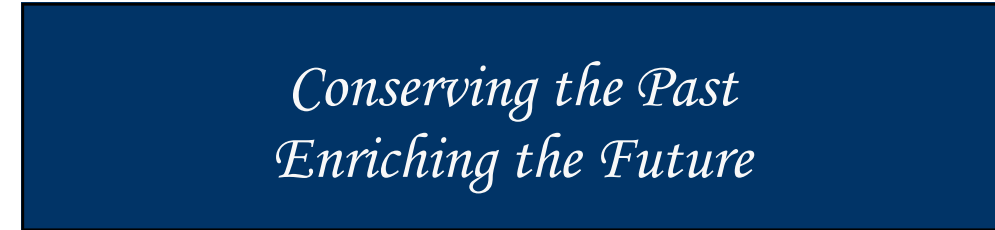


## OUR YEAR IN CONSERVATION



- Durham Cathedral**  
(Condition Survey of Medieval Wall Paintings)
- Lizard Lighthouse**  
(Architectural Paint Research)
- Tremadog**  
(Condition Survey of Coade Stone Gateway)
- Bitteswell**  
(Conservation of Nave Ceiling)
- Norwich Roman Catholic Cathedral**  
(Cleaning & Consolidation of Stone—East End Undercroft)
- Royal Society of Arts**  
(Reinstatement of decoration to Adam Ceilings)
- Market Drayton Roman Catholic Church**  
(Restoration of 19<sup>th</sup>C Painted Interior)



**This is a small sample of the conservation projects with which we have been involved during 2003**

- Keble College, Oxford**  
(Conservation Cleaning of Great Hall Ceiling)
- Villa Saraceno, Venice**  
(Condition Reports, Environmental Monitoring & Conservation Repairs)
- Cardiff Castle**  
(Research, Consultancy and Analysis of the Decorative Interiors)

- Grey Friars Tower, Kings Lynn**  
(Consultancy & Specifications)
- Moggerhanger House**  
(Extensive Conservation & Restoration Works)
- Retford Town Hall**  
(Conservation of Collection of 19<sup>th</sup>C Easel Paintings)
- Temple Newsam House, Leeds**  
(Stone Conservation)
- St George's German Lutheran Church**  
(Repairs & Restoration to Canvas Painting)
- Royston Cave**  
(Environmental Monitoring of Knights Templar Meeting Place)
- Lichfield**  
(Conservation of late 19<sup>th</sup>C painted Chancel Ceiling & Reredos)

Don't forget that you can access and download all previous copies of the Hirst Conservation Newsletter from our web site, in Adobe Acrobat format. Visit our site at [www.hirst-conservation.com](http://www.hirst-conservation.com) for more details, where you can also download the free version of Adobe Reader

### WHERE IS THIS ?



Think you know your geography, can readily identify the architectural treasures that form our heritage, then where is this?

Answers can be emailed or posted to the address shown on the first page of this Newsletter. The first correct answer picked at random on the 5th January 2004 will win a bottle of Champagne. Good luck. Full answer in next edition.

Sorry, Hirst Conservation staff and their families excluded.

### VILLA SARACENO, ITALY

*Located in Finale di Agugliaro, near Venice Italy, Villa Saraceno was designed by Andrea Palladio between 1548 and 1549. Palladio was requested by Bagio Saraceno, to re-design his existing agricultural farm which had long been in his family.*

Villa Saraceno is today owned by the Landmark Trust and is available for holidays throughout the year.

Our remit at the Villa was to undertake a thorough examination of its condition and prepare a detailed conservation report, incorporating a plan for the future conservation and restoration of this magnificent villa.

As one immediate task was to carry out repairs to the external render, a detailed analysis of the existing material was undertaken at our laboratories at Laughton prior to our visit.

Using hydraulic lime, a mix appropriate to the existing render identified in analysis was made, and applied to those areas found to be in critical need of repair.

The interior of this idyllic villa was also to be part of the conservation ethic currently being developed to ensure the long term integrity of the building.

Again it was found that a complex microclimate was having its own impact on the interior of the Villa, resulting from the widely ranging temperatures in this region (30°C to -15°C). We have now installed an electronic environmental monitoring system to ascertain the climatic changes taking place within the structure. The results that we

gather from this process will help us better identify an appropriate conservation programme that will be tailored to suit the specific requirements for the Villa.

We have also undertaken an in-depth condition survey of the frescos that adorn the interior of the Villa. This report will include a wide range of conservation recommendations designed to stabilise and secure the frescos for the enjoyment of future visitors.

This project has given us the opportunity to address all aspects of the building, from the structure itself to the decoration to be found in the interior. Villa Saraceno is a remarkable building with a fascinating history, and you can be sure there will be no shortage of volunteers when we return.

If you are thinking of a holiday in the Veneto, then this is the place to go.



IN THIS ISSUE:
Villa Saraceno
Keble College, Oxford
Stowe School
Trinity Bridge, Crowland
Our Year in Conservation
Photo Competition



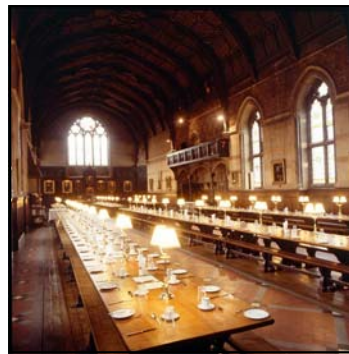
Example of Fresco from the Loggia



## KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD

Senior On-Site Conservator—Alison Thornton, MSc BA  
Architect—Inskip & Jenkins

**Founded by John Keble in 1870, Keble is one of the few Victorian built Colleges using polychromatic brick (red and bright). Keble College has a student population of approximately 630. Twice winners of the popular quiz programme, University Challenge, it features amongst its Alumni, the cricketer Imran Khan, and the Rev Chad Varah, founder of the Samaritans.**



**W**e find ourselves in this famous college designed by Butterfield, undertaking an extensive conservation cleaning programme to the Great Hall painted ceiling.

The Hall was opened in 1878, and is the longest in Oxford, capable of seating 300 diners.

Unlike many of the Colleges in Oxford, Keble still retains the tradition of formal Hall, with members wearing gowns and Fellows dining at High Table.

Inevitably, the Hall has suffered from its 120 years of continuous use, particularly from the gas lighting installed and used in its early years. The photograph which shows the results of cleaning trials, gives a clear indication of the build up of surface dirt. The trial panels reflect the level of cleaning that will be required across the whole ceiling.

Prior to the commencement of the project, we had been heavily involved in the consultation processes to determine the final conservation solutions for the task of cleaning and restoring this huge ceiling.

Highly decorative, the ceiling covers an area of in excess of approximately 700 sq mtrs. The ceiling is accessed by a large enclosed

*“The Hall was opened in 1878, and is the longest in Oxford, capable of seating 300 diners”*

birdcage scaffolding. With a minimum of twelve conservators making up the team, the works are expected to take 4 months to complete.

Following the trials, it was determined that a poultice cleaning method should be adopted. This relatively “clean” methodology together with effective scaffold and extension equipment, will ensure that the Hall continues to function and serve the needs of the student population.

The poultice will be applied to the ceiling panels to remove the dirt and reveal the vibrancy of the decoration as it would have appeared to the early students when they entered the Hall.

Following completion of the cleaning, the panels will be varnished.

It will be a fascinating and exciting experience to watch the beauty of this ceiling unfold as cleaning progresses, and the conservators make their slow but steady progress through the Hall.



Results of the cleaning trials

## STOWE SCHOOL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Architect—Jane Kennedy, Purcell Miller Tritton  
Architect—Ed Morton, Ed Morton Partnership

**I**t is difficult to explain the beauty and magnificence of the ceiling at Stowe School—you just have to see it for yourself to appreciate the detail of this wonderful work.



We have been extensively involved with Stowe School, providing consultancy and analysis for the external render works, and now we are engaged on the interior works.

A 1960s abutting roof structure is being removed together with adjacent large metal water tanks. Rectilinear photography techniques have been employed to record the plaster decoration and coffered panels.

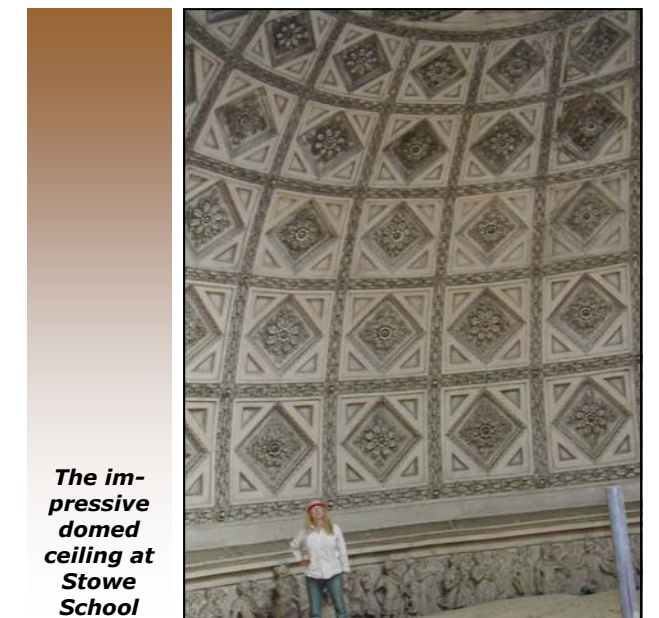
It is clear from viewing the ceiling that the build up of dirt over the years has in its own way, added an aesthetic appeal to the ceiling, and helped to create a more three dimensional effect than perhaps was evident when it was first completed.

It has been our task to produce temporary securing measures during the roof removal.

Close inspection of the ceiling has also revealed a significant number of cracks together with broken and missing detail in many of the panels.

It will be our job to recommend sympathetic repairs to these areas using a variety of techniques, whilst again maintaining the unique character of the ceiling.

The scaffold structure over the dome and other roof areas is the largest single span scaffold in the country.



The impressive domed ceiling at Stowe School

## HIRST CONSERVATION RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Supervising Authority—Richard Waters, Lincolnshire County Council



**H**irst Conservation finds itself at the receiving end of an award for its work at Trinity Bridge, Crowland, near Peterborough. The bridge was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century on the site of a previous bridge first recorded in 943 AD. It is a three span bridge which originally crossed 2 rivers that used to flow through the centre of the village.

The Historic Bridge and Infrastructure Award, recognises the work carried out by Hirst Conservation in the repair and repointing of this historic bridge resulting from normal erosion, continued settlement and an unfortunate traffic accident.

Sabina Van de Bruck and Tim Pretty attended the presentation to receive the award on behalf of Hirst Conservation .