



# St Barnabas' Church, Jehrico, Oxford

The lower walls of the chancel arch and apse

St Barnabas Church, Jehrico, was founded by Thomas Combe, manager of the Oxford University Press; and designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield. Both Thomas Combe and his wife Martha were keen patrons of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and not surprisingly St Barnabas provided a home for the Tractarian Movement in Oxford.

In 1869 the church was opened, internally the walls of the chancel arch and apse were decorated with a relatively straightforward scheme. In 1893, under the direction of Sir Arthur Blomfield, there was a significant redecoration by the company Heaton, Butler and Bayne. In layout this reworking followed the existing decoration but there was considerable embellishment with gold leaf. That scheme accounts for much of what is seen today. In the 1960s the lower walls were completely repainted in an imitation of the 1893 scheme, but the quality of the work was much poorer than the original.

The programme of conservation and reconstruction was concerned with the damaged polychromy on the lower walls of the chancel arch and the apse. Practical measures included identifying, recording and securing painted decoration from both the 1869 and subsequent embellished 1893 schemes. A reversible paint medium was used to reconstruct the decoration on the lower walls of the chancel in keeping with the 1893 scheme.

