

# Southwell Cathedral: South Quire Aisle Lead Roof (1 of 2 projects funded)

*Awarded £291,000 in July 2016*

## The need

The quire aisle roofs were originally lead-covered but may have been tiled in slates, presumably as a cost-cutting measure, as early as the 18th century. The present slate covering dated from the 1880s and was worn out, with slipped and broken slates that were difficult to access. The most recent Quinquennial Inspection found that there had been a series of leaks over recent years. Water had been able to penetrate into the cathedral through the vaults and rot had occurred in places. If not addressed now, damage and costs would have escalated.



The new lead roof. Photo credit: Buttress Architects.

## Outcomes

This area of the building has been maintained for current worshippers and generations to come to enjoy. Without this funding re-roofing now would not have been possible and the building would have been at risk of greater deterioration, which would have been costlier in the longer term. The repair works addressed the issue of severe rotting which posed a health risk to the public

## Economic Impact

The project supported the development of specialist skills in timber and masonry. The cathedral team now feel that there is greater public confidence in the cathedral, as shown by more interest in their events and services, and an increase in commemoration activities. An increased confidence in health and safety is felt both by the public and the members of staff running the cathedral.

## Works completed and timescale

The works were all completed and included replacing the old roof, which was made entirely of slate, with a new lead roof, re-profiling of the parapet gutters and repairs to the roof timbers.

## The Cathedral

Lying close to several Roman roads, the cathedral (also known as Southwell Minster) is built over a Roman villa and buildings that served as churches since Roman times. The nave, transepts and west end, with their distinctive pepper-pot towers, date from the early 12th century. Inside, the massive piers and three arcades of the Norman nave cannot fail to impress. As elsewhere, the modest apsidal Norman choir was soon replaced by an Early English choir and later a Decorated pulpitum dividing the choir from the nave.

Southwell's masterpiece is the design and decoration of the chapter house and the passage leading to it, constructed in the last decades of the 13th century. The chapter house has no central column; its stone vault is held up by supporting ribs in the shape of a star. Most remarkable are the carved stone decorations on the capitals of every pier, in the bosses, in every gable and sometimes escaping across adjacent columns and spaces. The intricately carved 'Leaves of Southwell' are a celebration of creation, with animals and dragons, human heads and green men, and at least twelve different types of leaf, including oak, hawthorn and buttercup, all deeply and crisply carved.



Southwell Cathedral, quire aisle roof at centre. Photo credit: Buttress Architects.

## Southwell Cathedral: North Side Roofs (2 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £295,000 in November 2016

### The need

The project was part of a programme to replace in lead the eastern roofs and followed on from the previous grant which covered south quire aisle roofs. The quire aisle roofs were originally lead-covered but may have been tiled in slates, presumably as a cost-cutting measure, as early as the 18th century. The present slate covering dated from the 1880s and was worn out, with slipped and broken slates that were difficult to access. The roof was prone to leaks; the most recent Quinquennial Inspection found that there had been a series of leaks over recent years. Water had been able to penetrate into the cathedral through the vaults and rot had occurred in places. If not addressed now, damage and costs would have escalated.

### Economic and social impact

Specialist skills were supported during this project, particularly in lead-working. Other jobs supported included timber and stonemasonry. The cathedral team now feel that there is greater public confidence in the cathedral, as shown by more interest in their events and services, and an increase in commemoration activities. An increased confidence in health and safety is felt both by the public and the members of staff running the cathedral.

### Works completed and timescale

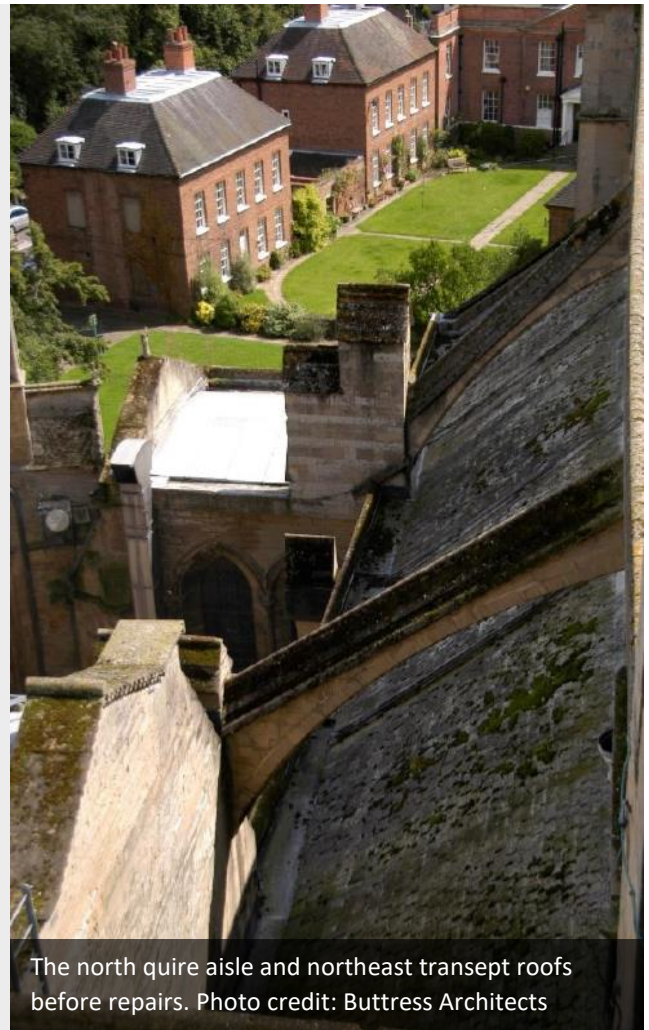
Despite a delay in receiving planning permission, the project was completed within the timescales and the project was effectively managed. The works included stripping out and preparation, timber repairs and replacements, gutters, leadwork, and other works including roof ladders, lightning protection and rainwater downpipes. The extent of timber repairs required was less than originally budgeted for. The tendering for both projects was combined into one single contract, which led to significant cost benefits, allowing the roof repairs to be extended into adjacent areas with the agreement of the fund's Expert Panel, and an underspend of c. £45,000 to be returned to the fund for re-allocation.

### Cathedral quote

*It is not realistic for these cathedrals to maintain their historic buildings within their limited resources. These buildings support tourism and economic activity in their specific regions. This spins off into bed & breakfasts, hotels and local shops. It is value for money to put central funding into these heritage buildings as you get it back in other means'* (Nick Rank, Cathedral Architect).

### The Cathedral

See previous project summary.



The north quire aisle and northeast transept roofs before repairs. Photo credit: Buttress Architects