

Ancient Monuments Laboratory  
Report 59/97

WALL PAINTING CONDITION AUDIT,  
CLEEVE ABBEY, SOMERSET

C Babington  
A Heritage  
T Manning  
S Stewart  
P Welford

AML reports are interim reports which make available the results of specialist investigations in advance of full publication. They are not subject to external refereeing and their conclusions may sometimes have to be modified in the light of archaeological information that was not available at the time of the investigation. Readers are therefore asked to consult the author before citing the report in any publication and to consult the final excavation report when available.

Opinions expressed in AML reports are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England.

Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report 59/97

WALL PAINTING CONDITION AUDIT,  
CLEEVE ABBEY, SOMERSET

C Babington  
A Heritage  
T Manning  
S Stewart  
P Welford

Summary

This condition audit of wall paintings at Cleeve Abbey 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.

Authors' addresses :-

Ms C Babington  
PAINTINGS CONSERVATION STUDIO  
English Heritage  
Inner Circle Regents Park  
London  
NW1 4PA

Mr A Heritage  
COURTAULD INSTITUTE OF ART  
Somerset House  
Strand  
London  
WC2R 0RN

Ms T Manning  
PAINTINGS CONSERVATION STUDIO  
English Heritage  
Inner Circle Regents Park  
London  
NW1 4PA

Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report 59/97

Ms S Stewart  
PAINTINGS CONSERVATION STUDIO  
English Heritage  
Inner Circle Regents Park  
London  
NW1 4PA

Mr P Welford  
COURTAULD INSTITUTE OF ART  
Somerset House  
Strand  
London  
WC2R 0RN



## Cleeve Abbey

### Somerset

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.

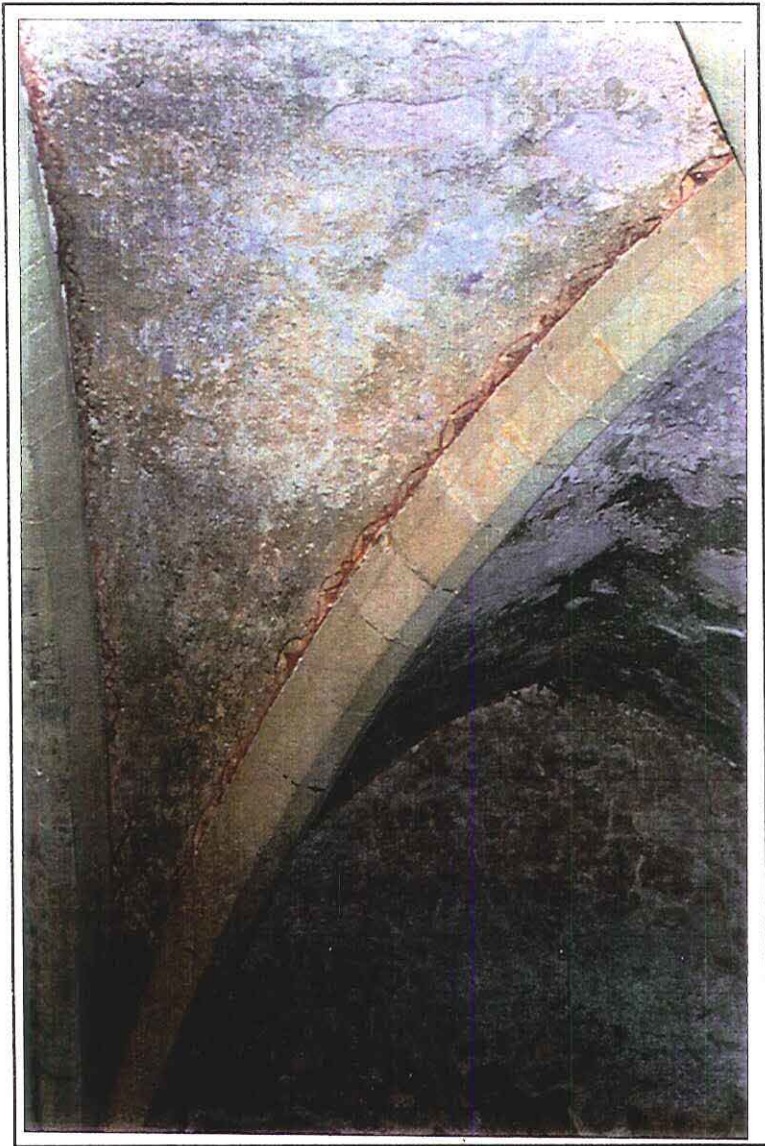
Throughout each section, an area of painting is assigned a number between 1 and 4 which is intended as a general indication of present condition. These are: 1 good, 2 fair, 3 poor, 4 unacceptable.

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.

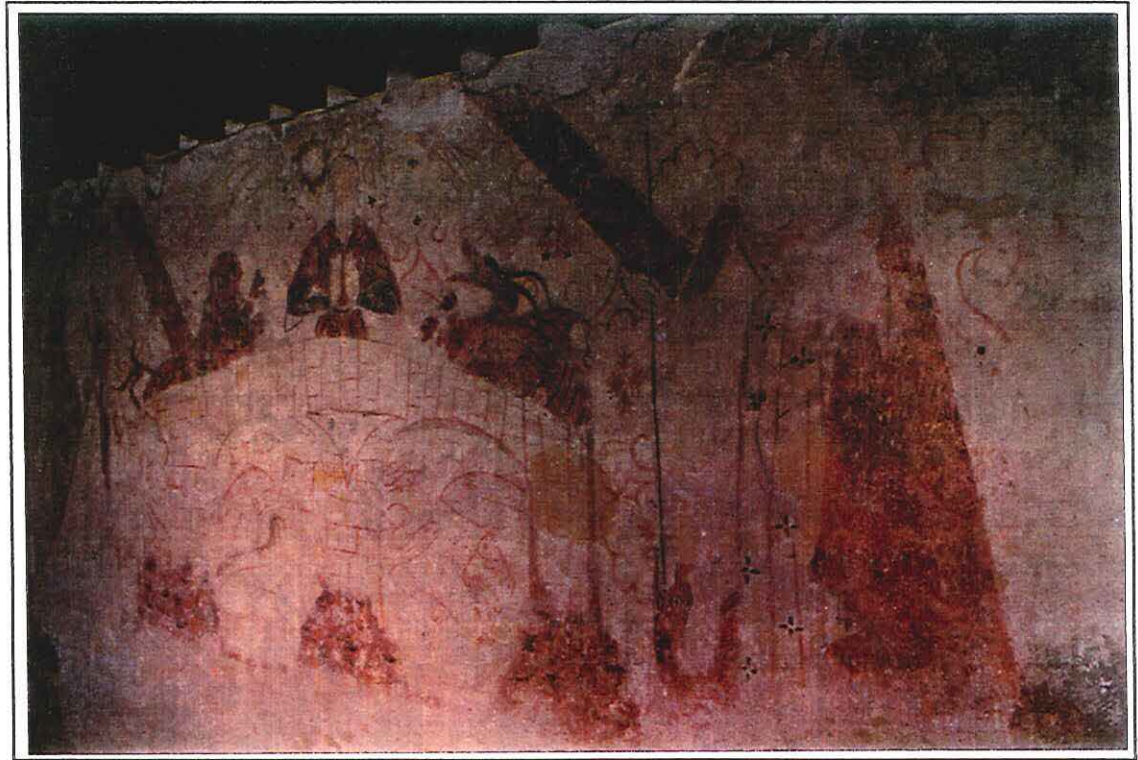
## CONTENTS

---

- 1 SACRISTY
- 2 LIBRARY
- 3 CHAPTER HOUSE
- 4 PARLOUR
- 5 COMMON ROOM
- 6 CLOISTER
- 7 CORRODIANS' LODGINGS
- 8 DORTER
- 9 REFECTORY
- 10 PAINTED CHAMBER
- 11 GALLERY
- 12 UPPER CHAMBER, SOUTH RANGE



Chapter house, detail of decoration on vaults



Painted Chamber, general view



Sacristy, piscina, detail painted decoration



Dorter, north wall, detail of single red-line masonry pattern,  
before conservation in 1993

# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location of painting	Sacristy		
Orientation	VAULT,NORTH,SOUTH,EAST,WEST WALLS AND PISCINA		
Century	13 <sup>th</sup>	Date	
		Height (cm)	Width (cm)

Subjects included

Border pattern

Masonry pattern

Various decorative motifs

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dormer, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

-----

DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dormer (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

DESCRIPTION OF THE SACRISTY (DORTER (EAST) RANGE):

'The two-storeyed dormer (dormitory) range, which is virtually intact, extends southwards from the south transept. The northernmost room on its ground floor, entered from the transept, is the sacristy. It has a barrel vault springing from a continuous impost round the walls. In the west wall (on your right) are twin



lockers with pointed heads, slots for shelves, and rebates for doors. The north wall may also have had a locker just to the left of the doorway.'

'The south wall has a recess near its west end. At the east end of this wall is a piscina in an arched recess with a circular drain and cheeks to support an upper shelf. In the east wall there is a large circular window within an embrasure; its tracery and its inner order with the exception of one stone are missing. The 1875 clearance and excavations reputedly recovered part of a 'foliated' inner order. A low-level circular window is an unusual feature at any date.'

'Parts of the borders of the tiled pavement, with groups of four tiles set diagonally, remain; the centre of the room is paved with a mosaic of tile fragments from the nineteenth-century excavations.'

'The walls and vault of the sacristy were originally plastered as everywhere else and had painted decoration of thirteenth-century date, much of which can still be seen. The walls were painted in imitation of ashlar and decoated with cinquefoils and with a running scroll beneath the impost moulding. The vault also had a masonry pattern, a running scroll between wavy lines, and a wavy line along its crown. The piscina recess had a masonry pattern with cinquefoils and scroll designs. The survival of this painted decoration is of outstanding importance and interest, given the rarity of medieval decorative schemes and especially on account of the strictness of the Cistercian statutes towards all forms of decoration (with which this generally conforms).'

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R. Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.15].

---

## VAULT

Decoration consists of red single line masonry pattern, bisected lengthways (W to E) by a wavy line bordered with a single line on each side. Above northern springing, a double line border. On both sides there is an elaborate foliate band with wavy lines (running N to S from springing of vault, to W of doorway). At the east end, there is a fragmentary border pattern (traces of wavy line?) running from N to S, probably also originally at W end. [Dimensions approximately 679 x 367 cms]

## SOUTH WALL

On the wall, traces of single red-line masonry pattern with a foliate border with yellow bands above and below.

In the piscina, single red-line and double red- and orange-line masonry pattern on yellow background, with foliate sprays and rosettes. Remains of foliate border across centre.

Within the west recess of the south wall is an area of foliate decoration on masonry pattern. [Dimensions approximately 29 x 40 cms]

## NORTH WALL

Single red-line masonry pattern, triple red-line border below springing of vault, and chevron pattern on springing above cornice.

## WEST WALL

Above the aumbries, a large patch of decoration survives, including single red-line masonry pattern with chevron border at springing level, with three red lines as a border on either side (pointing towards S, outlined in red). [Dimensions approximately 347 x 150 cms]

## EAST WALL INCLUDING WINDOW SPLAY

Single red-line masonry pattern, red border line at intersection of vault. Visible traces of possible foliate pattern within masonry pattern on the north side of the wall. Voussoir painted with masonry pattern including foliage. Southern window reveal has traces of red painting at the top, and faint traces of foliate decoration. [Dimensions of main areas as follows: (1) northern part of wall 135 cm x 40 cm, (2) southern

part of wall 110cm x 15cm, (3) window splay including soffit and reveal 215 cm x 65 cm. Dimensions of subsidiary areas: (1) northern part of wall, 3 x 6 cms and 6 x 6 cms, (2) southern part of wall, 2 x 1 cms, 2 x 1 cms, 7 x 3.5 cms]

### Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

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

12-7-51

A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'

A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'

A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'

A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.

A4900/general graffitti/wall painting?

24-6-65

A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.

A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

Sacristy vault: more required of general vault space.

### Bibliography

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855, VI, 91.

Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somwersetshire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90), EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI) English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

Simms, R.S., Somerset: Churches and Religious Houses, Cleeve Abbey, p. 118.

Tristram archive, held at Courtauld Institute of Art.

Warre, E., 'Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological Natural History', 1855, VI, 91-95.

## 2 General Audit Information

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY	County	Somerset
Region	South West		
Location	Sacristy		
Orientation	VAULT,NORTH,SOUTH,EAST,WEST WALLS AND PISCINA		
Century 13th	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
<u>Monitoring undertaken/in progress:</u>	Start Date	1/02/90	End Date 1/08/91
Comments	Data to be analysed as part of a full conservation programme.		
<u>Monitoring undertaken/in progress:</u>	Start Date	1/02/90	End Date 1/08/91
Comments	Data to be analysed as part of a full conservation programme.		
<u>Monitoring undertaken/in progress:</u>	Start Date	1/02/90	End Date 1/08/91
Comments	Data to be analysed as part of a full conservation programme.		
Auditor(s)	CB/SM	Start date	11/06/93

**Overall condition score 3**

### Recommendations

#### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PROPOSED STRATEGY

The continuing problem of high moisture levels in the sacristy, although now better understood, has yet to be resolved.

Core sampling and a moisture survey conducted in 1993 by the Wall Painting Department, Courtauld Institute identified that fluctuations in relative humidity (which can reach between 90-100%), condensation and infiltration from rainwater disposal are the major environmental problems contributing to persistent and highly damaging salt activity. According to the results of the environmental monitoring data commenced in 1990 there is almost constant condensation, except for two months out of the year. Also, the ground level of the sacristy is of course significantly lower than that of the exterior and the adjacent library and flooding has been a frequent problem.

The predominant type of salt present has been identified as potassium nitrate which has a very high equilibrium relative humidity. Frequent condensation events will therefore cause repeated cycles of crystallisation.

Given the complexity of these problems, alterations to the fabric of the building in an attempt to control its internal environment cannot be considered realistic interventions. The most viable option available would therefore be to attempt to reduce the amount of salts present. Desalination poulticing trials appeared effective during the 1993 programme and it is therefore recommended that further desalination trials be conducted using an analytical control.

It should also be noted that during the latest site inspection (26/7/96) it was understood that attempts have been made to lower the water-table in the immediate area surrounding the sacristy by inserting land-drains and that this has been considered successful. Further inspection in future years should ascertain their efficacy.

#### SPECIFIC TREATMENT PRIORITIES

**VAULT:** Delamination of plaster will require treatment. A particularly vulnerable area, in the northeast corner, should be treated in the near future [Timescale: 1 conservator, 1 week within 1 year].

Other areas of the vault require an assessment of active delamination of the plaster, grouting as necessary, and adjustment of unsightly or failing repairs [Timescale for overall treatment: 1 conservator, 4 weeks, within 5 years].

**SOUTH WALL:** The piscina requires removal and re-insertion of repairs, removal of salt crystallization as necessary and possible desalination trials [Timescale: 1 conservator, 2-3 weeks within 1 year].

Other areas of the wall requiring treatment include the area directly over the piscina. This requires removal of salt crystallization, removal and re-insertion of repairs and dusting [Timescale: 1 conservator, 2 weeks within 2 years].

**NORTH WALL:** The condition of this area is generally sound. However, some removal of salt crystallization, surface dusting and possibly removal of unsuitable repairs could be considered [Timescale: 1 conservator, 1 week within 10 years].

#### **WEST WALL**

Surface dusting is required (and could be included with other treatments elsewhere) as well as an assessment of any active delamination of plaster [Timescale: 1 conservator, 2 days within 5 years].

#### **EAST WALL INCLUDING WINDOW SPLAY**

Northeast corner, an area of delaminated and 'blown' plaster is in vulnerable condition. Treatment is now necessary. [Timescale: 1 conservator, 2 weeks within 1 year]. Overall and detail photography is also required.

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	Sacristy		
<b>Orientation</b>	VAULT,NORTH,SOUTH,EAST,WEST WALLS AND PISCINA		
<b>Century</b> 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	CB/SM	<b>Start date</b>	11/06/93

**Overall Condition Score      3**

**Stratigraphy**

<b>Layer type</b>	Support Layer	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	2
-------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

VAULT, SOUTH, NORTH, WEST AND EAST WALLS: Rough coursed sandstone rubble. Original pointing contains shell, slate and coarse aggregate. Some replaced pointing (date?). Pointing also replaced behind the piscina (in Library) under John Ashurst's instruction. NB. Core sampling has been undertaken on this wall (1993).

<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	1
-------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

VAULT, SOUTH, NORTH, WEST AND EAST WALLS: The first render layer is a lime/sand construction skim, flush with protruding rubble; not all visible from the interior. In raking light it appears that the vault was plastered in 5 sections (crossways) - the overlaps need further investigation to establish the progression of plastering.

<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 2	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
-------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**      1-3 cm

**Comments**

VAULT, SOUTH, NORTH, WEST, AND EAST WALLS: Lime/sand render, slate inclusions, coarse aggregate.

<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 3	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	4
-------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**      0.5 cm

**Comments**

VAULT, SOUTH, NORTH, WEST AND EAST WALLS: Smoothly applied lime/sand render, fine aggregate.

<b>Layer type</b>	Ground Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	4
-------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

VAULT, SOUTH, NORTH, WEST AND EAST WALLS: Limewash ground, brushstrokes visible.

**Identified pigments    Colours**

lime white              white

---

<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	4
-------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	---

<b>Thickness</b>	? cm
------------------	------

**Comments**

VAULT: Decoration applied with two types of red pigment (dark and light). Medium possibly lime.  
SOUTH WALL, PISCINA: White, red, yellow pigments. Orange colour unidentified. Medium possibly lime. Dry incised lines, especially central border, but also faint traces for masonry pattern and foliate sprays. Further examination required with video microscope.

**Identified pigments Colours**

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

**Type** losses (paint layer)  
**Location** SOUTH WALL, PISCINA  
**Comments** Foliate spray (centre, to E of S face): macro-flaking due to preferential pattern of salt efflorescence; much of paint layer similarly affected by periodic salt efflorescence.

---

**Type** flaking  
**Location** Red pigment generally  
**Comments** Red (earth?) powdering generally.

---

**Type** pitting (surface)  
**Location** SOUTH WALL: render layer 3  
**Comments** Small losses associated with slate inclusions in plater, render layer 3.

---

**Type** cracking  
**Location** SOUTH WALL, WEST RECESS  
**Comments** Minor cracking throughout render layers.

---

**Type** delamination (render layer)  
**Location** SOUTH WALL, WEST RECESS  
EAST WALL  
**Comments** SOUTH WALL, WEST RECESS: Delamination of render layers.  
EAST WALL: Render layers 2 and 3 on north side are badly detached and cracking with some losses and on south side 60% are detached. On the south soffit, render layer 3 is detached and cracking.

---

**Type** loss  
**Location** Paint layer(s) and render(s) generally  
**Comments** Loss of original paint layer(s) and render(s) 50%.

---

**Type** pigment alteration  
**Location** Red pigments (?)  
**Comments** Possible alteration of red pigments to black.

---

**Type** discolouration  
**Location** THROUGHOUT: Surface  
NORTH WALL: east end  
**Comments** THROUGHOUT: Yellowed appearance of casein coating applied c.1955.  
NORTH WALL: Grey discolouration of surface, especially to east.

---

**Type** staining  
**Location** WEST WALL  
**Comments** Water infiltration stains over central area.

---

### ***Mechanical damage***

**Type** cracking/fracturing  
**Location** SOUTH AND WEST WALLS  
**Comments** SOUTH WALL: Minor cracking (connects with cracks in vault). Render layers 2 & 3 minor cracks throughout; larger cracks across centre of soffit (west to east)

---



possibly due to settlement? Some small related losses in Render Layer 3.  
WEST WALL: Central fragment - vulnerable edges, minor cracks, repairs still working; southern fragment - vulnerable edges, minor cracks, overlapping repair; north fragment - vulnerable edges

---

**Type** substantial losses

**Location** SOUTH WALL: support

**Comments** SOUTH WALL: Large loss at centre, location of earlier shelving/fireplace.

---

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** salt efflorescences  
**Location** VAULT: centre; SOUTH WALL PISCINA; SOUTH WALL generally; EAST WALL  
**Comments** VAULT: efflorescences on central area of vault;  
SOUTH WALL PISCINA: substantial quantity of fluffy crystals over surface, NB. salts effloresce preferentially through original plaster rather than the 1962 repairs at base, suggesting they are too hard and compact.  
SOUTH WALL: extensive fluffy efflorescences throughout, identified as potassium nitrate in 1993.  
EAST WALL: Efflorescence on walls and window splay up to 140 cms height, but evidence of damage throughout; crystal growth in window splay has a 'cotton wool' appearance.

---

**Type** cobwebs  
**Location** THROUGHOUT, especially VAULT  
**Comments** General accumulation of cobwebs

---

**Type** biodeterioration  
**Location** VAULT; SOUTH WALL PISCINA; EAST WALL; WEST WALL  
**Comments** VAULT: surface stained in patches - appears black-green; SOUTH WALL PISCINA: green growth concentrated in pitting of eroded plaster, also on one repair (15 cms from base at centre, S face); black growth concentrated on lower half, especially S face;  
EAST WALL: at apex of window splay/soffit including voussoirs and south side of wall, upper part.  
WEST WALL: southern fragment, on vault, adjacent microbiological growth which could spread

---

**Type** bat excreta  
**Location** SOUTH WALL: upper areas  
**Comments**

---

**Type** insect activity  
**Location** THROUGHOUT  
**Comments** Wood lice inhabit the plaster throughout. General accumulation of dead wood lice, bees, and flies.

---

### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** unidentified  
**Location** THROUGHOUT  
**Comments** Discoloured coating, probably casein from 1955 treatment.

---

### Repairs

**Type** gypsum  
**Location** VAULT: NW corner, fairly extensive  
**Comments** VAULT: Probably relate to conservation campaign c.1955.

---

**Type** lime:sand  
**Location** VAULT: central loss  
**Comments** VAULT: 1991 edging repairs in lime/sand

---

**Type** lime:sand  
**Location** VAULT AND NORTH WALL  
**Comments** VAULT: north-west area, above springing of vault, 1989 edging repairs, lime/sand, coarse aggregate.  
NORTH WALL: 1989 repairs of edges and central losses, lime/sand, coarse aggregate.

---

**Type** cement  
**Location** VAULT, EAST AND SOUTH WALLS, PISCINA  
**Comments** VAULT: air vents at W and E end at apex of vault embedded in cement.  
EAST WALL: edging repair, south side, probably cement  
SOUTH WALL: minor edging repair, right side  
SOUTH WALL PISCINA: outer edge soffit plaster, cement (?), coarse aggregate, date unknown. Minor cracks, small loss, but sound.

---

**Type** lime:sand  
**Location** VAULT AND SOUTH WALL PISCINA  
**Comments** VAULT: probably relate to conservation campaign c.1962.  
SOUTH WALL PISCINA: also probably 1962, around base areas, plus small repairs throughout. Few minor cracks and losses, slight powdering of surface as result of salt activity, otherwise sound. NB. trace of plaster of Paris around edge of small repair on lower W face of piscina - which this mortar presumably replaces?

---

**Type** unidentified  
**Location** WEST, EAST AND SOUTH WALLS  
**Comments** WEST WALL: Edging repairs around entire central fragment and localised within it, at least three types: 1) lime:sand, dark yellow appearance; 2) lime:sand, pink-white appearance; 3) edging repair along vault indicating original moulding around west wall. Two ventilation holes (c. 0.13m x 0.2m).  
EAST WALL: Edging repairs around entire fragment - cement/lime/sand mixture?  
SOUTH WALL: large central loss, modern plaster.

---

## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

Type APPLICATION OF COATING Date 01/01/55  
Person MOW  
Comments Casein applied as a protective coating during conservation treatment c.1955.

---

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/01/55  
Person MOW  
Comments Fills were inserted using Plaster of Paris in glue.

---

### Past Treatment

Type BIODETERIORATION REMOVAL Date 01/01/62  
Person MOW M.Keevil  
Comments Microbiological growth was removed using a water and formaldehyde mixture.

---

Type CONSOLIDATION Date 01/01/62  
Person MOW, M.Keevil  
Comments Painted surfaces were consolidated using a spray of lime water and skimmed milk, applied repeatedly.

---

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/01/62  
Person MOW M.Keevil  
Comments Lime/sand repairs were inserted to replace old gypsum fills.

---

Type FILLS/REPAIRS REMOVAL Date 01/01/62  
Person M.Keevil  
Comments Gypsum fills were removed and replaced.

---

Type PRESENTATION/REINTEGRATION Date 01/01/62  
Person M.Keevil  
Comments Repairs toned with pigment, limewater and skimmed milk medium.

---

### Past Treatment

Type BIODETERIORATION REMOVAL Date 01/04/89  
Person CB, EH/CIA programme  
Comments Microbiological growth was treated using Murasol 20, which is a quaternary ammonium biocide, applied 1:20 in distilled water.

---

**Type** CLEANING **Date** 01/04/89  
**Person** CB, EH/CIA programme  
**Comments** General surface cleaning was carried out throughout the sacristy.

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date** 01/04/89  
**Person** CB, EH/CIA programme  
**Comments** Plaster of Paris repairs were replaced with lime mortar, 3 parts sieved sand (500 microns): 1 part lime.

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS REMOVAL **Date** 01/04/89  
**Person** CB, EH/CIA programme  
**Comments** Plaster of Paris repairs were removed in the piscina.

---

**Type** SALT REMOVAL **Date** 01/04/89  
**Person** CB, EH/CIA programme  
**Comments** Salts were removed, especially from the piscina, using mechanical methods.

---

#### **Past Treatment**

**Type** CLEANING **Date** 01/08/89  
**Person** CB, EH/CIA programme  
**Comments** 'Tests were made to remove the discoloured surface layer from the portion of painted plaster below the stringcourse. An ammonium-based poultice system proved to be the most effective cleaning agent. A saturated solution of NF4 HCO3 was diluted to approximately 75% by adding prepared carboxymethyl cellulose (CMC). This was mixed with paper pulp and applied to the painting over an intervention layer of Japanese tissue for 25 minutes. After removal, the painting was cleaned with water through another layer of tissue so that any residuals present could be absorbed from the surface. Then, the paint surface was directly swabbed with water and the broken down accretion mechanically removed with scalpels and/or fibre glass brush.' [From Babington, C. and Rickerby S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work' (CIA/GCI) June 1989].

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date** 01/08/89  
**Person** CB, SR, EH campaign  
**Comments** Several new (minor) plaster repairs and edges were inserted.

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS REMOVAL **Date** 01/08/89  
**Person** CB, SR, EH campaign  
**Comments** Old repair removed and replaced, at springing of N side.

---

**Type** FLAKE FIXING **Date** 01/08/89  
**Person** CB, EH/CIA programme  
**Comments** Areas of flaking paint layer in the piscina were fixed with 5% Plextol B500.

---

**Type** GROUTING **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** SS/TM  
**Comments** VAULT: north-east corner; also generally after assessment of active delamination.  
WEST WALL: assessment of active delamination is required.  
EAST WALL INCLUDING WINDOW SPLAY: the north-east corner contains an area of delaminated plaster which is in vulnerable condition.

---

**Type** SALT REMOVAL **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** SS/TM  
**Comments** NORTH AND SOUTH WALLS AND PISCINA: generally as required.

---

**Type** TESTING **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** SS/TM  
**Comments** Desalination tests should be initiated to attempt to lower the amount of potassium nitrate content present within the walls.

---

**Past Treatment**

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS REMOVAL **Date** 01/10/96  
**Person** S.Rickerby  
**Comments** PISCINA: 'The recent lime plaster repairs in the piscina appear to be quite hard and compact. Since no salt crystallisation is apparently drawn away from the painted plaster to these repairs - as would be preferred - an area of repair plaster was removed to test whether future salt activity can be redirected. Removal exposed the underlying original coarse plaster, and this should be monitored to check for preferential salt crystallisation' (S.Rickerby, October 1995).  
Site inspection by T.Manning and S.Stewart 26/7/96 confirmed that salts were indeed crystallising preferentially in this area.

---

**Type** SALT REMOVAL **Date** 01/10/96  
**Person** S.Rickerby  
**Comments** PISCINA: 'Remedial treatment followed the methods used on numerous past occasions. The fluffy salt efflorescences were gently brushed from the interior surface of the piscina and surrounding stonework, and removed from the Sacristy. In general, the painting appeared to be little damaged by the efflorescences, but points of damage and loss were notable where sub-florescent salts were detected...In an attempt to reduce the disruptive capacity of the sub-florescent salts a form of poutlicing was tried over affected areas: Japanese tissue paper was applied with deionised water to the surface, left to dry in place, then removed, and the whole procedure repeated.' (S.Rickerby, October 1995).

---

# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location of painting	Library		
Orientation	VAULT, SLIGHTLY EAST OF CENTRAL DIVIDE AND EAST WALL WINDOW S		
Century 13 <sup>th</sup>	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Masonry pattern			
Various decorative motifs			

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dorter, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

---

DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dorter (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

DESCRIPTION OF THE LIBRARY (DORTER (EAST) RANGE) [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, pp.17-20]:

'The second room on the ground floor of the dorter (east) range was the library. The allocation of a whole room to this purpose is a development from the usual Cistercian custom of housing the library in the western half of the sacristy, and explains the absence of the book cupboard usually found in the transept wall of other religious houses.'

---

'The thirteenth-century entrance to the library from the cloister was a large archway, later blocked, and a smaller doorway with moulded jambs preserved in the blocking. Internally, the room is barrel vaulted, and the east wall has a single lancet window, rebated for a frame and once provided with stanchion, saddlebars, and an external shutter; its sill has been reset. The books were probably kept in presses standing against the north, south, and east walls, as at Titchfield Abbey. Some evidence of painted masonry pattern survives in the window area.'

-----

Unlike the adjacent sacristy, most of the original plaster and painted decoration in the library has been lost. However, the surviving areas include:

#### VAULT (EAST SIDE)

Red line masonry pattern. DIMENSIONS: Main area: 50 x 5cm (hwx) (top of vault, centre, N side); Subsidiary areas: fragments maximum 3cm x 1cm (hwx) (vault, centre, S Side, above springing), 10 x 3 cms (hwx) (vault, centre, top), 10 x 3 cms (hwx) (vault, centre, north side, above springing). The orientation 'vault, east side, centre' refers to the east of central plaster join bisecting the vault and relates to original subdivision of room

#### EAST WALL WINDOW SPLAY

Double red-line masonry pattern. Dimensions: north splay: 58x87cms (hwx); soffit: 55x82cms; 40x18cms (hwx) (corner of south splay at lancet height).

#### Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

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

12-7-51

- A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'
- A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'
- A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'
- A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

- A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.
- A4900/general graffiti/wall painting?

24-6-65

- A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.
- A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

Feb.1990, painting by Terry Ball, A900106, J900027.

1991: window splay, colour print and slide, EH Conservation Studio.

#### Bibliography

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855, VI, 91.



Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somersetsire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90), EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI) English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

Simms, R.S., Somerset: Churches and Religious Houses, Cleeve Abbey, p. 118.

Tristram archive, held at Courtauld Institute of Art.

Warre, E., 'Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological Natural History', 1855, VI, 91-95.

## 2 General Audit Information

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Region</b>	South West		
<b>Location</b>	Library		
<b>Orientation</b>	VAULT, SLIGHTLY EAST OF CENTRAL DIVIDE AND EAST WALL WINDOW S		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	CB/SS/PW	<b>Start date</b>	04/07/94

**Overall condition score**      **3**

### Recommendations

#### VAULT, EAST SIDE:

All areas are vulnerable and further treatment is necessary including flake fixing and recording [Timescale: 1 conservator, 3 days within 2 years].

#### WINDOW SPLAY:

This area was treated in 1991. However certain areas appear to be delaminating and further grouting and insertion of repairs should be continued [Timescale: 1 conservator, 1 week within 2 years].

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	Library		
<b>Orientation</b>	VAULT, SLIGHTLY EAST OF CENTRAL DIVIDE AND EAST WALL WINDOW S		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	CB/SS/PW	<b>Start date</b> 04/07/94	

**Overall Condition Score      3**

**Stratigraphy**

<b>Layer type</b>	Support Layer	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	2
<b>Thickness</b>	50 cm		
<b>Comments</b>	Rough coursed sandstone rubble, coarse aggregate, slate, straw inclusions.		
	EAST WALL, WINDOW SPLAY: 1m 50cm (wall thickness), flush pointing (some possibly replaced adjacent to painting, includes shell and hair). Subsidiary areas: coursed ashlar quoins, sandstone, ashlar 15cm depth, fine dressed, vertical and diagonal tooled, fine flush pointing, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions.		
<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>			
<b>Comments</b>	Lime/sand construction skim, coarse aggregate, flush with protruding rubble, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions, some modern replacement similar to original plus shell and straw inclusions.		
<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 2	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>	2 cm		
<b>Comments</b>	Lime/sand render, coarse aggregate.		
<b>Layer type</b>	Ground Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	2
<b>Thickness</b>			
<b>Comments</b>	Thickly applied lime ground, brushstrokes visible.		
<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>		
lime white	white		
<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>			
<b>Comments</b>	red line masonry pattern.		
<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>		
---	red		

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

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location	Library		
Orientation	VAULT, SLIGHTLY EAST OF CENTRAL DIVIDE AND EAST WALL		
Century 13 <sup>th</sup>	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

**Type** loss of cohesion (paint layer)

**Location** east wall window splay

**Comments** Red pigment lacks cohesion.

---

**Type** loss of cohesion (render layer)

**Location** vault, east side

**Comments** Mostly abraded and therefore friable. The western section of the vault has later plaster and is in generally good condition.

---

**Type** loss of cohesion (paint layer)

**Location** vault, east side

**Comments** Limewash vulnerable in areas due to friable plaster.

---

**Type** delamination (paint layer)

**Location** vault, east side

**Comments** In certain areas.

---

**Type** delamination (render layer)

**Location** east wall window splay

**Comments** Certain areas appear to be delaminating and are therefore vulnerable.

---

#### Mechanical damage

**Type** abrasion

**Location** general

**Comments** Render layers mostly abraded and friable (NB. Western half of vault has later plaster, in generally good condition which abutts this). Limewash on eastern half is vulnerable in areas.

---

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** cobwebs

**Location** extensive

**Comments** Evidence of spider activity in past.

---

**Type** biodeterioration

**Location** vault (east side)

**Comments** Green algae present on part of main area and on subsidiary area south side.

---

### Repairs

**Type** lime:sand

**Location** vault (east side)

**Comments** c.1959, edging repairs in lime/sand applied in places within join between eastern (original) vault plaster and western (later) vault plaster.

---

**Type** lime:sand

**Location** east wall window splay

**Comments** c.1959, edging repairs in lime/sand applied around entire fragment, 3cms width fine aggregate. Small localised lime mortar repairs where inserted in 1991.

---

## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/01/50  
Person MOW  
Comments Edging repairs

---

### Past Treatment

Type DUSTING Date 01/01/91  
Person CB/SP (EH Studio)  
Comments East wall, window splay: 'Cobwebs and dust were removed using a soft brush.'  
(From C.Babington and S.Paine, 'report on conservation of the wall paintings in  
the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey, October 1991).

---

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/01/91  
Person CB/SP (EH Studio)  
Comments East wall, window splay.

---

Type FLAKE FIXING Date 01/01/91  
Person CB/SP (EH Studio)  
Comments East wall, window splay. 'Flake fixing was achieved by facing each area with  
eltalene tissue, and introducing water through the surface of the tissue with both a  
spray and a small brush. Tamping with cotton wool attained satisfactory  
readhesion of the flakes to the plaster ground' (From C.Babington and S.Paine,  
'report on conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve  
Abbey, October 1991).

---

Type GROUTING Date 01/01/91  
Person CB/SP (EH Studio)  
Comments East wall, window splay: treatment of localised areas. 'For those areas where the  
base plaster was delaminating from the support, a grouting material (lime:HTI  
1:1) was introduced through available lacunae in the plaster layer. The grout was  
injected using a syringe after pre-wetting with water:IMS 2:1. Following this the  
plaster was gently pressed with a cotton wool pad which effectively readhered the  
plaster to the support. The earlier c.1950 edging mortar repairs to this area of  
plaster were considered adequate and their removal unnecessary.' (From  
C.Babington and S.Paine, 'report on conservation of the wall paintings in the  
Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey, October 1991).

---

### Proposed Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/01/93  
Person CB/SS/PW  
Comments All areas: further edging repairs required.

---

Type FLAKE FIXING Date 01/01/93  
Person CB/SS  
Comments Vault (east side): fixing of flaking limewash required.

---

<b>Type</b>	GROUTING	<b>Date</b>	01/01/93
<b>Person</b>	CB/SS/PW		
<b>Comments</b>	All areas: further grouting required.		

---

# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location of painting</b>	Chapter house		
<b>Orientation</b>	VAULTS, N AND S WALLS (UPPER AREAS), W WALL SPANDRELS		
<b>Century 13th</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Masonry pattern			
Various decorative motifs			

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dorter, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

-----

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dorter (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

### DESCRIPTION OF THE CHAPTER HOUSE (DORTER (EAST) RANGE):

'This large rectangular room projects eastwards from the range. It is entered from the cloister by a large doorway of two continuous chamfered orders with bar stops. On each side of this is an unglazed two-light window with a plate-tracery head containing a quatrefoil, supported in the centre by a slender column with moulded lias cap and base, and against the jambs by fluted corbels. Doorways and windows had a continuous hoodmould towards the cloister, later hacked flush with the wall face.'

---



'The western part of the chapter house had a quadripartite vault in two bays, its ribs springing from moulded corbels with short shafts. The curve of the ribs is markedly segmental to keep the pitch of the vault low and so avoid interference with the general level of the dorter floor above. There are remains of plaster on the upper parts of the walls and in the cells of the vault, and traces of the original thirteenth-century painted decoration of a masonry pattern in red lines on the upper parts of the walls and in the tracery of the windows, with bands of red scrollwork following the lines of the vault ribs.'

'Other details of decoration that have been recorded include a red and yellow dado with zig-zag ornament on the walls; alternate stones of the vault ribs and doorway painted in white and yellow and outlined in red; red cinquefoils on the chamfers of the windows and at the intersection of the vault ribs; and scroll ornament following the outline of the doorway.'

'Only the foundations of the eastern bay of the chapter house remain; they project beyond the range. Just within the eastern bay is a large stone slab with a leaded socket for the stem of the lectern. Here, each day, an article or chapter of the monastic rule was read before the daily routine and responsibilities were arranged. There are slight traces of the footpace or stone platform for the seats.'

'This eastern part had a quadripartite vault in one bay springing from corbels set higher than those in the western part of the room. The construction of this vault is unusual in that it ends to the west with a transverse rib set clear of the eastern wall of the range which is supported by a segmental diaphragm arch of three chamfered orders to the east and one to the west, the latter forming the last transverse rib of the western vault'.

'Early engravings suggest that the chapter house once had a single lancet window in each of its north and south walls; the east wall may have had a group of lancets. There is an area of reset tile pavement along the south side of the room.'

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, pp.16-17].

---

#### VAULTS:

White vault spaces, the borders of which are decorated with looped scrollwork containing wide-spaced chevron pattern, both in red. Probably originally decorated with masonry pattern (?). Much of the paint is lost with only the plaster surviving except at the junction with the ribs where it has been better protected. Dimensions: average maximum 580x320cm.

#### NORTH AND SOUTH WALLS (UPPER AREAS):

Single red-line masonry pattern on white background. Dimensions: all four upper wall areas show an average maximum survival of 320x190cms.

#### WEST WALL SPANDRELS (NORTH AND SOUTH):

Single red line masonry pattern and foliate decoration around arch. Dimensions: North c.50 x 150cm, South: c.70 x 180cm.

#### Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

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

12-7-51

- A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'
- A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'
- A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'
- A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.  
A4900/general graffiti/wall painting?

24-6-65

A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.  
A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

### **Bibliography**

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855, VI, 91.

Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somwersetshire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90), EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI) English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

Simms, R.S., Somerset: Churches and Religious Houses, Cleeve Abbey, p. 118.

Tristram archive, held at Courtauld Institute of Art.

Warre, E., 'Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological Natural History', 1855, VI, 91-95.

# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location of painting</b>	Chapter house		
<b>Orientation</b>	RIBS, CAPITALS AND WINDOWS		
<b>Century</b> 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Masonry pattern			
Rosette(s)			
Various decorative motifs			

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dormer, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

-----  
DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dormer (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

### DESCRIPTION OF THE CHAPTER HOUSE:

'This large rectangular room projects eastwards from the range. It is entered from the cloister by a large doorway of two continuous chamfered orders with bar stops. On each side of this is an unglazed two-light window with a plate-tracery head containing a quatrefoil, supported in the centre by a slender column with moulded lias cap and base, and against the jambs by fluted corbels. Doorways and windows had a

continuous hoodmould towards the cloister, later hacked flush with the wall face.'

'The western part of the chapter house had a quadripartite vault in two bays, its ribs springing from moulded corbels with short shafts. The curve of the ribs is markedly segmental to keep the pitch of the vault low and so avoid interference with the general level of the dorter floor above. There are remains of plaster on the upper parts of the walls and in the cells of the vault, and traces of the original thirteenth-century painted decoration of a masonry pattern in red lines on the upper parts of the walls and in the tracery of the windows, with bands of red scrollwork following the lines of the vault ribs.'

'Other details of decoration that have been recorded include a red and yellow dado with zig-zag ornament on the walls; alternate stones of the vault ribs and doorway painted in white and yellow and outlined in red; red cinquefoils on the chamfers of the windows and at the intersection of the vault ribs; and scroll ornament following the outline of the doorway.'

'Only the foundations of the eastern bay of the chapter house remain; they project beyond the range. Just within the eastern bay is a large stone slab with a leaded socket for the stem of the lectern. Here, each day, an article or chapter of the monastic rule was read before the daily routine and responsibilities were arranged. There are slight traces of the footpace or stone platform for the seats.'

'This eastern part had a quadripartite vault in one bay springing from corbels set higher than those in the western part of the room. The construction of this vault is unusual in that it ends to the west with a transverse rib set clear of the eastern wall of the range which is supported by a segmental diaphragm arch of three chamfered orders to the east and one to the west, the latter forming the last transverse rib of the western vault'.

'Early engravings suggest that the chapter house once had a single lancet window in each of its north and south walls; the east wall may have had a group of lancets. There is an area of reset tile pavement along the south side of the room.'

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R. Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.15].

---

## RIBS AND CAPITALS

Red double line masonry pattern over yellow survives on most ribs, red decoration on capitals with five-lobed rosettes articulating each boss. Evidence of painting exists on all of the vaulting ribs in very small areas. Although these are too numerous to be recorded individually, they can best be seen on the E face of the N-W rib above springing point, on the W face of the N-E rib above springing level, and similarly on the E face of the central bay-dividing rib. 'Ghosts' of five-lobed rosettes appear on the intersection of the vaulting rib in the E bay. There is evidence on the abaci of the N-E, S-E, S-W and S centre capitals of plain red decoration.

## WEST WALL (EXCLUDING SPANDREL AREAS)

Fragmentary remains in splays and soffits of windows, tracery, and flanking dressed stonework of double red-line masonry pattern on yellow ground. These can best be seen on (1) the south window, on the E face of the tracery and at the junction of the tracery with the S and N splays; (2) the north window on the N and S splays; (3) the central arch, on the E face particularly on the soffits at the apex and N side; (4) the E wall faces on the S and N sides, adjacent to capitals including S window chamfer.

## SOUTH WALL, DADO ZONE

Two fragments of broad yellow dado band with red chevron pattern, outlined in red.

East bay, east of easternmost capital, roughly 20x60cm.  
West bay, east of westernmost capital, roughly 20x15cm.

## Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464,

E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

Photograph search, DOE files, EH photo library (JD24/03/95)  
12-7-51

A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'  
A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'  
A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'  
A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.  
A4900/general graffiti/wall painting?

24-6-65

A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.  
A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

### **Bibliography**

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855, VI, 91.

Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somwersetshire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90), EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI) English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

Simms, R.S., Somerset: Churches and Religious Houses, Cleeve Abbey, p. 118.

## 2 General Audit Information

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY	County	Somerset
Region	South West		
Location	Chapter house		
Orientation	VAULTS, N AND S WALLS (UPPER AREAS), W WALL SPANDRELS		
Century 13th	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
Auditor(s)	PW, TM	Start date	15/06/93

**Overall condition score**        **3**

### Recommendations

The walls are especially vulnerable given their exposed location in what is essentially a wind tunnel. They are suffering from quite severe biodeterioration, the plaster is clearly detached in many areas, some edging repairs are failing, and flaking is apparent. A full programme of conservation is required. [Total Timescale: 2 conservators, 14 weeks within 2 years].

**NORTH AND SOUTH WALLS, UPPER AREAS:** Remedial treatment in this area is considered necessary. Treatment required: flake fixing, grouting, removal and replacement of edging repairs [Timescale: 2 conservators, 6 weeks].

**WEST WALL SPANDRELS, NORTH AND SOUTH:** Treatment required: flake fixing, possibly grouting, removal and replacement of edging repairs [Timescale: 2 conservators, 1 week].

**VAULTS:** Remedial treatment appears necessary but should follow a more thorough investigation [Timescale: 2 conservators, 1 week]. Treatment will probably include: flake fixing, grouting, removal and replacement of repairs [Approximate Timescale: 2 conservators, 6 weeks].

A full photogrammetric survey is required.

## 2 General Audit Information

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY	County	Somerset
Region	South West		
Location	Chapter house		
Orientation	RIBS, CAPITALS AND WINDOWS		
Century 13th	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
Auditor(s)	PW, TM	Start date	15/06/93

**Overall condition score**        **2**

### Recommendations

These fragments are especially vulnerable given their exposed location in what is essentially a wind tunnel. Despite their small scale they are nevertheless important in establishing a full picture of the original decoration of the room. A full photogrammetric survey is recommended.

It is suggested that stabilisation, including flake fixing, of the more important fragments in this area be carried out in the reasonably near future. Some limited uncovering could also be carried out. [Timescale: 2 conservators, 1 week, within 2 years].

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	Chapter house		
<b>Orientation</b>	VAULTS, N AND S WALLS (UPPER AREAS), W WALL SPANDRELS		
<b>Century 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	PW, TM	<b>Start date</b>	15/06/93

**Overall Condition Score 3**

**Stratigraphy**

<b>Layer type</b>	Support Layer	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	2
-------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

Rough coursed sandstone rubble, flush pointing, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions.

<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
-------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

Lime/sand construction skim flush with protruding rubble, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions.

<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 2	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	2
-------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness** 1.5 cm

**Comments**

Lime/sand render, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions.

<b>Layer type</b>	Ground Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
-------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

Limewash ground.

<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>
lime white	white

---

<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
-------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

**VAULTS:**

The borders of the vault are decorated with looped scrollwork containing wide-spaced chevron pattern, both in red.

**NORTH AND SOUTH WALLS, UPPER AREAS:**

Single red line masonry pattern on white background.

**WEST WALL SPANDRELS, NORTH AND SOUTH:**

Single red line masonry pattern and foliate decoration around arch.

**Identified pigments Colours**

--- red



### 3 Audit Information: Technique

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	Chapter house		
<b>Orientation</b>	RIBS, CAPITALS AND WINDOWS		
<b>Century</b> 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	PW, TM	<b>Start date</b>	15/06/93

**Overall Condition Score**      **2**

#### Stratigraphy

<b>Layer type</b>	Support Layer	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	2
-------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

Ashlar sandstone, fine dressed, some with vertical tooling, fine flush pointing.

<b>Layer type</b>	Ground Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	2
-------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

White limewash ground.

<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>
----------------------------	----------------

lime white	white
------------	-------

<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	2
-------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

RIBS AND CAPITALS

One paint layer, red double-line masonry pattern, red decoration on captials, five-lobed rosettes articulating boss area.

WEST WALL (EXCLUDING SPANDREL AREAS)

Double red-line masonry pattern on yellow ground.

SOUTH WALL, DADO ZONE

Broad yellow dado band with red chevron pattern, outlined in red.

<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>
----------------------------	----------------

---	red
---	yellow

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

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location	Chapter house		
Orientation	VAULTS, N AND S WALLS (UPPER AREAS), W WALL SPANDREL		
Century 13th	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

Type losses (render layer)

Location VAULTS: western segment of the eastern bay

Comments There is evidence in the western segment of the eastern bay of a late medieval grill having been inserted. This has resulted in a series of losses to the plaster.

---

Type flaking

Location extensive

Comments VAULTS: widespread flaking of the paint layer.

WEST WALL SPANDRELS, NORTH AND SOUTH: Flaking of the paint layer is apparent in several areas, obscured by coating and evidence of earlier grouting above.

---

Type delamination (render layer)

Location principally the north wall, west bay and north and south sides of the vault, but also some areas on the the south wall, east and west bays

Comments WEST WALL SPANDRELS, NORTH AND SOUTH: north spandrel: delamination on lower part, also on northern side. South spandrel: whole fragment along top edge is severely delaminating.

NORTH WALL, WEST BAY: there are several areas of total delamination of the render from the underlying support with bulging and fracturing in places.

---

#### Mechanical damage

Type abrasion

Location north wall, east bay

Comments Loss consists mainly of abrasion to the paint layer.

---

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** insect activity

**Location** Throughout the vaults

**Comments**

---

**Type** cobwebs

**Location** Throughout

**Comments**

---

**Type** surface 'veil'

**Location** Throughout

**Comments** An unidentified grey veil is present, possibly a form of biodeterioration.

---

### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** limewash

**Location** throughout

**Comments** The remains of at least one limewash layer in areas.

---

**Type** unidentified

**Location** North and south walls, upper areas and west wall spandrels, north and south

**Comments** The remains of what is possibly an organic coating in areas.

---

### Repairs

**Type** lime:sand

**Location** edging repairs.

**Comments** Applied in 1959, particularly in the southwesternmost segment, both segments of the northwestern bay, and both segments of the northeastern bay. Very hard, possibly cement.

---

## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION                      **Date** 01/01/59

**Person** MOW

**Comments** edging repairs, hard lime plaster fills, evidence of grouting.

---

### Proposed Treatment

**Type** CLEANING    **Date** 15/06/93

**Person** PW/TM

**Comments** Desirable as part of a programme of treatment including grouting, flake fixing and the insertion of repairs.

---

**Type** FLAKE FIXING    **Date** 15/06/93

**Person** PW/TM

**Comments** Desirable as part of a programme of treatment including dusting, grouting and the insertion of repairs.

---

**Type** GROUTING    **Date** 15/06/93

**Person** PW/TM

**Comments** Desirable as part of a programme of treatment including dusting, flake fixing and the insertion of repairs.

---

**Type** RECORDING AND DOCUMENTATION                                      **Date** 15/06/93

**Person** PW/TM

**Comments** A full condition survey of the vaults is required. An overall photogrammetric survey is also needed.

---

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

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	Chapter house		
<b>Orientation</b>	RIBS, CAPITALS AND WINDOWS		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

**Type** flaking  
**Location** west wall (excluding spandrel areas)  
**Comments** There appears to be extensive flaking of the paint layer.

---

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** biodeterioration

**Location** throughout

**Comments** Microbiological growth, possibly lichen, present throughout.

---

### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** limewash

**Location** throughout

**Comments** There are remains of at least one layer of covering limewash.

---

**Type** unidentified

**Location** south wall, dado zone

**Comments** There are remains of a possible organic coating.

---

## TREATMENT

### Proposed Treatment

**Type** FLAKE FIXING **Date** 15/06/93

**Person** PW/TM

**Comments** All areas of decoration require fixing of the flaking limewash. [Timescale: minimum 1 week].

---

**Type** RECORDING AND DOCUMENTATION **Date** 15/06/93

**Person** PW/TM

**Comments** All areas of decoration require a photogrammetric survey.

---

**Type** UNCOVERING **Date** 15/06/93

**Person** PW/TM

**Comments** Further uncovering of limewash could be undertaken in the south wall, dado zone.

---

# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location of painting</b>	Parlour		
<b>Orientation</b>	E WALL, S&N WINDOW QUOINS; NORTH WALL		
<b>Century</b> 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 0	<b>Width (cm)</b> 0
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Foliate decoration			
Masonry pattern			
Various decorative motifs			

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dorter, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

-----

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dorter (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PARLOUR (DORTER (EAST) RANGE:

'This is entered by a fifteenth-century doorway alongside the inserted block that carries the day stairs. This block projects into the northwest corner of the parlour and has a small locker in its south and west faces. The south wall of the parlour itself has a rectangular locker with a lias lintel, and the east wall has twin lancet windows. The room has a pointed barrel vault of plastered rubble.'

---



'The parlour windows are set a little north of centre in the east wall, and it is probable that in the thirteenth century the doorway in the west wall was directly opposite them, with a space between it and the slype doorway. This space appears to have been occupied by a wall recess, part of the southern jamb of which can be seen alongside the inserted fifteenth-century doorway.'

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R. Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.20].

**EAST WALL, SOUTH AND NORTH WINDOW SPLAY QUOINS:** One area of single red line masonry pattern (3x3cm), also traces of yellow pigment elsewhere and evidence of possible foliate decoration.

**NORTH WALL, EAST END, BELOW SPRINGING:** Traces of yellow and red pigment survive in one small area. The entire vault retains its original plaster, of which this is the only painted area visible. The rest has been painted with a limewash or distemper layer.

### Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

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

12-7-51

- A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristry, showing wall paintings, from the north.'
- A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'
- A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'
- A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.  
A4900/general graffiti/wall painting?

24-6-65

A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.  
A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

Parlour, north wall, east end, below springing: photographic survey required.

### Bibliography

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855, VI, 91.

Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somersetsire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90), EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI) English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

Simms, R.S., Somerset: Churches and Religious Houses, Cleeve Abbey, p. 118.

Tristram archive, held at Courtauld Institute of Art.

Warre, E., 'Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological Natural History', 1855, VI, 91-95.

## 2 General Audit Information

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Region</b>	South West		
<b>Location</b>	Parlour		
<b>Orientation</b>	E WALL, S&N WINDOW QUOINS; NORTH WALL		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 0	<b>Width (cm)</b> 0
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	PW, TM	<b>Start date</b>	11/06/93

**Overall condition score**      **2**

### Recommendations

The condition of the painted decoration is stable. The parlour needs context photography with details of the painted area. There is evidence of MBG/algae chiefly on the ground. Salt activity is evident on the south wall and the entire vestibule.

NORTH WALL, EAST END, BELOW SPRINGING: Potentially much more of the 13th-century painted scheme could be uncovered here; though this is not desirable at present.

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

---

Property name CLEEVE ABBEY  
Region South West County Somerset  
Location Parlour  
Orientation E WALL, S&N WINDOW QUOINS; NORTH WALL  
Century 13th Date Height (cm)0 Width (cm) 0  
Auditor(s) PW, TM Start date 11/06/93

**Overall Condition Score 2**

#### Stratigraphy

---

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	1
Thickness	50 cm		

#### Comments

NORTH WALL, EAST END, BELOW SPRINGING:

Rough coursed sanstone rubble. The exposed wall area beneath the 13th-century plaster has been entirely re-pointed in 1987 but is very similar to original.

EAST WALL, SOUTH AND NORTH WINDOW SPLAY QUOINS:

Coursed ashlar quoins, sandstone, average 30cms thick, fine dressed, vertically tooled, fine flush pointing, coarse aggregate.

---

Layer type	Render Layer 1	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness	cm		

#### Comments

NORTH WALL, EAST END, BELOW SPRINGING:

Lime/sand construction skim, flush with protruding rubble.

---

Layer type	Render Layer 2	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness	cm		

#### Comments

NORTH WALL, EAST END, BELOW SPRINGING:

Lime/sand render, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions.

---

<b>Layer type</b>	Ground Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	2
-------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

NORTH WALL, EAST END, BELOW SPRINGING:

Yellowish-toned lime ground, thickly applied (brushstrokes evident).

EAST WALL, S & N WINDOW SPLAY QUOINS:

Yellowish-toned lime ground.

**Identified pigments**   **Colours**

---                      yellow  
lime white              white

---

<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
-------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**              1 cm

**Comments**

EAST WALL: Lime/sand, whitish render flush with quoins around door. No render on quoins. NB. condition score is 2 above 90cm from ground and 3 below 90cm. Coarse large black aggregate, possibly slate. Probably two plaster joins (1 is 2m 18cm from ground, 2nd should be 88/90cm from ground).

SOUTH WINDOW: East splay thickness: <0.5 cms (only on ashlar - on stone/rubble support render has been lost), Soffit thickness: 3 cms. Window arch has no render but a limewash ground.

WEST WALL: >0.5 cm - <2 cm thick. The render contains coarse large black aggregate (possibly slate). There is a smooth but undulating finish to the plaster. The ashlar of the fireplace appears to have been plastered down to floor level, with limewash remaining in the moulded chamfer of the fireplace (S side).

**Identified pigments**   **Colours**

---                      red

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

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location	Parlour		
Orientation	E WALL, S&N WINDOW QUOINS; NORTH WALL		
Century 13 <sup>th</sup>	Date	Height (cm)0	Width (cm) 0

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** limewash  
**Location** EAST WALL, S & N WINDOW SPLAY QUOINS  
**Comments** At least one later limewash layer.

---

### Repairs

**Type** lime:sand  
**Location** NORTH WALL, EAST END, BELOW SPRINGING  
**Comments** Lime/sand edging repairs throughout, 3 cms width, medium to fine aggregate.

---

## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/01/90  
Person EH  
Comments Lime/sand edging repairs throughout, probably 1990 EH campaign.

---

### Proposed Treatment

Type RECORDING AND DOCUMENTATION Date 11/06/93  
Person PW, TM  
Comments A photographic record of the painted areas is required.

---



# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location of painting</b>	Common room		
<b>Orientation</b>	NORTH-EAST CORNER QUOINING		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 40	<b>Width (cm)</b> 30
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Masonry pattern			

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dorter, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

-----  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY** [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dorter (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

### DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMON ROOM (DORTER (EAST) RANGE):

'The room is three bays long, and has had a simplified modern groin vault, executed in ferro-concrete as a 'folded slab', inserted. It springs from two piers and from wall corbels. The moulded circular bases of both piers remain, and the ashlar outline of the vaulting can be seen against the rubble of the walls. Most of the corbels have been hacked off flush with the wall faces, but their outlines can be recognised; there are mutilated remains of one in the northwest angle of the room, and of the three against the south wall.'

'The northernmost bay has a window in the east wall, cut down to floor level to act as a doorway after the

Dissolution. Enough remains of its mutilated dressings to show that it was of two lancet windows, perhaps with a pierced head as in the chapter house. No window could be pierced in the west wall of this bay, against which the refectory (frater) range abuts, but a blind recess was made there to balance the embrasure of the window opposite.'

'The central bay has the remains of the communal fireplace on the east, much damaged when a large opening was forced through the wall after the Dissolution and later blocked. The chamfered northern jamb of the fireplace stands six courses high, and on the four courses of ashlar above it can be seen a rough area where the fireplace hood was hacked back flush with the wall face. The lower part of the plastered flue also remains on this side, and a considerable amount of the fireback of tiles set in herringbone pattern. Only the bottom stone of the south jamb remains. In the west wall, opposite the fireplace, there was originally a window similar to that in the east wall of the north bay, but because of the forcing of another large opening here, later blocked, only its northern internal splay and some traces of its jambs and head on the outside face of the wall can be recognised.'

'The southernmost bay had two doorways set close together in its east wall. The northern and smaller of the two was robbed of its dressings and blocked in post-monastic times; it led out of the range into a pentise that covered the east wall from the reredorter to a point just short of the window in the north bay of the warming room, and the creasing and three hooked corbels for the support of the roof of this pentise can be seen on the external face of the wall. The second doorway led into the basement of the reredorter which has been excavated and laid out. The toothings for the walls and the tuskings of the north and west walls of the reredorter can be seen projecting from the east and south walls of the range. In the west wall opposite this doorway is a similar one, now robbed of its dressings and blocked; it led into a yard west of the warming room and south of the refectory range. The toothings for the wall of this yard can be seen projected westwards from the southwest angle of the warming room up to about 15ft(5m).'

'The west wall of the warming also had a window of which the internal splays and head, and parts of the external jambs, remain. Its sill was cut down to form an opening in post-Dissolution times, and later blocked.'

'The south wall of the warming room has more ashlar facework than the other walls, and the evidence of the vaulting is better preserved here, including a springer on the central corbel. Each bay of the wall has a window with double plate-tracery. The external tracery of these windows had two simply chamfered lancet lights and small pierced quatrefoil above. The internal tracery has a large quatrefoil above two trefoil-headed lights that together are slightly wider than the splay of the window embrasure, and a quoin is omitted on each side so that the springers of the tracery are inset in the wall, resting on a molded lias impost that projects beyond the angle of the quoin. The lights are divided by a slender central shaft of lias with moulded cap and base'.

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, pp.20-21].

-----  
Main area: north-east corner, quoining. Associated areas: small fragments (1x1cm) are visible below the springing of the vaults in the following areas:

- 1) north wall, centre
- 2) west wall, centre of north window splay
- 3) west wall, springing between first and second bays (N to S)
- 4) west wall, springing between second and third bays
- 5) south wall, east window, western splay, centre of quoining
- 6) south wall, west window, traces in western splay.

These fragments average 1x1cms.

#### **Photographic Record**

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

Photograph search, DOE files, EH photo library (JD24/03/95)  
12-7-51

A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'  
A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'  
A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'  
A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.  
A4900/general graffiti/wall painting?

24-6-65

A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.  
A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

Common room: overall photography required.

#### **Bibliography**

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855, VI, 91.

Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somwersetshire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90), EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI) English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

Simms, R.S., Somerset: Churches and Religious Houses, Cleeve Abbey, p. 118.

Tristram archive, held at Courtauld Institute of Art.

Warre, E., 'Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological Natural History', 1855, VI, 91-95.

## 2 General Audit Information

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY	County	Somerset
Region	South West		
Location	Common room		
Orientation	NORTH-EAST CORNER QUOINING		
Century 13th	Date	Height (cm)40	Width (cm) 30
Auditor(s)	PW, TM	Start date	11/06/93

**Overall condition score**      **2**

### Recommendations

Localized flooding occurs chiefly at the centre of the east wall, and collects within the fireplace. Large amounts of microbiological growth and plant activity are present at the base of the walls but do not directly encroach upon painted areas.

The fragmentary remains of painting will require dusting, salt removal and some limited consolidation of the paint layer [Timescale: 2 conservators, 1 day, within 5 years]. A photographic survey is recommended.

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location	Common room		
Orientation	NORTH-EAST CORNER QUOINING		
Century 13 <sup>th</sup>	Date	Height (cm)40	Width (cm) 30
Auditor(s)	PW, TM	Start date	11/06/93

**Overall Condition Score 2**

#### Stratigraphy

---

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness	30 cm		

#### Comments

Coursed ashlar quoins, fine dressed, fine flush pointing, coarse aggregate.

---

Layer type	Ground Layer 1	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness			

#### Comments

Yellow-toned lime ground.

Identified pigments Colours  
--- yellow

---

Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness			

#### Comments

Single red-line masonry pattern.

Identified pigments Colours  
--- red

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

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	Common room		
<b>Orientation</b>	NORTH-EAST CORNER QUOINING		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 40	<b>Width (cm)</b> 30

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** salt efflorescences

**Location** General

**Comments** Fluffy salt efflorescences visible in areas.

---

**Type** dust

**Location** Throughout

**Comments** General accumulation of dust.

---

**Type** cobwebs

**Location** Throughout

**Comments** General accumulation of cobwebs.

---

**Type** algae

**Location** Base of walls

**Comments** Green (possibly algal) growth at base of walls.

---

## TREATMENT

### Proposed Treatment

**Type** CONSOLIDATION **Date** 11/06/93

**Person** PW, TM

**Comments** Consolidation of friable paint layer will be required, 1 day, within 5 years.

---

**Type** DUSTING **Date** 11/06/93

**Person** PW, TM

**Comments** General dusting would improve the appearance of painted areas.

---

**Type** RECORDING AND DOCUMENTATION **Date** 11/06/93

**Person** PW, TM

**Comments** Full photographic recording of this area is required.

---

**Type** SALT REMOVAL **Date** 11/06/93

**Person** PW, TM

**Comments** Salt removal is required.

---



# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location of painting	Cloister		
Orientation	SOUTH SIDE		
Century 13 <sup>th</sup>	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Masonry pattern			
Various decorative motifs			

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dormer, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

-----  
DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dormer (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

### DESCRIPTION OF 13TH-CENTURY SOUTH RANGE:

'When first built during the second half of the thirteenth century this range conformed to the normal Cistercian plan established a century before. At its eastern end the day stairs ascended to the dormer; next to them was the warming house; next to this the refectory on a north-south axis in the centre of the range and extending beyond it to the south; and at the west end was the kitchen. In the third quarter of the fifteenth century the range was drastically remodelled to a new plan'.

'The only thirteenth-century features now surviving are the northern doorway to the day stairs still serving the passage that replaced them, a small doorway within this passage serving the former warming house or a recess in its eastern wall, the lavatory near the refectory doorway, the refectory doorway itself, the tiled pavement of the part of the refectory that projected south of the range, and the lower part of the west wall of the refectory with a doorway to the former kitchen.'

#### THIRTEENTH-CENTURY REFECTORY:

'This early refectory stood in the centre of the ground floor of the south range of claustral buildings and had its long axis north-south, projecting well beyond the main walls of the range in the usual Cistercian manner. Thorough as the reconstruction of the range in the fifteenth century was, it incorporated parts of the older refectory which can still be recognised.'

'The old doorway from the cloister to the refectory was retained and made to serve as the entrance to the stairs of the new refectory. It has a pointed arch of two orders, the inner one being a continuous chamfer ending on stops, one of which is carved with shallow foliage. The outer order is richly moulded and was carried on detached shafts, the lia caps and bases of which remain. Within the doorway there are remains of white plaster with red masonry lines, and the inner order appears to have been picked out in red. Immediately east of this doorway is the thirteenth-century lavatory, a broad wall recess which retains faint traces of its painted decoration and which has a segmental head of two chamfered orders, the outer one returned as a sill, now destroyed, to support the water trough. Behind the centre of the lavatory, within the present range, the lowest course of the east wall of the thirteenth-century frater can be seen against the north wall of the western study, whilst the west wall of the western bedchamber contains the thirteenth-century doorway, now blocked, that was a service entrance to the kitchen. Toothings at the southwest angle show that the first refectory was at least as high as the present one while the kitchen was lower.'

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Ber, second edition 1990, pp.22-23].

---

#### REMAINS OF DECORATION INCLUDE:

##### SOUTH SIDE: FRATER STAIR DOORWAY

Fragments of decorative counterchange in red, yellow and possibly white remain in the interstices of arch roll mouldings with evidence for red line masonry pattern on inner plain chamfered arch.

##### SOUTH SIDE: FRATER STAIRWAY

Double red-line masonry pattern on inner arch face and soffit. Dimensions: Soffit: c.180cms long, 55cms deep; Arch face: maximum height 50cms x 192cms (hwx).

##### SOUTH WALL, LAVABO RECESS

1 Plain yellow articulation on west side of outer arch chamfer, and two fragmentary remains, both higher up on west side, of same chamfer. Dimensions: chamfer width 12cm, and fragmentary remains occupy a length of 70cm.

2 Unidentified red linear decoration to west of central voussoir of inner arch. Dimensions: 6 x 27cm (hwx).

#### Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

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

12-7-51

A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'

A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'

A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'

A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.

A4900/general graffiti/wall painting?

24-6-65

A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.

A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

Photographic survey required for cloister, south side.

### **Bibliography**

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855, VI, 91.

Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somwersetshire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90), EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI) English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

Simms, R.S., Somerset: Churches and Religious Houses, Cleeve Abbey, p. 118.

Tristram archive, held at Courtauld Institute of Art.

Warre, E., 'Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological Natural History', 1855, VI, 91-95.

## 2 General Audit Information

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Region</b>	South West		
<b>Location</b>	Cloister		
<b>Orientation</b>	SOUTH SIDE		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	PW, TM	<b>Start date</b> 14/06/93	

**Overall condition score**      **3**

### Recommendations

#### SOUTH SIDE: FRATER STAIR DOORWAY:

The paint layer of this scheme is vulnerable due to its external location and the limewash ground is flaking. Some flake fixing required [Timescale: 1 conservator, 1 day, within 2 years]. Some removal of the biodeterioration could be undertaken but is not essential.

#### SOUTH SIDE: FRATER STAIRWAY:

There is some slight lifting of the limewash ground and fixing is required [Timescale: 1 person, 3 days, within 2 years].

#### SOUTH WALL, LAVABO RECESS:

Decoration in these areas requires flake fixing [Timescale: 1 conservator, 1 week within 2 years].

A photographic survey is required of all areas of painted decoration.

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	Cloister		
<b>Orientation</b>	SOUTH SIDE		
<b>Century</b> 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	PW, TM	<b>Start date</b> 14/06/93	

**Overall Condition Score      3**

**Stratigraphy**

<b>Layer type</b>	Support Layer	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>	05 cm		

**Comments**

LAVABO RECESS AND FRATER STAIR DOORWAY (INTERSTICES OF ARCH ROLL MOULDINGS): Coursed ashlar quoins, sandstone (>25 cm depth), fine dressed, fine flush pointed, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions.

FRATER STAIRWAY (INNER ARCH FACE AND SOFFIT): Rough coursed sandstone rubble, thickness unknown, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions and coursed ashlar sandstone, fine dressed, fine flush pointing, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions.

<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>			

**Comments**

FRATER STAIRWAY (INNER ARCH FACE AND SOFFIT): Lime/sand construction skim, flush with protruding rubble, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions.

<b>Layer type</b>	Ground Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>			

**Comments**

FRATER STAIRWAY (INNER ARCH FACE AND SOFFIT): lime ground.

LAVABO RECESS: an earlier limewash ground is present on the west side of central voussoir of inner arch.

FRATER STAIR DOORWAY (INTERSTICES OF ARCH ROLL MOULDINGS): limewash ground.

<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>
lime white	white

---

<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	2
-------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

FRATER STAIRWAY (INNER ARCH FACE AND SOFFIT): Double red-line masonry pattern.

FRATER STAIR DOORWAY: Decorative counterchange in red, yellow, and possibly white.

LAVABO RECESS: On the west side of the outer arch chamfer: two fragmentary remains of yellow articulation. On the west side of the central voussoir of the inner arch: unidentified red linear decoration. NB. Condition score is 3 in this area as the limewash ground is flaking extensively.

**Identified pigments**    **Colours**

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

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

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	Cloister		
<b>Orientation</b>	SOUTH SIDE		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

**Type** flaking  
**Location** all areas.  
**Comments** Limewash ground and paint layers are flaking extensively.

---

**Type** spalling  
**Location** all areas.  
**Comments** In many areas the stone is spalling and flaking.

---

**Type** flaking  
**Location** FRATER STAIR DOORWAY  
**Comments** In many areas the limewash ground and paint layers are flaking, although where the pigment is sheltered by the hood moulding it appears to be stable.

---

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** biodeterioration

**Location** lavabo recess and frater stair doorway

**Comments** Some lichen/algae growth observed in both areas.

---

### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** limewash

**Location** lavabo recess

**Comments** at least two disrupted limewash layers

---

**Type** unidentified

**Location** lavabo recess

**Comments** Possibly an organic coating on west side of outer arch chamfer.

---

**Type** limewash

**Location** frater stair doorway

**Comments** One or more limewash layers.

---

### Repairs

**Type** lime:sand

**Location** frater stairway (inner arch and soffit)

**Comments** Edging repairs, probably relate to treatment undertaken c.1988 (EH)

---



## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 01/01/88  
**Person** EH  
**Comments** Frater stairway, inner arch face and soffit.

---

**Type** FLAKE FIXING      **Date** 01/01/88  
**Person** EH  
**Comments** Frater stairway, inner arch face and soffit.

---

### Proposed Treatment

**Type** BIODETERIORATION REMOVAL      **Date** 14/06/93  
**Person** PW, TM  
**Comments** Required for lavabo recess and frater stair doorway, interstices of arch roll mouldings. [Timescale: 1 week].

---

**Type** FLAKE FIXING      **Date** 14/06/93  
**Person** PW, TM  
**Comments** Required for lavabo recess and frater stair doorway, interstices of arch roll mouldings. [Timescale: 1 week].

---

**Type** RECORDING AND DOCUMENTATION      **Date** 14/06/93  
**Person** PW, TM  
**Comments** Photographic survey required.

---

# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location of painting</b>	South range, Corrodians' lodgings, ground floor		
<b>Orientation</b>	UPPER WALL AREA, NORTH WALL		
<b>Century</b> 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 70	<b>Width (cm)</b> 210
<b>Subjects included</b>	masonry pattern, double-line		

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dormer, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

---

DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dormer (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

### DESCRIPTION OF WEST BEDCHAMBER, 15TH-CENTURY REFECTIONARY RANGE:

'The fifteenth-century refectory range is of two storeys in its eastern part and three storeys in its western part...(CHAMBERS (CORRODIAN'S LODGINGS)): The remainder of the ground floor of the range is divided into two sets of two chambers with attendant offices...At the west end of the lobby another doorway leads into the west bedchamber, which is the same size and has the same features as the east one. The north wall retains traces of thirteenth-century painted masonry pattern above the line of the inserted fifteenth-century ceiling (below the gallery floor). A doorway, now blocked, was forced in its north wall after the Dissolution, and another blocked doorway in its west wall belonged to the thirteenth-century kitchen.'

Here and in the lobby the ceiling beams are carried on chamfered stone cornices. The cobbled floors in these various chambers were laid when the range was used for farm purposes after the Dissolution'.

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, pp.25-31].

Remains of red double-line masonry pattern survive on the upper part of the north wall.

### Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

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

12-7-51

A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'

A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'

A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'

A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.

A4900/general graffiti/wall painting?

24-6-65

A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.

A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

Frater block, ground floor: overall photography required.

### Bibliography

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855, VI, 91.

Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somersetsire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90), EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI) English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

Simms, R.S., Somerset: Churches and Religious Houses, Cleeve Abbey, p. 118.

Tristram archive, held at Courtauld Institute of Art.

Warre, E., 'Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological Natural History', 1855, VI, 91-95.

## 2 General Audit Information

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Region</b>	South West		
<b>Location</b>	South range, Corrodians' lodgings, ground floor		
<b>Orientation</b>	UPPER WALL AREA, NORTH WALL		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 70	<b>Width (cm)</b> 210
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	PW, TM	<b>Start date</b>	06/06/93

**Overall condition score**      **2**

### Recommendations

The painted decoration is located on the upper part of the wall, out of reach, and within an enclosed space. Consolidation of the paint layer might be considered, but this area appears to be reasonably stable.

Treatment required: dusting [Timescale: 1 conservator, 1 day within 5 years].

A full photographic record is also required.

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location	South range, Corrodians' lodgings, ground floor		
Orientation	UPPER WALL AREA, NORTH WALL		
Century 13 <sup>th</sup>	Date	Height (cm)70	Width (cm) 210
Auditor(s)	PW, TM	Start date	06/06/93

**Overall Condition Score 2**

#### Stratigraphy

---

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	2
------------	---------------	--------------------------	---

Thickness

Comments

Rough coursed sandstone rubble, wall thickness unknown, pointing with coarse aggregate.

---

Layer type	Render Layer 1	Specific condition Score	2
------------	----------------	--------------------------	---

Thickness

Comments

Lime/sand construction skim, flush with protruding rubble, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions.

---

Layer type	Render Layer 2	Specific condition Score	2
------------	----------------	--------------------------	---

Thickness 1.5 cm

Comments

Lime/sand render, coarse aggregate, slate inclusions.

---

Layer type	Ground Layer 1	Specific condition Score	2
------------	----------------	--------------------------	---

Thickness

Comments

Limewash ground.

Identified pigments	Colours
lime white	white

---

Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	2
------------	---------------	--------------------------	---

Thickness

Comments

Red double-line masonry pattern.

Identified pigments	Colours
---	red

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

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	South range, Corrodians' lodgings, ground floor		
<b>Orientation</b>	UPPER WALL AREA, NORTH WALL		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 70	<b>Width (cm)</b> 210

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

**Type** loss of cohesion (paint layer)

**Location** Red pigment generally

**Comments** The red pigment is friable to some degree; but its protected position renders it reasonably stable.

---

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** insect activity

**Location** throughout

**Comments** Spiders and cobwebs are present.

---

**Type** cobwebs

**Location** throughout

**Comments** Spiders and cobwebs are present.

---

### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** limewash

**Location** Generally

**Comments** Several limewash layers are visible over the painted decoration, one of which is tinted yellow.

---

### Repairs

**Type** unidentified

**Location** throughout

**Comments** Brittle, possibly gypsum repairs.

---

**Type** modern lime plaster

**Location** East side over doorway

**Comments** Lime mortar, possibly with the addition of cement.

---

**Type** lime

**Location** throughout

**Comments** Evidence of grouting with a lime-based material, date unknown.

---



## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION                      **Date**

**Person** EH

**Comments** Hard lime repairs, possibly with a cement additive, probably from a more recent intervention by English Heritage in the 1980s.

---

**Type** GROUTING    **Date**

**Person** EH

**Comments** Evidence of grouting (holes throughout the surface), probably from a more recent intervention by English Heritage in the 1980s.

---

### Proposed Treatment

**Type** CONSOLIDATION                                      **Date** 16/06/93

**Person** PW, TM

**Comments** Consolidation of friable red pigment may be necessary within the next five years.

---

**Type** RECORDING AND DOCUMENTATION              **Date** 16/06/93

**Person** PW, TM

**Comments** Photographic record required.

---

# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location of painting	Dorter		
Orientation	NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS		
Century 13 <sup>th</sup>	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Masonry pattern			
Various decorative motifs			

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dorter, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

---

DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Bear, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dorter (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

DESCRIPTION OF THE DORTER [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Bear, second edition 1990, pp.17-20]:

'The dormitories of very few English monasteries have survived in anything approaching a state of completeness, and the dorter at Cleeve, although its roof is not of monastic date, is one of the finest remaining examples. It occupies the whole of the first floor of the range and is 25 by 137ft (7.6 by 43m). When it was built in the thirteenth century, recruitment to the Cistercian Order showed no signs of falling

---

off, and although the convent at Cleeve probably did not count more than twenty-five choir monks at the time, and in the event never to have exceeded twenty-eight, the dormer is designed to accommodate about thirty-six monks, showing that the abbey was prepared for a substantial increase in numbers.'

'The northern half of the dormer has a lime-mortar floor supported by the vaulting of the rooms beneath. At the west end of its north wall is the doorway to the night stairs that led into the transept, and at the east end of the same wall another doorway, now much altered, led to a room over the vault of the south transept chapels. A room existed in this position at some other Cistercian houses such as Buildwas Abbey and Valle Crucis Abbey, and it probably served as the treasury, which was often at the transept end of the first floor of the dormer range. Traces of original plaster with red masonry pattern survive particularly at the north end.'

'The northern part of the west wall of the dormer, overlooking the cloister, was originally lighted by ten small lancet windows spaced 7ft (2.1m) apart, and the east wall by two groups of three lancets similarly spaced, with a small doorway between them leading into the space above the destroyed vault of the eastern part of the chapter house. In their first form, the lancets had an external chamfer and an internal rebate for a shutter or a frame, and each was set in an embrasure with a segmental pointed ashlar rear arch. The painted masonry pattern of the walls was repeated in these embrasures.'

'The southern half of the dormer originally had two lancets in the west wall and three in the east wall, all at approximately twice the spacing of those in the northern half. The south wall itself had a gable instead of the present hipped roof, and probably had three graduated lancets, rather broader than those in the side walls; despite much post-monastic rebuilding here, the jambs and sill of the easternmost member of this triplet, and some traces of the central member, have survived. The southern half of the dormer has had its mortar floor reinstated; this and the wallheads are at a raised level, the former over the concrete vaults of the warming room.'

'The doorway to the reredormer (latrine block) is at the south end of the east wall. What is interesting about this doorway is that its door must have swung (but not revolved) to open and shut on a central vertical pivot. This can be seen by the central socket in the arch and the position of the rebates; one rebate faces into the dormitory on the north side, the other into the (now demolished) latrine on the south side. Immediately south of this doorway and sharing a relieving arch with it is a rectangular squint that passes through the southeast angle of the dormer wall. It has a flat slabbed lintel, and its openings to both the dormer and the reredormer are rebated. Within this squint, in accordance with the customs of the Cistercian order, hung the night light serving both dormer and the reredormer, and the iron ring for the attachment of the lantern remains in the lintel.'

'In the thirteenth century the dormer was a single room with the beds ranged against the walls. It could be reached either by the night stairs at the north end or by the day stairs which at that date were at the east end of the refectory range, with their upper doorway in the west wall of the dormer about two-thirds of the way from its northern end. During the fifteenth century considerable alterations were made as a result of the remodelling of the frater range. The early day stairs were demolished, and the dormer wall rebuilt where it abutted on the frater range. The new day stairs, already described, not only encroached on the floor space but also prevented access to one of the western windows.'

'Three new lancet windows, with less ample embrasures than those of the thirteenth century, were inserted; one of them (to the right of the two steps across the centre of the dormer), largely built of reused materials, is at the junction of the west wall of the dormer and the north wall of the refectory range. It is so cramped that its southern jamb had to be cut to a curve to allow it to emerge clear of the external face of the frater wall. The second new lancet is between the two western windows in the south half of the dormer; the third is immediately north of the reredormer doorway; both are smaller than the other windows.'

'Alterations were also made to the earlier windows and their embrasures, but not to a uniformed pattern. Some windows were provided with external rebates, in others only the heads were treated in this way, and some were provided with glazing grooves; several window seats were altered, and some window sills were cut down to form small recesses surfaced with spare floor tiles. This individual treatment of the windows was because the dormer was divided into permanent cubicles of wainscot in the later Middle Ages when individual monks increased the comfort of their bedchambers by having shutters or glass in the windows and by modifying the window seats to their particular liking. The eastern jamb of the night stairs doorway was also cut back to a splay up to head height, to give easier access to the central passage between the two rows of cubicles.'

'After the Dissolution more alterations were made to the room. The two small fireplaces inserted in the east wall, the northern one partly blocking a window embrasure, perhaps belong to this date, although their very small size would also have made them convenient for heating single cubicles. Later, when the building was re-roofed and ceased to be a ruin, the gaps in its walls were patched with rubble; there is a large patch covering the position of the northernmost window on the west side; other patches more or less obscure the first, second, fourth, fifth, and seventh windows on the east side, and much of the south wall was rebuilt. Both here and in the warming room, the large openings forced in the medieval walls and later roughly blocked belong to the time when the buildings were used from farm purposes, and when a wooden floor was inserted in the southern part of the dormer after the collapse of the original vaulting of the warming room.'

'The roof structure, with its curved wall braces in the local manner (mostly restorations of 1961), suggests a sixteenth-century or early seventeenth-century date.'

---

The dormer retains extensive, although fragmentary survivals of 13th century red-line masonry pattern and late-15th/early 16th-century (?) red/orange foliate decoration throughout. The areas include:

**NORTH WALL:** central area of single red-line masonry pattern which constitutes around 40% of the original decoration contained within the room.

**EAST WALL:**

- 1) window splay 1 (north to south), soffit, single red-line masonry pattern
- 2) window splay 2, soffit, single red-line masonry pattern
- 3) wall to south of window splay 2, at dado level, single red parallel lines demarcating dado
- 4) window splay 4, soffit, remains of orange-red decoration
- 5) window splay 5, soffit, remains of orange foliate decoration, over traces of double red-line masonry pattern
- 6) window splay 6, voussoir and chamfer, traces of single red-line masonry pattern
- 7) wall to south of window splay 6, centre of wall and south on window quoins, indistinct red-orange painting, probably 15C
- 8) window splay 7, voussoir and chamfer, north and south sides, traces of single red-line masonry pattern; both splays and soffit also have traces of late medieval painting in red (15C?)
- 9) wall to south of window splay 7, at springing height, and at centre of wall, single red-line masonry pattern
- 10) window splay 8, voussoirs and chamfer, traces of single red-line masonry pattern; also, north window splay traces of red late medieval decoration (15C?)
- 11) wall to north of window splay 9, 4 fragments of single red-line masonry pattern; fireplace chamfer, traces of dark red paint, presumably 16C contemporary with insertion

**SOUTH WALL:** south-east corner, adjacent to rere-dormer entrance, a section showing single red-line masonry pattern

**WEST WALL:**

- 1) wall, south side, west end, at centre and to north of this, two substantial fragments of single red-line masonry pattern
- 2) window splay 3 (south to north), chamfer and voussoir, small trace of single red-line masonry pattern; also, soffit, trace red-orange late medieval decoration (15C?)

- 3) wall to north of window splay 3, just below roof line, at centre, single red-line masonry pattern
- 4) window splay 5, voussoir and chamfer, single red-line masonry pattern
- 5) window splay 7, voussoir and chamfer, single red-line masonry pattern (especially to south); also, soffit, traces of late medieval red-orange decoration (15C?)
- 6) window splay 9, voussoir and chamfer, at apex, traces of single red-line masonry pattern; also soffit to north, traces of late medieval red-orange decoration (15C?)
- 7) window splay 10, voussoir and chamfer, single red-line masonry pattern
- 8) window splay 12, chamfer (north side), single red-line masonry pattern

### Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

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

12-7-51

A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'

A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'

A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'

A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.

A4900/general graffiti/wall painting?

24-6-65

A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.

A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

### Bibliography

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855, VI, 91.

Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somwersetshire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural

History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', *The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay*, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., *Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings*, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., *Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90)*, EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., *Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI)* English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

Simms, R.S., *Somerset: Churches and Religious Houses*, Cleeve Abbey, p. 118.

Tristram archive, held at Courtauld Institute of Art.

Warre, E., 'Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological Natural History', 1855, VI, 91-95.

## 2 General Audit Information

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY	County	Somerset
Region	South West		
Location	Dorter		
Orientation	NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS		
Century 13th	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
Auditor(s)	CB/PW	Start date	18/06/93

**Overall condition score**      **4**

### Recommendations

**NORTH WALL:** The main area of painted decoration on the north wall has undergone various treatment interventions between 1989 and 1995, principally to readhere the detaching plaster. However, the condition of this area is still poor, with frequent cycles of salt crystallization, and further loss of original plaster. It has consistently been suggested that the cause of this deterioration is persistent moisture infiltration from the uncapped gable end of the north wall. Until this problem is rectified, any further treatment could only consist of emergency remedial repairs. However, it is understood that more permanent proposals to rectify the causes of deterioration are planned. These include:

- 1) Capping the gable end of the north wall.
- 2) Removing hard, cement-based pointing from the exterior north wall and replacing with lime-based pointing.
- 3) Removing hard, cement-based pointing from around the fragment of painting on the interior north wall and replacing with lime-based pointing.

Following the most recent programme of emergency treatment by Stephen Rickerby in October 1995, this audit report endorses his conclusions that:

'proposal (1) is certainly necessary, and proposal (2) would probably be beneficial. It should be noted, however, that the exterior north wall also retains fragments of original render which should not be removed. Raking out defective cement-based pointing on the gable end and replacing with lime plaster would be the most straightforward method of capping, and has already been proposed. Consideration should be given to adequate drainage away from this area, since run-off water has had a deleterious impact on the environment of the Sacristy, contributing to deterioration of the paintings. Proposal (3), though desirable in ideal circumstances, is now too risky to attempt. The fragment of wall painting, though secured, is still in a vulnerable condition and susceptible to impact damage and vibration. As a priority, proposal (1) is the intervention which is likely to contribute most to the preservation of the painting, and should be undertaken first; other proposals should then be assessed in the light of its performance.'

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary Report on Emergency Conservation of Wall Paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', Stephen Rickerby, October 1995].

However, it is understood that the equipment suggested as appropriate for removing the pointing causes almost no vibration. If this is confirmed then Proposal 3 may be considered an acceptable intervention after any necessary emergency remedial repairs to the main area of plaster.

In the meantime, a further limited campaign of remedial treatment should be undertaken to secure the plaster as necessary (including further limited grouting and insertion of repairs) and to remove any visible salt efflorescences [Timescale: 2 conservators, at least 2 weeks, within 1 year].

However, it should be stressed that as this wall has suffered severe infiltration of liquid moisture for such a long period of time, any further emergency treatment could only be considered as a temporary measure to stabilise the plaster in the immediate future. Long-term recommendations can only be made once the building defects have been rectified and the full effects of any possible drying-out phase are established.

---

<b>Layer type</b>	Ground Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
-------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

Limewash ground.

<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>
----------------------------	----------------

lime white	white
------------	-------

---

<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
-------------------	---------------	---------------------------------	---

**Thickness**

**Comments**

NORTH WALL

13C Single red-line masonry pattern.

SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS

Single red-line masonry pattern and also unidentified red/orange pigments for traces of 15C/16C decoration.

PREPARATORY TECHNIQUE: dry incised horizontal line, west wall, south side, to south of window splay 1.

<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>
----------------------------	----------------

red earth	red
-----------	-----

---	orange
-----	--------

---	red
-----	-----



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

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	Dorter		
<b>Orientation</b>	NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

**Type** loss of cohesion (render layer)

**Location** NORTH WALL: render layer 1

EAST WALL: general

**Comments** NORTH WALL: Just below the smooth surface crust, the plaster is soft, crumbly, and has lost all cohesion.

**Type** losses (render layer)

**Location** NORTH WALL: render layer, generally

EAST WALL: fragments too numerous to document individually but all suffering general loss.

**Comments** NORTH WALL: Bulging of the plaster has caused a wide range of losses of varying depth.

EAST WALL: Fragments are vulnerable to further loss and damage.

**Type** flaking

**Location** NORTH WALL: ground layer

**Comments** Limewash ground flaking/lifting generally.

**Type** delamination (render layer)

**Location** NORTH WALL: throughout

**Comments** The plaster is bulging seriously in several areas, resulting in an undulating, deformed surface with large areas of detached plaster (some up to 5cm deep).

**Type** staining

**Location** EAST WALL

**Comments**

**Type** loss of cohesion (paint layer)

**Location** EAST WALL

**Comments**

#### Mechanical damage

**Type** scratches

**Type** scratches  
**Location** NORTH WALL

Surface, generally

**Comments**

---

**Type** cracking/fracturing

**Location** NORTH WALL

Throughout

**Comments**

---

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** biodeterioration

**Location** surface

**Comments** Traces throughout all four walls.

---

**Type** insect activity

**Location** throughout

**Comments** Traces throughout all four walls. Wood lice inhabit the plaster throughout.

---

**Type** cobwebs

**Location** NORTH WALL: entire surface

**Comments** Thick accretions of cobwebs in lacunae and over surface.

---

**Type** dust

**Location** All four walls, entire surface

**Comments** General accumulation of dust throughout.

---

**Type** salt efflorescences

**Location** throughout

**Comments** Salt efflorescences are a periodic problem throughout the dorter, especially on the north and east walls.

Salt analysis was undertaken during the October-November 1993 project: Three samples were taken of the efflorescences which appeared during conservation work. The following salts, which vary in crystal formation but contain similar ionic constituents, were found:

Thenardite - a naturally occurring sodium sulphate isomer

Aphthitalite - a sulphate of potassium and sodium

Calcite - or calcium carbonate, very commonly deposited by lime-bearing carbonated water percolation, one form is silicious which is ordinarily found in sandstones

Arcanite - a potassium sulphate isomer, and when containing NH<sub>4</sub> known as Taylorite, and can be an ammonian variant of aphthitalite.

XRD analysis does not differentiate between the different forms of the above salts. However, it was thought that these salts may originate from rainwater percolation of autochthonous siliceous and calcareous salts from the sandstone substrate and possibly also from the plaster.

It has been suggested that because Taylorite (a variant form of arcanite) contains NH<sub>4</sub>, and because the paintings were cleaned with ammonia in 1955, conservation materials may have contributed to the presence of salts.

Significant loss has been noted since 1989, probably attributable to continued infiltration from the exterior, that is, persistent water penetration via the upper wall and uncapped gable end of the north wall which has saturated the highly absorbent sandstone, weakened the plaster and caused salt bursting. Insect infestation and faulty original technique (porous mortar with large aggregate) have also contributed to the weakening of the plaster.

---

**Type** dirt

**Location** All four walls, entire surface

---

**Comments** General accumulation of dust throughout.

---

**Type** bird excreta

**Location** throughout

**Comments** Heavy deposits on east wall, at south end, and especially on west side.

---

**Coatings/Coverings**

**Type** limewash

**Location** south, east and west walls

**Comments** Fragmentary traces of overlying limewash throughout.

---

**Type** unidentified

**Location** NORTH WALL: surface

**Comments** An opaque yellow, and in areas, whitish crust partially obscures the painting in places. Though no records to the effect are extant, it is possible that this is a casein coating applied by the Ministry of Works in 1955, when a coating of the same material was applied over the painting on the east wall of the painted chamber.

---

**Repairs**

**Type** lime:sand

**Location** NORTH WALL

**Comments** Repairs were made using lime mortar (EH/Courtauld campaigns, June 1993 and October 1993)

---

**Type** gypsum

**Location** NORTH WALL

**Comments** Most of the 1962 Plaster of Paris repairs have been removed and replaced with a lime mortar in 1991 and 1993 (see Treatment).

---

## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

Type APPLICATION OF COATING Date 01/01/55

Person MOW

Comments NORTH WALL: The paintings in the sacristy were consolidated with a casein coating during treatment in 1955. This was possibly carried out in the dorter.

---

### Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/01/62

Person MOW

Comments NORTH WALL: Plaster of Paris repairs were inserted, possibly in 1962.

---

### Past Treatment

Type STRUCTURAL REPAIRS Date 01/01/85

Person English Heritage

Comments Installation of gutters at roof eaves.

---

### Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS REMOVAL Date 01/01/89

Person MOW

Comments NORTH WALL: Plaster of Paris repairs were removed during 1989 campaign.

---

### Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 01/06/89

Person C. Babington, S. Rickerby

Comments NORTH WALL: Lime mortar repairs were made in two layers, the upper layer with coarse aggregate and stippled.

---

Type GROUTING Date 01/06/89

Person C. Babington, S. Rickerby

Comments NORTH WALL: The plaster was grouted using a lime, red sand, and HTI mixture.

---

Type TISSUE FACING Date 01/06/89

Person C. Babington, S. Rickerby

Comments NORTH WALL: As the plaster was extremely fragile a tissue facing was applied using Paraloid B72 (10%) prior to grouting.

---

### Past Treatment

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 01/06/93  
**Person** English Heritage/Courtauld Institute  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: A similar technique was employed as the 1989 treatment. After grouting, lime mortar repairs were made in one or two layers, using red sand and coarse aggregate.

---

**Type** FLAKE FIXING      **Date** 01/06/93  
**Person** English Heritage/Courtauld Institute  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: Before grouting, flaking limewash ground was fixed using Plextol B500 2.5% (a water-based acrylic dispersion). Flakes were injected through tissue, after pre-wetting with IMS/water 1:1 and pressed back with cotton wool pads lined with vinyl.

---

**Type** GROUTING      **Date** 01/06/93  
**Person** English Heritage/Courtauld Institute  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: Voids were grouted with a mixture of trass and lime (1:1 with water). Presses were positioned to aid in re-adhesion of the plaster.

---

**Type** TISSUE FACING      **Date** 01/06/93  
**Person** English Heritage/Courtauld Institute  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: Before grouting, vulnerable areas were faced with a layer of tissue reinforced with gauze, applied with Paraloid B72 10%.

---

#### Past Treatment

**Type** CLEANING      **Date** 01/10/93  
**Person** English Heritage/Courtauld Institute  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: Removal of residual Paraloid B72 by repeated swabbing with acetone. Also removal of the white bloom, evident before 1989 (possibly related to salts and blanching of the casein coating), by clearing with acetone.

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 01/10/93  
**Person** English Heritage/Courtauld Institute  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: (1) Lime/sand slurry 2:5 used for the fills made to vulnerable areas during removal of the facing. (2) Lime/sand 6:1 used for other fills, using a sand mixture of 1:1 yellow Warmwell Dorset pit sand: local red sand purchased from Goodland builders merchants.

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS REMOVAL      **Date** 01/10/93  
**Person** English Heritage/Courtauld Institute  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: unsuitable coarse red fills were removed and replaced with a mortar of finer texture and lighter tonality.

---

**Type** GROUTING      **Date** 01/10/93  
**Person** English Heritage/Courtauld Institute  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: Completion of grouting using trass and lime 1:1 with water.

---

**Type** REMOVAL OF TISSUE FACING      **Date** 01/10/93  
**Person** English Heritage/Courtauld Institute  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: Tissue facing was swabbed/brushed with acetone, the gauze removed with forceps and the lens tissue rolled off.

---

**Type** VARIOUS      **Date** 01/10/93  
**Person** English Heritage/Courtauld Institute  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: Continuation of the treatment begun 6/93.

---

**Past Treatment**

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 01/10/95  
**Person** S. Rickerby  
**Comments** 'Edges of detached plaster were reattached to the wall with a weak plaster mix of 1 part slaked lime: 6 parts sand. A high ratio of aggregate to binder was chosen to avoid forming a plaster that would prove too strong in relation to the original materials, and a relatively coarse mix was used to blend with the original plaster'. [From S. Rickerby's report, October 1995].

---

**Type** GROUTING      **Date** 01/10/95  
**Person** S. Rickerby  
**Comments** 'For grouting, a slurry of slaked lime and finely sieved sand (1:3) was injected into voids behind the plaster through existing holes and cracks'. [From S. Rickerby's report, October 1995].

---

**Type** SALT REMOVAL      **Date** 01/10/95  
**Person** S. Rickerby  
**Comments** 'Surface salt efflorescences were easily removed with a soft brush. Elsewhere, the formation of salt crusts had provoked the scaling of thin layers on the plaster surface, and these were pressed back with deionised water through tissue paper where possible'. [From S. Rickerby's report, October 1995].

---

**Proposed Treatment**

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** TM/SS  
**Comments** ALL WALLS: repairs should be inserted to secure the plaster as necessary.

---

**Type** GROUTING      **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** TM/SS  
**Comments** ALL WALLS: very limited grouting, avoiding excess use of water, should be undertaken to secure the plaster as necessary.

---

**Type** MONITORING CONDITION      **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** TM/SS  
**Comments** A visual monitoring programme should be implemented to check the condition of the painting on a regular basis (1-2 days every year).

---

**Type** RECORDING AND DOCUMENTATION **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** TM/SS  
**Comments** ALL WALLS: A comprehensive photogrammetric survey is required of all interior walls.

---

**Type** SALT REMOVAL **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** TM/SS  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: visible salt efflorescences should be removed periodically.

---

**Type** STRUCTURAL REPAIRS **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** TM/SS  
**Comments** NORTH WALL: Capping of the north wall is required in order to prevent further infiltration of moisture. The area cannot be fully stabilised until all sources of moisture are eradicated.

---

**Type** TESTING **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** TM/SS  
**Comments** Cleaning tests to assess the feasibility of reducing/removing residues of various coatings (casein, Paraloid B72) should be included in any long-term strategy.

---



# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location of painting	Refectory		
Orientation	EAST WALL		
Century	15 <sup>th</sup>	Date	
		Height (cm)	0
		Width (cm)	0
Subjects included			
Crucifixion			

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dormer, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

-----  
DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Bear, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dormer (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

### DESCRIPTION OF THE REFECTORY:

The upper steps of the refectory stairs branch eastwards before reaching the lobby and lead to the west doorway of the refectory, which has an elliptical moulded head, a banded capital like an impost moulding, and jambs with large stops, the northernmost carved with a defaced grotesque mask.'

'The refectory itself is an impressive hall, 51ft by 22ft (15.5 by 6.7m). Its north wall has a row of 5 three-light windows with traceried heads; their sills are set high to clear the cloister roof, but their embrasures extend lower to match the four windows of the south wall, which are of three transomed lights with tracery

in the head and below the transom. Externally, the hoodmoulds of these windows have an excellent series of terminal heads. The glazing is modern pot (coloured) except for some minute fragments of glass said to survive in the tracery spandrels. The second bay from the east on the south wall has no window and housed the frater pulpit in a projecting breast above the garderobe of the eastern set of chambers on the ground floor. The tall and narrow doorway, and two lowest steps of the flight that led to the pulpit, remain, but the pulpit itself was destroyed when a large fireplace with a cambered head was inserted in this wall in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century.'

'The outstanding feature of the hall is its timber roof, superb even by the exacting standards of the west of England. As can be seen from its common rafters, the hall roof is a version of wagon roof - that is, collar trusses with upper and lower braces. It is divided into five bays by principal trusses and these are in turn subdivided by intermediate trusses. There are two sets of side purlins and a collar purlin, all tenoned into the intermediaries and clasped by the principals. They are heavily moulded and have deeply carved foliage bosses at the intersections with the principals and intermediates - fifty of them. Additionally, the collar purlin is slightly curved, or arched, between principals. The arch braces of the principals are deep, richly moulded, and decorated on each side with a blind arcade of fifty trefoil-headed panels. The subsidiaries repeat the mouldings of the principals but are not so deep and therefore have no blind arcade. The arch-braces of the trusses oversail the wall face and are carried on sole-pieces which project beyond them and are supported by moulded brackets on stone corbels.'

'On the subsidiary trusses, the sole-pieces are carved as busts of crowned angels, and the corbels beneath the brackets have plain shields; on the principals, the sole-pieces project far out and are carved as three-quarter-length crowned angels holding scrolls, while the corbels have half-angels holding shields. The richness of effect is partly the result of this syncopation. At first sight, the rows of angels create the impression of a hammer-beam roof, but in fact they are purely decorative and give no more cantilevered support than is already provided by the brackets beneath them.'

'The roof has double wallplates, the principal (inner) one moulded, decorated with a vine-trail, and surmounted by an embattled cornice. It was the builders' intention to have a panelled wagon ceiling, as in many Somerset churches, and the chases to take its boards can be seen on the trusses at the level of the backs of the purlins, but in the event it appears never to have been installed, and the roof may be considered unfinished in that it lacks this and has never been painted.'

'The construction of the refectory floor was similar to that of the lobby. Much of it was destroyed or replaced by a cross-boarded floor when the range was in use as a farm building. The missing parts and the mortar surface have been renewed. (A trap has been provided so that the construction of the original floor can be inspected.) The eastern end of the floor is at a higher level than the rest, and is of stone instead of wood, to master the curve of the passage vault below and to provide a dais.'

'Until the present century, the greater part of the east wall of the refectory was covered by a wall painting of the Crucifixion that formed a reredos to the high table where the officers of the house sat at meals. The crucifix with the figure of Our Lord reached almost to the level of the eaves and was flanked by figures of the Virgin and St John. The painting gradually decayed until by 1950 no recognisable traces of it were left; the missing plaster on the wall has been made good, and the original plaster on which the painting existed has been outlined. The whole has been limewashed.'

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, pp.32-36].

---

Documentary evidence (and an early photograph) record the presence of a Crucifixion with the Virgin and St. John on the east wall of the refectory. According to records in the Tristram archive (CIA): 'Slight traces of colour elsewhere in the Refectory suggest its being part of a general scheme.' Also recorded in the *Archaeological Journal*, 107 (1950). R.S. Simms also noted 'Over the dais was painted a representation of the Crucifixion; this has deteriorated during the past few years and is now almost unrecognisable.'

The Crucifixion would have been at least life-size and therefore extremely rare. It appears that it was covered over c.1950 and may have been partially destroyed. Uncovering tests made by K. Barakan (English Heritage Conservation Studio) in the late 1980s found traces of yellow paint, but not enough to justify extensive uncovering.

## Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

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

12-7-51

- A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'
- A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'
- A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'
- A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.  
A4900/general graffiti/wall painting?

24-6-65

A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.  
A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

## Bibliography

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855, VI, 91.

Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somersetsire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90), EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI) English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY				
Region	South West	County	Somerset		
Location of painting	Painted Chamber				
Orientation	EAST WALL, WEST WALL, AND SOUTH WINDOW				
Century	16 <sup>th</sup>	Date	1510	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
Subjects included	Allegorical figure subject Various decorative motifs				

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dorter, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

---

DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Bear, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dorter (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PAINTED CHAMBER, 15TH-CENTURY REFECTORY RANGE:

'The doorway in the west wall of the lobby at the head of the refectory stairs leads to a chamber above the western bedchamber on the ground floor. The south wall of this chamber had a flat-headed window of two lights with tracery similar to the lobby window, and the west wall has a fireplace, the lintel of which was destroyed when a window was forced through the fireback after the Dissolution. Some decorative paintwork can still be seen on the west wall'.

---

'The east wall of the room is entirely covered by a late fifteenth-century wall painting. On the left and right of the composition are large figures of St Catherine with her wheel and St Margaret holding a staff and standing on a dragon. Between them, a masonry bridge of two arches crosses a river in which several varieties of fish including eels can be recognised. In the centre of the bridge stands an elderly man with a grey beard, richly clothed and with his hands joined in prayer, whilst a lion and a horned dragon face him from the two ends of the bridge. The background is of geometrical figures containing flowers, and on either side of the man's head can be seen angels carrying the Scourge and the Crown of Thorns. The painting shows signs of being of two periods.'

'A stout plank and muntin partition separates the chamber from the gallery along its northern end. It is made up of chamfered muntins with grooves into which the planks are fitted. There is a doorway with a chamfered head near its west end. The doorway in its present form is probably of post-monastic date, and it replaced a hatch. The wall paintings show that the chamber was a place of consequence, and its position suggests that it was a 'checker' or office serving the abbot's secretariat'.

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, pp.31-32].

#### **EAST WALL**

The east wall measures 197 x 480 cms.

The painting on the east wall of the Painted Chamber has been described as 'the most important late Cistercian wall painting in Britain' (Norton & Park, 1986, 206-8). It shows a male figure standing on a bridge flanked by a lion and a dragon, with a flying angel on either side, and St Catherine of Alexandria and St Margaret of Antioch. For many years the precise subject-matter was unclear, and it has only recently been re-identified by Miriam Gill (Courtauld Institute of Art) as the legend of a man crossing a bridge, from *Gesta Romanorum*. This will be the subject of a forthcoming report by M. Gill.

The east wall is internal, abutting the main staircase to the Frater on the first floor of the three floor Frater range. The painting is at present enclosed by a wooden rail. The paint layer is in poor condition - deterioration is evident in the form of flaking and pigment alteration.

#### **SOUTH WALL**

Fragmentary remains of painting survive within the window of the south wall. The two main areas are on the East splay and soffit. The west side of the soffit contains foliate decoration, and the E splay may contain a possible figure subject. Fragments on the window jambs show a red diamond pattern. Dimensions: E splay 35 x 89 cms; soffit to W splay 140 x 56 cms.

#### **WEST WALL**

The west wall measures 330 x 565 cms.

The west wall is painted with a continuation of the fictive tapestry background which can also be seen on the east wall.

#### **Photographic Record**

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

Photograph search, DOE files, EH photo library (JD24/03/95)  
12-7-51

A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'  
A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'  
A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'  
A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

## 2 General Audit Information

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY	County	Somerset	
Region	South West			
Location	Painted Chamber			
Orientation	EAST WALL, WEST WALL, AND SOUTH WINDOW			
Century 16th	Date	1510	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
<b>Monitoring undertaken/in progress:</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	6/02/90	<b>End Date</b>	6/07/91
<b>Comments</b>	Two probes (RH & T) placed at north end of east wall, one ST (on repair). Data is being organised and graphs generated.			
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	AH, SS	<b>Start date</b>	11/06/93	

**Overall condition score**      **4**

### Recommendations

#### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The painted chamber is subject to persistent adverse environmental conditions and on-going deterioration. Results of monitoring commenced in 1990 indicate that there is minimal thermal buffering between the interior and the exterior and even less buffering of the absolute humidity. The room also suffers from condensation. In addition, cycles of crystallization of sodium chloride salts may in turn may be aggravating the adverse behaviour of the slate inclusions present within the original plaster causing serious pitting and flaking.

Options for intervention therefore include either:

- reducing the salt content contained within the original plaster in an attempt to limit the possibility of salt crystallization
- altering the internal climatic conditions within the room

However, the first option may not be considered feasible as the surface of the painting is extremely delicate and may not tolerate the treatment interventions necessary for desalination. Rather, efforts may be made to try to alter the interior climate of the room.

This would involve attempting to reduce the possibility of condensation by either lowering the absolute humidity within the room or raising the internal temperature.

Attempts to reduce the air exchange could indeed be implemented by ensuring that the door to the chamber is kept closed at all times. Open windows in the corridor to the north of the chamber could also be sealed to prevent the passage of air through the wooden partition into the room. In addition, raising the internal temperature could be achieved by installing constant, low level heating.

It is therefore recommended that one of these possibilities be implemented, for example, closing the door and the environmental monitoring equipment be reinstalled in the exactly the same location to assess any changes in the interior climate.

### SPECIFIC TREATMENT REQUIREMENTS

#### EAST WALL

It may be prudent only to treat the severe flaking of the paint layer once the interior environment has improved. Nevertheless, further testing of suitable fixatives, initiated in 1993, could be continued and used as a basis for short-term emergency treatment as well as an overall programme at a later date. [Time scale: 2 conservators, 3 weeks as soon as possible].

In addition, a small area of plaster on an edge on the north side is cracked and loose. [1 conservator, 1 week within 1 year].

#### **SOUTH WINDOW**

Some localised edging repairs, grouting, removal and re-insertion of repairs will be necessary [Timescale: 2 conservators, 1 week within 1 year].

#### **WEST WALL SOUTH SIDE**

The auditors observed that a few pieces of plaster had fallen to the floor and this was believed to be the result of mechanical damage by visitors. Emergency remedial treatment is necessary [Timescale: 2 conservators, 1-2 weeks within 1 year].

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY			
Region	South West	County	Somerset	
Location	Painted Chamber			
Orientation	EAST WALL, WEST WALL, AND SOUTH WINDOW			
Century 16th	Date	1510	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
Auditor(s)	AH, SS		Start date	11/06/93

**Overall Condition Score 4**

#### ***Stratigraphy***

---

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	1
Thickness	48 cm		

#### **Comments**

EAST WALL: Stone rubble construction, ashlar quoins. Tooling present on ashlar quoins around door frame but not regular. Chamber located on first floor. Condition of fabric good although there is a cement floor.

WEST WALL: Random stone and rubble, ashlar quoins to fireplace. Stippled effect on ashlar (N fireplace) could be keying. Diagonal tooling and stippling in lower area (S fireplace). Moulded chamfer survives on N & S sides of fireplace. Inserted timber approximately 5 x 20 cms. The decoration has survived well on the chimney breast (20 cms thick).

SOUTH WINDOW: Two types of support: (1) window splays of random stone rubble with ashlar quoins (with mainly vertical tooling), flush pointing. (2) window arch in ashlar with diagonal tooling.

---

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

#### **Comments**

EAST WALL: Lime/sand, white render flush with quoins around door. No render on quoins. NB. condition score is 2 above 90cm from ground and 3 below 90cm. Coarse large black aggregate, possibly slate. Probably two plaster joins (1 is 2m 18cm from ground, 2nd should be 88/90cm from ground).

SOUTH WINDOW: East splay thickness: <0.5 cms (only on ashlar - on stone/rubble support render has been lost), Soffit thickness: 3 cms. Window arch has no render but a limewash ground.

WEST WALL: >0.5 cm - <2 cm thick. The render contains coarse large black aggregate (possibly slate). There is a smooth but undulating finish to the plaster. The ashlar of the fireplace appears to have been plastered down to floor level, with limewash remaining in the moulded chamfer of the fireplace (S side).

#### ***Analysis undertaken***

**Method** SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY (S.E.M.)

**Person** J G McDonnell **Date** 01/01/90

**Comments** EAST WALL: Analysis by J G McDonnell (AML), report held at Conservation Studio. Results showed that NaCl crystal growth is present in the plaster and may be responsible for the continuing deterioration.

#### ***Analysis undertaken***

**Method** X-RAY DIFFRACTION (X.R.D.)

**Person** J G McDonnell **Date** 01/01/90

**Comments** EAST WALL: Analysis by J G McDonnell (AML), report held at Conservation Studio. Results showed that NaCl crystal growth is present in the plaster and may be responsible for the continuing deterioration.



<b>Layer type</b>	Ground Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>			
<b>Comments</b>	EAST WALL, WEST WALL, AND SOUTH WINDOW: Limewash ground present. EAST WALL ONLY: Preparatory technique: grey/black underdrawing over dry limewash ground.		
<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>		
lime white	white		

<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>			
<b>Comments</b>	EAST WALL: Black, red, white, grey, brown, green. Green appears to be applied over a black or red undercoat. White highlights and final outline in black. NB: pigments used for foliate decoration possible altered pigments eg. red lead. WEST WALL: White, red, yellow and green pigment. Most pigment survives over the fireplace, no red pigment survives below 160 cms. SOUTH WINDOW: Red, white and yellow. Brushstrokes of limewash evident.		
<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>		
---	black		
---	red		
---	brown		
---	grey		
---	white		
---	green		
---	yellow		

**Analysis undertaken**

<b>Method</b>	POLARIZING LIGHT MICROSCOPY		
<b>Person</b>	L. Shekede	<b>Date</b>	01/11/93
<b>Comments</b>	EAST WALL ONLY: Some preliminary analysis was carried out by L. Shekede (Courtauld Institute of Art) to determine pigments and/or the presence of alteration products. The following pigments were found: red lead, white lead, carbon black, synthetic copper blue, iron oxide. Samples were mounted in cross-section and dispersion using standard light microscopy and microchemical tests. The black conversion product of lead, plattnerite, was found in some samples, confirming the hypothesis that several darkened areas are the result of lead pigments having altered over time.		

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

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	Painted Chamber		
<b>Orientation</b>	EAST WALL, WEST WALL, AND SOUTH WINDOW		
<b>Century</b> 16th	<b>Date</b>	1510	<b>Height (cm)</b>
			<b>Width (cm)</b>

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

**Type** pigment alteration  
**Location** EAST WALL: Blues, greens and reds  
**Comments** Blackening of blue, green and red pigments.

---

**Type** flaking  
**Location** EAST WALL: Extensive  
**Comments** Large 'fractured' flakes which appear to be caused by the expansion and contraction of the slate inclusions contained within the original plaster aggravated by salt crystallization cycles.

---

**Type** pitting (surface)  
**Location** EAST WALL, particularly on lower part of north side and WEST WALL generally  
**Comments** EAST WALL and WEST WALL: Extensive. Related to the slate inclusions within the render.

---

**Type** delamination (render layer)  
**Location** EAST WALL: Throughout, SOUTH WINDOW: Soffit. WEST WALL: generally  
**Comments** EAST WALL: Areas of delamination were noted, SOUTH WINDOW: Soffit; later covering/repair render is delaminating and repairs are loose. Investigation is needed to see if original plaster extends below this later layer. WEST WALL: small areas are cracked and loose.

---

**Type** loss of cohesion (paint layer)  
**Location** EAST WALL and SOUTH WINDOW  
**Comments** EAST WALL: Paint layer friable in areas. SOUTH WINDOW: Stone support of soffit has lost cohesion.

---

**Type** cracking  
**Location** WEST WALL  
**Comments** More cracking than on the east wall, although many of the repairs on the east wall may have been filled and retouched as part of past conservation treatments. However, the render on the west wall is not as friable and does not show the same deterioration phenomena as the east wall.

---

**Type** losses (paint layer)  
**Location** WEST WALL  
**Comments** Large loss at south end of west wall, possibly due to past structural movement southwards.

---

**Type** blistering (paint layer)  
**Location** EAST WALL, particularly on lower part of north side and WEST WALL generally  
**Comments** EAST WALL and WEST WALL: Extensive. Related to the slate inclusions within the render.

---

**Type** loss of cohesion (render layer)  
**Location**  
**Comments** EAST WALL: Render friable in areas. SOUTH WINDOW: Stone support of soffit has lost cohesion.

---

**Mechanical damage**

**Type** cracking/fracturing  
**Location** EAST WALL: south side. WEST WALL: south side.  
**Comments** EAST WALL: crack on south side from upper south side, east wall, to nail on door frame. Also both east and west walls show a fine craquelure over the surface of the plaster.

---

**Type** graffiti  
**Location** WEST WALL  
**Comments**

---

**Type** scratches  
**Location** EAST WALL  
**Comments** General scratching and/or abrasion.

---

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** biodeterioration

**Location** EAST WALL: base, WEST WALL generally

**Comments** EAST WALL: Observed at base of wall but not on painting, WEST WALL: black and green growth, extends over the painted decoration in some isolated areas - visible in winter months.

---

**Type** nails

**Location** EAST WALL, SOUTH WINDOW, and WEST WALL

**Comments** EAST WALL: 3 nails (2m from ground, 1m to left of door); SOUTH WINDOW: throughout, WEST WALL: along the upper edge of the wall.

---

**Type** salt efflorescences

**Location** EAST WALL, and WEST WALL

**Comments** EAST WALL: Analysis of salt efflorescences by J G McDonnell (AML) found NaCl; WEST WALL: salt efflorescences found generally. During inspection 26/7/96 salt efflorescences were also visible in the south window soffit within an area of cement pointing.

---

**Type** dirt

**Location** SOUTH WINDOW

**Comments** General accumulation of dirt.

---

**Type** dust

**Location** SOUTH WINDOW

**Comments** General accumulation of dust.

---

**Type** cobwebs

**Location** SOUTH WINDOW

**Comments** General accumulation of cobwebs.

---

### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** repainting

**Location** EAST WALL, and WEST WALL

**Comments** EAST WALL: One layer, mainly on repairs, but can extend on original, WEST WALL: possible watercolour on repairs but not clear.

---

**Type** limewash

**Location** SOUTH WINDOW

**Comments** 2-3 fragmentary layers of limewash (white and yellow) generally. The window arch soffit is partially covered in limewash.

---

**Type** plaster

**Location** WEST WALL, south side

**Comments** Partially covered with lime/sand mortar (largest remaining area 35x45 cms approx) on the south side. Appears to have been plastered over in the past and subsequently uncovered.

---

**Type** casein

**Location** EAST WALL

**Comments** Casein is likely to remain from previous conservation treatments.

---

***Repairs***

**Type** gypsum

**Location** EAST WALL

**Comments** Edging repairs on left side and above door (possibly gypsum) and at base of painting.

---

**Type** lime:sand

**Location** EAST WALL, SOUTH WINDOW and WEST WALL

**Comments** EAST WALL: Minor but extensive, coloured yellow and unsightly. Modern repairs at base of painting; SOUTH WINDOW: Difficult to establish the extent of the repairs, as they can be confused with coverings. Some edging repairs on upper west splay and soffit; WEST WALL: Minor and extensive repairs, also edging repairs, many toned yellow as on east wall. Some need attention.

---

**Type** cement

**Location** SOUTH WINDOW

**Comments** SOUTH WINDOW: does not affect the painting.

---

## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

**Type** APPLICATION OF COATING      **Date** 01/01/55

**Person** MOW

**Comments** EAST WALL: Casein was applied as a consolidant during the 1955 conservation treatment. This was subsequently removed (1959) but many traces still remain.

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 01/01/55

**Person** MOW

**Comments** EAST WALL: Repairs were made using Plaster of Paris.

---

### Past Treatment

**Type** CLEANING      **Date** 01/01/59

**Person** MOW M Keevil

**Comments** EAST WALL: The coating was broken down by repeated applications (by sponge) of a mixture of ammonia and water.

---

**Type** CONSOLIDATION      **Date** 01/01/59

**Person** MOW M Keevil

**Comments** EAST WALL: The painting was consolidated using limewater and skimmed milk spray, which may have contributed to the alteration of pigments. Needs further investigation.

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 01/01/59

**Person** MOW M Keevil

**Comments** EAST WALL: Lime/sand repairs were made to replace the removed gypsum fills.

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS REMOVAL      **Date** 01/01/59

**Person** MOW M Keevil

**Comments** EAST WALL: Gypsum repairs were removed.

---

**Type** FLAKE FIXING      **Date** 01/01/59

**Person** MOW M Keevil

**Comments** EAST WALL: The paintings were sprayed with limewater, and localised fixing was carried out using limewater and skimmed milk, pressed back using a rubber roller.

---

**Type** PRESENTATION/REINTEGRATION      **Date** 01/01/59

**Person** MOW M Keevil

**Comments** EAST WALL: New repairs were toned with pigment in a limewater and skimmed milk medium.

---

### Proposed Treatment

**Type** FLAKE FIXING **Date** 14/06/93  
**Person** SS, AH

**Comments** Extensive stabilisation of paint layer subject to testing phase.

---

**Past Treatment**

**Type** TESTING **Date** 01/11/93  
**Person** EH/Courtauld Institute of Art

**Comments** L. Shekede (Courtauld Institute of Art) conducted various fixing tests using Paraloid B72, Plextol B500, lime milk, Primal AC33, Gypstop P and Durolith 61. Plextol and Primal (both 10% proprietary product in water) performed best. Photographs were taken before and after in both normal and raking light. Complete fixing of the paint layer was not recommended until the environment has been stabilised. Initial brief analysis of monitoring already carried out in the room showed that it is subject to extreme freeze/thaw cycles.

---

**Proposed Treatment**

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date** 14/06/96  
**Person** SS, AH

**Comments** south window, some unsuitable repairs should be removed and replaced.

---

**Proposed Treatment**

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** SS/TM

**Comments** Possibly east wall, north side, south window and west wall, south side.

---

**Type** GROUTING **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** SS/TM

**Comments** Possibly east wall, north side, south window and west wall, south side.

---

**Type** TESTING **Date** 26/07/96  
**Person** SS/TM

**Comments** Further testing of suitable fixatives should be carried out and used as a basis for short-term emergency treatment. [Timescale: 2 conservators, 3 weeks as soon as possible].

---

# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location of painting	South range, 1st floor, gallery		
Orientation	SOUTHERN REVEAL OF DOORWAY AND SOUTH JAMB OF CROSS ARCH		
Century 16 <sup>th</sup>	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
Subjects included	decorative Figurative		

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dorter, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

-----

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dorter (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

### DESCRIPTION OF THE GALLERY

'At the north end of the west wall of the refectory a doorway leads to a wooden gallery, over the entrance to the refectory staircase, against the north wall of the range and continued along the north end of the painted chamber and into the west range. The gallery has a deep and richly moulded rail into which are tenoned its moulded stiles with vertical plank backing. Internally it was crossed by a stone arch on the line of the east wall of the painted chamber, and it was lighted by the three rectangular windows in the north wall. These are set high with deep splayed sills to allow the cloister roof to be maintained outside. There are two in the

---



## 2 General Audit Information

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Region</b>	South West		
<b>Location</b>	South range, 1st floor, gallery		
<b>Orientation</b>	SOUTHERN REVEAL OF DOORWAY AND SOUTH JAMB OF CROSS ARCH		
<b>Century</b> 16th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	TM/SS	<b>Start date</b> 26/07/96	

**Overall condition score**      **3**

### Recommendations

Due to the presence of the perspex covering a full condition survey could not be carried out. The perspex should therefore be temporarily removed in both areas and the plaster and paint layer inspected. Further recommendations for treatment can then be made. [Timescale: 1 conservator, 1 day within 2 years].

The perspex does not appear to be causing any deterioration and should be replaced to protect both areas from inadvertent mechanical damage.

A full photographic survey should be undertaken.

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location	South range, 1st floor, gallery		
Orientation	SOUTHERN REVEAL OF DOORWAY AND SOUTH JAMB OF CROSS ARCH		
Century 16th	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)
Auditor(s)	TM/SS	Start date	26/07/96

**Overall Condition Score 3**

#### Stratigraphy

---

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness	cm		

#### Comments

BOTH AREAS: Ashlar.

---

Layer type	Render Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
Thickness	cm		

#### Comments

SOUTHERN REVEAL OF DOORWAY: lime/sand render, 1cm thick, coarse aggregate.

SOUTH JAMB OF CROSS ARCH: lime/sand construction skim, 0.5cm thick, coarse aggregate.

---

Layer type	Ground Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
Thickness	cm		

#### Comments

BOTH AREAS: limewash.

---

Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
Thickness			

#### Comments

Identified pigments	Colours
---	red

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

---

Property name	CLEEVE ABBEY		
Region	South West	County	Somerset
Location	South range, 1st floor, gallery		
Orientation	SOUTHERN REVEAL OF DOORWAY AND SOUTH JAMB OF CRO		
Century 16th	Date	Height (cm)	Width (cm)

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

Type loss  
Location all areas  
Comments

---

Type cracking  
Location all areas  
Comments

#### Mechanical damage

Type abrasion  
Location all areas  
Comments

---

Type scratches  
Location all areas  
Comments

---

Type graffiti  
Location all areas  
Comments

---

## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date  
Person  
Comments

---

### Proposed Treatment

Type VARIOUS Date 01/01/01  
Person Unknown

Comments Due to the presence of the perspex covering a full condition survey could not be carried out. The perspex should therefore be temporarily removed in both areas and the plaster and paint layer inspected. Further recommendations for treatment can then be made. The perspex does not appear to be causing any deterioration and should be replaced to protect both areas from inadvertent mechanical damage.

---



# 1 Wall Painting Record

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location of painting</b>	South range, 2nd floor chamber		
<b>Orientation</b>	WEST WALL, CENTRE		
<b>Century</b> 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 80	<b>Width (cm)</b> 50
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Figurative			
Unidentified scene			

---

## Description

### THE SITE AND PAINTINGS

The Cistercian abbey at Cleeve contains extensive remains of 13th-century wall painting throughout its claustral buildings. Although fragmentary, this decoration is particularly important given the poor survival rate of Cistercian painting in England. Areas survive throughout the chapter house, library, dormer, south range, parlour, cloister, common room and the sacristy. In addition, the Painted Chamber contains a particularly significant 15th-century scheme.

Numerous conservation campaigns have been undertaken in recent years. However, as a partially ruined site, many areas of decoration are exposed to particularly adverse environmental conditions and therefore continue to suffer from persistent, and in some instances, unavoidable cycles of deterioration.

The purpose of this audit report is to list the research and treatment undertaken so far and to provide a basis for a prioritised work programme using recommendations for each individual area.

-----  
DESCRIPTION OF THE ABBEY [From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Bear, second edition 1990, p.1]:

'Cleeve Abbey was founded for Cistercian monks by William, Earl of Roumare, towards the end of the twelfth century. A period of prosperity in the thirteenth century was followed by decline. The fortunes of the house revived after the middle of the fifteenth century but it never ranked among the greater monasteries and was dissolved in 1536.'

'Although little remains of the church except low walls and foundations, the east and south ranges of the claustral buildings are remarkably complete, and enable visitors to appreciate the arrangements of an abbey of modest size. The buildings are mainly of two dates. The east range belongs principally to the thirteenth century and is notable for the survival of its dormer (dormitory) on the first floor. The south range was remodelled after the middle of the fifteenth century and contains a first-floor refectory (frater) with a magnificent timber roof. The west alley of the cloister and the upper storey of the gatehouse, both rebuilt by the last abbot, are among the latest monastic buildings in the country.'

---

### DESCRIPTION OF UPPER CHAMBER, 15TH-CENTURY REFECTIONARY RANGE:

'Above the painted chamber there is a second chamber. This is reached by a new staircase in the room beyond the gallery. Originally the upper chamber was reached by newel stairs in a half-octagonal turret projecting from the north wall of the refectory range into the south alley of the cloister. This turret is destroyed, but parts of the stairs can be seen in the external face of the wall and the foundation of the turret remains with a springer of the doorway leading into it from the cloister. The stair head with its tunnel vault and doorway into the upper chamber also remain.'

---

'The north and south walls of the chamber each have a window of two transomed lights, with tracery in the flat head and beneath the transom. The west wall has a plain fireplace, near the north jamb of which are traces of wall painting. It has been suggested that they are architectural, perhaps an angel on a pilaster, but in fact they are most likely, once again, to be emblems of the Passion, of which the column, the spear and possibly the sponge can be made out. Finally there is the springing of an acute crocketed gable over the lintel.'

'The room was divided by a post-monastic wattle and daub partition, with which was associated a plaster ceiling at eaves level, now removed to show the fine late fifteenth-century open timber roof, which is in three bays, with close-set arch-braced collars, the principals deeply chamfered and mitred to a chamfered central purlin beneath the collars. The mouldings of the wallplate are returned to form half-octagonal corbels that carry the principals. It is essentially a continuation in simplified form of the adjacent roof over the refectory.'

'Part of the floor in the southern half of the chamber is in its original condition. It consisted of heavy planks laid in the direction of the close-set joists and covered with a bed of lime-mortar as a base for tiles. The chamber communicated with rooms at the same level in an extension to the west by a doorway near the north end of its west wall'.

[From 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset', EH Guide Book, R.Gilyard-Beer, second edition 1990, pp.36-37].

-----  
Unidentified scene with column and figurative element, remains of yellow, black and red. This area of painting has yet to be correctly interpreted. It appears to be of a Post-Reformation date, and may relate to a sort of architectural framework associated with the inserted fireplace. There are traces of graffiti in red and black throughout all four walls.

#### Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; general photos of several unassigned areas (CB/SS to assign as nec.) Sept 1988 E880467, F880041/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21. E880468, E880464, E880472, E880473, E880474, E880465.

Photograph search, DOE files, EH photo library (JD24/03/95)  
12-7-51

A1388/20 'Recess in south wall of Sacristy, showing wall paintings, from the north.'  
A1388/34 'Remains of wall painting of the Crucifixion on east wall of refectory.'  
A1388/39 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory(1st floor) north end.'  
A1388/40 'Wall paintings on east wall of room west of stairs to refectory (1st floor) south end.'

Inc 1939 A4104(Ex. OW C. 4497) [glass neg.]crucifixion wall painting?

6-12-57

A4900/3 Detail wall painting? location unknown.  
A4900/general graffiti/wall painting?

24-6-65

A6801/1 Colour, wall painting, overall.  
A6801/3 Colour, wall painting, overall.

28-6-76

A(CN)9678/1-14 wall paintings.

Frater upper chamber: requires overall photography.

#### Bibliography

Anon, 'Old Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1855,

VI, 91.

Anon, 'The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary of the Cliff, Old Cleeve', JBAA XXXI, 408-411.

Anon, 'The Discoveries at Cleeve Abbey', Somersetsire Archaeological Society, The Builder, Sept 4 1875, 801.

Archaeological Journal, 107 (1950).

Babington, C., and Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: report on conservation treatment of the wall paintings and recommendations for future work (CIA/GCI).

Barron, C.M., and Harper-Bell, C., The Church in pre-Reformation Society, essays in honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge 1985, 58-67.

Buckle, E., 'The Buildings of Cleeve Abbey', Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXV, 1889, 93.

Dunning, R.W. 'The Last Days of Cleeve Abbey', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of FRH Du Boulay, Woodbridge, 1985.

Keevil, M.E., Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: notes on the treatment of the wall paintings, np, 1959.

McDonnell, J.G., Analysis of plaster samples from Cleeve Abbey, Somerset (AML report 1/90), EH, 1990.

S. Paine and C. Babington, 'Conservation of the wall paintings in the Library and Sacristy at Cleeve Abbey', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1991.

Rickerby, S., Cleeve Abbey: supplementary report: a technical examination of the Painted Chamber (CIA/GCI) English Heritage, 1989.

Rickerby, S., 'Cleeve Abbey, Somerset: Summary report on emergency conservation of wall paintings in the Dormitory and Sacristy', English Heritage, unpublished report, 1995.

Simms, R.S., Somerset: Churches and Religious Houses, Cleeve Abbey, p. 118.

Tristram archive, held at Courtauld Institute of Art.

Warre, E., 'Transactions of the Somerset Archaeological Natural History', 1855, VI, 91-95.



## 2 General Audit Information

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Region</b>	South West		
<b>Location</b>	South range, 2nd floor chamber		
<b>Orientation</b>	WEST WALL, CENTRE		
<b>Century</b> 16th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 80	<b>Width (cm)</b> 50
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	PW, TM	<b>Start date</b>	16/06/93

**Overall condition score**      **3**

### Recommendations

Original render layers extend throughout this room and should be included in any plans for future stabilisation of plaster. A regular inspection of this room would also be prudent.

The main areas of plaster containing painting, especially around the column and over the fireplace, require grouting and repairs. [Time scale: 2 conservators, 1 week within 5 years].

A photographic record of this area is required.

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

---

<b>Property name</b>	CLEEVE ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South West	<b>County</b>	Somerset
<b>Location</b>	South range, 2nd floor chamber		
<b>Orientation</b>	WEST WALL, CENTRE		
<b>Century</b> 16th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 80	<b>Width (cm)</b> 50

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

**Type** loss of cohesion (paint layer)

**Location** Throughout

**Comments** The paint layer is slightly powdering.

---

**Type** delamination (render layer)

**Location** Throughout.

**Comments** The render layer is delaminating from the support in certain areas.

---

**Type** cracking

**Location** Throughout.

**Comments** Cracks are evident in the render layer in certain areas.

---

**Type** loss of cohesion

**Location** Of render layer.

**Comments** The plaster is friable in areas and is associated with cracking.

---

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** limewash

**Location** Throughout, in areas

**Comments** Remains of a limewash veil/skim is visible in places.

---

### Repairs

**Type** cement

**Location** throughout

**Comments** Repairs in lime/sand/cement, possibly from the 1950's EH intervention.

---

**Type** lime:sand

**Location** throughout

**Comments** Edging repairs in lime/sand, possibly from the 1980's EH intervention.

---

## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 01/01/50  
**Person** M.O.W  
**Comments** 1950's MOW lime: sand edging repairs.

---

### Past Treatment

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 01/01/80  
**Person** EH  
**Comments** Lime/sand edging repairs, possibly 1980's.

---

### Proposed Treatment

**Type** CONSOLIDATION      **Date** 16/06/93  
**Person** EH  
**Comments** Consolidation of friable plaster is required [Timescale: within 5 years].

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 16/06/93  
**Person** EH  
**Comments** Insertion of suitable repairs is required [Timescale: within 5 years].

---

**Type** GROUTING      **Date** 16/06/93  
**Person** EH  
**Comments** Grouting of detaching plaster is required [Timescale: within 5 years].

---

**Type** RECORDING AND DOCUMENTATION      **Date** 16/06/93  
**Person** EH  
**Comments** Photographic record required.

---