

## 6 GREAT EAST WINDOW

### *William's legacy*



The Great East Window was also designed by John Thornton and shows his distinctive style, with expressive faces and a vibrant colour palette.

If you look at the bottom row from the back of the chapel, you can find Archbishop William seated in the far right corner, enthroned above his coat of arms. William's legacy shaped the very fabric of the Minster, inspiring devotion from pilgrims and craftspeople over the centuries.

This masterpiece of medieval art depicts the beginning and end of all things.

## 7 ST MICHAEL'S CHAPEL

### *William becomes a saint*

After reports of miracles at William's tomb, Walter de Gray promoted his growing popularity and successfully campaigned for his canonisation. William was declared a saint on 18 March 1226.

Walter oversaw a programme of expansion in the Minster, starting in the South Transept, to create a cathedral worthy of a saint. His own tomb may even echo the design of one of William's early shrines.



This impressive tomb contains the remains of one of the Minster's most important Archbishops – Walter de Gray.

## 8 ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL

### *Saint or sinner?*

Information about William's character is scarce and often comes from his opponents. The Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux was openly critical of William, calling him "rotten from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head." In contrast, the Vita praised him as "reliable and faithful and worthy of the archbishop's throne." John of Hexham also wrote that William was well liked for his kindness and generosity. This was reflected in the story of the Ouse bridge, where the sheer size of the crowd welcoming him caused it to collapse!



On the south wall of this chapel, you will encounter a highly decorated image of St William, raising his hand in blessing.

## 9 THE CRYPT

### *Laid to rest*

Entry to stop 9 is via the Undercroft Museum in the South Transept, where you will see a film about William's shrines and walk through a fascinating exhibition about his life and miracles.



In 1538, King Henry VIII ordered the destruction of all shrines to saints in England, so William's magnificent shrines were dismantled and his coffin buried beneath the Nave floor. His coffin was rediscovered in the 1730s, but it was not until the late 1960s that William was finally laid to rest here in the Crypt.

As you end your tour, like centuries of pilgrims who have gone before, we invite you to find a moment of stillness at William's tomb.

In a cocoon of Norman stone, within a Roman sarcophagus, rests the remains of St William.

# ST WILLIAM OF YORK

## *His life and legacy*



## WELCOME TO YORK MINSTER

*Here you will find the resting place of St William of York*

He invites you to step with him into a tale of intrigue. Come meet his enemies, hear of a poisoned chalice and celebrate his miracles as you tread the pilgrim path to his tomb.



# 1 GREAT WEST WINDOW

*William's story begins*

William fitzHerbert can be found in a blue robe in the bottom row of this fabulous window, second character from the right. William was born in Winchester in the late 11th century. His mother Emma was a relative of King Stephen, and his royal connections enabled him to rise swiftly within the Church. He became Treasurer of York Minster and was later elected Archbishop of York. Powerful Cistercian monks, however, challenged his character and his royal ties, leading to the Cistercian Pope Eugenius III removing William from office.

St William, twice Archbishop of York, stands in the bottom row of the Great West Window.

# 2 ST CUTHBERT'S CHAPEL

*The miracle on the bridge*

In 1154, three of William's major Cistercian opponents died, enabling him to resume his position as Archbishop of York. As William returned in triumph, jubilant crowds came out to meet him, but as they were crossing the River Ouse, disaster struck. The wooden bridge collapsed, sending people tumbling into the water.

All was not lost, however, because William turned, made the sign of the cross and prayed and remarkably, nobody drowned. This was considered the first and only miracle of his lifetime.



St William's first miracle appears towards the top of the second large window from the west end.

# 3 BELL-FOUNDER'S WINDOW

*A poisoned chalice?*

Three weeks after his triumphant return in 1154, William fell ill after drinking from the Communion cup and tragically died. It was widely believed that his last remaining enemy, Archdeacon Osbert of Bayeux, had poisoned the chalice. William was buried in the centre of the Nave and after his death, reports of healing miracles unfolded at his tomb.



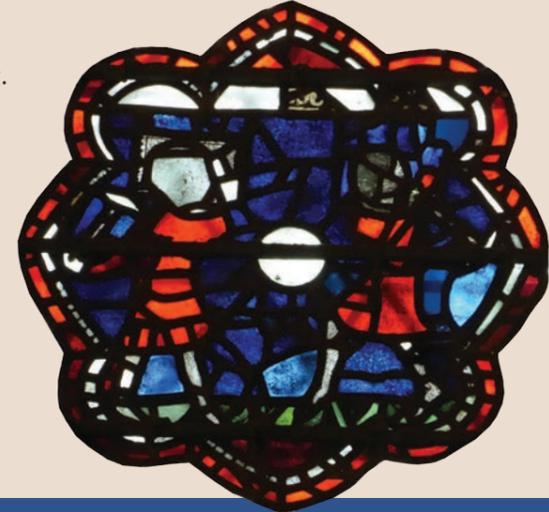
Bell-founder Richard Tunnoc is kneeling, offering the window that he paid for to St William of York.

# 4 THE CHAPTER HOUSE

*A fresh pair of eyes!*

As you enter this magnificent space, look for the second window on your left, which is dedicated to St William.

Higher up on the left are two figures in red who are fighting. They tell the gruesome story of Ralph and Besing, whose dispute over land ended with Ralph losing his eyes. However, Ralph was taken to St William's shrine where he miraculously received a new pair of eyes—said to be a different colour from his original ones, but he was delighted all the same!



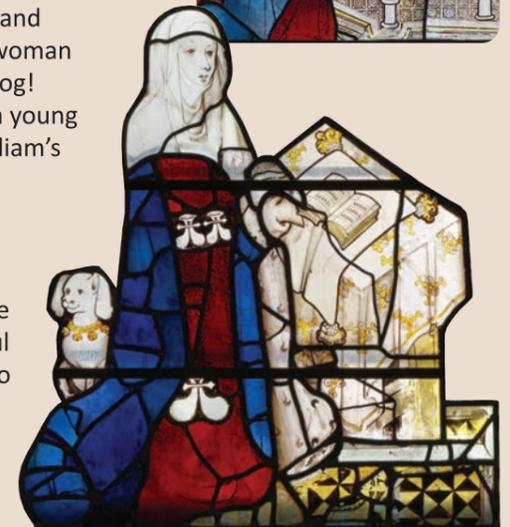
If you look closely at the fragments of coloured glass, you can see St William in the bottom centre, wearing his bishop's mitre.

# 5 ST WILLIAM WINDOW

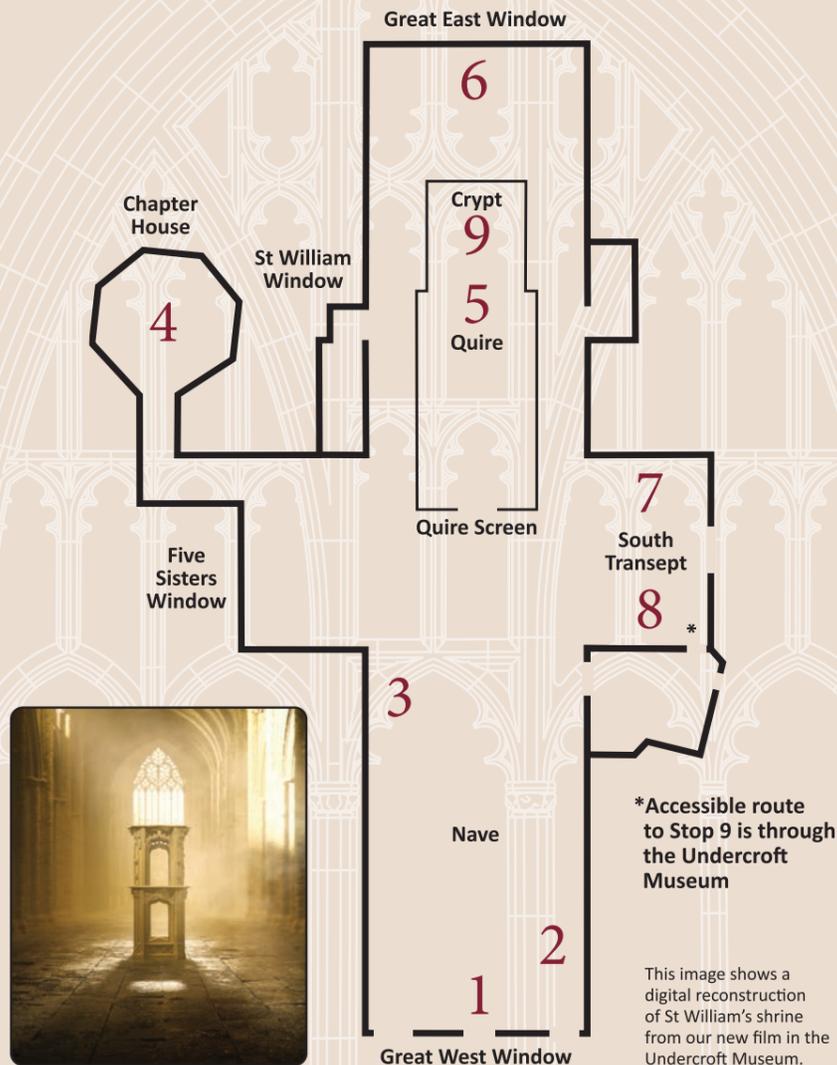
*Miracles at the tomb*

In 1177, more than twenty miracles were reported at William's tomb in a single day. They included healings of sight and hearing, and even a cure for a woman who had accidentally eaten a frog! The panel shown here depicts a young boy praying for a miracle at William's shrine.

The best view of these stained glass panels is from the Quire, where scenes from William's life and miracles appear in beautiful detail. The window is thought to be designed by the supremely talented John Thornton around the year 1414.



The window was funded by Lady Beatrice de Roos, seen in the bottom left-hand panel alongside her little dog, just visible as you exit the Quire from the ramp opposite the window.



This image shows a digital reconstruction of St William's shrine from our new film in the Undercroft Museum.