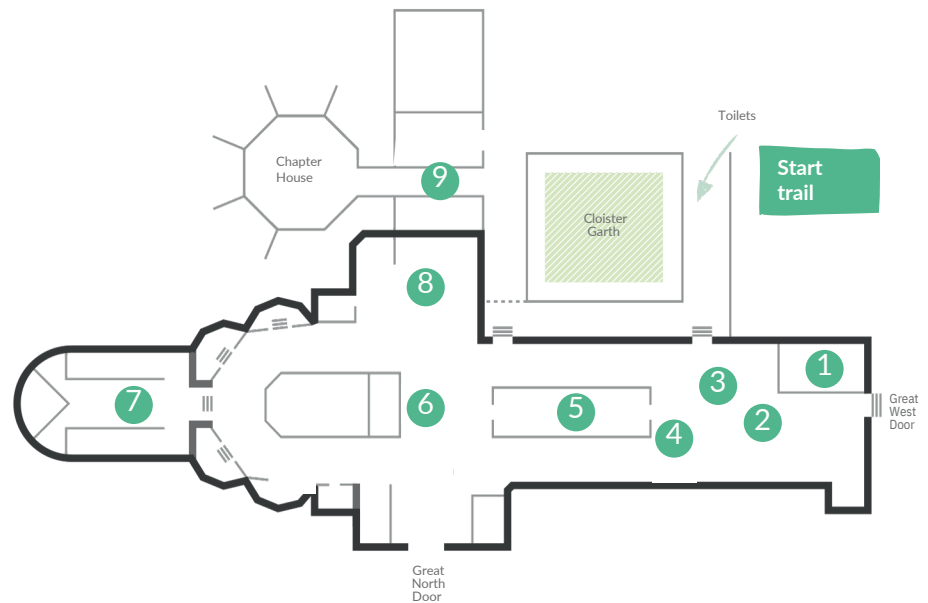


Abbey and Parliament

There has been a place of worship here for over 1,000 years, and today the Abbey is still a living church. The first stone Abbey, built by King Edward the Confessor, was completed in 1065. In the 1240s it was rebuilt in the Gothic style by King Henry III. Westminster Abbey has been the site of coronations since 1066 and over 3,000 people are buried or remembered here.

This map will help guide you around the Abbey. Follow the green dots in numerical order.

Top tip! If you have any questions, feel free to ask an Abbey Marshal or Abbey Guide in a red or blue gown.



1 The Coronation Chair

Since 1308, this chair has been used in coronations as the place where the monarch sits during important parts of the service, including the crowning. It was made on the orders of King Edward I to hold the Stone of Scone, the Scottish coronation stone, which he had captured. The chair was originally decorated with patterns of foliage and animals but has been damaged over time. You might notice the marks on the back, which are graffiti from Victorian schoolboys and visitors.



- In 1950 Scottish students broke into Westminster Abbey and 'reclaimed' the Stone of Scone, in an act of Scottish nationalism. The stone was returned to the Abbey but was formally given back to Scotland in 1996 as part of Scottish devolution. The stone only returns to the Abbey for coronations.
- In 1914, a small bomb was planted near the chair, possibly by the Suffragette movement. This act of protest aimed to draw attention to the campaign for women's voting rights. The explosion damaged the right side of the chair but luckily no one was hurt.
- Monarchs are known as the Defender of the Faith (Christianity). However, King Charles III's desire to be a defender of all faiths was reflected in his coronation ceremony; as he left the Abbey, he was blessed by leaders from a range of faith traditions.

Question: Why would this wooden chair be a target for political protests?

Stretch: To what extent do you think damaging famous or historical objects is an effective method of protest? Does this change if the object in question is housed within a church?

2 The Grave of the Unknown Warrior

This is the grave of a person who died fighting for Britain during the First World War. Their identity is unknown; they might have served in the Army, Navy or Air Force, and may have been from any part of the British Isles, Dominions or Colonies. The Unknown Warrior represents all those who died in war and have no known grave. Out of respect, it's the only grave in the Abbey that people do not walk on.

- Universal conscription was introduced in the UK for the first time during the First World War. All men between 18 and 41 had to join the military, unless medically exempt.
- Before the First World War, only men who owned property or paid a certain amount of rent could vote. In recognition of ordinary people's service during the war, the Representation of the People Act, 1918, granted voting rights to all men over 21 and some women over 30. Women gained equal voting rights in 1928.



Question: Many countries still have compulsory military service today. What are the pros and cons to universal conscription?

Stretch: Voting rights have changed since the Representation of the People Act, 1918. 18 is the voting age across the UK but 16 year olds can now vote in Welsh parliamentary and local elections. Do you think the voting age should be lowered to 16 across the UK?

3 Candles

Light is important in Christianity; in the Bible, Jesus is described as 'the light of the world'. Candles can also be a symbol of prayer. Both candle stations have an icon (a devotional painting of a religious figure) above them. They represent Mary with baby Jesus, and the adult Jesus. The Abbey is a Christian place of worship, but all are welcome to light a candle regardless of personal belief.

- Throughout the history of Westminster Abbey people have not always been able to practice their faith openly. Today our religious beliefs and practices, whatever they may be, are protected by law under the Human Rights Act, 1998.

Question: Today many people around the world are still persecuted for their beliefs. Take a moment to think of something that you are grateful to be able to do freely and without fear.



4 Scientists' Corner

This area of the Abbey is where people are buried or remembered for their contribution to science and our understanding of the world. There's no faith test to be remembered at the Abbey; people are chosen because of their contribution to a particular field of human knowledge, public service or the arts. The decision around new memorials is made by the Dean of Westminster, the most senior priest who is in charge. The Dean consults with lots of different people to help make the decision.

- Currently, there are no female scientists remembered in Scientists' Corner. Representation of women and people of colour in Westminster Abbey's memorials are limited. History has diminished their roles and importance; however, the Abbey is working towards greater representation.

Question: Can you think of someone who you believe should be memorialised at Westminster Abbey?

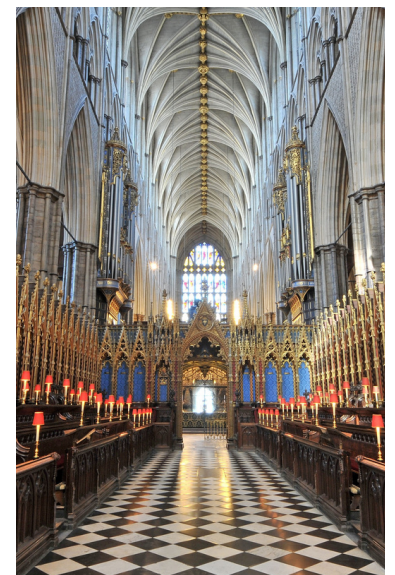
Stretch: People from minority communities have often been under-represented in public spaces in the UK. Do you feel this needs to be addressed and if so, how?



5 The quire

When the Abbey was a monastery, this is where the monks would have worshipped. Today the Abbey choristers sing in these stalls during daily services. As well as a boys' choir who attend boarding school here, the Abbey also has a girls' choir, based at St Margaret's Church. Look out for the seats labelled South Africa, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, which are reserved for representatives of these Commonwealth countries.

- When Parliament began to meet in the Palace of Westminster, they would sit in the quire stalls of St Stephen's Chapel. This is why MPs still sit opposite each other in Parliament today.
- The link between the church and parliament is further seen in the role of Lord Spirituals. 26 Church of England bishops sit in the House of Lords. Like other peers, they are appointed, not elected, and can influence legislation.
- The Commonwealth is a group of 56 countries who unite to promote democracy, human rights and protecting the environment. The monarch's role as Head of the Commonwealth is to respect and recognise the various faiths and cultures across the Commonwealth, and to promote tolerance and understanding.



Question: Is there a better shape for MPs to sit in? Why?

Stretch: As the Head of the Commonwealth is not a hereditary position, should a British monarch always be the head?

6 The high altar

This is where services such as weddings, funerals and coronations take place, as well as some of the daily services. The mosaic floor, called the Cosmati Pavement, is made from thousands of individually cut pieces of stone and glass. During a coronation, the Coronation Chair is placed in the centre of this floor. The most recent royal wedding (that of William and Catherine, The Prince and Princess of Wales) took place here in 2011.

- The UK was once an absolute monarchy, but today it is a constitutional monarchy by which the monarch rules, but power resides with the elected Parliament. During the coronation, the monarch must promise to obey the Rule of Law.
- Some MPs have specific roles in a coronation. This tradition reflects the relationship between the monarchy and parliament. During King Charles III's coronation, Penny Mordaunt, then Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Council, carried the Sword of State.
- To the left of the High Altar is Statesmen's Aisle where politicians are remembered including several Prime Ministers, such as William Gladstone, Robert Peel and Benjamin Disraeli.



Question: The monarch, like all people, must follow the law. If we do not agree with the law, in what ways can we challenge it?

Stretch: As we have seen, the role of parliament, the monarchy and the church are interlinked in British politics. To what extent do you believe there should be a more distinct separation of powers in the UK?

7 The Lady Chapel

Started by King Henry VII in 1503 and completed by his son, King Henry VIII, the Lady Chapel was designed as a burial place for Tudor monarchs. A lady chapel, dedicated to Mary (the mother of Jesus), can be found in most large churches. Look out for the colourful banners, belonging to the Knights of the Order of the Bath. This military order was established in 1725 and use the Lady Chapel for special services. Newly installed knights design their banners to reflect their careers and interests.

- The many Tudor symbols in this room would have acted as Tudor propaganda, illustrating the ruling dynasty's power. Visual propaganda has been used throughout British political history. During the First World War, Lord Kitchener, Minister for War, issued thousands of posters of himself pointing out at the viewer with the slogan "Your country needs you". This inspired a significant drive of volunteer soldiers before conscription was introduced. Lord Kitchener is remembered in this chapel.

- The architect Charles Barry took inspiration from this chapel when creating his design for the new Parliament building, after a fire in 1834. The symbol of Parliament, a portcullis, was likely lifted from this room. The portcullis is a symbol of a gate; some suggest it represents the gate to the kingdom.
- Oliver Cromwell was buried in this chapel. He led the Parliamentary army in the English Civil War, oversaw the removal of the English monarchy and served as Lord Protector from 1653-58. When the monarchy was reinstated, Cromwell's body was disinterred (removed).

Question: If you were asked to design a new emblem/logo for parliament, what shapes, symbols and images might you use?

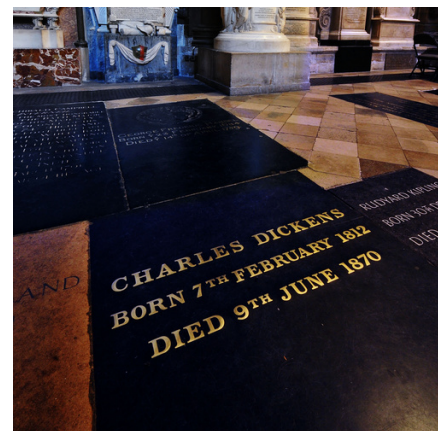
Stretch: Should politicians be memorialised in churches? Why or why not?



8 Poets' Corner

Over 100 poets and writers are buried or remembered in Poets' Corner. The first poet buried here, in 1400, was Geoffrey Chaucer, author of *The Canterbury Tales*. This wasn't because of his poetry but rather his job as Clerk of the King's Works, looking after royal properties. Nearly 200 years later, the poet Edmund Spenser asked to be buried near Chaucer. This started a tradition of literary memorials which still continues today, and also includes musicians, actors, singers and directors.

- Charles Dickens started his career as a political reporter and journalist. He reported on the activities of Parliament for five years. He felt he could influence opinion more through his fictional writing which often highlighted the plight of the poor.
- There are memorials to two abolitionists, writer Elizabeth Barrett Browning and lawyer Granville Sharp, in Poets' Corner. They both believed that enslavement and the transatlantic slave trade was wrong. In different ways, they fought to bring it to an end.



Question: In what ways can people influence opinion today?

Stretch: To what extent does the media have the power to influence politics? In what ways has this changed over time?

9 The Chapter House

The Chapter House was a meeting place for the monks who gathered every day to hear a chapter from the rules of St Benedict. In the entrance to the Chapter House is the oldest door in Britain, dating to the 1050s. Nearby is the Pyx Chamber, where pyxes (small boxes) containing gold and silver coins were kept. The Pyx Chamber is one of the few remaining parts of the first stone church and is nearly 1,000 years old.

- In the 1250s, the King's Council often met in the Chapter House. This may have been where the very first Parliament took place, led by Simon De Monfort in 1265, where the Barons forced King Henry III to uphold Magna Carta. Following this it was regularly used as a meeting place for the House of Commons. The Abbey owns a copy of Magna Carta, which is on display in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries.
- The crowd of people painted on the east wall may be an illustration of the politicians who met here in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Question: How does the shape of the seating in this room compare to the Houses of Parliament today?



Use this space to make notes and reflect.