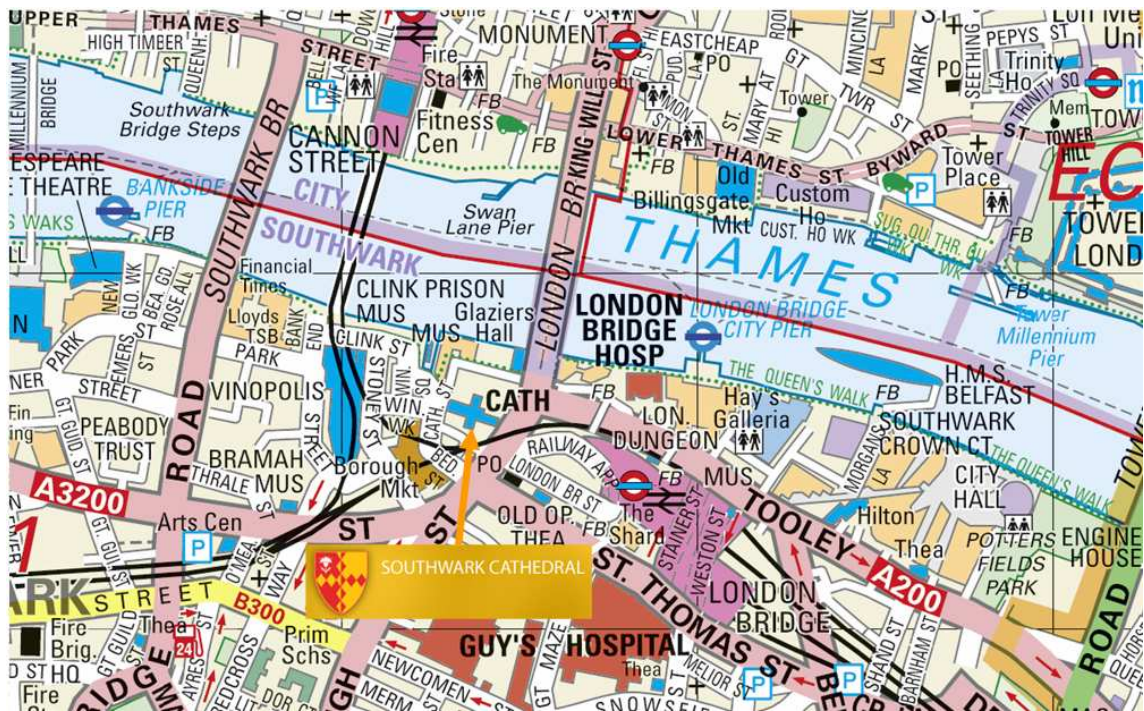




# Borough of Southwark

## Southwark Cathedral



Southwark Cathedral or The Cathedral and Collegiate Church of St Saviour and St Mary Overie, Southwark, London, lies on the south bank of the River Thames close to London Bridge. It is the mother church of the Anglican Diocese of Southwark. It has been a place of Christian worship for more than 1,000 years, but a cathedral only since the creation of the diocese of Southwark in 1905.

Between 1106 and 1538 it was the church of an Augustinian priory, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Following the dissolution of the monasteries, it became a parish church, with the new dedication of St Saviour's. The church was in the diocese of Winchester until 1877, when the parish of St Saviour's, along with other South London parishes, was transferred to the diocese of Rochester. The present building retains the basic form of the Gothic structure built between 1220 and 1420, although the nave is a late 19th-century reconstruction.

Borough Market is immediately to its south and the Hall of the Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass is on the riverside part of Montague Close on its north.



## Tours

Cathedral Guides, identified by a purple neck ribbon, are occasionally on duty and available to conduct informal tours for individuals. We do not currently offer daily turn-up and join tours for individual visitors. We have free self-guided leaflets and descriptive signage around the Cathedral to assist and enhance an individual's visit. There is also a Cathedral Guidebook which may be purchased (priced £4.50).

Look out for our "Southwark Uncovered" 2013 themed tours and walks during the summer months – details will be available from Easter 2013.

Evensong is performed at 17:30 every day



## *Our Story*



It is open to question when the first church was built in Southwark just south of London Bridge. A verbal tradition passed on to the Elizabethan historian John Stow suggests there was a community of nuns 'long before the [Norman] Conquest', possibly in the 7th century. There is a further suggestion that Swithun, Bishop of Winchester in the 9th century, replaced the nuns with a college of priests. The first written reference is the mention of a 'minster' in the Domesday

Book (1086) although there is an ambiguous reference in the *English Chronicle* that suggests that the body of St Alfege lay in Southwark prior to its removal to Greenwich some 40 years earlier.

In 1106 the church was 're-founded' by two Norman knights as a priory, living according to the rule of St Augustine of Hippo, dedicated to St Mary and later known as St Mary Overy ('over the river'). Like most of the surrounding area, Southwark was under the care of the bishops of Winchester, and much of the building's future would depend on the goodwill of the bishops who lived in a palace just west of the church. The Augustinians created a hospital alongside the church, the direct predecessor of today's St Thomas's Hospital opposite the Houses of Parliament and originally named in honour of St Thomas a Becket.



At the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, the last six canons were pensioned off, although they continued to live in buildings north of the church. The church itself became the property of King Henry VIII who rented it to the congregation. It was re-named St Saviour's, though the old name remained in popular usage for many years.

Tired of renting their church for worship, a group of merchants from the congregation, known as 'the Bargainers', bought the church from King James I in 1611 for £800. By this time the large unwieldy parish church served a very colourful area, not only of merchants and minor courtiers, but also actors, foreign craftsmen, and the ladies from the Bankside brothels.

The church ministered to its parish throughout the 16th and 17th centuries and various repairs and alterations were made to the building. The state of the building became a real cause for concern in the 1820s. Already in need of further repairs, the whole situation of the building was affected by the proposals for a new London Bridge to be constructed much closer to the church. The Bridge Committee suggested that St Saviour's be demolished and a smaller church be built on another site. After much argument the decision was made to restore the building, and it was largely due to the architect George Gwilt that major parts of today's Cathedral are still standing.

By the mid 19th century, living and working condition in south London were intolerable. They were depicted by novelist Charles Dickens in distressing detail and by Charles Booth's social researches with grim accuracy. It was proposed that a new diocese should be created and in anticipation for this a new nave was designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield in 1895.

St Saviour's church became Southwark Cathedral in 1905. The diocese which it serves stretches from the Thames to Gatwick Airport, from Thamesmead in the east almost to Thames Ditton in the west. It has a population of two and a half million people, served by over 300 parishes.



Now, as a Cathedral, Southwark is once again (as in monastic days) a centre for a pattern of daily worship within the English cathedral music tradition. In addition to holding five services a day all year round, the Cathedral provides services for diverse diocesan groups varying in size and style of worship. A cathedral derives its name from 'cathedra' a Greek word for the seat from which a bishop teaches and Southwark

comes into its own as the bishop's church when he ordains new priests and deacons, installs honorary canons and celebrates the Easter liturgy.

In 2000 major extensions, designed by Richard Griffiths, were added north of the Cathedral which provide meeting and conference rooms, a library, the Education Centre, the Shop and Refectory.

The Education Centre provides a wide series of National Curriculum-related programmes for both primary and secondary school children. Adult education is catered for by successful training schemes, including the South East Institute of Theological Education and Diocesan Readers' Course, and the Cathedral's own "Pilgrim Peoples" project.

Today, Southwark Cathedral continues to serve the people of its parish and the diocese, to be a centre of teaching, of worship, prayer and pilgrimage and a place of welcome for all. Recent years have seen major regeneration in the local area as Bankside has once again become a residential area, a playground for London and a place where the arts are celebrated. Southwark Cathedral continues to play its part in offering an open and inclusive welcome to all who come here



### ***History of the Choir***

The earliest mention of any musical activity at Southwark is in 1365 (then an Augustinian Priory) when one Nicholas Le Clerk was appointed to teach boys to sing and read. In 1456, the parish records include a payment made to the 'theatrical children' at St Saviour's (as it was then known). The first direct reference to professional singers is in 1569 when a certain Brian Pattinson, one of the vestry clerks, helped himself to the huge sum of £20 from funds to pay the Choir. He was dismissed and replaced by a successor 'who shall be a good bass'. At the same time, the Choir also advertised for 'a tenor, that the choir may be better served.'

The Choir prospered during Shakespeare's day when Southwark was the entertainment centre and 'red light' district of London. Its streets were full of cheap hotels, taverns, brothels, gambling haunts and theatres. Shakespeare's troupe of actors lodged here and the tombstone of his brother Edmond Shakespeare, who was an actor in the company, lies between the choir stalls in the Cathedral. William's 20th century memorial is the Cathedral's most popular memorial. Of the list of actors named in the folio edition of Shakespeare's plays in 1623, thirteen are also to be found in the parish records of this time. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the Church's singing boys would have been recruited as child actors and singers in Shakespeare's plays.



St Saviour's Church became the Cathedral for the newly formed Diocese of Southwark in 1905 and has boasted a fine Choir of boys and men for many years, offering pupils at day schools, both independent and state, the opportunity to learn music in the unique English Cathedral tradition. They have become well known through their broadcasts, tours and recordings. As part of the Millennium Project, marking the year 2000, Southwark Cathedral Girls' Choir was formed, on similar lines to the boys, to enrich the Cathedral's musical heritage and to offer the same opportunity for musical, spiritual and social development which the boys have enjoyed for so long. This includes an unparalleled musical education (spanning music from plainsong to the present day). The Choirs sing regular choral services throughout the week and are thus able to minister in a unique way to the people in South London