

Be a Cathedral Detective!



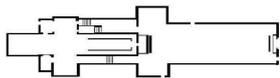
Welcome to Rochester Cathedral. Looking carefully at the outside of any building can tell you a lot about the building. Use this trail to find out more about Rochester Cathedral. Start at the West front of the cathedral.



Name of detective _____

Old buildings tell many stories.

This cathedral has seen wars and sieges, and been visited by many famous people (including Henry 8th, Elizabeth 1st and 2nd, and Charles Dickens).



The way it is built tells us things about the beliefs of those who built it. If you flew above the cathedral like a bird, what shape would you see?

The Castle

Turn around and look at the Castle. That was built in Norman times, like the nave of the present cathedral. How would you describe the condition of the castle today? Do you think the inside of the cathedral will be in the same condition?

What are your reasons?



The Spire

Look at the spire. Why do you think builders put high pointed spires on churches?



What is on the spire?

What is this for?

What is on the top of the spire?

What does this tell us?

Pilgrims' Passage

Move around to the north door of the cathedral. Look towards the High street. The passage ahead of you is the Pilgrims' Passage. Pilgrims are people who make a journey to a holy place. Why do you think people would make these long and sometimes dangerous journeys?



The Story of William of Perth

William was a baker from Scotland. He set out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1201 and stayed in Rochester whilst on his journey. Sadly he was murdered just outside Rochester, and his body was buried in the cathedral. Healing miracles were said to happen at his tomb, which is why Rochester became an important place of pilgrimage. Where might pilgrims visit today?

Gundulf's Tower

Now continue along the north side, passing under an old archway near the north door. You will see on your right the oldest of the cathedral, built by the Norman bishop, Gundulf.



What do you think this tower might have been used for originally?

St. Nicholas Church

As you go back round to the West Front notice that there is a church beside the cathedral. It is unusual to have a church right beside a cathedral. This church was built when the Benedictine monks, who wanted to keep the cathedral for themselves, threw out the townsfolk. Why do you think they did this?

St. Nicholas is now used as church offices.



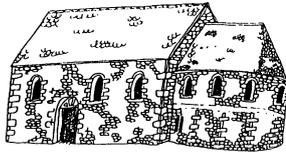
West Front

Go back to the West Front of the cathedral. Many churches are built with their entrances in the west, and the most important part, the High Altar, in the east. In the natural world what happens each day in the east and the west?

What do you think this has to do with the church?

The First Cathedral

The first cathedral was built here 1400 years ago by the Saxons. There are two lines of cobbles on the road which mark the position of the walls of the first cathedral. With a partner try to work out how many people might have fitted in that church.



cobbles on the road which mark the position of the walls

The West Façade

The scene carved over the Great West Door displays the work of the medieval stonemasons at their best. Who do you think is shown in the centre of the picture?



The Garden

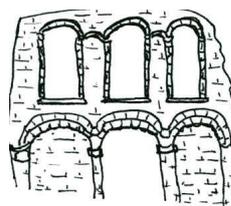
Now go round the south side and into the garden. As you go look at the stone which was used to construct the cathedral. The West Front is made of Caen stone from Normandy and the side walls from local Kentish ragstone. The western part of the cathedral (Nave) is Norman. In the garden look for evidence of later re-building? Can you see the flying buttress that was erected in the nineteenth century to stop the cathedral falling down?

Can you find this statue?
Who are the people?



The Monastery

The Norman bishop, Gundulf, as well as building the Norman cathedral and parts of the castle, also founded a Benedictine monastery here. The remains of the monastery, closed in 1540 by Henry 8th, can be seen in the garden.



Look for these three large windows. See if you can find out what they used to be.