

2016 - Another busy year.....

2016 has seen some momentous happenings around the world and is unlikely to be forgotten for a long time to come!

Amongst these, our own work to care for and protect St Mary's wonderful building and surroundings has continued.



The complexity of a building of St Mary's age and evolution was demonstrated by the realisation that the arrangement of downpipes at high levels on the building meant that rainwater from half of the huge areas of both the chancel and Beauchamp Chapel roofs was draining onto the small, enclosed roof area of the Dean's Chapel. With pipework that proved inadequate to take it away safely to ground level, and some pipe outlets even blocked by others,

it took only a modest drizzle to result in a build-up of water on the roof, resulting in damage to the underlying structure and decoration.

The problems were identified as of prime urgency during St Mary's five-yearly building inspection. A cost of approximately £150,000 was attached to rectifying the problem and replacing the damaged roof and underlying structure. This necessitated lifting lead with historic graffiti, recording it and replacing it on the new roof in precisely the same position. Money from the fundraising campaign started in 2012 was dedicated to the job with the grant of £75,000 from WREN covering a major part of the works.

Contractors have recently left the site having completed another important phase in the conservation of St Mary's. Water is now heading swiftly for the ground and remedial work to the areas affected has been undertaken or is in planning.

And into 2017.....

Similar problems afflict the nave roof and there will be a cost of £150,000 to rectify it. This time £100,000 worth of funding has been secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Listed Places of Worship grant scheme, with the balance coming from reserves. Work will start early in 2017 and will continue for approximately six months.

A new chapter in the care of St Mary's

Mark Stewart RIBA SCA AABC became St Mary's dedicated architect consultant at the very end of 2015. He has over 25 years experience on historic buildings which ranges from repair and conservation work to imaginative reinventions to meet modern needs.

With a long list of accreditations, Mark has worked for many leading conservation bodies, including the National Trust, the Churches Conservation Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Friends of Friendless Churches.



Mark's voluntary work includes former appointments as the Chair of Nottinghamshire Churches Trust and as a Trustee of the Society for Ancient Buildings [SPAB]. He is also the Chairman of the Harcourt Post Mill Trust.

One of his first tasks on taking up his appointment at Warwick was to carry out the five-yearly, or quinquennial inspection required of all churches and many secular buildings of historic significance.

A quinquennial inspection is a complete survey of all aspects of a church's fabric. It provides a snapshot of the building's condition for comparison with previous and subsequent checks. Vital elements are to:

- note the condition of every aspect of the building, and check for changes
- identify problems which have developed since the last inspection
- check that maintenance standards are appropriate
- check that previous recommendations have been applied
- identify urgent priorities for repair or conservation
- plan long-term works

Historic churches deteriorate and change in ways very different from modern buildings. A specialist in historic buildings and materials such as Mark and his professional colleagues can distinguish between issues that need attention and the superficial results of the ageing process. It is also important that specialists stay up to date, as there are new scientific approaches to maintenance and repair being tested all the time.

A quinquennial inspection is also a good opportunity for a church to reflect on the sustainability of the building and its use. This may include adapting the building to allow greater community use, considering how to increase resilience in the face of predicted changes to the climate, as well as increasing energy efficiency and considering other environmental issues.

It was Mark's quinquennial report early in 2016 that identified the accelerated urgency of the roof repairs in the Beauchamp and Dean's Chapel, and has also labelled the tower stonework as another area of very high priority.

THE DEAN'S CHAPEL – a new project for the Friends

The Friends of St Mary's have maintained their 30-year tradition of care for St Mary's. Their projects since formation have ranged across the ambitious, with a major contribution to the repair of the Beauchamp Chapel, to the more modest but no less important to the day-to-day operation of the church. These include future improvements to the visitor reception area and notice boards to ensure that a friendly and efficient welcome is always available.



Next they are to provide vital funding for the redecoration of the little gem of a space that lies between the chancel and the Beauchamp Chapel. Sandwiched between these two, and actually linking what were initially two separate buildings, the Dean's Chapel is, as described by Simon Jenkins in his celebrated book *England's Thousand Best Churches* as 'a casket of late-Perpendicular panelling and plaster fan vaults with pendants'.

Sadly, the features Mr Jenkins refers to have suffered from water seepage, now cured by the repair works

to the roof areas earlier this year. With that remedial work done, the redecoration work should be good for the long-term. As ever, the Vicar and PCC are immensely grateful to the Friends for their ready co-operation and support.

Fundraising continues! The next objective: THE TOWER

As well from the rainwater problems identified in the quinquennial report, a further and even more substantial matter has been designated as of highest priority.

The Tower of St Mary's, rising to 174 feet, and designed like the nave after the destruction of the great fire of Warwick by Sir William Wilson, dominates the town of Warwick, and is visible for from many miles distant. This dominance is a visible sign of the great importance of St Mary's for its history, its architecture, its contribution to the landscape and townscape, and its present active life in worship, mission and the arts.

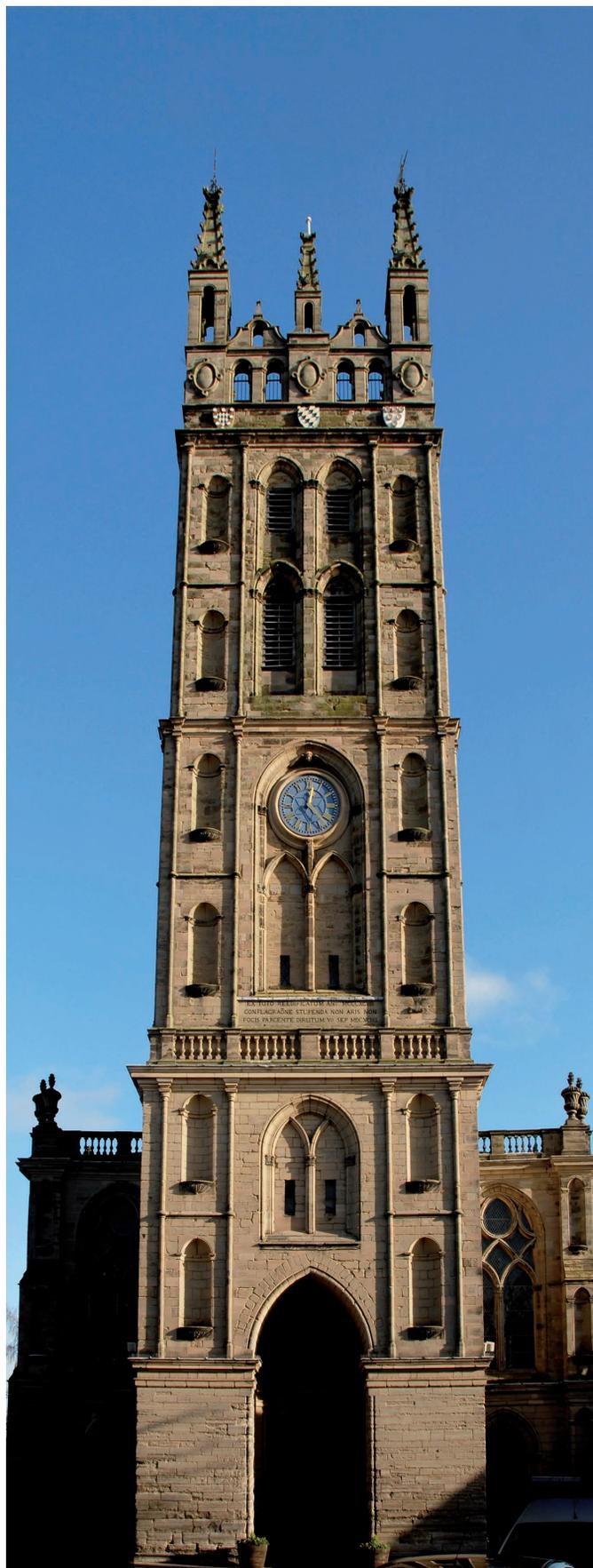
There was enough concern about the stonework of St Mary's landmark tower for a report be commissioned from Jefferson Consulting Ltd after delivery of the quinquennial report.

As so often with historic buildings, a complex set of factors has resulted in problems for us now. In this case, different stones (Arden and Warwick stone plus old repairs using Bromsgrove and Hollington stone) with differing degrees of resistance to weathering are to be found in the tower. This is exacerbated by concerns about both the mortar originally used and that used for repairs through the centuries since.

The report has concluded that, because most of the flaking and disintegration of stone is around areas of pointing, it is likely that chemical reaction between the stone and the mortar is a key weakness. Furthermore, the mortar being less porous than the stone trapping excess water in the stone and causing frost flaking of the stone especially in frosty conditions.

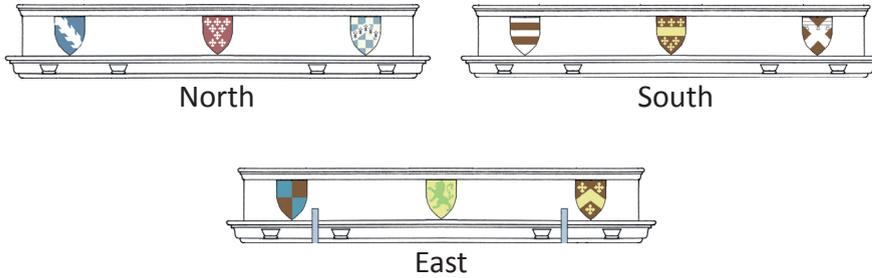
All this results in a need for repair that is 'urgent so as to secure hazardous loose masonry.'

The costing for this repair is £572,553 excluding specialist fees. This will include major expenditure



of £151,200 on a scaffold 'basket' for access to the tower. With the tower's position at the junction of three town centre streets, scaffolding up from ground level and blocking off of pavements and sections of roadway is practically and financially prohibitive.

Fundraising work is now commencing for this project. The Heritage Lottery Fund has been generous to St Mary's in the past, and we will now seek its support again for a substantial contribution. This will not be enough to cover the project costs, and wider fundraising from trusts, foundations and other interested parties will be underway as we head into 2017.



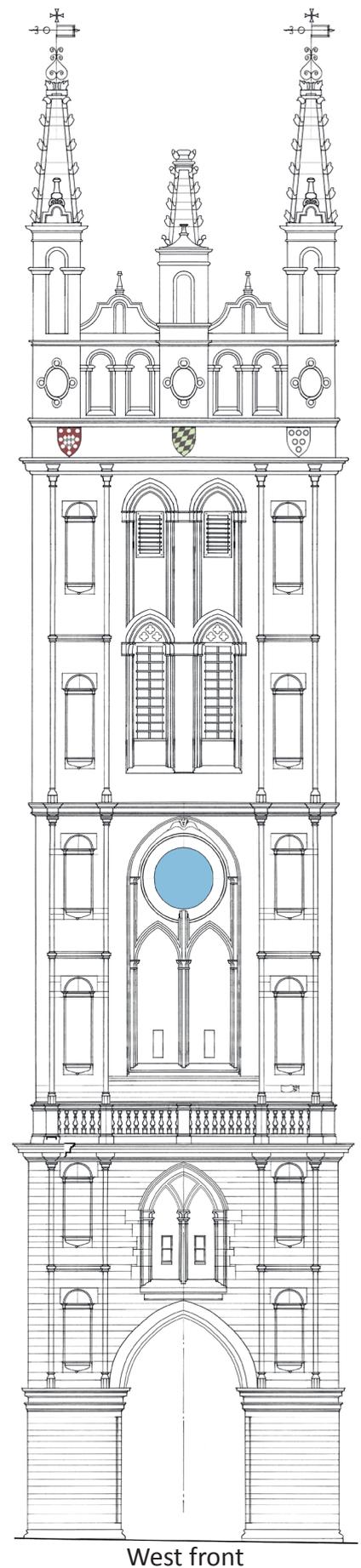
Alongside the tower project, and as a requirement for HLF funding, we will also seek to formulate a programme to enhance understanding of St Mary's heritage.

Please let us know how you and your family or friends like to receive information when you visit a church. Guidebook, information boards, leaflet, audio-visual presentation, mobile phone download? Do you like to have information on works when a repair project is obviously underway at a church you visit? Would you find project updates interesting? We'd be very interested to know and will use any information you feed back to us in our planning. Please email campaign@stmaryswarwick.org.uk to make your comments, or speak to one of our greeters or guides.

And for fun, you might like to look at www.nationalchurchtrust.org/news/yorkshire-drones – a really new insight into church buildings!

Please keep looking out for news of the Campaign. All our contact details are at the end of this newsletter. If you would like any further information we'd be glad to hear from you.

The Campaign leaflet with forms for Gift Aid and pledged giving is available in the church, and can be downloaded from the front page of the St Mary's website, www.stmaryswarwick.org.uk.



West front

Enquiries and contributions to
Collegiate Church of St Mary, FREEPOST RSYZ-LHCX-EATU, Old Square, Warwick, CV34 4RA

If you would like to know more, help or support us in any way, please contact us at campaign@stmaryswarwick.org.uk or call either of the numbers below. We would be happy to send you a full Campaign Prospectus with details of the works and costs.

Campaign Director: Alison Giles 07971 840672
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www.stmaryswarwick.org.uk