

PETER MARLOW FOUNDATION

Derby Cathedral Marks Halfway Point of Epic Tour of Late Magnum Photographer Peter Marlow's Compelling Photographic 'Portraits' of All 42 English Anglican Cathedrals

Peter Marlow: The English Cathedral

Exhibition Dates: 23 July - 1 September 2024



Peter Marlow, Derby Cathedral, 2010 © Peter Marlow Foundation/ Magnum Photos

Having toured extensively across England, *Peter Marlow: The English Cathedral*, the ambitious photographic project chronicling at dawn all 42 naves of England's Anglican cathedrals in natural light with all modern artificial light turned off, reaches a key stage when the free photographic exhibition shows at Derby Cathedral from 23 July - 1 September 2024. Derby Cathedral marks the midway point in this epic geographical tour - the 21st cathedral to exhibit the works of the 42 cathedrals that the late Magnum photographer Peter Marlow (b. UK, 1952 - 2016) photographed for the series.

Organised by the Peter Marlow Foundation, the charity set up to continue Peter's legacy, the aim is that this ethereal collection of images will exhibit at each of the 42 cathedrals he visited on his photographic pilgrimage across England. In hosting the exhibition, *Peter Marlow: The English Cathedral*, Derby Cathedral invites its visitors to embark on a visual journey through the lens of Peter

Marlow. The exhibition will be on display in the Cavendish Area and the Court Area during normal cathedral opening hours.

Fiona Naylor, Peter's partner and Chair of the Peter Marlow Foundation, says of this key point in *Peter Marlow: The English Cathedral*, "To have reached the half-way point in this extraordinary tour across England of Peter's cathedral portraits is certainly something to be celebrated. It is important to share Peter's work and the ongoing work of the Peter Marlow Foundation and introduce both to so many new audiences. We are looking forward to the coming years as the tour shows in all 42 of the English Anglican cathedrals Peter documented on his photographic road trip. These iconic buildings are superbly flexible and make wonderful galleries as well as being places of religion, peace and the deep history of England."

One of the oldest buildings in the city of Derby with the oldest ring of ten bells in the world, many of which date from 1678, Derby Cathedral is of great historic significance. With the first church on this site founded in 943AD, its nave was re-built in 1725 by the architect James Gibbs in a Neoclassical design. The uniquely simple interior is flooded with natural light from only two modern stained glass windows. To offset the unembellished interior, Gibbs introduced a wrought-iron chancel screen manufactured by local iron-smith Robert Bakewell, which extends across the width of the church and is a key feature of the Cathedral. Also onsite is the tomb of Bess of Hardwick and a memorial to Florence Nightingale. Peregrine falcons have nested and bred in the Cathedral tower since 2006 and have gathered an enthusiastic following worldwide who can watch their antics via a number of webcams.

The striking pink vaulted ceiling seen in Peter's photographic portrait of Derby Cathedral, was repainted white in 2015. The ceiling now matches the Greek inspired columns, so typical of Neoclassical architecture, allowing the gold gilding to really shine in the space. While the Cathedral's aesthetics may have altered since Peter's visit in 2010, the essence of the building and its simple Neoclassical style remains in Peter's image as he evocatively transports the viewer back to the site's historic roots by inviting contemplation of its stunning interior at dawn as the sun rises.

The Very Revd Dr Peter Robinson, Dean of Derby, says of the exhibition; "*We are delighted to be showcasing the exquisite exhibition by the late Peter Marlow, and we feel privileged to be featured as the halfway point of the tour. That the image is captured in natural daylight allows the viewer to see the relationship between light and the building. May this exhibition inspire photographers and visitors alike, to explore the beauty that surrounds us with creativity.*"

Peter Marlow (b. UK, 1952 - 2016) was commissioned in 2008 by Royal Mail on the 300th year anniversary of the completion of St Paul's Cathedral to photograph six Anglican Cathedrals that were issued as commemorative stamps. So taken was he by these initial magnificent interiors that he set out to photograph all 42, guided over the next three years by a copy of *English Cathedrals* (1989) by Edwin Smith and Olive Cook and a pack of *Anglican Cathedrals of England* Top Trumps Cards.

"What I thought was going to be incredibly simple became intricate, complicated, and utterly absorbing. The journey was memorable and wonderfully hypnotic, a kind of reflective pilgrimage. My cathedral days involved hours of driving and thinking, with my reference Polaroids drying in the sun on the dashboard. England passed by." Peter Marlow, *The English Cathedral*.

The images appear deceptively simple in their composition and technical set-up. It was after much experimentation that Peter developed the perfect strategy to document these huge interior spaces and to highlight the many varied architectural nuances between the buildings. Shooting on large format film using only natural light, he set up in the same position at all but one of the cathedrals - looking east towards the nave and altar as the dawn light streamed through the main window. By ensuring all artificial lighting was turned off, a rarity in many of these buildings whose lights remain on constantly, he captured the cathedrals emerging from the darkness as if suspended in time and removed from the modern age. This end result can be regarded as a contemporary update to the long tradition of church photography in England, namely Frederik Evans' late 19th century imagery and Edwin Smith's mid-20th century work.

Peter's remarkable photographs bring into sharp relief the full splendour of the interiors of some of England's most magnificent buildings, great symbols of spiritual and architectural power.

"When immersed in Peter's photographs we are metaphorically in some kind of contemplative enclosure, if not a sanctuary: one that confronts us with our own sense of being. The forms captured here are simultaneously concrete and abstract: containers of history, light and, above all, space. Despite of, and in parallel with, the undeniable structure of the architectural edifice, Peter captures the intangible essence of all form that is generated by creative force: the enduring mystery of space within space." Martin Barnes, *The English Cathedral*.

When he photographed the 42 Anglican cathedrals for the series, Peter took extensive time and preparation prior to and during the process in capturing the final photograph displayed here in the exhibition. Part of this process was the use of Fujifilm FP 100 Instant film to test the view and the exposure of each shot. In recognition of this Fujifilm has supplied instax cameras and film at the exhibitions on the tour. Visitors are asked to take photographs of the exhibition in-situ at Derby Cathedral and the visitors it attracts, utilising the example photographs by some of Peter's fellow Magnum photographers, Elliott Erwitt, David Seymour (Chim), Chris Steele-Perkins, Stuart Franklin and David Hurn.

These instant photographs will create an interactive ever-changing display that will be shared as part of the exhibition but also on the social media channels and websites of Derby Cathedral and the Peter Marlow Foundation to create a contemporary public response to the works. Having these instant images allowed Peter to make an immediate assessment of the composition as well as creating an additional accompanying set of photographs. For each hosting cathedral, Peter Marlow Foundation will choose a winner from those visitors who have contributed a photograph. This person will be awarded an Estate Stamped Fine Print of a cathedral photograph of their choice.

A sold-out monograph of Peter Marlow's *The English Cathedral* was published by Merrell in 2012 with a second edition in 2015. Featuring texts by Martin Barnes, Senior Curator of Photographs at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) London, and John Goodall, architectural editor of *Country Life* magazine, it also includes Peter's own account of his 'cathedral days' as well as his technical commentary of how he achieved these intensely detailed images. The initiation of The English Cathedral tour was generously funded by the Victoria and Albert Museum and their Photographs Acquisition Group. A full set of the prints are held in the V&A's permanent collection.

Following the exhibition at Derby Cathedral, *Peter Marlow: The English Cathedral* will show at the following cathedrals:

- Chester Cathedral, 10th September - 1st October 2024 (22/42 cathedrals)
- Worcester Cathedral, 8 October - 17 November 2024 (23/42 cathedrals)
- Truro Cathedral, 4 March - 3 April 2025 (24/42 cathedrals)

Peter Marlow: The English Cathedral has previously been hosted by Coventry Cathedral in 2016; Ely Cathedral in 2017; Portsmouth and Blackburn in 2019; Carlisle; Winchester; Ripon; Southwell; Bradford; St Albans; and St Paul's in 2022; Hereford; Newcastle; St Edmundsbury; Wakefield; Lincoln; and Wells in 2023; and Manchester; Rochester; and Peterborough so far in 2024. Many more of the cathedrals featured in the series are lined up for the years to come.

For more information about the *Peter Marlow: The English Cathedral* tour and the Peter Marlow Foundation contact: Sam Trenerry samtrenerry@yahoo.com / +44 (0)7780 991 811

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Notes to Editors

About Peter Marlow

Peter Marlow (1952 - 2016) was a renowned, internationally recognised photojournalist, a two-time President of the international photography cooperative, Magnum Photos of which he was a full member since 1986. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society in 2006 and his work is held in 12 public collections worldwide.

His professional work as a photographer spanned 41 years and 84 countries, capturing major world events for prestigious magazines and newspapers and his personal long form projects. His archive includes work of international interest as well as shining a light on Britain. Exhibitions include *Liverpool: Looking Out to Sea* at The Photographers Gallery, London; *Point of Interest; London at Night*; and *The English Cathedral* at The Wapping Project Bankside, London; *Magnum Contact Sheets* (Magnum Agency London, and touring); and *No Such Thing as Society - Photography in Britain 1967-1987 from the British Council and Arts Council Collection*, at Hayward Gallery, London which toured to Centre Pompidou, Paris, amongst other international venues. His work is in numerous collections including the Arts Council England; Victoria and Albert Museum; Qatar Museums; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Harry Ransom Center, Texas; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa; Library of Birmingham; and the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum.

About the Peter Marlow Foundation

The Peter Marlow Foundation encourages, examines and celebrates the photography of humanity, its impact and legacy. From 2025 this work will be delivered from our new home in Dungeness, Kent, housing a gallery, extensive archive and library of photography books, public exhibitions, a residency programme and cultural programme open to schools, the public and professionals. In his lifetime Peter Marlow worked all over the world and his ever thoughtful photographs deal with close

observation of the physical and personal landscape that is often overlooked. His lens was always on the human and social.

The Foundation will continue in this spirit, providing a focus on social realism and people, both in the work it shares and in the activity it generates. Outreach programmes are ongoing, with a special focus on young people from underserved and underrepresented communities.

www.petermarlowfoundation.com

About Derby Cathedral

The Cathedral Church of All Saints was founded in 943, and is at the heart of a modern city of making. It is one of Derby's most beautiful and historic sites, a Grade 1 listed building that holds many important monuments of Derby's and Derbyshire's past. Inside you will find many treasures such as the tomb of Bess of Hardwick, a memorial to Florence Nightingale and the impressive wrought iron screen by Robert Bakewell.

As a Church of England Cathedral, it is a sacred place and sign of unity for Christians of many traditions and a meeting place of faiths. The Cathedral is a lively place of worship with regular services, in person and live-streamed, involving its flourishing Cathedral Choir. A place of musical and cultural excellence, it frequently hosts concerts and events. Find out more at derbycathedral.org