

## **The Church of St James the Great, Stoke Orchard, Glos**



Before treatment



After treatment

### **2020 Wall Painting Conservation Project**

**Mark Perry ACR**  
**Adam Klups FIIC**

## The project's beginnings...











West wall, south side – scenes 17 & 18: St James overcoming the *familiar*; Christ blessing (after treatment). The scenes are separated simply by the figures having their backs to each other.



North wall – scene 22; The Scourging of St James (after treatment). The central figure – identified either as the High Priest or Herod Agrippa – has an elaborate headdress, long plait and distinctive patterned dress.



South wall, after treatment: Scenes 4&5 – *Hermogenes' aid sought by the chief Pharisee; he sends devils to attack St James who is saved by prayer. Phletus and his son are pictured behind St James.*



13. Scene 22 continued (left only) St. James believes his hearers.  
Scene 24 (right only) St. James led to execution looks a man of the pity.  
St. James looks over his shoulder.



Q. Scene 17. ? St James with staff overcoming Jews and Infidels by his preaching.  
The familiar falling down.  
Scene 18. ? A vision of Christ, in the attitude of blessing assisting his work.

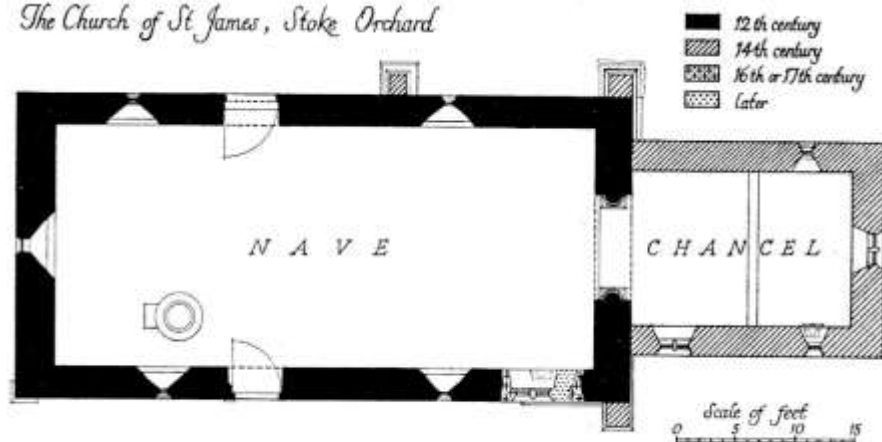


Q. Scene 9. (over South door). Hermogenes and St. James in converse.  
Scene 10. (over South door). Philetus' son tells his father to fetch St. James' staff.  
Scene 11. Philetus hands Hermogenes St. James' staff.



4. Scene 4. The Chief Pharisee seeks Hermogenes' help to destroy St. James  
Scene 5. St. James at prayer beset by devils (above), protects Philetus and his son.

## The Church of St James, Stoke Orchard



SOUTH WALL



NORTH WALL

## Notes

All areas of un-highlighted painted plaster are part of the St James cycle, thought to date from the 2nd quarter of the 14th century.

The dating of the various schemes is based on the information gleaned by Ifouze, the surveys by PUF and TCA and investigations during the recent conservation. The complicated layers structures, often as a result of the 1890's work, means that the date attribution of some areas is still open to speculation.

The demons pulling the wagon in the upper area of the south wall are on the same limewash layer as the St James cycle, but are stylistically close to similar schemes dating from the mid 14th century.

Mid 14th century    15th century    Late 15th century    2nd half 16th century    Early 17th century    18th century (post 1723)

<b>GRAPHIC NO: 1</b>	1015 Church of St James the Great, Stoke Orchard, Glos	LOCATION The Nave: South & North Walls	TITLE Location of the various schemes of Wall Painting	PROJECT The Perry Lithgow Partnership 1 Langdon Lane, Gosden Rd, Kingsham, Gloucestershire GL20 9JW Tel: 01452 680057	COORDINATES 13.6m L x 6m W x 4m H
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EAST WALL



WEST WALL

<b>GRAPHIC NO: 2</b>	1015 Church of St James the Great, Stoke Orchard, Glos	LOCATION The Nave: East & West Walls	TITLE Wall Painting Treatment Record (Dec 2020)	PROJECT The Perry Lithgow Partnership 1 Langdon Lane, Gosden Rd, Kingsham, Gloucestershire GL20 9JW Tel: 01452 680057	COORDINATES 13.6m L x 6m W x 4m H
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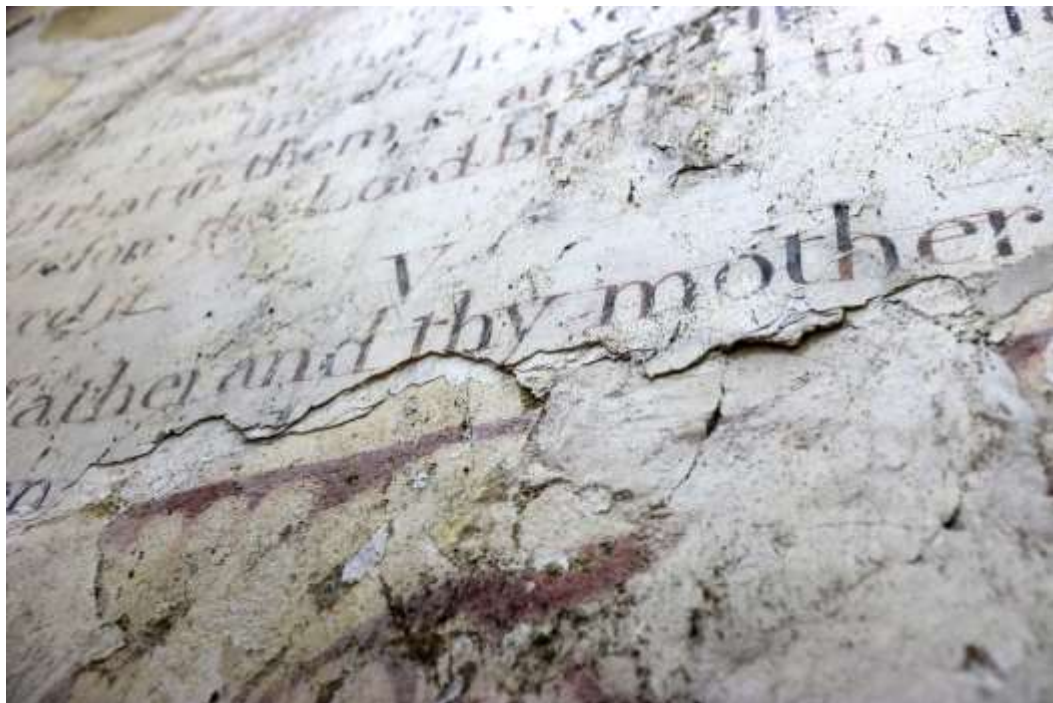
Examples of inappropriate previous repairs and surface losses on the south wall





Removal of previous repairs often exposed extensive damaged support plaster, with numerous voids behind the paintings surface, that required grouting







East wall, before &amp; after treatment



South-east corner, after treatment





Josh Hill and  
Louise Davison  
working on the  
west, east and  
south walls.

Claudia Fiocchi  
demonstrating  
paint  
reattachment  
techniques on the  
north wall (right)



Site visits in lockdown....



# Recruiting Graduate Conservation Assistant and Student Conservation Intern

## The Stoke Orchard Wall Paintings Conservation Project is recruiting

Published: June 11, 2020

The Stoke Orchard Wall Paintings Conservation Project Team is looking to recruit:

**1x Graduate Conservation Assistant**

**1x Student Conservation Intern**

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The Perry Lithgow Partnership have been appointed to carry out conservation treatment to the wall paintings at the Church of St James the Great, Stoke Orchard, Gloucestershire. The project is due to start in mid-August 2020.

The Tredington & Stoke Orchard PCC and the Perry Lithgow Partnership, supported by the Institute of Conservation (Icon) and Gloucester Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) are looking to recruit two junior members of the project's conservation team.

1. Graduate Conservation Assistant: A graduate of a recognised conservation course (an 'emerging conservator'), with proven experience of practical wall paintings conservation. The appointment will be for a period of 8 weeks (40 working days) of the project's expected 10 weeks. Eligible candidates should have graduated with their conservation degree less than two years prior to the project's start date. The daily rate of £128.00 (or £16 per hour, assuming a max 8-hour day) is offered, as well as reasonable travel and accommodation expenses, plus a small living allowance/subsistence. Full driving licence and access to a car are required.
2. Student Conservation Intern: A current student, enrolled on a recognised conservation course, for a period of two weeks (10 working days). The successful candidate will receive a stipend of £30/day. In addition, we would pay reasonable travel and accommodation expenses, plus a small living allowance/subsistence. Full driving licence and access to a car are preferable, but alternative arrangements may be possible.

Successful candidates will benefit from supervision of a nationally renowned conservation team of the Perry Lithgow Partnership. They will learn new skills and acquire practical conservation experience in a grade I listed rural church, thought



## Project Partners and Supporters:

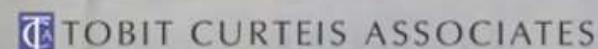
The PCC of Tredington  
and Stoke Orchard



The Friends of Tredington  
and Stoke Orchard Churches



The Gloucester Diocesan  
Advisory Committee



William and Jane Morris Fund



Idlewild Trust



THE LECHE TRUST



The Charities of William Laslett



*And over 70 individuals from the UK, Poland, United States, Canada, Spain, Slovenia and Bulgaria, who donated to help fund this important conservation project.*

## Help me to preserve Gloucestershire's hidden gem



**£1,625** raised

This fundraiser is no longer accepting donations. If you are the organiser, beneficiary, a team member or donor, [sign in](#) for further details.



Adam Klups is organising this fundraiser.





## Treating medieval wall paintings

### Also in this issue

Antarctic adventure • British Standards news • Forging history

# THE STOKE ORCHARD WALL PAINTINGS

The Stoke Orchard Wall Paintings Conservation Project provided an opportunity for two emerging conservators to hone their practical skills and learn new techniques

## INTRODUCTION

A story on Icon's website last November told of the conservation of medieval wall paintings at the Grade 1 listed church of St James the Great in Stoke Orchard, a small village in the county of Gloucestershire. The extensive and remarkable paintings in this small church depict the life of St James the Great and later schemes in need of conservation.

It is an onerous task for a small parish to take on all the work involved in raising the funds and commissioning a major conservation project. But with determination, cooperation and much help from Adam Klups, the Secretary to the Gloucester Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and an Icon Trustee, the funds were raised, permissions obtained, preparatory surveys conducted and competitive tendering undertaken. In due course, with the support of the Gloucester DAC, the Parochial

Church Council appointed the Perry Uthgow Partnership to undertake the work.

One element of the project made it possible to include two emerging conservators in the work. In this article we hear their accounts of the experience of working alongside Accredited experts in this field.

## JOSHUA HILL'S STORY

Arriving for my first day of work at St James the Great church, the early Autumn chill of the churchyard was balanced by the warmth of the exterior linewash of the church. This would be my first conservation job since graduating from the Courtauld in 2019 and, having spent 2019/20 in a full-time teaching role, almost a year since my last practical work.

St James the Great, Stoke Orchard



Image: Joshua Hill





SOUTH WALL



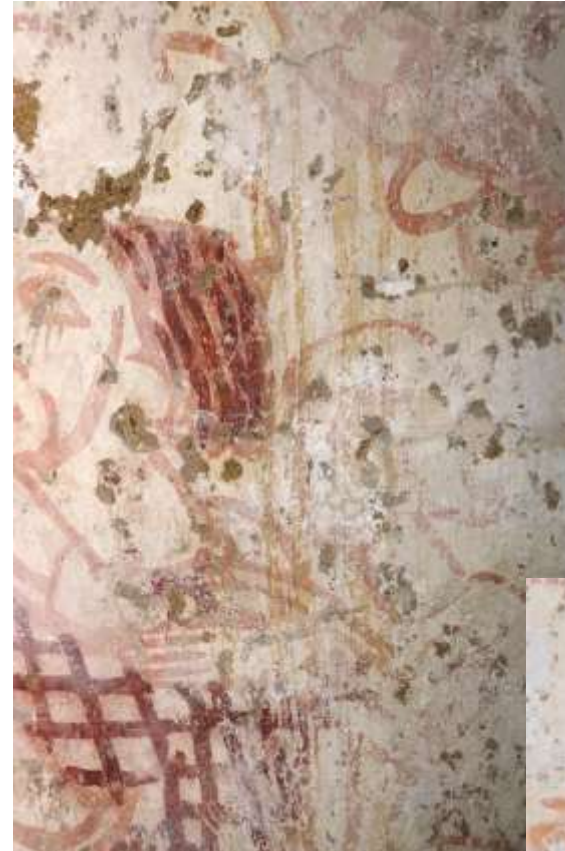
NORTH WALL

NB

The photographs used as the base for these graphics were taken before treatment

KEY       Unstable paint & ground (treated)       Unstable plaster (treated)       Water/wax drips (treated)

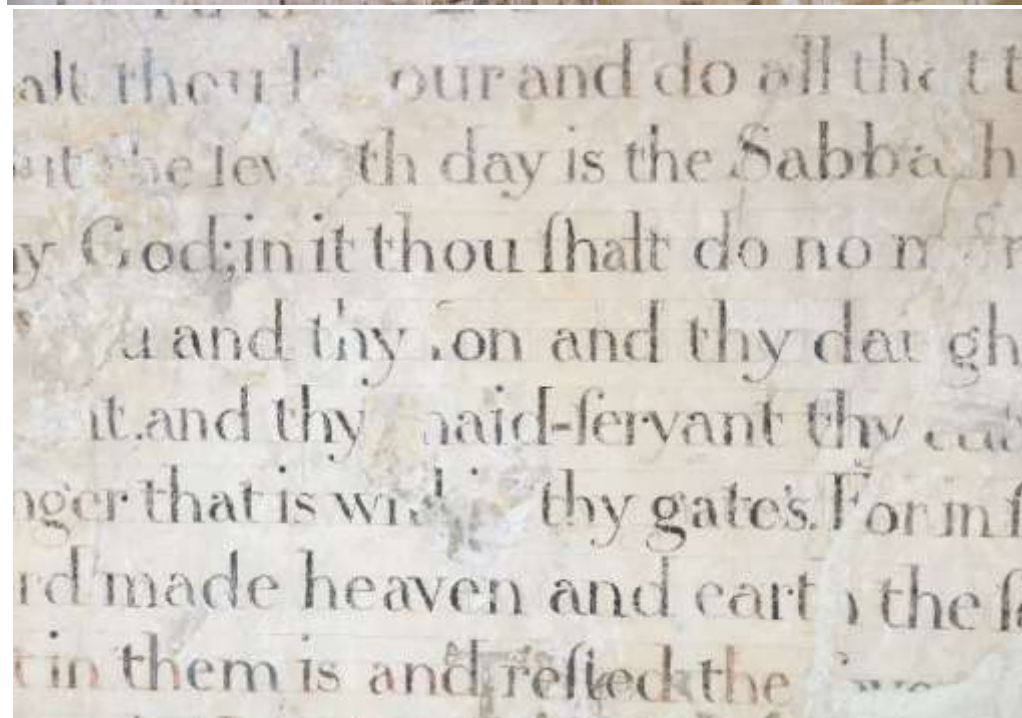
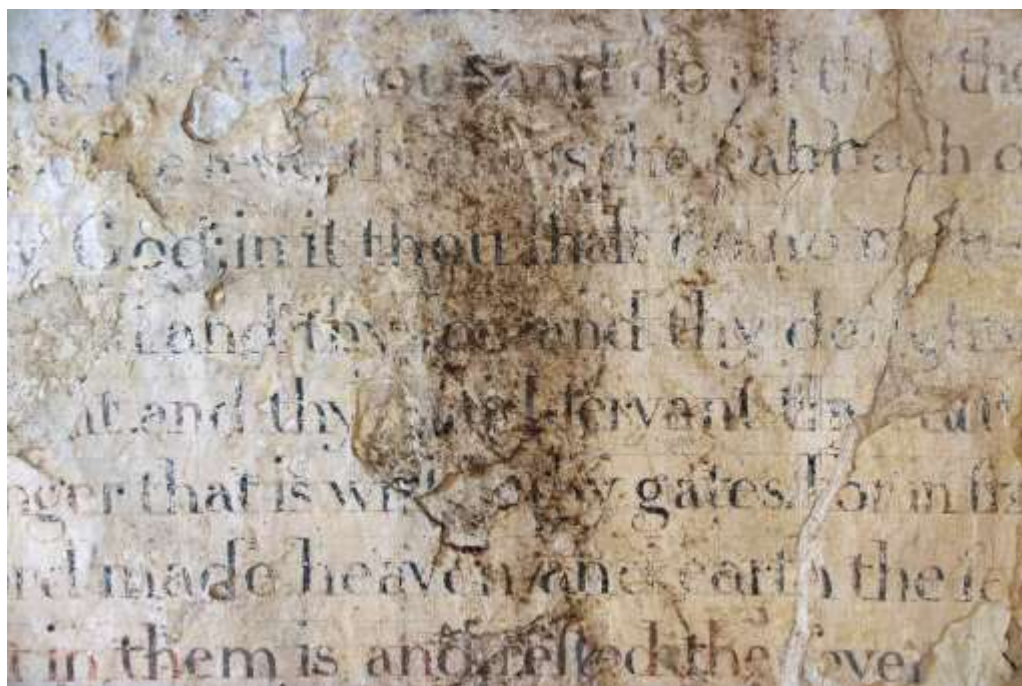
<b>GRAPHIC NO: 5</b>	<b>SITE</b> Church of St James the Great Stoke Orchard, Glos	<b>LOCATION</b> The Nave: South & North Walls	<b>TITLE</b> Wall Painting Treatment Record (Dec 2020)	<b>THE PERRY LITHGOW PARTNERSHIP</b> 1 Langston Lane, Saxon Rd, Kingham, Oxon OX7 6UW Tel. 01608 658067	<b>DIMENSIONS</b> 13.6m L x 6m W x 4m H
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South wall, centre area – before & after dirt & staining removal



Examples of dirt removal – during treatment



Examples of before and after dirt removal from the 10 Commandments (above left) and during cleaning the exposed stone work on the north window voussoirs (above right)



Upper east wall. - The Hanoverian Arms, context & detail  
before & after treatment

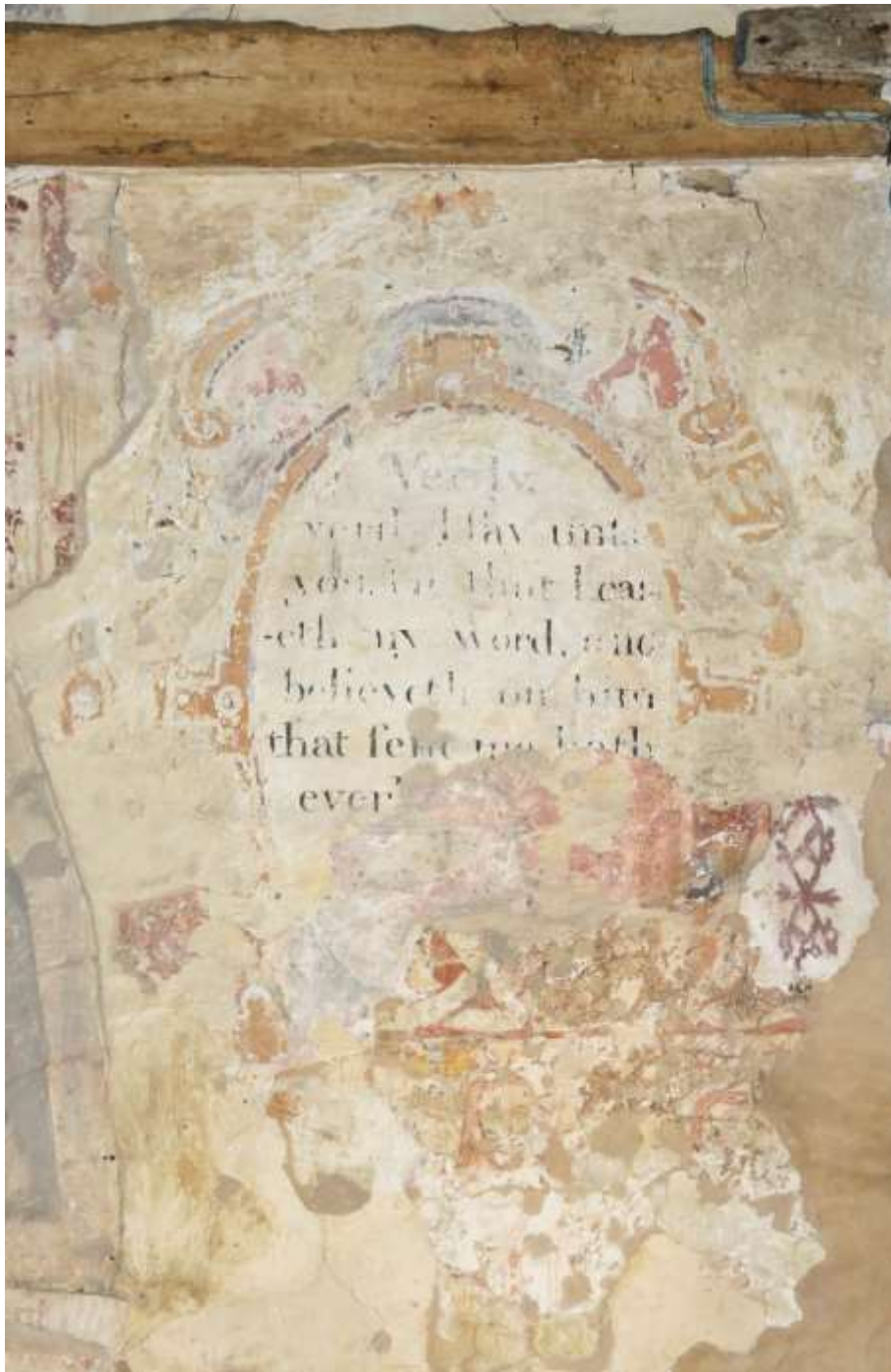


Examples of wax drips from candles & historic staining on window sill areas – before & after treatment



North wall, central area – The Lord's Prayer, details before &amp; after treatment





Removal of the unpainted covering limewash layers has exposed and clarified large areas of the 18<sup>th</sup> century text and frame on the south side of the chancel arch (before & after treatment)



South window, east end – the sill, before, during & after treatment



South wall, eastern end– details of the lower border, before, during & after treatment



North wall, east end – The Scourging of St James, before, during & after treatment



South wall, west end— detail of Hermogenes receiving St James' staff, before & after treatment



South wall, central area – detail of the St James cycle, before treatment





North-west corner, before & after treatment



North –west corner – before & after treatment



North wall, east end — St James cycle. Detail of possible donor figure below the border before & after treatment  
Plus a detail taken using D-Stretch imaging software (above)



West window – masonry patterns, after treatment (left) and with the design as a conjectural reconstruction (below left)



South east window – newly exposed masonry pattern, before (top) & after treatment



South east window sill – newly exposed foliate scroll pattern , before, during) & after treatment





Examples of incised lines used to lay out the scheme – lower east wall, south side , details of Christ's robe & nimbus (top left and left) & south wall centre, border, detail of fingers (above)



Example of incised drawing possibly intended as a sketch for the border scheme below the western window, south wall (above left) and graffiti of two heads on the border below the easternmost window, north wall (above right)