

The roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral



A boss is a protrusion in stone or wood, usually to be found in the ceilings of buildings, especially at the intersection of the ribs of a vault, and often intricately carved with decorative devices. Eight ribs are shown in this photograph, forming an intersecting cross and saltire.

According to its website, Norwich Cathedral has more bosses than any other cathedral worldwide: 1000 of them. Two-hundred-and-fifty-two are to be found in the nave. Its rib vault was built by Bishop Walter Lyhart after the fire of 1463, which destroyed the earlier wooden roof. They illustrate many subjects, from Creation at the east end to Doomsday at the west. The seven eastern bays cover events in the Old Testament and the seven western bays those in the New Testament.

References

Website for roof bosses in Norwich Cathedral:

<http://www.cathedral.org.uk/historyheritage/architecture-bosses.aspx>

Pevsner N, Wilson B. *The buildings of England. Norfolk 1: Norwich and north-east*. Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 2002.