

## BEVERLEY MINSTER TIMELINE

### NOTE:

*This document has been compiled as both research and availability of documentary evidence has become available over the past 20 years from all sorts of sources. They have been checked for accuracy with great diligence at all stages. It is felt that very little new evidence, and especially contradictory evidence is unlikely to turn up, mostly because when I stop looking, no-one else is going to take up the task. So this is it!*

### THE HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The tradition that John was born at Harpham can be traced back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. John Leland mentions that his birth at Harpham was common tradition ('ut vulgo creditur',) when he wrote his Itineraries.

The following is from a MS in the Parker Library in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS298. *Laurence Wade OSB, Life of Becket*. Canterbury Documents Ff 151b-152v, images online numbers 320-322

21<sup>st</sup> century *additions or corrections*: John Phillips.

<u>687</u>	On the 12 <sup>th</sup> day of the month of September St John was consecrated first Bishop of Hexham by Theodore Archbishop of Canterbury.
<u>706</u>	Namely in the beginning of the reign of Alfrid, King of Deira, St John is translated to the church of York by the same King Alfrid. ( <i>Ahlfrith or Eahlfrith, son of Oswiu king of Bernicia.</i> )
692	in the ancient place called Deirwuda, in Latin silva Deiorum ( <i>wood of the Deirans,</i> ) now Beverley, the Blessed John was received into the parish church of this place, long since built in honour of St John the Evangelist, how the parochial and conventual church began to expand in the same year; founding the same Abbey he constituted monks about to serve God, in which he placed in command as father and first Abbot, the Blessed Berthinus. To whom he also associated seven secular priests' (priests) or elders, with seven clerks ('Levites' or priests.) And in the chapel of St Martin on the south side of the church he set up nuns, with Blessed Polfrida in charge.
714	<i>John retired as Bishop of York to his monastery in Beverley</i>
721	Blessed John died and was buried in his monastery which was called Beverley.
723	Blessed Abbot Berthinus died and was succeeded by Blessed Wynwaldus as Abbot of Beverley, who died 751 and was succeeded by the venerable Ulfieth, as Abbot of Beverley who died in 783
742	Blessed Polfrida was buried with honour in the church of Beverley.
867	And it is understood that after the death of St John the monks, nuns, seven priests with seven clerks happily and unwaveringly lived in this place for 146 years continually, ( <i>i.e. until 867,</i> ) until, that is to say, the arrival of the Pagans Hungar and Hubba in Beverley, who killed all of the monks and nuns and some of the priests and clerks, and some fled, and they burnt the church and the place.
Circa 870	And, after three years, the above-mentioned priests and clerks who survived, returned to the church, and repaired the place, and numbers of both degrees came together for the septinarium, ( <i>seven days of prayer for the dead,</i> ) and lived under tribute to the Pagan Kings for 55 years, of course, up to the reign of King Athelstan. Who began to reign in the year 925.

Circa 935	<p>King Athelstan came to Beverley in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, to receive the merits and protection of Blessed John and vowed that if, by the Saint's intercession, he was the victor over the Scots, he would return to the church of Beverley and exalt it with munificent gifts.</p> <p>Who defeated Constantine the King of the Scots, and the exact whole of Scotland with the adjacent islands became the empire of the same Athelstan and of his successors the Kings of England, and he returned to Beverley.</p>
938	<p>King Athelstan, in the thirteenth year of his reign, and from the first founding of the abbey at Beverley 256 years, and from the deposition of Blessed John 217 on the advice of Wlstan Archbishop of York made and ordained the church of Beverley collegiate, and decided that the original priests would in future be secular canons, and would wear canonical habit; seven true clerks who would wear an appropriate dress, and it was decided that they would be called Levites.</p> <p>And in that year Athelstan gave his house of Beverley, to St John, Archbishop Wlstan and their successors. He gave as well in the same year to the church at Beverley and the canons, his thraves in the East Riding, and sanctuary, wherever the crime had been committed: and three years later he was buried at Malmesbury, in the year <u>939</u>.* (<i>Actually 941.</i>)</p>
1037	<p>in the time of Pope John XX, Blessed John is canonized and in the same year is translated by Alfric who was then Archbishop of York, through whom also in the same year are organised first in the church of Beverley, as guardians of the church, a chancellor and Precentor.</p> <p><i>Note the phrase 'in the time of'. This has been taken to mean that Pope John XX canonized John. This is incorrect. At this date Holy people could be added to the canon of the saints at the discretion of the Bishop. Papal approval was not required. Pope Alexander III (1159-81) began to reserve the cases of canonization to the Holy See. Another interesting fact is that owing to an earlier numbering deficiency in the list of Popes, John XX is known as 'the non-existent Pope.' John XIX, (or John XX,) was Pope from 1024-1032. The Pope at the time of John's canonization was his successor Benedict IX, (Pope 1032-48). The next John, John XXI didn't rule until 1276 and for only 254 days! It was he who 'skipped' the number XX and became John XXI. Dual-numbered John XXI (XX) Pedro Julião selected the number XXI because he believed that "Popes John XV" through "XIX" should have been numbered "XVI" through "XX". (See 'Pope John numbering' on Wikipedia.)</i></p>
Circa 1051-60	<p><i>Archbishop Cynsige gave the church a tower with 2 bells</i></p>
1064	<p>Aldred, Archbishop of York established that the seven canons of Beverley, who until then were conversing together and living together with their clerks and servants in a single refectory and dormitory in the Bedern, would have individual prebendal houses, in which they would live freely. And in the same year he established and ordained that the seven canons would have under them a single vicar; and in the same year was ordained by the same father an eighth canon with his vicar.</p>
	<p><b><i>Note to the above text. Some of the dates (3) were patently incorrect and have been changed. The events in italics are not mentioned in the original text and have been inserted from other sources. This is the only exact time sequence we have, albeit from a late text (early 16<sup>th</sup> century.) The text has no earlier provenance but was used by John Leland in the 1530-40s, either from this text or an earlier lost original.</i></b></p>
Mid 12 <sup>th</sup> century	<p>Building of the Norman church. Font dated 1160-70</p>
12 September 1188	<p>Fire burns Beverley 'and all its churches'.</p>
C1190- before 1206	<p>Building of the choir and eastern transepts complete by 1206. The two main transepts follow before c 1218</p>

1197	Rediscovery of St John's tomb during clearance of ruins of Norman choir
Circa 1214- 1220	Fall of the tower over the eastern crossing destroying parts of the retrochoir, eastern transepts, and south choir aisle.
1234-59	Re-roofing of the retrochoir and eastern transepts
1244 and 1253	2 gifts of 40 oaks from Sherwood Forest by Henry III
1261	Dedication of the high altar by Archbishop Geoffrey Ludham ( <i>not confirmed by documentary evidence, although he was present at a convocation in Beverley at this time.</i> )
1294	Repairs to the Minster. (Evidence from indulgence given by Archbishop Romeyn)
1292	Contract issued to Roger of Faringdon, a London goldsmith, for a new shrine for St John.
1308	Remaining funds from the shrine fund transferred to the fabric fund. Building of the nave starts with the south side leading to a church built over the charnel on the south west corner
21 June 1308	Indulgence of 40 days granted by Archbishop Greenfield for contributions to shrine and fabric. High altar of Church of St John the Evangelist dedicated to St John of Beverley
1315-17	"Great Famine" likely to have halted construction for some time, perhaps as late as 1322-5
1319-c1330	Construction of reredos and nave north aisle walls bays 22-27 (same masons' marks.)
1324	Altar of St Martin moved from the nave to the Charnel
1334 Aug 21	William Melton's register: "An order to Nicolas de Siglesthorn, our receiver at Beverley, to pay ten marks to the keeper of the fabric, towards the fabric of the high altar there, and twenty marks towards the fabric of the nave."
1328- after 1340	Construction of Percy Canopy
1348-9	The Great Plague reaches Beverley.
1352 6 May	William Melton's register: Commission to William de Bokenham, prior of the Carmelites at Coventry, to wash away with holy water a stain of Blood at Beverley minster
c1360 or before	Work begins on the remainder of the nave arcades and the two western towers
Latest 1358	Date of tie beam in eastern nave roof, probably indicating when the nave roof, trusses 1-42 (to the porch bay,) was finally put in place
c1365	Date of tie beam in western nave roof probably indicating when the nave roof, frames 43 -61 (porch to western towers,) was finally put in place
1381	1381 A visitation imposed by Archbishop Neville on the canons led to a clerical strike when the canons removed themselves to London, and the vicars choral to Lincoln, leaving Neville to move some of his canons from York to Beverley to take their place. <i>Beverley was highly involved in the more general Peasants Revolt from 1381.</i>
1388	The strike ended and Neville was impeached for high treason and fled the country.
10 June 1388	Release of timber from South Burton wood, estate of Archbishop Neville after petition to the King
1388-1400	Timber roof of nave bays 43-61 constructed
1386-1399	Heraldry of Great West Window (recorded and dated by Dugdale, 1661)
1391	Licence from the Governors of the Town for the production of 3,000 'tegulae' called 'Waltyle',) per year at Grove Hill. (Bricks for nave vault?)
1394	Stone for the vault of the nave delivered to the Minster from the Beck by sledge
1421	Visit by Henry 5 <sup>th</sup> to give thanks for victory at Agincourt. St John added to saints of Royal household.
1445-6	Repairs (Beverley Minster Fabric Roll.)
1531-2	Repairs (Fabric Roll.)

1548	Dissolution of College by Edward VI. Site granted to Sir Michael Stanhope and John Bellew. Church sold to the town for £100. Demolition of Chapter House, St Martins, and ancillary buildings.
1552	12 governors of Beverley petitioned for and received, rents towards the repair of the Minster by Decree of Exchequer dated 28 November. The Decree returned to the 12 Governors and their successors the 'rentes issues and profittes of all the landes tenements and hereditamentes belonging to the two late Chauntries of S John of Beverley and S William founded in the Collegiate Church of Sayncte John of Beverley aforesaid..' This became The Old Fund which still exists today and provides funds for the continuing upkeep and maintenance of the Minster.
1578, 1579 et seq	Repairs to the fabric
1624	Possible repairs to the north transept. (Plaque on outside west wall of transept at parapet height.)
1664	Recorded by Dugdale. Investigation of John's tomb in nave. Possible relocation of his tomb slab to 'Virgins' tomb in the nave under the relocated canopy from Nicholas de Huggate's tomb in the north transept. Recorded and drawn in situ by Henry Johnston, January 1670.
1693	Repairs (No details available.)
20 June 1717	Condition report on the Minster by Mr Thackray, master mason
June 1721	Dismantling of the lantern and clock from central tower.
14 <sup>th</sup> August 1721	Timber supplied for north transept roof from Sandbeck Estate, near Maultby.
1718-1731	Repairs to north transept involving straightening north gable, rebuilding 2 northern bays from arcade upwards, removing stone vault and replacing with wood and lath & plaster, removal of central lantern and rebuilding of central tower under supervision of Nicholas Hawksmoor and William Thornton of York.
1724	Construction of Treadwheel crane in central tower
1726-1763	Further repairs to other areas of the Minster. Supply of font cover from Thornton (1731), marble for the choir floor from Leghorn in Tuscany, (1728), supply of stone from Brodsworth quarry (1731), and Roche Abbey (1732), freight of the 'eagle' (for the altar reredos,) from London to Hull, and then to Beverley, and for gold leaf for it, (1734), lead roofing (1735), timber from Beningborough (1736), bricks from Hull, cobbles from Spurn, more Brodsworth stone, (1740), repair to 'south west low leads' including a new roof (1747), north transept roof (high roof from Dome to gable end) (1750), etc.. Construction of the screen designed by Hawksmoor.
1756, 1758	Design for new central tower from John Carr of York to replace Dome. Not carried out.
1769	Installation of new organ by John Schnetzler
1787	Statues of John and Athelstan by William Collins of Driffield
18 June 1812	Report on the State of Beverley Minster by William Shout master mason of York Minster.
1812- 1830	Further repairs overseen by Thomas Rickman/Fowlers of Wintringham, master mason William Comins 1825-30. This included reordering of the liturgical arrangements into the choir and the re-carving of the west side of the reredos by William Comins. He also removed the galleries from the nave, dismantled the baldachino over the high altar and removed the tester over the choir stalls.
1824	Hawksmoor's dome removed
1865-1880	Repairs and cleaning under Sir G. G. Scott including new organ screen carved by James Elwell of Beverley and new floors, altar rails etc.
1875	Removal of Hawksmoor's screen. This went into storage and reappeared in a garden in N. Lincs in 1916.
1895-1912	Introduction of new statues at the west end by Canon Nolloth, carved by 'Mr Smith' and John and son Bryant Baker. John Baker restored the minstrel carvings in the north aisle of the nave. His other son, Robert Baker carved the statues in the niches over the choir stalls.

1901	Canon Nolloth introduced a ring of 10 new bells and added Great John to the southwest tower. New quarter chimes composed by John Cammidge, minster organist
1916	New organ superstructure designed by Dr Arthur Hill
1921	Construction of the Cenotaph in the south transept.
1927	East window cleaned and restored
1931	Henin Cross placed in Great War Memorial chapel
1936	Tomb slab inscribed to St John placed in the nave floor.
1961-62	34 tapestry panels based on the life and work of St John presented on permanent loan to the Minster by Hull Regional College of Art.
1962	Processional cross donated. Organ restored at a cost of £9000
1965	Oak screen erected inside the north porch.
1968-69	Provosts, incumbents and organists names recorded in the north quire aisle on the back of the stalls. Lectern provided for St Catherine's chapel.
1970	New round altar table provided for the nave.
1972/73	400 new chairs and carpeting for the nave. Cleaning and redecoration of vaulting and walls in east end of the chancel. Similar work carried out in the east transept.
1974	Sanctuary chair moved to the north end of the altar table (from north choir aisle?).
2004	New window and other fittings in retrochoir by Helen Whittaker of Barley Studios at Dunnington.
2007	Opening of Beverley Minster shop in north transept
2015	New chairs for nave
2020	Southeast lesser transept, repairs to stonework and replacement of lead roof.
2021	East nave roof, replacement of timbers and replacement of lead roof. West nave roof, replacement of lead roof.
2021	Regilding of clock face
2022	Clock spring replacement
2023-2024	Restoration and refurbishment of bells, and Great John striking hammer etc.

