and walked through the close and step briefly into their lives.

Jane Austen - Her Life and Times

Jane Austen died in Winchester in 1817, in rented rooms in College Street. She was buried in the north aisle of the Cathedral, probably arranged by her brother Henry who had been ordained shortly before her death. This tour offers visitors an intimate and often amusing insight into her life and connections with the Cathedral.

Mothers' Union Tour

Hear the enchanting story of Mary Sumner, founder of the Mothers' Union; her life, and connections with Winchester, her vision and how the Mothers' Union was eventually recognized and continues to flourish worldwide.

Stained Glass

Stained Glass - a relatively unexplored cathedral treasure. Bring binoculars for best viewing. Winchester Cathedral offers the opportunity to study glass from the workshops of medieval masters of the 14th, 15th and early 16th century and to follow the enthusiastic Victorian revival and the Arts and Crafts movement to the present day.

Medieval Times

A view of this great church from 1079 to 1475 - seeing what its builders produced; the works of carvers, painters, glassmakers and tillers. See ancient books and documents, including the Winchester Bible. Hear also stories of the men and women, bishops and monks associated with the monastery and the financial and political problems they faced.



Tudor Intrigue in Turbulent Times

The religious upheavals of the Reformation, the cultural revolution of the Renaissance and the powerful personalities of the Tudor monarchs have all left their mark on Winchester Cathedral. Come and see this fascinating period of history brought to life.

Just Williams

Learn about the many illustrious and or some cases lesser-known men called William who have played significant roles in the history of the cathedral.

The Winchester Diver (William Walker)

One of the most fascinating stories around Winchester Cathedral is that of William Walker “the diver who saved the Cathedral with his own hands”. In the early years of the 20th Century defects appeared in the east end of the Cathedral and desperate measures were needed to safeguard it for the future. In the end the hero of the day was William Walker, who worked in atrocious and dangerous conditions for over 5 years. The tour will explore the Crypt, the outside of the Cathedral where the work was done and the interior where the results can be seen and are commemorated with the statue of William Walker himself.

Heroes and Villains

Who fled the cathedral in a dung-cart? Who refused lodgings to Charles II’s “trollop”? Who owned the hoof of a griffin? Find out about the great, the good and the occasionally ghastly men (and one woman) whose fascinating stories are told in this tour.

Modern Art

Winchester Cathedral is rich in art objects, including works by internationally acclaimed artists, Peter Eugene Ball, Cecil Collins, Eric Gill, Antony Gormley, Barbara Hepworth and Justin Knowles, as well as local artists Sophie Hacker, Tim Harrisson, Alice Kettle, Tracey Sheppard - and many more. This Tour enables visitors to enjoy a close-up interaction with several of these works, within the context of this very special, time-honoured place.

The Cathedral under the Gaze of Queen Victoria

The Cathedral was cold, dismal and colourless when Queen Victoria came to the throne. This tour traces its transformation and introduces colourful Victorian personalities associated with the Cathedral including Soapy Sam; the Bishop of Borneo; the anti muckabite Dean Garnier and the inspiration for one of Trollope’s characters.

Pestilence penitence and Putrefaction: a Medical History of Winchester Cathedral

For nearly 1400 years, those associated with the Cathedrals in Winchester have played an important part in the care of the sick and management of disease. This tour recounts the history of medicine in relation to the structure of the present Cathedral and the people commemorated within it.

Unlocking the Secrets

Some of the best kept secrets in the Cathedral, spanning some 800 years, will be revealed on the tour. A few secrets are uncovered immediately but others will involve a trip down the years to the cathedral museum with your guide. Note: the museum is only accessible by stairs.

The Icons of the Cathedral

There are 12 icons in Winchester Cathedral. This tour aims to study each in turn; the way they are made, their roots in history and the tradition which produced their artistic style, also to explore the layers of symbolism and meaning within them.



For All the Saints

Originally the term saint was used for those who suffered martyrdom for their faith. Nowadays a saint is one who has been recognised for having an exceptional degree of holiness, sanctity, and virtue. Saints were always held in great reverence as examples for Christians to look up to, and their images were prevalent in English churches. Although orders were given for the images to be removed at the time of the reformation, the Cathedral now has many examples in its glass, its stonework, in wall paintings and on textiles. This tour looks at some of the saints represented in the Cathedral and tells their stories.

Face the Music

Face the music includes background musical history and examines aspects of music within the Cathedral. There are three types of visual clues: firstly, images in stone, wood, glass and embroidery reflecting 'heavenly harmony'; secondly memorials and graffiti referring to specific musical personalities; and thirdly, places and objects with musical functions such as organ or the Treasure.

Hidden Places

The Cathedral is famous for its chantry chapels. However as access can sometimes be difficult they are usually kept locked and can only be seen from the outside. On this tour the chapels will be open and visitors will be allowed inside to see, at close quarters what they contain.

Green Men

The term "Green Men" was only brought into use in 1939, but their existence goes back many years and actually predates Christianity. They are a carver's device, rarely found in glass or in illuminated manuscripts and they were particularly popular in the 14th century. There are over 70 examples in the Cathedral although some are difficult to spot, and on the tour we shall look at several different types of Green Men, including one for which Winchester is rightly famous.

Winged Messengers

An angel is a supernatural being or spirit, usually humanoid in form, found in various religions and mythologies. The name comes from the Greek, *angelos*, meaning messenger. There are well over a hundred representations of angels in Winchester Cathedral, in glass, woodwork, stonework, paintings, and textiles. Some even survived the reformation and our earliest angel dates from the 12th century. The tour takes in a variety of images spanning 800 years.

Strength and Artistry in Wood

This tour explores the exceptional riches of the Cathedral's woodwork, ancient and modern. It considers the indispensable role of wood in the construction and preservation of the building and we discover wood furnishings and decoration as far back as the 12th century. The highlight of the tour is a look in some detail at one of the Cathedral's greatest treasures, the 14th century quire stalls, described as "the most beautiful in Northern Europe".

Other Close Residents

This tour explores some of the unknown secrets and little known facts about the plants which are to be found within the precincts of the Inner Close. Many of these plants have been introduced by plant hunters through the ages dating right back to the Roman era.

Are there bones beneath these stones?

A detailed look at some of the gravestones, tombs etc in the Cathedral.

My Lord Bishop of Winchester

A look at Bishops buried in the Cathedral.



Stitched and Woven

(Vestments, cushions and altar frontals)

With few exceptions, all the items were made between the late nineteenth century and the present day. Amongst earlier examples are some pieces of Spanish work believed to have been used at the marriage of Queen Mary in 1554. The vestments include a treasured set designed by Ninian Comper over a century ago, and the most recent commissioned for the enthronement of the present Bishop in 2012. Sets of cushions and the altar frontals complement the glass and stonework throughout the Cathedral.

Spiritual Tour

Most cathedral tours have a spiritual content but we are able to provide a tour with more on the work of this Christian church today as well as providing more on the religion on which the building is based. There are many symbols to explore in more detail and we can provide emphasis on aspects that each group may want. Often groups wish to attend a service or hold their own service.

Supertour (approx 1 ½ hours)

A unique opportunity to take an in-depth tour of the cathedral, bringing to life the events of nearly 1000 years; encompassing monarchs, bishops, monks, plague, Reformation and civil war together with the work of medieval and contemporary craftsman. This tour takes about 2 hours and is ideally separated by lunch or a coffee break

Curious & Mysterious

Mysteries are as irksome to the human mind, as a grain of sand is to an oyster. This tour will explain some of the more curious and mysterious happenings, connected to the Cathedral and its monuments; dating from 1250, to the present day

The Marriage of England & Spain: Mary Tudor's Wedding

Queen Mary I Marries Prince Philip of Spain: the most famous wedding ever to have taken place in Winchester Cathedral. Discover the intrigues and plots behind-the-scenes in these turbulent Tudor Counter-Reformation times, and eavesdrop on the sumptuous ceremony itself...

First World War Tours 2015 - OVER THE TOP

In 2014 we ran a tour giving an overview of the FWW and the part the Cathedral played. This year our tour has two parts. In the first half we focus on how the Cathedral was involved in the events of 1915, whilst the second half will see us on a pilgrimage (129 steps), up the back stairs into the roof space where we will look out over the surrounding landscape and describe what was happening outside as well as inside. We pose the questions what does the onslaught of Gallipoli have to do with Hursley? Which building in the Close was used perhaps more than any other? What links does Culver Terrace have with the Cathedral?

This Royal House of Kings and Saints

The Anglo Saxon Minster and its role in the birth of the English nation, the personalities who inhabited it and the traces which are still visible today. Part of this tour is outside on slightly uneven ground, suitable clothing and footwear should be worn.

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