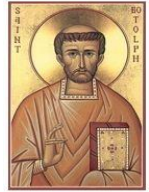




# The Botolphian

Newsletter of  
The Society of Saint Botolph

[www.botolph.info](http://www.botolph.info)



The Saint Botolph icon above is copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA and used by permission. All rights reserved.  
Admin: Denis Pepper, 17, Cliffe House, Radnor Cliff, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2TY. Tel: +44 (0)1303 221-777 [botolph@virginmedia.com](mailto:botolph@virginmedia.com)  
President: Revd Timothy L'Estrange, Vicar of St.Gabriel's Church, North Acton.

Issue Number: 83    **2020 – the 1400<sup>th</sup> anniversary (circa) of St Botolph's birth.**    1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

## The Wall Paintings of **S**t **B**otolph's Church at **H**ardham in West Sussex.

A comparison between the paintings in 2020  
and Philip Mainwaring Johnston's record of 1900.



*St Botolph's church, Hardham.*

*“In the water meadows and level pastures through which the Arun flows seaward a mile or so to the south of Pulborough, lies the tiny grey church of St Botolph, Hardham, overshadowed by towering elms. Its Saxon dedication prepares one for architecture of possibly pre-Conquest date – an expectation realised in the actual building which belongs to a group of early churches in West Sussex, all built on the simplest lines, and in plan and in their main features of a date within the eleventh century.”*

*Philip Mainwaring Johnston, 1901.*

Issue Number 80 of *The Botolphian* (published on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020) was devoted to this lovely church and some of its wall paintings. I was unable to cover them all for want of space but I promised to revisit the subject and provide a supplement containing a commentary on the remaining paintings. In the event the project took rather longer and was more complicated than I had anticipated. People have written about Hardham's wall paintings before but, as far as I can discover, there has been no such article as this one which shows pictures of every single painting on a 'warts and all' basis. Most writers had baulked at printing a photograph which showed nothing intelligible but I particularly wanted to show every piece of wall where a painting once resided. Quite a few of the paintings are indecipherable and some are a mere 'splodge' on the wall, but I believe it is important to take that 'splodge' into account, identify the theme that would have been portrayed in that position, and thereby obtain an holistic view of the entire gallery.

My intention, in spite of its bulk, was to publish this as a mid-month *Botolphian* supplement but, partly due to the time the work has taken, and partly due to the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic prevented me from re-visiting three other St Botolph churches which were scheduled to occupy the April, May and June issues, I decided that it would be sensible for this project to take the place of the April issue itself.

In the event I decided that I would make it a complete guide to all 44 wall paintings and include the 13 themes which I had already discussed in the January issue.

I am not, in this collection, providing a study of each painting in turn. That is for you to do when you come to visit St Botolph's Church at Hardham – as surely you must. My aim is to lead you from painting to painting and guide you through the various sequences. I provide you with a photograph of each painting – not with a view to explaining it in detail because some of the photographs are just a jumble of colours, but in order for you to be sure that you are looking at the painting that matches the commentary. And the commentaries that you will mostly read (and these are written in italics) are those of Philip Mainwaring Johnston (of whom more later).

You will stand before the paintings and look at them in full size – something with which my small illustrations could never hope to compete. You will peer at them and endeavour to make out what the artist was trying to portray. Some will be so faded that you will be unable to do so; some will have had their surfaces damaged so that they have become similarly undecipherable. At this stage you will, I hope, look to this guide for rescue.

## **The Artists.**

In some ways the individual paintings are less important than the sequential themes and the exhibition as a whole. You are visitors to a twelfth century art gallery and this is the catalogue. The exhibitors who painted these pictures were skilled artists known as the Lewes Group who travelled from church to church. Their technique was to first apply a thick layer of plaster to the walls and then add thinner layers in patches where scenes and borders were depicted. Each patch was then painted whilst the plaster was still wet; this is the classical fresco technique.

The artistic group was based just 24 miles away at St Pancras' Priory at Lewes – at that time one of the richest English monasteries in England. But, as we shall read later from the pen of Johnston himself, many of the artists were not of English but of Norman descent and they left behind them in France other fine examples of the skills that they subsequently brought to England.

The paintings have inevitably faded and will continue to do so but clearly it would be wrong to hide them away. They have been subjected to several bouts of restoration over the years the last being by the Canterbury Cathedral Wall Paintings Workshop in 1986.

We must remember that the purpose of the wall paintings was twofold. First and foremost, they conveyed the Bible story in pictures. We are often told that the motivating factor for this was the illiteracy of the people but we also know that ‘a picture tells a thousand words’ and this maxim applies just as strongly to literate and illiterate alike. The secondary and perhaps *almost as important* purpose of these works of art was to decorate the interior of the church in such a spectacular fashion that it created spiritual awe in the minds of all who entered the church.

As a further aid to interpreting the faded illustrations I have, from time to time included copies of pictures drawn by Philip Mainwaring Johnson.

## **Philip Mainwaring Johnston**

Philip Mainwaring Johnston, FSA., FRIBA (1865-1936) was an English architect and historian who was articed to John Belcher RIBA RA (1841-1913) the 1904 president of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Johnston himself later became vice-president.

Johnston was a notable designer of World War I war memorials and a conservator and restorer of sixteen churches the second of which, in 1900, was Hardham. He lived in Camberwell and was a pillar of both the Sussex and the Surrey Archaeological Societies.

In 1901, he had a lengthy and inspiring paper entitled Hardham Church and its Early Paintings published in Volume XLIV of the Sussex Archaeological Collection and, in the following guide wherever possible, I include his observations on each picture so that readers can decide for themselves whether or not the paintings have become less discernible in the intervening 120 years.

It will be noted that some of his comments have been invalidated due to the C20 restorations of some of the paintings. His impressions in 1900 are included nevertheless. It seems likely that the subsequent restorers were to an extent guided by some of his comments. He describes the paintings in minute detail – so minute that many readers might find his descriptions excessive and so I have attempted to edit his paper in such a way that their interest will be maintained whilst still providing the necessary information. For those who wish to read the unexpurgated article, this can be found at: <https://leweshistory.org.uk/research-resources/lewes-history-group-bibliography/sussex-archaeological-collections-digitised-volumes/>.

In his defence he writes *I have gone at some length into the description of these paintings as I believe them, imperfect as they now are, to be of quite exceptional interest on account of their subjects, extent and extremely early date. One rarely finds a church, however small, entirely covered with paintings all of one scheme and period; and when that period is the earliest of which we have any examples remaining – that embracing the second half of the eleventh to the first quarter of the twelfth century – one may be excused for going somewhat minutely into detail in describing them.*

In the following guide, the words of Philip Mainwaring Johnston are written in italics and the page number appended to each section refers to the page on which that section will be found in the original paper. Words in regular script are generally my own but have often been inspired by the church’s guide “The Wall Paintings” which was the work of the Courtauld Institute. (see below). Where the words are used verbatim the Courtauld Institute is acknowledged.

## The Wall Paintings

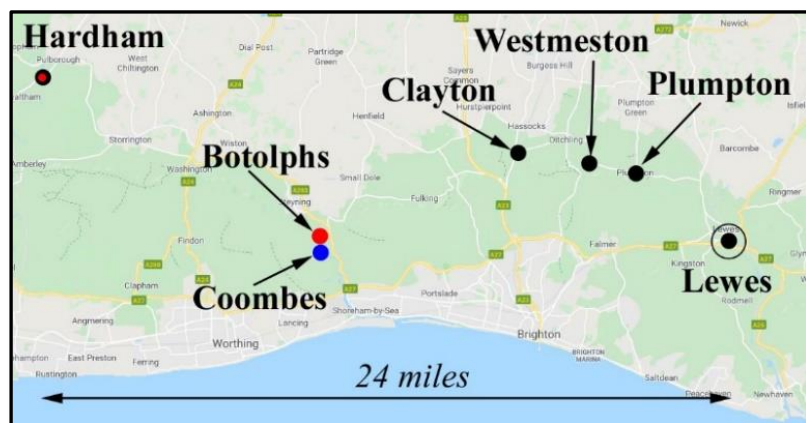


**On his page 114 Johnston writes:**

*'The great Cluniac Priory of St Pancras, Lewes, founded by William de Warrenne and his wife Gundrada about 1077, must alone have been the cause of importing a host of foreign artificers. Its great stone church (replacing the more ancient Saxon one of wooden construction) was consecrated in the first instance somewhere between 1091 and 1097; but work was busily and continuously going on during the next century.*

*After the death of William de Warrenne in 1088 his sons continued to act as benefactors to the priory. They proceeded with the building of the church and its offices and much of the elaborate colour decoration (of which abundant traces have come to light during the recent excavations carried out by our Society) was of twelfth century date . . . Archbishop Lanfranc, the trusted adviser of William and Gundrada, despised the English as barbarians and recommended foreigners. William seems to have been a man of deep piety and of singularly cultured taste for this time, a great traveller and patron of the arts, in which latter role his sons followed him. He and his wife had a strongly marked partiality for Burgundian monks, with whom the community at Lewes was judiciously leavened . . .*

*One may suppose that the rude manner of building and decorative art in use among the conquered Saxons would be as distasteful to their Norman Conquerors as would be their rude manner of life and speech. Probably with the Burgundian monks came skilled workmen and artists – indeed, many of them were doubtless artists themselves – carvers, painters and illuminators.'*



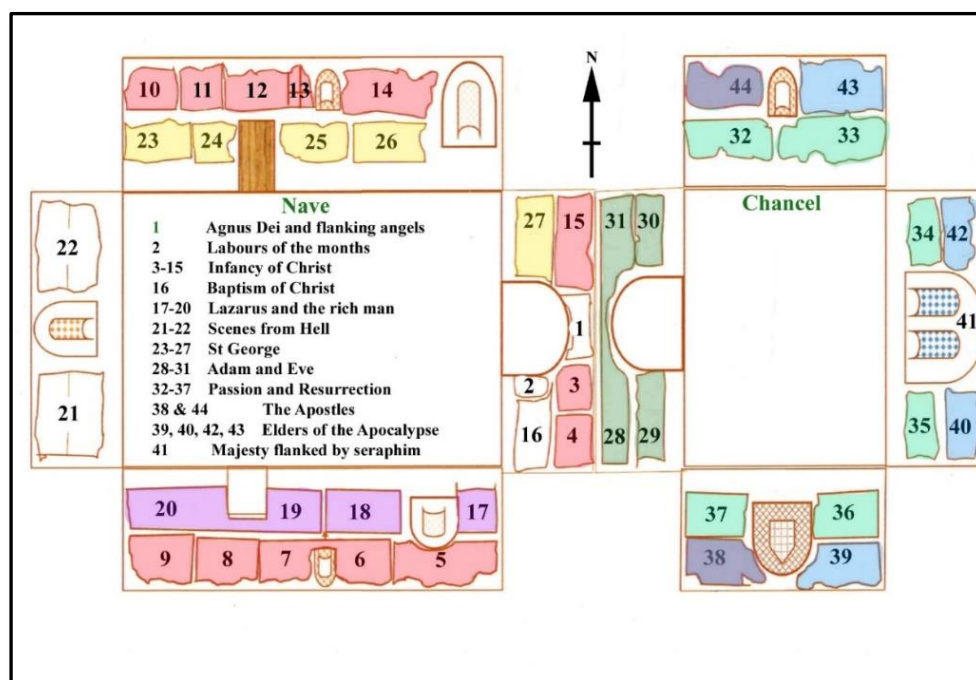


It has to be said that St Botolph's church, Hardham is a very special church - for at least two reasons. Firstly, because it has changed very little since it was built in C11 and secondly because it has the best set of wall paintings in the United Kingdom. They constitute a complete set - which is unusual in itself - the only pieces missing are where extra windows have been punched through the walls and where plaster was removed from the chancel arch. Thus, when you visit, you have the joy of walking into an almost untouched art gallery dating from 50 years after the Norman Conquest. There are more than forty scenes.

In its time, the St Pancras' Priory at Lewes was one of the richest monasteries in England. It was a group from this priory which was employed to produce the wonderful decorations at Hardham. The same group was responsible for similar work in the nearby churches of Clayton, Plumpton and Westmeston (see map above). The c. 950 St Botolph's church in the village of Botolphs also exhibits remains of wall paintings as does its near neighbour at Coombes and it is possible that these were also carried out by the Lewes group.

Although the paintings were executed nearly 900 years ago, they were plastered over in the thirteenth century and not rediscovered until 1866. Sadly they were denied a proper professional 'disinterment' and it was not until 1900, when Philip Mainwaring Johnston took an interest, that a grant was made available to the Committee on Mural Paintings so that the entire series could be thoroughly cleaned, sized and varnished.

I have attempted to portray the pictures in a way that minimises ambiguity. It is for this reason that, in many cases the painting itself does not take up the full frame of the photograph but the edges of windows and the presence of a wall-angles are left in view so that the reader may thereby more readily locate the site.



***Key to the Locations of the wall paintings at Hardham.***

(N.B. For easy reference another copy of this plan has been printed on the back cover).

**Acknowledgement:** This ground-plan has been taken from the church's guidebook "The Wall Paintings" by the late Sharon Cather and David Park of the Conservation of Wall Painting Department, Courtauld Institute of Art, 41 Gordon Square, London. I have, however, altered the numbering sequence and colour-coded the pictorial subjects.

# The Catalogue

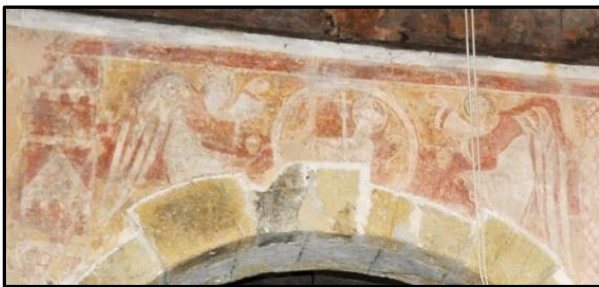
We start in the nave facing east looking up at the painting above the chancel arch.

---

## Painting 1.

p.94.

*Over the chancel arch was a circular medallion which perhaps contained the Holy Lamb, but it is no longer visible . . . but it is quite possible that “The Veneration of the Cross,” and not the Adoration of the Lamb was here represented.*



**1. The Agnus Dei flanked by censing angels.**

*At Hardham the angels show their reverence by the crouching posture in which they kneel. The angel on the southern side is the more perfect, although both (and the medallion) have been cruelly injured by the unfortunate removal of the plaster from the stonework of the chancel arch.*

*. . . Most probably among the decorations destroyed by the removal of the plaster from the soffit of the arch were “The Signs of the Zodiac,” and, on the arch-piers, “The Occupations of the Months.”*

[Ed: This area has been restored and we can now see features at which Johnston could only guess].

---

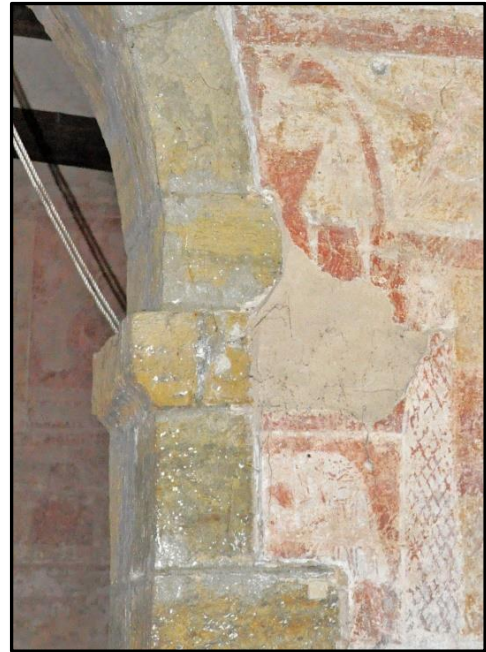
Looking to the right and following the archway down, we find the ‘Labours of the months.’

---

## Painting 2.

p.95.

*At Hardham slight remains of the medallions on which were painted the “Occupations of the Months” are still visible on the western face of the southern jamb of the chancel arch. One of these appears to represent a man threshing wheat.*



**2. Labours of the months**

---

To the right of this is the first of the *Infancy of Christ* series of which there are thirteen pictures.

---

## Painting 3.

p.86.

*On the right of the chancel arch, we have on the upper tier ‘The Annunciation,’ by far the most perfect of any of the subjects.*



**3. The Annunciation.**



To the left is the Archangel Gabriel, the forefinger of his right hand emphasising the message he is delivering to the Blessed Virgin. His arms are crossed over his body to enable him to do this and in his left hand is a lily-sceptre. The Virgin – over whom the Holy Dove is hovering – spreads out her hands in the Eastern attitude of prayer.

#### Painting 4

p.87.

On the right of the Annunciation is “*The Salutation*,” the subjects being separated by a remarkable tower, perhaps intended for the Virgin’s house . . . To the right of this tower are the figures of Mary and Elizabeth.



4. *The Visitation (aka The Salutation).*

The faces, unfortunately destroyed by an old settlement in the wall, are represented by parts of the nimbus, [Ed: haloes] which are here yellow instead of green . . . The figures appear to be embracing. Running along the red border above these scenes is a most interesting inscription in white Roman letters . . . VIRGO SALUTATUR – STERILIS FECUNDA PROBATUR – “The Virgin is saluted. The barren is proved fruitful.”



Johnston’s sketch of Painting 4.

We now swing to our right so that we are looking at the *upper tier* of paintings on the south wall of the nave above the window

#### Painting 5.

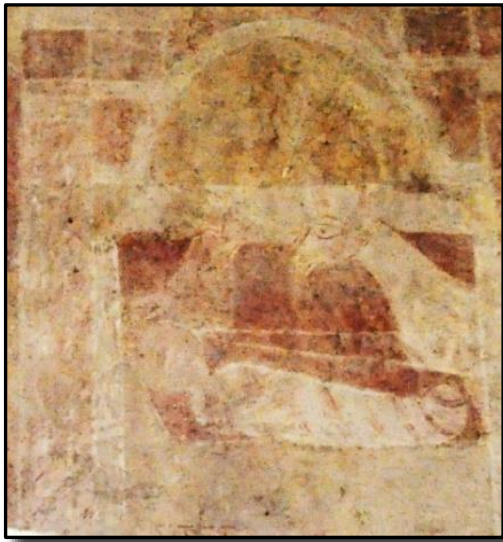
p.85

*The Nativity and Visit of the Shepherds* – far less perfect than the foregoing.



5. *The Nativity (eastern part).*

The Blessed Virgin reposes upon a couch with a red coverlet spotted with white pellets, her head resting on a richly diapered pillow; at her feet Joseph is seated in an attitude of contemplation, partly covered by the folds of a curtain which is draped above and around the bed.

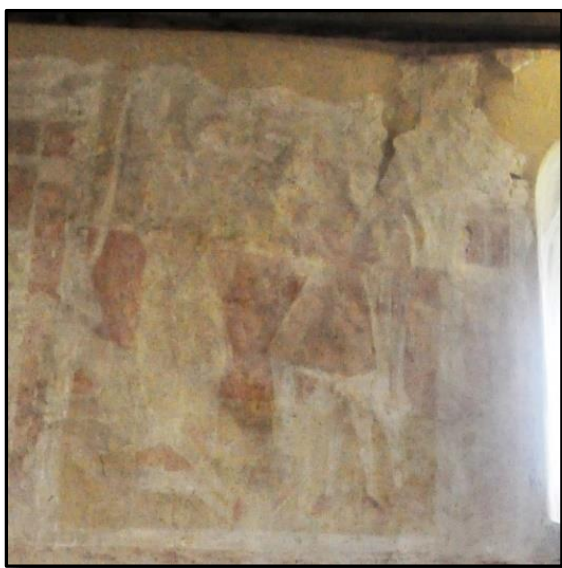


**5b. The Nativity (western part).**

*Beyond, with a domed roof, diagonally striped piers and other peculiar architectural details is seen part of the stable of the Inn, with the ox and the ass gazing at the Child, swaddled and lying in a manger. The entrance to the stable is being shown by a diminutive genuflecting figure who is apparently acting as guide to three shepherds – if not one of themselves. The fifteenth century window has destroyed part of the subject.*

**Painting 6.**

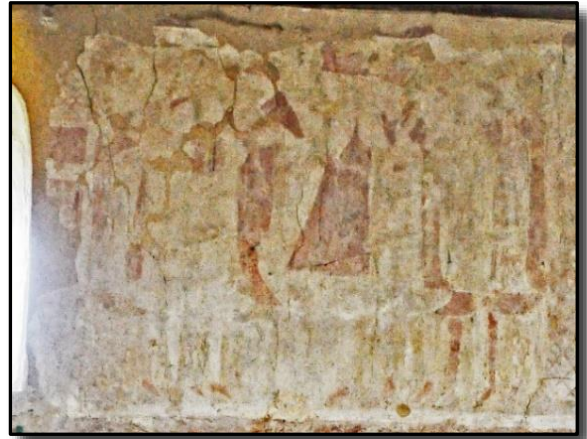
**Annunciation to the Shepherds:** On the left is the angel who is facing two shepherds (not easy to define) while in the lower left corner a third shepherd is kneeling and peering through to the previous scene in order to look at the Christ Child.



**6. Annunciation to Shepherds**

**Painting 7.**

**In ‘The Wall Paintings’ guide we find:** This enigmatic scene, not closely paralleled elsewhere, shows two facing groups of figures. That on the right includes two figures wearing prominent horned headdresses perhaps to be identified as Herod’s high priests.’



**7. Unidentified Subject**  
(according to “The Wall Paintings” guide).

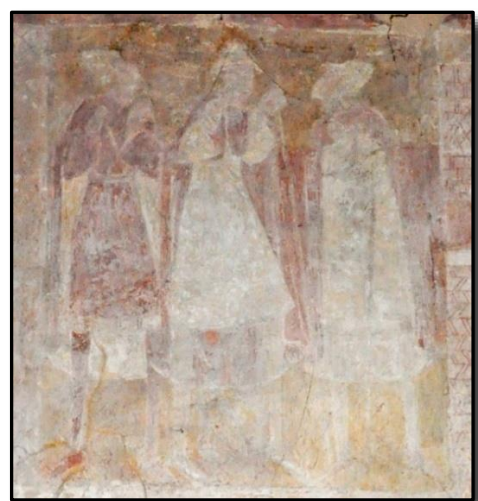
But Johnston takes a different view:

**p.90**

*“The Appearance of the Star” seems to have been the next subject, but it is almost entirely obliterated. Remains of figures gazing upwards are apparent, followed by a trellised tower.*

**Painting 8.**

**The Magi:** The kings are walking rather than riding and they wear hats rather than crowns.



**8. The Magi.**

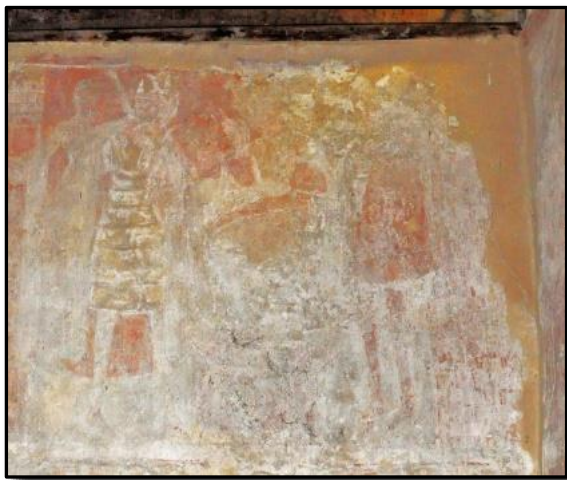


*“The Magi on their Journey” - Three figures on foot in tunics, travelling cloaks and long hose, with pointed shoes. They have apparently saucer-shaped, broad-brimmed hats, with a button on the crown, and carry staves or spears. Before them is another wonderful bit of tower architecture, intended for Jerusalem or Herod’s palace, in which trellis pattern alternates with coursed masonry, a horseshoe-arched arcade and work of herring-bone stoning.*

---

**Painting 9.**

**Sharon Cather of The Courtauld Institute writes in Hardham’s Wall Paintings guide: ‘Herod ordering the Massacre of the Children:** Herod, enthroned at the centre, is depicted with hand upraised instructing the helmeted soldiers standing before him. The cycle is interrupted at this point by the hell scenes on the west wall, and the Massacre itself is represented toward the east end of the north wall’ [Ed: Painting 14].



**9. Herod ordering the massacre of the children.**

... but Johnston disagrees once again:

**p.91.**

*The next and last subject on this south wall of the nave is again very indistinct. It is probably meant for “Herod conferring with the Chief Priests and Scribes.” A tower adjoining that last described borders the picture in which a seated figure on a dais can be made out together with an attendant behind and two figures before him. These have staves (?crooks) in their hands and mitre-like headdresses; the one in front having a white tunic striped horizontally with red, white hose and red shoes, while the other’s costume is mostly red. Another piece of masonry work – Herod’s palace – completes the scene.*

---



---

At this point we will, still moving to our right, skip past the Hell Scenes and concentrate our gaze on the upper tier of the paintings on the north wall.

---

**Painting 10.**

**The Adoration of the Magi:** The three kings, now crowned, face the Virgin and Christ Child on the right. One king is kneeling.



**10. The Adoration of the Magi.**

*Passing to the upper tier of paintings on the north wall, we find, beginning at the west end, “The Magi Presenting their Gifts.” The architectural setting is fairly distinct and very curious. Two circular arches flanked by turrets with a third turret between them are supported by columns having capitals painted to represent carving: the Romanesque character of these details is very marked.*

*Two of the Wise Kings stand under one of the arches (which is much wider than the other) while the third kneels presenting his gift before the young Child and his mother who are placed under the narrower arch. The Magi have crowns of an early type – a simple band of metal – short tunics and outer cloaks and long close-fitting hose, red in one case and white in the other. One holds a crescent-shaped object, intended for a casket of a ‘ship’ of frankincense.*

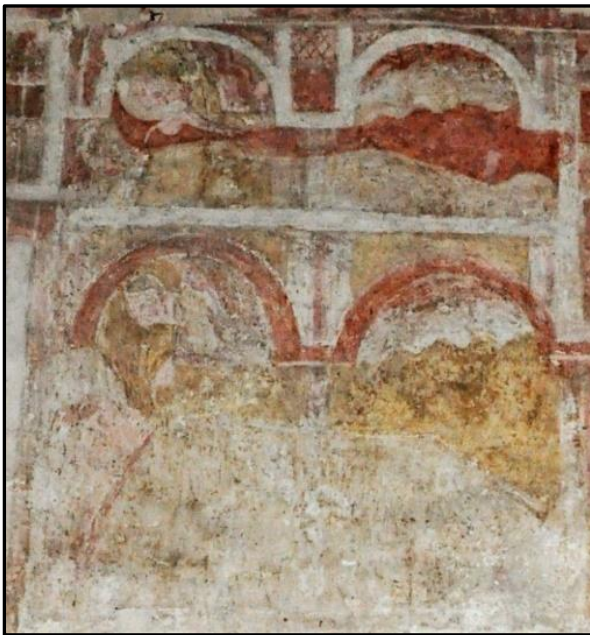
*The Blessed Virgin is seated upon a low cushioned stool and holds the Child upon her knee, the latter being depicted as about ‘two years old’ in correct accord with the sacred narrative. Before the feet of the mother and Child is a footstool. The Virgin has a sort of hood or veil and a crown of similar character to those in the Annunciation; both figures are nimbed.*



*Johnston's sketch of Painting 10.*

**Painting 11.**

**Dreams of Joseph and the Magi:** The upper section shows Joseph lying in bed receiving a message of warning from an angel flying in a cloud above. Below, the Magi are also abed and similarly dreaming.



*11. Dreams of Joseph and the Magi.*

**p.92.**

*The picture next in order is two-fold; in the upper compartment under two circular arches is "Joseph warned in a dream." Joseph, a bearded old man, is lying asleep, an angel bending over him with outstretched forefinger.*

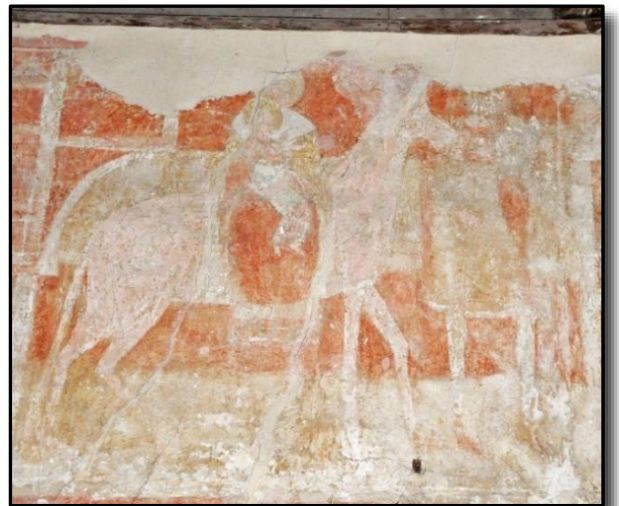


*Johnston's sketch of Painting 11.*

*In the lower story are represented "The Magi warned in a dream," in which three kings are under one coverlet, their heads, with skull caps, resting on large pillows while an angel bending over them is also emphasising his message with down-pointed finger.*

**Painting 12.**

**Flight into Egypt:** Joseph leads the Virgin and Child to Egypt.



*12. Flight into Egypt.*

*Mother and Child are seated upon the ass, led by Joseph who carries, I think, a lantern, but the details in this scene are very obscure.*



### Painting 13.

**Falling idols:** The miracle of the pagan idols falling from their niches when the Holy Family reaches the Egyptian town of Sotina.



**13. Falling idols.**

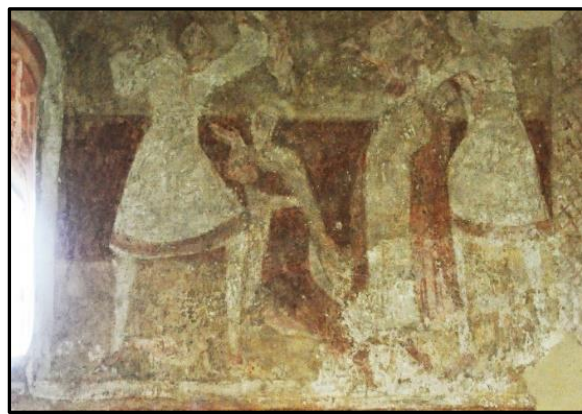
*There is a very singular adjunct to this scene . . . (which) does not occur in any other mural painting in England so far as I am aware, viz., the idols of Egypt falling from their niches at the approach of the Saviour of the world.*

*There are four niches, two upper and two lower; two nude idols are still erect in the former while in the latter one is seen falling headlong and the other tumbling on to its knees as though in involuntary worship.*

### Painting 14.

**Massacre of the Innocents:** The Courtauld writes: 'Two soldiers are shown butchering the children, the one on the left holding a naked child aloft by his leg while its mother kneels before him in supplication.'

(A further scene at the east end of the wall was destroyed by the insertion of a later window).'



**14. Massacre of the Innocents.**

**p.93.**

*Herod's soldiers in short full-skirted tunics and long hose (pink, with red shoes) are realistically represented slaughtering the children whose mothers are frantically striving to protect them. The Innocents are mostly naked. One of the mothers is being seized by the hair in her efforts to save her child.*

---

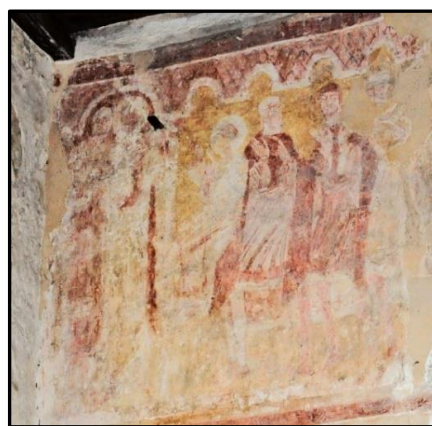
*The next subject, which may have been either "The Circumcision" or "Presentation of our Lord in the temple," has been destroyed by the large thirteenth century lancet . . .*

---

We now turn to our right and move to view the north side of the east wall of the nave:

### Painting 15.

**Christ amongst the Doctors:** Three doctors are seen on the right. In the centre the Christ Child turns to greet Mary and Joseph as they enter the temple from the left.



**15. Christ amongst the Doctors (aka The Finding in the Temple).**



(This) brings us to the east wall of the nave where we have on its northern half **“The Finding in the Temple.”** A range of pendant circular arches forms a canopy under which are the figures of Joseph and Mary on the left and the doctors with the Child on the right.



*Johnston’s sketch of Painting 15.*

This completes the 13 scenarios showing the infancy of Christ. Powerful stuff 800 years ago (or even yesterday) if you are a teenager who cannot read and a village elder is taking you round the church, showing you the pictures and explaining the story to you.

We now start our second circuit of the nave, this time looking at the *lower* tier of pictures. We begin on the south side of the east wall.

### **Painting 16.**

Christ is shown standing in the river Jordan while John the Baptist points at an open book which he is holding beside Christ’s head.



**16. Baptism of Christ.**

### **p.96.**

... the picture on the southern side is much more perfect and represents **“The Baptism of our Lord.”** In this the Saviour is buried up to the armpits in the waters of the Jordan, which are ‘standing upright as an heap’ – a common treatment in connection with this subject, derived from an ancient legend. John is shown baptising our Lord, who has the cruciform nimbus and the Dove is descending upon Him.

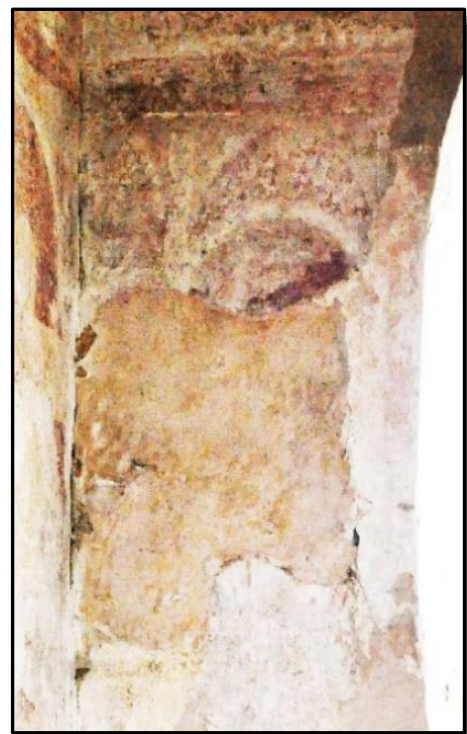
---

We turn to our right and follow the lower tier on the nave’s south wall.

---

### **Picture 17.**

**Parable of the rich man and Lazarus.** In this parable the social order is reversed by the poor man being given a name (Lazarus) but the rich man being left anonymous. This suggests that the parable might have been based on a true story. Johnston refers to him as ‘Dives,’ This is not a name as such but a Latin epithet for ‘Rich man.’



**17. The rich man’s feast.**

A series of **“Moralities,”** founded upon the parable of Dives and Lazarus, seems to have occupied the lower tier of the south wall of the nave. A rich piece of domed roofing with scale-pattern tiles over a circular arch, formed part of the canopy to the first scene which no doubt was that of **“The Rich Man Feasting,”** the while Lazarus is ‘laid at his gate full of sores.’ We may be sure that the artist did not omit the incident of the dogs performing their merciful

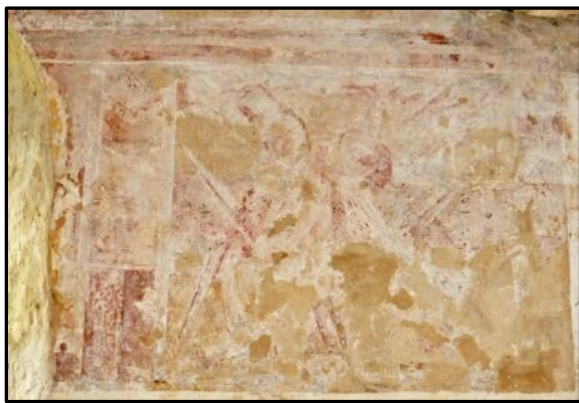
office. But the insertion at the eastern end of this wall of a large fifteenth century window has robbed us of the whole of this picture except part of the setting.



*A similar image to that we would have expected to see in 17. This one is taken from a prefatory leaf of the mid C12 Eadwine Psalter (see p. 25).*

### Painting 18.

The tiny naked soul of Lazarus, wrapped in a cloth, is carried up to heaven by four angels.



18. *The Ascension of Lazarus.*

p.97.

*The next scene, which, fortunately, is fairly perfect represents “Lazarus carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” The soul of the beggar is painted as a small nude sexless figure – borne in a napkin by four large angels, two above and two below. The outstretched wings of the upper pair pass beyond the limits of the picture, through a border of boldly drawn conventional clouds. On the left is a domed tower, perhaps belonging to the preceding subject, the upper part of which is shown in a curious sort of perspective, while a lower stage has a pediment and horseshoe arcading similar to that in The Annunciation. A pair of smaller arcaded turrets with high-pitched*

*tilled roofs flank the picture on the right side; these may perhaps represent paradise.*



*From the Eadwine Psalter.*

I am not sure that the Psalter picture above bears much relation to Painting 18 other than it being a portrayal of the same scene. In this picture however, as in Johnston’s description, Lazarus’ soul is being carried in a napkin and Johnston writes: *Conventional treatment of this subject in medieval times: A soul, like all precious or sacred things, is always shown as held in a napkin. Compare this with the gift which the kneeling figure in ‘The Adoration of the Magi’ is presenting to the Holy Child. It is held in a napkin.*

### Painting 19.

Towards the top of this picture (of which little is discernible) one can just make out the massive head of a seated Abraham and, perhaps, the cloth that lies before him holding Lazarus’ soul.

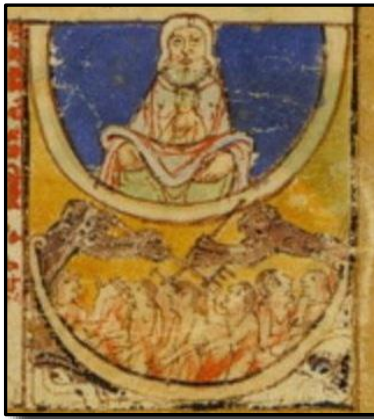
Johnston’s narrative regarding the previous Painting 18 should perhaps have simply said *“Lazarus carried by the angels,”* since *“The soul of Lazarus on Abraham’s bosom”* is now generally regarded as a suitable subject title for Painting 19.



19. *Lazarus’ soul lying on Abraham’s bosom.*



What Johnston *does* say about this area is: *“Lazarus comforted”* was probably the scene between this and the now blocked south doorway, which latter, being an original feature, would most naturally form that ‘great gulf fixed’ of which the parable speaks.



*An image from the Eadwine Psalter illustrating the same theme as Painting 19.*

### Painting 20.

In this picture the rich man lies in bed in the foreground, his head on a cushion. His newly widowed wife, wearing a white headdress, stands at the head of the bed and a male figure in mourning is also shown. Above the bed a devil carries off the rich man’s soul to hell.



*20. The death of the rich man.*

*“Dives in Hell” . . .and this would be in appropriate conjunction with the demonology of the west wall; but the plaster of all this portion has been so injured by one cause or another that nothing but traces of one or two figures, diaper work and arch canopies remain.*

As a result of this damage, Johnston misinterprets what was visible to him of this painting.



*The equivalent of painting 20 as seen in the Eadwine Psalter.*

This completes the *Moralities* and we turn to our right to view the pictures on the west wall which, perhaps “pour encourager les autres,” are scenes from Hell.

### Paintings 21 & 22.

**p.85.**

*Let us now examine the paintings in detail, beginning with the west wall of the nave.*



*21. Scenes of Hell - south side of west wall.*

*This is the worst preserved of all; only the upper tier remains [Ed: this was before later restoration], and this has been half destroyed by the later inserted window. The subject appears to be **‘The Torments of Hell.’***





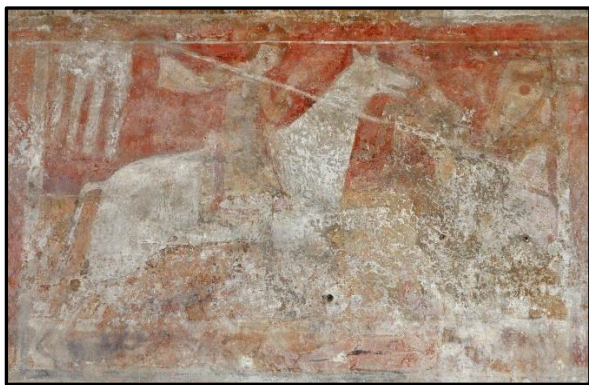
22. *Scenes of Hell – north side of west wall.*

*Gigantic figures of demons in contorted attitudes are hacking the limbs of lost souls, the gashes and blood being realistically depicted. The demons are very grotesque.*

At this point we find ourselves in the nave's northwest corner and we turn to our right and concentrate our gaze on the paintings on the lower tier of the north wall. These constitute **the St George series**.

### Painting 23.

Here we see St George on a white steed – his lance piercing the body of an infidel. At the top right one can just make out a kite-shaped shield with a round boss – being held by another infidel. Lying naked beneath the horse (very difficult to see) is another injured alien. This celebrates St George at the Battle of Antioch (1098) during the First Crusade when he and two other saints on white horses are said to have come to the relief of the crusaders.



23. *St George in battle.*

p.98.

*We may congratulate ourselves in possessing in these mutilated fragments the earliest existing representation in this country of the legendary history of St George of Cappadocia, our own national patron saint.*

*Among this series the combat with the dragon does not appear to have been painted unless, possibly, it occupied the space now taken up by the Early English window at the eastern end, or the lower tier of the west wall. “St George at the Battle of Antioch” is the first of this lower tier series on the north nave wall. The saint is shown as nimbed and of a youthful aspect, clad in a pink tunic with a dalmatic-shaped upper vest of similar colour having broad-mouthed sleeves and open at the neck. He has a skull cap, perhaps meant for a metal head-covering and is mounted upon a large white horse with a curiously small head which he is reining in with his left hand while, with the right, he has impaled a paynim knight by the means of a long lance. There are traces of a group of armed figures at which the saint is riding, in attitudes indicative of fear and discomfiture, but unfortunately this part of the painting is very obscure. The lance bears at the reverse end a white four-tailed pennon, similar to those in the Bayeux Tapestry and in early twelfth century seals.*



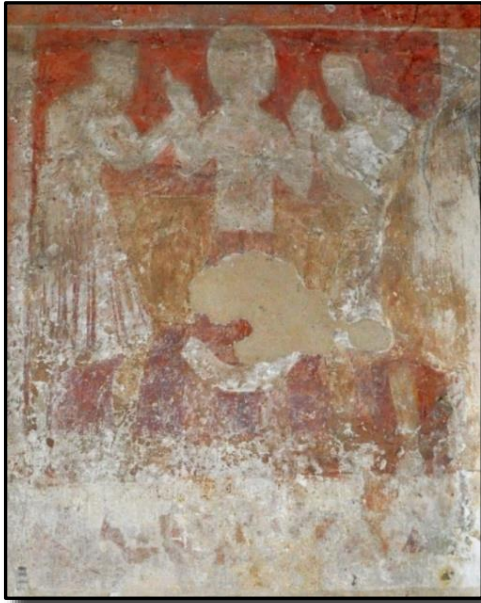
*Johnston's sketch of Painting 23.*

[Ed: Later, on p.102, Johnston writes: *Now the date of the siege of Antioch at which St George is supposed to have miraculously intervened in aid of Godfrey de Bouillon and the Christians (1098), makes it certain that the representation of the incident at Hardham cannot be older than the close of the eleventh century, while in all probability a little time would elapse to allow of the miracle becoming sufficiently notorious to be painted on a church wall*].

[Ed: . . . this particular church wall being dated c.1068 and the painting itself to c.1110 making the battle almost current news!].

**Painting 24.**

St George, perfectly decent, although wearing nothing but his halo, is held by two torturers.



*24. St George with his torturers.*

p.101.

*“... St George before Datian.” This has been so mutilated by the modern doorway that it is possible only to guess at its meaning. It is probable that we have here an incident in the martyrdom of St George – his being seized and carried before Datian the pro-consul for tearing down the Emperor Diocletian’s proclamation against the Christians. The nimbed figure, throwing up his hands, is being held by two guards who are grasping his wrists.*

[Ed: The modern concept refutes the idea that Datian features on this picture and suggests that it should simply be entitled “*St George held by two torturers.*”]



*Johnston’s sketch of Painting 24.*

**Painting 25.**

St George, tied to a wooden frame, waits the horrors of a hunch-backed torturer seen on the lower right.



*25. Torture of St George*

Johnston does not mention this painting which suggests that it was then still hidden from view.

**Painting 26.**

*“St George on the Wheel.”* A half-naked St George strapped to a wheel. To the right of the picture there is some damage where a new window has been inserted and this has resulted in the complete loss of one scene.



*26. St George on the wheel.*



Towards the eastern end of the north wall are the faint traces of a wheel with a nimbed figure bound upon it. The legend relates how that, after enduring other cruel tortures for eight days and having drunk unharmed of a poisoned cup, the saint was, at the decree of Datian, "bound upon a wheel full of sharp blades. But the wheel was broken by two angels who descended from heaven."

[Ed: This has clearly been restored since Johnston's day since the image is now quite clear].

---

We turn to our right and view the remains of the last painting in this series (on the east wall).

---

### Painting 27.

Difficult to interpret, this picture shows a figure leaning over a tomb and is thought to represent the death of St George.



27. *Burial of St George?*

#### p.96

Johnston had different ideas about this picture however.

He wrote: *Coming now to the subjects in the lower tier of the Nave, there are, right and left of the chancel arch, events from the life of our Lord. That on the left we can only guess at, owing to its imperfect condition; it was probably "The Circumcision of Christ."*

One cannot but agree with Johnston that to stand in front of the chancel arch and see at the top left, *Christ amongst the Doctors*; at top right *The Annunciation* and *The Visitation*; and at the lower right *The Baptism of Christ* – it would be somewhat incongruous to turn to the lower left and see *The Death of St George*. It seems likely that all the paintings on the east wall would have followed the same theme and that Johnston's concept of *The Circumcision of Christ* occupying this position, carries more weight.

#### p.102

*At the time when these paintings were executed England was still under the protection of Edward the Confessor as patron saint but St George seems gradually to have ousted her older patron. His miraculous appearance at the Battle of Antioch in 1098 and the vision of the martyr given to Richard I at Acre nearly a century later, contributing to his greater popularity. It was not, however, till 1348, when Edward III instituted the Order of the Garter in honour of God, our Lady and St George, that the latter was generally recognised as our national patron saint.*

---

## The Chancel

We can now move into the chancel. The photographs in this section are cropped with the intention of helping the reader to identify which part of the chancel wall they are viewing. Many of these paintings are difficult to interpret and although I describe what the experts tell us the picture illustrates, it will often be impossible to identify much in the photographs although it will be a little easier when you are viewing the painting itself.

We start by standing with our backs to the altar and looking towards the top left where we see Hardham's iconic stylised picture of Adam and Eve. This is the first of the *Garden of Eden* series.

---

### Painting 28.

**"The Fall."** Here Eve takes the apple from the winged serpent in the tree on the right.



28. *The Fall.*



**p.102.**

*On the southern half of the Chancel west wall . . . is the well-preserved picture of "The Fall," treated in imitation of a piece of tapestry or a painted cloth, such as were commonly imported (or home-made) and hung upon the walls of houses throughout the middle ages.*

*This little piece of innocent trickery is very naively effected, the cloth being painted with loops in the middle and at the top corners, as if hanging to a rod, which in its turn is secured by hooks to the wall. The details and colouring of this painting are very perfectly preserved and deserving of some attention.*

*The nude figures of Adam and Eve – their legs very much too long in proportion to their bodies – are painted in a warm flesh tint, with highlights of white and streaks of pink to indicate the muscles etc, the outlines and features being drawn in dark red . . . The drawing of the figures, although archaic and conventional, is free and vigorous compared with most contemporary native productions in carving or illuminations. Indeed, the whole treatment betrays foreign influence; and the artist, or guild of painters, was possessed of no mean skill for the time when these paintings were created.*

*Our first parents stand against a pale blue background which shades off into white, and Eve is shown in the act of receiving the forbidden fruit, which the serpent appears to have plucked and is dropping out of his jaws into her outstretched left hand. With the long and curling forefinger of her right she is pointing over her shoulder at him. Adam seems to be indicating with his right hand a piece of the fruit in his left; and there is an appropriately conspirator-like air about the pair. The background of the serpent is a strong tomato-red (the only instance of this particular colour in the church) and upon this is painted the Tree of Knowledge, in the branches of which the serpent is poised. The upper part of his body is more like that of a dragon, being furnished with paws and large wings; and while this rests in the fork of the tree, his serpentine hinder part is coiled in knots round the stem. The head presents a mixture of dog and serpent, with a peculiarly evil look about the pink eye . . .*

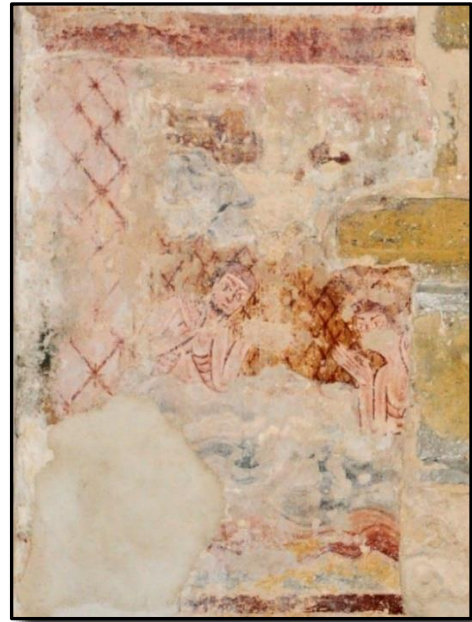
*From the branches of the tree depend waving tendrils on which are emerald green fruits similar to the one that Eve holds in her hand; while along the right-hand border of the picture are more branches with curious white flowers growing on them.*

[Ed: Johnston continues by associating these flowers with others painted in the church of St Savin, Vienne in southwest France and suggests that both emanated from the same school of French painters].

---

**Painting 29.**

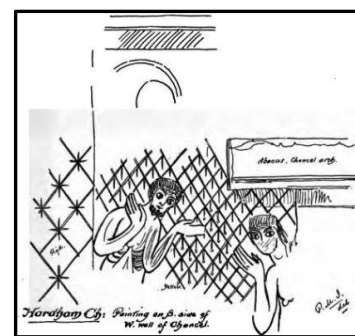
Below 28 is "Adam and Eve after the Fall." A picture showing the lamentations of Adam and Eve, the lower halves of their bodies here hidden – perhaps by water.



**29. After the Fall.**

**p.106.**

*On the left is a strip of pink with a large diaper pattern, and between this and the pier of the chancel arch, against a yellow background with a smaller diaper, are painted the guilty pair, throwing up their hands to express shame and confusion of face. The greater part of Eve's figure is destroyed but Adam is in better preservation.*



**Johnston's sketch of Painting 29.**

---

### Painting 30.

On the lower tier on the north side of the arch we find “**Hiding their Nakedness.**” Hardham’s Wall Painting Guide remarks on the fact that the two figures sit back to back: ‘Only one parallel seems to exist for this back-to-back representation – on a Romanesque sculptured portal at Andlau (Alsace).’



**30. Hiding their nakedness.**

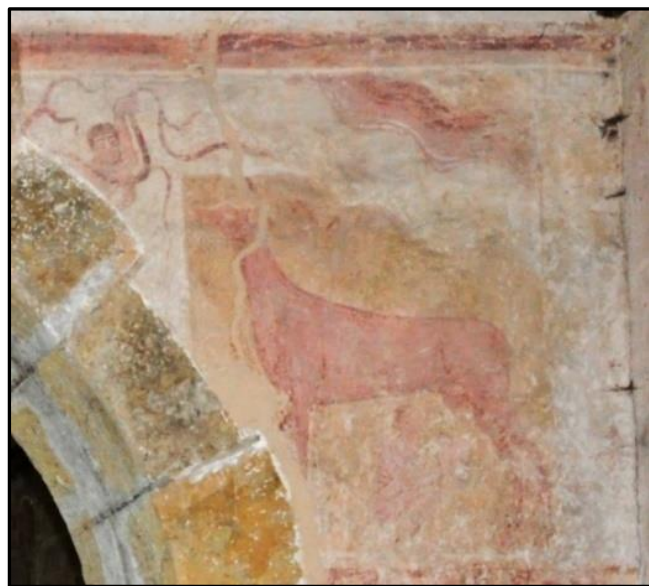
**p.107.**

*It was found inadvisable to remove much of the whitewash that still covers this and others of the paintings, owing to the tenacity with which it adheres to the glazed face of the old colour and this necessarily increases the difficulty of deciphering some of the subjects. In this way the painting (**Painting 30**) is still hidden; probably it belonged to the series of “The Fall.”*

[Ed: Since these comments were written, further restoration work has been done and the obscuring whitewash has been removed thus revealing what we see today. Johnston’s surmise about the identity of the series has proved to be correct].

### Painting 31.

Above this are the “**Labours of Adam and Eve.**” Adam is seen in the top left corner of the picture while Eve is occupied milking a large cow.



**31. Labours of Adam and Eve.**

**p.107.**

*Adam appears, against the same diapered background, wrestling with the gnarled and thorny branch of a tree . . . while Eve is in the act of milking a very antediluvian-looking cow.*

---

Turning again to our right we are looking at the north wall of the chancel and our interest is in the lower tier of pictures of which number 32 marks the beginning of the *Passion and Resurrection series.*

---

### Painting 32.

“**The Last Supper.**” Christ and the apostles are seated behind the table upon which various dishes can be seen. The head of St John the Evangelist rests on Christ’s breast, and the figure of Judas is isolated at the front of the table.



**32. The Last Supper.**



**p.110**

The subjects represented in the lower tier of the chancel walls are, as might be expected, very fragmentary. They appear, however, to have consisted of scenes in connection with the death and resurrection of our Lord.

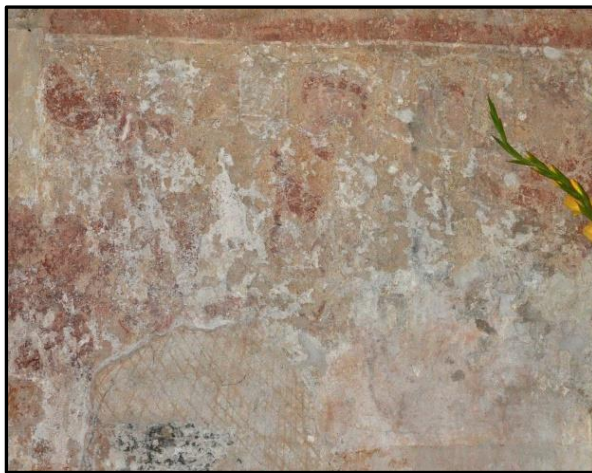
Beginning with the north wall we have, at its western end, **“The Last Supper.”** Our Lord can be distinguished by the cruciform nimbus; St John leans upon His bosom while St Peter with tonsured crown and stubby beard is seated on His right . . . A golden chalice, of the early squat type found in eleventh and twelfth century representations, and a large wafer marked with a cross, appear on the table and beyond these eastwards are some pointed oval-shaped objects that may represent dishes or fish.



*As portrayed in the Eadwine Psalter.*

**Painting 33.**

**“Betrayal.”** Hardham’s Wall Painting guide writes: ‘In this much damaged scene, the head of Christ and Judas can be seen in the centre and to the left a white lantern, held up by one of the soldiers.’



**33. Betrayal.**

**p.111.**

There is another subject – perhaps **“The Betrayal”** between this and the east wall, but too indistinct to make out the details.



*The same scene in the Eadwine Psalter.*

---

Turn to your right to view paintings 34 and 35 on the east wall.

---

**Painting 34.**

**“The Scourging of Christ.”** The Courtauld writes: ‘This scene is likewise very fragmentary, but Christ can be seen looking from behind the white column to which he is bound, while to the left is the grotesque profile head of one of his scourgers.’

This scene, and 33, seem to have been particularly close to representations of the same subjects in the Lewes Group paintings at Westmeston (now destroyed) and may be by the same hand.’



**34. The Scourging of Christ.**

Johnston makes no comment on this painting.



*The scene in the Eadwine Psalter.*

---

**Painting 35.**

The Courtauld writes: 'Perhaps intended to represent the entombment, this depiction of the Sepulchre includes a sarcophagus at the foot of the scene.'



**35. Christ's tomb.**

Again, Johnston makes no comment here.

---

Turn to your right again now to look at the paintings on the lower tier of the south wall.

---

**Painting 36.**

**Three Marys at Christ's Tomb:** The Courtauld comments: 'The Angel can be seen at the left, seated on the tomb, and facing the three women. The heads of the sleeping soldiers appear at the bottom right of the scene.'



**36. Three Marys at Christ's tomb.**

*In the lower tier of the eastern part of the south wall are the remains of an angel beckoning to three women. Probably this is the first of two paintings on this wall representing "The Entombment" and "The Resurrection." The angel is nimbed and appears to be seated upon the open tomb with outspread wings. The women are doubtless the three Marys bringing spices to the sepulchre. It is singular and perhaps significant that we have no representation of the Crucifixion and Ascension among this series of paintings.*

---

**Painting 37.**

**The Washing of the Feet:** The Courtauld writes: 'The figure of Christ was destroyed when the later window was cut in the centre of the wall. To the right of the window where he would have been, all twelve apostles are seated in a row, gesturing animatedly, with the tonsured figure of St Peter at the front.'



**37. The Washing of the feet.**



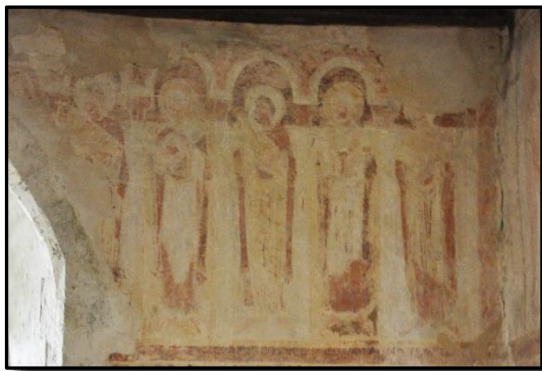


Johnston makes no comment . . .

. . . *but the equivalent view in the Eadwine Psalter shows a great similarity.*

### Painting 38.

Casting our eyes above the last picture and onto the upper tier, we find five of the twelve apostles standing under a colonnade of semi-circular archways. The painting of the sixth has been devoured by the insertion of the C13 window.



**38. The Apostles' adoration of Christ II.**

. . . little of the remaining pictures in the chancel can be made out . . . Great havoc also has been wrought by the inserted windows and time, the weather and injudicious scraping at the first discovery of the paintings have aided in obliterating much of the work "**The Worship in Heaven.**" Rows of saints under canopies can be distinguished – perhaps twelve of the Prophets of the Old Dispensation on the western half of the north wall (upper tier) [Ed: **Painting 44**]. And the Apostles of the New Testament in the corresponding position on the south wall [Ed: **Painting 38**].

At this point sequencing defeats us, because, as we have read above, this picture's partner (**Painting 44** which shows the other six apostles) is on the opposite (north) wall in the mirror-equivalent position. We shall come to it shortly. We now

reverse our rotation and, rather than moving to the right, we retrace our steps to the left but this time following the *upper* tier of paintings which consist of four illustrations of the twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse.

### Painting 39.

These seven are seated and looking to their right. Once again two elders are missing, having been displaced from their position by the insertion of the window.



**39. Elders of the Apocalypse I.**

### p.107.

*In the upper tier on both sides and continued along the east wall of the chancel are painted the twenty-four Elders . . .*

*They are shown as on thrones against a dark red background and with a pink pavement below. They are mostly 'clothed in white raiment' with red shoes but some for relief have a red mantle and all have on their heads crowns of gold – of the curious square type found in some early paintings and illuminations.*

*This detail I take to be one of the evidences of the exceptionally early date of these Hardham paintings. At first sight it might be taken for a low mitre . . .*

*The Elders are represented as 'falling down before the throne' all in the same stiff attitude and each holds in his right hand a vial and in his left a three-stringed gittern or guitar instead of the harp familiar to us in the Authorised Version.*

### Painting 40.

As we reach the abutting wall and turn to face east, we find three more elders. These have similarly turned to face to their right.



40. *Elders of the Apocalypse II.*



*Johnston's sketch of Painting 40.*

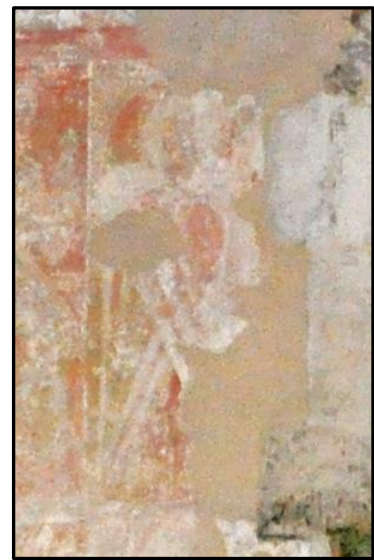
**Painting 41.**

Moving continually to our left we reach the east window inserted in the thirteenth century. This, sadly, has obliterated the picture which was here. Sharon Cather believed that it portrayed, "*Majesty flanked by Seraphim*" and, although Majesty itself has been destroyed, flanking 'seraphs' (as she labels them) survive on either side of the later window. Johnston refers to them as the 'Four Living Creatures.'



41 south. *'Seraphim' from Christ in Glory.*

On the southern side of the window . . . and then moving to our left . . .



41 north. *'Seraphim' from Christ in Glory.*

. . . on the northern side of the window.

**p.109.**

**Johnston writes:**

*And flanking the original narrow window of this wall (destroyed by the present larger one inserted in the thirteenth century) were the **Four Living Creatures**, of which parts of two only remain . . . That on the right of the window seems to have been the one with the 'face as a man,' and its companion on the left 'the second, like a calf,' leaving the inner places round the throne to the lion-like creature and 'the flying eagle.' The 'six wings about him' and the halo are visible in the right hand creature . . . (Revelations Ch.iv).*





41. The C13 window replacing the painting.



The same (restored) scene painted by the same Lewes group of painters at nearby St Michael's church Plumpton.

There is some conflict here about whether the creatures depicted in this scene were Seraphim, Cherubim or Four Living Creatures.

To clarify the matter:

**Seraphim** are distinguished by having six wings. They are only mentioned in Chapter 6 of the book of Isiah which starts with the memorable words 'In the year that King Uzziah died.' Isiah tells us that they covered their faces with two wings, covered their feet with another two wings and used the remaining pair for flying.

**Cherubim** have four faces and four wings.

**The Four Living Creatures** (according to Ezekiel) also had four wings but they had four faces too. The faces are of four distinct animals and represent four divine qualities:

1. The Human being – intelligence; (Matthew)
2. The Lion – sovereignty; (Mark)
3. The Ox – diligence; (Calf – Luke)
4. The Eagle – agility. (John).

#### Painting 42.

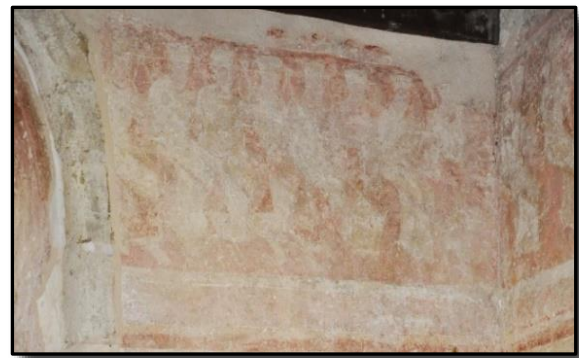
Moving further to our left we find three more Elders of the Apocalypse. These, in respectful propriety, have their faces turned to their left to look towards Christ in Majesty and it is now clear that the attitudinal aspects of *all* the elders would have drawn ours and all other observer's, sight to that most important central view of *Christ in Majesty* above the window . . . it is such a pity that this focal point is missing.



Fig. 42. Elders of the Apocalypse III.

#### Painting 43.

We also turn to our left and, on the north wall, find the remains of nine more elders stretching towards the window.



43. Elders of the Apocalypse IV.

#### Painting 44.

The final picture (the partner of picture 38 seen earlier) contains the remaining six of the twelve apostles standing beneath round-headed arches and looking towards the Majesty.



44. The Adoration of the Apostles.

p.109.

*Rows of saints under canopies can be distinguished – perhaps twelve of the Prophets of the Old Dispensation on the western half of the north wall (upper tier) and the apostles of the New Testament in the corresponding position on the south wall (Painting 38).*

[Ed: Further work has shown that Johnstone had the right idea about the paintings matching but *both* paintings have now been shown to be of the ‘Apostles of the New Testament’ and there were fewer on the north wall than he thought].

---

## The Eadwine Psalter

The magnificent Eadwine Psalter was produced at Christ Church Canterbury in c. 1150. The wall paintings in the church at Hardham were painted in about 1110 so one can therefore regard them as contemporaries.

The psalter was written by the scribe Eadwine - probably for the use of one of Christ Church’s senior members. It contains the Book of Psalms in Latin, Old English and Anglo-Norman.

It is not the psalms, however, but its prefatory leaves which are of interest to us here since, as you will by now have discovered, many of the illustrations compare well with Hardham’s wall paintings and can therefore help us to glean an idea of the nature of missing details.

In conclusion, I must acknowledge the learned work carried out by the late Sharon Cather and David Park under the auspices of the Courtauld Institute. I have often, in the interests of brevity, credited Sharon as the author but in truth she and David worked together as a team and David Park deserves his share of the credit. This guide in no way replaces their publication of ‘*The Wall Paintings,*’ which I have found enormously helpful.

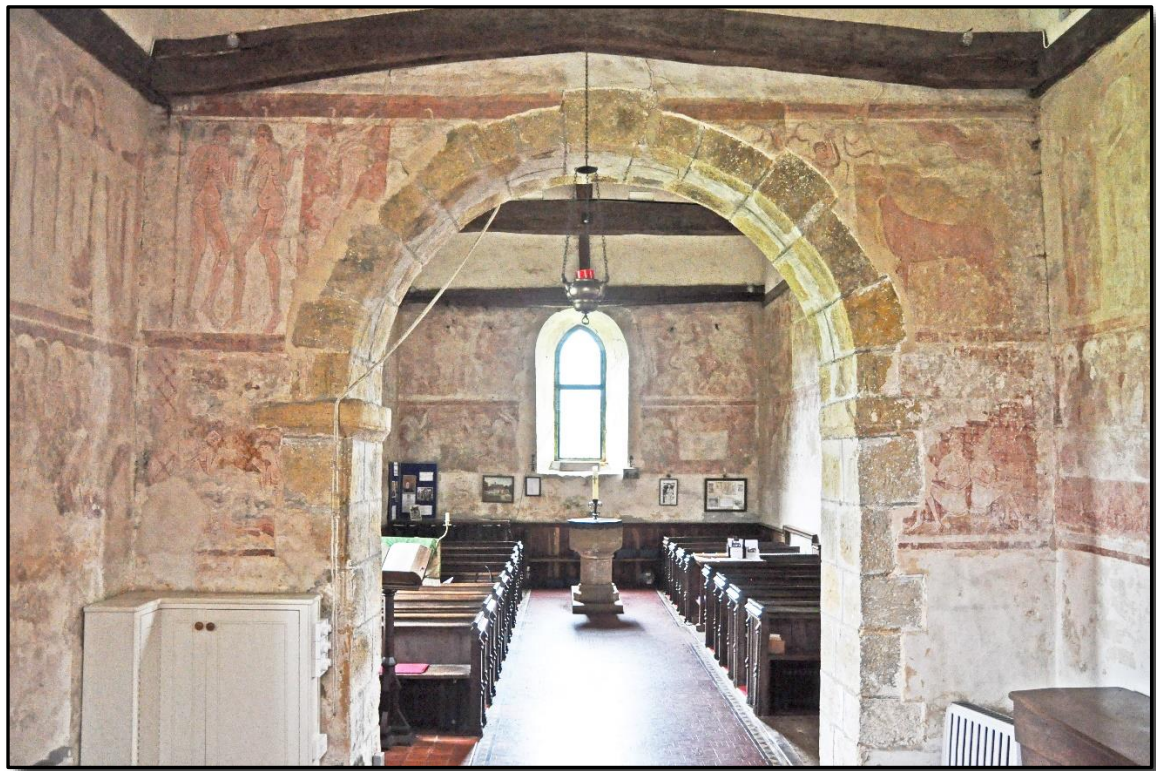
This work has not been written for financial gain but as a tribute to the lovely church of St Botolph’s, Hardham, West Sussex, in the hope that it will encourage others to come and visit this important piece of our National heritage.

**Copyright, Denis Pepper, Administrator of the Society of St Botolph, 17 Cliffe House, Folkestone, CT20 2TY.**

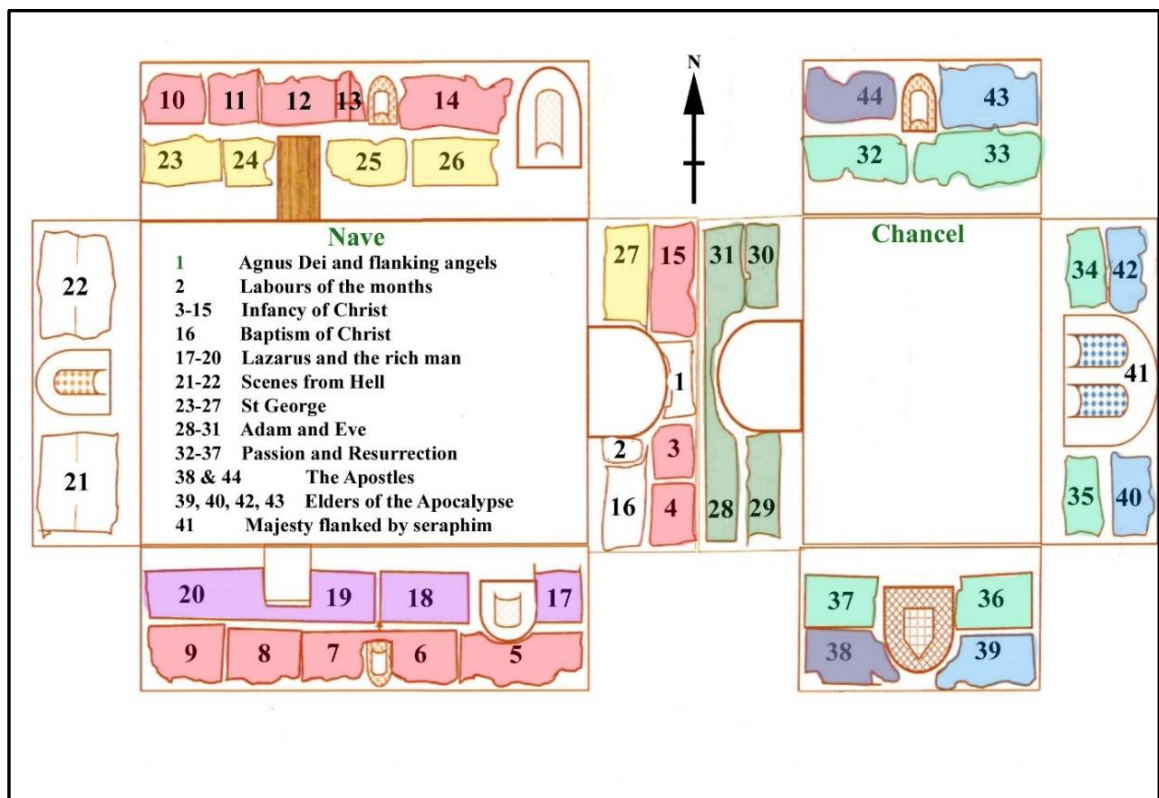


*A leaf from the Eadwine Psalter.*





*A view from the sanctuary.*



*Key to the Locations of the wall paintings at Hardham*

**Acknowledgement:** This ground-plan has been taken from the church's guidebook "The Wall Paintings" by the late Sharon Cather and David Park of the Conservation of Wall Painting Department, Courtauld Institute of Art, 41 Gordon Square, London. My contribution has been to alter the numbering sequence and colour-code the pictorial representations.