



# SKILLINGTONS

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## St Mary's church Kirkby Fleetham, North Yorkshire



*Plate 1: The monument after conservation.*

**A record of conservation carried out to the  
monument of William Smelt Esq (d.1755) during  
January 2020**

**Skillington Workshop Limited**

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## **Introduction**

This report forms the final conservation record of the works carried out to the William Smelt Esq monument on the north wall of the north aisle of St Mary's Church, Kirkby Fleetham, North Yorkshire. The work was carried out by Laura Parker and Kathrine Graf with assistance from Simon Nadin and Josh Horsfall all of Skillington Workshop Ltd during January 2020. The report includes a photographic record.

## **Description of the work carried out**

The works consisted of cleaning all of the elements of the monument using minimal amounts of deionised water and melamine sponge to remove the dirt. Ammonium Carbonate poultices were used where necessary to remove more ingrained dirt. The upper section of the obelisk and the cartouche were removed and reset using stainless steel fixings and Hilti HY epoxy resin. The right-hand scroll bracket was also reset using the same method. Other exposed iron fixings were treated for rust and painted to protect them from further deterioration.

The painted heraldry was cleaned carefully using Tri-Ammonium Citrate, the edges of the paint were then consolidated using a 5% solution of Primal B60A. Areas of flaking black marble were consolidated using the same method with larger voids grouted using *Deffner & Johann* CalXnova Lime Injection Mortar. Losses to the black marble were filled using colour matched lime mortar.

Finally the lettering to the inscription panel was repainted and the losses to the lettering on the cartouche were touched in and the whole monument was given a coat of microcrystalline wax.

## **Conservation record of works to the monument**

1. Once access was gained to the top of the monument via a mobile tower scaffold it was evident the top of the obelisk was not secure and there was a large gap between the marble and the wall. It was decided it would be safest to remove this section and the cartouche before carrying out works to the rest of the monument.



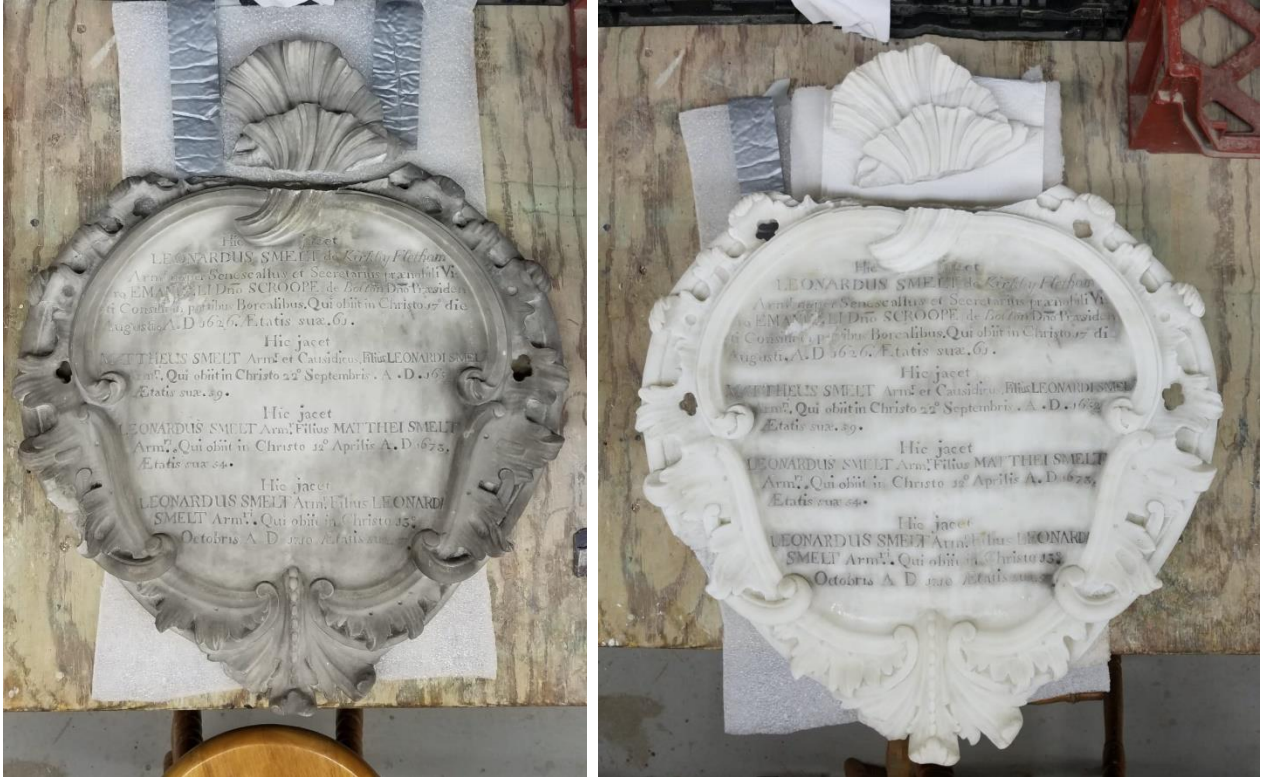
*Plate 2: The gap between the upper section of the obelisk and the wall.*

2. The monument was then given a general clean using soft brushes to remove loose dirt into the nozzle of a vacuum cleaner.
3. Trials were carried out to determine the best method of cleaning. The whole monument was cleaned using melamine sponge moistened with deionised water. Cotton wool swabs were also used especially around the lettering to the cartouche and the inscription panel. The white and grey marble elements were then cleaned further using a 2% Ammonium Carbonate poultice applied on acid free tissue paper for a dwell time of thirty minutes. In some areas two applications were necessary such as the corbels. There was a surface coating on the corbels which had discoloured making them appear black which required two applications to soften enough to fully remove.



*Plate 3: The urn during cleaning*

- The upper section of the obelisk and the cartouche were cleaned while dismantled. The decorative element on the top of the cartouche had been previously repaired in plaster which was deteriorating. This was removed and pinned back into place using a small stainless steel dowel set in polyester resin.



*Plates 4& 5: The cartouche before and during cleaning*

- The section of obelisk and the cartouche were reset using 316 marine grade stainless steel fixings and Hilti HY epoxy resin. No fixings were found to support the section of black marble; it appeared to be reliant on the cartouche to hold it in place. The section was bedded on a thin layer of plaster of Paris. To ensure it was secure cramps were added to the top edge which extend into the wall behind to give extra support. The original fixings for the cartouche hooked behind the lower section of black marble, these were replaced and extended to fix into the wall behind to offer greater security.



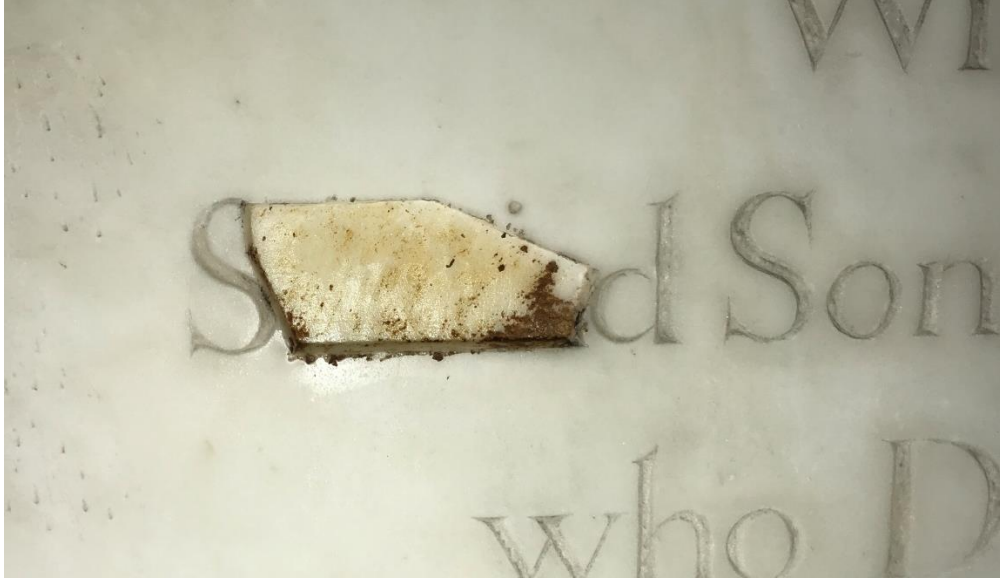
*Plate 6: Fixings holding the top section of the obelisk into the wall*

6. The right-hand scroll bracket was reset using a similar method. A small stainless steel dowel was added as there had previously been no fixings holding it in place.



*Plate 7: Supporting dowel to the back of the scroll bracket*

7. A small slip of marble on the inscription panel, possibly where a correction was made, was loose, it was cleaned of old adhesive and re-adhered using polyester resin.



*Plate 8: Indent where lettering was replaced showing old adhesive residue*

8. The polychromy to the shield was cleaned using a combination of cotton wool swabs with deionised water and also a 5% solution of Tri-Ammonium Citrate. The swabs were carefully rolled across the surface to remove surface dirt without loss of paint. The edges of the polychromy were consolidated using a 5% solution of Primal B60A in deionised water using a small paint brush to flood the solution under the edges of the polychromy.
9. It was not possible to extract the iron cramp exposed in the top of the urn, instead the metal work was cleaned using wire wool to remove loose corrosion and then stabilised using Hammerite Kurust rust inhibitor then painted using Hammerite metal paint to protect it from corroding further. This was also done to the other exposed iron fixings including the one to the right side of the surbase which had caused a section of the marble to spall off. The metal work was treated and the loose section of marble was readhered in place using polyester resin. The urn lid was secured using plaster of Paris.



*Plate 9: The urn with lid repointed and cramp treated*

10. There were several losses to the black marble background as well as areas where the marble was delaminating leaving small voids behind the surface and losses to the surface where it had flaked off. These areas were consolidated by using a syringe to inject a 5% solution of Primal B60A behind the surface and over the areas of loss. The voids were then filled using a grout of:

1x *Deffner & Johann* CalXnova Lime Injection Mortar, 0.5x Rottenstone, 1x Trass.

The larger losses were filled using lime mortar. A backing mix was applied initially:

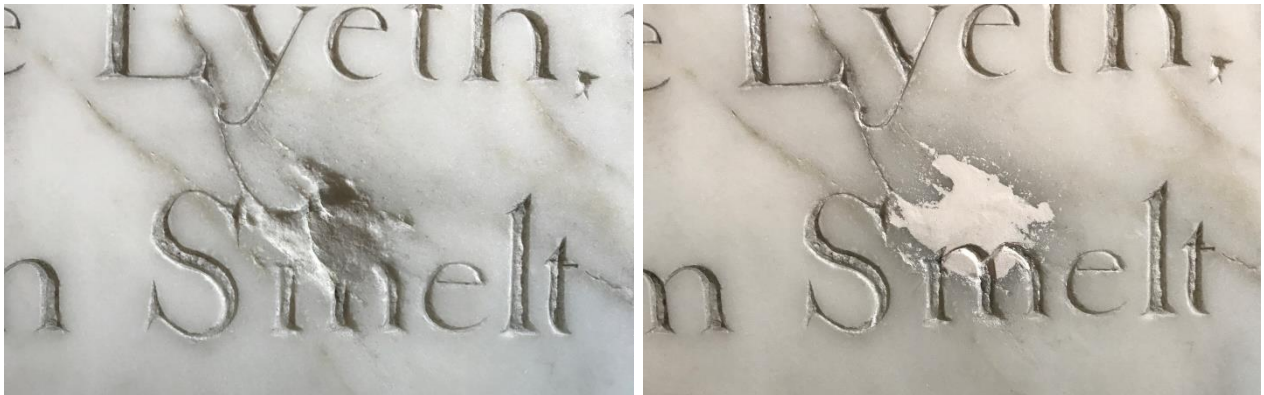
1x St. Astier NHL2, 2x Baston sharp sand, 1 x Baston plastering sand

A colour matched layer was applied over the top to blend the repairs in with the original marble. Two mixes were used for lighter and darker areas:

*Light:* 1 x St. Astier NHL2, 1.5 x sieved Baston plastering sand, 1 x Rottenstone, 0.5 x Trass

*Dark:* 1 x St. Astier NHL2, 1.5 x sieved Baston plastering sand, 1 x Rottenstone, 0.5 x Trass + 10% Burnt Umber powder pigment

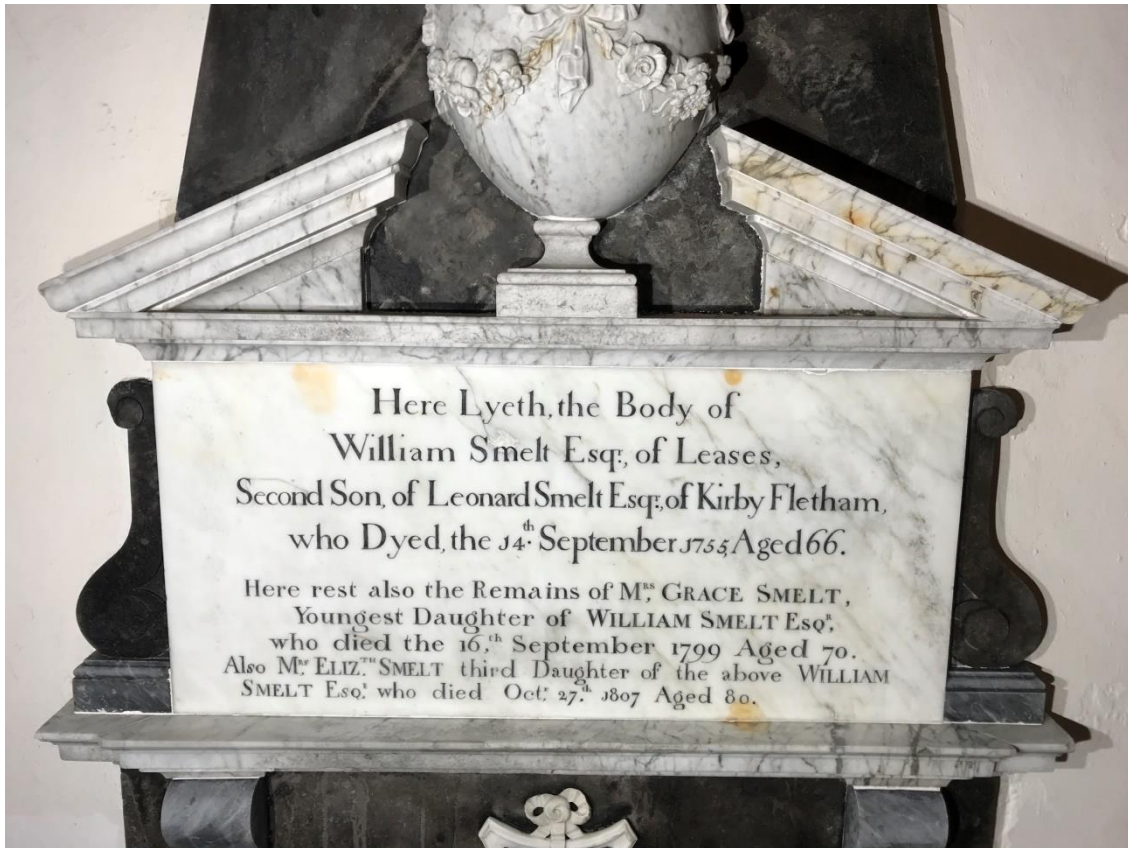
11. There were losses to some of the letters including the 'm' in 'Smelt', these were filled using casting plaster and carved into shape to improve the legibility of the inscription. These were toned in using artists' acrylics.



*Plates 10&11: Lettering before and during repair*

12. The lettering to the cartouche was mostly intact; the small losses were toned in using artists' acrylics. The paint in the lettering to the inscription panel was almost entirely lost. The lettering was repainted, again, using artists' acrylics to match the colour of the original paint being carefully to ensure the original paint was retained.





*Plate 12: The inscription panel after relettering*

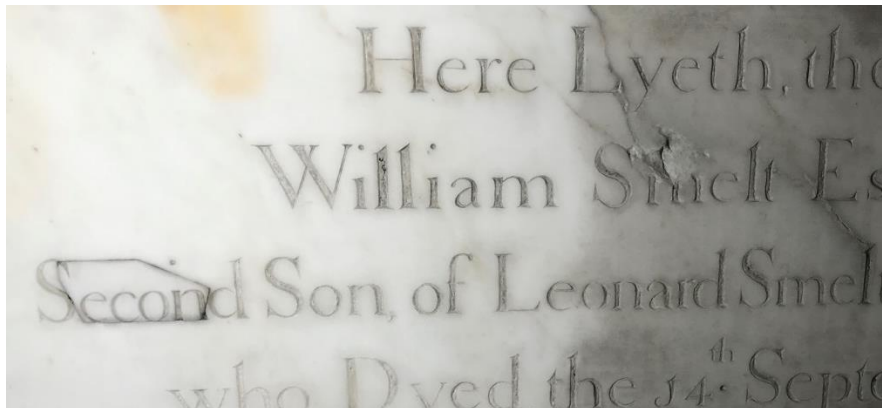
13. Loose and missing pointing was replaced using plaster of Paris, where this appeared obtrusive the joint lines were toned in using artists' acrylics.
14. The entire monument was given a protective coating of Cosmoloid H80 microcrystalline wax buffed to a uniform finish using a soft cloth.



*Plates 13&14: The monument before and after conservation*

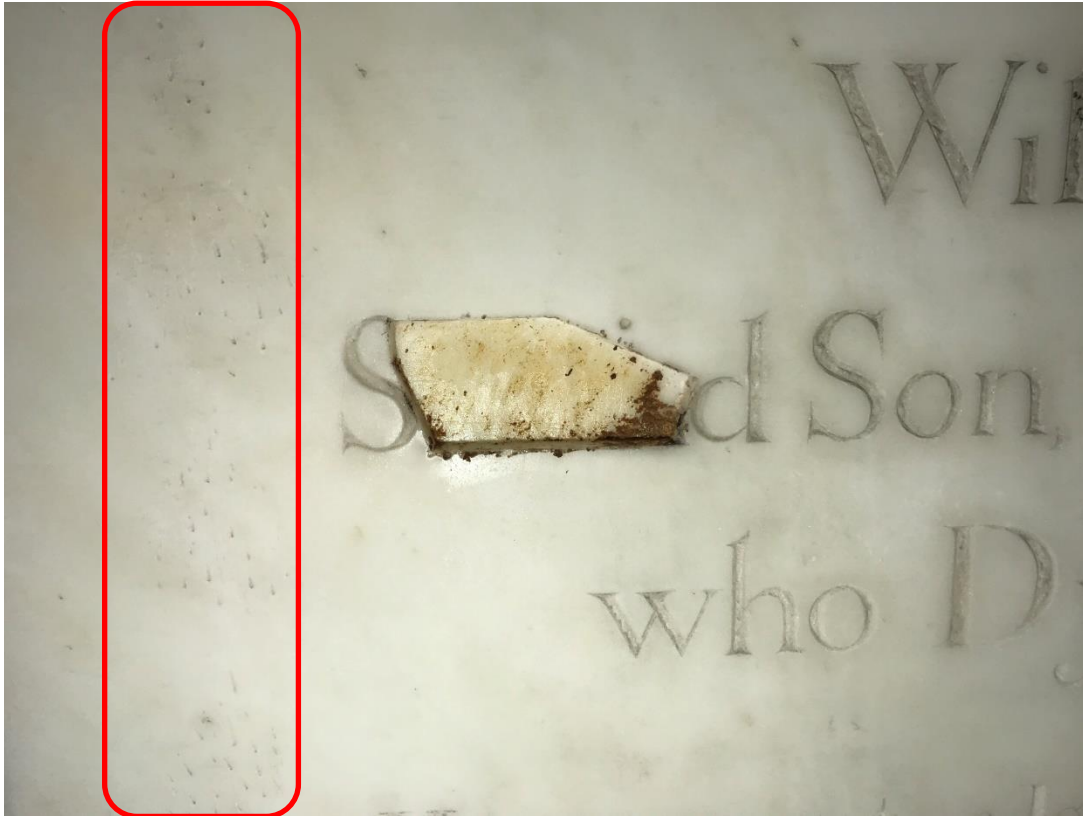
## Observations

1. There appears to have been a correction made to the inscription tablet. William is described as the 'second son'; however, the letters 'econ' are on a small slip of marble which had been adhered into place. It is possible it originally read 'third' as the 'd' has not been altered and there is a tittle above the area where an 'i' would fit.



*Plate 15: The insert during cleaning of the inscription panel*

2. There appear to be some decorative elements missing from the inscription panel, either side of the lettering. There is a pattern of keying on the marble which from the shape may possibly have been a ribbon a flower decoration. It is less evident on the right hand side as the marble is damaged but there is a similar outline.



*Plate 16: The keying visible to the left of the lettering*

### **Future maintenance recommendations**

1. Cleaning should be kept to a minimum with only light dusting using soft bristle brushes such as a paint brush used to remove loose dust into the nozzle of a vacuum cleaner. If any further cleaning is required a suitably experienced conservator should be consulted.
2. The building fabric – in particularly rainwater disposal and roofs – should be maintained in good order.
3. The impact from building works elsewhere in the church can be reduced by carefully laying over two layers of clean light-weight dust sheets. Any building works above or in the close vicinity of the monument will require that it is boxed

in in such a way that both the dust is kept out and that there is no direct contact with the monument.

4. It is recommended that the monument be inspected by the church architect as part of their quinquennial reports. Observations should be made of any movement in the monument. This will be most obviously detected in the plaster of Paris pointing. If anything of concern is noted then an ICON accredited monument conservator should be consulted.

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Laura Parker

Conservator

24 January 2020