

The Church of St Mary, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire (Diocese of Oxford) Conservation Management Plan



Figure 1: The Church of St Mary, Chalgrove, seen from the south-east



Chalgrove Church
A PLACE A PART

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Figure 2: Medieval wall paintings on the north wall of the chancel

The Church of St Mary, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire (Diocese of Oxford): Conservation Management Plan

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Church, Chalgrove, commissioned this Conservation Plan as part of the Conservation and Management Project for the church. This received grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Conservation Management Plan originally formed part of a Stage 2 funding application, and has now been updated as a result of the Heritage Lottery funded work of the Conservation and Restoration Project in 2015-16. This first revision dated March 2017 includes new historic and conservation evidence gained during the work.

The Church of St Mary at Chalgrove is an ancient foundation. The church's current form dates back to the 12th century AD, and there may be an Anglo-Saxon church beneath or near the medieval building. The church contains one of the best preserved and most colourful set of wall paintings not only in Oxfordshire, but in England. The quality and beauty of the decoration is probably due to royal patronage as a prebend of Wallingford. This influence perhaps ensured that the living of the church passed to Christ Church, Oxford, the new foundation of King Henry VIII.

The Church of St Mary is a good example of Norman transitional architecture in Oxfordshire. In addition to the exceptional early 14th-century wall paintings, the carved stone piscina with credence and three-seated sedilia are very fine examples of high quality medieval design and craftsmanship, possibly with Florentine influence. The exceptional historic, architectural, art historical and archaeological significance of the building is recognised in its Grade I listing: this places it in the top 2.5% of England's most important historic buildings. The church, however, should not be

seen as an isolated historical monument, but must be understood as the home of a vibrant Christian community. As such it represents a centuries-long tradition of faith and worship at Chalgrove. This sets the building within its wider human and natural environment, as an asset for the local and wider community. The importance of encouraging local children to find out about their community's history is recognised in the 2010 Chalgrove Local Plan. The Church is recognised as important as a historic building in this context (Chalgrove Local Plan 2010).

With this in mind, this Conservation Management Plan was compiled in 2014, and has now been revised in 2016-17, as an essential contribution to the continuing development of the church as a community and cultural asset as well as a place of worship and contemplation. It is the obvious place to learn about the history of Christianity in the area, and the rich local heritage of the village as a whole. It is also a cultural centre, a place to enjoy music and art: in the latter instance this is not only through the wall paintings and other original features such as monuments and brasses, but also contemporary artists through hosting events such as the Oxfordshire Art Weeks. This has involved working together with the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage, the Diocese of Oxford, the local planning authorities and other partners in order to offer a resource and attraction to audiences at the local, regional and national levels – and beyond.

The Plan describes the considerable improvements achieved by the Conservation and Refurbishment Project during 2015-16. These should not be the end of a process: rather, they provide the basis for further improvements to the building and contents. This must of course involve ongoing inspection, maintenance and repair as needed of the church fabric, fixtures and fittings, and/or ensuring their preservation for the future. The energy and expertise within the church community and of its external advisors should continue to be harnessed for the good of the fabric, along with the existing Diocesan and national support. The aim is not only to respect the significance of the building, and the values attached to it by the people of Chalgrove and beyond, but to enhance it, to make it better, to conserve and protect all the assets within St Mary's Church. The Conservation Management Plan will guide and assist the Parochial Church Council and its partners in moving on from the 2015-16 project.



Figure 3: The interior of the nave looking south-east towards the chancel.

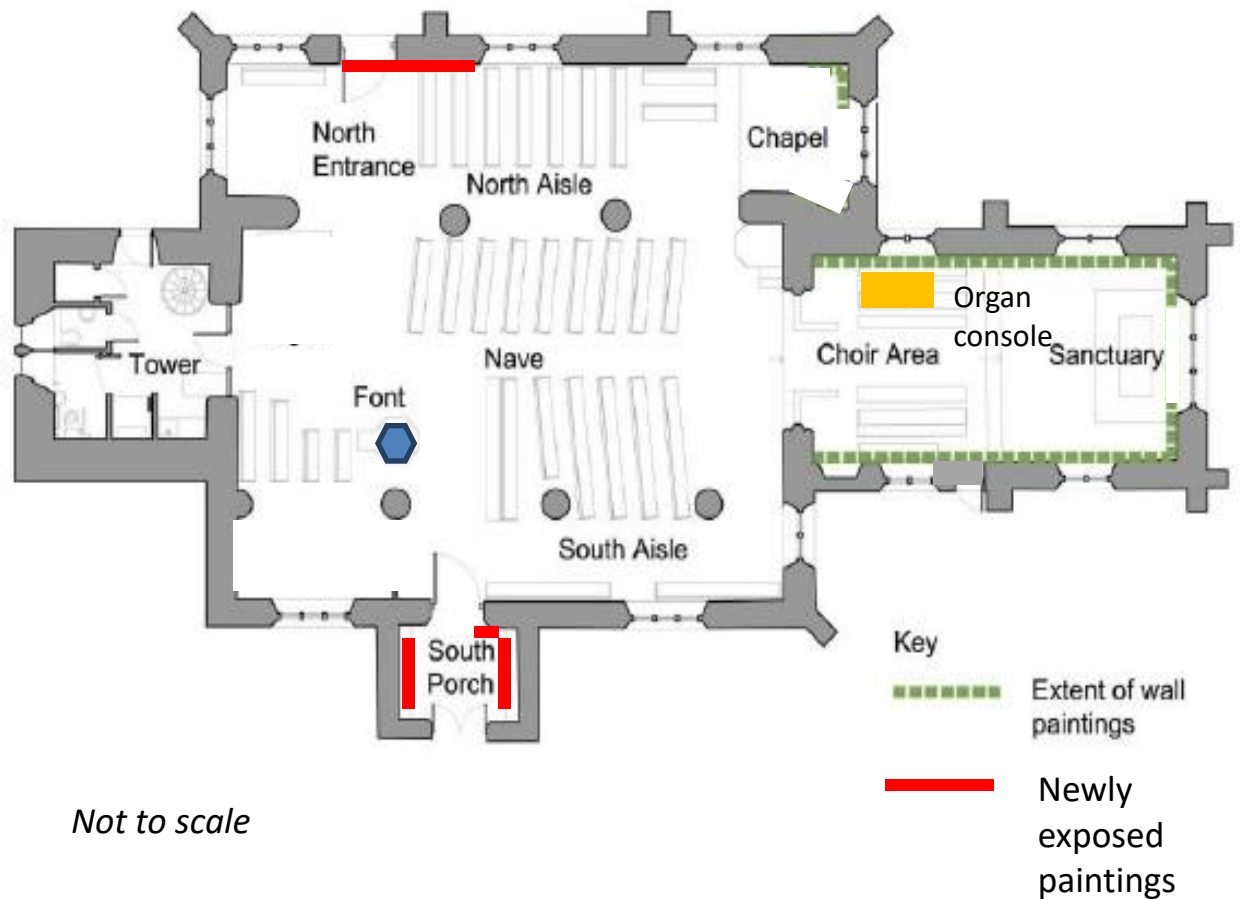


Figure 4: Plan of the church, showing the extent of medieval wall paintings (after Caroe & Partners, amended C Baker).

2 INTRODUCTION

The Conservation Plan for St Mary's Church was compiled in 2014 on behalf of the Parochial Church Council as part of the first stage development of a significant conservation-based scheme of work to the church's interior and exterior. The Conservation Plan has been updated in 2016-17 as result of the Conservation and Refurbishment Project which took place in 2015-16 with funding provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund and others as well as local fund raising. The document has been benefitted from the advice and input of the PCC, the incumbent (Rev'd Canon Ian Cohen), the PCC's architects (Caroe and Partners), Paul and Rachel Jacques, and the work of the Chalgrove Local History Group. Specific information on the results of the 2015-16 work, and lessons to be drawn from it, has also been provided by Charles Baker, the leader of the Conservation and Refurbishment Project. This has included the reports from conservator Madeleine Katkov, environmental auditor Tobit Curteis, the brass monuments conservator, and charity boards conservator. Other conservators working under the guidance of Madeleine Katkov also worked on other monuments within the church and have provided reports. The revised plan has been written to guide proposals for improving the ongoing conservation, accessibility and use of the church as a place of Christian worship and mission, and as a community and educational resource. The Conservation Plan will be of value to the Parochial Church Council and its partners in providing appropriate and dynamic policies and direction for day-to-day management of the site as well as higher-level issues, needs and projects. It is an important document for evaluating short, medium and long-term work programmes, not only for conservation purposes but also in any future development ideas.

The Conservation Plan follows guidance published by the Church Buildings Council in 2007,¹ and English Heritage's *Conservation Principles*. As this document stresses, a Conservation Plan on a major church is "a useful tool for recognising and reconciling tensions that may arise between the necessary life of the church and the significance of the place, and to help the church and its community to transcend these in order to develop and grow."

Conservation management and planning are increasingly understood to be crucial to the beneficial use and guardianship of important historic structures and sites. Conservation Plans are designed to describe a place and its community and define its significance. They then go on to assess the vulnerability of the place. Finally they establish policies to ensure the long-term protection of the place, and the retention (or if possible enhancement) of its significance.

The objectives of this Conservation Plan are therefore to:

- **Understand the church building and its use by the community** by drawing together information including documents and physical evidence in order to present an overall description of the place through time. This includes a brief description of the church and site today, how it is used and perceived, and identifies areas for further research.

¹ See <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/CMPs.pdf>

- **Assess its significance** both generally and for its principal components, at local, regional, national and where relevant international level.
- **Define vulnerability and potential** by identifying issues affecting the significance of the site and building remains, or which could affect them in the future, and how threats can be mitigated, and potential realised.
- **Develop management policies** to ensure that the significance of the church and site is retained in future conservation, management, use or alteration. If possible this significance should be enhanced through implementation of these policies.

2.1 STATUS OF THE DOCUMENT

This Conservation Management Plan essentially summarises what is currently known about the church and site, and bases its evaluation of significance, vulnerability, potential and management policies on this summary. Observations have been made which attempt to interpret what can be seen and what has already been written and collated in the light of current understanding. Preparation of a Conservation Management Plan does not usually involve new research or survey work to any significant degree, but it provides an opportunity for a fresh look at existing material and a specialist assessment of a site or building's character and heritage. Several histories of the church have been written, notably the recent revision by the Victoria County History, and the history of the church by the Chalgrove Local History Group. Extensive records, photographs and maps are held by the PCC, by the English Heritage Archive, Oxfordshire County Council Archive Service, the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record, the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading, and the Chalgrove Local History Group.

No original research has been undertaken for the compilation of this document, but suggestions have been made regarding areas where such work might in future be most advantageously directed. Key amongst these are the questions regarding the early development of the church, its structural remains and internal details (including but not limited to the wall paintings).

The Conservation Management Plan is not a closed document, but should be regularly consulted, checked, corrected if necessary, and updated. It should have a close relationship to other key documents, notably the Inventory and the Quinquennial Inspection reports.

2.2 SCOPE OF THE PLAN

The Conservation Plan covers mainly the interior and contents, the furnishings and fittings and the built structure, the windows, doors, wall paintings and monuments and below ground evidence, tombs and brasses and any other information within the church and the exterior the structure and inscriptions and other material outside the church. The Church of St Mary the Virgin is well maintained, and the 2015-16 Conservation and Refurbishment Project has effected major improvements to the fabric.

2.3 AUTHORSHIP, RESEARCH AND RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

Graham Keevill and Catherine Underwood have carried out the research and drafted the text for this document. Graham Keevill is an expert in the archaeology of medieval abbeys and ecclesiastical buildings generally, with published books on Eynsham Abbey (Oxfordshire; 2004) and Monastic Archaeology (2001, with the late Mick Aston). He is the Cathedral Archaeologist at Rochester, Salisbury, Blackburn and the Foundation Archaeologist for Christ Church, Oxford. Catherine Underwood works closely with Graham on all these sites. We have prepared Conservation Plans for Rochester and Peterborough Cathedrals; Abbotsbury, Bayham and Rievaulx Abbeys; and Lanercost and Lewes Priors, and Breedon on the Hill Church Leicestershire.

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Research has included full searches of the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (OHER), and the English Heritage Archive (EHA). The latter was also visited to view the collections of aerial and historic photographs, and to examine various publications in the archive's library. We are grateful to the staff of both the OHER and EHA for their assistance throughout.

Several other reports have been used and referred to in the preparation of this Conservation Management Plan. These include

- The quinquennial Condition Surveys prepared by Caroe and Partners in 2010, 2006 and 2000.
- The Church terrier and inventory.
- The results of the Chalgrove St Mary's Conservation and Refurbishment Project, with various post-completion reports from the conservators who carried out so much essential (and fruitful) work with great patience and expertise.

We have also referred to the current Local Plan and Conservation Area information, and the Conservation Area Appraisal for Chalgrove by South Oxfordshire District Council, which is available online. The Conservation Area does not include the church of St Mary the Virgin although it is recognised as an important component of the village. Historical and archaeological characterisations of the area have also been referred to. This includes the Solent-Thames Archaeological Research Framework, which covers the counties of Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

2.4 MESSAGE FROM THE PCC OF ST MARY'S CHALGROVE.



The Parish Church of Chalgrove, dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, stands resiliently, as it has done for 900 years, as a valued place for worship and as a precious part of the life of this country village. It remains at the heart of the built village, although it has always been at the edge of the housing. It is valued for all that it can offer: heritage, worship, the marking of life's events, and a variety of celebrations and remembrances.

All ages use this Church, and delight in its many intriguing aspects: its off-centre construction, its lack of stained glass windows, its broad medieval space. Above all there is its heritage, with a remarkable almost complete set of wall-paintings in the chancel depicting not only the early life and death of Jesus, but also the legend of the Assumption of Mary. The architecture of the chancel is of exceptional significance. In the nave is a unique painted memorial to the Quartermaine family. It has perhaps the oldest working turret clock in the county of Oxfordshire, dating from 1699, working and maintained in its hand wound format; a rare Friendly Society Banner dating from 1840; a Jacobean pulpit and a font which is thought to be 'lost heritage'.

The church community and the village community are one, sharing a common outlook generating a spirit of service towards others, and a common hope for the well-being of all. Our life is shared openly and generously with visitors who know they are welcome and valued. Its glory is that St Mary's Chalgrove is a village church, for all who would share its journey along a simple path, bearing a precious heritage into a precious future.

The PCC is grateful for the steer of Graham Keevill in producing this Conservation Management Plan, which it regards as an offering from the present council to future councils. It is our hope that they may carry forward the joyful work of cherishing the village's church, and work together with the other supporting bodies from the Diocese of Oxford to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Thereby we hope to maintain its treasured identity in the future and develop our vision, for we are a church that believes that "God wants us to be welcoming and hospitable, serving and building within our community".

3 UNDERSTANDING ST MARY'S CHURCH, CHALGROVE

3.1 BACKGROUND

Chalgrove is a large village 3.5 miles north-west of Watlington, 7 miles north-east of Wallingford and more than 9 miles south-east of Oxford. It lies on the clays and gravels between the Thames Valley and the Chiltern scarp. The Gault clay underlies the gravels in the village and to the south-west. The topography is relatively flat. The Church of St Mary lies to the south of the village centre and is one of the few medieval buildings within the village. In an area that has little building stone, the stone structure of the church with its rubble limestone and stone quoins is distinctive. The tower is a prominent landmark.



Figure 5: Aerial view of Chalgrove from the south in 1950, with the church in the trees at top left. English Heritage Archive photo ref RAF 30227 PFF0-0143.

Most of the other historic buildings in the village are timber framed with brick infill and date mainly to the 17th century. Most are grade II listed. Houses are clustered around the Green, the site of the former medieval stone cross, and along or behind the High Street. The village initially grew up around its five mills and by the 12th century the manor house, Langenhull Farm and the church. The original linking development between the church and High Street was along Frogmore Lane to the Green. Church Lane led to Church mill and the junction of the High Street with the key road between Woodstock, Wheatley, Haseley and Wallingford. The village expanded beyond the High Street, with its ready ground water supply, but largely remained within this historic core and underwent remarkably little change until the 1950s onwards. The village core has been a conservation area since 1992 with an extension in 2000 (South Oxfordshire District Council 2011, Chalgrove Conservation Area). The church, however, lies outside the conservation area although it is recognised as an integral part of the history and character of the village and the conservation area.

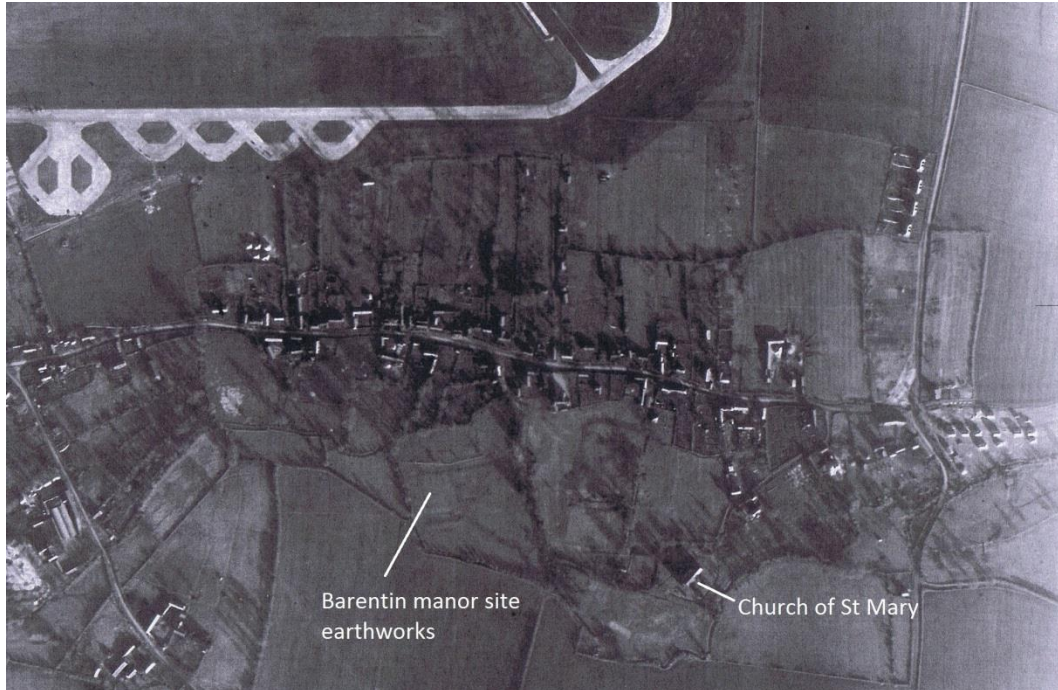


Figure 6: Extract from USAF aerial photograph LOC104/8090, 13 December 1943, with the airfield at the top with north to the left. The church and Barentin manor site are indicated. Note the limited development of the village in this photograph and Plate 4.

The village and the area to the north and east of the church were filled in by housing estates from the mid 1960s onwards. This rapid expansion was for workers employed at the Cowley Works and on the airfield. The village now serves for commuters to Oxford and elsewhere. The population is about 3000 and growing. The church seems dislocated from the older area of the village and is now almost subsumed by the modern housing. The open fields and older field systems are preserved to the south of the village, and to the south and west of the church of St Mary's. Originally there would have been a few properties to the north and west of the church and scattered housing along Church Lane shown in the 1843 inclosure map.

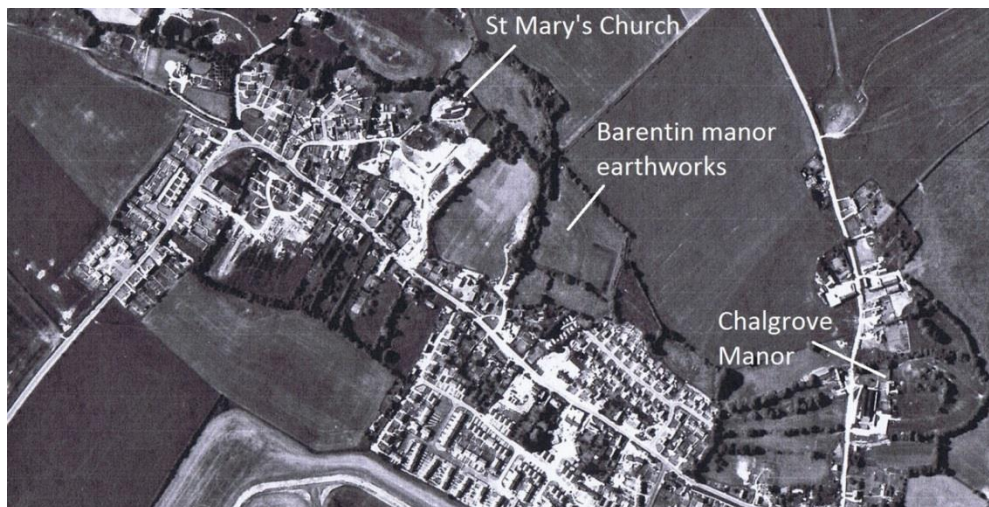


Figure 7: Extract from English Heritage air photo RAF/58/8107-94, 14 June 1967, with new housing developments and the medieval sites indicated.

The churchyard provides an important area of green space. Despite the modern village pressing upon it, this is an area of peace and remembrance of the past. A grass-cut labyrinth has been established, helping to encourage prayerful contemplation. The church is a historic building that encourages young and old alike to access religion through services, the choir and bell ringing.

Even though the church lies toward the south-east edge of the expanded village, it is still an integral part of Chalgrove's daily life. Somewhat unusually, the church owns through a trust the Red Lion public house and three cottages, providing important funds to support the ministry of and repairs to the church. The establishment of the John Hampden Hall and the village school were also prompted by clergy and parishioners of St Mary's Church in the past.

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This section of the Plan describes the site in its various aspects including history, archaeology, architecture and management. The description forms the first step in assessing and defining the importance of the church and its surroundings, set within the village of Chalgrove. It commences with a brief description of the pre-church archaeological background to the site. It then goes on to provide a summary of the site's history and buildings. References to the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (OxHER) and English Heritage Archive (EHA) are given in the form of the unique identifying numbers (UID). Those for the EHA are usually numeric and the OxHER has a PRN parish record number. The OxHER has also monument and event numbers and these may be distinct.

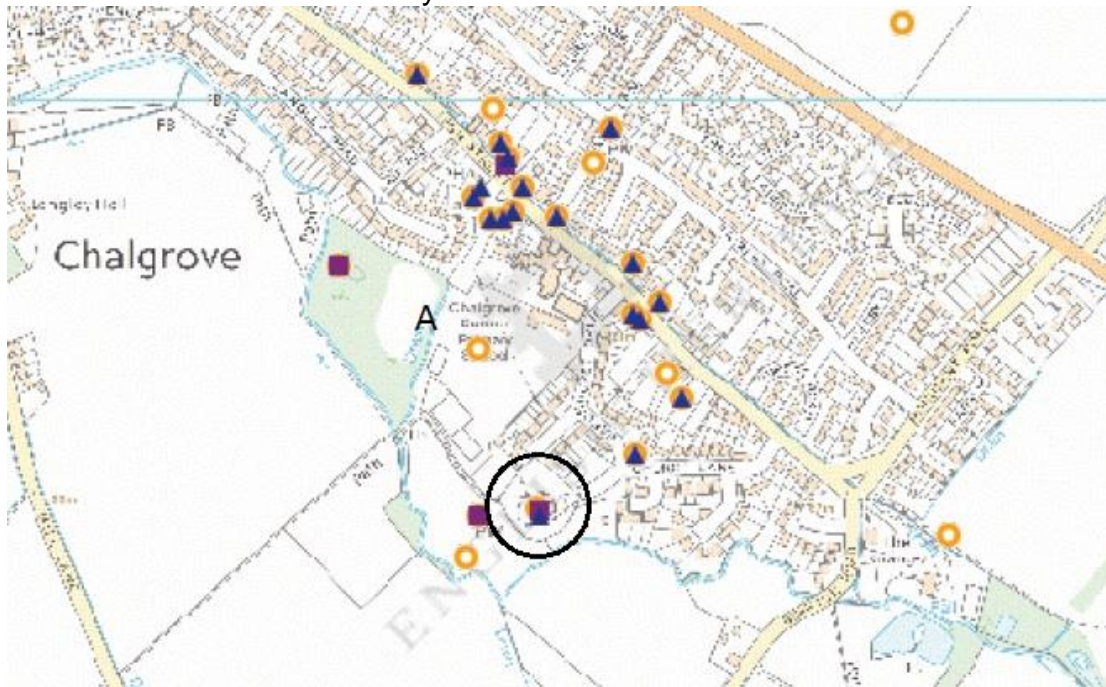


Figure 8: Archaeological sites near St Mary's Church (circled), including the Barentin manor (A). Source www.heritagegateway.org.uk

3.2.1 Prehistoric

Human activity in Chalgrove dates back at least to the Neolithic period, with polished stone axes having been found (HER PRN 5211). A Bronze or Iron Age post-built structure and a Middle Bronze Age cremation have been found near Chalgrove during a pipeline excavation (HER PRN 16326). A Middle Bronze Age copper alloy palstave (special axehead) has also been found at Chalgrove (Portable Antiquities Scheme BH 763BB3). Iron Age finds include a gold quarter stater of Tasciovanus and a few pottery sherds (HER PRN 2037, VCH Oxon I 263).

3.2.2 Roman

One Roman coin hoard was found on Chalgrove Farm, with 4145 coins in two pots (HER PRN 16963). A second hoard was found on nearby Langley Field Farm that included a very rare coin of Domitianus. A 2nd-century carnelian intaglio with Ceres and agricultural prosperity symbols was found near to the second coin hoard (Henig 2004). Cropmarks and pottery evidence indicate a Romano-British settlement to the west of the modern village (HER PRN 4490, 1153, 1144, 12491). A scatter of Roman pottery was found during excavations of the moat at Manor Farm (Historic England SU 69 NW6, Monument no 241975) and this was used to date the nearby cropmarks as a Romano-British Settlement (SU69 NW23).

3.2.3 Anglo-Saxon to Domesday

Chalgrove was within the important royal Mercian seat of *Bensington* (Benson). Benson is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. In 571 it was one of four *tunas* captured by Cuthbert of the Gewisse. Christianity arrived in Mercia about 610 with St Chad and St Cuthbert. There was a later conversion by St Birinus with his mission and foundation at Dorchester on Thames, and churches are supposed to have been in existence around Dorchester by 640. Churches in the *Bensington* area could therefore date to the 7th century, though no substantive evidence of this has yet come to light. Excavations in St Helen's Avenue about 100m south of the church in Benson have revealed Anglo-Saxon remains, with a radiocarbon date from bone from a post hole dated to AD 545-659 (Booth et al 2007, 96). There may have been a Saxon church in Chalgrove: if so it could underlie the medieval church.

An Anglo-Saxon settlement had its origins close to the church on the south side of the modern village with at least three mill sites between those at Stratford and Ascott. A few pottery sherds and two 9th-century strap ends have been excavated (Page et al 2005, 8, 86, 195). One Saxon pottery sherd came from a cottage (demolished in 1977) to the west of the church (HER PRN 11143). The south boundary of the settlement was known as Egrith's boundary in AD 887 (VCH Chalgrove, introduction, Nov 2013, 2).

Middle Saxon-type pottery has been recovered from pipeline excavations locally (Vince 2003). A late Anglo-Saxon spearhead was also found in Chalgrove and is now in the Ashmolean Museum. Boundary ditches and a possible pond were located by survey to the south of the church and the west of the churchyard. The survey showed traces of linear boundaries of uncertain age but probably the remains of the medieval village (EHA no 91747, SU6359638; HER 11136; Chambers 1981). This

may be part of the original village site near the church. There would have been open fields for the most part around this village and near the church; several Anglo-Saxon furlong names are mentioned such as langfurlong, sleperfurlong and waterfurlong (VCH 2013 Chalgrove Economic History, 1; Magdalen College Archive Chalgrove 64, 67).

The burh of Wallingford dates from the late 9th century and is mentioned in the Burghal Hidage, where it was assessed at 2400 hides. At this scale it was as important as Winchester (Roffe, 2009, 41). The burh had local associated manors at Chalgrove, Benson, Berrick, and Great Hazeley. There are early churches in Wallingford and Benson; similarly early foundations perhaps existed in Chalgrove and Berrick. Archaeologists have suggested that, because of its importance to the burh, Chalgrove would have had a church and a priest.

In the Domesday Book of 1086 Chalgrove came under the land of Miles Crispin, the keeper of Wallingford Castle and a member of the King's Council. Chalgrove as Crispin's principal seat, was part of the Honor of Wallingford and in the half hundred of Benson. At the time of the Domesday survey Chalgrove had 10 hides (a hide was about 120 acres), enough for 12 ploughs. There were "In Lordship 4 ploughs, 9 slaves, 23 villagers with 10 smallholders have 9 ploughs. 5 mills at 60s, meadows 3 furlongs long and 3 furlongs wide, pasture 60 acres. The value was £10 now £12. Thorkell held it freely." Thorkell is a Danish name, but he seems to have had Mercian connections as a great nephew of Lady Godiva; his father Alwin was sheriff of Warwickshire (Great Domesday Book 159, DB Oxon 35, 6). The Wallingford prebend consisted of the churches of North Stoke, Chalgrove, All Saints Wallingford, and the chapel of St Nicholas within the Outer Bailey of Wallingford Castle (Roffe 2009, 36).

Miles Crispin, keeper of Wallingford and overlord of Chalgrove, had connections with Bec through his family. Tithes (taxes) from the parish of Chalgrove and elsewhere were given to Bec abbey. The connections with Bec Abbey led to his foundation of an alien priory of Bec with a church at Swincombe, also connected with Crispin; tithes were paid to Bec through the Priory. Crispin owned tenements in Wallingford and Oxford.

3.2.4 Medieval and later

In medieval times Chalgrove was a rectory, with glebe land to support the rector, a royal clerk appointed by the crown. The vicar or chaplain was appointed by the rector to undertake the parochial duties. This included mass and prayers in the church, and other duties in the parish. Both of these posts could be combined in one person. It also could mean that the rectory and its lands could be leased out in later periods: the vicar would have his own dwelling, originally near the church, with land and tithes to support him and the church. St Mary's and Chalgrove Manor are the only surviving medieval buildings in Chalgrove. Medieval artefacts have been found in Chalgrove, and include medieval pottery and building material dated from the 13th-15th century from a listed building (Portable Antiquities Scheme BERK9DQ265).



Figure 9: The location of St Mary's Church, on the edge of the village. Source: English Heritage list description. Map based on Ordnance Survey data, Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Licence number 100051221.

The 12th century

Architectural evidence from the church suggests that the present building was first established during the 12th century. The earliest part is the nave. Lord Peter Boterel, then Keeper of Wallingford Castle and holder of the manor of Chalgrove, may have been responsible for its re-construction. It would have been a Romanesque church, perhaps with an apsidal end. Mid to late 12th-century voussoirs (arch stones) of a Romanesque doorway were re-used on the Barentin manor site and may have come from the original church. The abbey of Bec may also have had some influence in the church construction and in the dedication to St Mary (Notre Dame de Bec).

In the 1190s the nave was widened to create a chapel. The South Arcade (with the square capitals) was constructed to achieve this. The door at the bottom of the church tower is of c.1190. Chalgrove and its appurtenances of Berrick, Gangsdown, Ricote and land and property in Oxford had been given to Hugh de Malaunay in about 1190 by John de Mortain, confirmed by Richard I in 1197, and by John when he became king in 1199. The church had its own parson by c.1195 and appears to have been independent, although lands in Chalgrove still owed dues to Bec Abbey.

The 13th century

By 1224 the manor of the Malaunay part of Chalgrove was in Henry III's hands, who used it to support his small number of household knights. He granted it to: Hugh de Plessis, Drew de Barentin and Nicholas de Boterel. Hugh de Despender held another portion along with the manor house and grounds. By 1229 the whole of the manor of Chalgrove was divided between Hugh and John de Plessis, and Drew de Barentin. It reverted to Malaunay's son Peter for a short while. On Christmas day 1233 the manor was granted to John de Plessis and Drew de Barentin and their heirs. Drew probably had the manor house and grounds on the Hardings Field site.

Both men were extremely influential within the King's Council. Drew served Henry III as his regularly resident representative in the Channel Islands and similarly in Gascony, as well as acting as the king's diplomat. John de Plessis was a constant companion of the king and became Earl of Warwick by marriage (within the Crown's gift; Jacques 2003). Both men were prosperous enough to support the church and the community. The Barentin manor house lay a very short distance to the north of the church, and has been the subject of extensive archaeological excavations (Page et al 2005). The north aisle of the church with its rounded capitals may have been added, by royal craftsmen based at Wallingford Castle, in c.1240, probably through the auspices of these wealthy local families and the patrons Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and his brother the King. Seven generations of the Barentin family were buried in the chancel.

In 1229 Henry III granted the castle and Honor of Wallingford to his brother Richard, earl of Cornwall, the King retained the gift of the prebends. Records show that the advowson of the church was held by Richard, earl of Cornwall, in c1241 and c1258. The advowson reverted to the Crown on Richard's absence on Crusade. The rectory was one of the wealthiest in the deanery, worth 40 marks (£26 13s 4d) in 1241, 30 marks (£20) in 1219 and 1254, and £21 6s 8d in 1291. In 1317 the king granted the advowson to Thame Abbey, with The Rectorie or Parsonage being added in 1319. There was a vicarage (probably originally near the church) with 4 acres of glebe, the altarage from Chalgrove and Berrick Salome, and part of Clapcot's tithes (VCH Chalgrove religious text 2013, 4)

The division of Chalgrove between the de Plessis heirs (the de Berefordes) and the de Barentins provided two 13th-century foci for the village around the de Plessis manor on Mill Lane and the Barentin's on the site now known as Hardings Field. This was in addition to the Quartermain holding at Ascott and that of the Langenhull to the south of the de Plessis manor. Development along the line of the Chalgrove Brook and the five mills which were present in medieval times led to sporadic housing along the waterway, but the strategic roads were more important. The Oxford to Watlington road went through the parish on the high ground across the 'Chalgrove Fields' to the north of the village from west to east, and it was crossed by the important strategic road linking Woodstock, Wheatley, Haseley, Warpsgrove, Chalgrove, Berrick and Benson with Wallingford, which passed to the east of the church. Earthworks around the church and High Street may have formed as a medieval headland, where the turning plough built soil up at the ends of a field strip (VCH 2013, Chalgrove, 9).

The 14th century

The death of Piers Gaveston as earl of Cornwall in 1312 meant the church advowson again reverted to the Crown (Edward II). In 1317 the king granted the advowson to Thame Abbey, to maintain six monks to perform daily masses for his ancestors and Sir Piers Gaveston (VCH Oxon Chalgrove religious history, 2013, 3). There was an existing vicarage (probably near the church) with 4 acres of glebe, the altarage from Chalgrove and Berrick Salome, and part of Clapcot's tithes (VCH Chalgrove religious text 2013, 4) The dedication of the church to St Mary the Virgin was under the Abbey of Thame, whose own dedication was to St Mary of Thame.

The link to the Prebend of Wallingford ceased with the transfer. The Honor Courts continued to be held at Chalgrove.

In c 1310-1313 the chancel of the church was rebuilt with the sedilia, lavabo, painting of the chancel and stained glass windows as part of a decorative scheme behind a new rood screen (Heath-Whyte 2003, 8). This may have been under the influence of Sir Drew Barentin II, combined with Sir William de Bereford (whose wife Margaret de Plessis was heir to the local de Plessis estate), an executor of the patron Sir Piers Gaveston, earl of Cornwall. Gaveston, as patron, had appointed the Florentine master builder, Bonacursus de Friscobaldis as rector on 31 January 1310. The chancel features remarkable wall paintings depicting scenes from the life of the church's dedicatee, St Mary. These include the Virgin at prayer, her relationship with the apostles, death and burial. The piscina, credence and triple sedilia are of a very high level of craftsmanship. It is possible that the paintings, piscina and sedilia were by royal craftsmen. Sir Drew and Sir William had royal connections and it has been suggested that Drew Barentin, as the resident lord, would have been consulted by Gaveston concerning the proposed works on the church. Drew's wife and daughters may have been included as donor figures in the scene on the south wall with the Virgin and her neighbours (ibid, 49, 60-61). The triple sedilia, which was seating for three clergy, probably the priest, deacon and sub-deacon implies sufficient wealth to afford the seating and the personnel to pray for the deceased and High Mass.

There would also have been a rood screen, with stair to the rood loft and a tympanum above. The rood screen may have been painted, red and white ochre are now visible on the south column of the chancel arch. Six slots were visible during work on the conservation and refurbishment work which were remains of wooden supports for the tympanum. A wooden lintel for the door to the stair to the rood loft was also revealed by September 2015. The date of the medieval rood screen is unknown but it is possible it might be coeval with the early 14th century wall painting and redevelopment of the church.



Figure 10: The sedilia and piscina in the south wall of the chancel

In 1319 the bishop of Lincoln transferred 'Rectorie and Parsonage' to the Abbey stating that a new vicarage (house) for the priest was to be built in the middle of the town of Chalgrove. This was to include a new hall, a guest room, the vicar's room and service facilities (buttery, kitchen, stable and brewhouse; Lincoln Episcopal Register). The new house had two acres of land and a meadow belonging to it. This was all to be maintained by the Abbot and abbey of Thame. Before this, and until the new vicarage was ready, the priest had a principal dwelling house by the church, also repaired and maintained by Thame Abbey.

In 1365 Gilbert Taylur granted land 'to God and St Mary and the church at Chalgrove to maintain a cresset full of pitch for lighting 4 lamps'. The cresset is probably the surviving one in the wall at the east end of the south arcade. It would originally have had 15 holes. The Taylur land would have been administered by the churchwarden to maintain the lights in the church (VCH 2013, Chalgrove Local Government 2).

In 1369 Thomas Barentin obtained a licence for a chantry. This was probably the chapel that was found when the Barentin site was excavated. The north aisle was widened, extended and decorated in c. 1450. In his will Sir Drew III, who was buried in the chancel in 1453, bequeathed 'The ornaments of my chapel to the chapel newly repaired in Chalgrove church, on the North side'. The north aisle still has fragmentary wall paintings on the east wall.

In 1391 the vicar of Chalgrove petitioned the pope for an increase in his endowment. He claimed that the monks of Thame had extorted an oath that he should not increase his portion. The vicar stated that he was afraid of the monks. The pope ruled in the vicar's favour.

The 15th century

Documentary evidence for the church dwindles somewhat in the early decades of the 15th century. From 1402, however, two churchwardens were mentioned as being at Chalgrove for the administration of St Mary's and Rofford church (VCH 2013 Chalgrove Local Government 2). Two identical angel heads were painted on window panes about this time: later, they were placed on the outer side of the glass in the eastern window of the north aisle but one is the wrong way round.



Figure 11: The painted glass angel heads.

A 1480 list shows that Drew Barentin II and the next five Barentin generations were buried in the chancel under 'marble stones', as a 'family mausoleum'. The 1480 record from Magdalen College Archives mentions the tombs of Drugo Barantyn (Drew Barantyn II), Thomas Barantyn and Elizabeth his wife, Thomas II, Reginaldus (Reynold) the son of Thomas, Drugo (Drew III) the son of Reynold, and Johannis (John) the son of Drew. Some of their memorial brasses survive. There may have been others for earlier members, which are no longer present such as for Drew Barentin II (Blair 2005, 6). There are brasses of Thomas Barentyn dated 1402-3, Reynold (Reginald) Barentin dated 1441, and Drew Barentin III with his two wives Johanna and Beatrix dated 1446. The main part of Thomas' brass is missing - there is lettering only. The brasses were made in London workshops with the early one of a particular type and the later brasses different 'D' type (Lack 2016). London workshop brasses are usual for medieval brasses and there were a few regional workshops. The wealth of the Barentyns would have enabled commemorative and reminders of prayers in the form of brasses for the deceased to be placed in the chancel. Thomas Barentyn II had connections in London where his younger brother Drew was a wealthy and well respected goldsmith and financier and leading figure in the City of London. Reynold Barantyn inherited his London uncle's wealth and substantial land holdings (Roskell et al 1993).

In c 1450 the north aisle was widened, and extended eastwards to form a chantry chapel. In 1453 when Drew Barentin died he bequeathed ornaments from his private chapel at his manor house to Chalgrove Church but subject to his widow's lifetime interest. His widow was his third wife, Joan, who married again. It is possible the gift to Chalgrove Church went elsewhere with Joan. In the north aisle of the church at the east end there is a wall painting of a tabernacle or canopy which would have been above the image of a saint, probably St James. This may be related to the request of Drew Barentin at his death in 1453. The north aisle became the chapel of St James. Meanwhile new windows were installed, the porch was built, and the south side of the church was crenellated. The work would have been funded by Drew Barentin as patron of the church.

The parishioners and churchwardens may have built a new church house in the 15th century (VCH, Chalgrove religious, 2013, 9). In 1471 the Archbishop of Canterbury ordered Thame Abbey to allow the Vicar of Chalgrove additional tithes worth £13 13s 4d. These may have also included tithes from Berrick Salome. Chaplains of Chalgrove appear to have added simple liturgical texts including the Paternoster and the Asperges on the limewash on the 14th century wall paintings. These can just be made out in a late 15th century hand (Bertram 2003). Father Jerome Bertram had suggested that the wall paintings were limewashed over by this time. Some of the decoration above the north and south church doors and above the windows in part may date to the 15th century and some to the 16th century.

14th-15th century pottery of Surrey ware with green glaze (Tudor green style) pottery has been recovered from within Chalgrove (Portable Antiquities Scheme BERK9CBB57). Early 15th century Henry VI silver English groats and several 15th-century Edward IV silver pennies have also been found in the village (Portable Antiquities Scheme BERK-AD6047, BERK-AE476). There seem to have been few wealthy 15th-century properties in Chalgrove, except for the Chalgrove and Barentin manors, The Rectory, and St Clere's, but a few other village properties do retain

fabric of this date. Apple Tree Cottage is a 15th/early 16th-century cruck framed building, the Red Lion public house has an original cruck frame, and Brook Cottage had an open hall and parlour with ceiling and solar above (VCH Chalgrove, 2013, 11). The finds within the village and the further additions to the church indicate a prosperous 15th-century community.

The 16th century

At the visitation in 1517-20 the chancel roof was in ruins and the churchyard was overfull. The visitation of 1530 found the Church of St Mary needing repair to the chancel walls and floors; the churchyard was not properly fenced. The Abbot and Abbey of Thame still had control of the church and received some dues from it, but the vicar had the largest amount at £12. The church and rectory lands were farmed by Robert Quatermaynes. The Parish registers start from 1531 and were originally placed in the parish chest dated c 1500. The apparent dilapidation may be due to poverty of the Abbey of Thame, the rector; and the Barentin family's move to Little Haseley in the late 15th century.

In 1532 the Clergy submitted and recognised the King as Head of the Church. The Act of Supremacy in 1535 meant that all religious bodies recognised the King's supremacy over the church. An assessment was made of the value of all church and monastic lands in 1536. Chalgrove rectory was valued at £9 9s, the spirituals (the church) was worth £14 and the vicarage £10 5s 5d (*Valor Ecclesiasticus* ii 169, 213, 239).

Despite these vicissitudes, the church was refurbished in c 1540 when the low window in the south side of the chancel was inserted. Then in 1542 Henry VIII gave the patronage of the church to his new cathedral in Oxford. The Augmentation office recorded the grants from Chalgrove, which included the value of the farm, tithes, alms, a grant from Roger Quatremain, and annual tithes from the vicar of 36 shillings. Chalgrove Church and lands made a total grant of £15 16s towards the founding of Christ Church. In 1546 Henry VIII granted the patronage, rectory and tithes to Christ Church. This included lordships, manors, rectories, vicarages chapels in Chalgrove (Letters and Papers Domestic and Foreign Vol 21, part 2 1546-7 p333-8).

In 1547 the churchwardens gave information to the King's Commissioners that lands given to the parish church and worth 18s 3d were to maintain and repair the church. There were also a series of donations between 1531 and 1544 to the high altar and that of St Katherine. The piscina and credence in the south wall of the south aisle indicates the likely position of the former altar, perhaps that in the chapel of St Katherine. No wall paintings have yet been recognised in the south aisle.

Also in 1547 King Edward VI issued an injunction requiring all signs of idolatry to be removed. This could include any images or anything to do with the holy image and prayers to the Virgin Mary. Such images included wall paintings such as those St Mary's Church, but fortunately these were simply just limewashed over rather than destroyed.

In 1549 Roger Quatremain was buried in the middle aisle of St Mary's Church. The Quatremaines were a prominent and well-to-do local family in the local area from early

medieval times. Roger Quatremain and his widow Alice (died 1559) were both buried in the middle aisle. This burial site in the church was for people of a certain status and wealth (VCH 2013, Chalgrove, Social, 5). Latin texts in the chancel and the recently uncovered fleur de lys motif (a sign probably of the Virgin Mary) and decoration over the north door may possibly date to the resurgence of the Catholic church in Queen Mary's reign 1553-1558.

In 1585 Robert Whicker, a clerk of Christ Church, was appointed as the vicar of Chalgrove. He seems to have improved the vicarage (probably the house provided for the vicar by Thame Abbey in the 14th century) and had a new chimney built.

17th century

Robert Whicker died in 1609 and bequeathed money to the poor in certain parishes in Oxfordshire. This included £20 to Chalgrove (and £10 to Berrick Salome), sums which continued to be paid by his executor Thomas Whicker, Clerk, with members of the Quartermaine family as witnesses in 1611. This may be the same Thomas Whycker who was curate in 1615.

In 1620 Richard Chibnalls was buried and a lidded silver tankard communion flagon was presented by or in memory of him in 1621. In 1646 Joan Chibnall of Princes Risborough left a charity to give gowns and linen to four poor widows or ancient maids in Britwell Salome, Britwell Prior and the Chalgrove poor. There was money left for a sermon and £3 to be distributed in small sums on the Sunday before St Matthew's Day. Details of the benefactors are on the boards on the north wall of the church. In 1656 a silver chalice or cup was presented to the church in memory of Joan Chibnall. This and Richard Chibnall's communion tankard form part of the church plate.

In c.1630 Maria Hall of Highmeadow, Gloucester installed the Winchcombe family Memorial in the North Aisle. [Maria is represented on the memorial] The Winchcombe estate was the ancient Langenhull holding to the south side of the manor. The Mansion House (later known as Langley Hull/Hall) was built c.1550 near the track that is now Mill Lane.

In 1643 the Battle of Chalgrove Field took place to the north of Chalgrove and it is probable that the church was damaged as a result of this. Churches were used for horses and troop emplacements and the tower would have been a good vantage point/look-out. The Royalist troops based at Wheatley in 1643 needed grain and other supplies and raided the surrounding area which would have included Chalgrove. The Royal court and garrison at Oxford in 1644 took grain from the parish for the garrison. This would have included produce from church and rectory lands, meaning there was less for upkeep of the church. In 1655 Sampson White, a mercer of Oxford, took over the Rectory / Parsonage and all the lands, tithes and rents and services that went with it. As lessee Sampson White was obliged to do all the repairs to the Rectory and Chancel etc (Christ Church L 6 & 7). In 1656 Francis Markham was vicar, marrying in that year.

In 1668 Rev Francis Markham died and a silver paten was dedicated in his memory in 1670-1. In 1671 his wife, Alicia Markham, died and a further silver standing paten

was presented in memory of Alicia and Francis in 1672. Both are part of the church plate. The Markham memorial on the south side of the chancel was also put in place in their memory, its stone surround featuring cherubs and grotesque decoration, and a winged cherub at the base.

From 1660-70 the font, pulpit and chancel rails were installed and the chancel screen seen in late 19th century photographs belongs to the same period or earlier. These may have been the gift of Sir Sampson White. The four bells installed in the tower in 1664 may have been his gift as well. The sanctus bell is dated 1659 (VCH Oxon Chalgrove religious 2013, 12). Sir Sampson White was knighted by Charles II in 1660 and was twice Mayor of Oxford. He continued as a lessee of the rectory in 1682. He died in 1684 and was buried in the church of St Mary, Oxford, between the door leading into Adam Brome's chapel and the buttress of the steeple on the north side of the church.

Burial within the church was requested by some parishioners, with a John Smith (died 1679) wanting to be buried near his usual seat in the church in the middle aisle. The middle aisle was a high-status area for wealthy local people. The Halls of Langley, descendants of the Winchcombes, wished to retain the east end of the north aisle for their exclusive use as a pew and burial right. The vicar Richard Manning had to resolve the conflict of precedence.

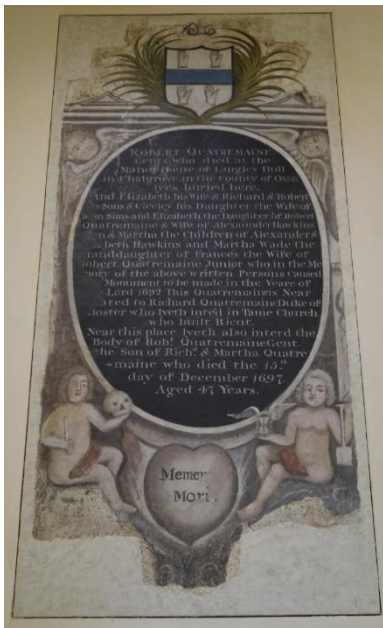


Figure 12: The Quatremain memorial.

In the 1660s the vicarage house was assessed as having only three or four hearths. Despite the age and size of the vicarage at least one vicar Richard Manning (1668-1701) raised a family there. The 1685 terrier of the Vicarage of Chalgrove notes the property and tenements near the church. There was a dwelling house near the churchyard with three acres and the tithes from this were for the church/vicar. Other tenements were part of the charitable gifts of the church, and one small tenement adjoining the churchyard had as tenant Thomas Child of Chalgrove. Another unspecified tenement (but probably near the church) had a close and six acres, and was tenanted by George Buckland. All the lands formed part of the charitable endowment for church repair.

In 1687 the lease of the rectory was taken over by the sons of Sir Sampson White (originally his widow was part of the lease as well). Rev'd Gilbert White was his third son, and Francis White his fifth.

In 1692 the unique, painted, Baroque memorial to the Quatremain family was installed. This was originally on the east wall of the north chancel. In 1694 a wooden gallery for musicians was built at the west end of the nave, lit by a dormer window in the west end of the north aisle. Another dormer window at the east end of the south aisle may also have been put in place. The churchwardens at the time, Francis Quartermain and John Cox, had their names inscribed on the gallery. It is possible

that Gilbert and Francis White paid for the gallery, continuing in the tradition of their father. A photograph of 1869 shows the north dormer still in situ.



Figure 13: The north side of the church in 1869.

In 1699 the clock in the church tower was installed. The date 1699 is lightly chiselled into the front left hand vertical frame bar. Originally it was a two-train movement of birdcage construction with a frame in wrought iron. It had a thirty-hour setting, the gong being on the left with anchor escapement and the hour strike on the right. Records for the clock at Great Haseley show it being sent to Oxford and to Chalgrove in a cart for overhaul between 1679 and 1690. This suggests that there was a clock repairer or worker at Chalgrove in that period and would partially explain the unusual clock at St Mary's Church and its date.

The 18th century

Charitable bequests were made in the early 18th century in order to help poor children in Chalgrove to be apprenticed. This included £5 from the estate of Francis White in Chilworth. The details of charitable bequests are on boards in the north aisle of the church. As the recorded history shows the charity boards – which are painted canvas in a frame – are misleading. It appears that a Mr Adeane, as trustee, acquired the land in question.

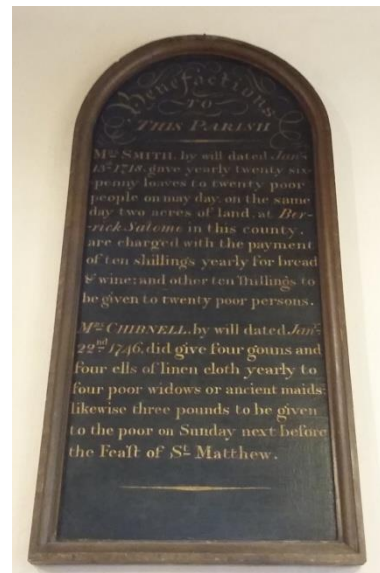


Figure 14: One of the charity boards.

In 1723 George Villiers was appointed by Christ Church as vicar of Chalgrove. He was related to the Earl of Buckingham and on his cousin's death in August 1723 succeeded as the next Earl. George did not claim his title at first. This may have been due to his position as a clergyman and his cousin's reputation. He married in about 1724 and had four children, one of whom Katharine is buried and has a memorial in the chancel. George Villiers finally claimed his title as earl in 1734.

The church tower partially collapsed in 1726 after a storm. The upper part had to be rebuilt. The funding for the rebuild came from Rodolphus Hobbes (a major leaseholder of Christ Church land), Christ Church itself, and public subscription promoted by Hobbes. His initials RH and the date 1727 are set on the front of the steeple. Two of the bells had to be recast as a result of the collapse; this was done in 1729.

Due to the ill-health of the vicar George Villiers 'from the low situation of the place having contracted a bad habit of the body'- he moved to Oxford. From 1736 the services and duties were undertaken by the curate W Darby, who was paid £30 and resided in the vicar's house (Questionnaire details for church Visitation of 1738, George Villiers). Routine repairs of the church took place in 1758.

The 19th century

The churchwardens reported in 1801 that the clock, pews and church exterior were under repair. Prints dating to 1822-3 show the exterior of the church with gravestones near the tower; the north side of the church; and the font on a small carved pedestal base near one of the stone piers in the church (English Heritage archive 4755-039, Bodleian library 63, and Sanders of Oxford).

Anthony Wood recorded some details of the church in a visit in 1825: 'At the West end of the Church is a Gallery, on the front of which are painted the following Benefactions: William Hart ...; Dr Wall ...; Mr Wiggins ...; Mr A Deane ...; Mrs Smith ...; Mrs Chibnall ...' (each of the six names was followed by a description of the benefaction.) Over the arch between the nave and chancel, are the 10 Commandments, Creed and Lord's Prayer, painted in black letter, date 1692, supported by Moses and Aaron.' 'From the arch hangs 3 funeral garlands, a custom still in use there.'

Robert French Lawrence was appointed the vicar of St Mary's Church in 1832. He married Elizabeth Coates, daughter of a farmer from Brightwell Baldwin. Rev'd Lawrence appears to have been a man who cared for his parishioners and his parish. In 1837 he asked Christ Church for help to support a school. Remarkably, he served as incumbent for 53 years until his death in 1885; he is commemorated in a plaque on the south aisle wall adjacent to the porch.

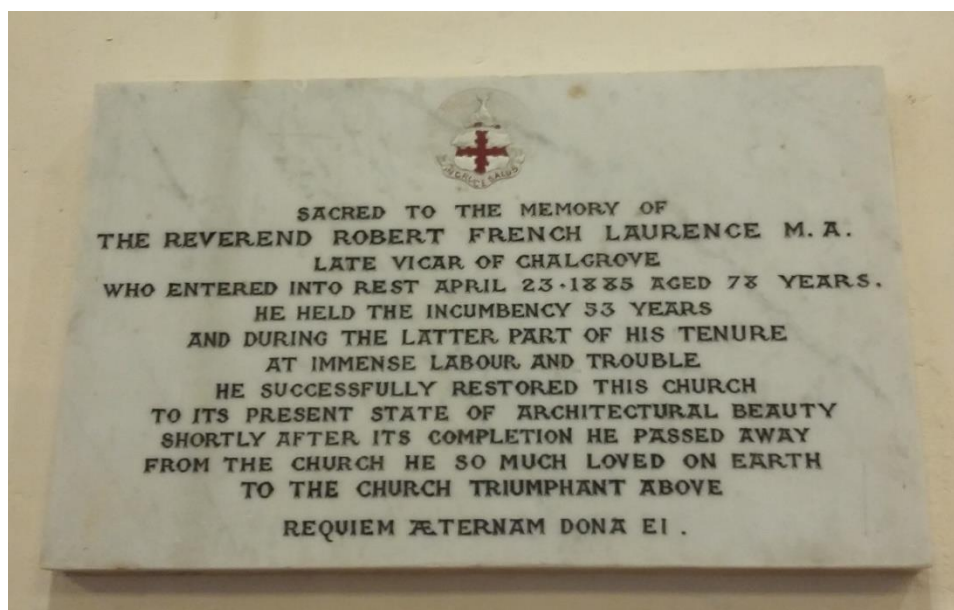


Figure 15: The Laurence memorial plaque in the south aisle.

In 1840 pews were repaired and re painted, and new square pews were put in place. The Chalgrove Friendly Society was established. The wall paintings in the chancel were revealed in the summer of 1858 by workmen repairing the chancel. Rev'd Lawrence and his family were determined to preserve the paintings. The Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, James Parker made tracings of the paintings at the time they were discovered and full-size tracings were also made by the Lawrence daughters. Rev'd Lawrence ensured the paintings were preserved and appealed to Christ Church for funds for the recently discovered 'very beautiful' wall paintings. The tracings of the wall paintings done by James Parker were presented at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries in December 1858. The full size tracings made by the Misses Lawrence were probably used by Charles Buckler for his illustrations. Charles Buckler's views on the wall paintings were read to the Oxford Architectural Society and a paper appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (August 1859). James Henry Parker read a paper to the Society of Antiquaries, William Burges' 'On Mural Paintings in Chalgrove Church, Oxfordshire, with illustrations by Charles Buckler' was printed in *Archaeologia* (xxxviii p431-38), and another paper was printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (vol CCVIII, 547-56).

The clock in the tower was modernised in about 1863 by R (probably Richard) Brown of Chalgrove, recorded as a watch and clockmaker in Chalgrove in 1831. In 1868 the church was noted as in good repair with a fund of £60 from land to maintain and repair the church. By the 1870s, however, the church was dilapidated and by 1881 it was unsafe with the north arcade falling outwards and the roofs in poor condition. The church was restored in 1881-4 by Joseph Morris and S S Stallwood of Reading (plans for the improvements and repair by Morris and Stallwood exist in the Lambeth Palace Library). The arched brace roof dates from this time and meant that the dormer windows had to be removed. The estimated costs involved £1500 to restore the fabric and £500 to reseat the nave and aisle. Work to reseat the church involved reducing the floor level and any vaults which would impede this. This included the vaults of the Hobbes and Adeane families at the east end of the nave. The pews were also refurbished in 1883 by the Froud firm from Nettlebed (inscription found inside a joint on one of the pews during the conservation work 2015-16),

The 20th century to the present day

In 1911 the Chalgrove Friendly Society Banner was deposited in the Church. The Chalgrove Friendly Society was for labourers who paid in a small sum weekly with assurance that payment would be made out in case of serious accident or death. The banner was for a yearly procession by the society on Whitsuntide Wednesday through the village after a service at the church. The banner dates from about 1840.

In 1912 a faculty allowed one of the Adeane ledger slabs to be removed from the aisle floor and installed as a wall memorial. This is close to the chancel arch on the south side of the nave and commemorates Robert Adeane, his mother, Susannah, and father, Simon.

Late 19th century and 20th century photographs by Henry Taunt of the interior and exterior of St Mary's survive, and are an invaluable record of the church at that time. Interior views show the chancel rood screen in place (so must be pre-1906), the location of the font, and the stone floor and heating ducts in the centre of the nave. Faculty permission for a new lower chancel screen and communion rail was granted in 1905. The previous chancel screen was removed in 1906.



Figure 16: Exterior and interior views of St Mary's, by Henry Taunt (English Heritage Archive images cc 72 395 (left) and 72 394 (right)).

Photographs from 1923 show the chancel sedilia with tapestry/brocade in place over the seats, and possible patterns in the plaster work. The altar rail is also extant. There is a photograph of the Barentin brasses with the heraldic shields in place dated to 1924 (photographs in the Oxfordshire Archives Photographic Collection).

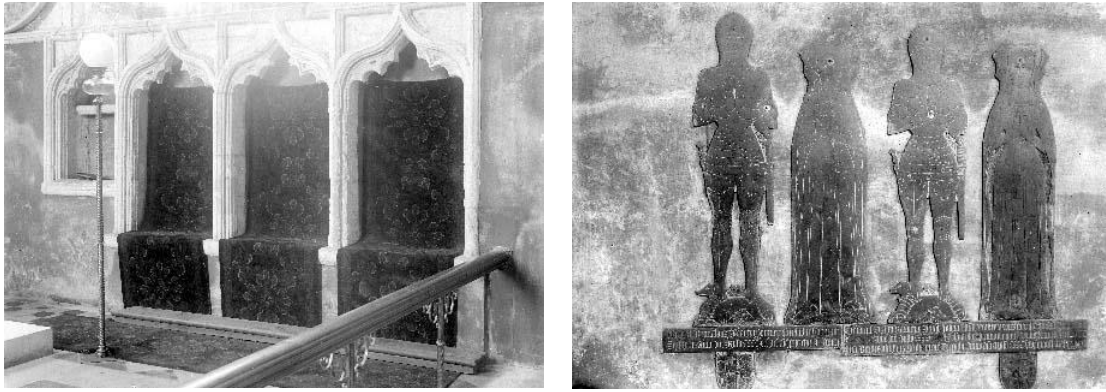


Figure 17: The sedilia in 1923 (OAPC ref d214998a), and the Barentin brasses in 1924 (OAPC ref d214991a).

In the 1930s Professor E W Tristram restored the chancel wall paintings at St Mary's using a then 'state of the art' waxing technique. Unfortunately this did not ultimately prove beneficial to the colour, appearance and state of the paintings. Tristram also recorded the wall paintings, in a characteristically fine series of watercolours now held by the Victoria and Albert Museum (E1530 - E1540: the online catalogue entries note that Tristram signed all the paintings with the year 1913).

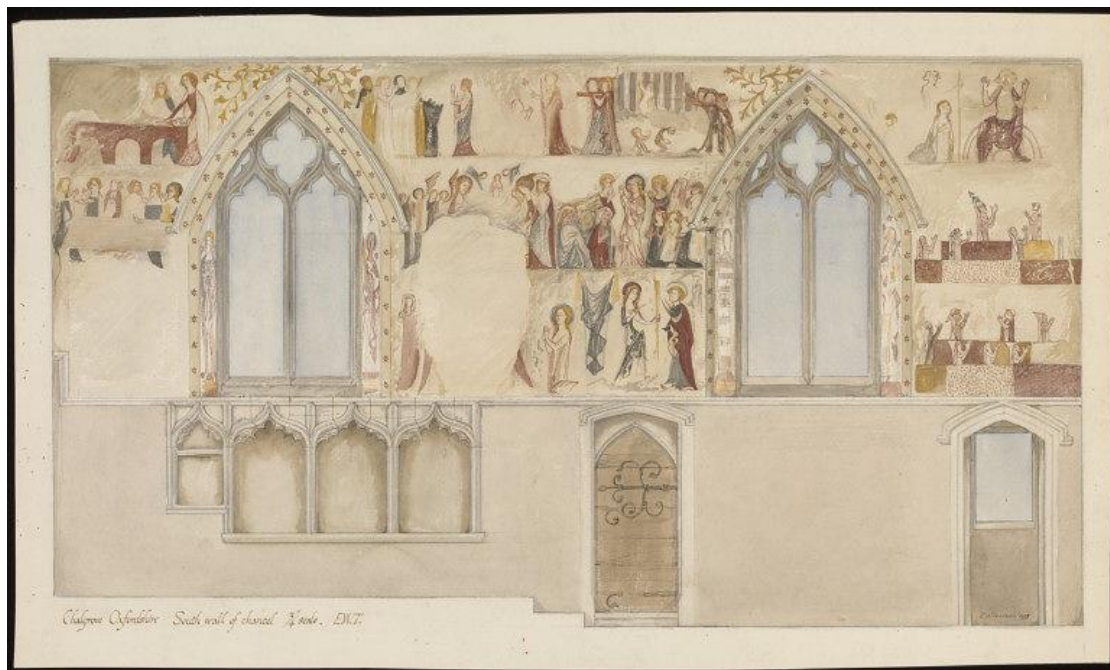


Figure 18: One of Tristram's paintings of the chancel decoration. Victoria and Albert Museum E1536.

A pipe organ was installed in 1931 and was not new when it came to the church. It incorporated previously used material in its construction. It was by Martin and Coate of Oxford. It was replaced in 2016 by a digital instrument by Viscount Classical Organs

In the 1950s several improvements were made to the interior of the church, with faculty permission for new lights in 1950 and the new altar in 1952. The vestry was moved in 1955 from the north aisle to the south aisle, and a side chapel was made out of the old vestry. There are photographs of the wall paintings in the church dated to before 1954 in the English Heritage Archive (eg 4785/042, 4785/045, 4785).

The church was recognised for its national importance and was listed at Grade I in 1963. The listing details are unchanged today (Appendix 1).

Between 1967-8 further conservation work on the wall paintings was carried out by Geoffrey Pearce and John Dives of the Pilgrim Trust under the supervision of Evelyn Baker. A new drainage system was put in place under the chancel walls to alleviate problems of damp and its effect on the paintings. Restoration of the south and east walls of the chancel was made in 1975 and 1978.

In 1966 the South Porch became the main entrance for the church, and emulsion paint applied to all the interior stonework. The heating and lighting were improved in 1967. Iron gates were put in place in the south porch in 1974 to deter vandals. The gravestones in the churchyard were surveyed in 1974.

The chancel and north aisle plastering was removed in 1980 to allow for drying out and the stonework was left exposed. The north aisle ceiling was replaced and the font raised by inserting a carved stone plinth, also in 1980. In 1981 the west wall of the Nave and the Tower had damp-proof course and dry rot treatment; their floors were replaced with quarry tiles. In 1982 the Quatremaine Monument was removed and restored, wholly with grant aid. The organ was repaired in the 1980s, but by 1989 was assessed as in poor condition and badly maintained. Woodworm was noted in the organ casework in 1987.

In 1982, exposure of wall paintings necessitated removal of the Quatremaine memorial from the east wall of the North Aisle. After restoration it was placed, in 1984, on the west wall of the nave, on the south side. The exposed wall paintings resemble a central tower with pinnacles on either side and a banner on the centre pinnacle; there may be a colour infill below and an inscription which has not as yet been deciphered (Heath-Whyte 2003, 90-1). The first edition of 'A guide to the Wall Paintings of St Mary-the-Virgin Church, Chalgrove, in the County of Oxfordshire' by R W Heath-Whyte was published in December 1985. Conservation work on the wall paintings on the north wall of the Chancel was done by Douglas Smith of Gartner Petzold Smith in 1986. Further conservation work was undertaken by Donald Smith and Louise Bradshaw in 1993.

In May 1988 Ian Cohen became vicar of Chalgrove. He is still the incumbent (2017), maintaining St Mary's tradition of long service in the vicarage.

In 1990 the electrics and heater within the church were refurbished. Vandal damage in 1990-1 to the aumbry, vestry lock and glass framed door between the church and bell tower had to be repaired. Window repairs and conservation work on the Robert French Lawrence memorial took place in 1994. Early in January of that year, the PCC's inspecting architect commented in a letter that 'St Mary's is now gradually approaching a reasonable state of repair'.²

The terrier and inventory records the contents of the church. This shows that the old registers of baptisms and burials were placed with the Oxfordshire County Archives

² In the church's Fabric File for 1994, kept at the Vicarage.

in the 1990s. The inventory records numerous items belonging to (often specifically made for/dedicated to) the church including plate such as communion sets (eg chalice and paten, wine jugs etc) dating to 1620, 1650, 1670, 1885-6 and modern plate. There is also a full schedule of furnishings. The terrier / inventory is a vital document, reviewed and updated annually by the churchwardens and vicar.

In 1996 the Chalgrove Friendly Society Banner was in a very poor condition and was repaired by textile conservators Katherine Barker and Alison Chester. The banner was rehung on a new pole with supports by Chalgrove blacksmith Michael Jacques. The turret clock was serviced in June 1997.

Towards the end of 1999, the PCC decided to appoint a new architect. Patrick Crawford of Caroe and Partners was selected in 2000 following interviews with several candidates from well-known conservation architecture practices. Mr Crawford carried out his first quinquennial inspection of the church fabric in November 2000, following inspections by his predecessor in 1988 and 1994. In 2002 re-roofing and other repairs were undertaken under the supervision of Caroe and Partners with substantial grant aid, though the PCC still had to raise the balance of the funding. In 2004 a proposal was put forward for new toilets, storage space and servery facilities in the base of the tower, with a mezzanine level in the bell tower. In 2005 further work on the lead roof was undertaken, along with repair and replacement of timbers and stonework, window restoration, and leadwork. All of this was done with partial grant funding. The project for toilets and washing-up and coffee-making facilities in the ground floor of the tower was carried out in 2006-7; the mezzanine was inserted without compromising the historic structure of the tower, with a spiral stair to the new bell ringing chamber at this level.

In 1995 and 1996 community fundraising events raised funds for the restoration of the banner and the turret clock. The church clock in the tower was dismantled, overhauled in the workshop of Gillett and Johnston (Croydon) Ltd and returned in its hand-wound format in 1995. It was assessed in 2005 by Mr Borre van Nievelt of Rotterdam. Its movement was assessed as of high quality; the framework was functional and normal for turret clocks. It could be the oldest still-working turret clock in Oxfordshire. The 2012 quinquennial inspection recommended that the clock's wooden surround should be redecorated and the single clock hand re-gilded (file in Vicarage on the church clock). Responsibility for the church clock falls to its keeper Andrew Davis, who was appointed in May 2012. The church dial proved too rotten to repair in 2013 and was replaced by Gillett and Johnson, clock restorers and conservators. Servicing of the clock in early 2014 was also done by Gillett and Johnston.

In 2007 a storm damaged the east window of the church chancel. One light of the window was lost. The window was completely restored in November 2007 by Jonathan and Ruth Cooke from Ilkley. All 16 panels in the three lights were cleaned and repaired, replacing the 16th-century glass in its original position, mending broken panes, using new lead, and re-using medieval iron frames.

In 2010 the bells in the tower were removed, a major enterprise. They were repaired and rehung on a new beam, with a better and easier means of ringing the bells. The

restoration was by White's of Appleton. Any older clappers or features of the bells were retained and are on display in the bell tower.

The viability of the church pipe organ was assessed in 2012. The position of the organ relative to the choir in the chancel and the state of repair of the organ were two aspects of concern. The then current organ was assessed as of 'low historic interest' but a photographic record was recommended for the National Pipe Organ Register. A replacement pipe organ would cost in the region of £30,000 to £35,000 and would need to be placed in the south aisle beneath the first large arch. This would not be a convenient position. In 2014 the decision was made on replacement with a digital instrument with the console on the chancel.

In 2013 the Parochial Church Council of St Mary's formally launched an appeal for the Conservation and Refurbishment Project for the church. The speakers were Tim Stevenson, Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, The Venerable Martin Gorick, Archdeacon of Oxford, and the Hon Georgina Stonor. The Lord Lieutenant and Archdeacon recognised not only the importance of the church and the heritage conservation that had already taken place, but also the need for a refurbishment that would bring an ancient building up to date for everyone. The Hon Georgina Stonor reminded the audience of the importance of Chalgrove in the Saxon to Plantagenet period and that there was still more to discover in the church of St Mary's, such as the origins of the font and pulpit, the artist of the wall paintings, who had commissioned that work, and why (St Mary's PCC yearbook 2013-14, 1). The importance of the conservation and refurbishment of St Mary's over the previous 20 years has already been noted by the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust (Payne 2014, 50-4).

The Conservation and Refurbishment Project raised money to start work on conservation of the wall paintings and work on the interior and exterior of the church. The contract started in June 2015 and the work on the church was completed in April 2016. The Conservation and Refurbishment Project 'Precious Heritage Precious Future' has led to the removal of layers of white paint on the columns in the nave and on the sedilia and piscina in the chancel. This has revealed the beauty of the stonework and construction, and also the differences in the quality and finish of wall rubble layers in the stonework from the chancel wall and other areas of the nave. The cleaning and resetting of the brasses of members of the Barantin family in the chancel was undertaken by William Lack (2016), who also provided recommendations for the cleaning and upkeep of the brasses. The 19th century church memory boards have also been cleaned, conserved and rehung (Trevor Cumine 2016). The wall paintings in the chancel have been conserved and further wall paintings have been revealed and conserved on the north side of the nave near the door, the east wall of the north aisle, and further wall painting in the south porch (Madeline Katkov 2015-2016). The wall paintings have been subject to detailed recording especially in the chancel by the conservator Madeline Katkov with a team of artists, some from local colleges. By April 2016 the building works by Ward and Co, and the church refurbishment was complete. This has included re-tiling of the floors with like-for-like replicas of damaged Victorian tiles and stone flooring in the chancel to replace the timber floor, re-plastering of the walls with all wiring hidden in the plasterwork and re-grouting and finishing the stonework outside the church. Carefully selected areas of the new discoveries of wall paintings have been left un-

plastered. The fitting of the lights and heating panels were done by specialist firms and the nave, aisle and porch lighting pendants were designed and made by Michael Jacques, local Eminent Master Blacksmith, and his apprentices. The chancel wall paintings have been specially lit so that they can be illuminated individually in the correct sequence. An assessment of the environmental performance of the church building was also done in November 2016 (Curteis 2016).

3.3 CHURCH DESCRIPTION

3.3.1 *The church*

The church is constructed of coursed limestone rubble with ashlar (dressed stone) facings. The stone is Corallian limestone from near Oxford and Reigate stone from north-east Surrey (Sanderson 2001) It has a gabled tiled roof dated to the late 19th and 20th century, which probably follows the line of the original roof. The roof has stone ridge tiles with a lead sheet roof on the north aisle with timber rolled edge and rain water drains via metal hoppers and drainpipes with lead flashing.

3.3.2 *The Chancel*

Outside the chancel has offset buttresses and a three-light decorated east window, with two-light windows in the side walls. The chancel is a two-bay 14th-century replacement of an earlier version, with contemporary wall paintings internally. They made extensive use of lead white pigment and, unusually, a glue binder. These contribute to the fluidity of the brush strokes and the smooth, silky finish of the scheme. The westernmost bay of the north wall features a Tree of Jesse with looped ovals containing Mary and the Infant Jesus in the top, and King David with his harp. Other figures in the S-shaped curlicues of the tree flank both Mary and King David. The windows have painted detail to either side. The western (Annunciation) window in the north wall has paintings of the Archangel Gabriel to the left and the Virgin Mary to the right. It is probable that the original stained glass window here related to the story of the Annunciation. The lower and middle levels of the central portion of this wall represents the story of the birth of Christ with the nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, the Slaughter of the Innocents, and the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple. The final highest level of the north wall deals with the last days of Christ, with Judas, the betrayal, Jesus before the priest Annas, the mocking by the Jews and scourging of Jesus by two figures with drops of blood on His leg. The scene of Jesus carrying the cross is above the moulding of the east window. The east window on the north side has the images of St Helen of the True Cross on the left and Mary Magdalene on the right, with her alabaster jar of ointment. The Crucifixion, Descent from the Cross and the Anointing of the body of Christ are on the east end of the north wall.

The embrasure of the three-light east window has St Peter on the north (left) side and St Paul on the south. The wall flanking the window features images of the story of Christ after his death, with the Harrowing of Hell, the Resurrection, and the Ascension (in which the figures of Mary and the Apostles are also present, including Peter with his keys). Two plain recesses are in the wall below the east window, behind the altar; a third recess or aumbry is to one side of the altar, in the north wall.

It has been suggested that the recesses may have contained reliquaries presented by the Popes to Drew Barentin I.

The south wall of the chancel has a 14th-century pointed moulded priest's door with studding and wrought iron hinges, and also a 15th-century chamfered window. The wall also contains the finely decorated piscina, sedilia and lavabo with cusped ogee heads and fluted sides. The south wall's paintings deal with the Death and Assumption of the Virgin Mary. These are known from the Apocryphal gospels. Paintings of Mary's final days are in the central portion of the wall between the two windows. The two bottom paintings show Mary receiving the Palm of Paradise from an Angel. The next scene is the Virgin Mary at prayer in pink robes, the gown of immortality: her normal blue robe is behind her. The Hand of God is above in blessing.



Figure 19: The wall paintings and Markham memorial on the south wall, between the two windows.

The next painted image has largely been covered by the Markham Monument. This is a baroque style memorial to the Rev Francis Markham who died in 1668 and his wife Alicia. It has a black central stone with inscription and a garlanded cartouche with angels supporting a coat of arms. The painted figures around and obscured by the monument show one female figure and part of another. Above the presentation of the palm the image shows Mary with the apostles and neighbours. Next to this is the death of Mary surrounded by Angels, but Mary is hidden behind the Markham Monument. Above is the Funeral of the Virgin with the bier supported by the apostles.

The next scenes show St John the Evangelist with the Palm of Paradise (Mary's Palm) and a star-shaped wand. In the next image the High Priest uses the Palm to

heal and convert blinded Jews. These images are unique. The figures of John the Baptist and John the Evangelist are in this window's splays. The story of Mary's death continues with the burial of the Virgin on the top eastern most end of the wall, the Apostles at table with Thomas with the girdle of the Virgin in the central scene. In the lower scene only one male bearded face is visible. The majority of the scene has been replaced by the 18th-century memorial to Katharine Villiers, daughter of the Reverend George Villiers, a fine stone carving of an urn with draped female figures to either side.

The final images in the south wall to the west end are of the General Resurrection, which can be viewed from the squint window from the side chapel. Jesus is in judgement sitting on a rainbow and Mary serves as supplicant for mankind. There are angels barely visible and the figures of souls rising from their graves including bishops, monks, a Pope, and a priest. In the window alcoves at the west end of the south are the figures of St Laurence and St Bartholomew. Both are associated with hospitals, sickness and the needy. All the paintings are defined by a raised stone border with fine moulding at the bottom of the series of wall paintings. This border continues and forms part of the outline of the decorated sedilia and piscina on the south wall. Below the border the coursed limestone wall with lime mortar pointing has been re-plastered.

The communion rail at the chancel entry has barley-sugar (twisted) balusters and is of 17th-century date. The chancel arch is early 14th-century with cutouts to either side in the pillars where the rood screen was positioned; this was removed in the early 20th century. Within the chancel are the brasses of Reginald Barantyn who died 1441 and Drew Barantyn with his wives, Joan who died 1446 and Lady Beatrice. All the brasses are from the London workshops, which is usual for most medieval brasses. Other Barantyns would have been buried in the chancel and the area was the family mausoleum.

The chancel arch was cleaned of 20th-century white paint and several holes were revealed which were part of the structure of the tympanum of the medieval rood screen. There are traces of medieval paint lower down on the column on the south side. Traces of wood from the rood screen are also in place on the north side of the arch.

3.3.3 The Nave

The Nave is of four bays with a late 12th-century south arcade. This has small pointed and roll moulded arches on circular piers with square bases and water-leaf capitals. The early 13th-century north arcade has chamfered arches on circular piers with moulded and foliate capitals. All the dressed stone in the Nave and elsewhere including all the columns, piers and mullions are of Wheatley stone from near Oxford. The exposed limestone rubble in the lower parts of the walls is of Wheatley stone and stone from the local Portland formation (Powell 2016).



Figure 20: Nave pews, with a waterleaf capital in the foreground, prior to 2015-16 refurbishment.

The fine Jacobean oak pulpit is slightly to the north of the chancel in the nave with the 19th-century Adeane monument nearby. The pulpit has finely carved fluted bands at the top, stylised floral and leaf carving below, and toothed arches on Doric pillars. The lower portion has recessed square panels with a double pedestal at the base. The pulpit is accessed by a series of three stairs. It has a dentilled top that supports the table-shelf for bible and other texts. No sounding board is evident. The Chalgrove Friendly Society Banner hangs at the west end of the nave. The wooden ceiling of the nave and aisles consists of a four-bay collar truss roof with curved windbraces. It is all in pine and dates to the 1881-3 renovation of the church. The church roof woodwork was cleaned as part of the refurbishment and conservation work on the church in 2015, as were the oak pulpit and chancel rail.



Figure 21: The pulpit (left) and font (right).

The cup-shaped octagonal font is towards the back (west end) of the south aisle. The bowl has carved emblems on each side under a chevron band with cup and dart detail below. The emblems include a portcullis, a fleur-de-lys, a thistle and a rose with coronet detail. The font is on a twisted spiral carved pillar over a double octagonal plinth, but was previously on a square base with bevelled corners. The

font may have links to Swincombe, originally owned by the Monastery of Bec and then rebuilt in the 16th century by Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk who was married to Henry VIII's sister Mary, the Dowager Queen of France. Both the Duke of Suffolk and Mary's heraldic devices appear on the font, as they did on their house at Swincombe. The font has been dated to the 17th century but this may make it 16th century or, as the rim carving suggests, very much earlier. The font bowl is of Wheatley stone, the spiral stem or pillar is Stoke Ground stone, a type of Bath stone, on a base of Wheatley stone and the stone step of oolitic stone probably Stoke Ground (Powell 2016). The lower step has been removed and the font lowered to make it more accessible for christenings (Conservation and Refurbishment Project 2015-16). The font height is probably the original level of the font.

The painted memorial to the Quatremaine family is on the west wall of the south side of the nave. It is dated 1692 with family details painted on the cartouche in white on a dark background. The lower part has a heart-shaped motif with the words *memento mori*, flanked by figures holding a skull on the left, and a winged goblet in one hand and a small spade in the other on the right. There are two winged heads of angels in the two corners above the memorial inscription. There is a painted bolection-moulded pseudo-stone plinth above with a central heraldic shield of the Quatremaine family. The Quatremaine memorial was cleaned and conserved as part of the Conservation and Refurbishment Project.

3.3.4 The North Aisle

The north aisle in its original narrow form dates from c 1240. It is of three bays with three 15th-century three-light windows and an altar at the east end. The window towards the east has two 15th-century angel faces in two panes of glass. The east window has some blue glass also 15th-century. There is a tablet in memory of Christian Winchcombe (buried in 1557) on the north wall. The north aisle also has the squint to the chancel which has two points of view. Originally this would have been outside. A board on the north wall details the charitable bequests to the poor and needy of Chalgrove. This records grants from 1646. The west window has wooden boards either side of it with the words of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.

The east end of the North Aisle is now the Chapel of St James, perhaps because the church at Warpsgrove in the parish of Chalgrove had a church of St James that was not in use after 1450. The chapel was probably originally the chantry chapel of Drew Barantyn III (Barentin). There is a 15th-century wall painting on the east wall of the north aisle just to the north side of the window (see above). No trace was found of further wall paintings on the north wall. This may correlate with the use of the area as a medieval chantry and burial site. There is a 13th-century aumbry (now with wooden surround, door and sanctuary light) within the aisle for the sacrament. The remains of a stoup/piscina are also to be seen in a pillar near the north aisle.

The north door has wall paintings with a curlicue design and a fleur de lys over the door. The fleur de lys is associated with the Virgin Mary. This was uncovered as part of the conservation and refurbishment work within the church.

A wooden bier of 1668 now adjacent to the north door would have transported coffins and shrouded bodies to the grave. The bier now has the parish chest on top,

a large wooden chest studded on top with the date 1674 and the initials TK and FG (possibly the church wardens at the time). The parish records would have been stored in the chest. In spite of the studded details the parish chest is dated about 1500; the parish church records started in May 1531.

Figure 22: The bier and chest.



3.3.5 The South Aisle

The south aisle was added in Transitional style c 1190. The half bay at the east end of the aisle was probably shortened when the chancel was built. A medieval cresset (lamp) is set high in the wall above the eastern pointed arch near the chancel. The cleaning of the south arcade in 2015 revealed an oak wooden lintel near the eastern short arch of the arcade which was part of the medieval door to the rood loft. It has not been exposed. This aisle has a crenellated parapet on the exterior that dates to the 15th century

The east window of the south aisle is of c 1320 in date and was restored in 1881-3 with the initials of a local man Moses Brown: MB 1883. There is a 13th-century piscina and credence in the south wall, which implies that there was another altar here. Later bequests in the 16th century for the lights and maintenance of St Katherine's altar suggest that this may have been the chapel of St Katherine, a very popular medieval saint. Monuments include the roll of honour of the men of Chalgrove who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars, with the flag of the British Legion above and the memorial tablet to the Reverend Robert French Lawrence.

3.3.6 The Porch

The south doorway that leads into the porch is c 1320 in date and has recently discovered painted detail above it. This comprises a ball trefoil pattern over a triangular detail with ball detail inside and between each raised triangle and trefoil. The pattern is also noted on the north door and north aisle windows and it is probable the motif decorated all the doors and windows in the nave (Heath-Whyte 2016, 96). The porch is mid-15th-century with a gabled roof, top leaded window and a four-centred arched doorway with square head and indented moulded triangular spandrels. There is a drip mould below the window on the exterior. On the interior there are large wooden support beams across the door opening and further wooden roof supports. There are new wrought steel gates with full glazing and part glazed inner wooden doors. Wall painting including a 16th century zig zag panel pattern has been revealed on the walls of the porch. These appear to be borders to text. South of the porch in the western corner of the south aisle was a wood-panelled vestry with Commandment boards on the north side of the exterior. The vestry was at one time in the south porch and another time in the north aisle. The vestry has since been removed to allow space at the back of the church for social gatherings after services and for concerts or other social occasions. The prayer boards have been removed and placed on the south wall. New cupboards have been placed against the south

and west sides of the nave and south aisle to allow for storage. All of this work was done as part of the conservation and refurbishment work on the church in 2015-16.



Figure 23: The Porch.

3.3.7 The Tower

The tower is at the west end of the Nave. The base of the tower now has the 2006-7 servery and toilet facilities with a mezzanine bellringing level reached by a metal spiral staircase. The west face of the tower has a series of windows. The top windows have simple Y tracery and date to about 1240. There are perpendicular windows that date to the late 14th-15th century. The round window midway down is due to the repairs in 1727 when part of the tower was destroyed in a storm. The north face of the tower has the clock, of lozenge shape with a single hand. This was a thirty-hour clock in 1699 and still has the date on its mechanism. The clock was modified in 1863 to become an eight-day movement clock. The doorway to the tower on this face has an arch dated to c 1190; the wooden door is 18th century. There are many masons' marks and initials on the stone quoins of the tower. The bell louvres of the tower were replaced with new ones of oak as part of the Conservation and Refurbishment Project.

In 2010 the seven bells in the tower were removed and restored by Whites of Appleton. The bells were 1/8 turned (they were 1/4 turned when rehung in c. 1888) on their axis and rehung on new headstocks and fitted with new clappers, ropes and bearings. These modifications enabled them to be rung more easily, and this was advantageous to attracting younger and older ringers to the Church. An original wheel and clapper are displayed in the ringing room in the tower.



Figure 24: The Tower, with its internal ground-floor facilities.

3.4 CURRENT MANAGEMENT, USE AND CONDITION OF THE SITE

The Church of St Mary is in the Deanery of Aston and Cuddesdon, within the Archdeaconry of Dorchester and the Diocese of Oxford. The Parochial Parish Council (PCC) co-ordinate the work in the parish and three members serve on the Deanery synod. There are several Committees that cover all aspects of the church and include Fabric and Finance, Social and Pastoral, Communications and a Management Committee for the John Hampden Hall. The Friends of Chalgrove Church also serves to recognise the importance of St Mary's in and beyond the parish. Visitors and interested people can become Friends and support the church through fundraising and donations. St Mary's is especially fortunate that it has an active and proactive Parochial Church Council, an equally proactive incumbent, and churchwardens. Members of the PCC included the project leader for the Conservation and Refurbishment Project. This has taken almost ten years of thought and preparation. The Archdeacon of Oxford had encouraged the project to improve and enhance the use of the church. The church now comes within the Archdeaconry of Dorchester.

The church is a welcoming place that encourages all parishioners, community members and visitors to use and appreciate it. There is an enthusiastic team of bellringers recognised for their commitment, and a congregation that organises prayer meetings and has a deeply realised faith, for which some members of the congregation have been recognised by the diocese. The mission statement for the church reflects this: 'God wants us to be welcoming and hospitable, serving and building within our community'.

Documentation of improvements to the church are held in Reverend Canon Ian Cohen's records of past church work. Regular inspections of the condition of the church are made, with recommendations for work to be done on the interior and exterior of the church at various priority levels (eg one, two-three, five years and beyond). The Diocese of Oxford provides special advice on the church. Contractors with special knowledge of different aspects of the church are retained, for example for the church turret clock, a specialist firm for the bells which were improved and rehung in 2010, and a Conservator for the wall paintings.

The 2010 quinquennial survey by the Patrick Crawford of Caroe & Partners indicated that the general condition of the church building was good and there has been a steady level of improvements. However the exterior stonework was a matter of concern, especially in the area of the chancel. The south wall string course on the exterior and the masonry below the window cills were cracked or exfoliating, with surfaces starting to come away. The ironwork that supports the windows in the north elevation of the chancel was badly rusting and at the western window may have been affecting the surrounding stonework. The door on the south side of the chancel was cracking on the stone hood over the door and the timberwork of the door was in a poor state of repair. The survey suggested replacing it and a weather bar at the base of the door; if this is the 14th-century priest's door with medieval ironwork then a repair might be more appropriate. The windows have been cleaned and replaced and the original ironwork retained as far as possible. It has been noted as part of the preliminary assessment of the environmental performance of the church building that in the internal face of the north-east corner of the chancel there is salt discolouration below the string course in the 2015 plaster (Curteis 2016). There was flaking and salt activity noted in the 14th century painting above the string course. The deterioration is associated with an increased level of ground water or due to the considerable amount of water used in the re-plastering. Any drainage issues should continue to be investigated.

The south wall of the south aisle had decaying stone at high level. A recently planted shrub/tree in the angle between the aisle's east and the chancel was inappropriate and has been removed. The interior of the south aisle had defective wooden ceiling panels towards the east. The entrance to the west of the ceiling had decay where lathes were exposed and there was cracking adjacent to the central purlin in the west wall of the south aisle. In the east wall of the south aisle the plaster had signs of decay at a high level. The south aisle ceiling has been restored and is in a sufficiently robust state to retain high-level heating panels.

The windows in the north aisle on the north side were in need of some remedial work both the stonework over but also the lead comes are failing in places. This is in an area with 15th-century glass. There was cracking near to the purlins in the ceiling towards the west wall. The windows have been conserved and the original ironwork retained.

Most of the walls had exposed limestone rubble at a lower level. The piers, window mullions, font and piscina and sedilia and surrounds had white emulsion paint applied in 1966 as had other stonework in the chancel. All this thick white paint has been removed by a steam clean process in the nave and very carefully in the chancel. All the lower walls have been cleaned and re-plastered.

On the floor in the nave there are 19th century Minton-type red and black tiles. The carpet over these did not allow the tiles to breathe and has been removed. The chancel choir area has black and white stone tiles, and the brass monuments of the Barentins. The tiles have been relaid and like for like tiles replaced in the nave. The brasses have been conserved and riveted in a similar manner to the original and are on view.

The Porch interior was defined as being in a poor state ('mediocre'). There were cracks to the rendered internal walls and ceiling, the plywood seat covers were decayed. These are supported on cinder blocks. The porch needed repair with seating more in keeping with the building. In the tower the exterior stonework was exfoliating and in some cases friable; this was evident particularly on the east face. The porch has since been re-plastered and re-decorated and the wall paintings that were found there have been exposed. The porch has a new stone floor and seating. Wrought steel gates by Michael Jacques with the Tree of Life design are on the exterior entrance and the new oak doors have etched glass within them with the same tree of life design. There is a new light pendant in the porch by Michael Jacques's workshop. The exterior of the porch and the church has been repointed and decaying stone replaced.

3.5 THE CONSERVATION AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

The Conservation and Refurbishment Project was centred around preserving the uniquely important medieval wall paintings at St Mary's. The Project has proved much more than that, however: it has succeeded in the removal of modern white paint from the stonework and replacement of lime plaster render to the walls in various areas. Improvements to the South Porch were also part of the project. This is the main public entrance to the church and has been completely refurbished as part of the project.

The Victorian pine 'catalogue' pews³ in the church have been overhauled and reconfigured. The space is now better arranged, more flexible, and comfort levels have been improved. Shorter pews can also be reconfigured around the font for christenings. The creed and prayer panels on the vestry wall have been conserved and relocated to the south wall. The previous heating system has been replaced with discrete new panel heaters at high level within the nave and aisles, and heating bars beneath the new choir stalls. All the wiring has been incorporated in the new plastering on all the walls. This is a medium-term solution: the PCC would prefer green and more sustainable solutions in the longer term. A recent report suggests that the Conservation and Refurbishment Project has improved environmental conditions in the church (Curteis 2016).

³ These were made in Nettlebed.

4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ST MARY'S, CHALGROVE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section assesses the significance of the church, while touching on some associated remains in the vicinity as well. Firstly the background of statutory and other protections is examined. Then the significance of the site is examined at various stages in its history, from the prehistoric to the present day. This is done in general terms across the whole site. Significance may reside in one or more categories such as architecture, archaeology, landscape, collections, ecology, community values, and associated people. A number of factors have been used in defining significance, such as rarity, date/periods present, condition, extent, group value, user value and fragility. Many of these relate to guidelines currently in use for the evaluation of sites and monuments at national and regional levels. These provide appropriate mechanisms for achieving the aim of defining significance. We have not addressed ecology in this Plan, as its specific remit covers the church building only. Bats (if present), lichens and mosses may require some consideration outside of the context of this document.

Significance is essentially a hierarchical concept, using ascending levels of value. These follow guidelines established by James Semple Kerr (*The Conservation Plan*, 1996) and adopted by the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and others. The levels of significance are:

- **Exceptional**, important at national to international levels, reflected in the statutory designations of Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and equivalent nationally graded sites (including those of ecological and nature conservation value).
- **Considerable**, important at regional level or sometimes higher.
- **Some**, of local to regional significance, often for group value (eg a vernacular architectural feature).
- **Little**, of limited heritage or other value.
- **Negative** or **intrusive** features, ie elements that actually detract from the value of a site. A modern corrugated iron shed adjacent to an important medieval building might be a good example.

A low designation of significance does not necessarily imply that a feature is expendable. Furthermore there are many instances where parts or aspects of the study area may be susceptible to **enhancement** or **reduction** of significance as currently perceived, especially where there is a lack of information or understanding at the moment. Instances of this are highlighted in the following text.

English Heritage's Conservation Principles (2008) provides further valuable advice on the definition of heritage significance. In particular, it focusses on four value areas which can be used to provide further depth to the characterisation of a building's or site significance. These are its *evidential*, *historic*, *aesthetic* and *community* values. These categories are therefore used where appropriate in this section of the Plan.

4.2 DESIGNATION: BACKGROUND TO SIGNIFICANCE

Designation provides an important reference point because a historic site or monument can only be granted this legal protection (especially at the level of Scheduled Monument, Listed Building or Site of Special Scientific Interest) if it meets certain criteria. All of these relate to importance in some way, usually at a national level. Statutorily protected sites are therefore inherently among the most significant examples of a type; they may even be unique. Scheduled Monuments in particular must be of national importance by definition if they are to be so designated. All these protective measures, however, are subject-specific.⁴ The assessment of significance undertaken for a Conservation Plan has an advantage in being able to use all relevant criteria across many specialist disciplines rather than concentrating on one of them.

In most cases there is only one recognised grade of importance usually at a national level. The three-tier grading system for Listed Buildings (and Registered Parks and Gardens) providing a hierarchy of levels, with Grade I being the most important (2.5% of England's more than 374,000 listed buildings), Grade II* next (5.5%), and Grade II last (92%).⁵ Nevertheless it is still axiomatic that "Grade II buildings are nationally important and of special interest".⁶

4.3 KEY SIGNIFICANCE FACTORS

As guidance published in 2010 states:

"Buildings on the list are graded to reflect their relative architectural and historic interest. Buildings of historic interest may justify a higher grading than would otherwise be appropriate.

- Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest;
- Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest;
- Grade II buildings are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them."⁷

St Mary's Church, Chalgrove, is a Grade I listed building. Thus it is ranked in the top 2.5% of England's historic buildings. It is, by definition, of **exceptional significance**.

The Grade I listed status of St Mary's is, however, worthy of further examination. It is plainly the case that the church is a fine example of medieval ecclesiastical architecture, and it is rich in history. Indeed this is evident in virtually every part of the building, in monuments, inscriptions, brasses and ledgers. Arguably more personal connections exist as well, such as masons' marks, dedicated church plate from the 17th century onwards, and the late 18th-century studded initials on the parish chest. Thus there is a very strong sense of communal and historical connection to the fine

⁴ The Heritage Protection Bill envisaged the replacement of the existing raft of separate designations with a unified one covering archaeological sites, registered parks and gardens, battlefield sites, wrecks and historic buildings under the broad term 'heritage assets'.

⁵ See <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/listed-buildings/> for further information.

⁶ <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/listed-buildings/>

⁷ Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2010, *Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings*, paragraph 7.

architecture of the building itself. These aspects could easily warrant the church's Grade I listing – there are many other medieval churches, in town and village, which enjoy this level of designation. The architecture, history and deep community connection of St Mary's are key to an appreciation of its past, present and future: it is a building of **exceptional significance** for its evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.

While these aspects are clearly important, and meet statutory designation criteria, there is one facet of St Mary's which stands above all others as its most important feature: the medieval wall paintings in the chancel. We return to these in more detail below, but beyond any doubt they are chief among the key significance factors at St Mary's Chalgrove. The paintings would have been impressive enough if only a part of the scheme had survived: to have virtually the whole scheme intact (but for some areas partly obscured by later monuments) is truly extraordinary. These paintings rank among the finest in medieval England, and deserve their recognition nationally and internationally. They are of **exceptional significance** for its evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.

Above all, of course, St Mary's Chalgrove is an active centre and focus of Christian worship and mission. As such its present incumbent and community represent the present-day guardians of a tradition and religious use dating back for around nine centuries – perhaps longer. The congregation today, and the wider communities of village, county, Diocese and beyond, have a keen sense of place within that continuum. The recent Conservation and Refurbishment Project represents the community's vision and will conserve, nurture and protect the building's wonderful heritage, but also to take it proudly forward to wider and all-inclusive use and users. The local vision and determination to maintain and extend this church's values is of **exceptional significance**.

4.4 THE SITE BEFORE THE CHURCH

Little is known in detail about the church site's (or indeed the wider village's) past development. A few sites and finds of prehistoric and Roman date are known in the vicinity. One Roman find known as the Chalgrove Coin Hoard has a unique coin of an unknown Roman emperor Domitianus, the only other coin of this previously unknown emperor was found 100 years ago in France. There was a Roman settlement to the west of the current settlement. This find is of **exceptional significance** and is now part of the British collection at the Ashmolean Museum Oxford. Most of the evidence hints at important sites and people in Chalgrove, but little sense of a clear history or pattern emerges from these small traces. It is impossible to define them as of greater than local importance, and thus of **some significance**, for its evidential, historical and communal values. Future discoveries may change this, however, and thus enhance our understanding of Chalgrove and its significance.

Chalgrove gradually comes into greater focus during the Anglo-Saxon period, especially later on when it gained historical connections with the new burgh of Wallingford. Chalgrove was on one of the linking routes to the burgh of Oxford, as well as one that linked Wallingford to Woodstock, and was a large arable area

processing and providing food for the burgh. Even so it is difficult to pin down what was happening in Chalgrove itself, and how (or even whether) it grew during this era. There are a few more finds, and a gradual increase in historical documentation – but it is still only possible to define the site as of local importance, and thus of **some significance**, for its evidential, historical and communal values. Once again, though, future finds may change this, and so enhance our understanding of Chalgrove and its significance.

4.5 THE MEDIEVAL AND LATER CHURCH, ITS DECORATION, FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

4.5.1 The medieval fabric of the church

St Mary's Chalgrove is a palimpsest of fabric dating from the 12th century onwards. Most areas of the church retain medieval features and fabric. There have been alterations, extensions and restorations down the centuries, so that the roofs (for instance) retain virtually no early fabric and little of their original character other than pitches. The door frames, windows and porch are largely original, though again of varying ages (see above) and with extensive refurbishment in places (eg the 2007 work on the storm-damaged east window of the chancel). Areas of particularly fine fabric include

- The chancel, including its arch to the nave, the piscina, sedilia, priest's door and squint.
- The nave and its arcade piers, of different ages to either side and thus demonstrating how complex medieval parish churches could be.
- The aisles, with evidence for secondary (but important) altars, chapels and chantries.
- The south porch.
- The tower.

The medieval fabric, features and fittings of the church are of **exceptional significance** for their evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.

4.5.2 The medieval wall paintings

St Mary's owes much of its character and value to the preservation, extent and beauty of the 14th-century wall paintings in the chancel. The majority of medieval churches would have been painted. Such decoration was actively promoted by St Gregory the Great in 604 AD, who declared that every church was to be decorated with brightly painted murals. Unfortunately the zealous 'cleaning' of many English parish churches in the Puritan days of the 17th century hid or ruined many schemes. Less than 10% of English churches contain any remains of their wall painting decoration, and most are no more than minor fragments of their original schemes. Often it is barely possible to make out what the scheme would have looked like – or even any particular part of it. Extensive or near-complete survival of large-scale painted schemes is extremely rare. Examples include the remarkable 15th-century nave arcade scenes at St Peter's and St Paul's, Pickering (North Yorkshire)⁸ and the

⁸ <http://www.pickeringchurch.com/wallpaintings.html>

equally impressive late 15th-century Doom painting over the chancel arch at St Thomas's Church, Salisbury (Wiltshire).⁹ The Death, Burial and Coronation of the Virgin is depicted in similar detail but with less range of colour at Sutton Bingham Church, Somerset (Bath and Wells), in the nave. This scheme is dated to the 13th century. The earliest chancel wall paintings which are well-preserved are at Kempley church Gloucestershire and date to the 12th century. These are of the Last Judgement and the decoration of the church is due to a wealthy and well connected patron, a chancellor to Henry I. The death, burial and assumption of the Virgin is shown on the north wall of the chancel at Broughton, Oxfordshire, dated to the 14th century. In places the Broughton wall paintings are fragmentary, with the palm from the angel given to the Virgin the best preserved. St Mary Chalgrove's wall paintings are therefore exceedingly rare, and one of the earliest largely complete sets in the country. The detail and range of colour used in the figures and their dress, and the subject matter, are certainly among the best in the country. The paintings are of **exceptional significance** for their evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.

The wall paintings of St Marys Church Chalgrove are unique in that they show four of the five joys of Our Lady: Annunciation, Nativity, Resurrection, Ascension and Assumption. Any speech scrolls or further explanation may have been in the associated windows at Chalgrove, which may have been destroyed in the Commonwealth. There are three scenes - the image of the Virgin praying; the Conversion of the High Priest by St John the Evangelist; and the Conversion and Healing of the Blind Jews - which are believed to have no known comparative medieval images (Heath-Whyte 2003 and 2016). The wall paintings in the chancel of St Mary's Chalgrove are one of the best in the dozen or so extensive wall painting schemes to survive in England (there are many more highly fragmentary ones). The potential connection with Florentine medieval wall painting tradition is also extremely important. Beyond doubt, the chancel's medieval wall paintings are of **exceptional significance**.

Technically, the paintings are very unusual for the extensive use of lead white pigment, and a glue binder (Katkov 2016). Secco (dry) paintings usually produce a matt finish, but the glue binder allowed far more lustre in the Chalgrove paintings. The glossy effect has survived several previous conservation projects, and has been enhanced by the latest work during 2015-16. The unusual techniques employed on the scheme at St Mary's also mark it out as being of **exceptional significance**.

Remains of 15th century wall paintings also survive in the east wall of the north aisle and these form the remains of a tabernacle of arched and ogee-shaped detail which would have formed the background to the figure of a saint, in this case probably St James. Further wall paintings continue in places on the north wall of the north aisle. The tabernacle wall paintings may be associated with the changes in the north aisle in the 15th century, and the establishment of a chantry chapel by Drew Barentin. Painted wall paintings associated with chantry chapels and burials were common but are now particularly rare (Roffey 2007, 32). The presence of more wall paintings in the north aisle, and the rarity of chantry chapel paintings, ensure that this is of at least **considerable significance** for evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal

⁹ <http://www.stthomassalisbury.co.uk/content/pages/documents/1296212454.pdf>

values. Further work, if it reveals more paintings, might well elevate this to **exceptional significance**. The current remains of wall paintings over doors and windows are from different periods and are a stencilled ball and wave design part of which overlies the tabernacle. These are of **considerable significance** as a church-wide scheme of decoration. Wall paintings revealed in the south porch at Chalgrove are unique and rare examples of porch wall-paintings. Porch wall-paintings are relatively rare and of therefore of **exceptional significance**.

4.5.3 Other medieval features

The piscina, credence and the triple sedilia in the chancel form a fine group with columnar divisions between each seat in the triple sedilia. Another church that has cusped ogee arches in the piscina and sedilia (but not of the same quality) is St Mary the Virgin, North Creake (Norfolk). This has a large label over it which is not the case in St Mary's Chalgrove. Another example which is very similar is at Shottesbrooke (Oxfordshire) dated to c 1337 (Cameron 2015). The piscina, credence and triple sedilia in the chancel are of **exceptional significance** for their evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values even if, as Dr James Cameron suggests, the sedilia is a normal mid-C14th century type. It is probable that the sedilia would have been decorated, probably with blessing bishops behind the seats such as at Easby (North Yorkshire), which also has chancel wall paintings. The sedilia would have been in keeping with the unique wall-paintings.

The brasses of the Barentin family in the chancel show just two male members of the family and their monuments in the 15th century. Brasses served to remind people to say prayers (obits) for the dead through recognition of the image of the person. Brasses also showed the importance and status of the deceased, and preserved a person's memory. The Barentins were a high-status local family with wealth, and an extensive manor house complex not far from the church. They had royal connections from the first Drew Barentin who was a member of the household of Henry III, to Drew Barentin II who had connections with King Edward II and may have contributed finances and influence to the chancel decoration. Thomas I was a member of the Queen's household. These and subsequent family members will have been buried in family vaults in the chancel and would all, except John, have had brass monuments. The later brasses are not in themselves unusual but serve to show the integral relationship between the Church of St Mary and the chancel as a burial place for an influential and well-connected family. The understanding of the piety expressed through the church of St Mary is of at least **considerable significance**.

There are interesting specific details, such as late 14th-century cresset near to the chancel. This is currently a nine-hole cresset. It would have been bigger with 15 holes according to the records. Stone cressets are known in other churches such as Wareham Church, Dorset and the one in Brecon Priory has a large 30-hole cresset which would have taken the oil for candles. The cresset remains although interesting are not especially unusual and are therefore of local interest and **some significance** for its evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.

The chancel arch and surrounds have incised detail and evidence for the rood screen and tympaneum above it. This includes the remains of a wooden lintel (part of the door and access to the rood loft) and traces of paint on one of the chancel

arch columns. Medieval rood screens could be painted. There are examples of painted 15th century rood screen panels from St Mary's Church Kersey (Suffolk) and carved screen and rood loft as at Llannano Church (Wales) and St John the Baptist Church, Frome, Somerset (Heath-Whyte 2016, 99). The only exceptionally complete rood screen in Oxfordshire is a 13th century one at Stanton Harcourt Church. A probably later rood screen at Chalgrove was present in the early 20th century. The evidence for a rood screen and tympaneum and possible painted remains on a column are of **considerable significance**. It was as part of a scheme to divide and showcase any figures in the tympaneum / rood screen from the wall paintings in the chancel.

The squint in the North Aisle of Chalgrove church has two points of view, a double view squint. Most squints have a view of the altar for the raising of the host. The St Mary's example allows a view of the General Resurrection wall painting in the south-west corner of the chancel as well. Double view squints are assessed as rare: another example is present at St Thomas a Becket Church, Lewes (Sussex), which is associated with a leper hospital¹⁰. This would have allowed people in the aisle and outside to see the mass. St John the Baptist, Doddington, Faversham (Kent) also has a double squint or hagioscope. There are only a few examples of double squints, and any survivals are of national importance and **exceptional significance** for evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.



Figure 25: The medieval squints in the chancel's north wall.

The piscina and credence in the South Aisle indicate a possible former altar of St Katherine. St Katherine was a very popular medieval saint and her image is known on wall paintings elsewhere. The South Aisle and nave are the earliest part of the church, of 12th century date: the reference to the donation of the altar of St Katherine,

¹⁰ The Barentin family were recorded as founders/supporters of leper hospitals. The Langenhull family of Chalgrove supported the leper hospital at Crowmarsh, which held their estate in Chalgrove. That hospital was probably founded by the Boterel family, and it seems that Peter Boterel was the likely donator of the Langenhull lands to the hospital. He had given other manorial holdings to Missenden Abbey and the Hospital of St John, Oxford.

however, is 16th-century. Any saints' chapels and the probable chantry chapel in the North Aisle would have been closed on the orders of the Duke of Somerset in 1537. These features are of **considerable significance** for evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.

4.5.4 Later features

The 17th-century Markham Monument in the chancel is a Baroque-style oval cartouche wall monument. There are other late 17th-century wall monuments with baroque detail evident in Norwich churches and within the country-wide assessments by the Church Monument Society. None are the same as the Markham Monument; the most similar wall monuments are of 18th-century date. The Markham Monument is of national importance and **exceptional significance** for its evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values. The monument has been repaired and conserved

The 17th-century Quatremaine family memorial is an entirely wall painted memorial to look like an inscription on slate surrounded by marble angels at the top, a stone lintel and heraldic shield. Similar 17th-century painted panels are known on wood. Most 17th-century church monuments are carved, normally with the skull below and heraldic device above such as St Dunstan's Stepney. Other monuments have painted inscriptions on stone. There are 17th-century painted inscriptions at the Church of St Mary the Virgin and St Peter, Fairstead, Braintree (Essex). The nearest equivalents to the painted wall memorial in St Mary's Chalgrove are three painted late 17th-century text panels being conserved at St Michael's Church, Raddington (McNeilage Conservation). There is nothing to compare to the Quatremaine memorial in this country or elsewhere. The memorial is thus of **exceptional significance** for its evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.

The pulpit is of the 17th-century Reformation and is a very good, well-finished Jacobean example. It corresponds to the 17th-century oak carved chancel rails with barley-sugar balusters. There are similar 17th-century pulpits but few have its range and quality of carved detail. The pulpit and chancel rails may have been financed by a wealthy man, Sir Sampson White, who was twice mayor of Oxford, and had favour with the King. The pulpit is of local interest but of high quality (its panels may have come from the demolished 'Dudley Carlton' house at Brightwell) and **considerable significance** for its evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.

The church tower dates from the late 12th century with the lower section and the north door being the earliest part. The tower was repaired/rebuilt in the 18th century after its collapse. The tower has a turret clock, which is 17th-century in origin and one of the oldest working church turret clocks in Oxfordshire. It has a hand-wound mechanism with a date of 1699 inscribed. Seventeenth-century turret clocks exist at Windsor Castle, Wadham College Oxford, and St Johns College Oxford (this one dated to 1690). All of these clocks are associated with the Knibb family who originally came from Claydon, Oxfordshire. The turret clock at St Mary's Chalgrove has a unique mechanism with a 'birdcage' structure and has been built and maintained by local Chalgrove men. It is well maintained and works well in spite of its age, additions and changes over the years. Other 17th-century turret clocks in Oxfordshire (such as

the one at St Swithun's Church, Merton) have been replaced and the original clock there is now in the nave. The continued use of the turret clock at St Mary's is of **considerable significance**.

Four of the six bells in the tower of the church are dated 1664, in the time of Charles II. There may have been earlier bells: the Chantry Certificate of Church Goods in 1552 mentions 'three great bells and one little bell'. The latter may have been the equivalent to the current Ting Tang, dated 1659, the sanctus bell for mass and now for church services. This bell hangs in the north window opening. The treble, 2nd, 3rd and 4th bells are all dated 1664. All of the early bells are listed in the Council for Care of Churches 'Schedule of Bells for Preservation' in the Oxfordshire Diocese. These bells are therefore of at least **considerable significance**.

The charity boards, commandments and creed and Lord's Prayer boards reflect 17th / 18th-century charity and 19th-century piety. All types of boards are represented elsewhere but probably not all three in one church. The boards are of **some significance** evidentially, historically and aesthetically but the communal (eg social and religious) values and have been enhanced with some conservation cleaning. All should be retained as a vital part of the church and social and religious history. The Chalgrove Friendly Society Banner a mid- 19th century society is of social significance and has links to the church through the service associated with the Friendly Society. The Banner has been conserved and rehung and is of **some significance**.



Figure 26: The creed, commandments and Lord's Prayer boards (left), and the Friendly Society Banner.

4.5.5 Associated people

Various people have already been mentioned in the preceding sections. They will not be referred to again here.

The scale of the decorative detail and the finish and precision of the work on the sedilia, and piscina indicate a master craftsman possibly with royal connections. Bonacursus de Friscobaldis de Florencia was appointed in 1310 by Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, and the King: records suggest, that Bonacursus resided in

Chalgrove from time to time. The influential local families the Barentins and the Berefords were in favour with the King and his favourite Gaveston (William Bereford was Gaveston's executor). These families with their national and wider connections are of **exceptional significance** historically, aesthetically and communally for their contributions to the church and village.

The 18th-century memorial to Katharine Villiers (married name Lewis) is a typical and well executed wall memorial with classical urn and draped figures. Her father George was vicar of Chalgrove: he died in 1748 and is buried in the floor of the chancel. George was the last recognised titular Earl of Buckingham. As such the Rev Villiers is recognised more for his name and title and is of regional and national importance and the unfortunate coincidence that he had the same name as his notorious cousin, the self-styled Duke of Buckingham. The Reverend George Villiers is mentioned in the peerage history and is of **considerable significance** more for his social connections which are reflected in the composition of his daughter's memorial.

The memorial to the 19th-century vicar, Reverend Robert French Lawrence, is important in that it reflects the effect of the man on his parish and his parishioners. The Rev Robert French Lawrence is named in the Oxfordshire Diocese in its Calendar of Saints (The Calendar has been in place since 2001) and is recognised for his local ministry that made a difference to local people - 'a life of holiness which enriched the life of the church'. The Rev French Lawrence established a school which he taught at himself. He campaigned for better accommodation for agricultural labourers and was a secretary of the National Agricultural Labourers Organisation. There was a union meeting on the lawn of the vicarage at Chalgrove. Robert French Lawrence was vicar of Chalgrove and Berrick Salome from 1832 until his death in 1885. His work and influence in saving the wall paintings for posterity is of regional and national importance. The social importance of Reverend Robert French Lawrence is of **considerable significance**.

5 SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND TO ISSUES AND POLICIES

The Parochial Church Council has an important vision of faith, mission and service for St Mary's Church, Chalgrove. It has maintained the fabric of the church and has records of maintenance over the past thirty years or so. The incumbent, PCC, churchwardens and congregation all endorse the desire for the inclusive use of the space within the church for the benefit of all.

Facilities

St Mary's already had a carefully thought out and unobtrusive servery and toilet facilities in the base of the west tower as a result of an earlier project. In 2014, it became appropriate and important that heating, lighting and advanced audio systems needed be considered for the nave and chancel. The heating system was significantly more than 30 years old and barely penetrated the overall low temperature of this large historic building. As part of a major project enhancing the interior of the church, the introduction of modern and building-sensitive heating and lighting could now be appropriately addressed. A modern series of radiant heating panels have been placed in the nave roof and the two aisles. This is an unusual

heating system in a church and has meant that possible below-ground heating, which could have impacted on the church structure and archaeology, has not been needed. The effect of the new heating is immediate and noticeable. The effects of the heating on all the church artefacts will be monitored. The heating in the chancel, sited underneath the pews there, may also need monitoring. Lighting has also been improved and the sequentially controlled illumination of the medieval wall paintings in the chancel, has been found to be very successful. The effect of all the improvements is readily apparent. A microphone system with an audio loop is also in place. The church now feels uncluttered, light, and warm and the microphone system is very effective. All the new systems for heating, lighting and sound enhancement will need to be monitored and maintained on a regular basis.

Fabric

The external fabric of the church is in generally good condition due to the success of the incumbent and PCC, and past grant aid from English Heritage. The latter, however, no longer administer grants to churches: this role has passed to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Past work has involved work to the nave floor, the conservation of monuments, the east window of the chancel (after storm damage), and the wall paintings. This is a major and noteworthy achievement, but there remained no room for complacency. The interior needed new consideration and considerable investment which was recognised in the Conservation and Refurbishment Project. The project has led to fabric consolidation, conservation of features and furnishings, and replacement of tiling and floors. This will have to be maintained as necessary on a continuing basis. The opportunities for using the church will need to be observed and recorded to assess the condition and effect on the fabric. The new form of heating now in this church will need continuing assessment as we are aware that it is of interest to the Diocese of Oxford and beyond. Any new works and installations always have the potential to impact negatively on the significance of the fabric, furnishings and fittings, but we believe that the current works have been carried out with due care and consultation. Such works also however have the potential to reveal and enhance this significance, and this has been acknowledged throughout the process of the Conservation and Refurbishment Project.

The conservation work of the paintings in the chancel (Katkov 2016) has shown that there are peculiarities with the structure ie the thickness of the walls. Historically, dampness in the walls has led to decay with plaster coming away and also cracks and surface erosion. The condition of the chancel will continue to be monitored, either on a regular or quinquennial basis by a conservator, while continued observation by the churchwardens should also help to flag up any issues which arise between the formal inspections. With climate change possibly impacting on rainwater drainage, the suitability of the downspouts on either side of the nave aisle walls will need to occasionally reassessed, (Curteis 2016). The impact of any water penetration into the church structure and the various changes, as regards humidity and temperature level within the building, will need continuing assessment as regards the long term preservation of the chancel and wall-paintings (Curteis 2016). Prompt action will always need to be taken when anything goes amiss as regards rain water run off or blocked or faulty drains.

The fittings and fixtures in the church have been conserved such as the Adeane Ledger stone (Carpenter 2016) and the Quatremaire memorial (Russell 2016). In both cases regular inspection for lamination in the ledger stone and paint deterioration in the Quatremaire memorial have been recommended.

Health and safety

An issue which increases the vulnerability of the church in this respect are the perceived demands of recent legislation. Health and Safety Regulations have made it more difficult for volunteer labour to carry out a variety of routine tasks. However the church currently has a skilled caretaker with professional Health and Safety credentials. With assistance he is able to use the permanent scaffolding tower which has been incorporated into a specially designed cupboard in the church. Should this not be the case in the future then specialist accredited expertise will be required. There are various grant-aiding organisations which can help in this respect. An annual report on Health and Safety is provided by the churchwardens, while urgent matters are dealt with as they arise.

Risk management

All heritage assets are exposed to losses from disasters such as fire and flood, but historic buildings and their contents are particularly vulnerable to such damage. The church is vulnerable to fire damage because of the extensive use of timber in its structure, especially the roof as well as in its internal fixtures and fittings which are irreplaceable. Damage may be caused accidentally or deliberately. Equally, however, buildings such as this church, are also extremely vulnerable to damage from inappropriate fire safety regimes, protective works and equipment. A **Disaster Management Plan** (for which the Church Buildings Council has developed guidance), and regular reviews of the safety equipment and procedures, will be instituted.

A remotely monitored roof alarm was fitted as part of the Conservation and Refurbishment Project 2015/16. This covers all three areas of lead on the roof and was fitted by a supplier approved by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

Access

The requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act have influenced the planning for and activity regarding the church's restoration. Accessibility to and use of the church by those with a disability has been embraced as a priority.

Substantial access improvements were effected during 2015/16 as part of the Conservation and Refurbishment Project. Wheelchair movement around the interior is now much easier, although several changes in level remain. A wheelchair ramp is provided for access through the north door, should this be needed. It can also be used on the other level changes in the chancel. Vehicular access is possible around the whole of the church with a drop-off point adjacent to the south porch. The gravel surfaces outside have also been upgraded. Large-print books are provided at every regular service at St Mary's, and an audio-loop was introduced during 2015/16 as part of the microphone and address system. Interpretative methods include

materials for sight-impaired visitors, to help their enjoyment of the heritage of the Church, have been introduced.

Achievement

The PCC, community and diocese developed plans to re-order the church, creating space and facilities for use of the church by wider sections of the community. This has all been achieved by the 2015/6 Conservation and Refurbishment Project. Implemented ideas included:

- The rearrangement of the South Aisle and west end of the church, including the removal the vestry and pipe organ, and the fitting of well-designed storage cupboards has proved creative of this space.
- The improvement and conservation of the South Porch, with the installation of a new external metal and glass door, designed by a local eminent master blacksmith.
- Development of the nave, addressing the present configuration of the pews better to provide a flexible space suitable for large services, as well as small services eg baptisms at the font. The font has been lowered to its former height. Music concerts and art exhibitions / cultural events are now better accommodated.
- Development of information boards about the history and current use of the church. The Chalgrove History Group and the Parish Council are expecting to use these information boards as the 'type' within and around the church and village to reflect the complex history of the church and village.
- New sound system and lighting has been introduced aware of the need to reduce the running costs and Carbon Footprint of the church. Further improvements will be considered where appropriate in the future.
- Re-decoration throughout following the above; with removal of emulsion paint that is detrimental to the fabric, and re-plastering with lime plaster at both the higher and lower levels of the walls, in addition to a new limewash finish. Replacement of the choir stalls was also a part of the new opportunity for the use of the better use of the interior which not only embraces functionality with a variety of choir using them, but providing a clear liturgical and aesthetically pleasing presence in the chancel.
- Conservation and accurate recording of the nationally renowned wall paintings, including those discovered during the project. Detailed records were kept at all stages of the project, including all sections of wall prior to re-plastering.

Following the necessary options appraisal phase, a development plan was devised and funding sought, including the major application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This programme of works was carefully considered with full consultation. The Conservation and Restoration Project with Lottery funding and funding raised from other sources has managed to reconfigure and conserve the church interior and

realised all of these initial ideals within 2015/2016. The interior and exterior of the church have been extensively repaired and improved. A new digital organ console near the choir (Viscount Classical Organ), new choir stalls and lighting has improved the chancel. All the historic woodwork has been cleaned and conserved (Mick Lomas and Douglas Griffin). The wall paintings have been conserved and detailed recording has been done (Madeleine Katkov). The Adeane ledger slab on the south side of the chancel arch has been conserved with the laminated surfaces fixed (Carpenter 2016). The heating now consists of electric radiant heating panels at ceiling level within the nave and aisles, which have been decorated to blend in with the church ceiling and heating in the chancel under the new chancel pews (so as not to affect the wall paintings). Printed guides produced by the Chalgrove History Group (Jacques 2016) and information on the church is available online and within the church as part of the Conservation and Restoration Project. This include a digital interactive 360⁰ tour of the church interior.

5.1 ISSUES AND POLICIES FOR CHALGROVE CHURCH

Statutory designations and local planning controls are designed to protect and reflect the full depth of a heritage asset's importance to the people who use it, work there or visit it. A feeling of deep attachment and pride is commonly found in historic buildings and this can be as important as any official protection. The church of St Mary the Virgin, Chalgrove and its surrounds can be vulnerable to threats, both physical and through inadequate information and/or understanding. This part of the Conservation Management Plan therefore identifies vulnerability issues, and establishes conservation policies for dealing with them. The policies take due account of local, regional and national planning and other policies.

This section sets out firstly the issues, and then the policies, that have been identified during the process of preparing the Plan.

The Conservation Management Plan is not a fixed and immutable document and has to reflect changes within the Church and the needs of the incumbent and congregation, choir and all who use the church of St Mary the Virgin Chalgrove.

Issue 1: Our knowledge of places like major churches is constantly increasing, and of course the church and site and its environment are also in a constant state of change. The Conservation Management Plan provides a framework for managing information, to which new information can be added as it arises. It will continuously evolve and thereby remain accurate and useful. The maintenance of the Conservation Management Plan as a digital document allows this to be done at minimum cost and effort.

Issue 2: The church of St Mary the Virgin Chalgrove has a mission that reflects all aspects of the church life and has services that encourage all age groups and are family friendly. It seeks to explore potential for better public access where this is appropriate and which is not in conflict with existing (or possible future) uses.

The church is a place of worship, and seeks to maintain a good relationship and active role with the community and parish, deanery and diocese. As regards

maintaining this, appropriate advice and support can be sought from the Diocese, the Church Buildings Council and other partners and organisations, including Historic England and the local authority.

Issue 3: Mindful of the Conservation Management Plan, the historic environment of the church of St Mary the Virgin, its churchyard and features will continue to require special attention in the future. Strategic decisions will need to be taken in accordance with the principles and policies set out in the Conservation Plan. Where there is a need to enhance the ambience and retain the heritage of St Mary Chalgrove, building conservation principles will be significant. The maintenance and repair of this major historic building will continue to need to be carried out using appropriate materials and techniques which are not damaging to its historic fabric and character.

Issue 4: All heritage assets are exposed to losses from disasters such as fire, flood or theft, but historic buildings and their contents are particularly vulnerable to such damage. This may be caused accidentally or deliberately. Equally, however, buildings and collections are also extremely vulnerable to damage from inappropriate safety regimes, protective works and equipment. The internal environment of the building can also be subject to considerable variations in temperature and relative humidity. This in turn can have negative impacts on invaluable decoration such as the medieval wall paintings and later wall monuments. Such issues can only be dealt with by managing the specific risks and adopting active management arrangements to deal with these safely and with sensitivity. Good safety and environmental management (and protection) should be recognised as being good conservation - there should be no conflict between the two.

Similarly safety, security and inclusion needs to be at the forefront in planning. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) challenges any PCC to respond effectively to encourage maximum inclusion. A disability audit has been made, and its recommendations considered by the PCC. It puts the statutory obligation on the PCC to consider all disability issues and take 'reasonable steps' to eliminate discriminatory arrangements. This was an integral part of the Conservation and Refurbishment Project remit.

Issue 5: In seeking to ensure the protection of the building, including interior fixtures and fittings integral to the design and function of the building, from fire, lightning, environmental and other safety and security hazards, undertaking specialist safety audits and risk assessments to best current practice will remain necessary. This should include provision for staff and contractors to receive appropriate and adequate induction and on-going training. The CBC has issued guidance on the creation and adoption of a Disaster Emergency Plan, available on 'ChurchCare'.

Detection and alarm systems always need to be kept serviced and up to date. Training, close co-ordination and co-operation with the Fire Brigade are essential prerequisites of successful disaster prevention. A realistic appreciation of protective measures might suggest that the building be separated into zones. Evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency are always announced when the church is in extensive use, eg major services, concerts etc.

New legislation makes it essential that persons responsible for non-domestic buildings maintain records of asbestos in the building, for use by those carrying out works and by the emergency services. Where appropriate, this should include a plan showing the location of any asbestos, a risk assessment and a plan for the management of assessed risks (a type 2 Asbestos Building Survey has been carried out). The 2015/6 Refurbishment Project included an independent assessment of asbestos, with a certificate duly issued.

Issue 6: Statutory requirements and constraints governing the management of the church and site need to be periodically reviewed, particularly in the light of the proposed Heritage Protection Review and Heritage Protection Agreements with Historic England and the local authority. The Conservation Management Plan can assist the PCC when it needs to make strong representations to the appropriate planning and strategic bodies on any issues and proposals that might affect the PCC directly or indirectly.

Issue 7: There are various aspects of the church and its furnishings and fittings which would benefit from further research. Conservation has been completed and discoveries of further wall painting within the church have been made. The Conservation and Refurbishment Project and the work within the church has revealed more historic evidence. The DAC and CBC should always be approached for advice and the latter for possible funding. Efforts can be made to procure further grant aid towards research and conservation work, including publication. The brasses have been cleaned and refixed and an historic assessment made. The parts missing may have to be researched further with the aid of historic photographs and any further historic information. A description of the brasses and the detail of dress and appearance is included in the church guides and interpretation. In addition:

- The medieval sedilia, piscina, credence and aumbry in the chancel, north and south aisle of the church, and the fabric of the walls and structure of the church, and some furnishings were needing attention. Inappropriate paintwork has been removed and lime plaster is now in place. Comparative studies and historic research can add further depth of understanding.
- The woodwork - Jacobean and any other woodwork such as the prayer boards in the church. These have been conserved and carefully cleaned and the pine woodwork in the roof of the church has been cleaned. Information of the process is online but provision of up-to date information and further recording will continue.
- The charity boards in the church were dark and virtually illegible. These have been cleaned and the backings replaced. Environmental effects on the boards should be monitored.
- Other monuments such as the Adeane ledger stone have been conserved but it is recommended that any further delamination or any detrimental effects to stonework should be regularly inspected and if necessary further work done (Carpenter 2016). The Quatremaine memorial has been conserved and will need regular inspection to check on condition of the paintwork (Russell 2016).
- All work carried out to date, or to be done in future, must be fully documented. All reports must be fully archived, and available for the PCC and its professional advisors' use.

The church has a website and records visitor numbers. The printed guide leaflets cover a basic guide to the church, the bells and the turret clock. Further guides are for volunteers who help visitors. All are linked to the website. There is a detailed illustrated guidebook on the medieval wall paintings which is extensive and comprehensive. However new information is always possible and in the light of the conservation and refurbishment work some of the guides are being updated. The Guide to the Medieval Wall Paintings has been updated and a new edition has now been published (Heath-Whyte August 2016). Visitors are always to be encouraged and the work of the trained volunteer guides reflects this.

Issue 8: Visitor management. It is the PCC's plan to keep the church open (or a key easily available) during daylight hours for visitors and to improve and enhance the visitor experience. Therefore the printed guidebooks will be reviewed and updated according to the information in the Conservation Management Plan and as part of the Quinquennial review process and/or when new information becomes available. New information on the Conservation and Refurbishment Project is detailed online and results from this work do also improve the visitor experience. Visitors were encouraged on open days to see the wall paintings and other heritage assets when being conserved and with better visibility with scaffolding in place.

Issue 9: Archaeology. The church site and its building form an archaeological resource that is fragile and irreplaceable. Under the Care of Churches Measure (1991) the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) has explicit responsibility for advising on amongst other things 'the architecture, archaeology, art and history of places of worship'

The Church of St Mary's archaeology is not just the below the surface but stretches from below ground to the roof of the church. Any historic part to be affected needs to be recorded before being altered, replaced or removed. In the case of St Mary the Virgin Chalgrove, this would include any alterations to historic doors, internal heating proposals, drainage, and floor interventions.

The church and churchyard have been defined as being of exceptional archaeological significance. The desire of the PCC is to protect and if possible enhance this significance. The guidance set out in the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists Guidance Note no 1 (ADCA 2004 and Elders 2005) will inform this.

Similarly, in regard to human remains and their archaeology, the PCC can follow the procedures laid down by the Church of England/ English Heritage 2005 guidance document and any guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Justice.

Issue 10: Working in the long term with the architect and potential external partners such as English Heritage and university departments, the PCC will seek to develop and maintain a comprehensive database (in hard copy and digital formats, with appropriate storage locations and environments) of accurate records for the interior and exterior of the church and the area surrounding including:

- A geophysical survey/radar survey of the floors within the church and the whole churchyard might be considered as it would greatly increase knowledge of the

development of the church. It could also provide useful information regarding possible future development of the building and site.

- A fabric typology survey (internal and external) identifying original fabric and subsequent phases of repair/restoration graphically, photographically and in text would be of great use, and aid and amplify any lacunae in the understanding of the building and help conservation and repair. Stonework finish differences were shown as a result of the Conservation and Refurbishment Project and this indicates the importance of such a survey of the church fabric.
- The Listing description does not reflect current understanding of the building, and all information in official national and regional archives should be reviewed to reflect the historical importance of the St Mary's Church, Chalgrove.
- A compendium of all information on the interior and exterior of the church from historical sources both private, local history and other collections is needed. There is a large amount of local knowledge, especially amongst members of Chalgrove Local History Group and local historians' research. The terrier/inventory of the church fittings, furnishings and objects will continue to be updated annually and accurately, to reflect all the past and present changes within the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Chalgrove. Maintenance and inspection by conservators of features such as the Quatremaine memorial will be part of the annual update of the fittings and furnishings and objects.

Further research of all wall paintings within the church is an ongoing process. As part of the conservation of the wall paintings, drawings of them were made, with assessment of the colours, application and brush techniques used (Katkov 2016) This has involved a continual process of survey. Understanding the extent of wall paintings in the north aisle and other areas in the church has improved substantially. Further recording and understanding of the original techniques of how the wall painting was achieved in the chancel has been done with the aid of detailed survey and rectilinear photogrammetry. Comparison with other churches both here and abroad is to be encouraged.

Issue 11: The PCC encourages diversity of habitat in areas of open space where this is appropriate. Being aware of lichen on the church walls and monuments and protected species and legal requirements in this respect, has always been its desire. The Church and its environs do not have any nature conservation or ecological designation. No bats or other protected species are known on the site. The ambience and benign management of the churchyard and church surrounds as a whole are likely to make it attractive for wildlife but its exact level of significance for ecology and biodiversity, if desired, cannot be established without an appropriate survey. This can be carried out as part of any Churchyard survey and any survey of the church tower and surrounds. The current survey of gravestones in the churchyard might also be updated with ecological information. Carrying out a Phase 1 Ecology Survey of the site in the future, can be considered in the future. This may identify further necessary measures and/or more detailed survey needs for parts of the churchyard.

Issue 12: All PCC policies need to plan for environmentally and economically sustainable development and management, about which the DAC can be consulted. Playing its part in “Shrinking the Footprint” of the church in terms of its environmental impact can be a particular charge upon any PCC.

The present and future PCCs are therefore charged and challenged:

Policy 1: To create and maintain a mechanism for a Review Procedure of the Conservation Management Plan itself alongside the Quinquennial Inspection process, and produce printed and digital copies after each major review.

Policy 2: To continue to work together with its appointed Architect to conserve and maintain the fabric of the Church and its environs, seeking further advice and support as appropriate. This will involve taking care in the making of appropriate decisions and using appropriate materials so as to avoid possibly visually intrusive features in and around the church.

Policy 3: To continue to develop a strategy for the sustainable care of the Church and its environs, which will be supported by its strategy for funding repairs in the future.

Policy 4: To remain mindful of the need to provide access for all and to continue to explore potential for better public access where this is appropriate and which is not in conflict with existing (or possible future) uses eg for community purposes such as concerts, exhibitions etc.

Policy 5: To endeavor to keep apprised of all aspects of current legislation, and to exercise its duty to comply. The existing policies of risk assessment and Health and Safety will be regularly reviewed and amended as necessary, and the PCC will take advice as appropriate, from external bodies.

Policy 6: To maintain a **Disability Audit** to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the terms of which came into force in 2004), and review it appropriately alongside that of the Conservation Management Plan. It will seek to implement its recommendations so long as these are acceptable in conservation terms and do not involve negative impact on or intrusion into significant fabric (including visual intrusion).

Policy 7: To maintain a **Disaster Management Plan**, to help ensure that in the event of a disaster they can respond with preparedness and in the most effective ways.

Policy 8: To implement a system of environmental monitoring of the church interior by regular inspection of the management of the fabric and checks by the conservators of wall paintings and artefacts.

Policy 9: To adopt policies which will result in the proper management of the church and its environs which can be communicated to appropriate persons and bodies. Making use of the Conservation Management Plan, the PCC, when appropriate, will

endeavour to make strong representations to the appropriate planning and strategic bodies on all issues and proposals that might affect the PCC directly or indirectly.

Policy 10: To remain mindful of the need for further research, as appropriate, while recognising its responsibility for the historic fabric, furniture, fittings and environs,.

Policy 11: To keep under active consideration all possibilities to improve visitor appreciation and numbers, especially when encouraging access by local children/schools.

Policy 12: To maintain an appropriate focus on nature conservation requirements.

Policy 13: To take into account, in all its policies, the need for environmentally and economically sustainable development and management, being mindful of playing its part in “Shrinking the Footprint” of the church in terms of its environmental impact.

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APPENDIX 1: LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

CHALGROVE SU6396 11/32 Church of St. Mary 18/07/63

GV I

Church. Early C13, early C14 chancel: C15 and C18 alterations. Coursed limestone rubble with ashlar dressings; late C19 and C20 gabled tile roof. Chancel, aisled nave, west tower. Chancel has offset buttresses, 3-light Decorated east window and 2-light windows in 2-bay side walls: south wall also has central pointed moulded priest's door, and C16 chamfered light. 3-bay north aisle has late C15 three-light windows, early C14 two-light window in west end and C13 pointed moulded doorway. South aisle, crenellated in late C15, has similar early C14 window in east end, similar late C15 windows and late C15 porch with 4-light wood-mullioned window over 4-centred moulded doorway: early C14 pointed moulded south doorway. 3-stage tower (spire collapsed 1727) has early C13 pointed chamfered doorway to C18 studded door, early C13 two-light window, second-stage C18 round window, and C13 third-stage 2-light Y-tracery windows: C18 crenellated parapet with pinnacles. Interior: chancel has Decorated piscina and sedilia, studded priest's door with early C14 wrought-iron hinges; and plain aumbry and recesses. Complete sequences of fine early C14 wall paintings depict Last Judgement and Life of the Virgin to south, Tree of Jesse and the Life of Christ to north, and, on the east wall, the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin and the Ascension, Resurrection and Descent into Hell; splays of windows

depict figures of the Saints. Brasses to Reginald Barantyn, d.1441, and Hugh Barantyn with wives Joan (d.1446) and Lady Beatrice. Baroque memorial to Rev. Francis Markham, d.1668, has garlanded cartouche with angels supporting coat of arms; early C19 memorial tablet to wife of Rev. John Lewis from Ireland. Late C17 communion rail of barley-sugar balusters at chancel entry. Early C14 chancel arch. Nave has early C13 four-bay south arcade of small pointed arch and roll-moulded Transitional arches on circular piers with water-leaf capitals: early C13 three-bay north arcade has chamfered Transitional arches on circular piers with moulded and foliate capitals. C18 memorial tablet to Adeane family above Jacobean pulpit. Font of c.1660-70 set on barley-sugar stem. Painted memorial mural to Robert Quatremaine, d.1697. Four-bay arch-braced collar-truss roof with curved windbraces. South aisle has C13 piscina. North aisle has squint to chancel, early C14 wall painting north of east window, slate memorial tablet to Benedict Winchcombe, d. 1623, depicting his family, and 2 boards commemorating local charities. Parish chest dated TK 1674 FG next to north door. Stained glass; 2 similar quarries of angel 5 heads at head of east-bay window of north aisle. The early C14 paintings in the chancel are among the best preserved in the country. (Buildings of England: Oxfordshire, pp.525-6; E.T.Long, *Medieval Wall Paintings in Oxfordshire Churches*, Oxoniensia, Vol. XXXVII, 1972, pp.86-108; E.W. Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Paintings (The Fourteenth Century)* 1954, pp.153-5; National Monuments Record).