

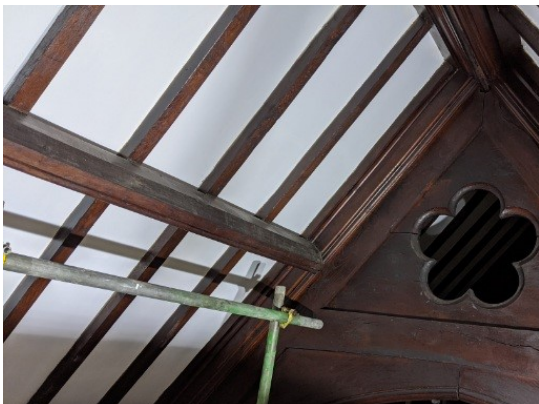
3.7.20

St Edmund's ceiling repair and redecoration

Update 5

Taking advantage of the Church not being open for Services, the painters came last Saturday to complete the second coating on the Nave and south Aisle. Over the weekend I designed some brackets to secure the ladder and stepladder in church so that the choir vestry lobby can be kept clearer. At some time I shall do the noisy operation at home of cutting out the metal parts as the first stage of making up the brackets. During the week I washed down the lobby ceiling for the third time, brushed the walls and thoroughly cleaned all five of the traditional heavy wooden doors around the church, ready for painting of the ironwork. The painters have left me with a quantity of paint so that we can freshen up this ceiling, which is not in their contract, at a time to suit ourselves. There might be enough to freshen up the Sacristy ceiling as well sometime.

Whilst the painters were not on site I had a good look at their high-level work. I think people will be very pleased with the quality of their painting, but, in agreement with Richard, our Architect, I was not satisfied with their two efforts to clean the varnished timbers. They returned at midweek and vigorously and thoroughly set about doing them all again to good effect this time, and obtained the Architect's approval. (Photo, the white spots are specks of dust caught in the flash)





While inspecting the timbers I found several more areas of woodworm holes which Richard inspected. We came to the conclusion that these were all in either dead knots or small areas of sapwood and probably from eggs in the timber at the time of felling. All looked old and inactive. As a precaution I have brush treated these specific limited areas with several coats of penetrating preservative. We intend to take this no further.

With the end of the first month of the Contract, Richard has issued the first (and probably on this job the sole) Interim Certificate for a payment to the Contractor for the work done to date. We also received this week the full report of the asbestos survey. No great surprises, there, but it contains wealth of information to enable us to carry out any future repairs safely.

With Jill at the foot of my ladder, I have brushed down all the walls within the 'congregational' areas of the church and we have assisted Michèle with cleaning nearly all the insides of the windows except the very high parts of the east windows of the Chancel and Lady Chapel. The church is noticeably lighter now during daylight hours.

The scaffolding has provided rare access to the highest part of the chancel screen. I have cleaned and painted this area, leaving the gilding untouched, and I am continuing to clean and paint the remainder, removing heavy accumulations of dirt and candle wax (not easy to remove from complex metalwork) as I go. It has also given us easier than usual access into the old organ loft at the west end of the church, but unfortunately the partially-dismantled remains of the old organ have made it impossible to penetrate far enough to thoroughly dust this area or safely reach the upper parts of the ceiling. By default, this loft will be left untouched unless we decide to clear or even remove it, the dusty contents of which must constitute something of a fire risk. As you can see from the photos this is quite a derelict interior. Maybe someone could make use of the organ parts? If you have any thoughts about this maybe you could discuss them with Michèle or myself. We did rediscover in there the Millennium time capsule which has been tucked away safely for the past 20 years.



On Wednesday we took a short break to attend John Coltman's graveside funeral and burial conducted by Peter and accompanied by a widely spaced-out congregation, including family, some of his lifelong friends and some current and former members of our congregations. The efforts of those who have been tending the churchyard were very much appreciated on this occasion.

During the weeks we have not been using the main entrance porch, others have found it a quiet place to raise a family!



I am very grateful to those of you who have offered help with various jobs. Jill and Michèle have continued to remove dust from the furniture and floors as it arises and this is at last achieving a degree of freshness that we have not known for a long time. I now have volunteers for the Advent candle stand refurbishment, curtain washing, curtain track cleaning, pew cleaning and dusting and at least some of the internal low-level painting. Richard Flatman will be vacuuming under the gratings during the week after next. I'm still hoping there is a woodworker out there who would be willing to patch the choir vestry cupboard back panel and help with high-level window cleaning is always welcome. It would be good if, perhaps a couple with knowledge of the Sacristy contents, could volunteer to clean out the cupboards and contents. The main areas get cleaned regularly, but the more remote corners are not often visited! If there is anyone who could do a little digging to investigate the choir

vestry kitchen drain I'd be glad to hear from them. In the meantime the sink remains unusable.

On Monday next week we expect the scaffolding to be dismantled. This may take more than one day to complete, but once it is out of the way the painters will have access to clean and re-paint the ceiling under the organ loft followed by a final clean-through to complete the contracted-out phase of the project.

Geoff Bailey
3.7.2020