



Guided Tour Script

May 2022

This booklet is intended to assist staff, volunteers and trainee guides in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

Although titled 'Tour Script', we do not expect anyone giving guided tours of the cathedral to stick to it word-for-word. It is rather intended to give some facts on the place and its history. Each of us interpret the building in our own way and this is an important feature of any worthwhile tour.

While it would be impossible in a booklet like this to cover all aspects of the cathedral and its history, we have tried to cover as many of the points which interest visitors in general. Please feel free to suggest any points which you feel should be included for future editions.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Saint Patrick's Cathedral, my name is [XYZ] and I am going to give you a short guided tour around the building. We will start from here (presuming you are standing near Celtic Grave Stone at shop); walk down into the north transept, or left arm, of the Cathedral. We will stop again at the Choir and then loop around into the south transept finally ending up back roughly where we started. The tour will last approximately 40 minutes and if you have any questions as we go please don't hesitate to ask.

The story of this site goes back to (possibly) the time of St Patrick himself. You may not be familiar with the story of our patron saint. The west window of the Cathedral high above us over here tells the story of St Patrick in 39 pictures. It starts in the bottom left corner when he was captured as a slave and then brought to Ireland to work as shepherd. On the right hand side he escapes from captivity and returns home (we are not really sure where that was). He receives a vision in the night telling him to return to Ireland and tell people about Christianity. In the centre panes, he travels around Ireland converting the pagan Irish.

There is a legend that St Patrick stopped in this area to use a well to baptise converts into the Christian faith. However, in truth we will never know for definite how much truth there is to this legend.

There has probably been a church on this site for around 1000 years. There are two pieces of evidence supporting this. First of all, there is a reference to a church on this site in 1121 AD. This church was called Saint Patrick's 'in insula', as it was located on an island between two branches of the river Poddle. This was probably a small wooden church.

We have also found some physical evidence of a church from this period. On display throughout the Cathedral are four early Christian grave slabs. They feature Celtic crosses, which are associated with early Christian Ireland. These were discovered by accident in 1901 when the park next door to the cathedral was being created.

Of course, everything changed when the Anglo Normans arrived in Ireland in the 12th century. As well as being fierce warriors, the Normans were experts in stone construction. In 1191 the first Anglo-Norman Archbishop of Dublin, John Comyn, raised the status of Saint Patrick's from a parish church to that of a collegiate church- that is a church with a larger body of clergy than a parish church, and one dedicated to worship and learning. The city already had a Cathedral (Christ Church Cathedral) so Comyn's motives for wanting to elevate St Patrick's are not entirely clear. The fact that the building was outside the original city walls may have been appealing to Comyn.

In 1219, Comyn was succeeded by Archbishop Henry of London, and Henry elevated the status of Saint Patrick's to that of a cathedral. In around 1220, the old wooden church was knocked down and construction in stone began and lasted for around 50 years. This work was overseen by Archbishop Luke who sadly never saw the finished building as he had actually gone blind by the time the work was complete.

The other key date in terms of the building are the Guinness Restoration of the 1860's in which Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness saved the cathedral from ruination and which we will talk about more on our tour. 2021 saw the completion of the largest restoration project on the building since the 1860s and included the replacement of over 14,000 slates on the upper levels of the roof, repairs and cleaning of high level masonry, new lead valleys, and upgrades to both our fire detection and lightning conductor systems.

You are of course probably wondering, what is still original? The basic fabric of the building is still the same from the 13th Century but much of the interior appearance of the Cathedral has changed over time. We will talk more about these changes as we walk around the building.

WEST END | *Move group over to beside the Boyle Monument if space permits*

There are around 200 monuments around the building. These have been added over the course of the last 800 years. The monument behind me is called the Boyle family monument and it is the largest in the Cathedral.

The Boyle family monument was erected by Richard Boyle, the first Earl of Cork in honour of his second wife Lady Catherine in 1631, and it depicts sixteen members of her family. The figure near the top is Dean Robert Weston, Lady Catherine's grandfather and Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Below him are Lady Catherine's parents. Then on the first floor, we have Richard and Catherine surround by their children. The boy in the middle of the ground floor level is their youngest son, Robert Boyle, the man who gave us 'Boyle's' law', and often referred to as 'The Father of Chemistry'. The Boyle Monument originally stood behind the high altar, and was moved under the orders of Lord Deputy Thomas Wentworth. This angered the Boyle family so much that they played a part in his eventual downfall and execution.

WINDOW

The window above us was installed during the Guinness restoration, and was made by the firm of William Wailes and Company in Newcastle on Tyne in northern England. It depicts thirty-nine episodes in the life of Saint Patrick. This window was restored in 2004, with each piece of glass cleaned and all of the lead and ironwork replaced. Wailes also made the windows in both the East end of the Lady Chapel, and the main windows in the South Transept.

NORTH AISLE SCULPTURES

These statues are around 200 years old and are of a variety of different kinds of people from sailors to clergymen. The third statue in the row is probably one of the finest pieces of sculpture in the Cathedral or perhaps even in Ireland. It is by a famous Irish sculptor named Edward Smyth and is of a man named the Marquis of Buckingham who was the first grandmaster of the Order of the Knights of Saint Patrick (which we will learn about later on).

NORTH TRANSEPT

We are now standing in the North Transept of the Cathedral. Behind me (presuming you are standing at the door) is one of the most famous objects in the building. This is called the Door of Reconciliation and it relates to a story from 1492 (the same year as Columbus travelled across the Atlantic). Here in Ireland in 1492, a feud was taking place between two families the Butlers of Ormonde and the Fitzgerald's of Kildare who were fighting on the outskirts of Dublin. The Butlers, were losing the battle and fled the battlefield and eventually took refuge in the Chapter House, (which used to be in the other transept of the Cathedral). The Fitzgerald's followed the Butlers into the Cathedral and asked them to come out and make peace. The Butlers, afraid that they would be slaughtered if they left the Chapter House, refused to do so. The head of the Kildare family, Gerald FitzGerald ordered a hole to be cut in the door. He put his arm through the door to shake hands with the head of the Butler family, and peace was made. This door is now known as the Door of Reconciliation, and today it gives us the phrase 'To chance your arm'.

There are many monuments and objects in the north transept which relate to military history. The flags above us are some of the regimental colours of Irish Regiments in the British army prior to Irish independence, The Royal Dublin Fusiliers (from the Great War), The Connaught Rangers and the Royal Irish Regiment being some of them. It was customary to hang regimental colours in a church when a regiment was disbanded.

In 2014, a new monument was added to the Cathedral. The Tree of Remembrance remembers all those who have been affected by conflict. It was inspired by the centenary of World War 1 and features a tree, which has been destroyed by war, and it is surrounded by barbed wire at its base. Visitors to the building are encouraged to leave behind a message for someone who has been affected by conflict of any type.

WINDOW

The window here is dedicated to Edward Cecil Guinness, Lord Iveagh and son of Benjamin Lee Guinness. Lord Iveagh continued his father's great support for the building, giving a new peal of bells to the cathedral in 1897.

ORGAN

A new organ and a chamber to hold it were built in 1901 above the North side of the choir. The organ contains over four thousand pipes ranging in size from 8 inches up to thirty-two feet long. The staircase here leads to the organ chamber, and was designed by Sir Thomas Drew, while the organ console here is the 1901 console which was replaced in 1963 during a restoration on the Organ.

THE CROSSING

The State Pew is where the President sits when attending services and ceremonies here at Saint Patrick's. On the front of the pew is a royal coat of arms. The royal viceroy in Dublin, the monarch's representative, previously used the seat. The President's seal of office of a gold harp on blue background can now be seen on the back of the pew.

The pulpit is where the preacher gives the sermon from on Sundays, usually on the Bible readings of the day. It is also a memorial to Dean Pakenham, who was Dean of the cathedral during the Guinness restoration.

The brass eagle Lectern is where passages from the Bible are read to the people. The eagle is said to be the strongest of birds, and here we see it carrying the word of God on its back above the ball, which represents earth. The eagle is also closely associated with John, author of the fourth Gospel.

THE CHOIR

This area of the building is called the Choir. The first two rows of stalls on either side are used by the cathedral's choir on a daily basis. The choir is, in part, composed of boys and girls aged (6-12) and they attend Saint Patrick's Cathedral choir school, which is situated directly across the road from here. They sing at Matins in the morning (09.00-9.30) and Evensong in the evening (17.30- 18.00). Saint Patrick's is the only Cathedral in Northern Europe which has morning and evening services sung each day during term time.

The front two rows of the Choir stalls are used by the choir, while the back row is used by the Cathedral Chapter. The Chapter is the body of clergy who are responsible for the cathedral. Ordinarily the Chapter are drawn from the diocese. However, Saint Patrick's is very rare in that it is a national cathedral. This cathedral is the National Cathedral for the Church of Ireland (which is part of the Anglican communion). This Cathedral's diocese and therefore chapter represent the entire Island of Ireland.

The banners, helmets and plaques on the back row of the stalls represent the Knights of the order of Saint Patrick. The Choir stalls also served as a Chapel to the Order from its foundation by George III in 1783, to the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1871. The Banners and Hatchments above the Choir represent some of the members of the order in 1870. One of the last people to be installed into the order was The Prince of Wales in 1869, he later became Edward VII. The order moved their services and ceremonies to Dublin Castle, and in the Castle today, you can see some of the banners in Saint Patrick's Hall.

ALTAR

The Altar frontals on the high altar were made by the Royal Irish School of Needlework around one hundred years ago and they are changed according to the church season.

Underneath the Altar is a large vault which contains the bodies of around 50 people. Most of these people are comprised of two families, the Boyles (whose monument you have seen earlier) and the Loftus family. Adam Loftus, Viscount Lisburne is buried just to the side of the Altar and if you look up from where he is buried you will see what killed him! The cannon ball, which hangs from the south wall, was fired during the siege of Limerick in 1691. Adam Loftus was fighting in the Williamite army which was laying siege to the city when he struck by this cannon ball. His body was moved back from Limerick and was buried just underneath these steps.

THE LADY CHAPEL

This part of the building is known as the Lady Chapel and it was basically an extension which was added to the East end of the Cathedral in around 1270. This is a very common feature in medieval cathedrals. This part of the Cathedral is an excellent example of how the Cathedral spends the money which it receives through tourism. Between 2012 and 2013, this area was closed off from the rest of the Cathedral and the space was fully restored at a cost to nearly one million euro. This work included the cleaning of the walls and the windows and ensuring that the area was structurally sound. This is why the area now appears brighter than the rest of the building.

The Chapel was also known for a time as the 'French Chapel' as it was used by Huguenots (French protestant refugees) from 1666 to 1816. Many of the monuments in the space are dedicated to significant Huguenots such as Dr Elie Bouhereau first librarian of Marsh's Library next door.

On a day to day basis the Lady Chapel is used for Eucharist Services on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. One of the side chapels will often be used for these services. Small events such as recitals and talks are often also held in the space.

One of the windows on the south side of the space remembers Annie Lee Plunkett, wife of Archbishop Plunkett, and daughter of Benjamin Lee Guinness. She was renowned for her charitable work, and is remembered here with a very appropriate piece of scripture for her family 'I was thirsty and ye gave me drink'.

SOUTH TRANSEPT

This is the second last stop on the tour. This is the South Transept of the Cathedral. This part of the cathedral has recently been transformed into an area called the Discovery Space. This part of the building provides visitors with an opportunity to learn a little more about the Cathedral's life and history. You can also do activities such as brass rubbings and jigsaws. There are also some IPADS where you can listen to music from the choir and the organ. If you like, after this tour you can come back to the space and find out more.

USE BELOW IF YOUR GROUP ARE STILL ENGAGED AT THIS POINT. IF THE TOUCH SCREEN TABLE IS FREE USE IT TO SHOW THE GROUP SOME IMAGES OF THE CATHEDRAL FROM THE PAST.

This is a good opportunity to talk about the layout of the building has changed over time. The Cathedral's interior design has changed quite considerably over the centuries. The building was originally divided up into separate parts. The north transept for example was called the church of Saint Nicholas With-out. It was used as a parish church in its own right and there was a screen which separated this area from the rest of the Cathedral. There was actually another chapel opposite Christ Church Cathedral, which was called the Church of Saint Nicholas Within because it was INSIDE the city walls.

This is the South Transept of the cathedral. In medieval times this was the Chapter House, a place where the cathedral's chapter could meet.

In medieval times the Choir extended down to the two large pillars here, and a pulpitum, or screen separated the Choir from the Nave.

By the 19th century this Cathedral was in a terrible state. When Charles Dickens visited in 1853 he said that it was in a "lamentable state of decay". Thankfully Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness, a member of the congregation and owner of the brewery stepped forward and personally undertook the restoration of this Cathedral. He spent 150,000 pounds (or 30 million euro in today's money) on this job. He decided to take the opportunity to modernise the cathedral in some ways by removing all the partitions which divided the cathedral into separate parts. Much of what you see inside the building today relates to this period which we call "the Guinness Restoration"

The large monument in the centre is to Archbishop Smyth and is by Van Nost. Both of these monuments would have stood in the Nave up to the Guinness restoration. Other monuments here include the effigy of Archbishop Whateley who founded the department of Economics at Trinity College.

Over here attached to the wall is a statue of Saint Patrick. We have lots of images of the saint around the Cathedral but this particular statue has had a rather unusual life. We think that it was created around the time of the Guinness restoration (1860s) but that it is made up of different parts from different periods. The body is part of a 13th statue of an Archbishop, while the head is from a newer statue, probably 17th century, while the base is probably part of an old pulpit in the cathedral. Of course, no one really knows what the Saint looked like anyway!

Finally, the small plaque in the corner remembers Alexander McGee who is one of the only normal (for want of a better word) men to be buried in the Cathedral. McGee received a plaque, as he was the servant to an exceptionally important man, who I will finish the tour by telling you about.

SWIFT PULPIT

Arguably, the most famous man to be buried in the Cathedral is Jonathan Swift. He is best known for being the author of "Gulliver's Travels" but most people don't realise that he was Dean (or head) of this Cathedral from 1713 until his death in 1745.

Here we have the Pulpit from which he preached. Swift's sermons were up to four hours in length! There is an urban legend that Swift had wheels fitted to the bottom of his pulpit, this meant that Swift could call for Alexander Mc Gee, his servant, to push his pulpit over toward anyone who had fallen asleep during the sermon so that he could shout down on top of them!

Here we have two monuments to the two Church of Ireland Presidents since the foundation of the state. Douglas Hyde was the first President of the Republic of Ireland from 1938 to 1945, while Erskine Childers was President from 1973, sadly passing away a year into his term. Both of their funeral services took place here.

SWIFT MEMORIALS

From this position, you can see three things, which relate to Jonathan Swift. Firstly, he is buried under the floor of the Cathedral to my left. He is buried alongside his great friend in life Esther Johnston or Stella, as she was better known.

Secondly, in the wooden cabinet are a number of objects various Swift related items including two of his death masks. It was common practice at the time of his death to take these masks of notable public figures. Also on display are some early editions of his writings including 'A sermon upon sleeping in Church', and a cast of Swift's skull. In his later years Swift was troubled by imbalance and noises in his ears, this combined with a stroke in 1742 led many to declare him mad. Ninety years after he died, his body was exhumed and examined by Sir William Wilde,

father of Oscar Wilde, who was a prominent physician in the city. Sir William discovered that Swift had a loose bone in his inner ear, and that this 'Meniere's disease' was at the root of much of Swift's problems.

It is ironic that Swift was thought mad, as he had left money in his will to found a hospital for treating those with mental illness, a hospital which still exists today just over a mile from here. Saint Patrick's hospital or "Dr Swift's" as it was also known.

Finally, Swift's gravestone epitaph is on the wall here above the door. Swift actually chose to write his own epitaph **before** he died. Apparently, he didn't like the idea that someone else would have the final say on his life. So we will continue this tradition by finishing the tour with his words, about himself. The translation reads:

*Here lies the body of Jonathan Swift, Doctor of Divinity and Dean of this Cathedral,
Where savage indignation can no longer lacerate his heart;
Go traveller and imitate if you can, this dedicated and earnest champion of liberty
He died on the 19th October 1745, aged 78*

I hope that you have enjoyed the tour please feel free to ask any other questions.

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