

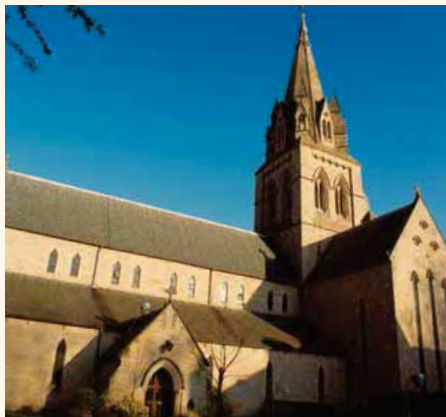
St Barnabas Cathedral

Derby Road, Nottingham

Grade II* | Grant Round 1: £80,297

Grant Round 2: £24,175

Diocese of Nottingham



The 16th Earl of Shrewsbury, Ambrose Phillips de Lisle and Bishop Walsh provided most of the funds to build what was, when it opened, the largest Catholic church in England at the time. A.W.N. Pugin was the architect and it was built between 1841–44. It became a Cathedral in 1850. The Cathedral houses the tomb of the Venerable Mary Potter, one of most significant women of C19th Nottingham who was foundress of the Little Company of Mary, an international religious institute of women begun in the city in 1877 with specific charism of medical care for the poor and dying.

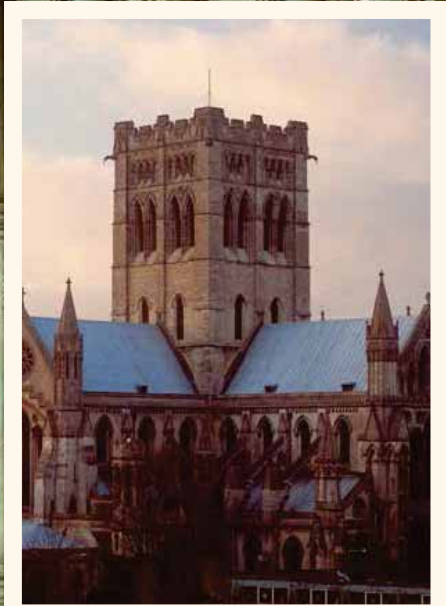
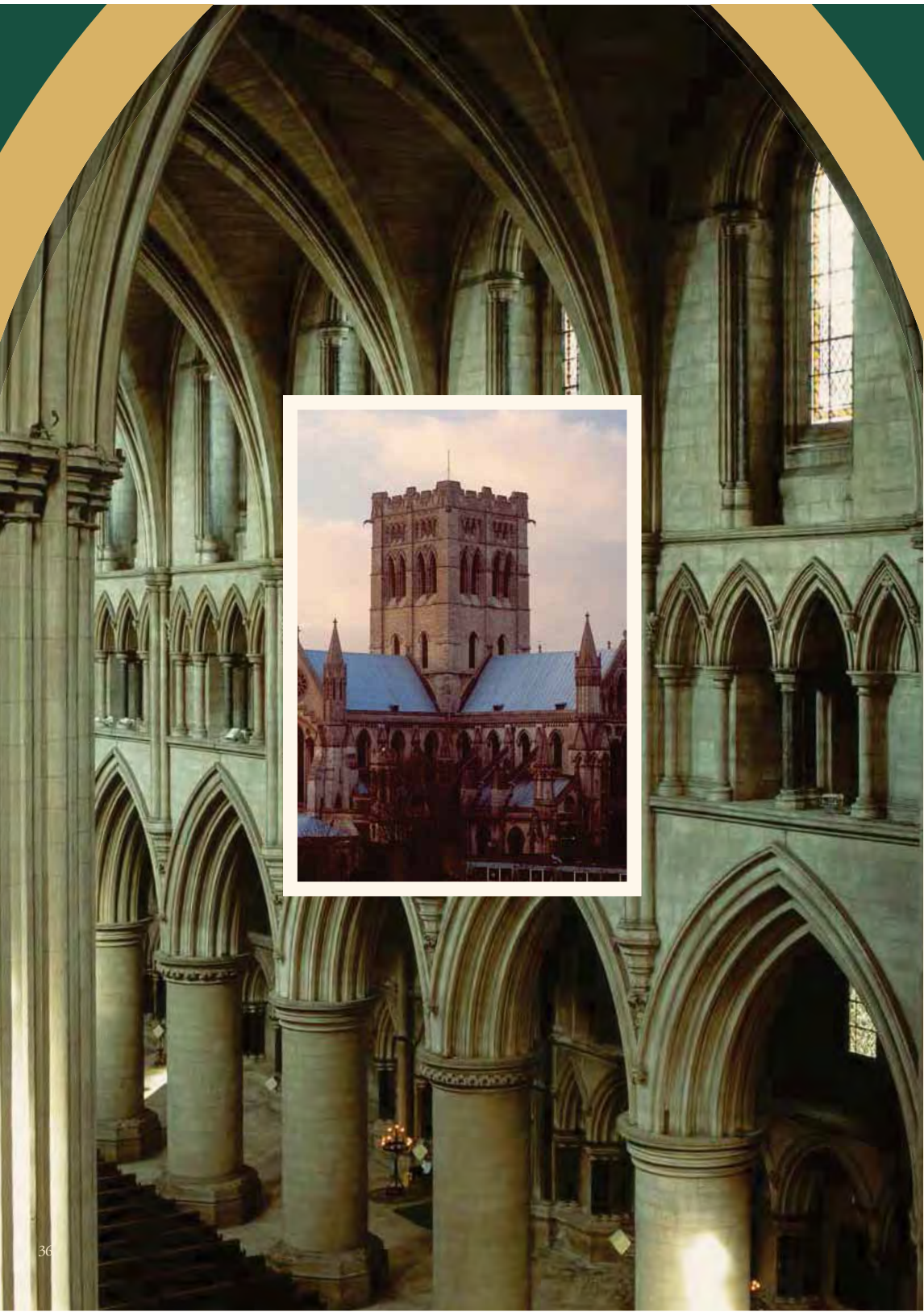
The Blessed Sacrament Chapel, brought back to Pugin style colours and decoration by Elphege Pippet in the 1930s, is one of the glories of the Cathedral. Elsewhere in the building the original painted decoration was covered over but recent paint analysis has uncovered the earlier decorative schemes, including Pugin's beautiful decoration in the side chapels off the ambulatory at the east end. The NLHF is currently supporting a project which aims to uncover and restore the original decoration.

However, before plans for this exciting conservation project could evolve there was an urgent need to eliminate the damp affecting the walls and nave columns and to stop water coming in through the tower. A significant grant from the First World War Centenary Cathedrals Repair Fund addressed the gutters, downpipes and drainage system around the Cathedral, all of which were failing. The grant in Round 1 of the Heritage Stimulus Fund resolved the issues in the tower as well as providing for a new boiler to replace one which was thirty years old and for which parts could no longer be obtained. With the Cathedral fabric being given time to dry out, the grant in Round 2 secured the repair of the bases of the nave columns. Over the years persistent damp had caused salts to rise and penetrate the stonework causing it to flake and crumble. These stone bases are now restored and the Cathedral is looking forward eagerly to develop its ambitious 'Restoring Pugin' project, being supported by the NLHF, with support from partner organisation Nottingham Trent University, and Culture Syndicates. A new group, the Friends of Nottingham Cathedral, has been established to support the project.



East of England





Cathedral of St John the Baptist

St Giles's Gate, Norwich

Grade I | Grant Round 1: £311,650

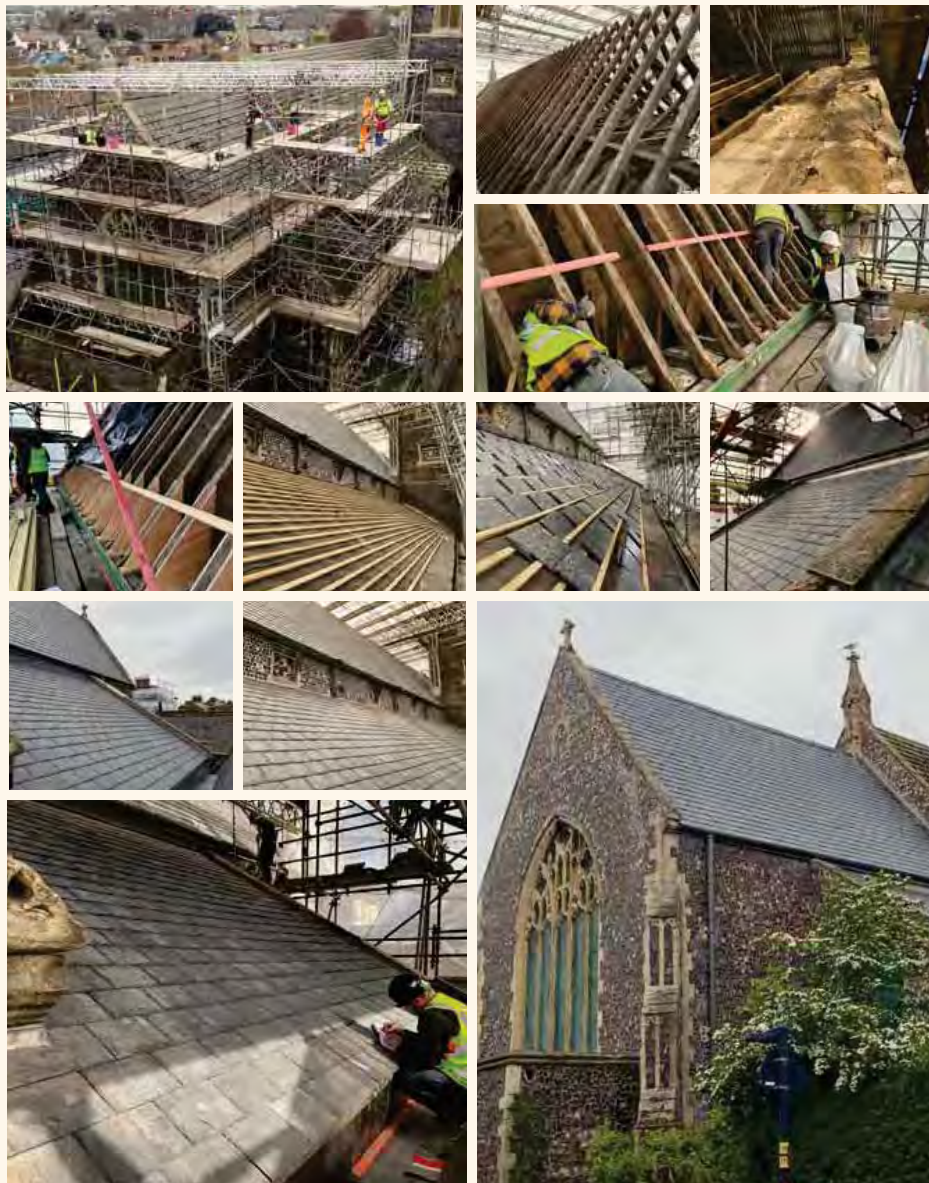
Diocese of East Anglia



The 15th Duke of Norfolk was a generous funder of Catholic churches. The great church he built at Arundel to mark his 21st birthday (another masterpiece by J.A. Hansom) was to become a Cathedral. So too at Norwich where he agreed to fund the building of a major new church which finally became a Cathedral in 1976. Building started in 1894 and continued until 1910. The architect was George Gilbert Scott junior, the son of the eminent Anglican architect Sir George Gilbert Scott, designer of St Pancras Station and many Anglican churches. George junior had been received into the Catholic Church by St John Henry Newman in 1881. He died before completing the church and work was continued by his brother, John Oldrid Scott. The site acquired was that of the former Norwich gaol, an elevated location allowing the church to be widely visible across the city. Internally there is wonderful stained glass, mostly designed by Hardman & Co.

A building of this scale, complexity and age needs a great deal of work to keep it in good repair. Whilst there is more to be done the three distinct projects funded under this grant scheme have addressed the most urgent areas. Lead behind the parapet of the north transept needed replacing to stop water leaking onto the beams supporting the roof, lengths of downpipe, stolen some years ago, needed replacing and, most critical of all in terms of fire safety, the incoming electricity supply cables and distribution panels had been found dangerous and needed urgent replacement. Snow and frost in the early part of 2021 presented a real challenge for those working on replacing the lead at high level but all the work was duly completed with great skill.





St Mary

Regent Road, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk

Grade II* | Grant Round 1: £134,870

Grant Round 2: £319,421

Diocese of East Anglia



Built for the Jesuits between 1848–50, this fine church was designed by J.J. Scoles, an architect the Jesuits frequently turned to. Faced with squared black flints it is very much an East Anglian church. At some point in the post-war period the whole roof was recovered with moulded concrete tiles. Not only were these unsightly, they did not fit well and over the years water has percolated into the church damaging the painted interior. A deluge of rain in a heavy storm a few years ago caused a valley gutter to overflow into the church directly above the early C20th mural painting of Our Lady of Great Yarmouth in the Lady Chapel causing extensive damage.

It was clear that the whole church needed reroofing and areas of flint repointing but there were no funds to do this. Whilst St Mary's lies outside the High Street Heritage Action Zone currently being supported by Historic England the parish has worked closely with those involved with the HAZ and fully recognised the scope for regeneration. The first grant saw the reroofing of the Sanctuary and the chapels either side and the grant in Round 2 has enabled the nave and aisle roofs to be completed. Parishioners have been actively engaged in fundraising – donors being asked to buy and sign individual slates — and they have left no stone unturned in their efforts to promote St Mary's as widely as possible and generate enthusiasm and commitment for ongoing restoration. Without the funding in place to secure the full repair of the roof and halt further damage and decay, parishioners would have faced an impossible uphill struggle against the elements. Flags of some 51 countries around the world now stand proudly together in St Mary's, celebrating the diversity of today's congregation. All share one aim: to see St Mary's fully restored to its former glory.





St Peter

Lowestoft Road, Gorleston, Norfolk

Grade II* | Grant Round 1: £136,524

Diocese of East Anglia



St Peter's is the only church designed by the Catholic sculptor, engraver, type-face designer and polemicist, Eric Gill. Whilst the exterior may look somewhat ordinary, the church is, in fact, revolutionary in its design. Built just before the Second World War between 1938–39, the altar is placed centrally under the crossing and thus in the middle of the congregation. St Peter's is a very early precursor of the kind of design that the Second Vatican Council espoused in the early 1960s but Gill had thought these ideas through decades before. Light permeates the space.



Not far from Great Yarmouth, Gorleston is a sea side town with a high level of deprivation. The parish do not have the funds to restore the church and the grant has enabled the large windows on the tower to be replaced. These were hard to access and were rotting badly. Before the work, some had simply been boarded over as the frames had become badly rotted.



✠ Our Lady of Consolation and St Stephen

Lynford, Thetford, Norfolk

Grade II* | Grant Round 2: £108,345

Norfolk Churches Trust



This gem of a church was designed by the architect, Henry Clutton, who converted to Catholicism in 1856. It was commissioned by the fabulously wealthy widow, Mrs Yolande Lyne-Stephens, formerly a celebrated French ballerina, who had married the banker and glass manufacturer Stephens Lyne-Stephens in 1837. They bought Lynford Hall in Norfolk which they rebuilt. The family owned a glass manufacturing business in Portugal and their fortune partly derived from the manufacture of patented moving dolls' eyes. The church was built between 1877–78 and is of extremely high quality with its interior largely intact. Romanesque carved panels dating from around 1100 are incorporated into the buttresses. These days it is hidden by trees planted when the estate was acquired by an Anglican family after Mrs Lyne-Stephens's death who regarded the Catholic chapel as an eyesore.

Mrs Lyne-Stephens is perhaps best known as the sole benefactor of the magnificent Our Lady and the English Martyrs, Cambridge, a church of cathedral proportions begun a decade after Lynford and recently upgraded to Grade I.

The church at Lynford is in the care of the Norfolk Churches Trust which has leased the building from the Diocese of East Anglia since 2009 when it ceased to be used for regular Mass. The stonework of the north parapet was particularly decayed with scaffolding supporting it since 2018. More recently, danger of falling masonry caused the church to be closed. The grant has enabled the repair of both the parapet and the bellcote and the church is now open again. Mass is said occasionally, and the church is also used for weddings in association with Lynford Hall, now a hotel.



London & South East of England

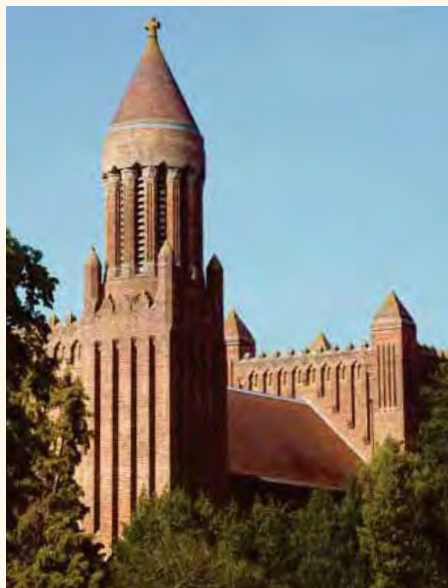


❖ Quarr Abbey of Our Lady

Ryde, Isle of Wight

Grade I | Grant Round 2: £259,453

St Mary's Abbey, Quarr



Arriving in the Isle of Wight in 1901 in the wake of growing anticlerical legal requirements in France and settling initially at Appuldurcombe House (now in the care of English Heritage), the French Benedictines from Solesmes acquired the site at Quarr and began building a new abbey in 1908–10. The site is close to the ruins of the great medieval Cistercian monastery of Quarr, founded in 1132 and destroyed at the Reformation when much of the stone was carted away to build Henry VIII's new forts along the Solent.

The present Abbey was designed by the Benedictine monk, Dom Paul Bellot, for his own community. Although essentially gothic in style, the design reflects French, Byzantine and Moorish elements. Pevsner described it as *'One of the most daring and successful church buildings of the early C20th in England'*.

The grant enabled two important elements of work to proceed. The leaded windows of the south choir were buckling and allowing water to penetrate the brickwork and the roofs above the chapels to the north and south of the Sanctuary were failing, again allowing water to seep into the walls. The peaceful and extensive grounds surrounding the monastery were open to the public throughout Covid providing a hugely valued place for residents of the Island to visit and enjoy. The small community of monks welcome visitors and are aided by enthusiastic volunteers who help to maintain both the Abbey church and the beautiful surroundings.



❖ Shrine of St Augustine

St Augustine's Road, Ramsgate, Kent

Grade I | Grant Round 2: £260,620

Archdiocese of Southwark



Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin bought the site in Ramsgate because it was near to where St Augustine landed in AD 597. He designed and built his house, The Grange (now owned by the Landmark Trust), and set about building a great church next door. Built between 1845–50, the church expresses all of Pugin's ideas about what a Catholic church should be. He designed and paid for it himself so for once did not have patrons or priests interfering. Bringing together the trusted people he had worked with before, George Myers oversaw the building, John Hardman provided the stained glass and metalwork to Pugin's designs and Herbert Minton supplied the tiles. Sadly the intended spire was never built. Pugin died in 1852 and is buried in the church, leaving his son, Edward Pugin, to complete the complex. In 2012 the church was created the Shrine of St Augustine of England.

The church itself underwent a major restoration with Heritage Lottery funding which was completed in 2017. As part of this programme a Pugin education, research and visitor centre was created. Many visitors now find their way to Ramsgate to experience Pugin's magnificent creation.

However, the planned phased programme of work to restore the cloister roofs, other roofs and architectural elements which form part of the complex was not able to proceed due to lack of funds. This grant has supported a second significant phase of roof repairs with newly made specially moulded clay tiles supplied for the roof and fitted together associated leadwork and stone repairs. More work is still needed to complete the full repair of the complex but this will only be possible with further grant funding.





Westminster Cathedral of the Most Precious Blood

Victoria Street, London

Grade I | Grant Round 1: £298,308

Archdiocese of Westminster

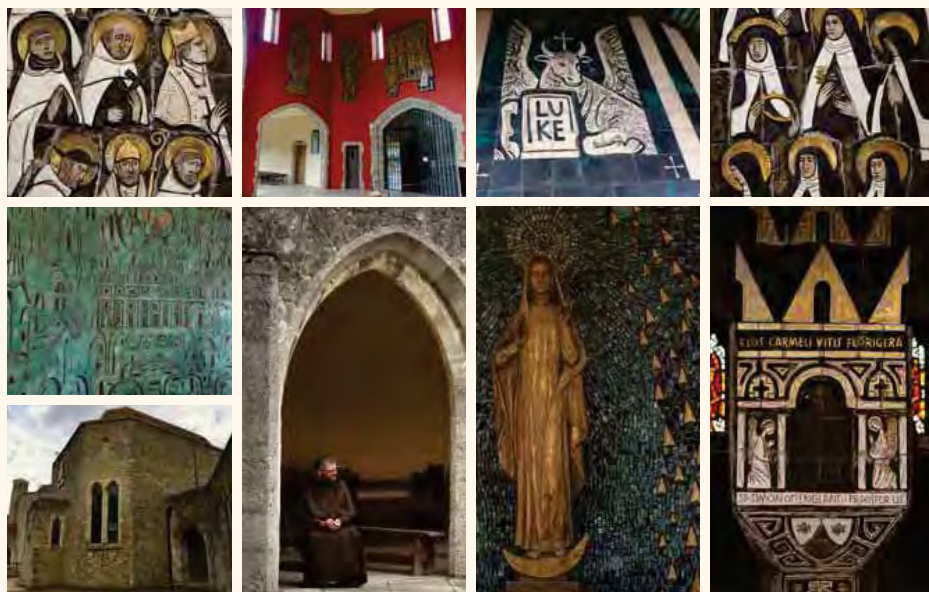


Cardinal Manning had the vision to create a great cathedral at Westminster but died before it could be realised. The project was taken forward by his successor, Cardinal Vaughan, who commissioned John Francis Bentley as architect. Debate ensued about the style: Gothic was rejected due to the near proximity with Westminster Abbey and Classical because Bentley was opposed and also because unfavourable comparisons might be made with the Brompton Oratory. Vaughan himself favoured an Early Christian style but between them they agreed on Byzantine. Bentley then spent five months travelling in Italy visiting Ravenna, Venice, Assisi and Rome. He planned to travel to Istanbul but an outbreak of cholera in the city prevented this. He was, however, familiar with the architecture of Hagia Sophia from learned books and the influence of this mighty building is evident in his design. Built between 1895–1903 the Cathedral is Bentley's masterpiece. Inside, mosaics and marble abound with incremental additions to the mosaics in recent years as funds have allowed. The upper parts of the Cathedral remain unfinished. The Cathedral has many side chapels full of beautiful furnishings and the Stations of the Cross are by Eric Gill. The body of St John Southworth, hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn in 1654, lies in the Chapel of St George and the English Martyrs.

The Cathedral can hold up to 2,000 people. The first performance in London of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* (words written by St John Henry Newman) was performed in the Cathedral in 1903.

After over 100 years the brick and stonework at high level is in need of repointing and repair with acid smoke from coal fired Battersea Power Station across the river blamed for hastening erosion prior to ceasing generating in 1983. One phase of repair to the long south elevation was completed prior to Covid with funding from the Gubay Foundation. The grant enabled a second significant phase to be completed but there is still a lot more to be done.





Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel & St Simon Stock

The Friars, Aylesford, Kent

Grade II* | Grant Round 1: £213,043

Grant Round 2: £173,780

The Friars Aylesford



The Carmelites first arrived at their site beside the river Medway in 1242. They were given the land by a returning Crusader. The Carmelites began as hermits on Mt Carmel in the Holy Land but gradually returned to Europe as mendicant friars with the collapse of the Crusader states. Five years after its Foundation, Aylesford hosted the first general meeting of Carmelites from across Europe and the English Carmelite saint, St Simon Stock, was at Aylesford before travelling across Europe to found new houses, ending up in Bordeaux where he died in 1265. The Friars were forced to leave Aylesford in 1538 and the buildings were transformed into a substantial house, being altered again in the late C17th. A fire in the 1930s destroyed this house and the Carmelite Friars were subsequently able to buy back their historic site in 1949.

Prior Malachy Lynch, the first Prior, commissioned Adrian Gilbert-Scott, brother of the better known Sir Giles Gilbert-Scott, to build a series of shrines and brought in the Polish refugee artist, Adam Kosowski, to decorate them with his distinctive highly coloured and sculpted tile work. Kosowski had been arrested by the advancing Soviet army in 1939 and sentenced to hard labour in the Gulag before managing to reach England in 1943. He worked at Aylesford from 1950–71. The complex of shrines were constructed between 1958–65. In 1951 a fragment of St Simon Stock's skull was brought by the Bishop of Bordeaux to Aylesford and resides in Kosowski's striking black and white reliquary. In front of the chapels is an open air sunken piazza where pilgrims come to hear Mass.

The two grants have supported the complete re-roofing of the Shrine complex including the link buildings. These had all been leaking with water causing damage to the outstanding decorative interiors within. Aylesford is a place of great peace and tranquillity with beautiful grounds.



❖ St Thomas of Canterbury

Pyle Street, Newport, Isle of Wight

Grade II* | Grant Round 2: £54,530

Diocese of Portsmouth



This delightful little building has a claim to be the oldest Catholic *'parish'* church built since the Reformation not associated with a private estate. Built immediately after the passing of the Catholic Relief Act of 1791, it was funded by Elizabeth Heneage who was born into a Catholic family on the island and married into the well-known recusant Heneage family of Lincolnshire. She also funded the almost contemporary Catholic church in Cowes. A charming wall tablet in the church at Newport commemorates her generosity and her piety. The style of the church is simple so as not to draw attention to itself although it clearly faces the public street. It is similar in design to Methodist chapels of that period and, apart from the crosses on the façade, could almost be mistaken for one. Inside, the interior has galleries and a shallow Sanctuary typical of early Catholic chapels of the Georgian period.

A grant from Historic England's Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund supported the renewal of the leadwork and repairs to parapet gutters and downpipes on the north elevation. This grant enabled similar work to be completed on the south and east elevations as well as upgrading the drainage system to ensure rainwater can no longer percolate into the building causing damage to the walls and plasterwork.



South West of England



✠ Our Lady Help of Christians and St Denis

Priory Road, St Marychurch, Torquay, Devon

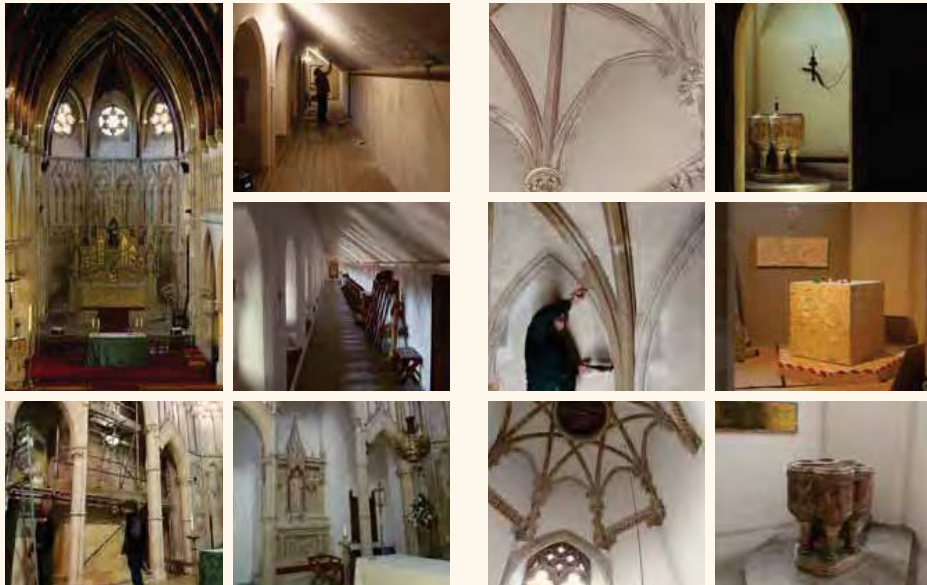
Grade I | Grant Round 1: £77,798

Diocese of Plymouth



This enormous church with its tall spire is a landmark in Torquay. It was built between 1865–81 for Mother Mary Hallahan who had been invited by Bishop Vaughan to bring her Dominican nuns to Devon. Mother Mary's ambition was to build a church of sufficient grandeur to be worthy of Our Lady. She achieved this thanks to the generosity of William Potts-Chatto, a wealthy newcomer to the district at the time who simply offered to pay whatever was required. J.A. Hansom was appointed architect and a convent, orphanage and school for some 200 pupils formed part of the complex. The convent is now converted to an old people's home. The church has retained many of its original fittings and houses a magnificent organ.

The grant enabled three areas of work to be undertaken repairing internal damage caused by water leaks from the roof which had recently been repaired. Collapsing plasterwork in the south nave triforium was repaired. Stonework and plaster repairs were carried out to the ribbed ceiling of the Baptistry (the font was designed by J.A. Hanson's son, also Joseph) as well as drainage improvements to deal with rainwater blowing in through the louvres of the belfry, and further repairs were undertaken to the rear wall of the north Sanctuary altar, again putting right damage caused by water ingress.



✠ St Mary

High Street, Cricklade, Wiltshire

Grade II* | Grant Round 1: £32,309

Diocese of Clifton



It is relatively rare for medieval churches to return to Catholic use but having been declared redundant in 1981, St Mary's was leased to the Diocese of Clifton in 1984 and adapted for Catholic worship. The origins of the church and some of its fabric date back to the C12th though it has been altered through the centuries and restored in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Ground movement in the north aisle caused spreading, the aisle had to be cordoned off for safety and the aisle roof supported by scaffolding putting a significant section of the interior out of use. The grant aided repair work has involved the construction of a new buttress to support this largely medieval wall. Whilst the scaffolding was erected for this work, the opportunity was taken to repoint high level stonework which had become very weathered. The church is now fully back in use with all internal scaffolding removed.

✠ The Annunciation

St Mary's Hill, Woodchester, Stroud, Gloucestershire

Grade I | Grant Round 1: £89,550

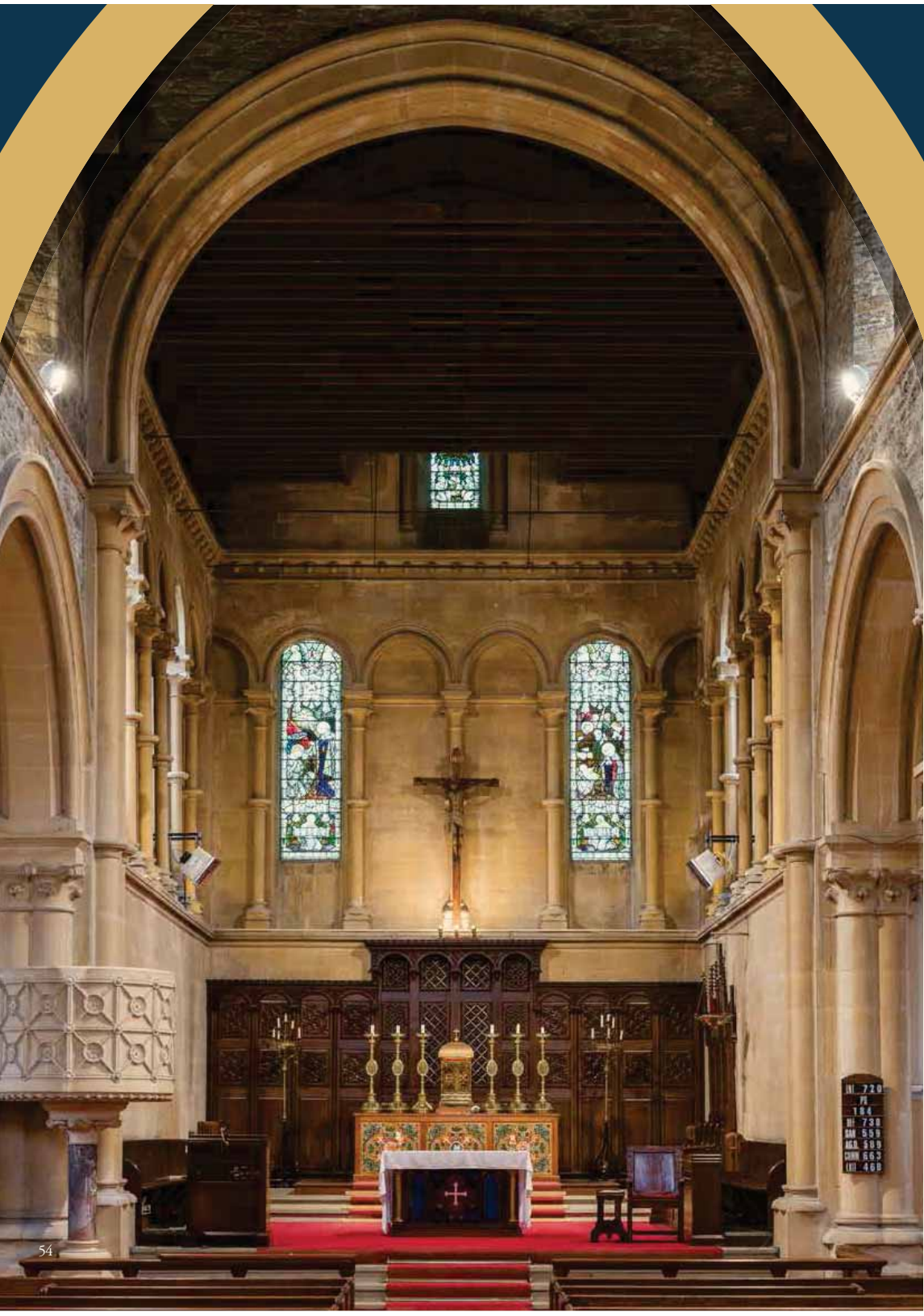
Diocese of Clifton



The church of the Annunciation at Woodchester was part of William Leigh's great vision to build not just a mansion for himself, but to establish a sizeable church and to bring in a religious community. Leigh had converted to Catholicism in 1844. He bought the Woodchester estate in 1845 and work on the church began the following year to the designs of Charles F. Hansom. It was complete by 1849 and has a fine interior. The Priory buildings were complete by 1853. First the Passionists arrived to be replaced shortly by the Dominicans (sadly, the Priory buildings were demolished in 1970). In 1855 Leigh began work on his house, Woodchester Mansion, but the large building was left unfinished at his death in 1873 and abandoned. It is now in the care of the Woodchester Mansion Trust.

The approach to the church is flanked by a long stone wall which runs up the hill. This was collapsing in places and becoming dangerous, a cause of real concern to the congregation which did not have the funds to repair it as well as to maintain their important church. The grant has ensured that this essential work has now been completed. The rebuilding of this wall provided training opportunities for young masons keen to learn the skills involved and the use of lime mortar.





Our Lady and St Mary Magdalene

Callington Road, Tavistock, Devon

Grade II* | Grant Round 2: £386,564

Diocese of Plymouth



This church was built by The 8th Duke of Bedford in 1865–67 as an Anglican chapel of ease for the workers at the nearby copper mines. The Duke's architect was Henry Clutton who was employed by the Duke both in Devon and at Woburn. Clutton had converted to Catholicism a decade before and built a significant number of Catholic churches. In the early C20th the copper mines declined and between 1918–1936 the church was out of use. In the early 1950s a local benefactor bought the church and it opened for Catholic worship in 1952. It is a major landmark on the hill on the edge of the town with the tower and spire visible from a considerable distance.



It is a large church and attached to it is a massive tower and spire. This was in need of major work as internal floors had rotted, internal access was impossible and the leadwork on the louvres had decayed badly requiring extensive replacement. An enormous amount of scaffolding was required, inevitably a major cost way beyond the means of the congregation. The grant aided work has seen the whole upper section of the tower and spire restored with stonework repaired and repointed, new timber replacing rotten elements and new leadwork. Steeple jacks accessed the top of the spire in order to carry out essential repairs.

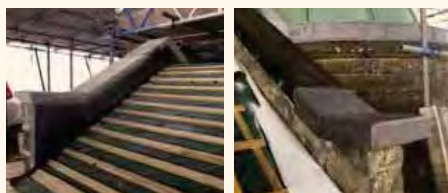
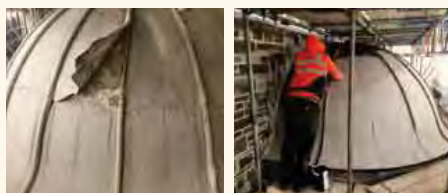


✠ St Cuthbert Mayne

St Stephen's Hill, Launceston, Cornwall

Grade II* | Grant Round 1: £221,899

Diocese of Plymouth



St Cuthbert Mayne was born in Devon, probably around 1543. At Oxford University he became an Anglican minister at the age of 18 but soon came into contact with St Edmund Campion and his circle. In 1575 Cuthbert Mayne was ordained a Catholic priest at Douai, the seminary in the Low Countries established by Cardinal Allen in 1568 on land given by Philip II of Spain to train priests for the English Mission. Mayne returned to England and to Cornwall but was arrested in 1577 and condemned later that year to be hanged, drawn and quartered for his Faith in Launceston. He was the first seminary priest trained on the Continent to be martyred in England. The church is the national shrine of St Cuthbert Mayne and houses a reliquary containing his skull. The skull, pieced by a pike following his execution, was smuggled to the Continent shortly after and came into the possession of the English Carmelite Convert in Antwerp. Following the French Revolution, the Carmelite nuns returned to England and to Lanherne in Cornwall bringing their important relic with them.

St Cuthbert's was built in 1911 in a Byzantine/Romanesque style (inspired by Westminster Cathedral). It was designed by Arthur Langdon, an antiquary interested in Celtic crosses and brother of the donor, Canon Charles Baskerville Langdon. It is constructed of local Cornish Polyphant stone, much used in this part of Cornwall but known to weather unevenly with some stones decaying much more quickly than others. The church needed major work both to its roof and stonework and the grant enabled these urgent repairs to be completed. St Cuthbert's is an unusual but handsome church. Following completion of the external repairs a sensitive new lighting scheme has brought the otherwise somewhat sombre grey stone interior, and the shrine of St Cuthbert Mayne, brilliantly to life.



✠ St Michael and St George

Silver Street, Lyme Regis, Dorset

Grade II* | Grant Round 1: £175,475

Diocese of Plymouth



This church stands in a prominent elevated position within the town. It was built in 1837 to the designs of a provincial architect, H.E. Goodridge of Bath in the gothic style. The presbytery was added the following year. The octagonal belfry was originally designed for a taller spire but a smaller one was added in 1855 and rebuilt in 1936.

Much of the church is rendered with stone dressings and being so exposed to both wind and sea air the render together with the decorative finials on the roof were deteriorating badly. Some of the finials were close to collapse. The grant has ensured the repair and stabilisation of these key architectural features together with the replacement of significant areas of spalling render. Normally, this kind of work involving lime render would be carried out during the summer months to avoid the risk of frost damaging the new render before it has time to dry out. Under the terms of the grant this work had to be carried out in the early part of the year necessitating great care to be taken to protect the newly rendered areas with protective sheeting. All went well and the church, which had been looking somewhat forlorn prior to the work, is now looking resplendent.



✠ The Annunciation

Charminster Road, Bournemouth, Dorset

Grade II* | Grant Round 1: £207,322

Diocese of Portsmouth



Built between 1906 –7, this was the first church to be designed by the young Giles Gilbert-Scott. Astonishingly, three years earlier, at the age of 22, he had won the competition to design the new Anglican cathedral in Liverpool. The Annunciation was built for the Jesuits. Client and architect were sometimes at odds during construction with Gilbert-Scott complaining, *'The artistic taste of the Catholic Priests is appalling and I am most anxious to have a church in which everything is genuine and good, and not tawdry or ostentatious'*. Scott got his way and the interior is starkly handsome with some good fittings. The severe, angular exterior in brick is overtly modern and heralds some of his later work. *'A brilliantly original design in brick'* is how John Betjeman described the church.

Over a century on the exterior was badly in need of repointing, stone work repairs to windows and repairs to gutters and downpipes all of which had suffered the effects of erosion over time from weathering. The grant has enabled this vital work to be undertaken. It has been carried out with great skill by gifted craftsmen.



A Short Introduction to Catholic Church Architecture in England and Wales



A Short Introduction to Catholic Church Architecture in England and Wales

The medieval parish churches which are such a feature of the landscapes of England and Wales were built for Christian worship according to the Latin (that is, the Roman Catholic) rite. That ceased to be the case at the time of the Reformation, and while a handful of medieval churches have returned to Catholic use, the vast majority of Catholic churches in use today in England and Wales were built in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the most ambitious programme of building undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s. This is therefore a building stock of relatively recent date, the scale and significance of which has often been overlooked.



The Canonisation of St John Henry Newman at St Peter's in Rome on October 13th 2019. St John Henry Newman is the first English saint to be Canonised since the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales were Canonised in 1970.

The Catholic Church is the world's largest Christian church, with an estimated 1.3 billion members, or one in six people. It is governed by the Pope, through the Roman Curia. Despite the popular perception of the Church as a monolithic and centralised organisation, power and administration are mainly devolved to the local level authority, residing with the diocesan bishop. Places of public worship are controlled by, and belong to, the diocese in which they are located, except when they are owned by one of the religious orders. In addition to a church, each parish may have a presbytery (priest's house), a parish hall and a school, usually attached to or near the church. The church is the centre of practicing

Catholics' spiritual life and religious observance, the place where they attend Mass and receive the Sacraments.

There are over 3,000 Catholic parish churches and chapels in England and Wales, mainly in urban and suburban areas; there are relatively few rural examples, but those that survive are often amongst the oldest and most important. Nearly all have been visited under the Taking Stock programme, an architectural and historical review of Catholic churches in England undertaken by Historic England in partnership with the dioceses (see website: taking-stock.org.uk).

A Short Introduction to Catholic Church Architecture in England and Wales



Reformation to 1790

Under Queen Elizabeth I's Act of Uniformity of 1559, the Catholic Mass became illegal in England and Wales. Catholic observance became a furtive and dangerous affair, with heavy penalties levied on those, known as recusants, who refused to attend Anglican church services. The seeds of a new underground church were planted with the foundation in 1568 of the College at Douai in Flanders (now northern France), from which missionary priests were trained and sent out to sympathetic safe houses. Many of these priests were to meet death by hanging, drawing and quartering in the Elizabethan period (below).



Stained glass windows in St Mary's Derby depicting the torture of St Ralph Sherwin at the Tower of London in 1580 (left) and the execution of Bd Nicholas Garlick in 1588 (right). Both were Derbyshire priests and martyrs.

While the penal laws remained on the statute books, violent persecution diminished under the Stuarts, although Catholic hopes for improvement were not helped by the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, which prompted further executions and suspicion. In the later Stuart period, the situation was made more complicated by the open or private Catholic faith of some monarchs, and by their Catholic marriages. James II was openly Catholic, and with his accession in 1685 the penal laws were suspended and ecclesiastical hierarchy restored, with the country divided into four Districts, each led by a Vicar Apostolic (bishop to missionary territories).

Progress stalled after James II's flight in 1688 and the accession of William and Mary, ushering in the Glorious or Protestant Revolution. The penal laws were re-established, and practising as a priest made punishable with life imprisonment (the last priest to be so punished being in 1767). The laity were prevented from buying new land, barred from the professions, army and universities, and forbidden to own a horse worth more than £5.



A Short Introduction to Catholic Church Architecture in England and Wales



Relief Acts to Emancipation

In 1776 the Government approached Richard Challoner, Vicar Apostolic for London, for help in recruiting Catholics to fight in the American War of Independence. In exchange for this, the government set up a committee of laymen to consider a relaxation of the penal laws. A Catholic Relief Act brought before Parliament in 1778 allowed Catholics to buy and inherit land and protected clergy from prosecution for fulfilling their priestly role but made no specific provision for church building. The Act prompted a fierce backlash, culminating in the Gordon Riots of 1780 when many Catholic properties were sacked.



St Thomas of Canterbury
Newport, Isle of Wight (1791)



All Saints, Hassop,
Derbyshire (1816)



St Mary, Standishgate,
Wigan (1818)



St Charles Borromeo,
Hull (1828)

The Second Catholic Relief Act of 1791 allowed Catholics, subject to the swearing of an oath of loyalty to the monarch, to practice their religion without fear of prosecution, and this included the building of churches. Bells and steeples were forbidden, and as a rule church buildings of the early post-Relief-Act years were architecturally plain. However, confidence grew in the 1820s, culminating with the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829, when most of the remaining barriers of penal times were removed.

A.W.N. Pugin's first large parish church was St Mary, Derby, built in 1838, and he went on to design many more churches until his early death in 1852. Pugin firmly believed that the only appropriate style for Catholic churches was Gothic. At St Giles, Cheadle, near Stoke-on-Trent, his great patron, The 16th Earl of Shrewsbury, allowed him his head to design the church as he wished. Pugin regarded the church as *'Perfect'*.



St Mary, Derby
(A.W.N. Pugin 1838)



St Giles, Cheadle
(A.W.N. Pugin 1840 - 46)

A Short Introduction to Catholic Church Architecture in England and Wales



Restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy

In 1850, Pope Pius IX restored the Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales, with the creation of thirteen new dioceses, each headed by a diocesan bishop. At this time there was a considerable under-provision of churches to cater for the growing, mainly industrial and working-class Catholic population. The census of 1851 recorded just over 250,000 attending Sunday Mass, out of an estimated Catholic population of over 600,000. Many of these were recent Irish immigrants, escaping the privations of the Great Famine (1845 - 52).



St. John the Evangelist, Bath
(C.F. Hansom, 1861 - 63)



London Oratory of St Philip Neri
(Herbert Gribble, 1878 - 96)



The second half of the nineteenth century saw an enormous building programme, focusing primarily on schools, with churches following as funds permitted. Between 1875 and 1900 the number of churches and chapels grew by a third to about 1,500, and the estimated number of priests serving the missions (as they were known) from 2,000 to 3,000. At the start of the twentieth century, the estimated Catholic population had risen to 1.5 million, or 4.6 percent of the general population of England and Wales. Catholic culture was strong, introverted, and in some areas tribal in character; Catholics had their own schools, their own social clubs and were firmly discouraged from marrying outside of the Faith.

Whilst many churches were built in the gothic style, major classical churches which looked to Rome were also constructed during this period.



A Short Introduction to Catholic Church Architecture in England and Wales



Twentieth Century Growth

There were an estimated 1.7 million Catholics by 1911, rising to 2.4 million (5.7 percent of the population) by 1941. Numbers were greatest in the industrial Catholic heartlands, especially Lancashire, County Durham, the West Midlands and London. While the main Catholic centres remained in the urban areas, there was increasing growth in the suburbs.



Westminster Cathedral, built in 1895 – 1903 and designed by J.F. Bentley, is the mother church of Roman Catholics in England and Wales. It was described by the architect Norman Shaw at the time of its opening as *'the finest church that has been built for centuries'*. The programme of mosaic enrichment continues to this day.



St Alphege, Bath
(Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, 1925 – 29)



St Monica, Bootle
(F.X. Velarde, 1936)

After the war, it took a while for expansion to resume; building restrictions and austerity meant that church and school building did not pick up again until the 1950s. The Education Act of 1944 engendered a boom in school building, and in the 1950s and 1960s this went hand in hand with church building, serving the expanding new towns, suburbs and housing estates. More Catholic churches were built in these decades than in any other decade before or since.



English Martyrs, Wallasey
(F.X. Velarde, 1952 – 53)



Our Lady of Fatima, Harlow
(Gerard Goalen 1958 – 60)



The Good Shepherd, Woodthorpe,
Nottingham (Gerard Goalen, 1961 – 63)



A Short Introduction to Catholic Church Architecture in England and Wales



The Second Vatican Council and Beyond

The Second Vatican Council (or Vatican II) was opened by Pope John XXIII in October 1962 and closed under Pope Paul VI in December 1965. The Council had a profound impact on Catholics and how they saw themselves and were seen by other Christian denominations and the wider world. The triumphalism of the pre-war years was left behind, and Christian unity increasingly promoted. Ecumenical collaboration at the local level increased significantly. The outward form of the liturgy was changed, with Mass said in the vernacular tongue rather than Latin, within reordered sanctuaries. Some found these changes traumatic, while others embraced the spirit of renewal; initially at least, numbers attending Mass held up, and in 1971 the number of priests reached an all-time high of 7,500.



Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King,
Liverpool (Sir Frederick Gibberd, 1962 – 67)



Worth Abbey
(Francis Pollen, 1964 – 89)



Our Lady Help of Christians, Kitts Green,
Birmingham (Richard Gilbert Scott, 1966 – 67)



Clifton Cathedral
(Percy Thomas Partnership, 1969 – 73)



Brentwood Cathedral
(Quinlan Terry 1989 – 91)

However, momentum was not maintained, and the last decades of the twentieth century saw a sharp decline. The breakup of formerly solid working-class Catholic communities was particularly marked in the north of England, where traditional manufacturing industries were breaking down. There was a decline in the number of priests, from the high-water mark of 1971, to 5,600 in 2001. However, this decline has been offset to some extent by Catholic immigration from Eastern Europe and elsewhere, and by a continuing, though smaller, influx of converts.



A Short Introduction to Catholic Church Architecture in England and Wales



The Context of Catholic Churches

Urban and suburban parish churches are, along with schools (with which they are often co-located) the most visible outward sign of the nineteenth and twentieth-century Catholic revival in England. Churches are often sited in disadvantaged locations, more central ones being usually unaffordable (and sometimes, in the nineteenth century at least, unavailable on account of local anti-Catholic prejudice). They tend to occupy large sites, having been acquired wherever possible with a view to establishing a parish 'complex' of church, presbytery (usually attached to the church), parish hall, and sometimes a school or convent. Attached burial grounds are unusual, at least in urban and suburban areas, a consequence of the various burial acts of the nineteenth century, which required burial in edge-of-town public cemeteries.

Until relatively recently Catholic churches tended to be designed by architects from within the Catholic fold, some well-known outside Catholic circles, many less so. The networks of architects and patronage were complex. There were family dynasties (Pugin, Scott, Hadfield, Scoles, Goldie) and major regional practices (such as F.R. Bates & Sons in South Wales). Even in the post-Vatican II decades, Catholic architects tended to dominate church building practice, but the relative dearth of building today has largely broken these networks. Catholic churches display many mainstream features of church design in England and Wales, from the gothic revival of the nineteenth century to the modernism of the twentieth. Fittings and furnishings, murals, metalwork, stained glass windows and other church furnishings can be seen in relation to the usually better-known Anglican work of the same period. However, the buildings, their furnishings and their settings need to be understood on their own terms as the products of a distinct, and distinctive, culture, history and mode of worship.

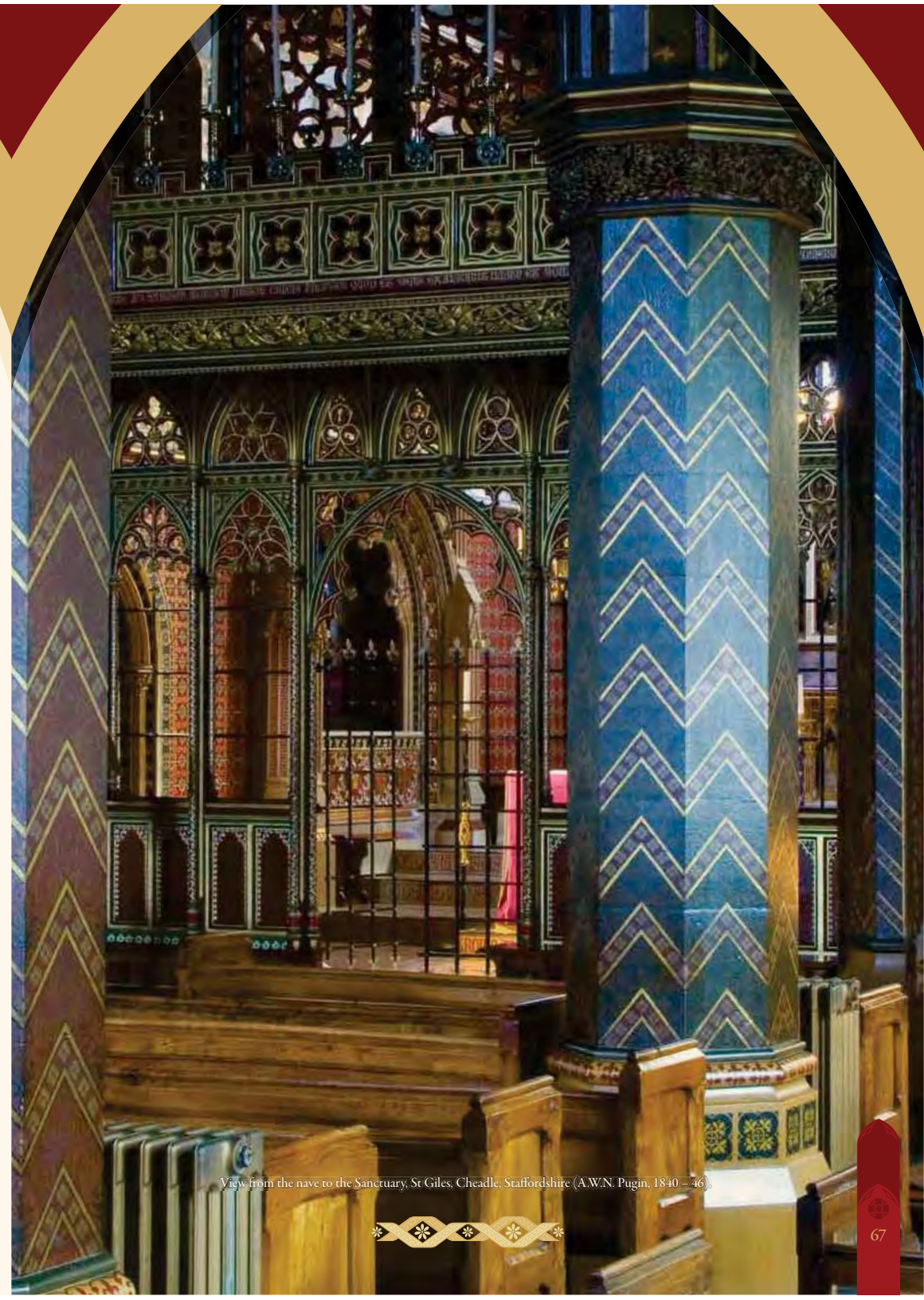
Change and the Future

There is no wholly reliable figure for the number of Catholic churches in England and Wales, but there are well over 3,000. About two-thirds date from the twentieth century, and by far the greatest proportion of those were built in the 1950s and 1960s. Just under 25 percent of Catholic churches are listed, most of them (nearly 90 percent) Grade II. Generally, Catholic churches are well maintained. However, this is an increasingly aged building stock and where grant money is unavailable, repair and maintenance costs are largely met from within the local church. Catholic parishes are not generally able to reach out to the wider community for support in the way that those responsible for a medieval parish church may.

This text is a revised and shortened version of '19th and 20th Century Roman Catholic Churches: Introductions to Heritage Assets' (Historic England, 2017).



Left and Right: The Canonisation of St John Henry Newman on October 13th 2019 at St Peter's, Rome.
Centre: HM The King, then HRH The Prince of Wales, and His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols at the reception following the Canonisation.



View from the nave to the Sanctuary, St Giles, Cheadle, Staffordshire (A.W.N. Pugin, 1840 – 46).



Grants for Programmes of Major Works:

Locations of Grant Aided Projects 2020 – 2022

North West

- St Patrick | Toxteth, Liverpool
- St Philip Neri | Liverpool
- Cathedral of St Peter | Lancaster
- All Saints Friary | Barton-upon-Irwell, Greater Manchester
- The Holy Name of Jesus | Manchester
- St Walburge | Preston
- Syro-Malabar Cathedral of St Alphonsa | Preston
- St Alban | Macclesfield
- St John the Baptist | Rochdale
- Cathedral of St John the Evangelist | Salford

North East & Yorkshire

- Ampleforth Abbey | North Yorkshire
- St Michael | Elswick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
- St Wilfrid | Ripon, North Yorkshire
- St Mary | Hexham, Northumberland
- Cathedral of St Mary | Newcastle-upon-Tyne
- Cathedral of St Anne | Leeds
- St Joseph | Pontefract, West Yorkshire
- St Paul | Alnwick, Northumberland
- St Cuthbert | Bradford

Midlands

- Cathedral of St Chad | Birmingham
- Harvington Hall | Worcestershire
- Cathedral of Our Lady Help of Christians and St Peter of Alcantara | Shrewsbury
- Cathedral of St Barnabas | Nottingham

East of England

- Cathedral of St. John the Baptist | Norwich
- St Mary | Great Yarmouth, Norfolk
- St Peter | Gorleston, Norfolk
- Our Lady of Consolation and St Stephen | Lynford, Norfolk

London & South East

- Quarr Abbey | Isle of Wight
- Shrine of St Augustine | Ramsgate, Kent
- Cathedral of the Most Precious Blood | Westminster, London
- Aylesford Priory | Kent
- St Thomas of Canterbury | Newport, Isle of Wight

South West

- Our Lady Help of Christians and St Denis | Torquay, Devon
- St Mary | Cricklade, Wiltshire
- The Annunciation | Woodchester, Gloucestershire
- Our Lady and St Mary Magdalene | Tavistock, Devon
- St Cuthbert Mayne | Launceston, Cornwall
- St Michael and St George | Lyme Regis, Dorset
- The Annunciation | Bournemouth, Dorset

North East & Yorkshire 9 Projects

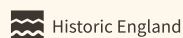
North West 10 Projects

Midlands 4 Projects

East of England 4 Projects

London & South East 5 Projects

South West 7 Projects

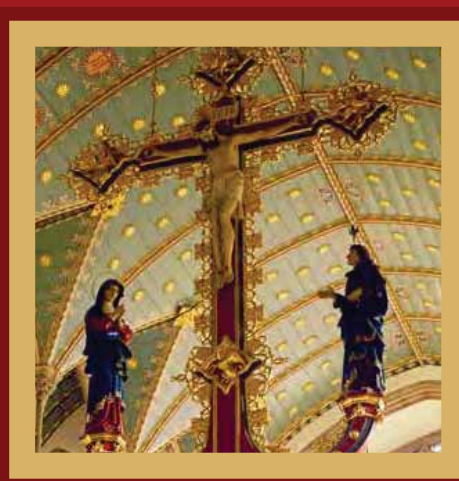


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Further Reading:

A Glimpse of Heaven: Catholic Churches of England and Wales, Christopher Martin, 2009, English Heritage

Fifty Catholic Churches to See Before You Die, Elena Curti, 2020, Gracewing

(A second volume of a further 50 churches is due out later in 2023).

Taking Stock: taking-stock.org.uk

This book has been designed and produced by Andrew Bates of Bates Fine Art Design Limited batesfineartdesign.com



April 2023

Image above: Holy Rood, Watford: J. F. Bentley's carved rood against the gold and green vaulted Sanctuary (1889 – 1900).
Back cover image: St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham: 15th Century Madonna and Child given by A.W.N. Pugin for the Lady Chapel.