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St. Peter's Church
Clayworth
Nottinghamshire
(Diocese of Southwell)

Plate 1: The monument after conservation

A Record of Conservation Works Carried out to the Monument of Humphrey Fitzwilliam (d.1556)

July 2024

Introduction

This report is a record of the conservation works undertaken to the monument of Humphry Fitzwilliam in St. Peters Church, Clayworth in June and July 2024. The works were carried out by Laura Parker and Abby Davy both Conservators of Skillington Workshop Ltd with overall supervision from Dr. David Carrington ACR FSA FIIC. The works carried out included dry and wet cleaning, consolidation of plasterwork and mortar repairs. In addition the sections of lost bull nose moulding were reinstated.

The works were commissioned by Graeme Renton church Architect on behalf of Clayworth Parochial Church Council, where our primary contact was Mrs Davina Gull. Financial support was received from *Church Care* (the Radcliffe Trust), the Prince of Wales Trust, the William and Jane Morris Fund, Nottinghamshire Historic Churches Trust, Benefact Trust, Hoare's Bank, and the Henry Smith Charity.

The monument was originally covered by a survey report by Paul Wooles of Skillington Workshop Ltd, dated November 2013. This was reviewed and amended by Dr David Carrington in a letter to Davina Gull dated 16 December 2022, and then further revisions made in light of advice from Tracy Manning of the Church Buildings Council, as per Dr Carrington's letter to Graeme Renton dated 9 November 2023. These three documents together formed the brief for the works described here, developed over the course of 10 years!

Works Carried Out to the Monument

1. The area was secured from visitor access with cones to provide a suitable safe working area. The floor was protected before works began by laying sheets of Correx taped together. Record photographs and notes were taken throughout the process.

2. Consolidation of the plasterwork was carried out before cleaning to preserve the original surface. Historical cracks allowed access to the back of the delaminated plaster for a small needle to be inserted. The area was flushed with IDA (Industrial Denatured Alcohol) used as a wetting agent to improve travel of the grout. Then *CaLoSiL E50* (a nanolime dispersion*)* was injected into the area to consolidate any powdered surfaces behind the plaster. The area was then grouted using *Deffner & Johann CalXNova* Lime Injection Mortar (A dispersed hydrated lime mixed with minerals and water).

Plate 2 (left): The south face during consolidation

Plate 3 (right): The west face after consolidation

3. Some small decorative elements were loose and at risk of detachment so these were also secured by grouting or spot fixing with *CalXNova* as necessary.

4. Dry cleaning of the whole monument was carried out to remove the surface dust, debris and salts. A soft bristle brush was used in conjunction with a vacuum cleaner ensuring the nozzle did not come into direct contact with the plaster and decorative surfaces. Monitoring was carried out throughout this process to ensure any friable surfaces were consolidated before cleaning to prevent further loss.
5. Surfaces were consolidated using *Primal SF-016* (a deep penetrating acrylic solidifier) diluted to 5% in de-ionised water.

6. The whole surface of the monument was cleaned with smoke sponges and in areas that required further cleaning a cotton wool swab with a small amount of de-ionised water and *Synperonic A7* (non-ionic detergent) was used ensuring not to flood the surface.

Plate 4: Before cleaning.

Plate 5: After cleaning.

7. The missing section of bull nose moulding was reconstructed using sections of riven oak lath doubled up and secured together using stainless steel wire. This wire was fishtailed at the end and inserted into small holes drilled into the plaster and adhered with *Hilti HY* polyester resin. The new moulding was roughed out with a first layer of plaster made from 1 part lime putty, 2.5 parts Baston plastering sand with the addition of hair. This was left to firm before the finishing layer of plaster was applied replicating the shape of the bullnose and blending with previous repairs. The mix consisted of 1 part lime putty, 1.5 parts Clipsham stone dust and 1 part Portland stone dust.

Plate 6: The lath fixed in place.

Plate 7: The backing coat for the moulding.

8. The most extensive repair to the bullnose was on the west end. The structure was still in place, however it was very loose and was easily removed. Removal allowed the remaining plaster which was also loose to be secured. This was done using *CalXNova*. The remaining plaster meant a different method of attaching the wood had to be used to enable it to sit flush. This was done by drilling small holes into the wood of the moulding and into corresponding places on the monument. Twisted stainless steel wire was used as a dowel, this was fixed into the monument with *Hilti HY* polyester resin and into the wood with *General* polyester resin. Once secured the loss to the north end of the moulding was reconstructed in the same way as on the other sides.

Plate 8: The loose bullnose moulding and plaster sections from the west face.

9. The losses in the plaster were filled using a mortar mix consisting of 1 part Singleton Birch lime putty, 1.5 parts Clipsham stone dust and 1 part Portland stone dust. Losses to the decoration were not re-constructed but surfaces were left flush to the surrounding area.

Plate 9: The west face after mortar repairs and reinstating moulding.

10. The brass plaque on the top of the monument was cleaned using a small amount of IDA on a cotton wool swab. *Renaissance* microcrystalline wax was applied to the surface with consideration to not leave excessive residue in the lettering and then carefully buffed to a uniform finish.

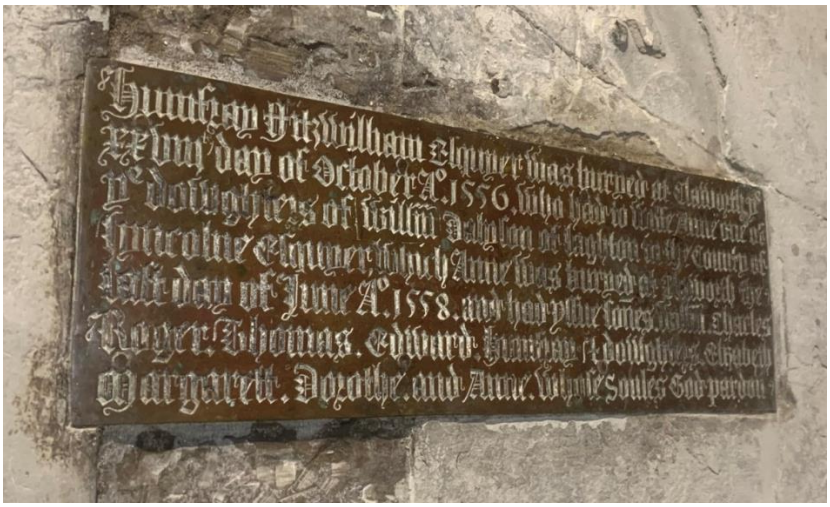

Plate 10: The brass plaque after cleaning and waxing.

11. Investigation of the suspected cement render on the plinth of the tomb chest revealed the cement to be more extensive than first thought. An investigation window was opened to assess the depth of the cement. This was covered in Dr David Carrington's letter dated 2 July 2024. It was decided that it would be potentially too destructive to remove the render fully. Instead the cracks and losses were filled and the investigation window was repaired. The cracks were grouted with a mix of 1 part *St. Astier* NHL2, 1 part Portland stone dust. The investigation window was built up in layers with a mix of 1 part NHL 2, 2.5 parts Baston plastering sand with sections of tile. A top coat of 1 part NHL 2, 1.25 parts Portland stone dust, 0.5 parts Clipsham stone dust and 0.25 parts Delabole slate dust was applied to the cracks and losses.

Plate 11: Building up the backing coats.

Plate 12: The top coat applied.

12. Upon completion the floor protection was removed and the area left tidy. Hazard tape was secured in front of the monument to ensure mortars had adequate time to fully dry before being accessible to the public.

Observations

1. There is obviously historic damage to the tomb chest as would be expected for a monument of this age. However, the front of the tomb chest appears to have scrapes along the upper protruding edge from contact with furniture. The delicate nature of the plaster makes any contact with furniture or other objects damaging to the surface and should be avoided.
2. The south facing elevation had significantly more discolouration, from what appeared to be soot. This is presumably from candles being situated close to the monument.
3. Efflorescence historically has been a major problem for this monument. The tiles were removed from around the base of the monument in February 2024 therefore; this will still be improving the problem of efflorescence. The small amount of efflorescence that was observed was concentrated around the west end of the monument and was removed in the dry cleaning. Some was also noted when investigating the cement render to the plinth.
4. The bullnose has been repaired previously and at least two different methods had been used.
5. When drilling for the bullnose brick or stone was found behind the plaster on the east and south side however the west side had a void immediately behind the plaster suggesting with some damp brick dust suggesting deterioration of the substrate.
6. There are sections of graffiti on the back of the monument (north side) which are mainly prevalent on old sections of repair. Various initials, names and dates can be seen.

Plate 13: Graffiti to the north side of the tomb chest.

Future maintenance recommendations

1. Cleaning should ideally be avoided. Even well-intentioned light dusting could potentially cause damage. If cleaning is felt necessary an ICON accredited monument conservator should be consulted first.

2. It is important that the monument is protected from paint splashes during any redecoration works in the vicinity.

3. The building fabric – in particularly rainwater disposal and roofs – must be maintained in good order.

4. The impact from building works elsewhere in the church can be reduced by carefully protecting with 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.

5. It is recommended that the monument be inspected by the church architect as part of their quinquennial reports. In particular any signs of recently opened cracks or of soluble salt efflorescence should be looked for. If anything of concern is seen then an ICON accredited monument conservator should be consulted for further advice.

6. Nothing should be placed on top of or in close proximity to the monument.

Abby Davy, Laura Parker, and Dr David Carrington ACR FSA FIIC
For Skillington Workshop Ltd
July 2024