



Lottery windfall helps St Mary's mend leaking roof

St Mary's parish in Great Yarmouth has received a grant of £148,598 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for repairs to a leaking roof.

The grant comes from the Culture Recovery Fund and is specified to be used for the re-roofing of the sanctuary, both side chapels and the old sacristy. The contribution that St Mary's parish must raise towards the repairs is £37,150.

The Grade II* listed building dates from 1850 and was designed by the acclaimed Catholic architect, JJ Scoles. The roof has deteriorated, and water has seriously damaged a mural painted by Archibald Jarvis in 1921.

The building has not just broken and missing tiles, but also displaced beams, cracks in the walls and internal damage due to leaks. Some of the tiles which have come off are above the organ loft, and water has been coming in, threatening the valuable organ below from possible rain damage.

The original slate tiles over the nave, as well as over the chancel and

side chapels at the western end, were replaced by concrete tiles in the 1960s. The excessive weight of these has displaced beams supporting the roof.

The current repairs, being made in partnership with Caroe Architecture, are dealing with the eastern end of the building. To protect all the beams of the church, the concrete tiles across the whole roof

would need to be replaced with slate. A 2019 report from Nicholas Warnes architects put the cost of a complete repair at £1,500,000.

"The past couple of years we've been doing concerts, race nights and raffles," said Brian Lafferty, chair of the finance committee at St Mary's. "The parish are very committed and enthusiastic. We had everything planned for last year, and then along came Covid."

The parish has launched a 'Buy a candle and save our church' appeal. You can support this through the St Mary's website, at <http://www.stmarysgy.org.uk/>



To see your parish featured in these pages, contact Michael Winterbottom on 07949 987771 or via michael.winterbottom@thecatholicuniverse.com

Diocese takes stock of architectural heritage

A comprehensive architectural and historical review of Catholic churches across the diocese of East Anglia has been published online as part of the major Taking Stock project.

Taking Stock is an architectural and historical review of Catholic churches and chapels in England and Wales. The project is a partnership between the Patrimony Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, individual dioceses, and Historic England.

In the diocese they range from the spectacular architectural glories of churches such as St Benet's Minster in Beccles and Our Lady and the English Martyrs in Cambridge to the many humbler yet much-loved church buildings.

Cedric Burton, secretary of the Historic Churches Committee, said: "This audit of the Catholic churches and chapels in the diocese is an important tool. It will help to enable to proper preservation, and appropriate development, of the Church's patrimony."

"In particular it will provide the committee, and the new historic churches support officer, with a



Our Lady and the English Martyrs in Cambridge. Photo: Alex Ramsay / Architectural History Practice

baseline from which to assess the needs and proposals of parishes."

The review was carried out by Andrew Derrick, director of the Architectural History Practice.

He said: "We are all familiar with the great legacy of medieval church buildings in East Anglia, but not so well known is the modern heritage of Catholic churches. By modern I mean those built after 1791, when Catholic church building once again became legal in England."

"There are 25 listed churches in the diocese, including a couple of medieval outliers (the Slipper Chapel at Walsingham and the

church at Clare Priory). The most recent is Eric Gill's 1939 church at Greston.

"Many other churches, while not listed, are of local value and, of course, important to those who worship there."

"Taking Stock has assessed the architecture and history of all of them and aims to ensure that heritage considerations are given their proper weight when changes are proposed."

More information on the project as a whole can be found at www.taking-stock.org.uk/

Diss parishioners celebrate their heroic saint's feast day

Parishioners in Diss gathered on 1st February for a virtual celebration of the feast day of St Henry Morse, known as 'The Priest of the Plague'. Judith Tooth reports. The parish church, built in 2012, is dedicated to St Henry Morse, a local saint who became known as 'The Priest of the Plague' for his work caring for the sick.

Parishioners also gave thanks and prayed for the repose of the soul of Joan Westwood, the parish's eldest parishioner, who had died, aged 101, just a few days earlier. Over many years Mrs Westwood had researched the history of the Henry Morse, shared her findings and encouraged wider devotion to the saint within the parish.

Diss parish priest, Fr Alex Anaman, opened the celebration with the day's reading from the letter to the Hebrews, which spoke of "men who through faith conquered kingdoms", some of whom "had to bear being pilloried and flogged...chained up in prison...sawn in half or beheaded". They were all "heroes of faith".

"Like them, Henry Morse, our patron saint, was a great hero of faith," said Fr Alex.



Fr Alex Anaman outside the church and below, an etching of St Henry Morse which hangs in the church.



Henry Morse was born in 1595 in the village of Brome, near Diss, and raised nearby in the Tivetshalls, at a time of violent persecution towards Catholics. Despite the dangers he became a Jesuit priest.

When plague broke out, he persevered in nursing the sick and dying, undeterred by spells in prison and exile.

In 1645, without trial, Henry Morse was found guilty of treason for being a Catholic priest, and executed on 1st February, at Tyburn in London. He is among the 40 Martyrs

of England and Wales canonised in 1970.

At the virtual gathering Richard Poole shared his recollections of the parish's pilgrimage to Tyburn on the same day in 2016, and how it had inspired him to search for an artwork of the saint. His efforts resulted in a beautiful 17th century etching which now hangs in the Church of St Henry Morse.

More information about St Henry Morse can be found on Diss church's parish website, at www.sthenrymorse.com/st-henry-morse