



The Commemoration in Question  
**WESTMINSTER ABBEY 750**

Tuesday 10 March

Westminster Abbey is enthusiastically celebrating 750 years since its rebuilding in 1269, but its history stretches back far beyond that - beyond Edward the Confessor's vast church of the 11c, to a Benedictine abbey of about 960. Edward completely rebuilt it, the first English Romanesque church, recorded vividly in the Bayeux tapestry. It was then rebuilt again in its present soaring Gothic style by Henry III from 1245, in honour of the royal saint Edward the Confessor, and consecrated in 1269. The rich and complex inlaid-stone Cosmati pavement was laid in 1268, and, along with the Gothic rebuilding, inspires us to focus particularly on the inspiring 13c work in the Abbey, its architecture, furnishings including the astonishing Westminster painted retablo, decorations and burials. We set that great 13c rebuilding in the context of the history of the Abbey as a whole, from its status as the church of a Benedictine monastery, through to its renaissance as a 'Royal Peculiar', that is, a church directly responsible to the sovereign. Here all our monarchs have been crowned since William the Conqueror in 1066, and here most of our monarchs until George II, along with 3000 of our distinguished citizens, have been buried. It is England's Valhalla.

Culture in Question lectures take place in the Art Workers Guild, Queen Square, Bloomsbury, unless otherwise indicated. Coffee is served at 10.30, the lectures begin at 11, and a light lunch with wine is served at 1 pm. The event ends by 3.30 pm. £90 members, £100 non-members.