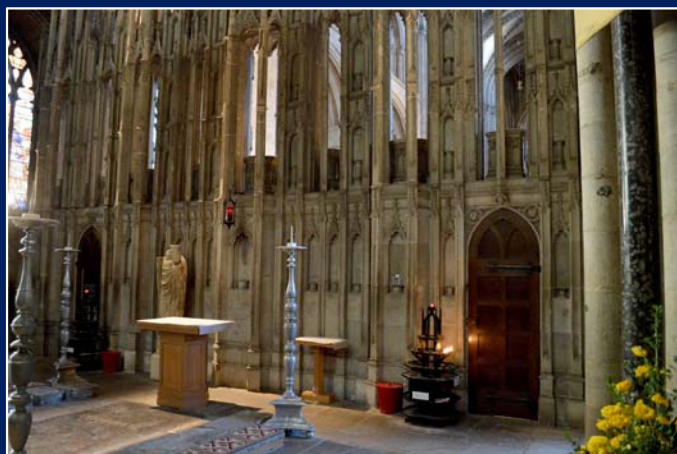




The Pilgrimage and England's Cathedrals Project: conclusions, outcomes and next steps



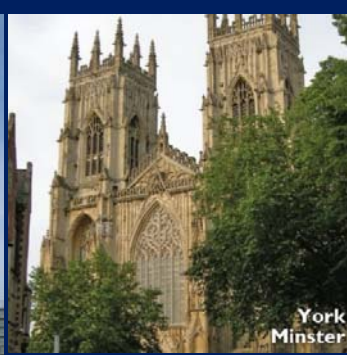
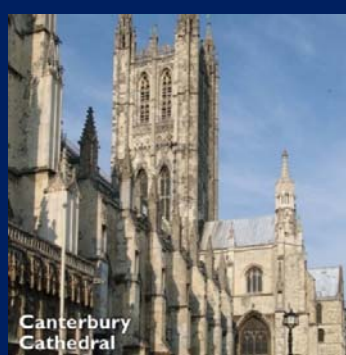
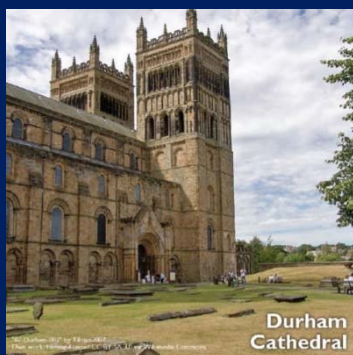
Revd Dr Dee Dyas
Dr Louise Hampson
Centre for the Study of
Christianity & Culture
University of York



Pilgrimage & England's cathedrals

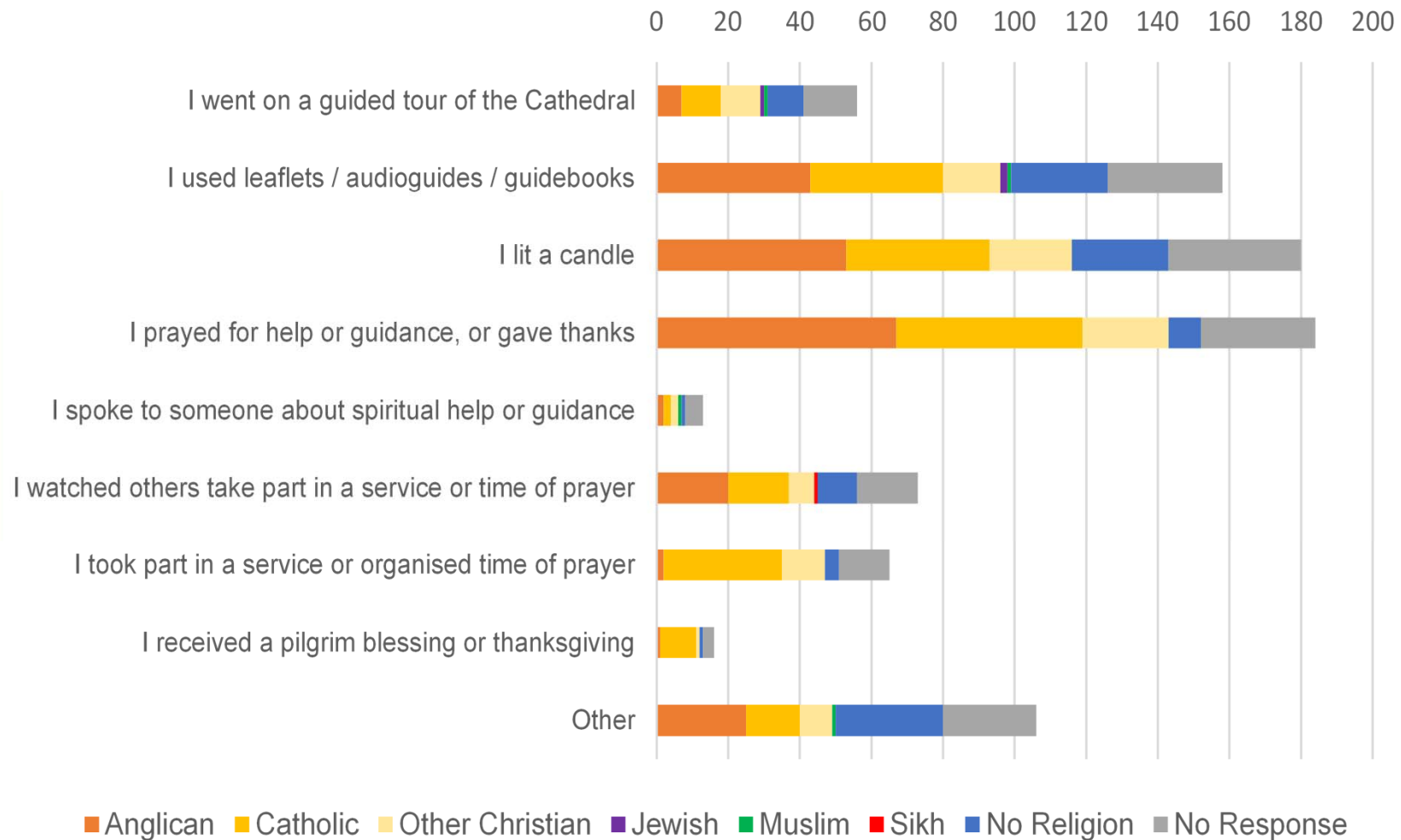
PAST & PRESENT

- interdisciplinary project (2014-8) in partnership with the Church of England, the AEC, Cathedrals Plus, Historic England and four 'case study' cathedrals: Canterbury, Durham, York and Westminster
- Have considered 'pilgrimage' in its widest sense of openness to spiritual engagement, whether planned or spontaneous
- Aim was to allow the past to speak to the present and help shape the future through:
 - detailed historical and theological research into the ways in which medieval buildings were designed to shape and enhance learning and response
 - using the tools and insights of social science and religious studies to provide in-depth analysis of the experience of visitors, pilgrims, 'potential pilgrims', staff, and volunteers today



- **How can cathedrals/other churches combine being heritage sites and civic resources with their core role of offering worship and being places of spiritual encounter?**
- **Churches are places of 'spiritual heritage'. How can they explain their meaning to visitors who may come from any faith or none, possibly with little or no Christian understanding?**
- **Churches have worship, welcome and witness at their core, yet are now welcoming audiences for whom both worship and witness may seem alien.**
- **We often use the terms 'pilgrim' and 'pilgrimage' today but what or who *is* a pilgrim?**
- **Most churches now offer much less visual or tactile stimulus than their medieval predecessors, yet human beings still learn and respond through their senses. What can we offer today to enhance learning, encounter and response?**

Activities of visitors across all venues by Religious Affiliation



Free text quotations from respondents

'Thought about my life; the significance of other people's contribution'

'Walked around enjoying the PEACE, the mosaics and organ music'

'Wrote a card for the Christmas tree and prayed for Palestine'

'Sat to reflect on those most dear to me, dead and alive'

'Gazed at the Anthony Gormley figure – just amazing'

'Listened to the organ practice'

'Admired architecture'

'Took photos, sat in peace for a while'

'Looked at the beautiful building'

'Meditated'

'Spoke to someone about the meaning of life'

*I was struck at how emotional I felt the minute I set foot inside the cathedral. Tears sprang to my eyes immediately .. I was finally inside somewhere I had wanted to visit for so many years and was also feeling such a deep sadness at the thought of losing my brother, but also because of the sheer magnificence and beauty of a building that was 900 years old... I felt an immediate sense of peace, calm and comfort too. **Durham 'Visitor'***

*There is a sense of awe and wonder at the craftsmanship and the sense of devoted worship echoing from ages past to the present day which inspires and encourages me and often serves to strengthen my faith as you can see the powerful effect of God echoing through history. Finally, cathedrals are simply beautiful and holy. **Durham 'Visitor'***

*Lighting a candle always seems appropriate in a cathedral ... it feels like your prayer is connecting not only with God but with praise and holiness that has been offered in the place over hundreds of years and connects with the idea that a cathedral still is a vibrant place of prayer, worship, devotion and pilgrimage every day. **Durham 'Pilgrim'***

*A cathedral has such beautiful music – I love the sound of choristers... and find the music an inspiring aspect of worship that lifts me to another place. **Durham 'Pilgrim'***



‘My impression of this place was – wow! A feeling I have never had in this intensity, or in this depth. This cathedral is not only rooted in the earth, but it’s at the same time rooted in time. As if the Cathedral was here as a ... what’s the word? ... A witness’.

A ‘no religion’ visitor to Canterbury Cathedral, 2016

It is hard to overemphasise the role of the senses in shaping our experience of the world and of ourselves. Our sense of belonging, our emotions, our ways of coping all depend on our senses. Sensory experience is the fabric of the mind and *it helps to fashion who we are* [my italics].

Philosopher Barry C. Smith, *The Uncommon Senses*, BBC Radio 4, March 2017

It is literally neurobiologically impossible to build memories, engage complex thoughts, or make meaningful decisions without emotion... without emotion... people can have no preferences, no interests, no motivation, no morality, and no sense of creativity, beauty or purpose.'

Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, *Emotions, Learning, and the Brain*

'We think and remember with our feelings and our bodies ... emotions code memories'. David Morgan, *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Be*

The catalyst that converts any physical location - any environment if you will - into a place, *is the process of experiencing deeply* [my italics]. A place is a piece of the whole environment that has been claimed by feelings. Alan Gussow, *A Sense of Place*





THE SENSES AND INTERACTING WITH SACRED SPACES IN THE PAST

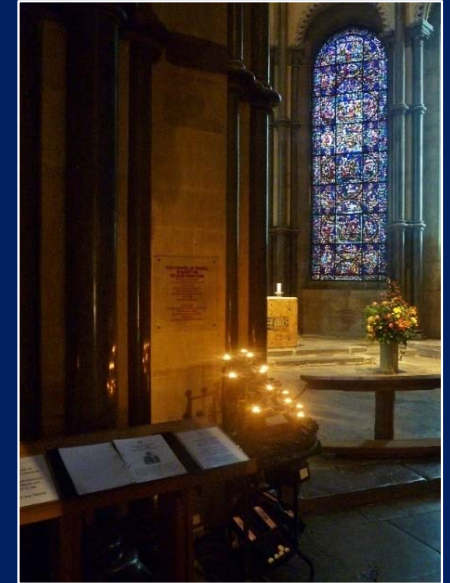
community
Senses action
power movement accessibility
setting
Revelation
landscape awe liturgy
Transformation hope
touch holiness
presence Connection healing
prayer Encounter need
grace soundscape compassion
smellscape

Engagement and multi-sensory experience today

Attending Evensong, listening to the sung psalms - I felt bathed and cleansed by those sounds. sound-washed if you may: it soothes, nourishes and is imbued with beauty.'



A candle provides a visible sign of a contact with something beyond the human... A prayer, longing, searching - hard to quantify... such a small light and a wisp of smoke does provide a concrete sign of something hard to explain.'



We feel drawn to chapels where people are invited to pray quietly. We find that very comforting



Checking our messages

What are we communicating?

**The Cathedral
is Closed for
Worship**

Is that really what we mean?

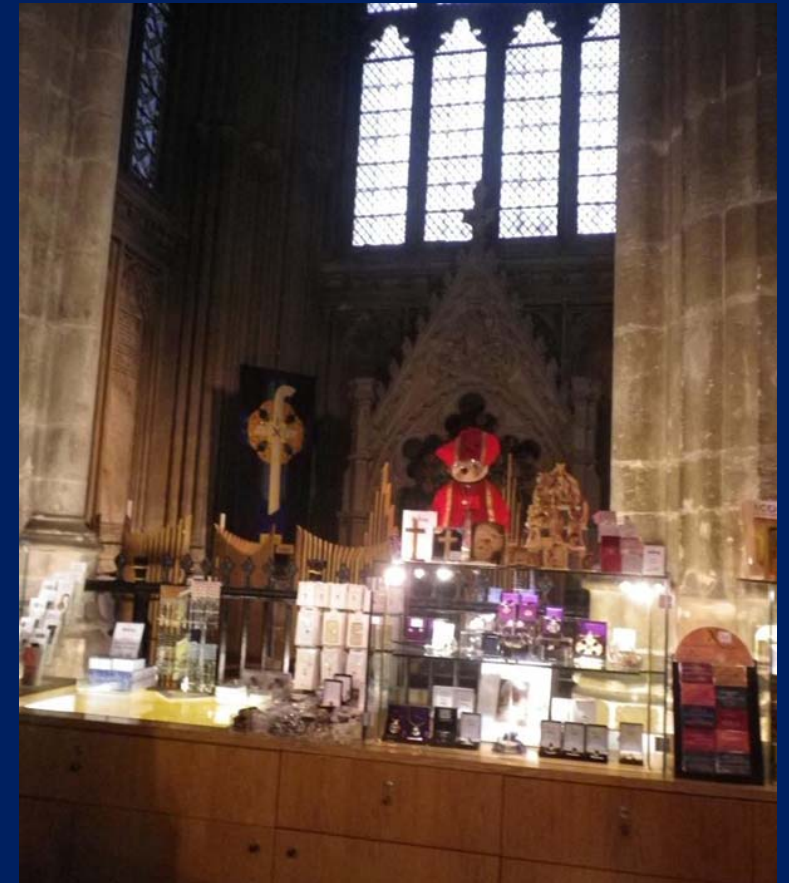
**This Chapel is reserved for
private prayer**

or do we want to say

**You are welcome to use
this lovely chapel to
enjoy a time of peace
and to pray**



Taking
away



'[Purchasing items in the Cathedral] will definitely make them more special to me because of where I bought them'

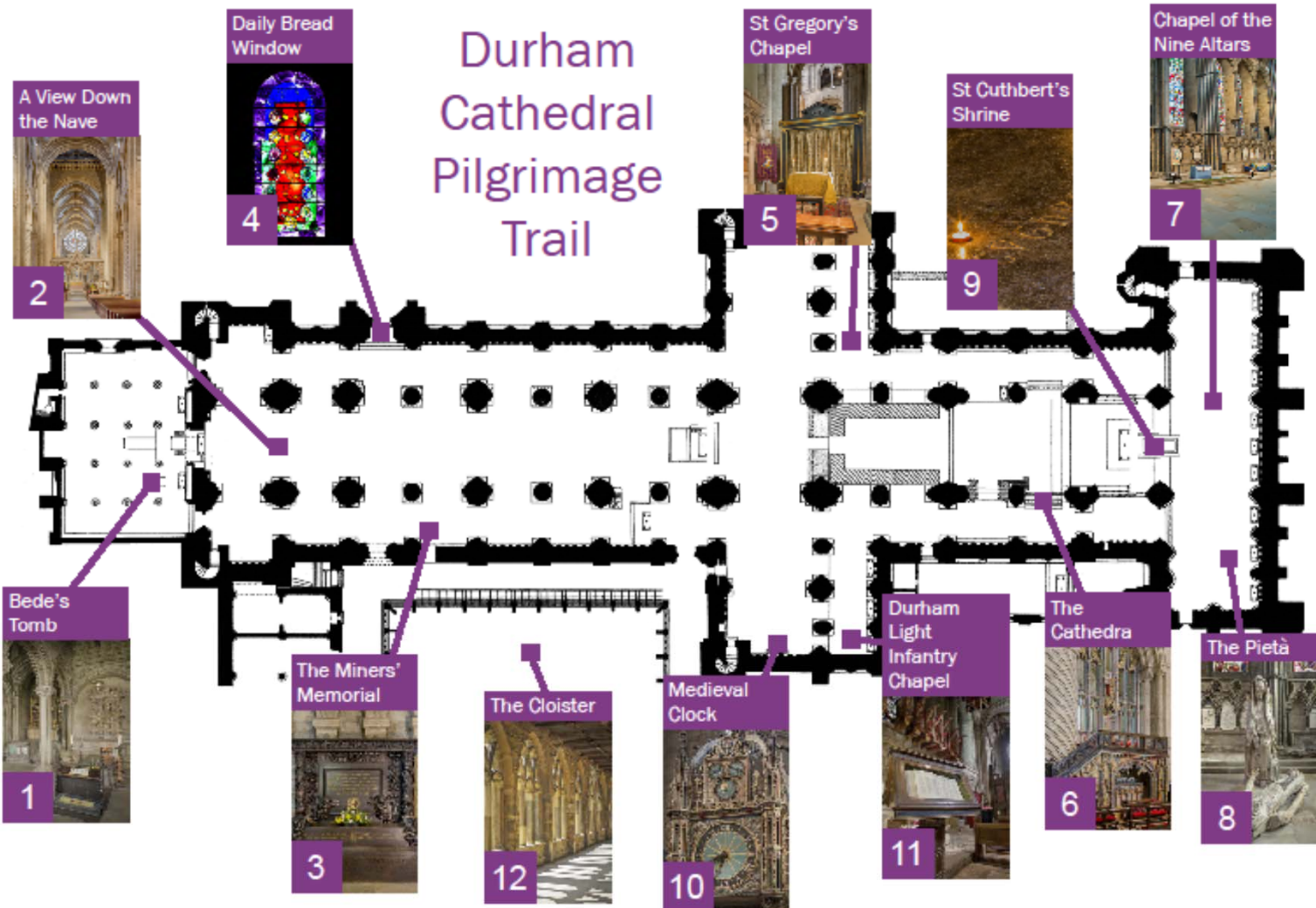


SOME OUTCOMES

PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCE DAYS



Durham Cathedral Pilgrimage Trail





Worship at Norwich Cathedral

Discover Lichfield Cathedral



Explore the
Herkenrode Glass



Explore
Pilgrimage at Lichfield



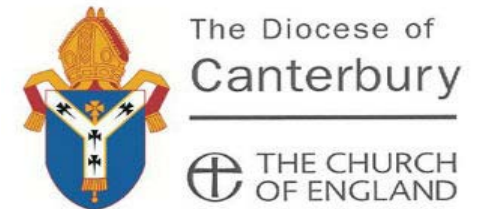
LICHFIELD
CATHEDRAL

CHRISTIANITY
& CULTURE



THE BECKET CONNECTION

using the Becket 2020 anniversary as a catalyst for heritage,
tourism, education, and community engagement



The British
Museum



CELEBRATING BECKET AND LONDON 2020



THE EXPLORE PROJECT

Providing a range of engaging accessible on-site resources for exploring faith, which don't assume prior knowledge but do justice to the richness of the Christian story and invite people from all backgrounds to discover it for themselves

Providing takeaway resources including leaflets, booklets, and an 'Explore' website, with topics such as Exploring other churches; Exploring Faith; Exploring the Bible; Exploring Prayer; Exploring Pilgrimage; Finding a church near you