

## 14 December 2022

### Angels revealed!

The high-level scaffolding inside the Cathedral is providing close-up views of the impressive medieval hammerbeam roof that has been restored several times over the centuries, and our wonderful carved and gilded angels - each carrying a shield depicting an aspect of the crucifixion of Jesus.

The symbols on this [shield of a tunic and dice](#) reference the Gospel accounts of the Roman soldiers dividing Jesus' clothes among them by gambling.

While on this [shield](#) the symbols appear to be a spear and a sponge on a stick, referencing the Gospel accounts of a sponge on a stick being soaked in cheap wine and offered to Jesus to drink, and one of the soldiers piercing Jesus' side with a spear.

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)



---

## 5 December 2022

### Updated time lapse video showing progress during November

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the ongoing archaeological excavations being undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) to enable the construction of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension.



Archaeologists have now carefully unearthed more than 850 complete burials, an incredible density given that they are only investigating a 195 sq m area (measuring 13 x 15m or 8% of the total graveyard).

The video shows a new metal access ramp put in place to allow excavation of burials in the original earth access ramp. If you look carefully, at the far end of the new access ramp you can see the excavation of a lead coffin containing the mortal remains of Edward Entwistle Wilkinson (d.1846), who was a surgeon at the Leicester Infirmary – the photograph shows

the coffin more clearly. Mathew Morris from ULAS will be telling us more about Edward Entwhistle Wilkinson in a future blog.

Inside the Cathedral the internal time lapse camera has been relocated to the top of the scaffolding at the west end of the nave and the short video shows the Cathedral's wonderful gilded angels, as well as paint testing ahead of the full redecoration work, and high level electrical re-wiring.

The video can be seen below: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/783311128/e7ffe216d>

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

#### **4 November 2022**

#### **Updated time lapse video showing progress during October**

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the ongoing archaeological excavations being undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) to enable the construction of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension.

Archaeologists have now carefully unearthed more than 800 complete burials, showing how important this place has been to local people for centuries. At present, none of the burials appear to be earlier than the 12th century, suggesting the burial ground started in the post-conquest period.



Roman archaeology is visible and looks to be simple and straightforward, so it is currently anticipated all archaeology excavation will be finished by January 2023.

The video can be seen below:

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/776561060/879de21b5f>

External stonework repair and restoration is now complete so the scaffolding will be removed over the coming weeks. The last element of this work was the rebuilding of two large buttresses on the southeast corner.



Inside the Cathedral plaster repair is underway along with paint sampling and testing for the roof timbers and limewash for the walls. The internal time lapse camera has been relocated to the top of the scaffolding at the west end of the nave to record the redecoration work when it gets underway.

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

## 14 October 2022 Works progressing to North Porch floor

A new waterproof concrete floor slab has now been [laid in the North Porch](#), and this also provides a solid ceiling to the boiler room below.

Onto this, a new stone and ceramic tile floor will be formed and landscaping works adjacent to the porch will enable un-stepped access to be achieved.

Some of the [external scaffolding](#) on the south side of the Cathedral has been removed offering a glimpse of the completed external stonework repair and restoration, including the new Wyvern grotesque (next to the flagpole). The remaining scaffolding will be dismantled over the coming weeks.



Inside the Cathedral the internal [‘birdcage’ scaffolding](#) has now been fully erected to enable high-level internal works such as new lighting and redecoration to get underway.

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

**3 October 2022**

## **Updated time lapse videos showing progress during September**

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the ongoing archaeological excavations being undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) to enable the construction of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension. If you look carefully, you can spot various visiting groups using the specially constructed platform at the far end of the site to view the excavations.

There were some technical issues with the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral during the month. The footage shows internal scaffolding being erected to enable high-level internal works such as new lighting and redecoration to get underway.

The video can be seen below.

Internal - <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/764227736/8bd17300ff>

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

**2 September 2022**

## **Works underway to North Porch floor**

Work has begun to replace the floor of the North Porch, removing the old and defective structure and enabling un-stepped access to be achieved. The initial stage of the work has created a large hole, clearly visible from Guildhall Lane (see photograph), attracting lots of interest from passersby.

The work is being carefully undertaken without disturbing the stone bases to the porch and the structure above, including the lime render pargetted panels on either side of the porch and the impressive and unusual wooden medieval vaulted ceiling.

A new floor slab will provide a solid ceiling to the boiler room below and onto this a new stone and ceramic tile floor will be formed, complete with drainage. New external gate posts and gates to the North Porch will also be fitted.

<https://vimeo.com/753850789/143b73a440>

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)





---

**19 August 2022**

**Updated time lapse videos showing progress during July**

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the ongoing archaeological excavations to enable the construction of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension. The work is being undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) with the excavation area fully covered to provide weather protection.

Video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows the limecrete floor slab being laid. Limecrete creates a breathable floor base, is durable with some flex and so a good alternative to concrete, particularly in heritage buildings. The limecrete has now cured and hardened sufficiently for internal scaffolding to be erected that will enable the high-level internal works such as new lighting and redecoration.

Further into the construction programme, once the internal scaffolding has been removed, an attractive new stone floor, level throughout and including energy-efficient underfloor heating will be installed on top of the limecrete slab.

The video can be seen below.

Internal: <https://vimeo.com/746905080/7720d3a856>

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

**29 July 2022**

**Progress with the new floor**

A limecrete slab has been laid inside the Cathedral to form the base for the new floor. Limecrete is a combination of natural hydraulic lime and lightweight aggregate or sand. It creates a breathable floor base allowing escape of water vapour, is durable with a certain amount of flex, and therefore a good alternative to concrete. These properties mean it is widely used to restore and protect heritage buildings.



The limecrete will need to cure for a few weeks so it hardens sufficiently for the internal scaffolding to be erected that will enable the high level internal works such as new lighting and redecoration.

Further into the construction programme, once the internal scaffolding has been removed, an attractive new stone floor, level throughout and including energy-efficient underfloor heating will be installed on top of the limecrete slab.

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)



---

## 11 July 2022

### Updated time lapse videos showing progress during June

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows the resumption of major archaeological excavations to enable the construction of the basement for the new visitor and learning centre extension. The work is being undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) with the excavation area fully covered to provide weather protection.

Video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows underground services installation, concrete strengthening works between the arcade stone columns, and infilling, levelling, and grading to create the formation layer for the new floor.

The videos can be seen below.

Internal - <https://vimeo.com/733589486/49c73c7615>

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

## 10 June 2022

### Updated time lapse videos showing progress during May

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows further ground works to form the basement of the new visitor and learning centre extension. This includes completion of reinforced concrete capping and ground beams to form a stable foundation and spread the weight of the above ground structure of the new extension. Also shown is removal of old foundation blocks from the now demolished Song School building and preparation of the area to enable Phase 2 archaeological excavations to commence, including installing a full covering to provide weather protection.

If you look carefully, you will spot the workmen on the scaffolding on the south façade of the Cathedral undertaking external stonework repair and restoration works.

Video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows further works to reduce the floor level and excavation of service trenches – necessary preparatory works for the new stone floor and underfloor heating.

The video can be seen below.

**Internal:** <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/724533470/1456dd6cd4>

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

## 18 May 2022

### New grotesques arrive

Four new carved stone grotesques were welcomed to the Cathedral by specially invited guests on Wednesday 18 May.

The *Leicester Cathedral Revealed* project includes the repair and restoration of external stonework on the south façade and as part of that work, the new grotesques will be installed as an integral part of the parapet wall, to replace old, weather-worn ones.



The four carved creatures were selected by members of the Cathedral community to complement the fox and tiger grotesques installed in 2018, and further represent aspects of local history and culture.

See my previous update on 14 April for further background information about the inspiration behind the choice of the new grotesques.

The specially invited guests each had a connection to one of the creatures:

- **White Boar** – Iain Gordon, General Manager of the King Richard III Visitor Centre
- **Peregrine Falcon** – Jim Graham from Leicestershire and Rutland Ornithological Society
- **Wyvern** – Cllr Ted Cassidy who is also an Honorary Canon of Leicester Cathedral
- **Leicester Longwool Sheep** – Thomas Cole, President of the Leicester Longwool Sheep Breeders Association and Malcolm Britton, Honorary Canon of Leicester Cathedral

Skilled sculptor/carver Alan Necchi working for local firm Midland Stone Masonry carved all the grotesques applying a similar style and expression to form a ‘family’ of stone creatures on the south elevation. They will be installed over the next few weeks and will be visible when the scaffolding is removed later in the summer.



The new grotesques are funded with a grant from the Culture Recovery Fund for programmes of major works undertaken by specialist builders and craftspeople on churches and cathedrals. Match funding comes from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and the Dulverton Trust

I hope the complete family of grotesque creatures will be an encouraging sign that our Cathedral has an exciting future and that they form a fascinating building feature, revealing the living stories of Cathedral and its role as a beating heart for our City and County.

Simon Bentley  
 Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

**13 May 2022**

**Updated time lapse videos showing progress during April**

Updated video from the time lapse camera outside the Cathedral shows further ground works to form the basement of the new visitor and learning centre extension. This includes removal of the guide wall used to install the 70 rotary piles that define the basement, cropping the top of these piles and testing their integrity, followed by installing a reinforced concrete capping beam on top. The capping beam increases the rigidity of the foundations and reduces movement to form a stable foundation and spread the weight of the above ground structure of the new extension.

Video from the time lapse camera inside the Cathedral shows removal of the floor slab and excavation work to reduce the floor level.

The video can be seen below.

**Internal** <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/715635869/1248700961>



Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

## 6 May 2022

### Progress carving new grotesques

The new Leicester grotesques featuring a [Longwool sheep](#) and [White Boar](#) are taking shape nicely, as the accompanying photographs show.

See my previous update on 14 April for additional background information and photos.

It is anticipated that all four new grotesques will arrive at the Cathedral during week commencing 16 May for installation into the parapet wall high up on the south façade.

The grotesques are funded with a grant from the Culture Recovery Fund for programmes of major works undertaken by specialist builders and craftspeople on churches and cathedrals. Match funding comes from the National Heritage Lottery Fund and Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

## 14 April 2022

### New Grotesques

An important element of *Leicester Cathedral Revealed* now underway is the repair and restoration of external stonework on the south façade.

An exciting part of this is replacing four badly weathered and deteriorated grotesques, to complement the fox and tiger grotesques installed in 2018.

Skilled and experienced stone carvers from Midland Stone Masonry who created the fox and tiger grotesques will carve the new ones, applying a similar style and



*New Peregrine Falcon grotesque (with the plaster model or maquette that the stone carver works from) awaiting final carving and finishing*

expression to form a ‘family’ of grotesques on the south elevation.

Following suggestions from members of the Cathedral community the new grotesques will feature a Leicester Longwool Sheep, Peregrine Falcon, White Boar and Wyvern to further represent local history and culture.

The new grotesques will be carved from Peak Moor stone, as were the fox and tiger and will be installed in the next few months.

A visit this week to the carving workshop showed encouraging progress.

Photograph: Caption - New Peregrine Falcon grotesque (with the plaster model or maquette that the stone carver works from) awaiting final carving and finishing



**Peregrine Falcons** are now an established feature at Leicester Cathedral and in the city centre – their exploits, behaviour and ecology attract much interest and comment.

See <http://leicesterperegrines.org.uk/> for the latest news of the Cathedral’s peregrines.

The figure of a reptilian beast – known as a **Wyvern** – is carved into many of the Victorian buildings in Leicester as well as sitting on top of the Town Hall itself. It is also on top of the Clock Tower and the Corn Exchange building in the form of a weather vain. The origin of the word wyvern comes from thirteenth-century word wyver, which is derived from the French wyvere, meaning both "viper" and "life." Leicester’s wyvern connection originates from 1619 when the Arms of the City of Leicester were confirmed during a Heraldic Visitation. Originally consisting of a simple cinquefoil with a battle-scarred wyvern perched on top, the inspiration for the design came from motifs that were associated with the city’s historic earls.



*New Wyvern grotesque – awaiting final carving and finishing*

A **White Boar** was the personal device or badge of King Richard III and an early instance of the use of boars in heraldry. Livery badges were important symbols of political affiliation in the Wars of the Roses, and Richard distributed very large numbers at his coronation and the installation of his son Edward as Prince of Wales, for which an order of 13,000 badges in fustian cloth is recorded.

**Leicester Longwool sheep** date back to the 1700s, and were found in the Midland counties of England, originally developed in Dishley Grange, Leicestershire by Robert Bakewell.

Bakewell was the foremost exponent of modern animal-breeding techniques in the selection of livestock. The Leicester Longwool in the 1700s was slow-growing and coarsely boned. They now have been developed to gain weight quickly and are fast-growing. Leicester Longwool was one of the first pure sheep breeds introduced to Australia, having been introduced in 1826. The Leicester Longwool has been used to improve many sheep breeds because of its meaty carcass and heavy fleece.

Simon Bentley

Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)



*Stone carver at work on the new White Boar grotesque*

---

## 8 April 2022

### Updated time lapse videos showing progress during March

Updated video from the time lapse camera **outside** the Cathedral shows the rotary piling work that has bored the 70 deep holes needed to form the contiguous piled wall that defines the basement of the new visitor and learning centre extension.

If you look carefully you may also spot the top of the scaffolding being wrapped to protect the uncovered and exposed parapet during external stonework repair and restoration works.

Video from the time lapse camera **inside** the Cathedral shows completion of asbestos removal, further trial holes being dug to investigate floor structure and removal of floor coverings prior to excavation work getting underway to reduce the floor level.

The video can be seen below.

**Internal** <https://vimeo.com/703274020/26b963d3a1>

Simon Bentley

Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

**24 March 2022**

## **Rotary piling and external stonework**

It has been a busy and fairly noisy few weeks for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*.

A rotary piling rig has been on site boring the 70 deep holes needed to form the contiguous piled wall that defines the basement of the new visitor and learning centre extension.

Repair and restoration of external stonework on the south façade is now underway, with the top section of the scaffolding wrapped to prevent water ingress along the uncovered and exposed parapet during wet weather.



An exciting part of these works we will be replacing four badly weathered and deteriorated grotesques, to complement the fox and tiger grotesques installed in 2018.

Following suggestions from members of the Cathedral community the new grotesques will feature a Leicester Longwool Sheep, Peregrine Falcon, White Boar and Wyvern to further represent local history and culture.

The same stone carver that created the fox and tiger grotesques will create the new ones, applying a similar style and expression to form a ‘family’ of grotesques on the south elevation.

There will be more on this in a future update.

Inside the Cathedral, asbestos removal has been completed and work has now commenced on stripping out the old mechanical and electrical infrastructure, removing floor coverings and reducing the level to enable the new underfloor heating system to be installed.



Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

**3 March 2022**

## **Updated time lapse videos showing progress during February**

Updated video from the time lapse camera **outside** the Cathedral shows continuing ground works for construction of the basement of the new visitor and learning centre extension. These works include probing to check the proposed pile locations for obstructions and voids and installation of the piling mat and guide wall in preparation for the arrival of the rotary



piling rig. This will bore the holes for installation of the contiguous piled wall that will define the basement of the new building.

Video from the time lapse camera **inside** the Cathedral shows asbestos removal, with a specialist contractor working within special enclosures to take out the asbestos lagging on old heating pipes and ducts. It also shows test pits being dug to assess the composition of the floor in preparation for the reduced level excavation necessary to install the underfloor heating and then the new level floor throughout.

The video can be seen below.

**Internal** - <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/698547571/7a632dae76>

Simon Bentley  
Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*  
[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

**24 February 2022**

## **Scaffolding, groundworks and asbestos removal**

Scaffolding has been erected on the south side of the Cathedral to enable urgent repair and restoration of external stonework, addressing serious issues with stone defects and weathered stonemasonry and improved safety for the public.



*Asbestos removal*

This is being undertaken as a discrete project within *Leicester Cathedral Revealed* with a grant from the Culture Recovery Fund for programmes of major works undertaken by specialist builders and craftspeople on churches and cathedrals. Match funding comes from the National Heritage Lottery Fund and Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

The scaffolding has enabled a bird's-eye view of the ground works for the new learning and visitor centre extension. The photograph shows construction of the guide wall that is necessary for the accurate installation of a contiguous piled wall that will define the basement of the new centre. Within this, Phase 2 of the archaeological excavation and investigation can then be safely undertaken. This will commence in April and could take up to 6 months.

Inside the Cathedral asbestos removal is now well underway, with a specialist contractor working within special enclosures to take out the asbestos lagging on old heating pipes and ducts. This should be completed in the next couple of weeks and then the next phase will be stripping out the old mechanical and electrical infrastructure, removing floor coverings and reducing the level to enable the new underfloor heating system to be installed.

Simon Bentley

Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*

[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)

---

**10 February 2022**

## **Updated time lapse videos**

Updated video from the time lapse cameras **outside** the Cathedral shows the completion of Phase 1 of the archaeological excavation and the start of ground works, including probing to checking the proposed pile locations for obstructions and voids before the piling rig arrives on site. A contiguous piled wall will be installed that will define the basement of the new visitor and learning centre extension. Within this, further archaeological excavation and investigation can be then be safely undertaken.

Video from the time lapse camera **inside** the Cathedral shows the decant, storage and protection operation to make the Cathedral ready for internal repair, restoration and renewal works.

Internal timelapse - <https://vimeo.com/698547156/6431f76dfa>

---

## **16 January 2022**

### **Decant and Storage Operation Completed**

This complex operation was carried out in the first two weeks of January, thanks to the hard work and support of the verger team and volunteers, together with a range of experts and specialist contractors.

Key elements of the operation included the following:

The assemblage of furniture known as the Archdeacon's Court that was at the east end of the Great South Aisle has been relocated by Midland Stone Masonry to the Church of St Michael, Edmonthorpe, under a loan agreement with The Churches Conservation Trust.



Helpful advice and assistance was provided by Philip Warren and colleagues from the Conservation and Collections Team at Leicestershire County Council, with packing and storage of fragile and precious items, including altar frontals, banners and memorial books.

Colonel Anthony Swallow Ret. from the Royal Leicestershire Regiment supervised the safe removal of the regimental standards from St George's Chapel. The Regiment are arranging for skilled and sensitive cleaning and stabilisation work on the standards, finials and poles, and will safely store them during building works.

The Richard III Funeral Pall and Crown display cabinet has been moved by AM System Ltd to the King Richard III Visitor Centre and installed close to the King's original burial site, alongside a short video display of the tomb.

AM System also took down the two large wall paintings in the north transept and securely packed them for onsite storage.

Local firm Stokes Removals managed the decant and storage of loose furniture, fittings and other items.



The Cathedral Organ has been fully covered by specialist firm Harrison & Harrison to protect it from dust and debris during building works.

With the Cathedral now clear, main contractor Messenger are undertaking general surveys, temporary removal of timber wall panels and the screen to St George's Chapel, and comprehensive protection works to memorials and key features.

The next stage is professional asbestos removal from heating ducts and other identified areas.

**Internal video** - <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/698546808/d52e2dde89>

Simon Bentley

Project Director for *Leicester Cathedral Revealed*

[simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org](mailto:simon.bentley@leicestercofe.org)