

What can we find for you?

Cambridge

Search All Articles  
 Search Entire Site

search

HOME

NEWS

SPORTS

WHAT'S ON

OPINION

COMMUNITY

OBITUARIES

AUTOS

CLASSIFIEDS

REAL

Home > Community > St. Patrick's gaze returns to Galt church – hidden...

Like 0 Tweet 0

Dec 09, 2015 | Vote 0 0

## St. Patrick's gaze returns to Galt church – hidden mural uncovered

### Previously hidden in ceiling, mural uncovered during renovation

Cambridge Times

By Ray Martin

CAMBRIDGE – A long forgotten face is back at Cambridge's St. Patrick's Church.

After years of being hidden behind cobwebs, a thick layer of dust and a suspended ceiling, Ireland's patron saint is once again looking down upon parishioners of the Wellington Street church.

This summer, as major renovations were taking place, work crews uncovered a large mural of Saint Patrick hidden behind a suspended ceiling of Galt's oldest Catholic Church.

"In the late 1940s, Father Doyle (later Monsignor Doyle) commissioned elaborate murals of the saints and last supper on the vaulted ceilings of the church," explains Father Bill Foote.

"Following the Second Vatican Council, the church underwent a massive renovation in 1972 and it was modernized."

The modernization radically altered the Victorian structure, built circa 1880, blowing out the brick side walls of the building with its arched windows and replacing them with twin additions that increased the seating and created two modern sainted glass walls.

In the centre of the church, the elaborate murals on the vaulted ceiling received a coat of white paint and were buried beneath a suspended ceiling structure.

"When it was done, many of the older parishioners weren't happy," Foote said. "They had grown up with the vaulted ceiling and the elaborate murals."

Roll forward 43 years; a new generation has grown up with the neo-modern St. Patrick's Church. That changed July 1, when the church closed for three months to complete the latest changes as part of Project Restoration 2015.

In a church pamphlet describing the work to be tackled in the project, Foote describes the state of his parish prior to the start of construction.

"The time has arrived when important and necessary work to our church building must be undertaken. Victorian stained glass windows that are now 135 years old will not survive unless issues of degradation are addressed. Carpet, laid in the mid-'70s, is frayed to the point where it must be replaced, necessitating the removal of all of the pews.

"The floating ceiling ... is no longer level. The barrel vault ceiling above it – damaged by years of water leaks prior to putting on our new steel roof – must to be repaired, plastered and painted."

Church officials have taken a more sympathetic approach compared to the '70s renovation, blending the new with the old.

"The old church lacked architectural integrity," said Foote. "We wanted to not only renovate it, but do a restoration."

Removal of the old ceiling also revealed another of the church's architectural gems, it's large circular stain-glass window over the main entrance.

A series of other relics from the old church were also found, restored and incorporated into the renovations. Among them, found in the basement, is what is thought to be the first St. Patrick's Church alter stone from 1857. It has been incorporated into the church's alter to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In late October, Bishop Douglas Crosby of the Hamilton Diocese visited St. Patrick's for a rededication ceremony, however, there is yet another project to be completed.

The church has purchased a used pipe organ.

"For now it has been crated and sits in storage until we can have it refurbished and installed," Foots said. "It will be a very large undertaking and will be Part B of our restoration."

[rmartin@cambridgetimes.ca](mailto:rmartin@cambridgetimes.ca)



**Mural**

Ray Martin, Times Staff