



Two Great Churches: One Town's Story

The purpose of the exhibition

You may not have realised that Beverley's two main churches, the Minster and St Mary's, are exceptional.

We tend to take for granted the area in which we live, often not seeing how rare and beautiful our surroundings are until somebody from the outside points them out, or for some reason they are lost forever.

Sir Alec Clifton-Taylor, in his book 'Six More English Towns', says "To this day the place [Beverley] has not one but two front-rank churches: St John and St Mary". Of the Minster he says "I have no hesitation in saying that, after Westminster Abbey, this is the finest non-cathedral church in the kingdom". Sir Simon Jenkins, ex-chair of the National Trust and author of 'England's Thousand Best Churches' has declared that St Mary's and Beverley Minster are his "two favourite churches".

However, both are currently under threat from a lack of resources to carry out essential restoration work.

St Mary's Church is suffering from decades of piecemeal maintenance and has now reached the stage where large-scale restoration work is essential to prevent the church from falling down. Beverley Minster has managed to keep up with much of its maintenance from ongoing funds, but now needs to carry out large-scale work which is well beyond the scope of existing resources.

Both churches are therefore applying to funding sources, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, for grants to carry out the most urgent work. However, in an unusual move, the churches are exploring the possibility of working together rather than competitively to obtain funding.

We are trying to help - and so can you!

When applying for funding it is vital for the applicant to show that they have the support of the community. This exhibition aims to demonstrate the importance of the two churches in a local, national and international context, and illustrate how vital it is for the restoration work to be done to prevent the churches deteriorating beyond our capacity to save them.

It is hoped that as a result of this exhibition the local community will value the churches more highly and be more prepared to support them in their fundraising attempts. Visitors to the town are urged to visit both churches and discover their architectural beauty and spiritual resonance.

Have a look at the last panel in the exhibition, which outlines what is happening for the fundraising, and how you can contribute your support in a way that the churches can use in their applications.

But first, every good project needs a Plan!

The first stage of the fundraising project was to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for both churches. The Plan for Beverley was compiled in 2013-14 by the Church Buildings Council using work done for the purpose by two postgraduate students at the University of York. Alongside this exhibition a draft of the Conservation Management Plan will be presented for public consultation so that you can be involved in the development process.

If you are interested in commenting on the consultation draft please ask for a copy of the document and send your comments to fiona.jenkinson@eastriding.gov.uk, or pass written comments to us directly. You can also post your written comments to Fiona Jenkinson, East Riding Museums Service, Treasure House, Champney Road, Beverley, HU17 8HE.





The churches and the town

St John and the Minster

There is no doubt that the roots of Beverley's history can be traced to her famous Minster Church. In his work, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (completed in 731), Bede wrote of the life and times of John, bishop of Hexham, who was renowned for his miracles of healing. Following reported miracles at John's tomb, he was canonised as St John of Beverley in 1037 by Pope Benedict IX. Such rumoured Godly powers had been eagerly nurtured by respective kings and clergy, to the point where, by the year of the great Norman invasion of 1066, St John had a national cult following and a Minster constructed in his honour, supposedly on the site of his monastery. Praying to St John before battle was believed to guarantee battlefield success. Kings and nobles paid homage to St John before the battles of Brunanburh, Agincourt, in the War of the Roses, and even as late as the English Civil War. In consequence, the Minster grew exponentially from 1220 to 1425, and also became a destination for pilgrims – around which the town of Beverley formed.

In 1180 a great fire engulfed Beverley, causing extensive damage to the early Minster, and the temporary loss of the bones of St John. The bones were found nine years later and re-buried in a lead coffin. They remain central to the Minster to this day.

The present Minster, possibly started in the late 1100s, is thought to be the fourth church built on the site. Although built over a 200 year period, with architectural styles ranging from Early English to Perpendicular, the church still retains a sense of architectural unity.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th century, the Minster lost its collegiate status, and on Easter Day 1548 became a parish church like its sister, St Mary's. The building was given to Sir Michael Stanhope (deputy governor of Hull) who wanted to knock it down and sell the stone, but this was opposed by the townspeople possibly, in part, because of its status as a parish church by this time. Instead they knocked down the Chapter House and sold the stone from this, raising the £100 required to buy the Minster from Stanhope. Despite this downfall St John's kept its Minster title, and remains the oldest and largest building in Beverley still used for its original purpose.



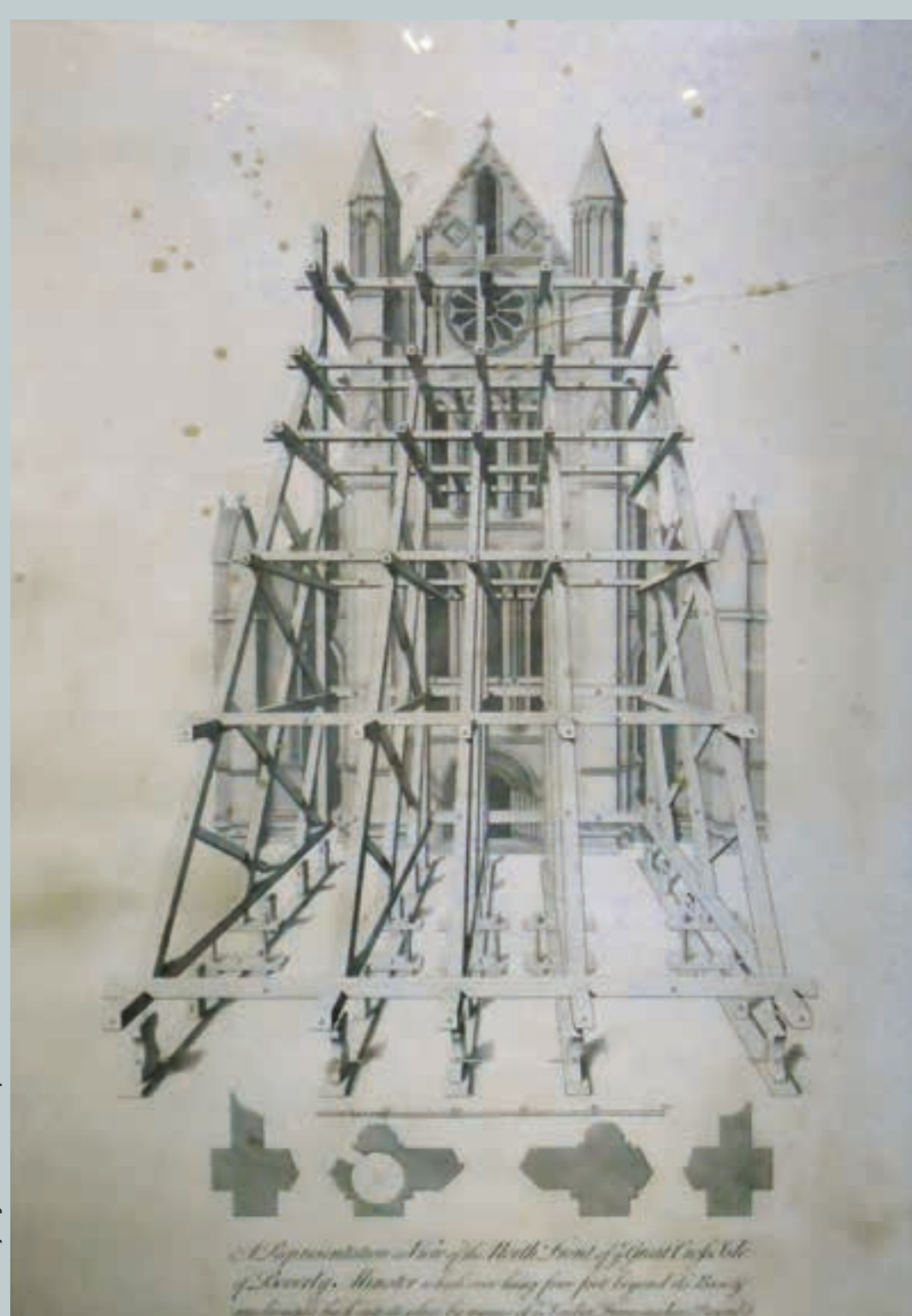
The Minster nave with the tomb of St John in the floor of the foreground.

John Phillips



The original steps in the north chancel aisle are all that remains of the original octagonal chapter house which was knocked down to allow the townspeople to buy the Minster for £100.

Colin Bradshaw



Courtesy of John Phillips

Drawing of Hawksmoor's scaffolding used to push the north transept back to the vertical during the 18th century restoration.

A further threat to the Minster's survival was experienced in the 18th century when the north transept started to lean, possibly due to its

foundations on marshy ground, worsened by an earthquake in 1703. An extraordinary feat of engineering was undertaken from 1717 to 1731 to restore the transept to the vertical using a technique devised by Nicholas Hawksmoor. The success of this work means that the Minster of St John's remains to this day as the principal architectural ornament of Beverley.



While Hawksmoor was carrying out the restoration of the north transept in the early 18th century a dome was also added to the central tower. This was removed again in 1824.

ERYMS 1997.494





Another parish church for the town

The growing importance of medieval Beverley – not just as a northern hub of English worship, but also as a town serving the rapidly-expanding wool cloth industry of the East Riding of Yorkshire – led to the creation of the Parish Church of St Mary's. Up to the time of St Mary's construction, the people in the northern part of Beverley – mostly merchant and trading families – would have had their own altar and priest in the Minster.

Construction of the new church started around 1120, probably under the instruction of Archbishop Thurstan, in the northern market place. The original idea was for St Mary's to serve as a chapel of ease to the Minster's altar of St Martin, but over the next 400 years St Mary's and the parish she served expanded beyond expectation. It has been noted that few churches in England have endured as much change, addition, restoration and reconstruction as St Mary's – and that, therein, lies much of the charm of this splendid parish church.

Medieval guilds and the churches

Part of the importance of St Mary's lies in its heritage as the chosen church of the medieval guilds.

There were a large number of guilds in the small but growing town of Beverley (some 38 were counted in 1390), probably more than the number of craftsmen that were needed to serve the townsfolk. This may have partly resulted from the town developing as an ecclesiastical centre with rich clerics stimulating the economy.

These 'Gilds', as they were known then, were the equivalent of the modern trade unions. The

Guild of Bakers, for example, managed to obtain an ordinance from the town aldermen in 1453 which stipulated that innkeepers were to cease baking their own bread, and purchase from the town bakers. Such ordinances confirm how deeply the guilds were involved in the local governance of Beverley.



Beverley's Great Guild Book, which is held in the East Riding Archives, was in use from the late 1300s to the late 1500s. Older entries are in Latin while later entries are in English. This page shows a list of individual members of some of the guilds.

The guilds not only promoted the interests of their respective trades, but also acted as 'religious fraternities' for their respective communities. Almost all of the religious worship and other activities, such as christenings, weddings, funerals, blessings and festivals, in which guildsmen and their families participated, were undertaken at the town parish church of St Mary's. The Minster and the surrounding area in southern Beverley was ruled by the Provost and the canons and, as such, was deemed far too high ecclesiastically for guild religious activity. St Mary's – in the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of York – therefore was the hub of religious activity for the majority of ordinary townsfolk.

Palpable friction between the two churches was evident in the Beverley town riots of 1381–2 in which the malcontent smaller merchants and tradespeople, encouraged by the Archbishop of York, vigorously pressed their personal disputes with the Provost of St John's. Both churches nonetheless benefited greatly over time from the skilled craftsmanship in Beverley, carving and sculpting the ornate Gothic architecture decorated lovingly with animals and mythical beasts.

Very little evidence of the guilds exists today, except through the presence of St Mary's church, which serves as testament to how fundamental religion was to trade, community, and everyday life throughout history.

Moreover, that St Mary's still exists in its current form is testament to the symbiotic nature the church continued to share with the guildsmen. For example, when the tower of St Mary's collapsed and killed a number of worshippers attending mass

on Sunday 29 April 1520, it took up to ten years to restore the tower, essentially because the funds were raised through private means. The names of the most generous benefactors can be seen carved on scrolls in the pillars. These include two pillars donated by ordinary Beverley folk – the '*good wives of Beverley*', and the Guild of Minstrels which supposedly existed in Beverley from the time of Athelstan – the first King of England.

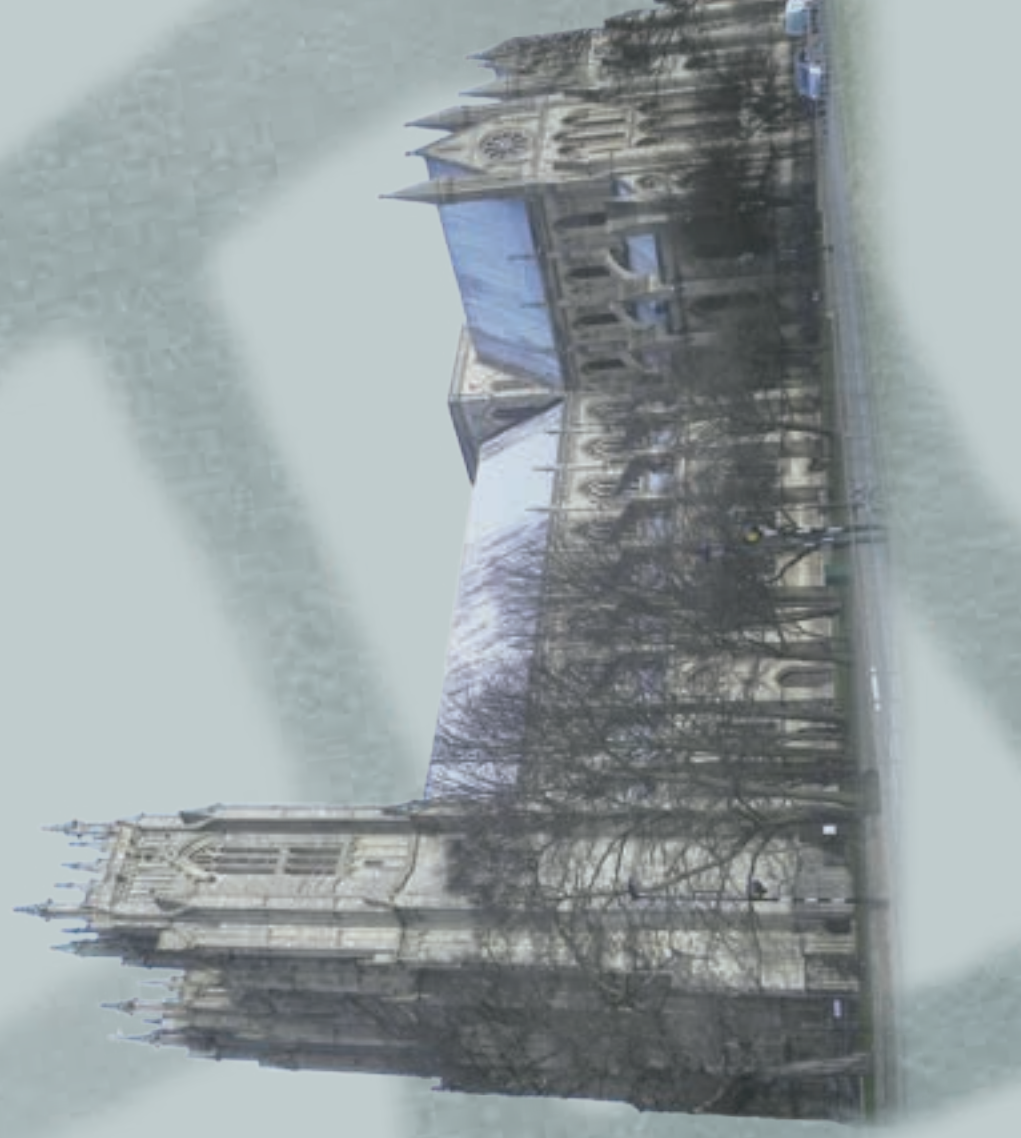


'Decorated' style stone carving in the Minster.



Chris Holtsine

The "Minstrels' Pillar" in St Mary's Church is significant as an item of art history but is also historically significant in commemorating an important event in the town.





Maintaining the churches

Unlike the Minster, which has benefited from a fabric fund established by Elizabeth I in 1579, rarely has the state contributed to the upkeep of St Mary's, which has therefore had to survive largely on lands, rents and bequests.

By the 17th century – largely due to the changes enforced by the Reformation, the rise of Hull as a port of military significance, and the slow but perpetual demise of the woollen industry in the East Riding – the town of Beverley was falling into decline. Both churches suffered in consequence. Even stones from the nearby St Nicholas church, ruined in 1642 by the ravages of Civil War, had to be used to repair St Mary's, which necessarily served both St Mary's and St Nicholas' parishes for the next 200 years. This process of scavenging, coupled with reliance upon private funding for the maintenance of St Mary's, continued throughout the 19th century. By 1850, St Mary's had been externally restored (not least with its characteristic flying buttresses), yet an editorial in an 1856 edition of the Beverley Guardian complained of the state of internal disrepair:

“Half a door...will admit to the transept. The irregular and broken stones, which form the pavement, are dank with perpetual moisture...the fissured walls appear not to support the roof...Pews up and pews down – pews facing east and facing west – sinking northward or southward; dark, worm-eaten oak, patched with begrimed but unpainted deal – dingy baize hanging in tatters from rusty nails...a prevailing wash of yellow...all around the pillars and walls are disfigured by the marks left by the removal of the galleries, and the cutting down of the screens and canopies which once protected the worshippers from observation and cold.”

As with most towns and cities in the north of England, Beverley's population doubled during the 19th century (to 13,183 in the 1901 census). Yet, in contrast to the Minster which benefited from extensive financial patronage, St Mary's was neglected, especially after the Church of



Watercolour by an unknown artist, entitled “Corporation Pew, St Mary's Church”, probably mid 19th century, showing a raised pew, which was presumably where members of the town corporation sat during services.

FRYMS 1997.1285

St Nicholas was restored as a parish church from 1880. Eventually, generous patronage was forthcoming in the late-Victorian period, leading one historian to comment in 1911 that it was “*pleasant to think that, after enduring for centuries the rude shocks of time, the church of St Mary's was at length in the hands of those who will do all that is necessary for its maintenance and repair, and who will protect it from unwise innovation*”. Unfortunately such a promising future did not last long as the church is once again in need of loving restoration.

The two churches today

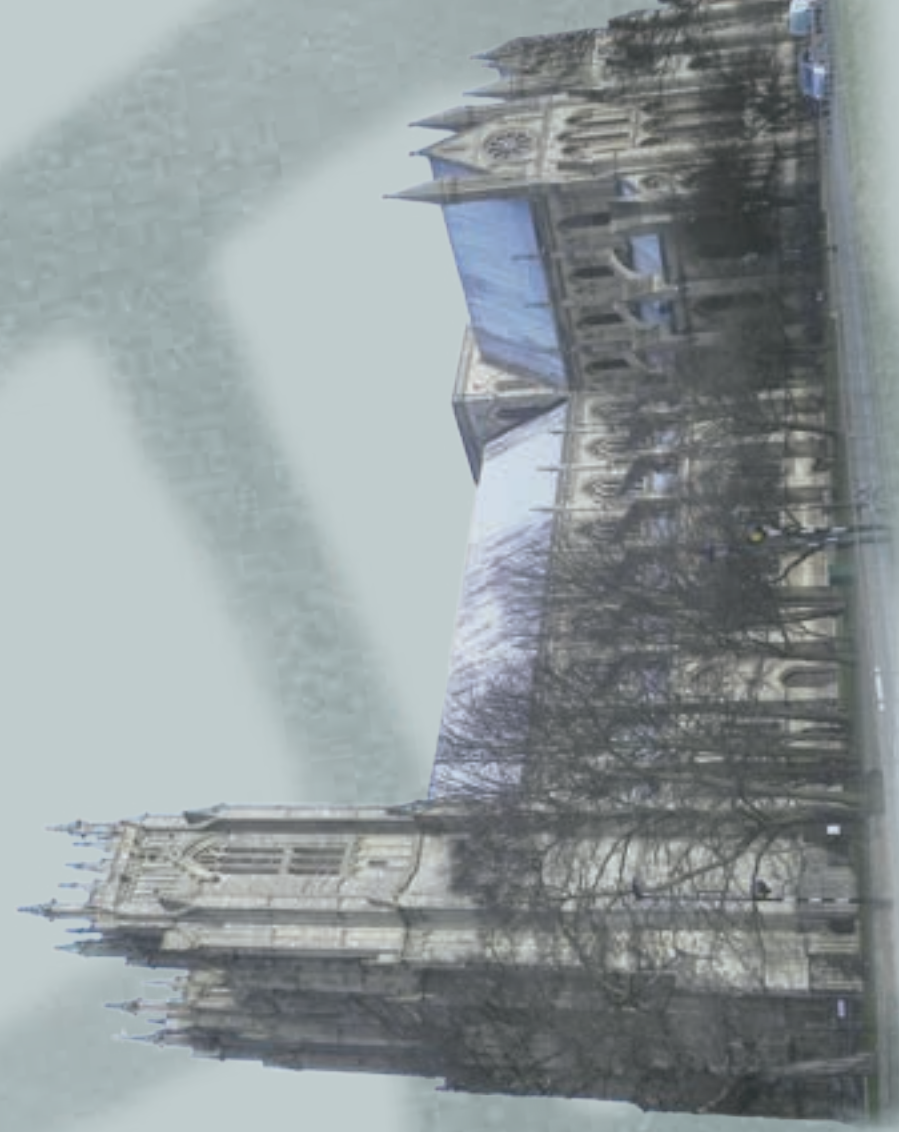
The respective roles of the two churches have survived to the present day. The Minster of St John's is considered to be one of the finest Gothic churches in Europe, deemed the ‘Jewel’ of the East Riding of Yorkshire and, as such, is a major visitor attraction for Beverley. It remains an important location for Christian pilgrimage, and therefore has exceptional significance at an international level. By contrast, St Mary's has lived in the shadow of the dominant Minster throughout its existence, despite possessing its own important features and historical significance.



Painting by James Burras of Beverley from the Westwood in the late 19th century, showing how the two churches dominate the town.

FRYMS 1997.108

Beverley is unique in that it enjoys two internationally-acclaimed, magnificently decorated (almost cathedral-like) churches in a comparatively small, yet endearingly quintessential, market town. Only together do the two churches tell the spiritual, social, and economic, histories of Beverley.





Discover the important features of Beverley Minster

Here we look at some of the features of Beverley Minster that make it so important. These were highlighted in the Conservation Management Plan, which also assessed the relative significance of the church's key features.

Beverley Minster is part of the 'Greater Churches Network' and is recognised as being one of the finest Gothic churches in Europe. The church bears witness to over 1300 years of occupation and worship and is a symbol of civic identity, visible for miles around.

The Minster is a major landmark feature that dominates the town. Together with St Mary's the two churches frame the town, giving Beverley its particular identity. The presence of a centre of worship from the 8th century has also been essentially responsible for the town's existence.

The Minster is still a pilgrimage church retaining the relics of St John of Beverley, a nationally important saint who is recognised as patron of the deaf because of some of his early miracles. The church is also an extremely important visitor attraction in the town which, in addition to its role as a practising church, also provides a venue for numerous secular events.



Beverley Minster as seen across the town from St Mary's Church.

Martin McNicol

Landscape, archaeology and ecology

To the south of the Minster is Hall Garth, originally the site of the Archbishop's Palace and now protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The churchyard is a valuable green space containing some Anglo-Saxon burials to the south of the nave, which have the potential to provide evidence for the location and orientation of previous church structures. The north east churchyard also contains the foundations of the lost 13th century chapter house. The churchyard and precinct are also of potential ecological value for the trees and lichen, and for the several species of bats that have been recorded here.



Parts of the remaining earthworks are still visible on Hall Garth from the time of its use as the location of the Archbishop's Palace.

Joan Kemp

Architecture



John Phillips

The Minster's east and west fronts are considered excellent examples of their respective periods of Gothic architecture, with the west end in particular representing a superlative example of Perpendicular design.

Despite being built over a period of 200 years the Minster remains a coherent architectural entity of impressive size and aesthetic quality. Architecturally it represents building styles from Early English style at the east end, through Decorated style in the nave, to Perpendicular style at the extreme west end. Its double transept plan is shared with many other quintessentially English cathedrals, and the standards of architectural design are comparable to, yet predating, Westminster Abbey.

The numerous masons' and carpenters' marks throughout the building are of archaeological value with the potential for further study. The marks provide links with the craftsmen employed on St Mary's and there is also significant correspondence between the masons' marks on the north aisle piers of Beverley Minster with those in the east end of York Minster.

The restoration of the north transept by Nicholas Hawksmoor in the early 18th century was significant, not only in its preservation of the Minster but in the development and history of technology and engineering.



John Phillips

The west doors display 18th century carvings designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor.





The Minster interior

Stained glass

Within the Minster are examples of stained glass of both old and new styles.

Nave and nave aisles

The tomb of St John of Beverley at the east end maintains an unbroken thread of continuity stretching back from the 8th century to the present day.



The perspective effects employed by medieval craftsmen serve to increase the impression of the Minster's height and length and produce the stunning aesthetic impact of the nave.

The label stops in the bays immediately to the east of the north porch depict musicians and entertainers which document the importance of music in Beverley, and provide a link to the carvings of musicians in St Mary's.



The Minster's east window contains the church's only remaining medieval glass, although the window was re-ordered in the 19th century.



21st century window by York glazier Helen Whittaker in the retro-choir.



Along the length of the nave there is a wealth of figure sculpture and foliage carving.

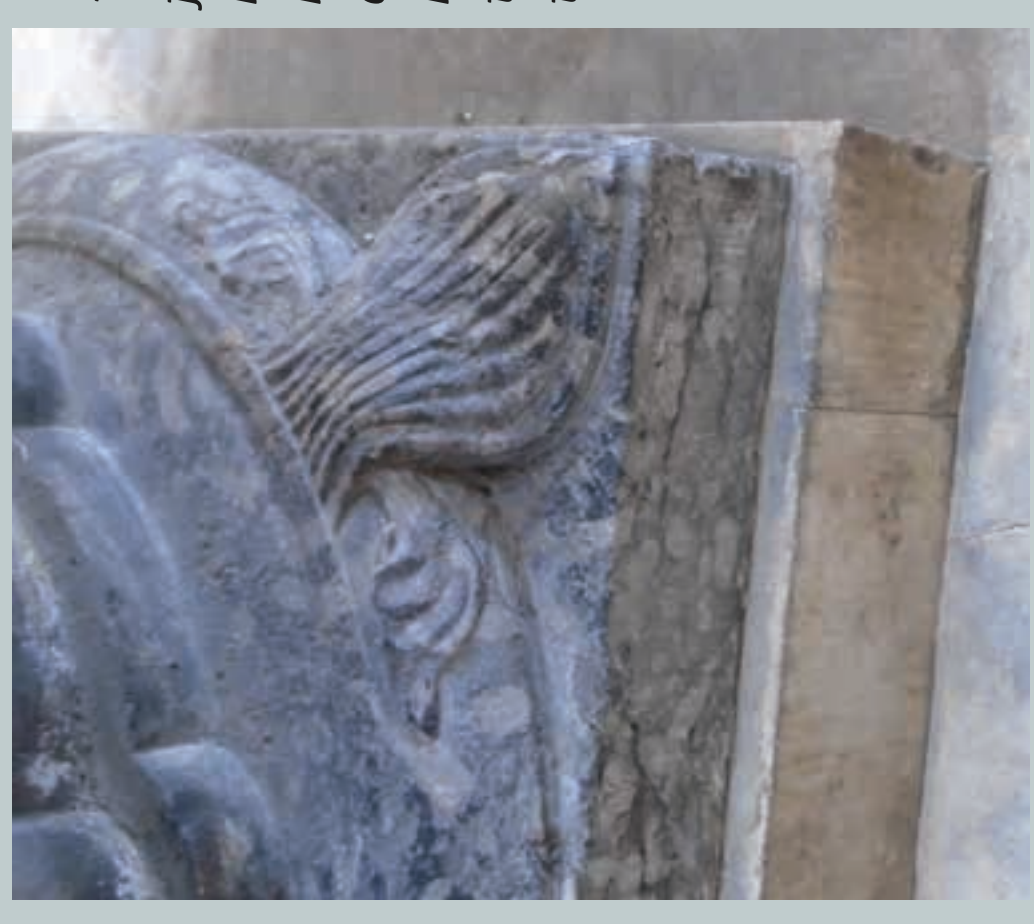


Carvings of musicians abound in the Minster



John Phillips

The 12th century font in the south aisle is carved from Frosterley marble with an oak cover designed by Hawksmoor in the early 18th century.



The carved oak cover for the font, designed by Hawksmoor, is suspended over a Norman basin which has carvings at each corner of the base thought to represent the tail of a beaver, thus providing an important link to the town itself.

Roofs

The high roof of the nave is the last remaining original roof structure in the Minster, all the others being 18th century replacements. The former provides understanding of the techniques of the 14th century builders, while the latter represent evidence of the Georgian restoration of the Minster.



John Phillips

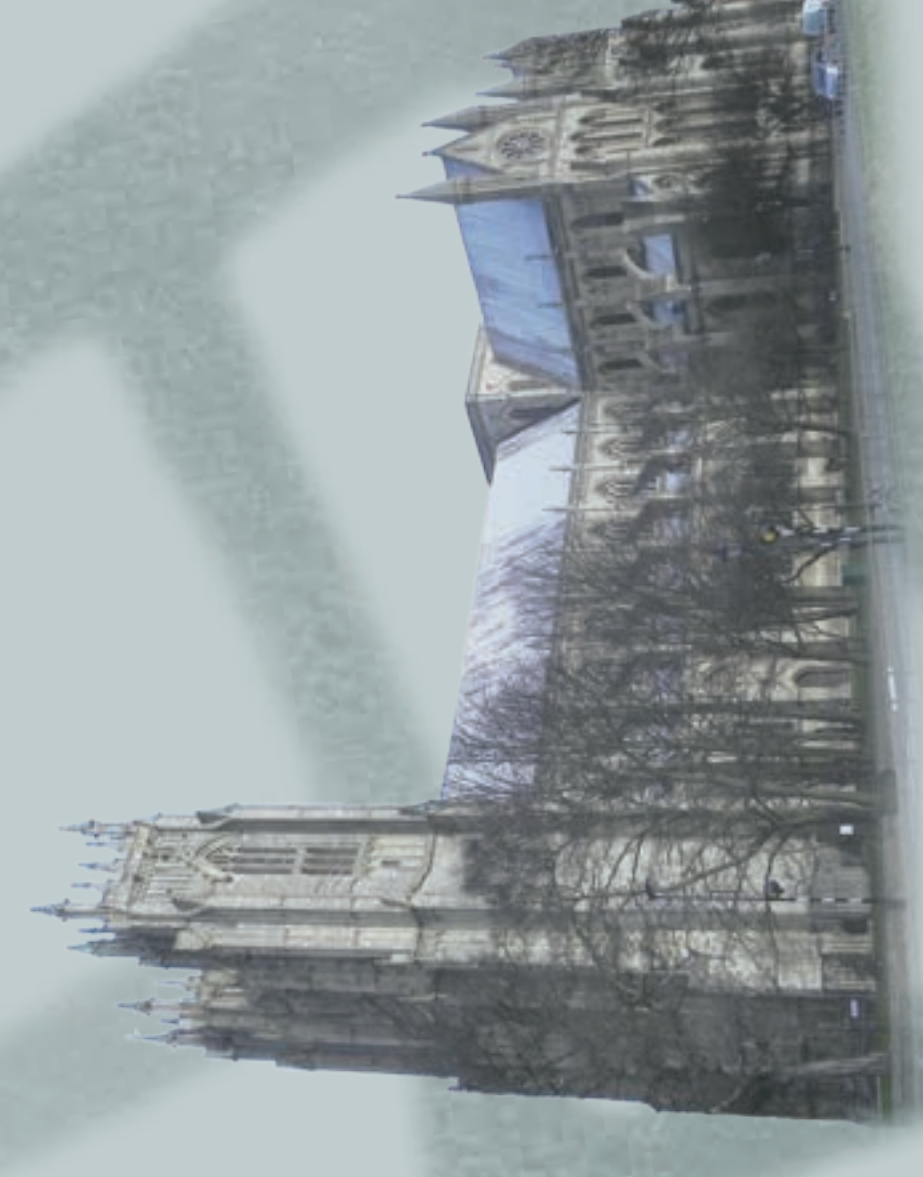
The high roof of the nave dates from the 14th century and allows the work of the medieval builders still to be seen.



John Phillips

Above the crossing, which itself represents a series of architectural styles, there is a working treadwheel which is of exceptional significance for its age, rarity and working condition.

The treadwheel raises one of the bosses over the crossing, allowing material to be winched into the roofs through the opening. In addition to being a rare feature this provides illustration of the working practices of the medieval craftsmen.





South west transept

Within the south transept is a series of military chapels, all of which are of local importance as a focus of commemoration and memorial.



The military chapels in the south transept (left) are an important focus for local people, but the storage area opposite (seen above) needs work.

John Phillips

Choir and organ



John Phillips



The choir screen was carved by local carver James Elwell, with additional figures by Nathaniel Hitch (above right).



John Phillips

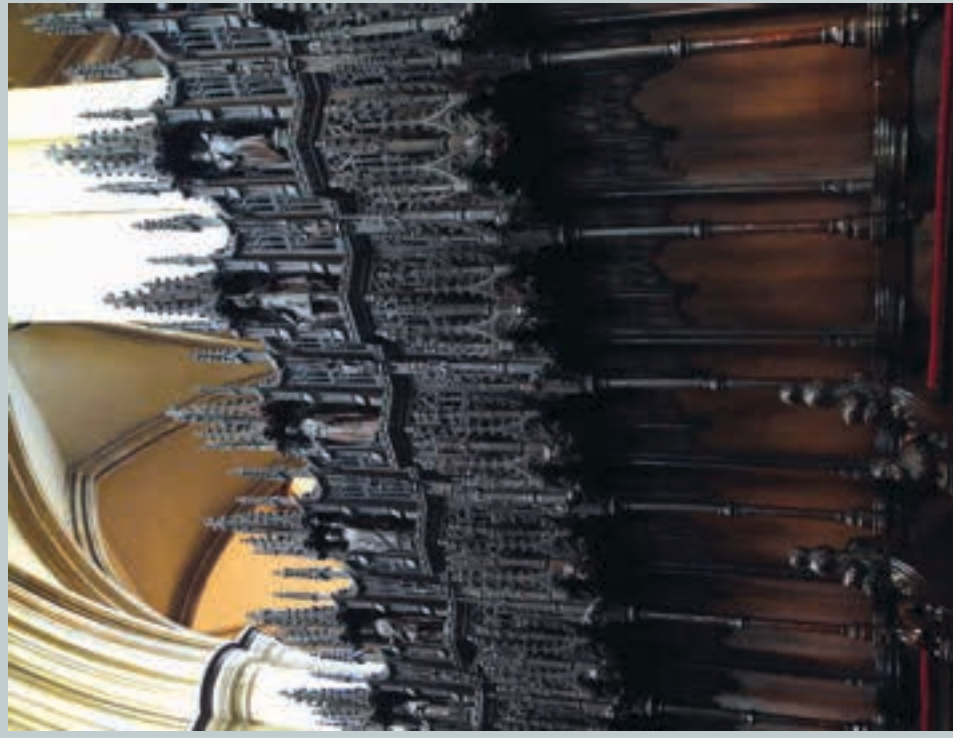
Within the choir itself the

misericords of c.1520 represent a later style of carving by the Ripon carvers than those of St Mary's, with beautifully-carved 19th century choir stalls above (right), which were reordered by Rickman and Hutchinson in the 1820s.



John Phillips

Like the misericords at St Mary's those of the Minster were carved by the Ripon carvers, but these date to c.1520 compared with 1445 at St Mary's.



Wikimedia Commons

Percy canopy, reredos and sedilia

When considered together the 14th century Percy canopy, reredos and sedilia are of international significance for their art historical value.



John Phillips

The reredos tracery was carved by Ivo de Raughton, providing yet another link with St Mary's Church. The statuary in the reredos is from the 19th century.



Geoff Nicholson

The Percy canopy is regarded as one of the finest Decorated funerary monuments in North Europe, while the sedilia (in the distance) is the earliest wooden sedilia still in full use.

The Saxon 'frith' (or 'frid') stool is an extremely rare historical object, thought to be linked to the Minster's history as a major sanctuary church.



John Phillips

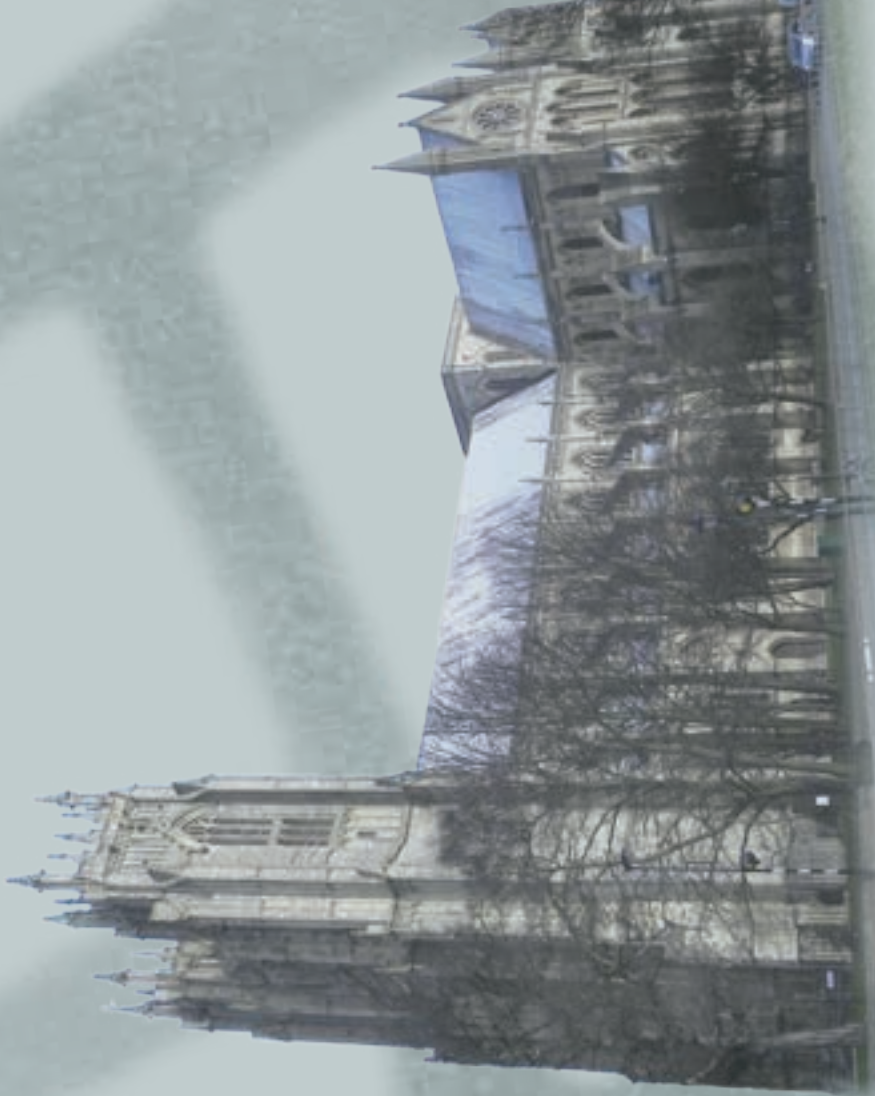
Retro-choir

The centuries of use of the retro-choir by pilgrims is signified in the 21st century sculpture by Whittaker (right).



John Phillips

The east face of the reredos is of exceptional local craftsmanship, and the presence of several 18th century monuments here documents the association of local people with the Minster, particularly the monument of Sir Michael Wharton in the centre.





Restoration required at the Minster

High roofs

Lead has a finite lifetime of 150 years, after which it becomes essential to carry out restoration work to supplement the lead content. Although the lead on the aisle roofs has been replaced as part of ongoing maintenance, all the lead on the Minster's high roofs now needs to be replaced as a matter of urgency. The lead will be removed, melted down, supplemented with new lead and replaced on the roofs.

Great windows

Likewise, the lead in both the east and west windows is now in need of replacement to prevent the windows falling out. This is particularly important in the east window which contains the Minster's only remaining medieval glass.



The lead on the high roofs needs to be replaced - the aisle roofs have been repaired as part of ongoing maintenance.



The lead in the east window needs to be replaced.



As does the lead in the west window.



The steps up to the Highgate entrance need to be replaced by a more accessible entrance.

Visitor access and amenities

Whilst re-leading the roofs and windows is a matter of urgency, additional work is also required on improving the visitor access and amenities. At present the only access not via the Highgate steps is alongside the toilets, which is considered inappropriate. It is therefore proposed to improve visitor access through the Highgate entrance. At the same time the toilet facilities themselves are also considered to be inadequate for such a building. It is therefore proposed to remove the section of building containing the toilets and boiler room and re-site these elsewhere.



The added section of building containing the toilets and boiler will be removed and the facilities re-sited elsewhere.





Discover the important features of St Mary's Church

Here we look at some of the features of St Mary's Church that make it so important. These were highlighted in the Conservation Management Plan, which also assessed the relative significance of the church's key features.

St Mary's is nationally acclaimed as a fine example of one of England's 'major churches'. Although it is smaller than the Minster the two churches together frame the town and contribute greatly to the town's identity. The sheer size of St Mary's, and the quality of its craftsmanship, reflects the prosperity of the medieval town and the ambition of the merchants and guilds to separate the "town's" church from the influence of the Minster.

Architecture

The present form of St Mary's is the result of centuries of evolution in architecture and changing demands of the liturgy. The church has evolved from its original Norman form through the development of Gothic architecture between the 13th and 15th centuries, and major restoration work by the country's leading architects during the 19th century.

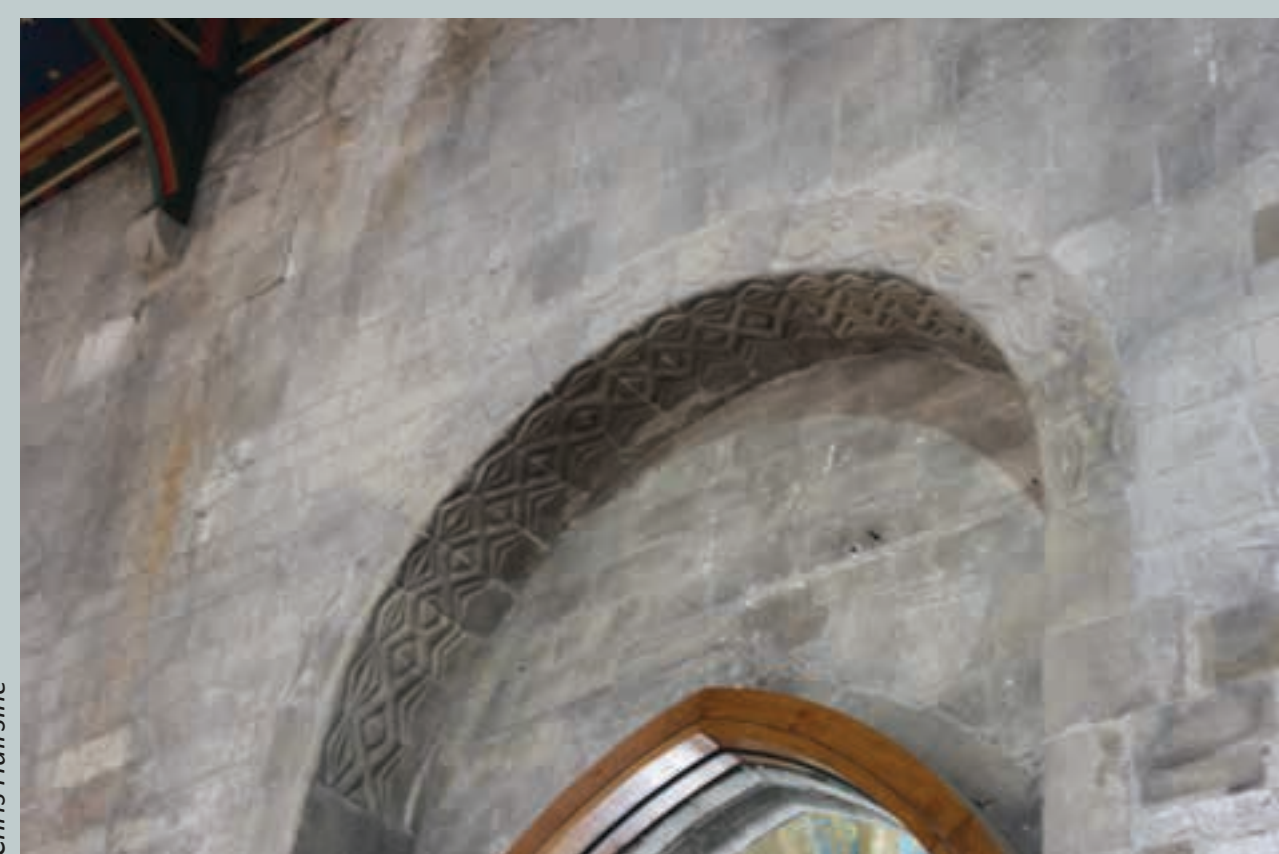
One of the key features of St Mary's architecture, however, was the desire to separate it from the Minster in its ecclesiastical design. Although inspiration was drawn from the mother church the citizens aspired to develop the town's church into something different, thus making the two churches completely different in architectural character.

Surviving traces of the original Norman church are very rare, but a few can still be seen, and Early English features are also important remnants of the early church.



St Mary's Church as seen across the town from the Minster.

Martin McNicol



Chris Hairsine

Re-set Norman zig-zag arch round the main south doorway. This has probably been moved from a different location.



Chamfered plinth in the south aisle of the chancel, probably in its original location in the Norman church.



Chris Hairsine

Norman zig-zag leading from the north transept to the north chancel aisle. This has probably been re-used from a different location, and would not originally have been in this Gothic arch shape.



Martin McNicol

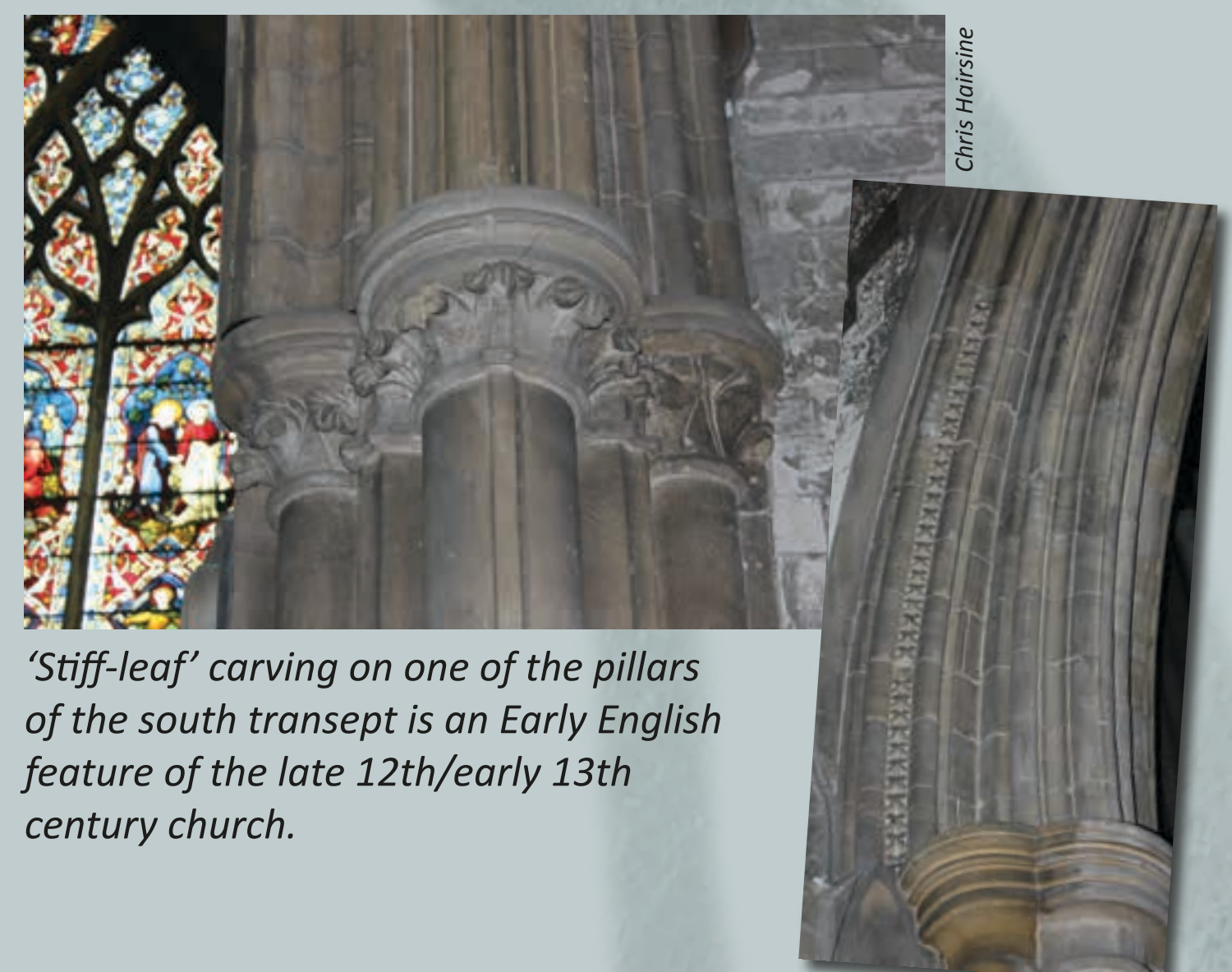
The revolutionary stone vaulting and uniquely traceried windows of St Michael's chapel are exceptional examples of the work of Richard and Ivo de Raughton.

The 14th century additions of St Michael's chapel, the sacristy and the priest's rooms are exceptionally high quality designs by Richard and Ivo de Raughton. These are believed to have been used as models for later work in York Minster.



Chris Hairsine

One particular stone adorned with a graffito and a mason's mark (in the Priests' Room), is believed to be the work of the Raughtons, and is of significance in this region as evidence of the work of these two craftsmen.



Chris Hairsine

'Stiff-leaf' carving on one of the pillars of the south transept is an Early English feature of the late 12th/early 13th century church.

Fragment of Early English 'dogtooth' carving





Also in the 14th century sacristy is a three-light window containing the only piece of remaining medieval glass in the church.

The restoration campaigns of the two Pugins in the 19th century are excellent examples of the work of two nationally important architects. Their work enhanced the south transept, the west windows and much of the interior, whilst still remaining sympathetic to the earlier medieval character of the building

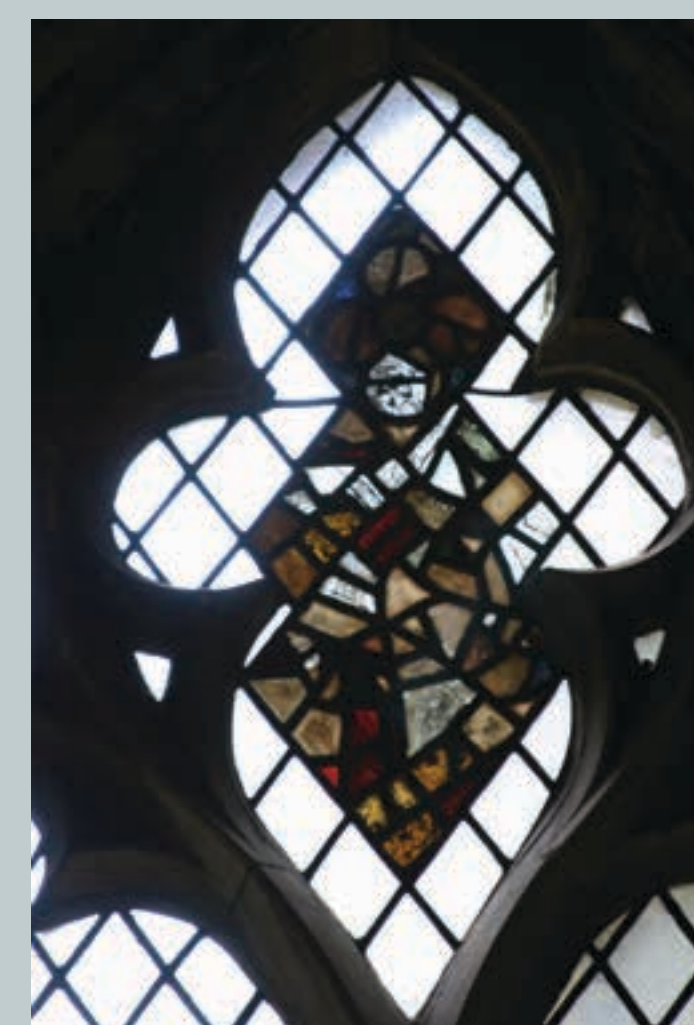


Chris Hairsine

The elegant flying buttresses on the south transept were proposed by A.W.N. Pugin in 1844 to reduce movement of the transept, and were eventually added by his son E.W. Pugin in 1853.

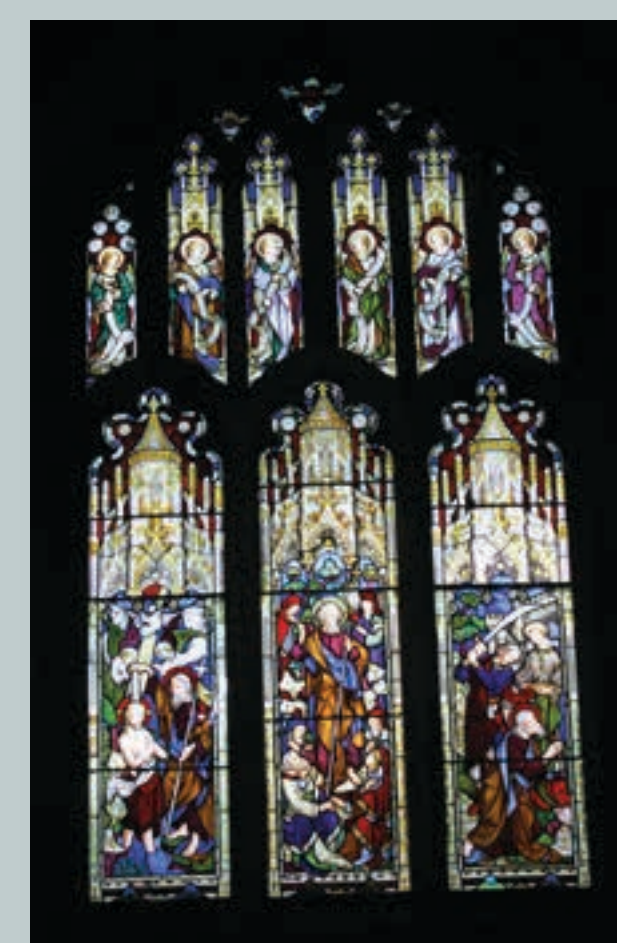


The three west windows were designed by A.W.N. Pugin. The large central window was installed in 1850, the right (situated over the font) in 1852, two months after Pugin's death, and the left (near the south entrance) in 1855.



Chris Hairsine

The only piece of remaining medieval glass in St Mary's.



Chris Hairsine

The oak pews, each carved with an individual floral motif on the end, were added by E.W. Pugin in 1866.



Chris Hairsine

Art history

St Mary's as a whole has a superb collection of monuments, fixtures and fittings with exquisite design quality.



Wikimedia Commons

The painted ceiling of the chancel, originally dating from 1445 with the addition of George VI when the ceiling was restored in 1939, represents a highly unique scheme of paintings of exceptional art historical significance.



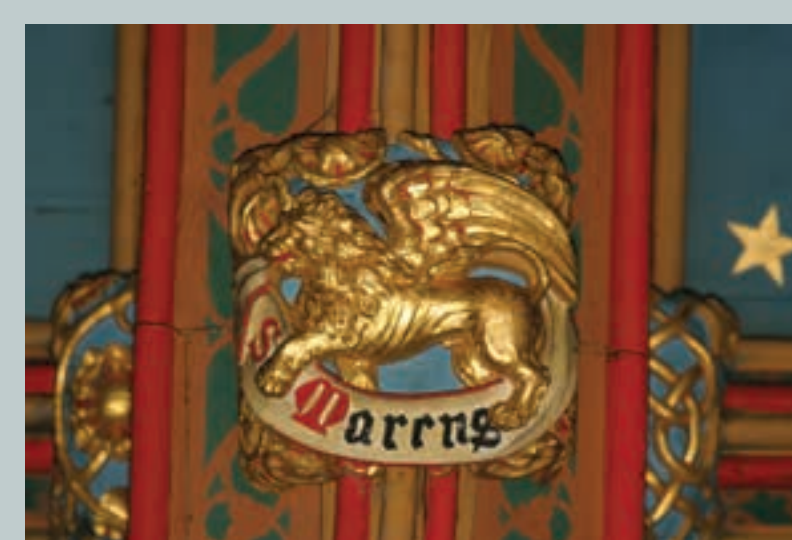
Wikimedia Commons

The design of the blue painted ceilings with gold stars in the nave, aisles and transepts dates from the 15th century and contributes significantly to the aesthetic value and general identity of the church.



Chris Hairsine

The misericords in the chancel are examples of the fine wood carving of the Ripon carvers dating from 1445, earlier than those in the Minster. The carvings also represent the development of the 'wild man' misericord in English art. They were placed in their current position as part of the 19th century Pugin restoration work.



Chris Hairsine

Further artistic interest can be seen in the collection of 625 ceiling bosses throughout the church, all of which are different.

Some of the most interesting and significant items of historical interest are stored in the Priest's room, in particular a Maiden's Garland dating from 1680, which is the oldest surviving example in the country.



Chris Hairsine

Maiden's Garland: Usually these were made of paper, which is why it is very rare for them to survive. The one in St Mary's is made of bent wood.





The carved alabaster pulpit was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, a notable English Gothic revival architect working in the 19th century, who also designed the organ screen in the Minster.



The priests' rooms, above St Michael's chapel and the sacristy, are an exceptional treasure trove of historical and art historical items, including the town stocks, two scold's bridles, the parish bier, parts of the medieval woodwork, an Elizabethan bell, a wayfarer's lantern, Pugin's original weather vane, items of worked stone including the Easter sepulchre, and numerous unidentified architectural relics.



The parclose screen adjacent to St Michael's chapel is part of the remaining medieval woodwork. Fragments of the rood screen are also stored in the priests' room.



The 19th century reredos was designed by J. Oldrid Scott (son of Sir George Gilbert Scott).



The octagonal font is an example of early 16th century carving.

Historical significance

Much of St Mary's historical significance lies in its development as the "town's church" with strong ties to the town's mercantile community who wanted their church to be distinct from the mother church, the Minster. Past restoration work by nationally notable architects and craftsmen, many of them linked to both Beverley and York Minster, also makes the church of historical significance.



The fall of the tower in 1520, a significant local event which cost the lives of many of the congregation, is commemorated on a wooden pew that is now held in the priest's room. The pew itself, although now in pieces, is of great historical significance.

The carving of a rabbit adjacent to the sacristy door is historically important because it is believed to have been the inspiration for Lewis Carroll's White Rabbit.



Archaeology

Several items of archaeological importance have been uncovered and investigated during recent work. For example, during construction of the new church hall substantial 14th century limestone wall foundations were observed. While a new staircase and lift in the nave were being constructed an earlier stair, possibly from the late 13th or early 14th centuries, was revealed. Further investigation when opportunities arise may allow greater understanding of the original 12th century structure.

Liturgical significance

The architecture of the church is dictated by the liturgical rites that take place within it. The internal layout therefore contributes to our understanding of liturgy within a late medieval church.

Spiritual significance

St Mary's has a sense of stillness and peace which appeals not only to Christians but also to those not of the Christian faith. However, it is the church's continuous 800 year history of worship, particularly through its early links to the trade guilds and the townspeople, that has given St Mary's its historical value as a centre of religion in the town.





Restoration required at St Mary's

Structural priorities

As a matter of urgent priority the severely eroded condition of much of the stonework must be addressed in order to prevent a catastrophic failure. This includes the stonework of the tower and roofs, the eroded stonework surrounding the windows of all clerestories, the stonework around the south transept windows, high stonework on the north transept and many of the pinnacles.



Chris Hairsine

Erosion of the stonework around this door means there is now a gaping hole.



Chris Hairsine

Previous bracing to many of the pinnacles is now coming apart.



Fiona Jenkinson

The erosion around this window is typical of most of the clerestories, with the potential for the windows to fall out imminently. Some of the windows also have metal grilles which are discolouring the stonework and need to be removed.



Fiona Jenkinson

Previous restoration of many of the pinnacles, such as these on the north west corner, involved use of an alternative stone. Runoff from these stones has been reacting with the Magnesian limestone below to exacerbate the erosion problems.

Drainage

The low level of St Mary's in relation to the surrounding ground means that drainage within the church is a constant problem, particularly in the crypt. This will be addressed in the immediate future, funding having been recently secured for this part of the work.

The organ

The organ has suffered from many years of additions and alterations, which has resulted in too many stops, causing conflicts and dissonance of the sound. A recent independent report concluded that there is a desperate need to rebuild the organ from scratch. Rebuilding the organ would provide the opportunity potentially to move it to a more appropriate location, thus freeing-up the north transept for alternative uses.



Martin McNicol

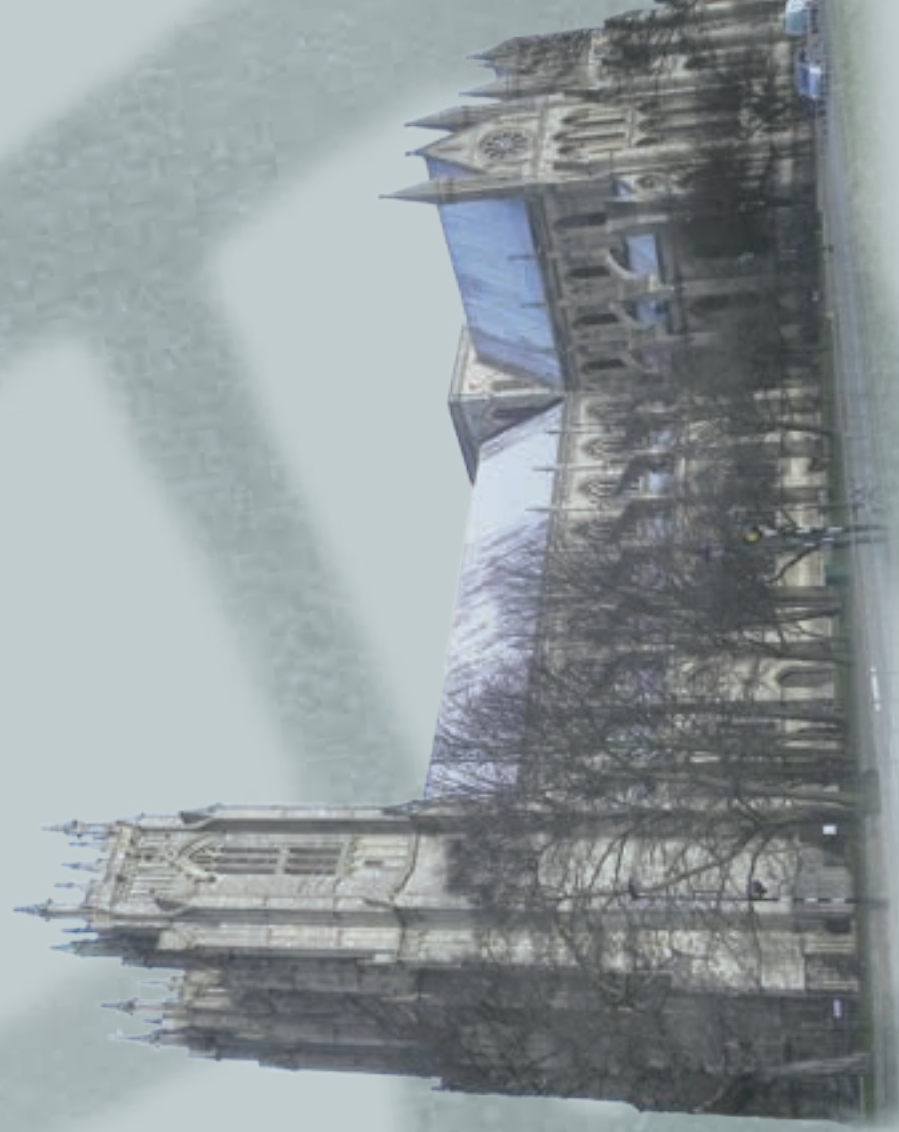
The organ is overly large for the size of the church, taking up the whole of the north transept, is poorly situated in an inappropriate location which does not direct the sound into the body of the church, and has suffered in numerous alterations which have resulted in dissonance of the sound.

Interpretive space

To enhance community use of the church it is planned to zone off the Holy Trinity Chapel to allow it to be used as an interpretive space, providing opportunities for a Sunday School, a school learning zone, meeting room and potential for income generation.

Visitor amenities

If the organ can be removed elsewhere this would result in opening up the north transept, which would allow the addition of toilet facilities, a larger interpretive area alongside the Holy Trinity Chapel, and direct access into the churchyard and to the parish hall. There are also important carvings in this area and some of the earliest memorials in the floor, which are all currently inaccessible due to the presence of the organ.





What happens next and how you can help

Fundraising bids

We have seen how important the two churches are to the town, but this importance extends beyond the town itself because both are important nationally and internationally. We have also seen how vitally important it is for both to obtain funding for the restoration work that is now needed, particularly urgently in the case of St Mary's.

Work is now under way to identify funding sources and prepare the various bids. At St Mary's an initial £70,000 was obtained to carry out urgent work on the drainage, which is a good start. A further £30,000 has been raised through the generosity of gifts from individuals.

However, another £5m is needed for the critical stonework restoration, and additional money will be required to rebuild the organ. At the Minster the re-leading of the roofs and windows is a very large task which could require up to £10m.

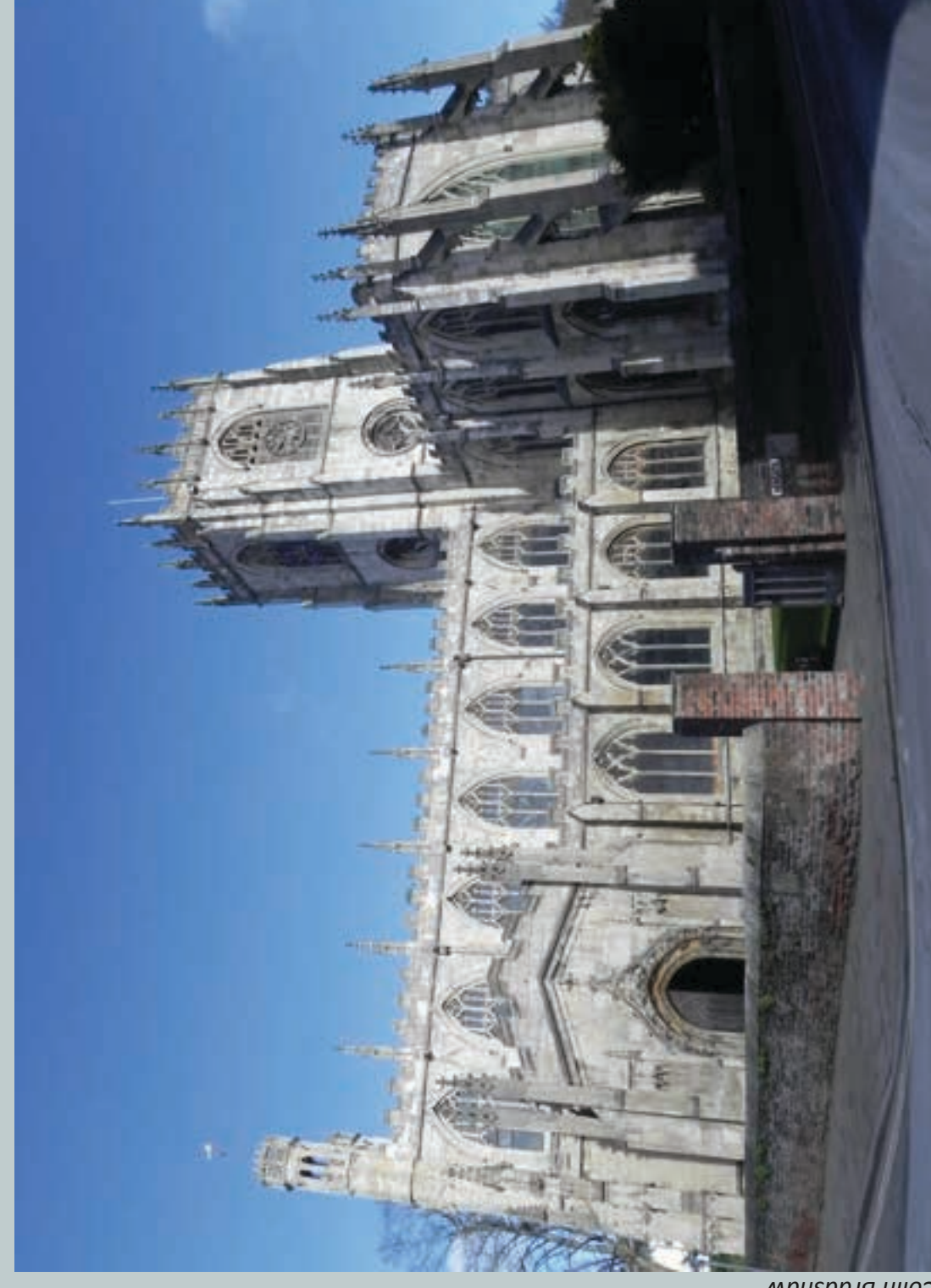
The main funding body for this type of work is the Heritage Lottery Fund, and it is hoped that an application will be submitted to them in November 2016 since only one funding round is available each year.

The possibility of applying to a range of additional funding agencies is also being explored.

As an aside, the actor Vincent Regan, who currently lives in Beverley, has offered to put on a production of Under Milk Wood this summer, with all money to be donated to the St Mary's appeal.



Colin Bradshaw



Colin Bradshaw

How you can help

Obviously the amount of money required is massive, and the majority will have to come from bids to funding agencies. As part of the bids the funding bodies require applicants to demonstrate that they have the support of the local community. Your support is therefore vital to the success of the fundraising. There are a number of ways you can show your support:

- You can add your comments to the book on the table in this room. Comments can be on either or both churches (please tell us which) and can include your memories of occasions in the church, your feelings about the church or views on how important the church is to the town and the local community. Where possible these comments will be included in the funding bids. It would therefore be very helpful if you could include your name with the comment.
- You can record your memories or views if you would prefer. Speak to one of the attendants who have access to a voice recorder and you can either talk with them or we can find you somewhere quiet for you to talk by yourself.
- You can send your comments to East Riding Museums by email. These will be collated here and submitted with the bids. The email address to use is: fiona.jenkinson@eastriding.gov.uk.

In addition to submitting your comments in support of the churches you are welcome to contribute to their fundraising directly, because every little helps! For example, recently Hunters Estate Agents arranged a cycle ride from York to Beverley in aid of the St Mary's fundraising, which raised over £6000.

But your project does not have to be as big as this! You could arrange a sponsorship project yourself, you could attend any events that the churches arrange, or you could simply put a few pennies into the churches' donation boxes. Everything will be greatly appreciated.

Show how important Beverley Minster and St Mary's Church are to you and help ensure their survival for future generations.

