



The English Cathedral

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Among the most magnificent buildings of England are its Anglican cathedrals, great symbols of spiritual and architectural power. There are few experiences more uplifting and humbling than standing in the nave of a cathedral, and no one can fail to marvel at Durham's incomparable Romanesque masterpiece, the elegant stylistic unity of Salisbury, the world-famous stained glass of Canterbury or the striking Gothic scissor arch at Wells.

Britain is the top foreign tourist destination for Americans, with 3 million visiting each year, and historic buildings are the top visitor sites. Canterbury Cathedral alone receives over 40,000 visitors each year from the United States and, together with Durham, is a World Heritage Site.

In this truly breathtaking book, award-winning Magnum photographer, Peter Marlow, has captured the nave of each of England's 42 Anglican cathedrals. Taken in natural light at dawn, usually looking towards the east window, these remarkable images bring into sharp relief the full splendour of the buildings.

Marlow first took up photography as a student, after visiting an exhibition of the photographs of Walker Evans at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The impetus to begin photographing cathedrals came from a commission in 2007 from the Royal Mail for photographs of the interiors of six cathedrals, for use on a set of commemorative stamps. Once the commission was complete, Marlow was inspired to continue the project in his own time. Approaching the Dean and Chapter of each cathedral, he gained permission to enter each building in the early hours of the morning and to turn off all artificial lights. Marlow adopted a kind of ritual, waking as early as 3.00 am to drive to the location and begin working from 6.00 am. In this window of opportunity, he watched the cathedral interior emerge from the darkness and come to life.

Marlow's spellbinding photographs are accompanied by his commentary on the project, including sketches, preparatory shots and technical notes; an introduction by curator Martin Barnes on the tradition of church photography, especially the work of Frederick Evans and Edwin Smith; and a concise summary of each cathedral interior by architectural historian John Goodall.

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Laura Buscher:

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