

you're on your tour, don't miss the unusual anticlockwise spiral staircase leading to one of the turrets. But the most exciting item inside the hall, for most visitors, is the priest's hiding hole – and unlike most hiding holes, visitors are allowed to try it out. Be warned, though: at eight feet by eight feet by four feet it's a real squeeze – proof, presumably, that the priests who travelled around recusant families saying illegal Masses, and who would pay with their lives if they were discovered, were agile and no Friar Tucks.

Like the house itself, the Bedingfeld ancestry boasts some interesting stories: Sir Henry Bedingfeld, for example, was constable of the Tower of London in the mid sixteenth century, which meant he was jailor to Queen Elizabeth I when, while still a princess, she was imprisoned there in 1554 during the reign of her Catholic sister, Queen Mary.

RECENT TIMES

In the nineteenth century the house was extensively renovated in a fusion of Tudor, neo-classical and Victorian styles; and in the BBC series *How We Built Britain*, presented by David Dimbleby in 2007, the house was chosen as one of the buildings that defines the nation. (It was also, in a slightly more quirky footnote from its history, the location for some of the settings in the BBC comedy series *Dad's Army*.)

The house fell into serious disrepair in the first half of the twentieth century, and, believing there was no alternative, the owners sold it to an insurance company. But another member of the clan, Lady Sybil Bedingfeld, bought it back – and so it returned to the family's hands. She then handed it over to the National Trust, with a proviso that the family would retain an apartment there on into the future.

For more information or to plan a visit, see www.nationaltrust.org.uk/oxburgh-hall

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Cry out with joy to God, all the earth;
O sing to the glory of his name.
O render him glorious praise, alleluia.**

FIRST READING Acts 3:13-15. 17-19

PSALM Psalm 4

RESPONSE **Lift up the light of your face on us,
O Lord.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. When I call, answer me, O God of justice;
from anguish you released me, have mercy
and hear me! **R.**
2. It is the Lord who grants favours to those
whom he loves;
the Lord hears me whenever I call him. **R.**
3. "What can bring us happiness?" many say,
Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord. **R.**

4. I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once,
for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 John 2:1-5

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us.
Make our hearts burn within us
as you talk to us.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL Luke 24:35-48

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The Christ had to suffer and on the third day
rise from the dead;
in his name repentance and remission of sins
must be preached to all the nations, alleluia.**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Acts 4:8-12
1 John 3:1-2
John 10:11-18



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SUNDAY BULLETIN

FAMILY FORTUNES IN NORFOLK

On first sight Oxburgh Hall, a handsome manor house near King's Lynn in Norfolk, is imposing, surrounded as it is by a broad moat and extensive gardens. But step inside, and you realise that this house – like Sandringham, the royal home not far away – is much more a family abode than an elaborate showcase.

What's remarkable about the family at the centre of it, the Bedingfelds, is that they've been there such an incredibly long time – since 1482, to be precise. Equally remarkable is that they've also been Catholic through that period, eschewing the Protestant Church after the Reformation and choosing instead to hold on to the faith of their ancestors, and of Rome.

Oxburgh – which got its name, apparently, from the fact that oxen once grazed in the grounds – has, like most houses with illustrious connections, had its seat on the front row of history, and that's reflected in many of the treasures on display on a tour of the place today. The most significant gems are the tapestries worked on by Mary, Queen of Scots, while she was a prisoner, and Bess of Hardwick. Earlier in its history King Henry VII and his wife Elizabeth of York stayed here, and you can see the bedroom that was theirs complete with recreated tapestries. The originals, which had been lost, were either early sixteenth-century Netherlandish scenes of kings and queens, or slightly later images of game parks. They have been digitally recreated and printed onto linen, which has the same weighting and weave and looks exactly as the tapestries would have looked in Tudor times.

Other items on display include a late medieval, intricately carved tabernacle which was used to display the communion host during Benediction, and a letter sent to the family informing them of the death of Catherine of Aragon, the first wife of Henry VIII, whose divorce from her triggered the Reformation in England – and while

Catholic heritage in Britain



Joanna Moorhead visits Oxburgh Hall in Norfolk.



18 APRIL 2021

3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK III