



Westminster Abbey - formally known as "The Collegiate Church of St Peter at Westminster" - has been the scene of royal coronations (and other royal events) for more than a thousand years. In this view of the church, we see the Great West Door.

We can step back in time - to the mid-eighteenth-century - to see how the Abbey appeared when Canaletto painted it in 1749. Although the church looks the same, the neighborhood is quite different!

We can still hear two bells from the time of Queen Elizabeth I (in the sixteenth century) - the Abbey's two oldest - which are chimed every day, just before the evening service. The Abbey has a total of ten bells.

And ... we can step inside (thanks to *LIFE* magazine) to view famous scenes which took place at the Abbey during the past 100 years.

What is the history of this famous church, where the Duke and Duchess of York were married (on April 26, 1923) and where the Duke was later crowned King George VI (on the 12th of May, 1937)? We learn more from the Abbey's official website:

Westminster Abbey is steeped in more than a thousand years of history. Benedictine monks first came to this site in the middle of the tenth century, establishing a tradition of daily worship which continues to this day.

The Abbey has been the coronation church since 1066 and is the final resting place of seventeen monarchs.

The present church, begun by Henry III in 1245, is one of the most important Gothic buildings in the country, with the medieval shrine of an Anglo-Saxon saint still at its heart.

A treasure house of paintings, stained glass, pavements, textiles and other artifacts, Westminster Abbey is also the place where some of the most significant people in the nation's history are buried or commemorated. Taken as a whole the tombs and memorials comprise the most significant single collection of monumental sculpture anywhere in the United Kingdom.

The Library and Muniment Room houses the important (and growing) collections of archives, printed books and manuscripts belonging to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, providing a centre for their study and for research into all aspects of the Abbey's long and varied history.

The church (which was damaged by Nazi bombs during World War II) was also the place where Prince William and Kate Middleton were married on April 29, 2011.

The venue has already been an important place in Wills' life. Among other things, the funeral of his mother - Princess Diana - took place there in September of 1997.

For other significant events at the Abbey, see these videos:

Funeral of Princess Diana - the coffin, followed by William and Harry - arrives at the church door;

Verdi - Lynne Dawson Sings at Princess Diana's Funeral - one of the Princess' favorite songs comes alive in the Abbey as Lynne Dawson and the BBC Singers perform "Libera me" from Verdi's "Requiem;"

Elton John, at Princess Diana's funeral, singing "Candle in the Wind" with rewritten words to fit the Princess (instead of its original subject - Marilyn Monroe);

Wedding of Prince William's great grandparents - Prince Albert ("Bertie"), the future King George VI, and his bride (Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon) - on April 26, 1923 (whose stories are featured in "The King's Speech");

Funeral of Charles Darwin, on April 26, 1882; and

Coronation of Queen Elizabeth I.

Click on the image for a much-better view.

Credits:

Image of Westminster Abbey, from 2006, was taken by Ellocharlie and placed online via Wikimedia Commons. No license or restrictions apply, as the image has been released into the public domain.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Westminster-Abbey-Scene-of-Royal-Events0>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Westminster-Abbey-Scene-of-Royal-Events0>

Media Stream



Westminster Abbey - Scene of Royal Events

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Westminster-Abbey-Scene-of-Royal-Events1>