

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL

A brief history

1

1715 - The beginning



In the early 1700s, there was only one church in Birmingham, St Martin's in the Bullring. As the population grew to over 10,000, a new church had to be built. That church was St Philip's. The first act in our parish registry is the baptism of a boy called Philip!

1885-97 - The windows

2



A wealthy lady in the parish, Emma Chadwick Villers Wilkes, used money left by her late brother to pay for a stained glass window depicting the ascension of Jesus. Edward Burne-Jones, the artist, was so impressed by his own work that he made three more, the Nativity, the Crucifixion and the Last Judgement.

3

1905 - A new Cathedral



From 1715-1905, Birmingham was part of the diocese of Lichfield. With the growing population, Birmingham became its own diocese. Charles Gore, the first Bishop of Birmingham, did not want to build a new Cathedral, so chose to convert St Philip's.

1940 - Birmingham Blitz

4



In the Second World War, Birmingham was bombed, due to the many factories based here. The Birmingham Civic society made sure that the Cathedral's stained glass windows and the organ were moved to a slate mine for the duration of the war. This was a good idea, as the Cathedral was bombed in 1940.

5

1989 - A royal visit



In 1989, HM Queen Elizabeth II visited Birmingham Cathedral on Maundy Thursday to give out Maundy money to the people of Birmingham. Every year the monarch travels to a different city, and this was the only time she came to the Cathedral. On the same visit, she also opened a new space for the choir in the Cathedral, the Undercroft.

2023 - Divine Beauty

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In 2023, with help from the National Lottery, Birmingham Cathedral embarked on a huge project to renovate the four stained glass windows. The Divine Beauty project cleaned years of dirt and grime from the windows, and restored them to their original glory.