

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 64/97

WALL PAINTING CONDITION AUDIT,
KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

J Davies
T Manning

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KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH,
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Summary

This condition audit of wall paintings at Kempley, St Mary's Church, includes a wall painting record, general audit information, documentation of original materials and execution of the painting, and deterioration and damage including previously used materials and treatment, as well as proposals for treatment and monitoring strategies.

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Kempley, St Mary's Church Gloucestershire

The following report has been generated by the Wall Painting Section database. This archival system provides a computerised record of all wall paintings in English Heritage Historic Properties and is intended to comprehensively document the collection. Each report has been subdivided into four sections to present the data in a clear format. These include:

1 **Wall Painting Record:**

Includes a description of the site and paintings, as well as archival information, such as bibliographic references and photographic records.

2 **General Audit Information:**

Describes any monitoring undertaken and a synopsis of future conservation requirements.

3 **Technique:**

Documents the nature and condition of the original materials and execution of the painting which is described according to its stratigraphy and any related analysis.

4 **Deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment:**

Deterioration and damage lists the types of alterations which may have occurred, that is either deterioration (natural alterations such as cracking or delamination) or mechanical damage (such as graffiti).

Added Materials documents all non-original materials present on or within a painting. These may include naturally occurring substances (accretions, such as dirt and dust) or deliberately added materials (coatings, coverings and repairs).

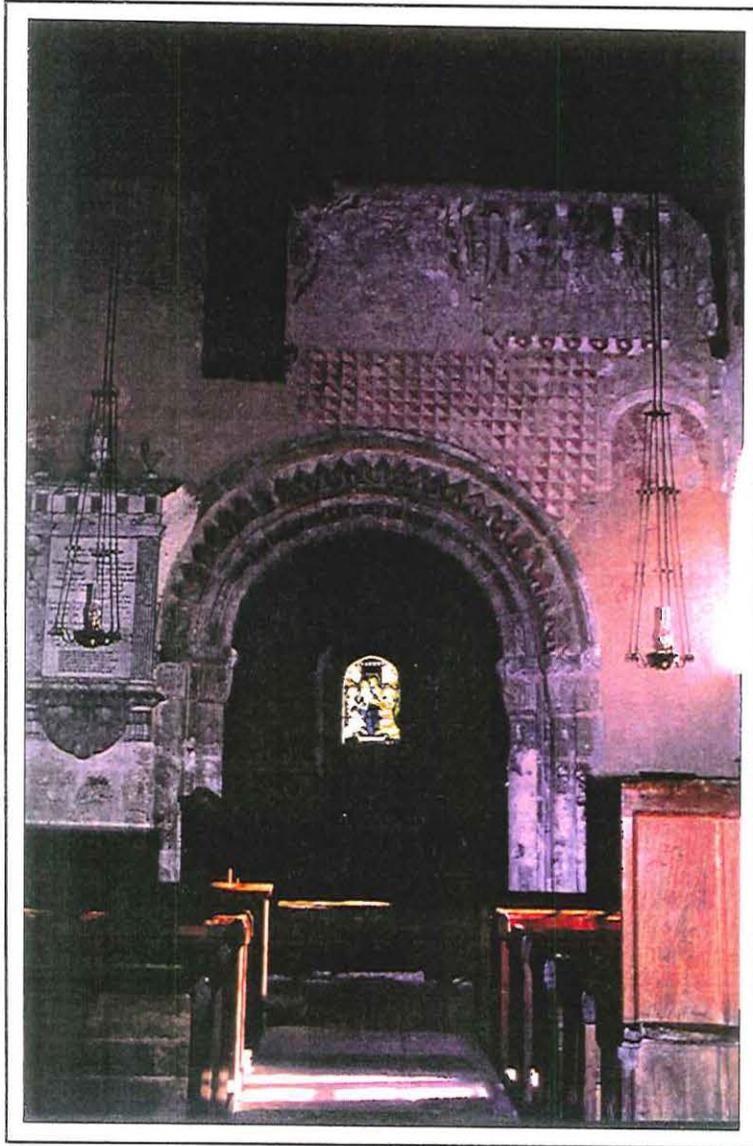
Treatment documents previous interventions and proposed treatment and monitoring strategies.

Throughout each section, an area of painting is assigned a number between 1 and 4 which is intended as a general indication of present condition. These are: 1 good, 2 fair, 3 poor, 4 unacceptable.

This report is based on information gathered prior to March 1996 and does not include any changes in condition, further research or treatment undertaken after this date. Amended editions will be produced as necessary.

Contents

- 1** Chancel (entire)
- 2** Nave, East wall (Chancel Arch)
- 3** Nave, North wall, west end
- 4** Nave, North wall, centre (Wheel of Life)
- 5** Nave, North wall, east end (window)
- 6** Nave, South wall
- 7** Nave, West wall



Nave, general view to east showing 12th-century decoration over the chancel arch



Chancel, south side, 12th-century scheme including seated apostles



Nave, general view to west, showing the various schemes of medieval decoration on the north and south walls



Nave, north wall, detail Wheel of Life and east window

1 Wall Painting Record

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location of painting	Chancel		
Orientation	CEILING AND NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS		
Century	12 th	Date	Height (cm) 270 Width (cm) 420
Subjects included			
Apostle(s)			
Christ in Majesty			
Four evangelists			
Saint(s)			

Description

THE WALL PAINTINGS

The church of St. Mary's, Kempsey, in Gloucestershire, is best known for its impressive scheme of Romanesque wall painting, one of the most important in England. The building itself comprises an aisleless nave, a square-ended chancel with a low barrel vault, and a western tower. The majority of the 12th-century scheme (generally dated to about 1130/40) is restricted to the chancel and the east wall of the nave (the chancel arch).

The paintings in the chancel form an Apocalypse scheme. This includes, on the vault, a Christ in Majesty (in a triple mandorla) surrounded by the four evangelists, four archangels, the sun, the moon, and stars, and also a representation of St. Peter and the Virgin. On the north and south walls, seated apostles look upwards towards the vault. Standing bishops and pilgrims complete the scheme at the east end. On the chancel arch, the Three Maries at the Sepulchre are seen on the south side, flanking a chevron pattern which once formed the backdrop for a (wooden?) sculptured rood.

Several aspects of the iconography point to foreign sources (mainly France and the pilgrimage route), and in fact, the iconography is thought to refer directly to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Figures of pilgrims, in niches on the north and south wall of the chancel, have been the subject of much conjecture. One may be the figure of St James the Greater, but the others remain unidentified.

The scheme was rediscovered in 1871 by the local vicar. The paintings were subsequently hastily uncovered and treated with a coat of varnish.

The paintings were restored during the 1950s-70s by the Bakers, at which time the Gothic paintings in the nave were further clarified. These comprise on the north wall, a 13th-century 'Wheel of Life', as described by Tristram, 'consisting of ten spokes, each terminating in a disk, the disks painted alternately in black and in red, the subjects once framed within them now destroyed' (Tristram, 1950, 555). The splays in the window at the eastern end of this wall also contain the figure of St Anthony with St Michael and the Virgin including masonry pattern, dated by Tristram to the 14th century. The west end of the north wall contains a possible representation of St Christopher.

This is only a tentative identification, as the figure is largely obliterated by the western (17C) window. However, the possible remains of a staff are just visible, as well as details of drapery and a landscape with architectural features. There are also small rosettes as well as a foliate pattern executed in white over a red and black ground. There are also remains of a consecration on the lower west-side of the window.

The south wall, again, is a palimpsest with a Martyrdom of St Thomas a Becket, possibly a St George and a St Margaret, and traces of various other decorative schemes.

The west wall, which does not appear to have had any original plasterwork beyond that of thick ribbon pointing, contains two painted 17th-century texts. Traces of this same scheme are also seen on the north and south walls.

The 18th-century monument on the north side of the east wall of the nave was removed during the 1872 restoration from the same position on the east wall of the chancel, obliterating what 12C work existed in this area.

The tower was built c.1276. The early west window had steps cut into its base in the 17C to give access to a (no longer extant) gallery (finished in 1670). This gallery was probably contemporary with the painted texts executed below the gallery on the west wall, and above it on the south. The ceiling was lowered at this time (several timbers are inscribed 1670-71).

The doorway over the chancel arch (on the east wall of the nave) was discovered in 1872. This provides access to a chamber over the chancel vault. This doorway appears to be original, and presumably also provided access to the rood. The use of this room is unclear (as is the original form of access to it), but it has an original window, and may have been used as a dwelling, treasury, or sacristy -- a usage which apparently is strongly linked with the presence of a western gallery (see Fernie, n.d., 148). It should also be noted that the damage suffered by the Norman capitals below, supporting the western side of the chancel arch, seems to be related to the insertion of some sort of structure, but this, unfortunately, is also unexplained.

The Early Norman sculpture in the church has been compared to that of the local Dymock school, as seen in the zigzag work of the chancel arch, the cushion and scallop capitals supporting the chancel arch, the Tree of Life tympanum and chevron-carved arch of the south door, and the former west door (now inside the tower).

The porch is a re-used 14th-century lychgate. Another modification of the 14th-century is the piscina inserted into the southeast corner of the nave.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The original parish church of Kempsey formed part of a royal grant from William the Conqueror to Walter de Lacy (of Lassy, Normandy) who had fought at his side at the Battle of Hastings. Walter de Lacy built a castle at Longtown, and died in 1085. His son Roger inherited his estates and extended them. However, he was exiled to Normandy after rebelling against William II in 1095. The estates went to his brother Hugh, a devout churchman and later a favourite of Henry I. Hugh built Llanthony Abbey in 1109, and is thought to have taken down the Saxon church at Kempsey to replace it with a Norman one (it is worth noting that he also had very close ties with other sites such as St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester). Hugh de Lacy died in 1121.

The paintings appear to be part of a later renovation which took place early in the 12th century. The window at the east end of the chancel, contemporary with the paintings, was widened from an earlier, narrower window.

In 1976 the church was declared redundant and passed into the guardianship of the Department of the Environment. Conservation work was begun, by Mrs. Eve Baker, in 1955, and this continued into 1980.

Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files;

East wall, July 1990, E900171. north wall, July 1990; E900168, detail; J900281, n.window recess, F900610, south wall E900169, s. window recess, F900611, ceiling E900170. East and underside of Chancel Arch E900167.

EH photo library, computer keyword search;

July 1990, E900168, E900169, E900170, E900171.

Wall painting; F900610, F900611, F900612, M900977.

Photograph search, DOE files, EH photo library (JD24/03/95)

Feb. 1983

A(CN)10819/1-7

A10222/1-9

A(CN)10215/1-9

A(CN)10325/1-7

Bibliography

Anon., poss. D. Park, typescript of extract from research, in EH file, on St. Mary's with stylistic parallels, etc. [compares 12C scheme with Poitiers]

Anon, Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Societies: 31, 1908, [mentions the 12C paintings being varnished]

Anon, n.d., St. Mary's Church, Kempley, and its paintings. [in EH file]

Bird, H., Ancient Mural Paintings in the Churches of Gloucestershire, n.d., 21-22.

Demus, O., Romanesque Mural Painting, London, 1970, 122, 509, pl. 233.

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St. Clair Baddeley, W., 'The history of Kempley Manor and church, Gloucestershire', Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, XXXVI, 1913.

Rickerby, S., 'Kempley: a technical examination of the romaneseque wall paintings,' Early Medieval Wall Painting and Painted Sculpture in England, ed. S. Cather, D. Park and P. Williamson, BAR British Series, 1990.

Rickerby, S., and Park, D., 'A romaneseque "Visitatio Sepulchri" at Kempley,' The Burlington Magazine, Jan 1991, no. 1054, vol, CXXXIII, 27-31.

Rickert, M., Painting in Britain: the Middle Ages, London 1965, 76-77, pl. 74.

Tristram, E.W., English Medieval Wall Painting: The Twelfth Century, 1944, 42-44, 134-6, pl.56-66.

Verey, D., Gloucestershire, 2, The Vale and the Forest of Dean (The Buildings of England, 2nd ed., Harmondsworth, 1976.

Weaver, J. 'A masterpiece of preservation: history of the Kempley wall paintings', Country Life, 19 July 1956, 124.

The Illustrated London News, August 11, 1956 (pre-conservation photo).

2 General Audit Information

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH	County	Gloucestershire
Region	South West		
Location	Chancel		
Orientation	CEILING AND NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS		
Century 12th	Date	Height (cm) 270	Width (cm) 420
Auditor(s)	TM/JD	Start date	05/10/94

Overall condition score **2**

Recommendations

As these paintings are of great historical and artistic importance, routine inspection of the paintings and fabric should be undertaken to ensure their stability. Regular inspection of drains, guttering, etc., is also necessary. There have been severe problems related to damp (salt crystallisation, algal growth) in the past, and therefore the situation should be monitored. It should be noted that at the time of inspection, there was some green microbiological growth at the base of the chancel arch (north side). At the base of the walls, a white efflorescence is also visible within the Baker repairs (north wall of the chancel), forming a pattern which follows the pointing in the support. These large repairs to the dado level are the second ones applied by the Bakers (as a similar pattern of deterioration took place twenty years after their initial work here), and it is probable that within the next 10-20 years these repairs will have to be replaced.

The room above chancel vault should be inspected. It was noted during this audit that a strong breeze came through it. The roof and window should be checked and made secure if necessary.

Some minor flaking on the north side of the east wall, caused by the contraction of remaining preservative on the surface could be consolidated. However, as was found during the 1990 treatment of the flaking on the chancel arch paintings, it may be impossible to reduce the preservative without the loss of original material.

3 Audit Information: Technique

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Chancel		
Orientation	CEILING AND NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS		
Century 12 th	Date	Height (cm)270	Width (cm) 420
Auditor(s)	TM/JD	Start date	05/10/94

Overall Condition Score 2

Stratigraphy

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness	84 cm		

Comments

Greyish limestone ashlar support as elsewhere in the church. Although the support in the chancel is not visible from the interior, ashlar walls are recorded in documentary sources. Ceiling probably comprised of rubble infill. Window, arch and door quoins are of greyish limestone, with diagonal tooling. The pointing is visible in an area adjacent to the south window where it is flush and spread out over the surface of the stone. Interestingly this pointing technique is also visible to the exterior.

The structure has had a history of movement. Cement buttresses and underpinning have previously been undertaken.

Layer type	Render Layer 1	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness	3.0 cm		

Comments

Render has a distinct pinkish hue, probably due to the coloured local aggregates (see letter in file, R. Baker to J. Keevil, September 1985). Trowel marks are visible in raking light in several areas, especially to the band of plaster through seated apostles and the springing of vault (documented by Rickerby, 1990). Rickerby also records a polished surface. A fine raised 'brushstroke' texture is present in the surface render. Incisions to the heads of the seated apostles and to the capitals of the background niches appear to be part of the original technique and seem to be wet direct incised drawing. Evidence of dry incisions to form consecration crosses are present. These however may be of a later date than the painted schemes.

Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	2
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Thickness

Comments

When these paintings were discovered, and later treated, it was believed that they were painted in true fresco technique. However, this has never been confirmed. In fact, there are several aspects that point to secco techniques (see paint layer 2). The paint layer is heavily abraded and it is possible that the visible paint on the surface is simply the initial base colour, and therefore is fresco-bound. This is referred to here as paint layer 1. The paint layer appears relatively stable, however it has previously been heavily abraded. Incised circles and outlines are visible in raking light to the heads of the seated apostles and to the background niches. Visible colours include yellow, red, white, black and green (which is listed under paint layer two).

Identified pigments Colours

yellow earth	yellow
red earth	red
lime white	white
---	black

Analysis undertaken

Method POLARIZING LIGHT MICROSCOPY

Person J. Darrah, V&A **Date** 01/01/89

Comments Samples were examined in cross-section and in dispersion by Jo Darrah for Stephen Rickerby. Microchemical tests confirmed the identity of the pigments.

Layer type	Paint Layer 2	Specific condition Score	2
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Thickness

Comments

When these paintings were discovered, and later treated, it was believed that they were painted in true fresco technique. However, this has never been confirmed. In fact, there are several aspects that point to secco techniques. The paint layer is heavily abraded and it is possible that the visible paint on the surface is simply the initial base colour, and therefore is fresco-bound. However, there appears to be a distinct second paint layer which contains pigments unsuitable for true fresco. The use of malachite and azurite, both of a typically coarse particle size, clearly indicates the use of an organic binding medium, applied after the plaster had set. Rickerby (1990) also notes the partial conversion of azurite to malachite. The pigments were identified by samples taken from the chancel, which belong to the same scheme. Incised circles and outlines are visible in raking light to the heads of the seated apostles and to the capitals of the background niches. Incised consecration crosses penetrate the paint layers. The paint layer now appears relatively stable.

Identified pigments Colours

MALACHITE	GREEN
AZURITE	BLUE

Analysis undertaken

Method POLARIZING LIGHT MICROSCOPY

Person J. Darrah, V&A **Date** 01/01/89

Comments Samples were examined in cross-section and in dispersion by Jo Darrah of the V&A, for Stephen Rickerby. Azurite, partially converted to malachite, was identified.

4 Audit Information: deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Chancel		
Orientation	CEILING AND NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS		
Century	12 th	Date	Height (cm)270 Width (cm) 420

DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

Deterioration phenomena

Type delamination (render layer)

Location various areas

Comments The render has delaminated from the support in several areas. However, these areas have been treated during previous conservation programmes and now appear generally stable.

Type cracking

Location render layer, various areas

Comments Cracking appears to be associated with structural movement and possibly delamination of the render.

Type general erosion

Location lower areas of original plaster

Comments lower areas of the original plaster appear to have a slightly different composition to the render of the vault, although based on similar materials. The plaster has suffered from erosion.

Type losses (render layer)

Location lower walls

Comments The original plaster has been lost from the lower walls and has since been replaced twice with lime plasters by the Bakers during phases of their conservation programmes (1955, 1983). The plaster was matched to the original using Lugwardine river grit, local (red) Bromsberrow sand and lime.

Type flaking

Location north-east corner, mid wall

Comments Remnants of the 'preservative' coating are flaking and pulling traces of pigment away from the walls.

Type salt activity

Location lower walls

Comments The lower walls have twice been replastered since 1954 (1955, 1983). Salt efflorescence noted in north-west corner, crystallised in pattern of ashlar blocks. Damp appears to be an on-going problem in the chancel, as green MBG is present to the north corner of the chancel step. The drain to the exterior of the north wall requires clearing. The drain to the corner of the north walls of the nave and chancel appears to be blocked solid and requires clearing.

Type damp

Location north corner of chancel step

Comments Damp appears to be an ongoing problem in the chancel, as green micro-biological growth (MBG) is present to the north corner of the chancel step. The drain to the exterior of the north wall requires clearing. The drain to the corner of the north walls of the nave and chancel appears to be blocked solid and requires clearing.

Mechanical damage

Type abrasion

Location render and paint layers

Comments Abrasion of the paint and render has occurred, probably as a result of limewashing and plastering over the painting, followed by uncovering and treatment with a 'preservative' coating, the majority of which has in turn been removed.

Type scratches

Location paint and render layers

Comments Scratches have occurred, possibly as the result of crude methods utilised in removal of overlying limewash and plaster layers.

Type substantial losses

Location door, south wall, east and south windows, east wall, south side.

Comments Large losses of the original scheme have occurred due to the insertion or alteration of architectural or commemorative features. A door has been inserted in the south wall. The windows to the east and south walls have been enlarged. A memorial tablet dated to c. 1722 was inserted in the east wall, to the south of the central window. This memorial was moved to the east wall of the Chancel in c. 1873.

Type minor losses

Location painted niches behind seated apostles

Comments Small round losses have occurred from the centres of diaper pattern losenges. Loss of applied decoration could have occurred as a result of uncovering.

ADDED MATERIALS

Accretions

Type cobwebs
Location at high level
Comments Few fine cobwebs. Not disfiguring.

Type dirt
Location entire
Comments Fine deposit. Not disfiguring.

Type biodeterioration
Location north corner, chancel step
Comments Green microbiological growth is present to the north corner of the chancel step. The drain to the exterior of the north wall requires clearing. The drain to the corner of the north walls of the nave and chancel appears to be blocked solid and requires clearing.

Coatings/Coverings

Type unidentified
Location entire
Comments A 'preservative coating was applied c. 1872 after uncovering. Various sources describe it as containing shellac or egg. The majority of coating was removed c.1955, but numerous small fragments remain, especially in pits and losses.

Repairs

Type modern lime plaster
Location lower walls and small damages
Comments Undertaken by the Bakers in two phases: The majority of the work was carried out during the 1950's, a second replastering of the lower walls is datable to 1983. The plaster consisted of lime, Lugwardine river grit, and local Bromsberrow sand.

TREATMENT

Past Treatment

Type CLEANING **Date** 01/01/55
Person Eve Baker Trust
Comments The 'preservative' was removed in c. 1955 by the Eve Baker Trust. The methods used for removal of the coating are undocumented in the EH files.

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date** 01/01/55
Person Eve Baker Trust
Comments Further replastering to the lower walls was carried out by the Eve Baker Trust during 1983 (see letter in file, R. Baker to J. Keevil, 22 June 1983).

Type GROUTING **Date** 01/01/55
Person Eve Baker Trust
Comments Grouting to areas of delaminating plaster within the chancel appear to have been carried out c. 1955 by the Eve Baker Trust.

Type PRESENTATION/REINTEGRATION **Date** 01/01/55
Person Eve Baker Trust
Comments Retouching appears to have been carried out c. 1955 by the Eve Baker Trust. Watercolours may have been used.

Past Treatment

Type APPLICATION OF COATING **Date** 01/01/72
Person Unknown
Comments 1872: the paintings appear to have been varnished shortly after their uncovering by Rev Drummond and John Middleton. However, it is not clear who applied the coating, or its precise components. It has been variously described as an egg or shellac varnish. Some coating remains in pits and losses.

Type UNCOVERING **Date** 01/01/72
Person Rev Arthur Drummond/ John Middleton
Comments 1872: The paintings were discovered by the vicar of Kempley, the Rev Arthur Drummond, and uncovered with the aid of Mr John Middleton, an architect from Cheltenham. The Bakers noted that they must have used some sort of round-headed knife to uncover the paintings, as there are characteristic scratches throughout.

Proposed Treatment

Type CONSOLIDATION **Date** 05/10/94
Person TM/JD
Comments Consolidation of flaking preservative and traces of pigment (see the north side of the east wall, dado level) could be considered. It is probably impossible to remove the preservative without simultaneously removing original material, as was found to be the case during the 1990 treatment of the nave, east wall (chancel arch).

Type MONITORING CONDITION **Date** 05/10/94
Person TM/JD

Comments As the scheme is of extremely great historical and artistic importance, regular routine inspection should be undertaken to ensure no deterioration is taking place. Routine inspection and maintenance of external drains, guttering etc. is also of great importance in preventing damage due to salt crystallisation or moisture movement.

1 Wall Painting Record

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location of painting	Nave, East wall (Chancel arch)		
Orientation	EAST WALL		
Century 12 th	Date	Height (cm) 300	Width (cm) 446
Subjects included	Three Maries at the Sepulchre		

Description

THE WALL PAINTINGS

The church of St. Mary's, Kempley, in Gloucestershire, is best known for its impressive scheme of Romanesque wall painting, one of the most important in England. The building itself comprises an aisleless nave, a square-ended chancel with a low barrel vault, and a western tower. The majority of the 12th-century scheme (generally dated to about 1130/40) is restricted to the chancel and the east wall of the nave (the chancel arch).

The paintings in the chancel form an Apocalypse scheme. This includes, on the vault, a Christ in Majesty (in a triple mandorla) surrounded by the four evangelists, four archangels, the sun, the moon, and stars, and also a representation of St. Peter and the Virgin. On the north and south walls, seated apostles look upwards towards the vault. Standing bishops and pilgrims complete the scheme at the east end.

The scheme on the south side of the chancel arch incorporates the Three Maries at the Sepulchre, the subject-matter of which has been shown to represent the Easter sepulchre plays commonly celebrated during the 12C and is comparable to contemporary Romanesque schemes in France (Rickerby and Park 1991). This scene is flanked by a chevron pattern which once formed the backdrop for a (wooden?) sculptured rood.

Several aspects of the iconography point to foreign sources (mainly France and the pilgrimage route), and in fact, the iconography is thought to refer directly to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Figures of pilgrims, in niches on the north and south wall of the chancel, have been the subject of much conjecture. One may be the figure of St James the Greater, but the others remain unidentified.

The scheme was rediscovered in 1871 by the local vicar. The paintings were subsequently hastily uncovered and treated with a coat of varnish.

The paintings were restored during the 1950s-70s by the Bakers, at which time the Gothic paintings in the nave were further clarified. These comprise on the north wall, a 13th-century 'Wheel of Life', as described by Tristram, 'consisting of ten spokes, each terminating in a disk, the disks painted alternately in black and in red, the subjects once framed within them now destroyed' (Tristram, 1950, 555). The splays in the window at the eastern end of this wall also contain the figure of St Anthony with St Michael and the Virgin including masonry pattern, dated by Tristram to the 14th century. The west end of the north wall contains a possible representation of St Christopher.

This is only a tentative identification, as the figure is largely obliterated by the western (17C) window. However, the possible remains of a staff are just visible, as well as details of drapery and a landscape with architectural features. There are also small rosettes as well as a foliate pattern executed in white over a red and black ground. There are also remains of a consecration on the lower west-side of the window.

The south wall, again, is a palimpsest with a Martyrdom of St Thomas a Becket, possibly a St George and a St Margaret, and traces of various other decorative schemes.

The west wall, which does not appear to have had any original plasterwork beyond that of thick ribbon pointing, contains two painted 17th-century texts. Traces of this same scheme are also seen on the north and south walls.

The 18th-century monument on the north side of the east wall of the nave was removed during the 1872 restoration from the same position on the east wall of the chancel, obliterating what 12C work existed in this area.

The tower was built c.1276. The early west window had steps cut into its base in the 17C to give access to a (no longer extant) gallery (finished in 1670). This gallery was probably contemporary with the painted texts executed below the gallery on the west wall, and above it on the south. The ceiling was lowered at this time (several timbers are inscribed 1670-71).

The doorway over the chancel arch (on the east wall of the nave) was discovered in 1872. This provides access to a chamber over the chancel vault. This doorway appears to be original, and presumably also provided access to the rood. The use of this room is unclear (as is the original form of access to it), but it has an original window, and may have been used as a dwelling, treasury, or sacristy -- a usage which apparently is strongly linked with the presence of a western gallery (see Fernie, n.d., 148). It should also be noted that the damage suffered by the Norman capitals below, supporting the western side of the chancel arch, seems to be related to the insertion of some sort of structure, but this, unfortunately, is also unexplained.

The Early Norman sculpture in the church has been compared to that of the local Dymock school, as seen in the zigzag work of the chancel arch, the cushion and scallop capitals supporting the chancel arch, the Tree of Life tympanum and chevron-carved arch of the south door, and the former west door (now inside the tower).

The porch is a re-used 14th-century lychgate. Another modification of the 14th-century is the piscina inserted into the southeast corner of the nave.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The original parish church of Kempley formed part of a royal grant from William the Conqueror to Walter de Lacy (of Lassy, Normandy) who had fought at his side at the Battle of Hastings. Walter de Lacy built a castle at Longtown, and died in 1085. His son Roger inherited his estates and extended them. However, he was exiled to Normandy after rebelling against William II in 1095. The estates went to his brother Hugh, a devout churchman and later a favourite of Henry I. Hugh built Llanthony Abbey in 1109, and is thought to have taken down the Saxon church at Kempley to replace it with a Norman one (it is worth noting that he also had very close ties with other sites such as St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester). Hugh de Lacy died in 1121.

The paintings appear to be part of a later renovation which took place early in the 12th century. The window at the east end of the chancel, contemporary with the paintings, was widened from an earlier, narrower window.

In 1976 the church was declared redundant and passed into the guardianship of the Department of the Environment. Conservation work was begun, by Mrs. Eve Baker, in 1955, and this continued into 1980.

Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files;

East wall, July 1990, E900171. north wall, July 1990; E900168, detail; J900281, n.window recess, F900610, south wall E900169, s. window recess, F900611, ceiling E900170. East and underside of Chancel Arch E900167.

EH photo library, computer keyword search;

July 1990, E900168, E900169, E900170, E900171.

Wall painting; F900610, F900611, F900612, M900977.

Bibliography

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. [compares 12C scheme with Poitiers]

Anon, Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Societies: 31, 1908, [mentions the 12C paintings being varnished]

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Fernie, E., 'The church of St Magnus, Egilsay', in St. Magnus Cathedral and Orkney's Twelfth-century Renaissance, ed. B.E. Crawford, Aberdeen, 1988, 148 (for reference to chamber over chancel).

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Gethyn-Jones, D., Kempley: Nine centuries of village history, 1957.

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Morley, B. M., 'The nave roof of the church of St. Mary, Kempley, Gloucestershire,' The Antiquaries Journal, XLV, (1985), 101-111. [raises arguments for a dating of the romanesque paintings, the various building phases and the purpose of the exposed roof trusses]

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Weaver, J. 'A masterpiece of preservation: history of the Kempley wall paintings', Country Life, 19 July 1956, 124.

The Illustrated London News, August 11, 1956 (pre-conservation photo).

2 General Audit Information

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH	County	Gloucestershire
Region	South West		
Location	Nave, East wall (Chancel arch)		
Orientation	EAST WALL		
Century 12 th	Date	Height (cm) 300	Width (cm) 446
Auditor(s)	JD, TM	Start date	05/10/94

Overall condition score **3**

Recommendations

A programme of conservation was undertaken in this area in 1990 by C Babington (supervising students from the Courtauld Institute of Art). Flaking of the paint layer was treated on the south side, near the face of the figure (see documentation in studio files). Cleaning tests were also attempted using solvent gels, but the reduction of the remaining preservative (which was causing the contraction and damage) was found to jeopardize the paint layer.

This contraction and micro-flaking of the paint layer is still visible over the chancel arch, especially in the centre (within the chevron pattern) and near the figure on the south side and it is not clear whether this deterioration is active. A programme of treatment to attempt to continue fixing of the paint layer would therefore be desirable. [Timescale: 2 conservators, 1 week].

Routine visual inspection should also be carried out of the cracking on the south side in order to detect any further structural movement.

3 Audit Information: Technique

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Nave, East wall (Chancel arch)		
Orientation	EAST WALL		
Century 12 th	Date	Height (cm) 300	Width (cm) 446
Auditor(s)	JD, TM	Start date	05/10/94

Overall Condition Score 3

Stratigraphy

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	2
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Thickness 98 cm

Comments

Support appears to be ashlar, as that in the chancel, mainly based on documentary sources. However, the support is not currently visible to the interior.

Layer type	Render Layer 1	Specific condition Score	2
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Thickness 3.0 cm

Comments

Render has a distinct pinkish hue, probably due to the coloured local aggregates (see letter in file, R. Baker to J. Keevil, September 1985). A fine raised 'brushstroke' texture is present in the surface render.

Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
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Thickness

Comments

The original technique of the painting has always originally been presumed to have been executed in 'buon fresco'. However, this has not been confirmed. The paint layer is heavily abraded and it is possible that the visible paint on the surface is simply the initial base colour, and is therefore fresco-bound. The pigments were identified by samples taken from the chancel, which belong to the same scheme. Visible colours include yellow, red, white, black and green (listed under paint layer 2).

Identified pigments	Colours
yellow earth	yellow
red earth	red
lime white	white
---	black

Layer type	Paint Layer 2	Specific condition Score	2
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Thickness

Comments

When these paintings were discovered, and later treated, it was believed that they were painted in true fresco technique. However, this has never been confirmed. In fact, there are several aspects that point to secco techniques. The paint layer is heavily abraded and it is possible that the visible paint on the surface is simply the initial base colour, and therefore is fresco-bound. However, there appears to be a distinct second paint layer which contains pigments unsuitable for true fresco. The use of malachite and azurite, both of a typically coarse particle size, clearly indicates the use of an organic binding medium, applied after the plaster had set. Rickerby (1990) also notes the partial conversion of azurite to malachite. The pigments were identified by samples taken from the chancel, which belong to the same scheme. Further samples were taken in 1990 during conservation work but these results have not been published.

Identified pigments	Colours
MALACHITE	GREEN
AZURITE	BLUE

4 Audit Information: deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Nave, East wall (Chancel arch)		
Orientation	EAST WALL		
Century 12th	Date	Height (cm)300	Width (cm) 446

DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

Deterioration phenomena

Type flaking

Location central area above arch, and south side

Comments This flaking appears to be related to the contraction of the preservative applied in 1872, which has not been completely removed. It is especially evident in the central area above the arch, within the counterchange triangle pattern, and also near the figure of the Virgin on the south side, through proper access was not possible here.

Type cracking

Location render layer , especially south side

Comments Appears to be related to ongoing structural movement. This is visible within a repair (probably dating from 1979) on the south side, which has cracked along the lines of a previous fissure.

Type general erosion

Location general

Comments Erosion is related to the covering/uncovering/coating/cleaning of the paintings which has taken place within the last century.

Type salt activity

Location Entire?, now removed

Comments The Bakers reported the presence of salts throughout the chancel arch in a letter to J. Keevil (30/1/76): 'This year we would like to work on the chancel arch as it is covered with salts. This is partly due to the general condition of the fabric of the exterior and the lack of drainage on the north side. The green mould has now reached the chancel arch step, whereas in 1960 there was no sign of damp at this point.'

Mechanical damage

Type scratches

Location general

Comments Long scratches and gouges throughout.

Type substantial losses

Location north side

Comments Large losses include that caused by the insertion of a marble monument on the north side (that taken from the east wall of the chancel) in 1872. It may be that there was once some kind of stairway or gallery leading to the doorway, which would have caused further loss on this side, and may mean that the north side was already lost when the marble monument was moved to this area.

ADDED MATERIALS

Accretions

Type dirt
Location general
Comments

Type dust
Location general
Comments

Type cobwebs
Location general
Comments

Coatings/Coverings

Type unidentified
Location entire, now mostly removed
Comments After uncovering in 1872, the painting was coated with an unidentified varnish, referred to in documentary sources as containing egg or shellac. This has only been partially removed.

Repairs

Type lime:sand
Location upper north and lower south sides, small repairs throughout
Comments The Bakers (1979) filled small losses and the large areas of exposed stonework on the north and south sides. These fills are pinkish in hue, to match the original render.

TREATMENT

Past Treatment

Type APPLICATION OF COATING **Date** 01/01/72

Person Unknown

Comments 1872: the paintings appear to have been varnished shortly after their uncovering by Rev Drummond and John Middleton. However, it is not clear who applied the coating, or its precise components. It has been variously described as an egg or shellac varnish. As the chancel arch paintings were not completely uncovered, only the exposed areas (the central lozenge pattern over the arch) were coated with preservative.

Type UNCOVERING **Date** 01/01/72

Person Rev Arthur Drummond/John Middleton

Comments 1872: The paintings were discovered by the vicar of Kempsey, the Rev Arthur Drummond, and uncovered with the aid of Mr John Middleton, an architect from Cheltenham. It appears they only uncovered the lozenge pattern over the central arch. The Bakers noted that they must have used some sort of round-headed knife to uncover the paintings, as there are characteristic scratches throughout.

Past Treatment

Type CLEANING **Date** 01/01/77

Person Bakers

Comments 1977-1983: The Bakers worked on these paintings over the course of several years, uncovering further and removing the varnish coating. During the 1990 campaign (C. Babington) it was noted that much of the coating remained on the surface, and certain areas had been cleaned selectively to clarify the image.

Type CONSOLIDATION **Date** 01/01/77

Person Bakers

Comments 1977-1983: The paintings were probably consolidated with limewater. In 1985 there were plans to re-treat the chancel, and one can only assume they would have used the same treatment for the chancel arch paintings. The planned to 'apply a suitable number of limewater saturations to strengthen and at the same time to bring out the clarity of the pigments'.

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date** 01/01/77

Person Bakers

Comments 1977-1983: Large areas to the north and south sides were filled with the characteristic pink mortar similar to that used in the chancel. This was cited as containing 'lime, Lugwardine river grit and Bromsberrow sand matching the 12th-century ground of the painting'.

Type UNCOVERING **Date** 01/01/77

Person Bakers

Comments 1977-1983: The Bakers worked on these paintings over the course of several years, uncovering the north and south sides, as well as higher up the east wall, revealing the 'Visitatio Sepulchris' scene.

Past Treatment

Type SALT REMOVAL Date 01/01/84

Person Bakers

Comments The Bakers reported the presence of salts, and presumably incorporated salt removal into their conservation programme from 1977-1984.

Past Treatment

Type CLEANING Date 01/01/90

Person C. Babington

Comments During the 1990 campaign in association with the Courtauld Institute of Art (supervised by C. Babington) T. Curteis reports: 'It was decided to undertake cleaning tests on this coating with an acetone gel adapted from a formulation by Richard Wolbers. The coating was found to be highly soluble, but in many cases the coating was the only thing supporting the pigment, and so even a thinning would mean an unjustifiable loss of original material. We therefore decided that it was impractical to remove the coating.'

Type FLAKE FIXING Date 01/01/90

Person C. Babington

Comments During the 1990 campaign in association with the Courtauld Institute of Art (supervised by C. Babington) T. Curteis reports: 'it became clear that the flakes were susceptible to moisture. We therefore decided to use this to our advantage, softening the flakes with a mixture of IMS and water and then with a fine brush, applying a drop of weak lime milk behind an individual flake, before pressing it back with a sable brush. In some areas however where the coating was thicker the contraction was too great for the lime milk, and so a solution of 5% Plextol B500 was added to the lime milk and applied in the same way.' More difficult areas were 'wetted with the IMS mixture through Japanese paper. A pure solution of 5% Plextol B500 in water was applied over the paper, and the flakes pressed down. A swab of acetone was then rolled over the paper, and the paper removed...[and]... a fresh swab of acetone was rolled briefly over the surface of the painting to remove any residue...'

Proposed Treatment

Type FLAKE FIXING Date 05/10/94

Person JD, TM

Comments Small flakes over the centre of the arch, and on the lower south side, caused by contraction of the remaining preservative, could be consolidated. However, it should be noted that when this was attempted in the past (near the figure on the south side) it was generally found to put the paint layer at risk.

Type MONITORING CONDITION Date 05/10/94

Person JD, TM

Comments Visual inspection, at routine intervals, of the cracking on the south side should be carried out in order to detect any structural movement.

1 Wall Painting Record

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location of painting	Nave, North wall, west end		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, WEST END.		
Century 15 th	Date	Height (cm)650	Width (cm) 243
Subjects included			
Architectural motifs			
Consecration cross(es)			
drapery			
Landscape			
Rosette(s)			
St Christopher			

Description

THE WALL PAINTINGS

The church of St. Mary's, Kempsey, in Gloucestershire, is best known for its impressive scheme of Romanesque wall painting, one of the most important in England. The building itself comprises an aisleless nave, a square-ended chancel with a low barrel vault, and a western tower. The majority of the 12th-century scheme (generally dated to about 1130/40) is restricted to the chancel and the east wall of the nave (the chancel arch).

The paintings in the chancel form an Apocalypse scheme. This includes, on the vault, a Christ in Majesty (in a triple mandorla) surrounded by the four evangelists, four archangels, the sun, the moon, and stars, and also a representation of St. Peter and the Virgin. On the north and south walls, seated apostles look upwards towards the vault. Standing bishops and pilgrims complete the scheme at the east end. On the chancel arch, the Three Maries at the Sepulchre are seen on the south side, flanking a chevron pattern which once formed the backdrop for a (wooden?) sculptured rood.

Several aspects of the iconography point to foreign sources (mainly France and the pilgrimage route), and in fact, the iconography is thought to refer directly to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Figures of pilgrims, in niches on the north and south wall of the chancel, have been the subject of much conjecture. One may be the figure of St James the Greater, but the others remain unidentified.

The scheme was rediscovered in 1871 by the local vicar. The paintings were subsequently hastily uncovered and treated with a coat of varnish.

The paintings were restored during the 1950s-70s by the Bakers, at which time the Gothic paintings in the nave were further clarified. These comprise on the north wall, a 13th-century 'Wheel of Life', as described by Tristram, 'consisting of ten spokes, each terminating in a disk, the disks painted alternately in black and in red, the subjects once framed within them now destroyed' (Tristram, 1950, 555). The splays in the window at the eastern end of this wall also contain the figure of St Anthony with St Michael and the Virgin including masonry pattern, dated by Tristram to the 14th century. The west end of the north wall contains a possible representation of St Christopher.

This is only a tentative identification, as the figure is largely obliterated by the western (17C) window. However, the possible remains of a staff are just visible, as well as details of drapery and a landscape with architectural features. There are also small rosettes as well as a foliate pattern executed in white over a red and black ground. There are also remains of a consecration on the lower west-side of the window.

The south wall, again, is a palimpsest with a Martyrdom of St Thomas a Becket, possibly a St George and a St Margaret, and traces of various other decorative schemes.

The west wall, which does not appear to have had any original plasterwork beyond that of thick ribbon pointing, contains two painted 17th-century texts. Traces of this same scheme are also seen on the north and south walls.

The 18th-century monument on the north side of the east wall of the nave was removed during the 1872 restoration from the same position on the east wall of the chancel, obliterating what 12C work existed in this area.

The tower was built c.1276. The early west window had steps cut into its base in the 17C to give access to a (no longer extant) gallery (finished in 1670). This gallery was probably contemporary with the painted texts executed below the gallery on the west wall, and above it on the south. The ceiling was lowered at this time (several timbers are inscribed 1670-71).

The doorway over the chancel arch (on the east wall of the nave) was discovered in 1872. This provides access to a chamber over the chancel vault. This doorway appears to be original, and presumably also provided access to the rood. The use of this room is unclear (as is the original form of access to it), but it has an original window, and may have been used as a dwelling, treasury, or sacristy -- a usage which apparently is strongly linked with the presence of a western gallery (see Fernie, n.d., 148). It should also be noted that the damage suffered by the Norman capitals below, supporting the western side of the chancel arch, seems to be related to the insertion of some sort of structure, but this, unfortunately, is also unexplained.

The Early Norman sculpture in the church has been compared to that of the local Dymock school, as seen in the zigzag work of the chancel arch, the cushion and scallop capitals supporting the chancel arch, the Tree of Life tympanum and chevron-carved arch of the south door, and the former west door (now inside the tower).

The porch is a re-used 14th-century lychgate. Another modification of the 14th-century is the piscina inserted into the southeast corner of the nave.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The original parish church of Kempley formed part of a royal grant from William the Conqueror to Walter de Lacy (of Lassy, Normandy) who had fought at his side at the Battle of Hastings. Walter de Lacy built a castle at Longtown, and died in 1085. His son Roger inherited his estates and extended them. However, he was exiled to Normandy after rebelling against William II in 1095. The estates went to his brother Hugh, a devout churchman and later a favourite of Henry I. Hugh built Llanthony Abbey in 1109, and is thought to have taken down the Saxon church at Kempley to replace it with a Norman one (it is worth noting that he also had very close ties with other sites such as St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester). Hugh de Lacy died in 1121.

The paintings appear to be part of a later renovation which took place early in the 12th century. The window at the east end of the chancel, contemporary with the paintings, was widened from an earlier, narrower window.

In 1976 the church was declared redundant and passed into the guardianship of the Department of the Environment. Conservation work was begun, by Mrs. Eve Baker, in 1955, and this continued into 1980.

Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; West wall, July 1990, E900162, south wall E900163, s. larger window recess F900612. North wall E900164, east wall and chancel arch E900166.

EH photo library, computer keyword search;

July 1990, Nave, E900162, E900163, E900164, E900165 (cross-refs; J900281), E900166, J900281 (cross-refs; E900165).

Wall painting; F900610, F900611, F900612, M900977.

Bibliography

Anon., poss. D. Park, typescript of extract from research, in EH file, on St. Mary's with stylistic parallels, etc. [compares 12C scheme with Poitiers]

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Morley, B. M., 'The nave roof of the church of St. Mary, Kempeley, Gloucestershire,' The Antiquaries Journal, XLV, (1985), 101-111. [raises arguments for a dating of the romanesque paintings, the various building phases and the purpose of the exposed roof trusses]

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Rickerby, S., and Park, D., 'A romanesque "Visitatio Sepulchri" at Kempeley,' The Burlington Magazine, Jan 1991, no. 1054, vol, CXXXIII, 27-31.

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Weaver, J. 'A masterpiece of preservation: history of the Kempeley wall paintings', Country Life, 19 July 1956, 124.

The Illustrated London News, August 11, 1956 (pre-conservation photo).

2 General Audit Information

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH	County	Gloucestershire
Region	South West		
Location	Nave, North wall, west end		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, WEST END.		
Century 15 th	Date	Height (cm) 650	Width (cm) 243
Auditor(s)	JD, TM	Start date 07/10/94	

Overall condition score **4**

Recommendations

This area of the north wall has received very little attention over past conservation campaigns (only uncovering of surviving paint by the Bakers in 1975) and the overall appearance of the surviving areas is confused. Surface cleaning would therefore certainly clarify the extent and condition of the painted decoration and would also help determine the stratigraphy of the various schemes (for example the consecration cross). In the meantime emergency repairs are required including edge repairs and the fixing of the paint and ground layers. [Timescale: 2 conservators, 1 week].

There are several areas of bulging plaster in the uppermost region of the north wall, between the wooden trusses. These appear very vulnerable and repair of this area is highly recommended in order to prevent further loss. [Timescale: 2 conservators, 1-2 weeks depending on the condition on closer inspection].

External drains to the north wall are blocked and require cleaning. The drainage system could probably be improved.

3 Audit Information: Technique

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Nave, North wall, west end		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, WEST END.		
Century 15 th	Date	Height (cm) 650	Width (cm) 243
Auditor(s)	JD, TM	Start date	07/10/94

Overall Condition Score 4

Stratigraphy

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	3
Thickness	80 cm		
Comments	Greyish limestone ashlar support. Drain at exterior of north wall requires removal of vegetation.		
Layer type	Render Layer 1	Specific condition Score	4
Thickness	1-1 cm		
Comments	Construction skim, thickness varies over stone. Pinkish-coloured fine aggregate.		
Layer type	Ground Layer 1	Specific condition Score	4
Thickness			
Comments	Coarse limewash ground (striations of brushstrokes visible) similar to that found as ground of 'Wheel of Life' and 'St. Michael' (North wall, centre and North wall, east end).		
Layer type	Ground Layer 2	Specific condition Score	4
Thickness			
Comments	Smooth limewash ground.		
Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	4
Thickness			
Comments	Main painted scheme, medium unknown. To west of 18th-century window, what appears to be a wooden staff can be seen, also drapery billowing out to the west, an area of drapery below with a curious 'paw-print' pattern, and a landscape with trees and architecture. Colours visible include red, yellow, black and white.		
Identified pigments	Colours		
---	red		
---	yellow		
---	black		
---	white		

4 Audit Information: deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Nave, North wall, west end		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, WEST END.		
Century 15th	Date	Height (cm)650	Width (cm) 243

DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

Deterioration phenomena

Type loss
Location east side
Comments Loss of scheme associated with insertion of window.

Type flaking
Location generally
Comments Ground and paint layers flaking in areas.

Type delamination (render layer)
Location general, especially east side
Comments Some areas appear to be detached from the support, however, the surface is too delicate to allow tapping.

Mechanical damage

Type insertions
Location throughout
Comments Insertion of hooks for hanging of a canvas painted with the Royal Arms of George III.

Type nail holes
Location throughout
Comments Probably associated with the hanging canvas once in this area.

ADDED MATERIALS

Accretions

Type dirt

Location general

Comments Large amount of dirt, obscuring the painted surface.

Type dust

Location general

Comments Dirt and dust obscure the painted surface.

Type cobwebs

Location general

Comments

Type unidentified deposit

Location especially at east side, window edge

Comments Could be the remains of limewash or associated with dampness (from the window) and salt movement.

Coatings/Coverings

Type limewash

Location fragmentary remains generally

Comments Probably uncovered by the Bakers in the 1980s. Patchy survival of overlying limewash.

Repairs

Type modern plaster

Location west side, centre

Comments Two types of grey cement-like repairs visible. May be associated with the repair to the tower c1913, as they also appear to repair the pointing where there has been past structural movement.

Type modern lime plaster

Location east side, lower part (above consecration cross)

Comments Pinkish edge repairs

TREATMENT

Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date

Person Unknown

Comments Cement-type mortar used to repair pointing of the support, especially east side of painting. Probably associated with the structural work done at the west end and tower c.1913.

Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/01/75

Person Bakers?

Comments Pinkish edge repairs to render layer 1, in area surrounding the consecration cross. These were probably inserted by the Bakers, as they uncovered this area sometime between 1975-84, during their investigations in the nave. In a letter of 1975, M. Keevil notes, 'To the west of the modern window there are extensive remains of colour in several layers, this area is partially obscured by a Royal Arms of George III which is painted on canvas and secured to the wall. This area should be further investigated.'

Type UNCOVERING Date 01/01/75

Person Bakers

Comments The Bakers probably uncovered this area between 1975-84, during their investigations in the nave. (It could not have been exposed during the varnishing undertaken in 1872, as there is no coating on the paint layer) In a letter of 1975, M. Keevil notes, 'To the west of the modern window there are extensive remains of colour in several layers, this area is partially obscured by a Royal Arms of George III which is painted on canvas and secured to the wall. This area should be further investigated.'

Proposed Treatment

Type CLEANING Date 07/10/94

Person JD, TM

Comments The surface is obscured by dust and much of the painting could be clarified by surface cleaning.

Type CONSOLIDATION Date 07/10/94

Person JD, TM

Comments The bulging plaster of the upper-most area on the north wall, west end, between the wooden trusses, should be attended to very shortly. This area will need a thorough examination with proper access.

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 07/10/94

Person JD, TM

Comments Edge repairs are urgently needed.

Type FLAKE FIXING **Date** 07/10/94
Person JD, TM
Comments Fixing of ground and paint layers is urgently needed.

Type UNCOVERING **Date** 07/10/94
Person JD, TM
Comments Certain areas are partially obscured by remains of overlying limewash, and could be clarified by further uncovering.

1 Wall Painting Record

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location of painting	Nave, North wall, centre		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, CENTRAL AREA		
Century 13 th	Date	Height (cm) 200	Width (cm) 188
Subjects included	Wheel of Life		

Description

THE WALL PAINTINGS

The church of St. Mary's, Kempsey, in Gloucestershire, is best known for its impressive scheme of Romanesque wall painting, one of the most important in England. The building itself comprises an aisleless nave, a square-ended chancel with a low barrel vault, and a western tower. The majority of the 12th-century scheme (generally dated to about 1130/40) is restricted to the chancel and the east wall of the nave (the chancel arch).

The paintings in the chancel form an Apocalypse scheme. This includes, on the vault, a Christ in Majesty (in a triple mandorla) surrounded by the four evangelists, four archangels, the sun, the moon, and stars, and also a representation of St. Peter and the Virgin. On the north and south walls, seated apostles look upwards towards the vault. Standing bishops and pilgrims complete the scheme at the east end. On the chancel arch, the Three Maries at the Sepulchre are seen on the south side, flanking a chevron pattern which once formed the backdrop for a (wooden?) sculptured rood.

Several aspects of the iconography point to foreign sources (mainly France and the pilgrimage route), and in fact, the iconography is thought to refer directly to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Figures of pilgrims, in niches on the north and south wall of the chancel, have been the subject of much conjecture. One may be the figure of St James the Greater, but the others remain unidentified.

The scheme was rediscovered in 1871 by the local vicar. The paintings were subsequently hastily uncovered and treated with a coat of varnish.

The paintings were restored during the 1950s-70s by the Bakers, at which time the Gothic paintings in the nave were further clarified. These comprise on the north wall, a 13th-century 'Wheel of Life', as described by Tristram, 'consisting of ten spokes, each terminating in a disk, the disks painted alternately in black and in red, the subjects once framed within them now destroyed' (Tristram, 1950, 555). The splays in the window at the eastern end of this wall also contain the figure of St Anthony with St Michael and the Virgin including masonry pattern, dated by Tristram to the 14th century. The west end of the north wall contains a possible representation of St Christopher.

This is only a tentative identification, as the figure is largely obliterated by the western (17C) window. However, the possible remains of a staff are just visible, as well as details of drapery and a landscape with architectural features. There are also small rosettes as well as a foliate pattern executed in white over a red and black ground. There are also remains of a consecration on the lower west-side of the window.

The south wall, again, is a palimpsest with a Martyrdom of St Thomas a Becket, possibly a St George and a St Margaret, and traces of various other decorative schemes.

The west wall, which does not appear to have had any original plasterwork beyond that of thick ribbon pointing, contains two painted 17th-century texts. Traces of this same scheme are also seen on the north and south walls.

The 18th-century monument on the north side of the east wall of the nave was removed during the 1872 restoration from the same position on the east wall of the chancel, obliterating what 12C work existed in this area.

The tower was built c.1276. The early west window had steps cut into its base in the 17C to give access to a (no longer extant) gallery (finished in 1670). This gallery was probably contemporary with the painted texts executed below the gallery on the west wall, and above it on the south. The ceiling was lowered at this time (several timbers are inscribed 1670-71).

The doorway over the chancel arch (on the east wall of the nave) was discovered in 1872. This provides access to a chamber over the chancel vault. This doorway appears to be original, and presumably also provided access to the rood. The use of this room is unclear (as is the original form of access to it), but it has an original window, and may have been used as a dwelling, treasury, or sacristy -- a usage which apparently is strongly linked with the presence of a western gallery (see Fernie, n.d., 148). It should also be noted that the damage suffered by the Norman capitals below, supporting the western side of the chancel arch, seems to be related to the insertion of some sort of structure, but this, unfortunately, is also unexplained.

The Early Norman sculpture in the church has been compared to that of the local Dymock school, as seen in the zigzag work of the chancel arch, the cushion and scallop capitals supporting the chancel arch, the Tree of Life tympanum and chevron-carved arch of the south door, and the former west door (now inside the tower).

The porch is a re-used 14th-century lychgate. Another modification of the 14th-century is the piscina inserted into the southeast corner of the nave.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The original parish church of Kempley formed part of a royal grant from William the Conqueror to Walter de Lacy (of Lassy, Normandy) who had fought at his side at the Battle of Hastings. Walter de Lacy built a castle at Longtown, and died in 1085. His son Roger inherited his estates and extended them. However, he was exiled to Normandy after rebelling against William II in 1095. The estates went to his brother Hugh, a devout churchman and later a favourite of Henry I. Hugh built Llanthony Abbey in 1109, and is thought to have taken down the Saxon church at Kempley to replace it with a Norman one (it is worth noting that he also had very close ties with other sites such as St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester). Hugh de Lacy died in 1121.

The paintings appear to be part of a later renovation which took place early in the 12th century. The window at the east end of the chancel, contemporary with the paintings, was widened from an earlier, narrower window.

In 1976 the church was declared redundant and passed into the guardianship of the Department of the Environment. Conservation work was begun, by Mrs. Eve Baker, in 1955, and this continued into 1980.

Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; West wall, July 1990, E900162, south wall E900163, s. larger window recess F900612. North wall E900164, east wall and chancel arch E900166.

EH photo library, computer keyword search;

July 1990, Nave, E900162, E900163, E900164, E900165 (cross-refs; J900281), E900166, J900281 (cross-refs; E900165).

Wall painting; F900610, F900611, F900612, M900977.

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Anon, Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Societies: 31, 1908, [mentions the 12C paintings being varnished]

Anon, n.d., St. Mary's Church, Kempley, and its paintings. [in EH file]

Bird, H., *Ancient Mural Paintings in the Churches of Gloucestershire*, n.d., 21-22.

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Rickerby, S., 'Kempley: a technical examination of the romanesque wall paintings,' *Early Medieval Wall Painting and Painted Sculpture in England*, ed. S. Cather, D. Park and P. Williamson, BAR British Series, 1990.

Rickerby, S., and Park, D., 'A romanesque "Visitatio Sepulchri" at Kempley,' *The Burlington Magazine*, Jan 1991, no. 1054, vol. CXXXIII, 27-31.

Rickert, M., *Painting in Britain: the Middle Ages*, London 1965, 76-77, pl. 74.

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Weaver, J. 'A masterpiece of preservation: history of the Kempley wall paintings', *Country Life*, 19 July 1956, 124.

The Illustrated London News, August 11, 1956 (pre-conservation photo).

2 General Audit Information

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH	County	Gloucestershire
Region	South West		
Location	Nave, North wall, centre		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, CENTRAL AREA		
Century 13th	Date	Height (cm) 200	Width (cm) 188
Auditor(s)	TM/JD	Start date	07/10/94

Overall condition score **3**

Recommendations

The delamination of the paint layer requires stabilising. However, further treatment proposals including cleaning are problematic as areas of preservative, overpaint and numerous repairs, as well as dirt and dust, confuse the original appearance of the scheme. Further decisions could be made after a programme of light surface cleaning and flake fixing. [Time scale: two conservators, 1-2 weeks].

External drains to the north wall and corner of the north walls of the chancel and nave are blocked and require clearing. The drainage system could probably be improved.

Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
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Thickness

Comments

The paint layer is heavily overpainted. The original appears to be abraded. Visible colours include black, red, yellow and green.

Identified pigments **Colours**

---	black
---	red
---	yellow
---	green

4 Audit Information: deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Nave, North wall, centre		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, CENTRAL AREA		
Century 13th	Date	Height (cm)200	Width (cm) 188

DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

Deterioration phenomena

Type delamination (render layer)
Location lower, west side
Comments Render and limewash ground are affected.

Type flaking
Location entire
Comments Paint and ground layers are affected. The flaking of the paint layer appears to be directly related to the remnants of the 'preservative' coating.

Type cracking
Location general
Comments Ground layer has old cracks, probably now relatively stable.

Type loss
Location general
Comments Small pits and losses of ground have occurred.

Mechanical damage

Type abrasion
Location over the entire surface
Comments Probably exacerbated by attempts at uncovering, application of a 'preservative' and later removal of the 'preservative' coating.

Type minor losses
Location various
Comments Small holes may be related to insertion of needles for grouting.

Type nail holes
Location general
Comments Small holes may possible be the result of insertions of nails, although no nails are now present.

ADDED MATERIALS

Accretions

Type dirt

Location over the entire surface

Comments The painting is obscured and disfigured by covering layers. The poor appearance is probably exacerbated by the uneven rough surface of the ground and by the remnants of the 'preservative' coating.

Type dust

Location over the entire surface

Comments The painting is obscured and disfigured by covering layers. The poor appearance is probably exacerbated by the uneven rough surface of the ground and by the remnants of the 'preservative' coating.

Type cobwebs

Location over the entire surface

Comments The painting is obscured and disfigured by covering layers. The poor appearance is probably exacerbated by the uneven rough surface of the ground and by the remnants of the 'preservative' coating.

Coatings/Coverings

Type unidentified

Location fragmentary areas

Comments An organic 'preservative' coating, possibly varnish or egg was applied to the paintings in the chancel and some in the nave c.1872. Remnants of this layer are still present.

Type repainting

Location general

Comments Extensive repainting has taken place, possibly at several dates.

Type limewash

Location general

Comments Remnants of overlying limewash are present. These appear to be coated with 'preservative' and therefore pre-date the c. 1872 application.

Type limewash

Location surface; to upper west side, edges of circles.

Comments Cream coloured limewash which emphasises the edges of painted areas.

Type unidentified

Location surface; to lower east and west sides.

Comments Coloured fragments, probably the remains of a later decorative scheme are present to lower areas.

Repairs

Type lime:sand

Location upper west corner

Comments Probably a Baker repair as the reddish colour matches repairs identified in the chancel. The repair appears stable and of suitable texture and materials.

Type modern lime plaster

Location toned yellow repair to centre and in small plugs elsewhere

Comments Probably a Baker repair. The yellow tone is rather bright, however, the repair appears stable and of suitable texture and materials.

TREATMENT

Past Treatment

Type APPLICATION OF COATING **Date** 01/01/72
Person Unknown
Comments 'Preservative' coating(s) applied c.1872/3. The exact nature of the preservative layer is unknown, however there are early references to egg white varnish and shellac (?).

Type UNCOVERING **Date** 01/01/72
Person Rev. Arthur Drummond/John Middleton
Comments Uncovered in 1872, by the Rev. Arthur Drummond, vicar of Kempley, and Mr. John Middleton, an architect of Cheltenham. Although the precise method of uncovering is unknown, the Bakers thought they used a round-head knife.

Past Treatment

Type CLEANING **Date** 01/01/80
Person Bakers
Comments The majority of the preservative coating was removed by the Bakers during the early 1980's. The exact method of removal is unknown.

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date** 01/01/80
Person Bakers
Comments Repairs undertaken by the Bakers using lime based materials.

Type GROUTING **Date** 01/01/80
Person Bakers
Comments Repairs undertaken by the Bakers using lime based materials. The uneven surface of render 1 may have occurred due to delamination followed by grouting. Several small holes appear to be associated with injection grouting, although no records of conservation treatment, including grouting, exist.

Type PRESENTATION/REINTEGRATION **Date** 01/01/80
Person Bakers
Comments Extensive repainting has been undertaken. The surface of the painting is rather confused and it may be the case that several dates of retouching are present.

Proposed Treatment

Type CLEANING **Date** 07/10/94
Person TM/JD
Comments Cleaning may improve the appearance of the painting. However the confusion of layers, repairs and repaint may prohibit a satisfactory appearance being achieved. In addition it may not be possible to remove the remnants of 'preservative'.

Type FLAKE FIXING **Date** 07/10/94
Person TM/JD
Comments Flaking and delaminating layers require consolidation.

1 Wall Painting Record

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location of painting	Nave, North wall, east end		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, EAST END.		
Century 14 th	Date	Height (cm) 190	Width (cm) 127
Subjects included			
Masonry pattern			
Rosette(s)			
St Anthony			
St Michael			
The Virgin			

Description

THE WALL PAINTINGS

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Several aspects of the iconography point to foreign sources (mainly France and the pilgrimage route), and in fact, the iconography is thought to refer directly to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Figures of pilgrims, in niches on the north and south wall of the chancel, have been the subject of much conjecture. One may be the figure of St James the Greater, but the others remain unidentified.

The scheme was rediscovered in 1871 by the local vicar. The paintings were subsequently hastily uncovered and treated with a coat of varnish.

The paintings were restored during the 1950s-70s by the Bakers, at which time the Gothic paintings in the nave were further clarified. These comprise on the north wall, a 13th-century 'Wheel of Life', as described by Tristram, 'consisting of ten spokes, each terminating in a disk, the disks painted alternately in black and in red, the subjects once framed within them now destroyed' (Tristram, 1950, 555). The splays in the window at the eastern end of this wall also contain the figure of St Anthony with St Michael and the Virgin including masonry pattern, dated by Tristram to the 14th century. The west end of the north wall contains a possible representation of St Christopher.

This is only a tentative identification, as the figure is largely obliterated by the western (17C) window. However, the possible remains of a staff are just visible, as well as details of drapery and a landscape with architectural features. There are also small rosettes as well as a foliate pattern executed in white over a red and black ground. There are also remains of a consecration on the lower west-side of the window.

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a St Margaret, and traces of various other decorative schemes.

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The 18th-century monument on the north side of the east wall of the nave was removed during the 1872 restoration from the same position on the east wall of the chancel, obliterating what 12C work existed in this area.

The tower was built c.1276. The early west window had steps cut into its base in the 17C to give access to a (no longer extant) gallery (finished in 1670). This gallery was probably contemporary with the painted texts executed below the gallery on the west wall, and above it on the south. The ceiling was lowered at this time (several timbers are inscribed 1670-71).

The doorway over the chancel arch (on the east wall of the nave) was discovered in 1872. This provides access to a chamber over the chancel vault. This doorway appears to be original, and presumably also provided access to the rood. The use of this room is unclear (as is the original form of access to it), but it has an original window, and may have been used as a dwelling, treasury, or sacristy -- a usage which apparently is strongly linked with the presence of a western gallery (see Fernie, n.d., 148). It should also be noted that the damage suffered by the Norman capitals below, supporting the western side of the chancel arch, seems to be related to the insertion of some sort of structure, but this, unfortunately, is also unexplained.

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HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The original parish church of Kempley formed part of a royal grant from William the Conqueror to Walter de Lacy (of Lassy, Normandy) who had fought at his side at the Battle of Hastings. Walter de Lacy built a castle at Longtown, and died in 1085. His son Roger inherited his estates and extended them. However, he was exiled to Normandy after rebelling against William II in 1095. The estates went to his brother Hugh, a devout churchman and later a favourite of Henry I. Hugh built Llanthony Abbey in 1109, and is thought to have taken down the Saxon church at Kempley to replace it with a Norman one (it is worth noting that he also had very close ties with other sites such as St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester). Hugh de Lacy died in 1121.

The paintings appear to be part of a later renovation which took place early in the 12th century. The window at the east end of the chancel, contemporary with the paintings, was widened from an earlier, narrower window.

In 1976 the church was declared redundant and passed into the guardianship of the Department of the Environment. Conservation work was begun, by Mrs. Eve Baker, in 1955, and this continued into 1980.

Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files;

East wall, July 1990, E900171. north wall, July 1990; E900168, detail; J900281, n.window recess, F900610, south wall E900169, s. window recess, F900611, ceiling E900170. East and underside of Chancel Arch E900167.

EH photo library, computer keyword search;

July 1990, E900168, E900169, E900170, E900171.

Wall painting; F900610, F900611, F900612, M900977.

Bibliography

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- The Illustrated London News, August 11, 1956 (pre-conservation photo).

2 General Audit Information

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH	County	Gloucestershire
Region	South West		
Location	Nave, North wall, east end		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, EAST END.		
Century 14 th	Date	Height (cm) 190	Width (cm) 127
Auditor(s)	TM/JD	Start date	05/10/94

Overall condition score **4**

Recommendations

The paintings within the window splays, especially the St. Michael on the east splay, show extensive flaking of the ground and paint layers which are blistering away from the smooth plaster support. Treatment in this area should be considered an urgent priority. [Timescale: 2 conservators, 1 week, within the next year].

Some further cleaning could be undertaken to improve the appearance of the paintings. In addition the render should be checked for delamination. Further examination around and above the window could also help to clarify the chronology of the paintings on the north wall.

3 Audit Information: Technique

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Nave, North wall, east end		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, EAST END.		
Century 14 th	Date	Height (cm) 190	Width (cm) 127
Auditor(s)	TM/JD	Start date	05/10/94

Overall Condition Score 4

Stratigraphy

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness	85 cm		

Comments

Greyish limestone ashlar support. Apparently there has been some movement of the support at some time, as there is cracking in the soffit of the window. The support may also be suffering damp as the overlying plaster layers have undergone deterioration often associated with water infiltration. During inspection the drains to the base of the exterior of the north wall were found to be obstructed.

Layer type	Render Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
Thickness	1-2 cm		

Comments

The render is rather smooth, pinkish in tone and has the fine ridged texture noted on the plaster in the chancel. Therefore it may be coeval with the Romanesque scheme. No painted decoration was observed on the early render.

Layer type	Ground Layer 1	Specific condition Score	4
Thickness			

Comments

Thick limewash ground, applied with a coarse brush. Appears to be the same ground as that found under the 'Wheel of Life' painting.

Identified pigments	Colours
lime white	white

Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
Thickness			

Comments

Double red line masonry pattern with black rosettes (described by Keyser as blue (1877, 272). Early 14th-century.

Identified pigments	Colours
---	black
---	red

Layer type	Paint Layer 2	Specific condition Score	2
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Thickness

Comments

Late 14th-century scheme containing figures of St Michael, the Virgin and St Anthony over a red background.

Identified pigments **Colours**

---	red
---	white
---	black
---	yellow

4 Audit Information: deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Nave, North wall, east end		
Orientation	NORTH WALL, EAST END.		
Century 14th	Date	Height (cm) 190	Width (cm) 127

DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

Deterioration phenomena

Type cracking
Location render layer 1 apex of window soffit
Comments Possibly associated with delamination from the support.

Type loss
Location limewash ground layer
Comments Found generally but particularly at the apex of the window. Such damage is probably associated with the 'preservative' coating.

Type blistering (paint layer)
Location both paint and ground layers
Comments The delamination of the limewash ground from the render is severe and extensive. It occurs generally but is especially noticeable to the centre of the St Michael scheme. Remedial treatment is required. The poor adherence of the ground and paint layers to the support was noticed by the Bakers in 1985.

Type flaking
Location both paint and ground layers
Comments Flaking and loss of the limewash ground and paint layers is extensive and severe. It occurs generally but is especially noticeable to the centre of the St Michael scheme. Remedial treatment required. The poor adherence of the ground and paint layers to the support was noticed by the Bakers in 1985.

Mechanical damage

Type cracking/fracturing
Location apex of window soffit.
Comments Possibly due to structural movement.

Type insertions
Location window cill
Comments The window cill has been replastered, the cill has since become cracked and damaged. The cill replastering appears to contain cement.

ADDED MATERIALS

Accretions

Type dust

Location general

Comments The paintings, within a deep niche, are susceptible to dirt and dust deposition.

Type dirt

Location general

Comments The paintings, within a deep niche, are susceptible to dirt and dust deposition.

Type cobwebs

Location general, but especially corners

Comments The paintings, situated within a deep niche and with an undulating surface, are susceptible to cobwebs.

Coatings/Coverings

Type unidentified

Location entire surface

Comments An organic 'preservative' coating, possibly varnish or egg, was applied to the paintings of the chancel and some of the nave wall paintings in c.1872. Remnants of this coating still remain.

Repairs

Type lime:sand

Location apex of window

Comments These reddish lime/sand repairs are the same as those inserted by the Bakers elsewhere in the church. They worked in this area c.1985.

Type modern lime plaster

Location cill of window

Comments Appears sound but has some hollow areas.

Type modern plaster

Location surrounding modern window glass

Comments Greyish appearance, possibly cement.

TREATMENT

Past Treatment

Type UNCOVERING Date 01/01/72

Person Rev. Arthur Drummond/John Middleton

Comments Uncovered in 1872, by the Rev. Arthur Drummond, vicar of Kempley, and Mr. John Middleton, an architect from Cheltenham. Although the precise method of uncovering is unknown, the Bakers thought they used a round-headed knife.

Past Treatment

Type APPLICATION OF COATING Date 01/01/73

Person Unknown

Comments 'Preservative' coating(s) applied c. 1872/3. The exact nature of the preservative layer is unknown, however there are early references to egg white varnish and shellac. (?)

Past Treatment

Type CLEANING Date 01/01/85

Person Bakers

Comments The above-mentioned 'preservative' coating, possibly egg white varnish or shellac (?), was removed partially by the Bakers in c. 1985. In their report of 18/9/85, R. Baker states, 'We have cleaned the painting but could bring it to a finer state if it were more firmly attached to the wall. We propose here to take the fourteenth century painting away and refix it more firmly to the twelfth century plaster.' The latter never happened.

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/01/85

Person Bakers

Comments This area was worked on by the Bakers during 1985 (see their report 18/9/85). No specific reference is made to the filling of losses, but there are some small repairs which are likely to be their work, and probably date from this campaign. They are porous and lime-based.

Proposed Treatment

Type FLAKE FIXING Date 07/01/94

Person JD, TM

Comments Several areas are blistering and flaking away from the smooth plaster support. Fixing of the flaking and lifting limewash ground is required.

Proposed Treatment

Type CLEANING Date 07/10/94

Person JD, TM

Comments Some further cleaning could be undertaken to improve the appearance of the painting.

1 Wall Painting Record

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location of painting	Nave, South wall		
Orientation	SOUTH WALL		
Century 14 th	Date	Height (cm) 650	Width (cm) 1040
Subjects included			
Masonry pattern			
masonry pattern, double-line			
Saint(s)			
St George			
St Margaret of Antioch			
St. Thomas a Becket			

Description

THE WALL PAINTINGS

The church of St. Mary's, Kempsey, in Gloucestershire, is best known for its impressive scheme of Romanesque wall painting, one of the most important in England. The building itself comprises an aisleless nave, a square-ended chancel with a low barrel vault, and a western tower. The majority of the 12th-century scheme (generally dated to about 1130/40) is restricted to the chancel and the east wall of the nave (the chancel arch).

The paintings in the chancel form an Apocalypse scheme. This includes, on the vault, a Christ in Majesty (in a triple mandorla) surrounded by the four evangelists, four archangels, the sun, the moon, and stars, and also a representation of St. Peter and the Virgin. On the north and south walls, seated apostles look upwards towards the vault. Standing bishops and pilgrims complete the scheme at the east end. On the chancel arch, the Three Marias at the Sepulchre are seen on the south side, flanking a chevron pattern which once formed the backdrop for a (wooden?) sculptured rood.

Several aspects of the iconography point to foreign sources (mainly France and the pilgrimage route), and in fact, the iconography is thought to refer directly to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Figures of pilgrims, in niches on the north and south wall of the chancel, have been the subject of much conjecture. One may be the figure of St James the Greater, but the others remain unidentified.

The scheme was rediscovered in 1871 by the local vicar. The paintings were subsequently hastily uncovered and treated with a coat of varnish.

The paintings were restored during the 1950s-70s by the Bakers, at which time the Gothic paintings in the nave were further clarified. These comprise on the north wall, a 13th-century 'Wheel of Life', as described by Tristram, 'consisting of ten spokes, each terminating in a disk, the disks painted alternately in black and in red, the subjects once framed within them now destroyed' (Tristram, 1950, 555). The splays in the window at the eastern end of this wall also contain the figure of St Anthony with St Michael and the Virgin including masonry pattern, dated by Tristram to the 14th century. The west end of the north wall contains a possible representation of St Christopher.

This is only a tentative identification, as the figure is largely obliterated by the western (17C) window. However, the possible remains of a staff are just visible, as well as details of drapery and a landscape with architectural features. There are also small rosettes as well as a foliate pattern executed in white over a red and black ground. There are also remains of a consecration on the lower west-side of the window.

The south wall, again, is a palimpsest with a Martyrdom of St Thomas a Becket, possibly a St George and a St Margaret, and traces of various other decorative schemes.

The west wall, which does not appear to have had any original plasterwork beyond that of thick ribbon pointing, contains two painted 17th-century texts. Traces of this same scheme are also seen on the north and south walls.

The 18th-century monument on the north side of the east wall of the nave was removed during the 1872 restoration from the same position on the east wall of the chancel, obliterating what 12C work existed in this area.

The tower was built c.1276. The early west window had steps cut into its base in the 17C to give access to a (no longer extant) gallery (finished in 1670). This gallery was probably contemporary with the painted texts executed below the gallery on the west wall, and above it on the south. The ceiling was lowered at this time (several timbers are inscribed 1670-71).

The doorway over the chancel arch (on the east wall of the nave) was discovered in 1872. This provides access to a chamber over the chancel vault. This doorway appears to be original, and presumably also provided access to the rood. The use of this room is unclear (as is the original form of access to it), but it has an original window, and may have been used as a dwelling, treasury, or sacristy -- a usage which apparently is strongly linked with the presence of a western gallery (see Fernie, n.d., 148). It should also be noted that the damage suffered by the Norman capitals below, supporting the western side of the chancel arch, seems to be related to the insertion of some sort of structure, but this, unfortunately, is also unexplained.

The Early Norman sculpture in the church has been compared to that of the local Dymock school, as seen in the zigzag work of the chancel arch, the cushion and scallop capitals supporting the chancel arch, the Tree of Life tympanum and chevron-carved arch of the south door, and the former west door (now inside the tower).

The porch is a re-used 14th-century lychgate. Another modification of the 14th-century is the piscina inserted into the southeast corner of the nave.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The original parish church of Kempley formed part of a royal grant from William the Conqueror to Walter de Lacy (of Lassy, Normandy) who had fought at his side at the Battle of Hastings. Walter de Lacy built a castle at Longtown, and died in 1085. His son Roger inherited his estates and extended them. However, he was exiled to Normandy after rebelling against William II in 1095. The estates went to his brother Hugh, a devout churchman and later a favourite of Henry I. Hugh built Llanthony Abbey in 1109, and is thought to have taken down the Saxon church at Kempley to replace it with a Norman one (it is worth noting that he also had very close ties with other sites such as St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester). Hugh de Lacy died in 1121.

The paintings appear to be part of a later renovation which took place early in the 12th century. The window at the east end of the chancel, contemporary with the paintings, was widened from an earlier, narrower window.

In 1976 the church was declared redundant and passed into the guardianship of the Department of the Environment. Conservation work was begun, by Mrs. Eve Baker, in 1955, and this continued into 1980.

Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files;

East wall, July 1990, E900171. north wall, July 1990; E900168, detail; J900281, n.window recess, F900610, south wall E900169, s. window recess, F900611, ceiling E900170. East and underside of Chancel Arch E900167.

EH photo library, computer keyword search;

July 1990, E900168, E900169, E900170, E900171.

Wall painting; F900610, F900611, F900612, M900977.

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- Anon, Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Societies: 31, 1908, [mentions the 12C paintings being varnished]
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- Morley, B. M., 'The nave roof of the church of St. Mary, Kempley, Gloucestershire,' The Antiquaries Journal, XLV, (1985), 101-111. [raises arguments for a dating of the romanesque paintings, the various building phases and the purpose of the exposed roof trusses]
- St. Clair Baddeley, W., 'The history of Kempley Manor and church, Gloucestershire', Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, XXXVI, 1913.
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- Verey, D., Gloucestershire, 2, The Vale and the Forest of Dean (The Buildings of England, 2nd ed., Harmondsworth, 1976.
- Weaver, J. 'A masterpiece of preservation: history of the Kempley wall paintings', Country Life, 19 July 1956, 124.
- The Illustrated London News, August 11, 1956 (pre-conservation photo).

2 General Audit Information

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH	County	Gloucestershire
Region	South West		
Location	Nave, South wall		
Orientation	SOUTH WALL		
Century 14th	Date	Height (cm) 650	Width (cm) 1040
Auditor(s)	JD, TM	Start date	06/10/94

Overall condition score 3

Recommendations

The south wall is an extremely complex palimpsest of several painting schemes. It has never, to date, been examined fully and a full survey of the chronology and condition of the paint layers should be undertaken when possible. An assessment of the condition of the south wall was not possible during the present audit due to the limitations of the scaffolding and a fixed scaffolding to wall height, would be required for the length of the wall (towers are inadequate because of the fixed wooden pews beneath).

This report only includes some general observations on the chronology of the layers, and what aspects of condition were observable from the ground. The west side of the wall was examined from pew height (to c. 9 feet) and from the scaffold erected at the east wall (chancel arch). Some sketches were also made on site in an attempt to clarify the surviving traces of paint.

Despite limited access the overall condition of the various schemes appears fair. Nevertheless it is recommended that a more detailed examination and recommendations for treatment be undertaken in the near future [Timescale 2 days within 2 years].

Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
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Thickness

Comments

The entire south wall is a palimpsest of numerous painting schemes. Further investigation of the chronology and condition of the layers is necessary. It should be noted that the St. George, in the upper east corner, appears to be painted over a double red-line masonry pattern, as are the paintings in the window splays on the north wall, further supporting the idea that they are of the same date. The single red-line masonry pattern post-dates the St. George and most likely was painted when the large 14C window was inserted in this area (pattern extends over quoins of the window). The standing saints in the splays of this window are clearly contemporary with, or later than, the window.

Several motifs, such as rosettes, and small trees, which relate to the St. Christopher painting at the west end of the north wall, are also seen in the area of the window.

The Martyrdom of St. Thomas a Becket has been dated to the 15th century. At the west end are the remains of 17th-century text (of the same date as that on the west wall).

Visible colours include green, blue, red, yellow, black and white.

Identified pigments Colours

---	green
---	blue
---	red
---	yellow
---	black
lime white	white

4 Audit Information: deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Nave, South wall		
Orientation	SOUTH WALL		
Century 14th	Date	Height (cm)650	Width (cm) 1040

DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

ADDED MATERIALS

Accretions

Type dirt

Location general

Comments Not disfiguring in general.

Type dust

Location general

Comments Not disfiguring in general.

Type cobwebs

Location general

Comments Noticeable accumulation between ceiling trusses.

Type unidentified deposit

Location upper wall

Comments Bat faeces? May be cobwebs and dust.

Coatings/Coverings

Type limewash

Location traces, generally

Comments Now mostly removed.

Repairs

Type lime:sand

Location Thomas a Becket scheme

Comments Baker repairs, reddish and pinkish-yellow. Appear sound.

TREATMENT

Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date**

Person Bakers

Comments There are several Baker-type repairs to the St. Thomas a Becket area. It is not clear when these were undertaken, but in a letter to J. Keevil in January 1984, R. Baker notes: 'We also hope to complete the work... and if we have time - though I doubt it - to clear up the Becket painting on the south side'. And in a report of Sept. 1985, he suggests more 'research and clarification' will be required in this area.

Type UNCOVERING **Date**

Person Bakers?

Comments These paintings were probably covered with limewash when the preservative was applied to the south wall and chancel areas. This limewash was subsequently removed by the Bakers. It is not clear when this occurred, but in a letter to J. Keevil in January 1984, R. Baker notes: 'We also hope to complete the work... and if we have time - though I doubt it - to clear up the Becket painting on the south side'. And in a report of Sept. 1985, he suggests more 'research and clarification' will be required in this area.

Proposed Treatment

Type DUSTING **Date** 06/10/94

Person JD, TM

Comments A light dusting would improve the appearance of the paintings.

Type MONITORING CONDITION **Date** 06/10/94

Person JD, TM

Comments A full assessment of the chronology and condition of the paint layers should be undertaken when possible. Fixed scaffolding, to full wall height, would be required for the length of the wall (towers are inadequate because of fixed wooden pews beneath).

1 Wall Painting Record

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location of painting	Nave, West wall		
Orientation	WEST WALL		
Century 17 th	Date	Height (cm) 650	Width (cm) 575
Subjects included			
Text(s)			

Description

THE WALL PAINTINGS

The church of St. Mary's, Kempsey, in Gloucestershire, is best known for its impressive scheme of Romanesque wall painting, one of the most important in England. The building itself comprises an aisleless nave, a square-ended chancel with a low barrel vault, and a western tower. The majority of the 12th-century scheme (generally dated to about 1130/40) is restricted to the chancel and the east wall of the nave (the chancel arch).

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Several aspects of the iconography point to foreign sources (mainly France and the pilgrimage route), and in fact, the iconography is thought to refer directly to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Figures of pilgrims, in niches on the north and south wall of the chancel, have been the subject of much conjecture. One may be the figure of St James the Greater, but the others remain unidentified.

The scheme was rediscovered in 1871 by the local vicar. The paintings were subsequently hastily uncovered and treated with a coat of varnish.

The paintings were restored during the 1950s-70s by the Bakers, at which time the Gothic paintings in the nave were further clarified. These comprise on the north wall, a 13th-century 'Wheel of Life', as described by Tristram, 'consisting of ten spokes, each terminating in a disk, the disks painted alternately in black and in red, the subjects once framed within them now destroyed' (Tristram, 1950, 555). The splays in the window at the eastern end of this wall also contain the figure of St Anthony with St Michael and the Virgin including masonry pattern, dated by Tristram to the 14th century. The west end of the north wall contains a possible representation of St Christopher.

This is only a tentative identification, as the figure is largely obliterated by the western (17C) window. However, the possible remains of a staff are just visible, as well as details of drapery and a landscape with architectural features. There are also small rosettes as well as a foliate pattern executed in white over a red and black ground. There are also remains of a consecration on the lower west-side of the window.

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The 18th-century monument on the north side of the east wall of the nave was removed during the 1872 restoration from the same position on the east wall of the chancel, obliterating what 12C work existed in this area.

The tower was built c.1276. The early west window had steps cut into its base in the 17C to give access to a (no longer extant) gallery (finished in 1670). This gallery was probably contemporary with the painted texts executed below the gallery on the west wall, and above it on the south. The ceiling was lowered at this time (several timbers are inscribed 1670-71).

The doorway over the chancel arch (on the east wall of the nave) was discovered in 1872. This provides access to a chamber over the chancel vault. This doorway appears to be original, and presumably also provided access to the rood. The use of this room is unclear (as is the original form of access to it), but it has an original window, and may have been used as a dwelling, treasury, or sacristy -- a usage which apparently is strongly linked with the presence of a western gallery (see Fernie, n.d., 148). It should also be noted that the damage suffered by the Norman capitals below, supporting the western side of the chancel arch, seems to be related to the insertion of some sort of structure, but this, unfortunately, is also unexplained.

The Early Norman sculpture in the church has been compared to that of the local Dymock school, as seen in the zigzag work of the chancel arch, the cushion and scallop capitals supporting the chancel arch, the Tree of Life tympanum and chevron-carved arch of the south door, and the former west door (now inside the tower).

The porch is a re-used 14th-century lychgate. Another modification of the 14th-century is the piscina inserted into the southeast corner of the nave.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

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The paintings appear to be part of a later renovation which took place early in the 12th century. The window at the east end of the chancel, contemporary with the paintings, was widened from an earlier, narrower window.

In 1976 the church was declared redundant and passed into the guardianship of the Department of the Environment. Conservation work was begun, by Mrs. Eve Baker, in 1955, and this continued into 1980.

Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files;
East wall, July 1990, E900171. north wall, July 1990; E900168, detail; J900281, n.window recess, F900610, south wall E900169, s. window recess, F900611, ceiling E900170. East and underside of Chancel Arch E900167.

EH photo library, computer keyword search;
July 1990, E900168, E900169, E900170, E900171.
Wall painting; F900610, F900611, F900612, M900977.

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- Middleton, J.H., 'The Church of Kempley, Gloucestershire', Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club, 1877-80, 79-83.
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- The Illustrated London News, August 11, 1956 (pre-conservation photo).

2 General Audit Information

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH	County	Gloucestershire
Region	South West		
Location	Nave, West wall		
Orientation	WEST WALL		
Century 17th	Date	Height (cm) 650	Width (cm) 575
Auditor(s)	JD, TM	Start date	06/10/94

Overall condition score **2**

Recommendations

The late 17th-century inscription on the north side of the east wall was treated during a 1990 campaign undertaken by C. Babington (and students from the Courtauld Institute of Art). This campaign included grouting and replacement of mortar repairs to stabilise the painting which still appears to be sound. However, further uncovering could be carried out, but this would be purely cosmetic.

Further investigation of the west wall could be undertaken in order to clarify the chronology of the paintings at Kempsey.

3 Audit Information: Technique

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Nave, West wall		
Orientation	WEST WALL		
Century 17 th	Date	Height (cm)650	Width (cm) 575
Auditor(s)	JD, TM	Start date	06/10/94

Overall Condition Score 2

Stratigraphy

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	2
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Thickness

Comments

Greyish limestone ashlar support. Thick raised ribbon pointing (higher up on wall) appears to be original (photographs of the area above the present roof show the same pointing). The central section of the wall (presumably where the 17C wooden gallery once stood) contains a different, flush pointing. The lower part of the wall is rendered. Details of the pointing were impossible to obtain, however, as access was limited. It was originally an external wall (the tower was added later) but is now internal. The tower was underpinned c.1913.

Layer type	Render Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
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Thickness 0.5 cm

Comments

Render of unknown date, possibly 16th or 17th century, applied to the lower half of the west wall, presumably to allow for painting on either side of the west door. Contains a fine, pinkish-coloured aggregate. On the south side, edges are detached, on the north side there are some hollow pockets.

Layer type	Ground Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
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Thickness

Comments

Rough limewash ground, applied over the render and directly over stone quoins of doorway. Striations of brushstrokes visible. Has characteristic lumps, perhaps un-calcined and/or un-slaked lime, appearing as fine gritty lumps in the ground. Some limewash is flaking on the quoins.

Layer type	Ground Layer 2	Specific condition Score	2
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Thickness

Comments

Smooth limewash ground in preparation for paint layer 1.

Layer type	Ground Layer 3	Specific condition Score	2
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Thickness .01 cm

Comments

Red and black painting over ground layer 2, possibly an earlier text painting.

Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness			
Comments	Red and black painting over ground layer 2, possibly an earlier inscription painting.		
Identified pigments	Colours		
---	red		
---	black		

Layer type	Paint Layer 2	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness	.01 cm		
Comments	More colourful text painting and embellishment, applied over ground layer 3.		
Identified pigments	Colours		
---	blue		
---	yellow		
---	black		

4 Audit Information: deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment

Property name	KEMPLEY, ST MARY'S CHURCH		
Region	South West	County	Gloucestershire
Location	Nave, West wall		
Orientation	WEST WALL		
Century 17th	Date	Height (cm)650	Width (cm) 575

DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

Deterioration phenomena

Type delamination (render layer)

Location general

Comments Consolidated by grouting and repairs in 1990. Some hollow areas remain, but these appear stable.

Type flaking

Location general

Comments General flaking of the various ground and paint layers has caused the loss of much of the design.

Type loss

Location especially lower area, south side

Comments General loss of the render and paint layers. Any exposed stonework has since been limewashed over.

Mechanical damage

Type substantial losses

Location lower south side

Comments Loss of the plaster in this area could be associated with the insertion of a brass plaque (c.1913).

Type insertions

Location upper north side

Comments Wooden plugs inserted to support hanging board, which has since been removed.

ADDED MATERIALS

Accretions

Type dirt
Location general
Comments Not disfiguring.

Type dust
Location general
Comments Not disfiguring.

Type cobwebs
Location general
Comments Not disfiguring.

Coatings/Coverings

Type limewash
Location General
Comments Numerous applications, including from lowest to surface: 1)Dark beige, 2)White, 3)Yellow wash, and 3)Grey wash (surface).

Repairs

Type modern lime plaster
Location Upper areas, north side
Comments Lime/sand patches, above the painting, which have been limewashed over. Date unknown.

Type lime:sand
Location Lower areas, north side
Comments EH repairs c.1990. Some toned with yellow ochre, some awaiting toning.

TREATMENT

Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date

Person Unknown

Comments Lime/sand repairs of unknown date. It appears that several were removed during the 1990 treatment, but some remain.

Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/01/90

Person EH

Comments Work under English Heritage/ Courtauld Institute of Art in 1990 (supervised by C. Babington) was described as follows: 'Once the problem of adhesion of the render had been addressed the old plaster repairs were removed and existing lacunae filled with a new lime mortar consisting of 1 part sieved lime putty to 4 parts sieved sand. Finally to assist the legibility of the painting as a whole these new repairs were marginally toned using ground ochres diluted in water.'

Type FILLS/REPAIRS REMOVAL Date 01/01/90

Person EH

Comments Work under English Heritage/ Courtauld Institute of Art in 1990 (supervised by C. Babington) was described as follows: 'Once the problem of adhesion of the render had been addressed the old plaster repairs were removed and existing lacunae filled with a new lime mortar consisting of 1 part sieved lime putty to 4 parts sieved sand.'

Type GROUTING Date 01/01/90

Person EH

Comments Work with English Heritage/Courtauld Institute of Art in 1990 (supervised by C. Babington) included the following treatment: '...the most serious areas subject to delamination were initially faced with lens tissue and 5% Paraloid B72 in acetone to secure the surface and protect the painting during grouting. The grout consisted of 1 part HTI to 1 part lime with the small addition of 2.5% Plextol B500 to increase the adhesive properties of the mixture. This was injected by syringe into losses within the plaster area after an initial injection of 1 part water to 1 part IMS to reduce surface tension and to increase the flexibility of the plaster. Once sufficient grout had been introduced into the wall the plaster surface was then gently pushed back and held until the grout had set.'

Proposed Treatment

Type MONITORING CONDITION Date 06/10/94

Person JD, TM

Comments Visual monitoring on a routine basis. The painting is located in a vulnerable area and further consolidation should be undertaken if any deterioration is noted.

Type UNCOVERING Date 06/10/94

Person JD, TM

Comments Further uncovering could be carried out, but this would be purely cosmetic.
