



« Conserver la chapelle de Sainte-Marie-aux-Anglais »

Newsletter n°12, avril 2017

SAINTE-MARIE-AUX-ANGLAIS :

Towards the preservation of a jewel of medieval norman architecture.

Dear members of the association,

A first stage has been completed ! Restoration work has begun, the scaffolding is now girding the facade and the choir both inside and outside.

The heavy work is therefore under way and we are going to do our utmost to set the conditional phase rolling in the wake. By a sheer piece of luck, the end of this first stage will coincide with that of the present committee elected for three years in 2014, as well as that of the board. Next October we shall have to elect a new committee, whose members will choose the officers of the new board. Let me appeal to volunteers : you are all welcome to apply for candidacy !

A renewal of the members of these boards can only exemplify the vitality of our association. There is still so much to be done to repair the damage of nearly five centuries of disinterest in this magnificent chapel.

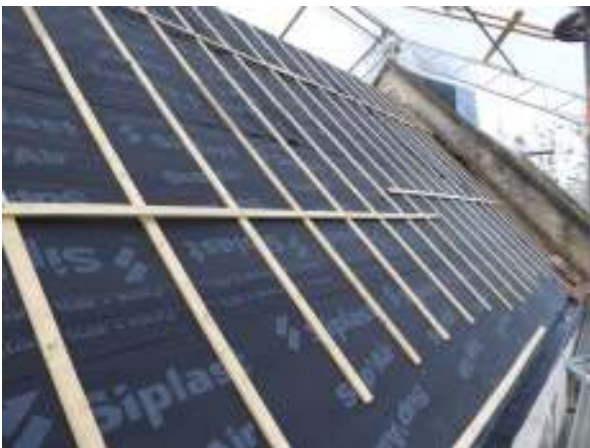
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Laying of the under-roof sheet



Testing the triangular-shaped copper gutter

A review of the current work in progress.

A workmen's facilities and conveniences unit has been installed in the car park. It is supplied by power as are two other spots on the restoration site. The interior of the chapel is going to be wired up via underground cabling for future events.

External scaffolding has been erected on either side of the choir, topped by a plastic-sheet 'umbrella' to enable the stripping of the roof. All the tiles have been taken down to be checked then brushed clean for re-use. Those dismissed will be replaced by identical old ones.

The timber framework, which had been redone in the early twentieth century and was in good condition, has been thoroughly checked and clad with under-roofing air-porous sheeting on which the tiles will be laid.

A triangular-shaped gutter will be specially made and fitted to drain away rain water. The advantage of such a device is that it is invisible as its lower

extremity lies hidden under the roof edge.

The western porch has also been scaffolded up. The stones will initially be scrubbed and replaced if damaged beyond re-use. The salpetre coat that covers them is undergoing chemical analysis to determine which adequate treatment should be carried out. The stone joints will also be scraped off and replaced. The wooden door is to undergo special treatment and lowered to facilitate access into the chapel for visitors on wheelchairs.

Finally, the « triple-ring » cross that tops the facade (of druidic inspiration ?) which is badly damaged will be replaced by a scrupulously identical replica.

Inside the chapel a scaffold-on-wheels has been installed to scrutinize the adherence of pictorial layers onto the vaults. The fragile sections have been secured by injections of an appropriate adhesive product. Finally a more recent spread of moss on some paintwork in the choir has been checked by the spraying of a fungicide. Drainage is being studied to channel rain water into a ditch east of the chapel.



Scraping of the stone joints of the western facade



Three-dimensional survey of the cross on top of the facade

What next ?

Undergoing work is due to extend into the summer holidays. By then, administrative matters regarding the second conditional work phase must be settled in order for work to be resumed in early September. The Department of Cultural Affairs (DRAC) has made known the share of the budget they are willing to subsidize : up to 50 %. This budget includes all the options accepted

by the project manager. Knowing that the 'Fondation du Patrimoine' (the National Heritage Foundation) has granted us a 5,000-Euro contribution (on top of the members' financial contribution), we are still short of 14,000 Euros to finance the second half of the budget.

Nevertheless, we are waiting for decisions about other funding sources and the DRAC budget includes a funding section dubbed « miscellaneous and unexpected projects » approaching 5,000 Euros so that we're still hopeful about balancing the budget.

This financial plan has to be submitted to the Mezidon-Vallée d'Auge city council whose approval could enable the second work phase to be launched.