



Holy Trinity, Dorchester

Nineteenth Century reredos and associated wood panelling

It is possible that the impressive late nineteenth century reredos in Holy Trinity could be by C E Kempe; who is perhaps better known for his work in stained glass. The central bas relief panels show the Crucifixion of Christ, to the left the risen Christ appearing before Mary Magdalene and to the right The Supper at Emmaus. Either side of these there are carvings of Saints Peter and Paul, each set within a niche; and below there is a row of nine Saints.

The programme of practical conservation was largely focused on conserving and cleaning the variety of polychromed surfaces which make up the reredos. To do this a range of approaches were required, taking into account not only the diverse qualities of original polychromed surfaces but also the varied nature of that which had been applied or deposited onto them over the last century.

Panelling to the sides of the reredos had been overpainted and in comparison to the reredos was dull and plain. Detailed investigations and archive photographs showed that the panelling was originally far more ornate, and provided a complimentary setting for the reredos. This decoration was reconstructed to imitate the original, and lettering which could be safely uncovered was revealed again.

Included within the overall programme was the upgrading of the artificial lighting in the chancel from halogen lights, which cast an unpleasant orange light, to a more natural looking light. A subtle aspect of the lighting is that the reredos is lit very slightly asymmetrically such that the three dimensional qualities are made apparent. Overall the transformation to the feel of the chancel was considerable.

