

Mediaeval Wall Paintings in Oxfordshire Churches

By E. T. LONG

INTRODUCTION

BEFORE the Reformation the interiors of our churches glowed with colour on walls, roofs, screens, images and altar pieces, while the windows sparkled with the brilliance of painted glass. In the Middle Ages, as comparatively few people could read, it was necessary to teach by means of pictures, which in any case are often more informative than the written or spoken word, and this was the primary purpose of mural paintings. At the Reformation these pictures were ordered to be obliterated as symbols of Popish idolatry, and scriptural texts put in their places. These texts were, of course, intended to be instructive and edifying, and their often decorative value helped to give some colour to the now otherwise bare interiors of the churches. Occasionally, especially in the 17th century, representations of the Apostles and Prophets or Death depicted as a skeleton with spade and hourglass were executed, but generally speaking such pictures were crude compared with their medieval predecessors. During the medieval period later paintings were often superimposed on the originals, sometimes with the same subject but more usually with something entirely different; an example of the former process can be detected at Combe and of the latter formerly at South Newington.

Though mural painting was employed from early times in this country, as is proved from remains that have been discovered in Roman villas, it is probable that the earliest examples now surviving belong to the Romanesque period. These paintings are not, as a rule, true frescoes but are executed in tempera on the dry plaster, whereas a fresco is painted on the plaster while it is still moist so that the colours are incorporated in it. True fresco work has, however, been noted in several churches, notably in the 12th century paintings at Clayton and Coombs, Sussex, and Kempey, Gloucestershire. The method usually employed in this country is known as the dry technique. The wall was first completely plastered and then given a finishing coat of lime putty. The pigments generally employed were burnt red and yellow ochre formed from oxides of iron which produced a wide range of shades, the red extending more or less from purple to pale pink. Charcoal, lampblack and lime white gave scope for added variety. Green was usually a copper salt (*verdigris*). Blue, which occurs comparatively rarely, is generally an azurite. The mixing of colours could produce quite a wide range. Painting in oil is comparatively rare and with few exceptions is confined to late work, but the superb mid-14th century paintings in the north aisle at South Newington are executed in this medium. The pigments were bound with size or white of egg, or tempered with skim milk. Chalk bound with skim milk was primarily used for mixing with other pigments.

There is little evidence to show who were the artists responsible for wall paintings, but the late Professor E. W. Tristram, who made it his life's work to uncover, study and preserve them in this country, has shown quite convincingly that the principal monasteries maintained schools of art, especially in the earlier period. This does not mean that all the painters were monks, but simply that young men showing artistic ability were trained in monastic scriptoria which were the only art schools available in those days. St. Albans, Colchester, Durham, Westminster, Winchester and many other monasteries maintained such schools. The names of some artists working under royal patronage are preserved in the household accounts books, especially in the reigns of Henry III and Edward III but there is no evidence to prove that any of them were associated with Oxfordshire. It is probable that many of the later paintings, especially those in village churches, were the work of itinerant artists who were associated with the various Guilds of Painter-Stainers in London and elsewhere.

Although there is much variety of subjects and their treatment, certain pictures came in course of time to be assigned as a rule to definite positions in the church. Of these the two most commonly found were the Doom (or Last Judgement) over the chancel arch and St. Christopher in a prominent position opposite the main entrance. The position of the former is explained by the symbolism which pictured the nave as representing the Church Militant and the chancel as the Church Triumphant separated by the Judgement before which all must pass. The following plan, with minor variants as to details, was usually adopted. In the centre at the top was the figure of Christ seated on a rainbow with hands upraised and feet and side exposed to show the Sacred Wounds. On His right knelt the Blessed Virgin interceding. Sometimes St. John Baptist kneels on the other side and occasionally angels displaying the Instruments of the Passion are introduced. Below, the dead are shown rising naked from their graves, their rank denoted by mitres, crowns and tonsures, being summoned to judgement by angels blowing trumpets. On Christ's right the redeemed were depicted being received by St. Peter at the gate of Heaven, while on His left the lost are being dragged off to Hell by fearsome fiends; the mouth of Hell is represented as the jaws of an immense fish-like monster with flames issuing forth and sometimes Satan sitting within awaiting his victims. Good Oxfordshire examples of the Doom occur at Combe, Cropredy and South Leigh; at Combe the Apostles stand on either side of Christ. Occasionally the Doom appears elsewhere than over the chancel arch. At Chalgrove the impressive range of mid-14th century scenes depicting the lives of Christ and Our Lady terminates with the Doom on the south-west of the chancel. Remains of a late 13th century example occur on the north wall of the north transept at Kelmscott.

The position and popularity of St. Christopher are explained by the pious belief that all who looked upon his representation and invoked his aid were safe that day from a sudden and unprepared death. The Saint is usually depicted as a huge figure grasping a massive staff and bearing on his shoulder the Christ Child as he wades across the stream. Other details are often included, especially in the later examples, such as the hermit whom Christopher assisted in conveying

travellers over the river and who holds a lantern to guide him. Fishes are often introduced and sometimes a mermaid with comb and mirror. There are examples of St. Christopher in several Oxfordshire churches, notably at Bloxham, Horley and Woodeaton; the last mentioned is interesting in having an inscription in Norman French—'Ki cest image verra ce jur de male mort ne murra'.

Another popular subject was the Weighing of Souls. This shows a figure of St. Michael holding a pair of scales in one pan of which is a soul depicted as a small naked figure and in the other an evil spirit; beside the first stands Our Lady who places a rosary on the scale to weigh it down, while on the other side demons are pulling vigorously but ineffectively. There are striking examples of this subject in Oxfordshire at South Leigh and Swalcliffe, the former largely repainted a century ago.

The Gospel story was naturally popular, especially in the 13th and 14th centuries. Nativity and Passion scenes were the most commonly portrayed and they were sometimes combined with episodes in the life of the Blessed Virgin as recorded by tradition, e.g. her Assumption and Coronation and the events leading thereto. At Chalgrove the walls of the chancel are covered with a splendid series depicting the Life of Christ and that of His Mother, while at Broughton are episodes in the closing years of the Blessed Virgin's life on earth, both of 14th century date. The Crucifixion sometimes occurs as a separate subject, e.g. at Broughton on a pillar and as an altar piece as at Combe. A subject which was probably of frequent occurrence in the late medieval period when devotion to Christ's Passion was popular was the Pietá—Our Lady supporting the dead body of her Son—which has survived at Hornton and Thame.

Single figures of Apostles and Saints often occur especially on the splays of windows and usually bear distinguishing emblems associated with their martyrdom, or other important events in their lives, e.g. St. Peter with the keys, St. Paul with a sword, St. Catherine with a wheel, St. Margaret with a dragon and St. Barbara with a tower. Oxfordshire examples may be noted at Cassington, Chalgrove, South Leigh, South Newington, North Stoke and elsewhere. Single scenes depicting outstanding events in the lives of the saints are frequently found, such as St. George slaying the dragon, the Martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury and, of course, St. Christopher. Sometimes a series of scenes depicting a number of events in the lives of the more popular saints occurs, e.g. St. Catherine and St. Margaret; there are remains of such a series of St. Catherine at Eynsham.

Among various sources of information relating to the Saints were short lives recording their story, but the most popular was the Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine which was among the earliest books to be printed in this country; it draws on earlier works such as those of St. Jerome and Eusebius. It is probable, too, that the Miracle Plays of the later Middle Ages influenced the artists.

As the instruction of the faithful was the primary object of wall paintings it is not surprising that certain subjects with a moral purpose were often depicted. A popular morality was that known as the 'Three Living and the Three Dead'. The legend runs thus. Three kings went hunting in the forest—usually on foot but occasionally on horseback—and met three grisly spectres who admonished

them to put aside worldly concerns and consider their last end, saying in effect 'as you are we were and as we are you will be'. There are 14th century Oxfordshire examples at North Stoke and Widford. Other popular moralities were the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Works of Mercy. Basically the former shows the Tree of Pride with three branches on either side. The sins—Pride, Gluttony, Anger, Sloth, Lechery, Avarice and Envy—are often vividly portrayed. Sometimes the tree is replaced by a male or female figure. The only Oxfordshire examples surviving are at South Leigh and Hook Norton. Unfortunately no example of the popular Works of Mercy has survived in Oxfordshire.

Several unusual subjects occur in the fascinating little church of Shorthampton. Here are depicted the Miracle of the Clay Birds, St. Eligius, Patron of blacksmiths and St. Zita, Patroness of domestic servants; the story relating to each of these subjects is summarized under Shorthampton in the Catalogue.

Apart from purely pictorial subjects it was customary to employ ornamental painting. The most usual treatment was masonry pattern imitating stone joints in single or double lines with conventional flowers in the blocks; this type of ornament is found from the 12th century to the 14th and may be noted in Oxford Cathedral, Eynsham and Woodeaton among other places. Scroll work was also popular especially on arches as at Bloxham, and also chevron pattern. Occasionally arches were decorated with blocks of alternating colours as at Shilton, and at South Newington is a dado formed of vertical bands of red and cream.

Another form of decoration with a practical purpose was the Consecration Cross marking the various places on the walls anointed with chrism by the Bishop at the consecration of the church; examples survive at Cassington, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Ducklington, Iffley and in the Oxford churches of St. Giles and St. Mary. These crosses are usually incised in the plaster and painted in red with splayed ends and enclosed in a circle.

Painting was not confined to walls and arches but also occurs on stone vaulting. Sometimes this is confined to masonry pattern as formerly at Iffley, but in the Cathedral there are also figures in roundels in the Chapter House and in the Lady Chapel and south choir aisle. There is renewed 13th century work on the apsidal vault at Checkendon.

ARTISTIC MERIT

A very large number of English medieval wall paintings have been lost and although fresh examples are constantly coming to light it is obvious that our knowledge of what existed before the Reformation is strictly limited. Although all medieval wall paintings have interest and value, the artistic merit varies greatly. While all are instructive many are of rustic quality, probably the work of itinerant painters, though, of course, worthy of preservation. On the other hand there are some, even in simple village churches, which exhibit a high artistic standard. It so happens that the two most important examples in Oxfordshire are to be found in country churches, i.e. Chalgrove and South Newington. These would be notable anywhere, particularly the latter. The

north aisle paintings at South Newington are indeed outstanding for their draughtsmanship, wide range and skilful blending of colours, and also for the medium, which is oil; nothing in this part of the country can compare with them in excellence. The unknown artist must have been in the front rank of his profession.

Many paintings came to light in the 19th century only to be speedily destroyed owing to the pernicious habit of denuding the walls of plaster—a common practice among Victorian ‘restorers’—or to unnecessary replastering as at Cowley (*c.* 1550), Cornwell (15C), Headington (*c.* 1310), Islip (14C) and Stanton Harcourt (*c.* 1400). Fortunately copies of a sort were sometimes made but they usually lacked the skilful execution so characteristic of the late Professor Tristram and of Mr. E. Clive Rouse. It is sad to relate that medieval wall paintings have been deliberately obliterated in several Oxfordshire churches since 1935, e.g. St. Bartholomew’s Chapel at Cowley, Eynsham, Marston and Oxford St. Giles, quite apart from what has been lost through negligence. These losses—although minor ones—added to the fact that there are various churches in which paintings still survive beneath limewash, e.g. Idbury, Kidlington, South Newington and Yarnton, make it the duty of all concerned with the protection of our churches—incumbents, parochial councils and the Advisory Committee—to insist that there should be competent supervision of existing paintings and any that may be discovered in the future.

Sometimes the paintings suffered from excessive renovation, or even complete renewal. This occurred in Oxfordshire at Checkendon, Dorchester and South Leigh. In these cases the renovation was more or less a faithful reproduction but it was much too drastic, especially at Checkendon and South Leigh. It can be argued that an occasional joining up or intensifying of a line is permissible provided nothing is done for which there is no definite authority and any minor addition of this sort is in complete accordance with the original.

THE CATALOGUE

ADDERBURY. St. Mary the Virgin

On the internal splays of two blocked 13th century windows in the east wall of the north transept are remains of contemporary painting. The northern one has only slight traces of colour in red and grey. In the other is delicate foliage in red line on a white ground; as the splay in each case is only partially unblocked it is possible that more detail may exist behind the inserted masonry.

In the Ashmolean Museum there is a small fragment of painting from Adderbury Church showing a mitred head, the only visible portion of figurework now surviving, and therefore worthy of mention although ‘*ex situ*’.

ALVESCOT. ? St. Mary the Virgin

There are remains of 15th century floral pattern on the south transept arch.

BARFORD ST. JOHN. St. John

At the springing of the south side of the chancel arch is the start of a scheme of 13th century colour decoration on the west face which doubtless continued round the whole arch. It consists of a trail with foliage and sprays in red on a cream ground.

BECKLEY. The Assumption

There are extensive remains of paintings of two dates—early 14th and 15th century. On the north wall of the south aisle is a charming representation of the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Child contained within a cinquefoiled arch on a trellis work patterned ground diapered with red flowers. The Blessed Virgin, crowned and clad in a red cloak, is suckling the Child. Unfortunately the lower part of the composition has been destroyed. Above and contemporary with it is depicted the Annunciation with the Blessed Virgin on the right in a red cloak and hood while St. Gabriel appears on the left at a slightly higher level. Above this again is a curious scene which would seem to depict the torments of the damned; a nude figure is being roasted on a spit while a strange figure, half man and half beast, is pouring something over the victim; on the left is a figure turning the spit and another blowing up the fire with a bellows; above are portions of an indecipherable inscription. At the top is a yellow band diapered with red roses. In the 15th century these subjects were covered with a scene depicting the Weighing of Souls, of which nothing now remains except one of the scales on a tapestry background.

Remains of paintings survive in the nave including a 15th century Doom over the western tower arch now partly obscured by an 18th century Royal Arms and limewash so that details are difficult to decipher. Below on either side respectively are figures of St. Peter and St. Paul on a rich tapestry design background and more or less contemporary with the Doom. On the north respond of the arch is a portion of 14th century painting showing the upper part of a kneeling figure in red within a trefoil arch. It is possible that medieval painting exists on the west wall of the nave beneath the remains of post-medieval work.

Arch. Journ., IV (1847), 257-8.

Burl. Mag., LXV (1934), 83

Tristram, III, 139.

BLACKBOURTON. St. Mary the Virgin

There is an extensive scheme of late 13th century painting on the north and south walls of the nave. On the north starting from the west the subjects are as follows: (1) Archbishop enthroned and holding a cross with an altar to the right on which is a reliquary; (2) Jesse Tree with the reclining figure of Jesse at the bottom, his head resting on a pillow; (3) St. Christopher, the top of his head destroyed by later rebuilding of the wall; (4) Unidentified subject, on the right a standing cleric with another kneeling behind him and also two or three other figures; (5) Coronation of Our Lady with Christ and His Mother seated in a medallion, a censuring angel on either side and below a figure in adoration, possibly the donor; (6) Baptism of Christ with St. John Baptist pouring the water on the left and an angel on the right holding a garment; (7) St. Peter and St. Paul with their emblems; (8) Martyrdom of St. Stephen who kneels vested in a dalmatic and is stoned by a man on either side; (9) Unidentified and very fragmentary.

On the south wall are traces of three tiers of subjects comprising Holy Infancy and probably Passion scenes with various saints and bishops. Starting from the east they are as follows: (1) Fragmentary remains of Nativity; (2) Magi on their journey and in adoration included in a single composition, with bands of scroll ornament above and below; (3) Massacre of the Holy Innocents, much damaged, with scroll borders above and below; (4) Appearance of the angel to St. Joseph, the Saint holding a staff in his left hand while the right is upraised, with scroll borders above and below (PL. VIII); (5) St. Richard in full pontificals blessing a group of persons, with remains above of an inscription with 'SCS RICAR' visible and scroll border below. Beyond this subject the plaster is mostly renewed but at the west end of the wall is a large medallion in which is depicted a priest holding a book in his left hand and a sprinkler in the right while two women kneel before him; above the medallion is the Manus Dei.

On each side is a bishop blessing. The interpretation of the subject is obscure. Below is part of the figure of St. Catherine holding the wheel and to the right portions of the figure of Christ blessing someone kneeling at His feet, all very fragmentary but probably depicting the Appearance to St. Mary Magdalene. Tristram, II, 506 ; pls. 97-110.

BLETCHINGDON. St. Giles

On the north wall of the chancel are remains of late 13th century colour decoration consisting of double lined masonry pattern in red with a six petal red flower with a long curved stalk in each compartment ; much of the scheme must have been destroyed by the insertion of large 17th and 18th century mural monuments.

BLOXHAM. St. Mary the Virgin

One of the most imposing and spacious churches in Oxfordshire, but most of the plaster was removed from the internal surface of the walls about a century ago. Fortunately, however, certain portions were spared and retain interesting remains of paintings. The 13th century south arcade has a contemporary trail in red on a white ground. Over the chancel arch are slight remains of a 15th century Doom consisting of Hell's mouth in the usual position at the bottom on the south. Above the north door is a striking 15th century St. Christopher now much obscured by wax and the accumulation of dust, but which would, doubtless, respond to modern methods of treatment. The Saint bearing the Holy Child is on the left and in the centre is the hermit holding a lantern to guide the Saint over the river : behind the hermit is quite an imposing church—not just a small chapel—with clerestoried nave and aisles, and nearby is a man fishing ; in the water are various fishes and a mermaid holding a looking-glass. There is a fairly wide range of colours and the whole composition is executed with considerable skill and scenic effect. The Holy Child and the Saint's head were skilfully restored by Tristram. In the Milcombe Chapel between two windows in the south wall is a tall strip of late 15th century painting which, though possessing much detail in fairly sound condition, is not easy to identify. Starting from the bottom there is first a trial scene ; in the centre is a lay figure with halo clad in a short red tunic, white hose and pointed shoes ; on the right is a seated crowned figure holding a sword and behind him and on the left are other similar figures standing, while at the bottom are the upper portions of suppliant figures looking upwards. The background is in green and white chequer. At the top is a large seated figure, probably Christ in Majesty.

BROUGHTON. St. Mary the Virgin

The north wall of the chancel retains considerable remains of a mid-14th century scheme of painting depicting various scenes associated with the latter days of the Blessed Virgin. Starting from the west we have first a striking representation of the Angel kneeling before the seated figure of Our Lady and foretelling her approaching death ; the Angel holds a palm in his right hand and a scroll in the left. Further to the east are indications of several figures, one holding a book ; this probably portrays the gathering of the Apostles. Next, between the second and third windows, are further fragments which probably depict the Death of the Virgin. East of the third window is either the Burial, or, more probably, the Apostles at the Empty Tomb. To the right again is the Assumption, the figure of Our Lady being contained within a rayed aureole supported by angels ; this is a composite picture since it shows, also, the Virgin letting down her girdle to convince the doubting St. Thomas who appears on the right at the bottom. Finally above the Assumption is portrayed the Coronation of Our Lady by her Son with a kneeling cleric below on the left holding a scroll inscribed ' Leuedy for thi Joyzes fyve led me the wey of clene lyve,' an early use of the vernacular in mural paintings. The Five Joys of Our Lady are the Annunciation, Nativity, Resurrection,

Ascension and Assumption. The colours are almost entirely restricted to red and yellow.

On either side of the east window is a large seraph standing on a wheel ; they are 15th century but are, unfortunately, in a fragmentary state.

On one of the columns of the nave arcade is a small Crucifixion of virtually the same date as the series on the north wall of the chancel. There are very fragmentary traces of 15th century paintings in the nave, including a Doom over the chancel arch and St. Christopher and St. George on the north wall.

Burl. Mag., LXXVI (1940), 162.

Tristram, III, 145.

BURFORD. St. John Baptist

There was formerly a fine St. Christopher in the north aisle which was destroyed by the stripping of the plaster at the Victorian restoration.

In the chapel of St. Thomas of Canterbury are patches of red of uncertain date and in a blocked arch in the east wall a scroll pattern in red and yellow, probably 14th century. In the south transept are patches of red of uncertain date which may have formed a background to figures or decoration in white.

CASSINGTON. St. Peter

There is evidence of considerable remains of late medieval painting and the fact that most of the old plaster survives makes it probable that much may still exist beneath the limewash. There was formerly a Doom over the Chancel arch but only slight traces now remain, sufficient to show that the work was of high quality. Ten years ago when a report was made by Mr. E. Clive Rouse, a good deal more was visible. On the south side was a large group of the damned being dragged into Hell by a chain and considerable portions of the mouth of Hell with demons and pitchforks, and further details survived on the north side. Mr. Clive Rouse dated the work as *c.* 1400.

On the east splay of the north-east and south-east windows of the nave is a graceful female figure beneath a canopy of late 15th century date ; both are now, alas, much decayed but that on the north probably depicts St. Barbara and that on the south St. Margaret ; enough remains to show that the work was of good quality which makes it all the more regrettable that they are now so fragmentary, a state due solely to past neglect. They seem to be executed in monochrome with touches of colour.

There are remains of painting to the north of the east window including a 12th century consecration cross. Recent investigations in the nave have revealed three more consecration crosses and on the north and south walls indications of arcading as well as traces of colour decoration on the east jamb of the rere-arch of the north doorway and a fragment of painting high up on the north wall of the nave towards the east end.

CHALGROVE. St. Mary the Virgin

The 14th century chancel retains its original colour scheme of *c.* 1350 in an unusually perfect state. On the north wall, starting from the west, is first a Jesse Tree, setting forth the genealogy of Christ, followed by fifteen scenes from the Life of Our Lord. On the splays of the first window is the Annunciation, then in the bottom tier the Nativity to the east of the window and next the Adoration of the Magi. The series continues in the second tier with the Massacre of the Innocents and the Presentation in the Temple. The series continues next at the west end of the third tier with the Betrayal ; east of the window the Trial before Pilate followed by the Mocking, the Flagellation, the Cross Bearing, the Crucifixion (fragmentary). Here the series is continued in the middle tier with the Descent from the Cross below the Crucifixion. Returning to the lowest tier we have the Entombment ; the splays of the adjacent window show St. Helen holding the Cross and another female figure, probably St. Mary Magdalene. The concluding scenes of the series are found on the east wall to the

north of the window starting with the Harrowing of Hell with the Resurrection and the Ascension above. On the north splay of the east window is St. Peter and on the south St. Paul.

On the south wall starting from the west is the Doom—a most unusual position for this subject—with Christ seated on a rainbow and Our Lady interceding on His right, while below the dead rise from their graves clad in shrouds and not naked in the usual manner. On the splays of the adjoining window are St. Bartholomew and St. Laurence; above the window is foliated decoration. On the splays of the eastern window are St. John Evangelist and St. John Baptist. The rest of the subjects on this wall relate to the events associated with the Death of the Blessed Virgin. To the east of the western window is the Angel presenting her with a palm and announcing her approaching death. Above is the Blessed Virgin with the Apostles and friends. Further east the bottom tier has been destroyed by a mural tablet; above is the Death of the Virgin. The two top panels between the windows depict the Funeral Procession and the Conversion of the Jews, who in seeking to attack the cortège were struck with blindness, but repenting had their sight restored. To the east of the window the lowest panel is very fragmentary; the middle tier shows the Apostles at table with St. Thomas, who, being absent at the Virgin's death, doubted her Assumption, receiving her girdle let down from Heaven. The top scene is fragmentary but probably portrayed the Burial. On the east wall to the south of the window, reading from the bottom, are the Assumption with Our Lady holding her hands in prayer and supported by an angel on either side, and finally the Coronation with Christ and His Mother seated side by side as she raises hands in prayer and inclines her head to receive the crown.

The window arches and all plain spaces are decorated with conventional flowers.

The general colour scheme is exceedingly simple, the figures in black and white with hands and faces in pale yellow on a deep cream background.

Borenus and Tristram (1927), 21; pls. 53-4.

Wall (1914), 125-44.

Tristram, III, 153-5; pls. 30-8, 39a, b, 40a, b.

CHARLTON-ON-OTMOOR. St. Mary the Virgin

Some remains of 14th century colour decoration survive on the north arcade. On the soffits of the arches are stars, crescents and scroll pattern and on the columns red chevrons. On the south wall of the chancel is a consecration cross in red with splayed ends enclosed in a grey circle. There is a similar cross on the back of the sedilia; both are 14th century.

Tristram, III, 155.

CHECKENDON. St. Peter and St. Paul

In the apse is a 13th century scheme of painting which, though repainted, seems to reproduce more or less accurately the original. In the centre of the vault is a seated figure of Christ displaying His Wounds; on either side is scroll foliage. Below on the wall flanking the east window are the Apostles led by St. Peter on the north (PL. IX) and St. Paul on the south, but two on the south were destroyed by the insertion of a 15th century window. St. Peter and St. Paul stand beneath crocketed canopies. Below is a diaper pattern for which, judging by a photograph taken at the time of the discovery of the paintings, there seems to be no evidence.

Over the chancel arch are traces of a Doom subject with the lower part of a seated figure and other fragments which is probably 14th century.

Tristram, II, 523; pl. 96.

COMBE. St. Laurence

There are extensive remains of 15th century paintings in the nave. Over the chancel arch is a well preserved Doom which differs in some respects from the usual

treatment since on either side of the seated Christ are the Apostles with their respective emblems. St. Peter vested in alb and cope is on the left and holds a key in one hand while the other is extended to guide the redeemed into the heavenly city. Below are naked figures rising from their graves; on the right the damned are being hustled into the jaws of Hell where Satan sits to receive them. There is a wide range of colours and their brightness suggests that the subject is painted in oil.

To the north of the chancel arch is a Crucifixion with the Blessed Virgin and St. John which probably served as a reredos for the lateral altar; it has been painted over an earlier representation of the same subject (PL. X). In the south-east angle of the nave is the upper portion of St. Gabriel with a scroll bearing the angelic salutation, 'Ave Maria gracia plena, Dominus tecum'; above is the Manus Dei. The background is in red and the work is well executed. The Angel is turned towards the vacant stone niche on the other side of the angle which probably contained a figure of the Blessed Virgin. Over the south doorway there is apparently a large St. Christopher which is mostly obscured by 17th century figures of Moses and Aaron flanking the Commandments; some fishes and an otter are visible in the water and portions of a figure in the foreground; the fishes and otter are well drawn and of large scale. On the north wall is a figure of St. Catherine under a canopy bearing a wheel on her left arm and a sword in her right hand; this picture is now difficult to decipher owing to the accumulation of dirt from the adjacent stove.

COWLEY. St. Bartholomew's Chapel

On the west wall on either side of the doorway is a 14th century consecration cross, unfortunately much damaged by unskilful uncovering; each is a red cross with splayed ends on a white ground within a red circle.

CROPREDY. St. Mary the Virgin

In the usual position over the chancel arch are remains of what must have been a fine 15th century Doom; it was discovered many years ago and was, unfortunately, varnished with unhappy results. The central portion with the seated Christ with hands uplifted and the dead rising from their graves below are distinguishable as well as a group of the redeemed on the left approaching the heavenly city; on the right it is more fragmentary, but the jaws of Hell are visible. There is a wide range of colours in which red, green and yellow predominate. On the wall of the north aisle is a solitary standing male figure in secular attire who may well be part of a St. Christopher scene, probably a fisher on the banks of the river. Apart from the Doom and this figure all the plaster has been removed from the walls with unhappy effect and probably grievous loss of paintings.

DORCHESTER. St. Peter and St. Paul

On the west face of the east wall of the south aisle is a large shallow recess within which is a large cross in red on a white background; round the arch are traces of red and black bands and on the wall to the south is patterned drapery in red. Below the recess and serving as a reredos to the altar is a Crucifixion flanked by the Blessed Virgin and St. John; to the left is a sun and on the right a crescent moon; the background is in red with a pattern of diamond fret; on each side is a hanging with red flowers on white (PL. XI). The scheme has been repainted but probably follows closely the original design of c. 1320. On the east face of the same wall are traces of colour decoration including connected roundels framing an ornamental design.

Keyser (1883), 87-8.

Tristram, III, 165-6.

DUCKLINGTON. St. Bartholomew

On the west respond of the south arcade is an incised consecration cross in red with splayed ends, probably 13th century. On the south splay of the east window of the south aisle is depicted the Trinity within a cusped and crocketed arch. God the Father is depicted enthroned with upraised hands and clad in a black cloak, holding between His knees the Crucifix, but no traces of the Dove remain. On the left is a small kneeling figure, probably the donor.
Tristram, III, 166 ; pl. 58.

EWELME. St. Mary the Virgin

The walls of the south chapel and the east wall of the chancel are diapered with I.H.S. in red and blue on a white ground ; round the top of the chapel walls and also over the head of the east window of the chancel is a band of inscription. This decoration is of 15th century origin but has been repainted.

On the flat stone ceiling of the lower part of the tomb of Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, the grand-daughter of Chaucer, are two paintings of 15th century date ; to the east are figures of St. Mary Magdalene and St. John Baptist, the former clad in a green tunic and red cloak and holding the box of ointment and a palm, the latter holding the Agnus Dei on a book and clad in a red tunic and green cloak ; to the west is the Annunciation with the Blessed Virgin under a red canopy and clad in a green tunic and red cloak edged with ermine ; the Angel, in a red cloak and holding a scroll, kneels before her and between them is a lily with green leaves and white flowers, and above are the Eternal Father and the Holy Spirit in the form of a Dove.
Keyser (1883), 100-1.

EYNHAM. St. Leonard

In 1936 considerable remains of a mid-14th century scheme of painting were discovered on the north, south and east walls of the sanctuary and the adjacent windows. All that now remains is on the north wall where were depicted scenes from the story of St. Catherine in three tiers divided by a pink band with a masonry pattern in yellow outline and red rosettes above and a trellis pattern in yellow with red fleurs de lys below. It is still possible to make out the miraculous destruction of the spiked wheel devised for the Saint's martyrdom and her subsequent beheading. The colours are mainly red and yellow on a cream ground and enough survives to show that the composition must have been of good quality and considerable charm. The north and south windows exhibited masonry pattern on the splays and chevrons and rosettes round the outer edge of the arch.

Oxoniensia (1937), II, 204.

Tristram, III, 170.

FULBROOK. St. James

On the chancel arch is masonry pattern with roses, alternately red and yellow.

Recent discoveries of paintings include a foot outlined in red on the east spandrel of the arcade and patches of red on the angle of the adjacent masonry. A large expanse of foliage pattern in red and cream has come to light on the north wall of the transept which is probably 14th century, and at the south-east angle of the nave are two patches of red, probably part of a Doom.

Tristram, II, 546-7.

HANBOROUGH. St. Peter and St. Paul

Two large recesses in the east wall of the north chapel—probably intended as a reredos—retain 15th century colour decoration consisting of white rosettes on a red ground.

HOLTON. St. Bartholomew

On the soffit of the south transept arch is a 13th century foliage pattern in red. There are traces of a similar design on the east repond of the north transept arch.

HOOK NORTON. St. Peter

The existence of a large window over the chancel arch precludes the placing of a Doom in this position ; there is, however, a 15th century scheme of painting to fit the available space here. On either side of the window are figures of St. Peter and St. Paul and below near the apex of the arch are two delicately executed censing angels vested in appressed albs and amices, all set on a deep red ground with a scroll pattern in white ; at the apex of the arch a blank space probably indicates the position of the cross beam of the Rood.

On the south wall of the nave is a sadly mutilated representation of the Seven Deadly Sins. At the bottom is Hell's mouth from which emerges the figure of pride with representations of the other sins in the form of dragons issuing from either side of Pride. On the opposite wall are small traces of painting too fragmentary to decipher.

Burl. Mag., LXXVI (1940) ; pl.

HORLEY. St. Etheldreda

This impressive church has considerable remains of 14th and 15th century paintings. In the base of the tower are various items including a shield on the east splay of the north window charged with gules, on a fesse sable a crescent argent, in chief two mullets sable ; above the shield is ornament in white on a black ground. In the north-west, north-east and south-west angles of the tower are medallions with black backgrounds and red borders which may have contained subjects of which nothing remains except fragments in the south-west one.

In the north aisle starting from the west are two much damaged subjects, the first, it is said, the Weighing of Souls, the second probably the Annunciation, two figures being visible, that on the left in a blue tunic and red mantle and with bare feet and the other in a red robe. All these paintings are 14th century. On a column of the north arcade is a female figure in a red robe lined with white, with a veil on her head ; on the black background are a purse, keys, cauldron, tub and other objects ; though usually said to be St. Etheldreda it is more probably St. Zita, the holy housekeeper of Lucca. The best preserved painting is a huge St. Christopher in the north aisle of the 15th century. There has been a certain amount of renovation, but it has been done with care. The background is black diapered with stars which may be intended to convey the impression of night as related in the legend. A scroll proceeds from both figures : St. Christopher says ' What art thou and art so yynge, bar I never so hevye a thyng ', and the Holy Child replies ' Yey I be hevye no wunther nys, for I am ye kynge of blys '. Fish are, as often, shown in the water and on either bank is a man fishing.

Tristram, III, 181-2.

Keyser (1883), 136.

HORNTON. St. John Baptist

Considerable portions of late medieval paintings survive. Over the chancel arch is a Doom which exhibits the very unusual feature of the Crucifixion in place of the seated Christ in the centre ; the heavenly city is clearly delineated on the left, but much of the rest is unfortunately destroyed ; the colour scheme is rich and of wide range in which red and green predominate. Below on the north and south of the chancel arch are a Pietà and St. George respectively ; the former is a most attractive composition on a dark blue ground with the dead Christ on His Mother's knees ; the lower part is damaged ; the latter scene shows St. George as a standing figure with no subsidiary details. In the nave and north aisle are various indeterminate fragments.

IFFLEY. St. Mary the Virgin

Remains of four consecration crosses have survived, one each on the north and south of the base of the tower and one each on the north and south of the nave, probably 13th century.

IPSDEN. St. Mary the Virgin

There is 16th century decoration round the splay of the east window of the north chapel ; it consists of a loop pattern with leaves in red on a cream ground.

KELMSCOTT. St. George

The arcade has 13th century scroll work in red on the arches and trellis pattern on the east respond.

The north transept retains considerable remains of an elaborate early 14th century scheme ; unfortunately it is only partially visible and in its present state much is virtually impossible to elucidate. Mr. Clive Rouse rightly considers the work to be of excellent quality with much good detail, but agrees that until the subjects are thoroughly cleaned and investigated it will be impossible to identify them fully. On the north wall above the window is a Doom with Christ seated in the centre and the dead rising from their graves below. There seem to be two single subject tiers on each side of the window ; the upper one on the east may be the Visitation. On the east and west walls are a series of scenes set in the bays of trefoil headed arcading in red and yellow. The spandrels have heads on a red ground with white spots. On the east wall are three scenes which may depict the Martyrdom of St. John Baptist, showing Salome dancing before Herod and the executioner with the Saint's head on a charger. The adjacent window has red and yellow blocks on the rere arch and flowers on the head of the splay. On the west wall there is evidence of three tiers ; of the top tier only the lower edge survives showing bare feet. The middle tier of originally five bays appeared to have two figures in each subject and the lowest section, which is fragmentary, probably the same number. Between the top and middle tiers is a wavy band in red, yellow and cream and below the middle one a wider band in the same colours with scroll work enrichment.

Arch. Journ., LVIII (1901), 53-4.

KIDDLINGTON. St. Mary the Virgin

This spacious church retains considerable portions of late medieval painting in the north transept and evidence that much survives beneath the limewash here and in the nave. On the east wall of the transept are much damaged and somewhat confused subjects. From right to left are the following : St. Margaret in red and blue driving the long cross shaft into the dragon's mouth, a fearsome green monster ; next fragmentary remains of St. Helen with part of a cross ; then St. Catherine bearing her wheel ; finally a seated figure of the Blessed Virgin at a desk, doubtless writing the Magnificat, and below a small figure kneeling at a desk and holding a rosary, probably a donor. On the north wall are remains of what must have been a beautiful Madonna in red tunic and green cloak ; the hands of the Divine Child can be discerned stretching to His Mother's neck. On the east wall of the nave a portion of the limewash has been removed revealing what would appear to be a Crucifixion on a red ground.

KIRTlington. St. Mary the Virgin

In the north aisle are 15th century paintings which, though in rather poor condition, are of much interest. To the west is a large St. George. The Saint is on horseback with uplifted sword and on his breastplate is a red cross ; below is the dragon, a fearsome monster with feet in the air ; the princess kneels on the right clad in a red cloak over a white tunic and in the background can be seen the city walls. It is worthy of note that,

while most of the picture is executed in tempera, St. George and his horse are in oils. To the east is a much defaced St. Christopher, of which little more can be discerned than the yellow staff and the figure of the Child at the top right hand corner. *Oxon. Arch. Soc.*, LXXIX (1933), 20.

NORTH LEIGH. St. Mary the Virgin

On the timber and plaster partition between the nave and chancel is a late medieval Doom (PL. XII, A). It is divided into four sections by timber uprights decorated with conventional flowers on a white ground. The two centre panels show the dead rising from their graves; on the left St. Peter is receiving the redeemed and on the right the lost are being pushed into the mouth of Hell; there is now at any rate no central figure of Christ visible.

SOUTH LEIGH. St. James

An extensive series of wall paintings exists, all 15th century and, with one exception, heavily restored after their discovery in 1872.

On the east wall of the chancel to the south of the altar is a standing figure of the Blessed Virgin beneath an elaborate canopy; she holds a lily and gazes upwards to the Dove; this is evidently part of an Annunciation, but the figure of St. Gabriel which was presumably to the north of the altar has completely disappeared. The Virgin is in green and red. Over the chancel arch and on the return north and south walls is the Doom; the figure of Christ is missing but towards the top are two angels with trumpets arousing the dead; that on the left, summoning the saved, is clothed in white and the other, awakening the lost, is in sombre garb; above the first is a scroll inscribed 'Venite Benedicti Patris Mei' and above the other 'Discedite Maledicti'. The naked figures below rise from their graves, the redeemed being received by St. Peter at the heavenly gates, while on the other side the damned are being bound together with a spiked chain and urged towards the jaws of Hell. Below is a brocade pattern in red and yellow with birds and foliage.

On the south wall is a large representation of the Weighing of Souls; in the centre is St. Michael holding a sword in one hand and the scales in the other; in one pan is a kneeling soul, while in the other is a demon with a trumpet summoning other friends from the mouth of Hell to help weigh down the scales. On the other side of the scene stands the Blessed Virgin crowned in a robe emblazoned with suns with the moon beneath her feet; she places a rosary on the scales to weigh down the pan with the soul; her effortless motion contrasts vividly with the frenzied but futile efforts of the demons on the other side.

On the north wall of the aisle is a fine figure of St. Clement pontifically vested with the papal tiara on his head, the triple cross in his left hand, his right raised in blessing and attached to his wrist an anchor, the emblem of his martyrdom. Further to the west on this wall is depicted the Seven Deadly Sins, which alone has escaped drastic renovation. At the bottom is the mouth of Hell; from this rises the Tree of Evil, from the top and branches of which spring dragons' heads within the jaws of which are figures representing the sins, now almost indecipherable; the colours are mainly red and white. *Tristram*, III, 191.

MARSTON, St. Nicholas

There are traces of painting over the chancel arch, but too fragmentary to decipher. Until recent years there were considerable remains on the west wall of the south aisle including what was probably part of an Annunciation on a ground diapered with red rosettes and a scroll border in red, probably 14th century. There were also traces of work of later date in the chancel and north aisle.

GREAT MILTON. St. Mary the Virgin

A considerable amount of medieval painting came to light in the last century, but all that remain are fragments of a 14th century subject over the south doorway in red ; on the left is a conventional flower in red.

SOUTH NEWINGTON. St. Peter

This church possesses extensive remains of paintings of two periods, *c.* 1330 and late medieval. The former series are among the most notable in the country for their rich colour scheme and superb execution ; moreover they are in oil, a rare medium in English wall paintings of that period. It is surprising to find such accomplished work in a village church. Heraldry gives some clue to the persons responsible for the work ; beneath both the Madonna and St. Margaret is a shield charged with gules three lions passant argent for Giffard, and below the Annunciation is ermine, a chief dancetty gules for Mortayne. Representations of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury and the beheading of Blessed Thomas of Lancaster, combined with these shields, suggest that Thomas Giffard and his wife Margaret Mortayne may have commissioned the work.

Over the chancel arch in the nave is a much defaced Doom, including also a Weighing of Souls, all the details so far as can be made out occupying the usual positions. The colours are predominantly green and red. Of the same period is a panel at the east end of the north wall with two figures difficult to identify, but possibly the Coronation of Our Lady ; below are two shields, one charged gules three chalices, probably for Pershore Abbey and the other with a chevron, ? for Wykeham. The shields are certainly 15th century (rather than mid-14th) and it is obvious therefore that they are later than the paintings above them and may actually belong to the late 15th century Passion scenes over the north arcade.

On the south splay of the east window in the north aisle is an exquisite St. Margaret standing on a corbel with the arms of Giffard ; she is crowned and wears a green mantle and holds in her right hand a long cross with which she pierces the prostrate dragon and in her left a book. At the east end of the north wall is a standing Madonna set within a canopied niche with the arms of Giffard below. She holds the Child on her right arm and in her left hand bears a lily ; she is crowned and clothed in a pink tunic and green cloak. The Child has an apple in His right hand and with the left fondles His Mother's neck ; the background is pale pink enriched with a red scroll pattern ; to the left are a male and female kneeling one above the other ; below is a riband band pattern and lower still vertical stripes in red and white. On the east splay of the adjoining window are two subjects, the Annunciation above and St. James Major below. In the former Our Lady stands with bowed head, her right hand raised in assent and in her left a book ; she is clad in a cream tunic and a red cloak edged with white ; St. Gabriel stands on the left in a pink tunic and green cloak with wings of red, green and yellow ; in his left hand is a scroll and the right is raised in salutation ; between the figures is a pot of flowers, below which is the shield of Mortayne and the background is light red with foliated work. St. James, in a white tunic, red cloak lined with green and a black pilgrim's hat, holds in his right hand a staff and in the left a scallop shell, while at his feet kneels a donor. There are now only slight traces of colour on the opposite splay. There are no remains of painting for some distance to the west and then comes the Martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury—a superb composition—with the Beheading of Thomas of Lancaster to the right, both victims of royal tyranny. Thomas, a cousin of Edward II, who was beheaded at Pontefract in 1322, was looked upon as the people's champion against misgovernment ; miracles were claimed at his tomb and he was beatified by the Pope soon after his death. Edward III petitioned Rome for his canonization but without success.

The representation of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas is probably the finest surviving

example of the subject in England, although the upper part is unfortunately lost. The Saint is depicted clad in Mass vestments and kneeling before an altar, which is historically incorrect. The four knights are on the left and the foremost is in the act of cleaving the Saint's skull; in the background the chaplain, Grim, can be seen endeavouring to protect the Saint. There is a wide range of colours including red, green, blue and white with a deep red background.

The Beheading of Thomas of Lancaster is a very simple composition consisting only of the victim and the executioner; Thomas kneels with his back to the headsman and on his neck are two deep gashes; he is clad in a red cloak. The executioner is shown with uplifted sword and one leg; he wears a belted red coat, pink hose and black shoes; unfortunately the head and left arm are missing. Below these two scenes is a bent riband border in red and green.

Over the north arcade is a late medieval Passion series, now consisting of ten scenes, but originally of at least five more. Though its artistic merit is far less than that of the earlier paintings, the work exhibits a naive charm and is valuable as affording a good example of the type of painting commonly found in village churches, the prime purpose of which was instruction. Starting from the west are the Entry into Jerusalem, with three figures waving palm branches from the battlements, the Agony in the Garden, the Betrayal, then after a gap which must have contained two scenes, the Scourging, the Cross bearing, the Crucifixion, the Deposition, the Burial, the Resurrection and the Appearance to St. Mary Magdalene; the rest, which must have included at least three scenes, is missing save for a few fragments. The scenes are framed by thin red lines and the background is trellis work. In the spandrels of the arches below are trees from which are suspended shields bearing the Passion Emblems. The colours are mainly red, grey and yellow, with some white. It is probable that more painting exists beneath the limewash over the south arcade.

Borenus (1932), 98; pl. XLII.

Burl. Mag., LXII (1933), 114-29.

Tristram, III, 226-9; pls. 16a, b, 17, 18a, b, 19a, b, 20.

NORTHMOOR. St. Denys

In describing the paintings here it is necessary to speak mostly in the past tense since comparatively little can now be seen. They were uncovered and treated in 1932. Fortunately coloured drawings were made of some of the work in 1936 and these are preserved in the Bodleian Library.

In the end wall of the north transept are two 14th century tomb recesses with effigies of a knight and lady respectively, the former bearing on his shield the arms of Delamore. Above each recess were depicted angels holding a sheet with a naked figure representing the soul of the departed; there were also several shields displaying the arms of Delamore, Harcourt, Buckingham and others not identified. At the back of the left recess was a seated Madonna flanked by groups of kneeling persons, men on the left and women on the right, probably members of the Delamore family. At the back of the right recess was portrayed with much charm the Coronation of Our Lady; here also kneeling male and female figures flanked the central group. The Blessed Virgin inclined her head to receive the crown from her Divine Son. Finally on the west wall adjoining the left recess was a seated Christ in Majesty with an orb in the left hand and the right hand raised in blessing, while on either side was an adoring angel. The upper part of this subject is fairly well preserved but of the rest of the paintings only fragments have survived. The range of colours was confined to red and yellow in various shades with some white. The date is c. 1370. The loss of these paintings is a tragedy since the quality of the work was of a high order.

Burl. Mag., LXV (1934), 83.

Tristram, III, 229.

OXFORD CATHEDRAL

Twelfth Century : There are fragmentary remains of 12th century painting in the south choir aisle and the Lucy Chapel. The former consist of two portions of drapery in red and yellow on the east wall, and above a border of scroll pattern between black horizontal bands. In the Lucy Chapel are traces of a pattern of contiguous roundels on the north-east pier ; on the western arch are traces of colour and the soffit of the north arch has a pattern of vesica shapes.

Thirteenth Century : The web of the vault of the Lady Chapel retains some masonry pattern with red lines ; on the ribs is masonry pattern in red and white alternately. The bay of the vault at the junction of the north transept and the north choir aisle has masonry pattern and the voussoirs are in red and white alternately. The vault of the south choir aisle has the web covered with leaf and trefoil patterns in red ; the round mouldings of the ribs are in red and the hollows in yellow, while the soffits of the arches have scroll patterns in black. The vault of the south nave aisle has scroll patterns in black.

The walls and vault of the Chapter House are decorated with masonry pattern and each bay of the vault had large medallions edged inside with a red line and outside with lines of red and white ; only the decoration of the east bay is complete and has in the east section St. Peter, in the west St. Paul, on the north St. Matthew and on the south St. John ; the adjacent bay has in the east section a censing angel.

Fourteenth Century : The Lady Chapel vault was further embellished *c.* 1350, but only the central bay retains appreciable remains. Here the intersections of the vault are emphasized by bands of red, yellow and black and the arch mouldings are decorated in black, red and blue ; on the web are censing angels in albs on a light blue ground ; they have golden hair and rayed nimbus and orange coloured wings, one lowered and the other outstretched. On the east portion of the south choir aisle vault are angels with upraised wings, two of which are dancing, and below is a figure playing a fiddle ; the others are standing motionless and are larger than the former. The figures are in red outline and those in the east section have black tunics. There are traces of a figure on one of the columns of the south arcade.

Tristram, I, 139 ; Supp. plate 15a, c.

Tristram, II, 586.

Tristram, III, 232-3 ; pls. 26, 27a, b, 52a.

OXFORD. St. Giles

There is a 13th century consecration cross on the north-west pier of the tower with splayed ends in red on a white ground within a circle.

OXFORD. St. Mary the Virgin

On the south wall of the chancel is a 15th century consecration cross in red with splayed ends on a cream ground within a narrow red circle.

PIDDINGTON. St. Nicholas

On the north wall of the nave are fragmentary remains of a 15th century St. Christopher ; the details are obscure, but it is possible to make out some of the Saint's figure with a red cloak, the staff and fishes in the stream.

SHILTON. Holy Rood

The arches of the arcade exhibit a scheme of early 13th century decoration. The north face of the east arch has a border of diamonds spotted in red between half diamonds in red and yellow, and on the edge of the soffit red chevrons outlined in black. The next arch has bent ribband ornament in red and pink and, on the soffit, a geometrical pattern

with yellow scrolls and a border of red zigzag, and on the east face a group of figures with red and yellow scroll pattern. The third arch has on the face scroll and trefoil pattern; the edges of the soffit have a plain red band on one side and red zigzag on the other. The mouldings have traces of red and on the caps are marbling and zigzags. On the soffit of the north doorway are scroll and zigzag with yellow fruit. Tristram, II, 598-9.

SHORTHAMPTON. All Saints

This charming little church possesses an interesting series of paintings, including some unusual subjects, mostly of 15th century date. On the splay of a 12th century window on the north of the nave is masonry pattern in red outline on a cream ground with a conventional flower in each division; on the west splay are fragmentary remains of a figure and inscription and to the west of the window slight remains of an ecclesiastic of which nothing can be deciphered except the ends of a stole; all these are probably early 13th century. To the east of the window is a seated woman teaching a child to read, with an ox nearby, which probably portrays St. Frideswide who is depicted thus in an Evangelistarium at Magdalen College, Oxford. Further to the east is the upper part of an archbishop holding a primatial cross, probably St. Thomas of Canterbury, though no distinctive symbol is now visible (PL. XII, B).

The chancel arch retains traces of 13th century decoration including scroll pattern. Above the chancel arch is a Doom showing the dead rising from their graves in the centre and on the right the damned being driven towards the jaws of Hell; the subject is continued on to the south wall where is shown a cauldron full of people and at the side a devil blowing a horn. On the right side of the large squint to the south of the chancel arch is a most unusual subject; it depicts the Miracle of the Clay Birds as related in the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus. According to the legend the Holy Child made clay birds for His companions and then gave them life. The Blessed Virgin is shown crowned and clad in an ermine robe with a pale blue cloak; on her right arm is the Holy Child and on her left one of the companions, while another kneels in front and between them is a bird. To the right of the squint is a much damaged scene which appears to depict the Agony in the Garden; it is notable for the background diapered with drops of blood and may have served as a reredos for a lateral altar. Above the adjacent piscina is a panel of deep red with no visible details.

On the east splay of the south-east window of the nave is St. Zita, patroness of domestic servants. She was born near Lucca, in Italy, early in the 13th century and spent most of her life in the service of one family, discharging her duties so conscientiously that she was made housekeeper. After her death miracles occurred at her tomb and she was eventually canonized. Devotion to her is said to have been introduced to this country by Italian merchants. She is found in painted glass in various places, but, so far as is known, only twice in wall paintings—here and at Horley. She wears a white tunic and green cloak and on her head a white kerchief; in one hand she holds a bag and bunch of keys. Further west on the south wall is depicted a legend associated with St. Eligius, or Eloy. Eligius (d. 659) was born near Limoges and was, in his early days, a worker in metals; so skilful was he and so honest that he was entrusted by King Clothaire with the control of his coinage. Being highly esteemed, also, for his sanctity he was eventually elected Bishop of Noyon. According to legend the Saint saw a smith shoeing a horse which had become very restive; Eligius thereupon, after making the sign of the cross, removed the horse's leg, nailed on the shoe and replaced the leg; this is the scene depicted here. It will be noticed that the horse is supported in a wooden frame, while the smith stands behind.

On the west wall are remains of a St. George and the Dragon, but all that survives is the Dragon's wing.

Arch. Journ., LXII, 161-2.

Oxon. Arch. Soc., LXXXIII (1937), 8-11.

SOULDERN. St. Mary the Virgin

On the north wall of the nave are remains of what must have been an impressive 15th century St. Christopher, but little can now be identified beyond the Saint's head and part of the staff on the left.

STANTON ST. JOHN. St. John Baptist

On the east splay of the second window from the west on the north of the chancel are faint traces of the upper part of a figure, probably *c.* 1300, the sole surviving remains of what may have been an extensive scheme of painting.

NORTH STOKE. St. Mary the Virgin

There is an extensive scheme of painting of *c.* 1300 on the north, south and east walls of the nave discovered in 1884. On the north wall, starting from the west, between the first two windows is the Three Living and the Three Dead treated in the usual manner; then between the second and third windows are two tiers of subjects divided by a yellow band, above is St. Stephen standing before the judge and next the Stoning of the Saint, with an angel receiving his soul; below is St. Catherine bound to the spiked wheel and then the Saint being scourged, all much damaged. On the south wall, starting from the east, between the first two windows are three tiers of subjects separated by green scroll work with white and pink borders, the latter enriched with leaves; the lowest tier contains the Last Supper which occupies the whole space; the middle tier shows the Betrayal, Christ before Pilate and the Scourging; in the top tier are the Cross Bearing, the Deposition and the Resurrection, the last scene being the best preserved. Over the south doorway are two much damaged figures—one an angel—which may be part of an Annunciation. On the east wall is a Doom, only a portion of which can be deciphered including figures rising from their graves, one on the left being received by St. Peter. To the north of the chancel arch is the Martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury; the four knights survive but St. Thomas has been deliberately defaced, probably in accordance with the royal injunctions of 1538 ordering the destruction of all pictures and images of the Saint. To the south of the chancel arch is a Crucifixion with the Blessed Virgin and St. John which probably served as a reredos to a lateral altar.

The window splays have lost their paintings except the east splay of the middle window on the south, where is St. John Baptist holding a roundel with the Agnus Dei and slight traces on the opposite splay.

There is a wide range of colours including dark red, yellow, black, pink, vermilion and two shades of green.

Tristram, III, 253-4.

SWALCLIFFE. St. Peter and St. Paul

On the lateral wall of the north aisle is an impressive representation of the Weighing of Souls of *c.* 1400. In the centre stands St. Michael holding the scales and to the left is the Blessed Virgin placing her hand on the balance pole to press down the scale which contains the soul, while two devils are pulling vigorously but without effect on the other side; St. Michael is warding off the fiends with his extended left hand. The drawing is accomplished and the general effect quite dramatic. The colours are mainly red and a greyish blue.

On the lateral wall of the north aisle are remains of medieval painting now virtually indecipherable with later superimposed texts.

On the west wall of the south aisle are two kings, one of whom appears to hold arrows; this is probably part of the Three Living and the Three Dead and is of 14th century date.

GREAT TEW. St. Michael

There is 13th century scroll work and other ornament with trefoil lobes on the pillars and caps of the north arcade.

Recently Mr Clive Rouse made a provisional examination of the plaster in the nave and aisles with gratifying results. Over the chancel arch there is evidence of a large painting, probably a Doom. In the north aisle there are many indications of subjects on the east, north and west walls which give promise of important discoveries. It is reasonable to suppose that a St. Christopher may be found near the north door. The west wall is difficult to examine owing to the proximity of the organ, but much colour is already visible with a scroll border. The main discoveries are on the lateral wall of the south aisle. On the west splay of the window east of the door is a figure in red and on the soffit of the arch is scroll ornament in red. Between this window and the next there is evidence of an elaborate and extensive scheme of c. 1300 in three, four or five tiers divided by a band of scroll ornament in red between yellow borders. The background is powdered with groups of red dots. It would appear to be a Passion series, or possibly a complete Life of Christ. Two subjects have been partially uncovered—the Carrying of the Cross and the Deposition. The detail is delicate and accomplished and the condition of the paintings seems to be good, all things considered. The colours are, it would seem, mainly red and yellow.

THAME. St. Mary the Virgin

On the south-east pier of the central tower is a late medieval Pietà; the lower part is gone but the rest is in good preservation and shows the head and shoulders of the Blessed Virgin with the empty cross behind; the face vividly expresses the extreme desolation of the Virgin Mother.

On the head of the end window of the north transept is a 16th century arabesque pattern in red and white.

WARBOROUGH. St. Laurence

There are fragmentary remains of a 15th century St. George on the north wall of the nave with evidence of the dragon and the princess.

WESTCOTT BARTON. St. Edward

There are remains of 13th century painting on the chancel arch and the arcade. The chancel arch has partially renewed red scroll pattern and red conventional flowers on the responds.

The two arches of the arcade have a partially renewed scheme with red conventional flowers, alternating with yellow scroll work, divided by blocks of black roundels.

WESTWELL. St. Mary the Virgin

The south-east window of the chancel has patterning in red on the rere-arch and a large red conventional flower at the apex of the window; the date is 13th century.

WIDFORD. St. Oswald

On the north and south walls of the chancel are remains of a scheme of 14th century subjects. On the north wall are two tiers separated by a band of bent riband; the upper one has fragmentary remains of the Martyrdom of St. Laurence and probably of St. Edmund. Below is the Three Living and the Three Dead; the three kings are depicted as old, middle-aged and young, the last with a hawk on his wrist and a dog at his feet; approaching them through trees on the right are three grisly spectres, the leader crowned and cocking a snook; the figures have inscribed scrolls now indecipherable. There were two tiers of subjects also on the south wall, but the remains are too fragmentary to decipher.

On the splays of the north window are single figures, possibly an Annunciation

and to the west further fragments as well as on the wall opposite. There are traces of single figures on the splays of the east window. On the wall to the north and south of the window is a tapestry pattern of late medieval date which served as a background to the figures which stood on the stone brackets.

On the north wall of the nave is a 15th century St. Christopher partly covered by a 17th century Royal Arms and mutilated by the insertion of a post-medieval window on the east. Parts of the Saint and his staff are clearly visible as well as the hermit and the chapel on the left.

Tristram, III, 265.

WOODEATON. Holy Rood

The walls of the nave retain considerable portions of 14th century masonry pattern with double red lines, and round the rere-arch of the north and south doorways is a scroll pattern in red and yellow. On the north wall is a fine 14th century St. Christopher; the heads of the Saint and the Holy Child had been destroyed but were convincingly restored by Professor Tristram. A striking feature is the scroll inscribed in Lombardic lettering: 'Ki Cest Image Verra Le Jur de Male Mort Ne Murra'. The drawing is accomplished and the colours mainly red and green—very effective. On the opposite wall are faint traces of another subject.

Burl. Mag., LXII (1933), 129.

Tristram, III, 268.

YARNTON. St. Bartholomew

This is a church where a thorough and careful investigation of the plaster would be rewarding. There are definite indications over the chancel arch where there is already visible a 15th century Nativity near the bottom on the south and, above, what is probably the Massacre of the Innocents. Over the north doorway there are indications of a large subject which may well be a St. Christopher.

LIST OF SURVIVING WALL PAINTINGS

(An asterisk denotes figures)

Adderbury	*Eynsham	*Oxford Cathedral
Alvescot	Fulbrook	Oxford St. Giles
Barford St. John	Hanborough	Oxford St. Mary
*Beckley	Holton	*Piddington
*Blackbourton	*Hook Norton	*Shilton
Bletchington	*Horley	*Shorthampton
*Bloxham	*Hornton	*Souldern
*Broughton	Iffley	*Stanton St. John
Burford	Ipsden	*North Stoke
*Cassington	*Kelmscott	*Swalcliffe
*Chalgrove	*Kidlington	*Great Tew
Charlton-on-Otmoor	*Kirtlington	*Thame
*Checkendon	*North Leigh	*Warborough
*Combe	*South Leigh	Westcott Barton
Cowley	Marston	Westwell
*Cropredy	*Great Milton	*Widford
*Dorchester	*South Newington	*Woodeaton
*Ducklington	*Northmoor	*Yarnton
*Ewelme		

CHRONOLOGY OF SURVIVING PAINTINGS

12TH CENTURY :

Cassington

Oxford Cathedral

13TH CENTURY :

Adderbury
 Alvescot
 Barford St. John
 Blackbourton
 Bletchington
 Checkendon
 Fulbrook
 Holton

Iffley
 Kelmscott
 Oxford Cathedral
 Oxford St. Giles
 Shorthampton
 Great Tew
 Westcott Barton
 Westwell

14TH CENTURY :

Beckley
 Broughton
 Burford
 Chalgrove
 Charlton-on-Otmoor
 Checkendon
 Cowley
 Dorchester
 Ducklington
 Eynsham
 Fulbrook
 Horley

Kelmscott
 Great Milton
 South Newington
 Northmoor
 Oxford Cathedral
 Stanton St. John
 North Stoke
 Swalcliffe
 Great Tew
 Widford
 Woodeaton

15TH AND 16TH CENTURY :

Alvescot
 Beckley
 Bloxham
 Cassington
 Combe
 Cropredy
 Ewelme
 Hanborough
 Hook Norton
 Horley
 Hornton
 Ipsden
 Kidlington

Kirtlington
 North Leigh
 South Leigh
 Marston
 South Newington
 Oxford St. Mary
 Piddington
 Shorthampton
 Souldern
 Thame
 Warborough
 Widford
 Yarnton

LIST OF SUBJECTS

- Nativity series : Blackbourton, Chalgrove, Yarnton.
 Passion series : Chalgrove, South Newington, North Stoke, Great Tew.
 Baptism of Christ : Blackbourton.
 Crucifixion : Broughton, Combe, Dorchester, North Stoke.
 Christ in Majesty : Checkendon, Northmoor.
 Holy Trinity : Ducklington.
 Life of Blessed Virgin : Broughton, Chalgrove.
 Single Figures of Blessed Virgin and Child : Beckley, Kidlington, South Newington, Northmoor.
 Annunciation : Beckley, Combe, Ewelme, South Newington.
 Pietà : Hornton, Thame.
 Coronation : Northmoor.
 St. Christopher : Blackbourton, Bloxham, Combe, ? Cropredy, Horley, Kirtlington, Piddington, Souldern, Widford, Woodeaton, Yarnton.
 St. George : Hornton, Kirtlington, Shorthampton, Warborough.
 Lives of Saints : Eynsham, Kelmscott.
 Single Events in Lives of Saints : Blackbourton, South Newington, Shorthampton, North Stoke.
 Single Figures of Saints and Angels : Beckley, Blackbourton, Cassington, Chalgrove, Checkendon, Combe, Ewelme, Hook Norton, Horley, Kidlington, South Leigh, South Newington, Oxford Cathedral, Shorthampton, North Stoke.
 Moralities :
 (a) Doom : Beckley, Bloxham, Cropredy, Hornton, Kelmscott, North Leigh, South Leigh, South Newington, Shorthampton, North Stoke.
 (b) Seven Deadly Sins : Hook Norton, South Leigh.
 (c) Three Living and Three Dead : North Stoke, Swalcliffe, Widford.
 (d) Weighing of Souls : ? Horley, South Leigh, Swalcliffe.
 Consecration Crosses : Cassington, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Cowley, Ducklington, Ifley, Oxford St. Giles, Oxford St. Mary.
 Decorative Schemes : Adderbury, Alvescot, Bletchingdon, Bloxham, Burford, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Dorchester, Ewelme, Fulbrook, Hanborough, Holton, Ipsden, Kelmscott, Marston, South Newington, Oxford Cathedral, Shilton, Shorthampton, Great Tew, Thame, Westcott Barton, Westwell, Woodeaton.
 Heraldry : Horley, South Newington, Northmoor.

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Blackbourton, Appearance of an Angel to St. Joseph.

Photo : the late F. E. Howard

PLATE IX



Checkendon, St. Peter and Other Apostles.

Photo: P. S. Spokes

PLATE X



Combe, Crucifixion.

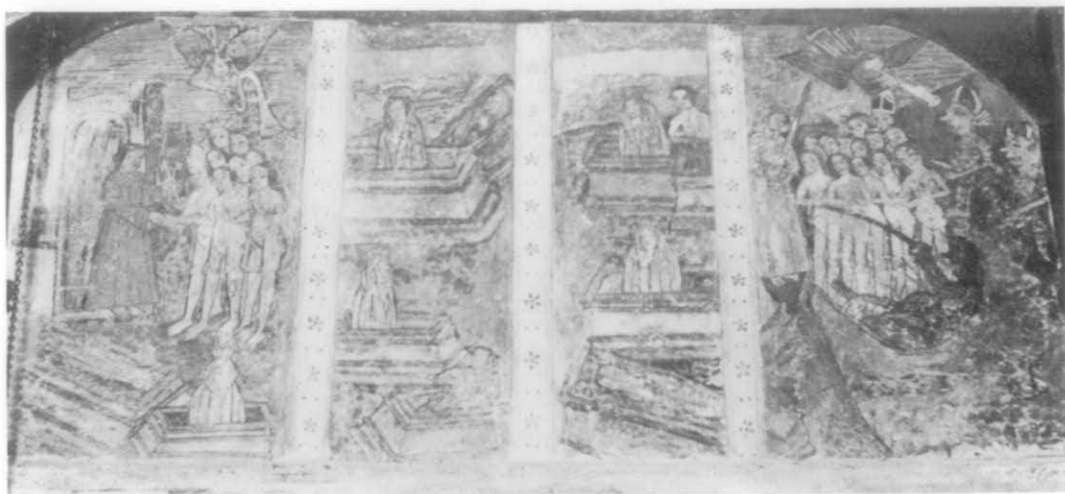
Photo: P. S. Spokes



Dorchester, Crucifixion in South Aisle.

Photo: P. S. Spokes

PLATE XII



A. North Leigh, Doom.



B. Shorthampton, Archbishop, ? St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Photos: P. S. Spokes