

The Parish Church of St Andrew, Shifnal, Shropshire

Six Peal Boards (1774 -1845)

Treatment Report – September 2020



St Andrew's, Shifnal, Shropshire



Six Peal Boards recording peals from 1774 - 1845

Introduction

Following a condition assessment carried out by Annabelle Monaghan, in June 2018, six wooden painted Peal Boards that belong to St Andrew's Church Shifnal and that record peals from 1774 – 1845 were conserved between March and September 2020. Three of the boards were conserved at the studio of Annabelle Monaghan and the other three were conserved *in situ* at St Andrews, in the North transept.

Condition

For the condition of the boards, see 'Condition report and estimate' dated June 2018.

Treatment record – Board 'A'



BOARD 'A'	
Location	Hung very low on east wall of south transept. To be re-hung in bell ringing chamber.
Date	Peal date 3 Feb 1785
Dimensions	H 1180mm x W 790mm
Description	Large black lettering on white background
Medium / support	Oil on timber, varnished
Frame	Thin wooden frame fixed to edges of panel, painted and varnished

- The painting was transported to my studio in Shropshire
- Having been removed from the wall, the painting was in worse condition than originally observed - the lower edge of the frame was split in two and the painting was no longer structurally stable. With the panels no longer supported by the lower edge of the frame, the two panels on the left were loose and no longer fixed together. This was made worse by damage caused by wood worm to the panels. The area of wood along the joints was very damaged by woodworm, causing losses in the timber on the backs of the panels and a complete failure of the join between the panels on the left. The panels were joined with large iron nails but the woodworm damage along the joints meant that the nails could no longer hold the panels together.
- As a result of the structural instability, the panel had to be kept flat on a table until the joins and lower part of the frame could be replaced and mended.
- The front was dusted and surface cleaned with a 3% solution of Tri-ammonium citrate in de-ionised water, cleared with de-ionised water.
- The protruding part of the nail on the front of the panel was cut and filed in plane with the rest of the painting as it could not be removed without damaging the paint.
- It was not possible to remove the scuff marks with the Tri-ammonium citrate. The top layer of the varnish was thinned with Shellsol A100 applied with Evolon; this removed the scuff marks. It also removed some of the unevenness and darkening in the varnish without completely removing the varnish or changing the colour and appearance of the board.
- The lower edge of the frame that was split in two, and the top right edge of the curved part of the frame which was also damaged with a large loss, were in fact not original but

replacement pieces of wood and were slightly different dimensions to the original frame profile. Both of these damaged and non-original parts of the frame were removed. This made it easy to justify replacing the lower part of the frame rather than mending it, a preferred choice as it would make the panel more structurally stable.

- The woodworm damage on the back was examined and appears to be old, with no recent looking flight holes. The areas of damage were treated nevertheless with permethrin to help prevent further infestations. The areas damaged by the flight holes were consolidated with Paraloid B72 (10% in Shellsol A100). The process was repeated several times in order to consolidate the timber sufficiently to make it more structurally stable. The losses in the timber were filled first with a filler made of Resin W, sawdust and micro-balloons. The tops of the losses were further filled with Osmo wood filler.
- The panels on the left were re-joined with three wooden dowels.
- The lower edge and top right part of the frame were replaced with white oak cut, planed and shaped to size. The lower edge was curved to match the curvature of the panel. The top right piece for the curved edge of the frame was steamed to shape it to the correct curvature. The new pieces were screwed onto the edges of the panel. Panel pins were used to re-attach the lifting part of the frame on the left shoulder.
- Once the panel was structurally stable the painting could be turned round and the back dusted properly. It was dusted with a brush and a microfibre cloth.
- The replacement pieces of timber were painted with Golden® Acrylic paint and dry pigments bound Paraloid B72.
- Losses and scratches in the panel were retouched with dry pigments bound in Paraloid B72.
- The panel was brush varnished with a thin layer of Laropal A81, and some of the losses further retouched with dry pigments bound in Laropal A81.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Regalrez 1094.
- A sheet of Tyvek was stapled to the back of the panel.



Condition before treatment – painting hanging in church



Before treatment in studio (photo taken with painting on table)



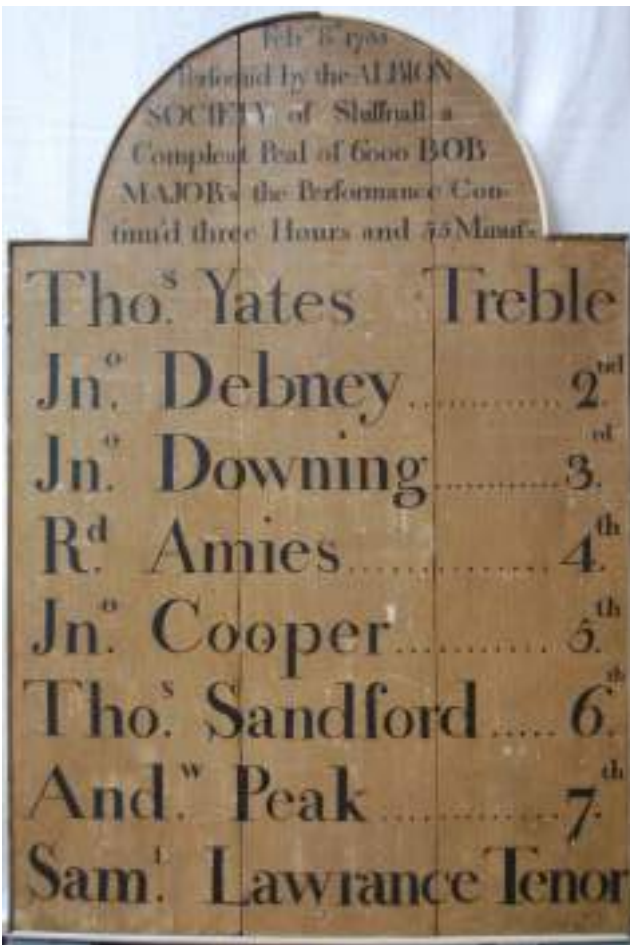
Lower edge before treatment showing split in frame



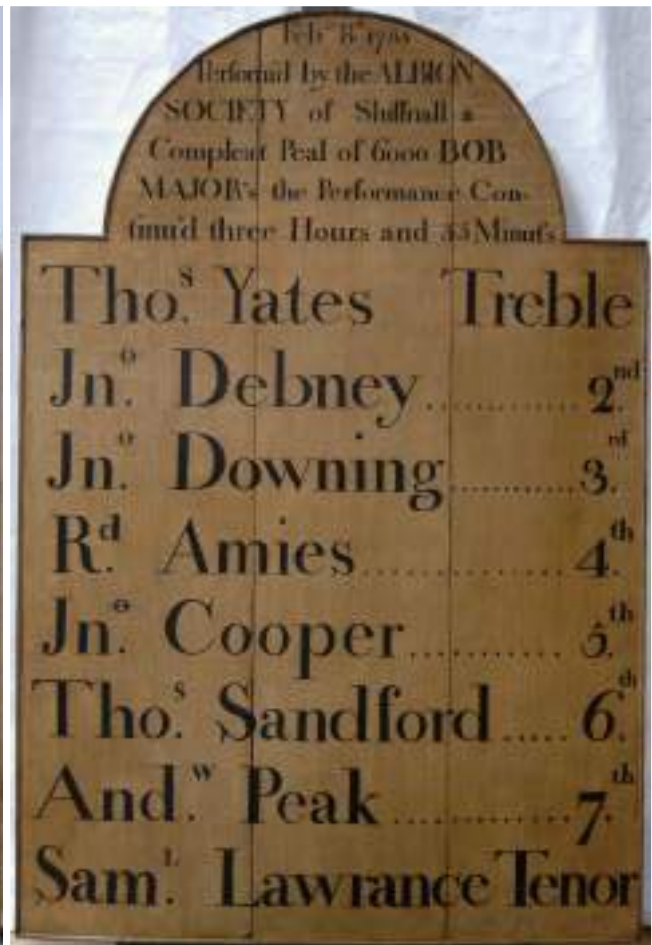
Open join in left panels



Wood worm damage on back of panel



Before retouching



After treatment



Back after treatment

Treatment record – Board B



BOARD 'B'	
Location	Unfixed, on floor in S. transept behind Board 'F'. To be re-hung in bell ringing chamber.
Date	Peal date March 1790
Dimensions	H 1570mm x W 1050mm
Description	Gold lettering on black background
Medium / support	Oil on timber, varnished
Frame	Thin wooden frame fixed to edges of panel, painted black and gold, and varnished

- The painting was transported to my studio in Shropshire.
- During examination of the back, an inscription in pencil was noted at the top of the back of the panel. It reads: 'W. Page Bellringer 1902 – 1932'. There are also the remains of a chalk inscription that mirrors the appearance of the top 'The' on the front of the panel, and may be a practice by the artist for the front, or someone trying to copy the style of writing.
- The back was dusted with a brush and microfibre cloth.
- Area of woodworm damage on the back were treated with permethrin.
- The corroded tacks on the back horizontal battens were treated with Kurust to prevent further corrosion.
- The front was dusted and surface cleaned with a 3% solution of Tri-ammonium citrate in de-ionised water, cleared with de-ionised water.
- A waxy layer containing dirt was also removed using Shellsol A100.
- The varnish was fairly uneven, and where it was thicker on the lettering, it was darker and this obscured and darkened the lettering. Areas of thick varnish were scraped with a scalpel to thin them to the same level as the rest of the varnish, making the lettering more legible and even looking.
- Areas of unstable paint were consolidated with Lascaux Medium for Consolidation.
- The damaged part of the frame on the right side was removed and replaced with a strip of white oak cut and planed to shape. The damaged part of the frame at the top left curved edge was also removed and replaced with a strip of white oak cut, planed and shaped to size and to match the curvature of the panel. These replacement strips of wood were attached with screws.
- The new strips of wood were painted with Golden® Acrylic paint and Gold Imitation gouache paint.
- Losses in the paint and lettering were retouched with dry pigments bound in Paraloid B72 and Gold Imitation gouache paint.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Laropal A81. Further glazing of the losses was carried out with dry pigments bound in Laropal A81.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Regalrez 1094.
- A sheet of Tyvek was stapled to the back of the panel.



Before treatment



Damage to right edge of frame



Damage to top of frame



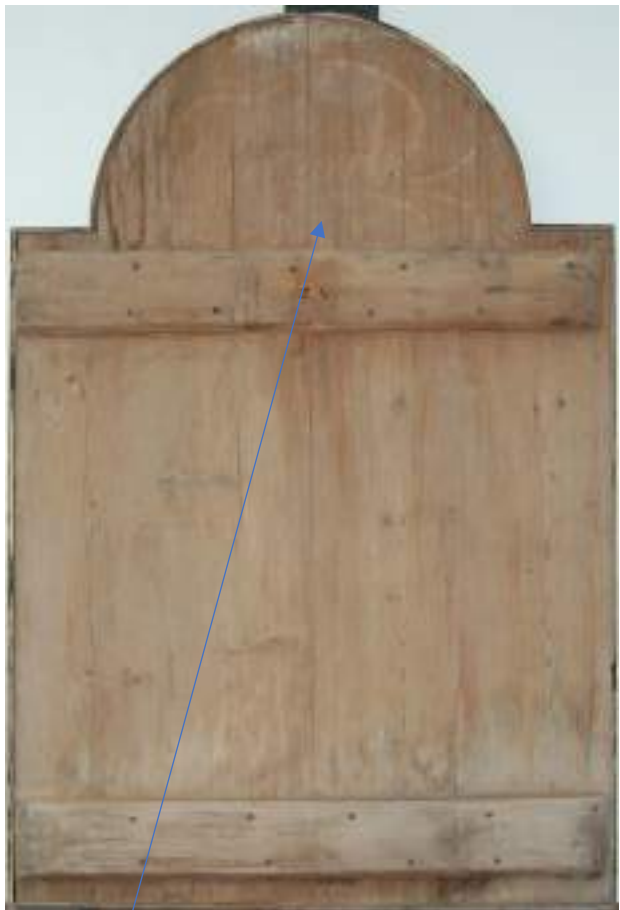
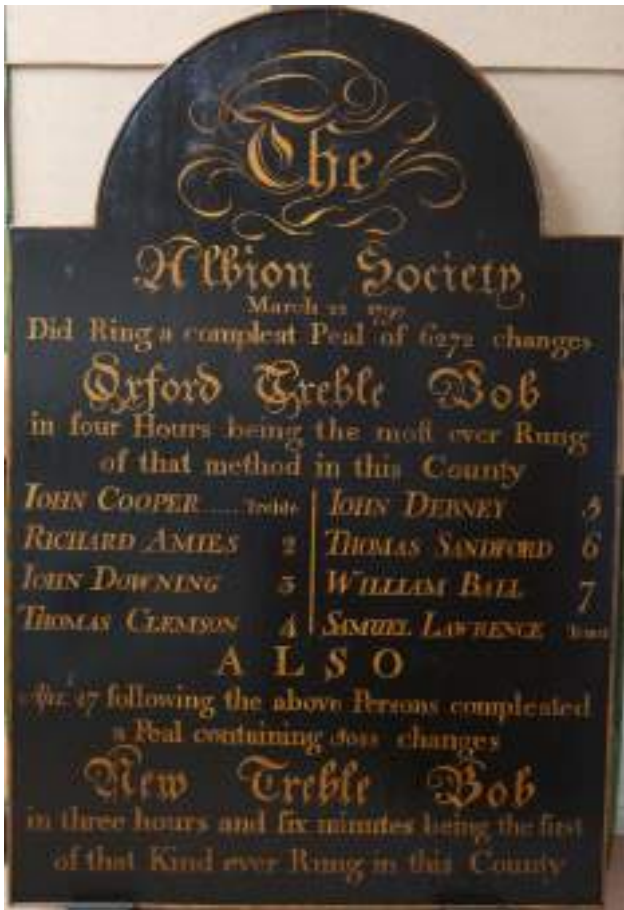
Dust along lower edge and loss in lettering



Back during treatment



Inscription on back



Front and back after treatment



Chalk inscription on back

Treatment record – Board C

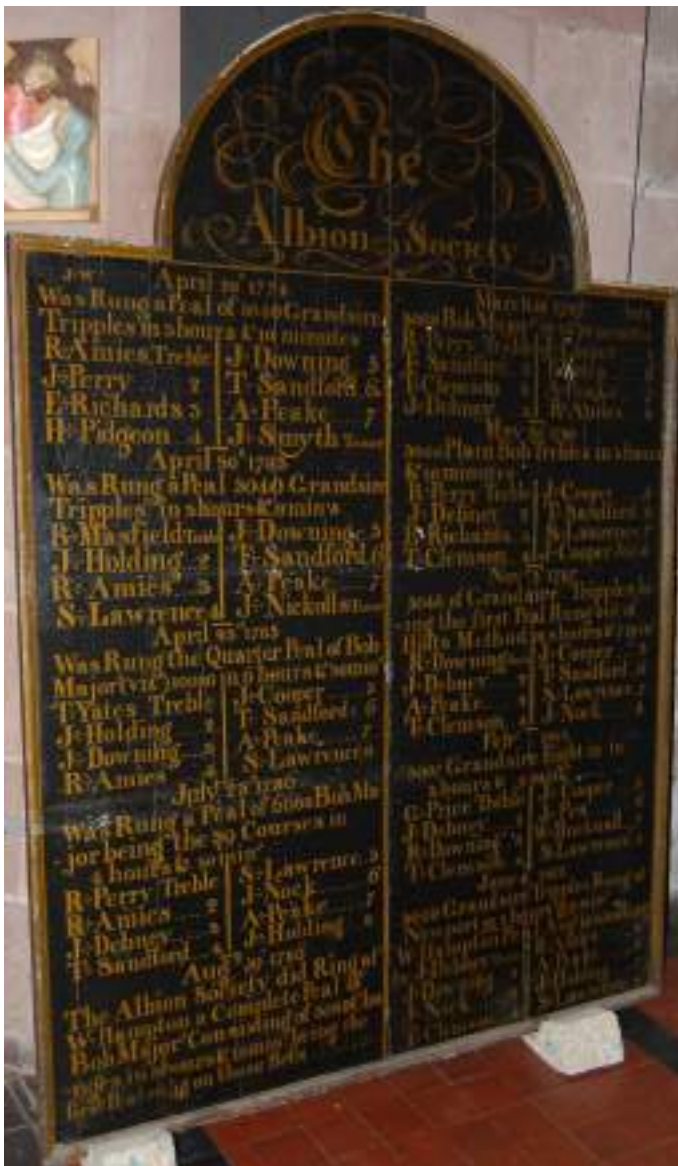


BOARD 'C'	
Location	On north wall of S. transept, below board D. To be re-hung on east wall of S. transept.
Date	Peal dates 1774 -1812 (10 peals) Signed 'J W' in top left corner of shoulder Dated '1823' in top right corner of shoulder
Dimensions	H 1970mm x W 1400mm
Description	Yellow painted lettering on black background
Medium / support	Oil on timber, varnished
Frame	Moulded wooden frame fixed to edges of panel, painted yellow and varnished.

- The painting was conserved in the church in the North transept.
- The back was dusted with a brush and microfibre cloth.
- Removing the thick layer of dust from the back revealed a painted inscription in the top right area. It reads: 'F. Halley wrote this board March, 2nd 1819 aged 16 years'. This inscription / signature and date does not correspond to the signature and date on the front of the painting (J.W. 1823). Closer examination of the front of the painting revealed that the painting appears to have been repainted as an earlier scheme is visible in some of the losses. An earlier scheme appears to have been painted over with a white ground followed by the black background with the yellow lettering of the current scheme. It is not possible to see more the first scheme or how similar it is to the second scheme. It is puzzling also that both schemes are later than the dates of the peals.
- Areas of woodworm damage on the back were treated with permethrin.
- The corroded tacks on the back horizontal battens were treated with Kurust to prevent further corrosion.
- The front was dusted and surface cleaned with a 3% solution of Tri-ammonium citrate in de-ionised water, cleared with de-ionised water.
- Areas of unstable paint were consolidated with Lascaux Medium for Consolidation.
- Losses in the paint and lettering were retouched with Golden® Acrylic and dry pigments bound in Paraloid B72.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Laropal A81. Further glazing of the losses was carried out with dry pigments bound in Laropal A81.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Regalrez 1094.
- A sheet of Tyvek was stapled to the back of the panel.



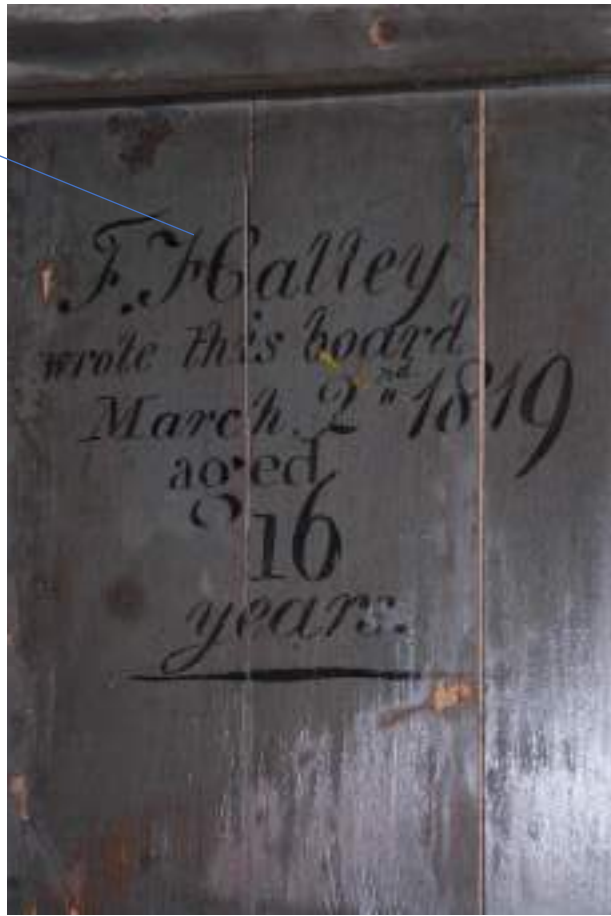
Before treatment on wall



Before treatment



Back before treatment



Inscription on back



Details of signature on front



Detail showing older scheme visible in paint losses



Front and back after treatment

Treatment record – Board D



BOARD 'D'	
Location	High on north wall of S. transept, to be re-hung on east wall of S. transept
Date	Peal dates 1826-1840 (8 peals)
Dimensions	H 1900mm x W 1400mm
Description	Yellow painted lettering on black background
Medium / support	Oil on timber, varnished. A metal medallion nailed at the top, referring to the coronation of William IV.
Frame	Moulded wooden frame fixed to edges of panel, painted black and yellow, and varnished.

- The painting was conserved in the church in the North transept.
- Closer examination of the metal medallion shows that it may refer to the coronation of William IV in 1831 as it reads: 'THEIR MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTIES WILLIAM AND ADELAIDE'. The nails fixing it to the board are very corroded. They were coated with Paraloid B72. It is unclear what the metal is but it is quite soft and light grey in colour.
- Close examination of the frame showed that the yellow sight edge of the frame is painted with yellow paint and varnished to give the appearance of gold, and not gilded as original noted.
- The back was dusted with a brush and microfibre cloth.
- Area of woodworm damage on the back were treated with permethrin.
- The corroded tacks on the back horizontal battens were treated with Kurust to prevent further corrosion.
- The front was dusted and surface cleaned with a 3% solution of Tri-ammonium citrate in de-ionised water, cleared with de-ionised water.
- Losses in the paint and lettering were retouched with Golden® Acrylic and dry pigments bound in Paraloid B72.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Laropal A81. Further glazing of the losses was carried out with dry pigments bound in Laropal A81.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Regalrez 1094.
- A sheet of Tyvek was stapled to the back of the panel.



Front before treatment on wall



Detail showing areas of drying cracks



Detail of medallion that reads: THEIR MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTIES WILLIAM AND ADELAIDE



Front and back before treatment



Front and back after treatment (the light patches are reflections caused by the flash on the camera)

Treatment record – Board E



BOARD 'E'	
Location	On east wall of S. transept, next to Board C, to be re-hung on north wall of south transept
Date	Peal dates 1843-1844 (6 peals)
Dimensions	H 2040mm x W 1360mm
Description	Yellow painted lettering on black background
Medium / support	Oil on timber, varnished,
Frame	Thin wooden frame fixed to edges of panel, painted black and yellow, and varnished

- The painting was conserved in the church in the North transept.
- The back was dusted with a brush and a microfibre cloth.
- Area of woodworm damage on the back were treated with permethrin.
- There was a loss in the frame on the back of the right edge. This was consolidated with Paraloid B72 (10% in Shellsol A100) and the larger area of loss was filled with Osmo wood filler.
- The corroded tacks on the back horizontal battens were treated with Kurust to prevent further corrosion.
- The front was dusted and surface cleaned with a 3% solution of Tri-ammonium citrate in de-ionised water, cleared with de-ionised water. Closer examination of the paint layer showed a great unevenness in the lettering. Most of the lettering was very faded and distorted, and difficult to read as a result of the severe drying cracks. But a few localised areas of paint were intact and it appears that this has been caused by the painter randomly and locally applying something to the surface that has protected areas of paint, possibly preventing the underlying layers from distorting as they dried.
- Losses on the frame and in the paint and lettering were retouched with Golden® Acrylic and dry pigments bound in Paraloid B72. A lot of the lettering had to be retouched in order to make it legible. It was not all retouched to the level of the most intact lettering as this would have meant repainting most of the letters, but was retouched enough to give a more even and coherent appearance.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Laropal A81. Further glazing of the losses and lettering was carried out with dry pigments bound in Laropal A81.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Regalrez 1094.
- A sheet of Tyvek was stapled to the back of the panel.



Front before treatment hanging



Details of paint



Details showing unevenness in condition of lettering



Front and back before treatment



Front after treatment

Treatment record – Board F



BOARD 'F'	
Location	Unfixed, on floor in S. transept, to be re-hung on East facing wall of South transept
Date	Peal dates 1845 (4 peals)
Dimensions	H 2030mm x W 1380mm
Description	Yellow painted lettering on black background
Medium / support	Oil on timber, varnished, a metal medallion referring to the Jubilee 1887 is nailed at the top.
Frame	Thin wooden frame fixed to edges of panel, painted black and yellow, and varnished

- The painting was transported to my studio in Shropshire.
- Closer examination of the medallion show that it reads: 'BORN 1819 / PROCLAIMED 1837 / JUBILEE 1887'. It is unclear what the metal is but it is quite soft and grey in colour. The corroded tacks on the medallion were coated with Paraloid B72.
- The back was dusted with a brush and a microfibre cloth. Examination of the back revealed a number of inscriptions that include sequences of numbers and letter, names and dates. (See images below.)
- The corroded tacks on the back horizontal battens were treated with Kurust to prevent further corrosion.
- The front was dusted and surface cleaned with a 3% solution of Tri-ammonium citrate in de-ionised water, cleared with de-ionised water.
- The loss in the top part of the frame was replaced with the strip of white oak cut, planed and shaped to size.
- Losses and replacement timber in the frame were retouched with Golden® Acrylic and dry pigments bound in Paraloid B72.
- Losses in the paint and lettering were retouched with Golden® Acrylic and dry pigments bound in Paraloid B72.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Laropal A81. Further glazing of the losses and lettering was carried out with dry pigments bound in Laropal A81.
- The painting was brush varnished with a thin layer of Regalrez 1094.
- A sheet of Tyvek was stapled to the back of the panel.



Details showing losses in paint



Details showing damage to frame



Detail of medallion



Front and back before treatment



Front and back after treatment



Detail of inscription on back



Detail of inscription on back



Detail of inscription on back



Detail of inscription on back

Materials

Cosmoloid 80H wax: Microcrystalline wax,

Dry pigments: Supplied by Cornelissen & Son

Evolon: Microfilament material of polyester and polyamide pH 7

Gold Imitation Gouache Paint Windsor and Newton

Golden® Acrylic Paint: Pure pigments in a 100% acrylic emulsion with excellent permanency and lightfastness. Contain no fillers, extenders, opacifiers, toners, or dyes.

Hammerite Kurust: Rust treatment: styrene-acrylate copolymer

Laropal A81: Urea-aldehyde resin, 20% in White spirit and Shellsol A100, with 2% Tinuvin 292 for varnish; 30% in Propan-2-ol for retouching medium.

Lascaux Medium for Consolidation 4176: Finely dispersed aqueous dispersion of an acrylic co-polymer, light and age resistant.

Microballoons: Inorganic sodium silicate borate

Paraloid B72: Methyl acrylate/methyl methacrylate co-polymer, diluted 15% in Shellsol A100 for varnishing, 5% in Shellsol A100 for consolidating, and 20% in methoxypropan-2-ol for retouching.

Osmo Woodfiller: Water-based woodfiller

Permethrin: Wood worm treatment. 0.2% permethrin in water

Regalrez 1094 varnish: Hydrocarbon, low molecular weight resin, 20% in White Spirit, with 2% Tinuvin 292.

Resin W: Evostik wood adhesive

Shellsol A100: A C9-C10 aromatic hydrocarbon solvent.

Tinuvin® 292: Liquid hindered amine light stabilizer for varnishes

Triammonium citrate: A chelating agent frequently used in conservation to remove surface dirt.

Tyvek®: An inert spun-bonded (non-woven) polyethylene.

Recommendations for hanging and future conservation

The paintings should be hung with a gap between them and walls to allow air to circulate behind the boards, preventing any build-up of moisture behind them.

The paintings could be hung on weight tested chain fixed at two points on the walls and supported with additional brackets along the lower edge.

The four larger boards would benefit from being lit once they are on the east wall to make them more visible and the inscriptions more legible. These should be lights that do not let out heat.