

SIXTEENTH – CENTURY MONUMENT

Church of St Michael & All Angels

The monument has a coating on it, and a sample was taken by Kieran Elliott of Elliott Ryder Conservation

Examination The pieces were examined under low magnification and then mounted as cross-sections in cold-setting polyester resin. Material from the paint layers was dispersed on glass slides and the pigments identified using a polarising light microscope

Results

The sections show a dirt-stained stone surface, followed but a single paint scheme, consisting of a white undercoat and a light brown, or stone-coloured, top coat.

The main pigment in the paint is lithopone, which is a combination of zinc sulphide and barium sulphate. Lithopone was widely used in house paints in the middle decades of the twentieth century. It was largely displaced by titanium white in the 1950s/60s, but it is still occasionally used.

For certain identification of the medium, instrumental organic analysis would have to be carried out, but the pigments point to it being a type of oil paint. There is some extender present, in the form of chalk, but the ratio of lithopone to chalk is high which suggests the paint is unlikely to be an emulsion paint or a water-based paint.

