

Stradishall PCC: Summary of activities March 2024 to March 2025

Introduction

The majority of this report is concerned with refurbishment of the church to prevent further deterioration and the enhancement of its physical condition to make it pleasant and suitable for church services and fund-raising events.

Refurbishment:

The refurbishment had four separate phases:

1. Stopping rainwater ingress

- a) **Chancel roof** 65 broken tiles replaced, and 6 bat tiles fitted.
- b) **Porch** new 'wall plate' fitted and tiles resecured and replaced where necessary.
- c) **South Aisle roof** Close examination showed the join between the tarred felted roof covering and the inside of the outer wall had failed. After removal of about 0.5 m³ of detritus, the failed joint was filled with approximately 100 litres of bitumastic. This was successful except for the inner southwest corner. (see below).

The success was shown that the green lichen covered inner wall could be plaster repaired and limewashed and it is thankfully now obvious that this treatment worked. During this leak sealing it was noticed that there was a certain amount of flexing of the roof surface. This flexing was particularly apparent in the southwest corner sufficiently such that it warranted a professional engineer's testing. Therefore, we applied to the Diocese for a small grant to effect this. The result was that it was found that two of the beam ends were badly rotted and the next three were not good. A faculty to totally repair the roof is being prepared by Philip Orchard.

Guttering was fitted on **South Nave** roof edge to attempt to divert the rainwater from the South Aisle roof, it failed.

2. Redecoration:

- a) The limewashing of the south wall emphasized how poor most of the paintwork of the rest of the church was. Now it is all done? This process took many months and much limewash. (~160litres) was applied. A number of villagers came to help, and a team of 8 people finessed the rest of the church, so it became what it is today.
- b) The team's work consisted of cleaning floors and windows including removing the inevitable paint splashes.
- c) A wonderful material called **finishing oil** was discovered which was used to refresh all the pews and woodwork.

3. Tidying and ancillary equipment replacement:

A large amount of gear had accumulated, and this was all assessed and modified or removed:

- a) Modern tables were dismantled, and hidden, neat canvas covers were supplied by one of the villagers and the numerous chairs were covered and tucked away.
- b) Some new mats including those in the belfry were donated.
- c) Unnecessary gear was removed from the Manor Pew and its original purpose can now be clearly seen.

4. Broken equipment repair:

- a) Some broken/absent window panes and missing lead strips were replaced (see photo's below)
- b) North aisle door was repaired with a new weather bar.

5. Churchyard maintenance

Heavy pruning of a fir tree and removal of large laurel bush was carried out to expose some graves that had become hidden.

6. Community activities

As it progressed the work on the church generated the support mentioned above and the **Stradishall Support Group** was re-formed whose main aims are to raise money for church repair and generate a community spirit in the village.

So far, they have organised four events:

- Musical afternoon tea
- 80th birthday party
- A Christmas Welcome (prior to the carol service)
- Story reading show called 'Scary Suffolk Stories'

All of these have been very successful.

Peter Thompson

Unfortunately, we have lost the before photos of the paintwork,

Below is a window repair



Before



After



Now