

ENGLISH MEDIEVAL CATHEDRALS IN CONTEXT

This course will be held on THURSDAY MORNINGS from 11.00-13.00 at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EP. It will start on 25th January 2018 and run for SIX WEEKS to 1st March 2018, and will be led by JOHN MCNEILL

Although the later conferment of cathedral status on medieval churches can easily obscure the fact, England's medieval complement of cathedrals never grew to anything like the number initially envisaged by Pope Gregory the Great. Nonetheless the seventeen dioceses acknowledged as existing by the fifteenth century gave rise to one of the most remarkable groups of medieval ecclesiastical precincts to survive in Europe. This series of six lectures will examine just five English medieval cathedrals - and do so from the perspective of their origin, location and architectural character. Two of them, Canterbury and Winchester, still occupy essentially the same sites as were established in the early Anglo-Saxon period. The other three were established as new diocesan sees after the Norman Conquest, as late as the thirteenth century in the case of Salisbury. Their origins, the communities they accommodated, and their specifically local traditions go some way towards explaining their very varied character, but there is much that suggests their architectural particularity may have been valued in its own right.

1. **Introduction to English medieval cathedrals** - their foundation, distribution and patterns of use.
2. **Canterbury**: Anglo-Saxon Origins and Post-Conquest Reconstructions.
3. **Winchester**: The largest and richest English cathedral - eclecticism and late medieval ambition.
4. **Durham**: A bishop with extraordinary powers - the triumph of Anglo-Norman monasticism.
5. **Exeter**: Change and Continuity - medieval England's longest-running cathedral building campaign.
6. **Wells**: Somerset in the late middle ages - the greatest cathedral of fourteenth-century Europe.

John McNeill lectures for the Department of Continuing Education at Oxford University and is a Vice-President of The London Art History Society, in addition to being the Honorary Secretary of the British Archaeological Association. He has published widely on medieval architecture, and has a long-standing interest on the art and architecture of English cathedrals.