

April 16. The Rev. Mr. Tiquet (Hon. Curate, Stokenham Pk) (K/B. 580564)

took the Maundy Thursday evening service for us. He asked what our church's connection with St. James was, since he considered the motif of the decoration on the chancel arch was a representation of the "cockle-shell" of the pilgrims to Santiago de Compostella. He suggested that we should approach the Society of St. James, who had considerable records of the pilgrimage (at its height between 1100-1500). It was possible that someone or several from the parish had made the pilgrimage, either thro' France & Spain or possibly by boat from Devon direct to ~~Spain~~ the north coast of Spain and so to Compostella. On return to their homes, such pilgrims might have been allowed to place a record in their local church by a decoration incorporating the badge.

(Second note)

Copy

The Veau,
Ringmore,
Kingsbridge,
Devon, TQ7 4HL.

8 January 1991

Miss Linda Woolley
Textiles and Dress
Victoria & Albert Museum
Kensington
LONDON.

Dear Miss Woolley

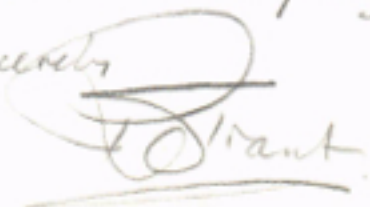
Thank you very much for your letter of 4 January. I am much obliged to you and your colleagues for the advice and information, which I will follow up.

Certainly I have seen the diaper pattern in both plaster and brick in a number of places in Iberia. The photocopy of the Alhambra sent me to my books again; in fact I think that the framework is more obvious in photographs taken from the immediately opposite side of the fountain (Monuments of Civilisation: Islam" p.176 and the tourist guide to "The Alhambra and the Generalife" pp. 37& 43). When last at the Alhambra, having finished our tour, I showed my photographs to attendants outside the (closed) Museo de Bellas Artes and to a Spanish priest showing friends around; both said "Here!" but we did not have time to go back and search. Later in our tour, an art-shop owner in Cordoba said "Not here; here Mussulman. I think Granada.", which was interesting. Perhaps Sa. Raquejo will be more helpful than Prof. Ortero Tunes and Santiago.

As for the colouring, undoubtedly a small amount of re-touching was done in the 1870's; our inspecting conservator said that the red then used was not available in earlier centuries but the rest appeared to be medieval. Our then Rector, who restored the church, wrote "The walls of the Nave were plastered throughout and richly adorned with colour, of which there were traces everywhere." He goes on to say that the plaster on walls other than this internal arch was "so utterly rotten that none of it could be retained" but that this painting "had been hidden by successive coats of coarse plaster and whitewash, on which several sets of the Decalogue had been coarsely/at successive periods, but, happily no injury was done to the interesting and precious treasure of ancient village-art which they concealed."

The light fittings also date from this restoration. (We have the name of the makers). We have no reference to any link with William Burges and doubt if any money would have been available for a fashionable architect. The Rector, Mr. Hingston-Randolph, was also an architect, antiquarian and archivist; he may well have known of Burges' work.

The search continues! Thank you again. R. C. Trant.

Yours sincerely


COPY

**Edward Barnaby B Sc Dip Arch RIBA
Architect**

my ref. 6029
your ref.

138 Whitchurch Road
Tavistock, Devon. PL19 9DE
(0822) 613840

23rd January 1989

R C Trant Esq
The Veau
Ringmore
Kingsbridge
Devon TQ7 4HL

Dear Mr Trant

RINGMORE PARISH CHURCH

I confirm our meeting on 20th January and set out below my comments and recommendations on dampness affecting the ancient wall painting on the chancel arch.

Firstly, I thank you for your help in keeping moisture and weather records in relation to this problem.

I confirm that the painted plaster is affected by damp in the lower right-hand section of the arch. Examination of the relatively recent render below the area in question showed it to be off-key, which has probably been caused by moisture trapped behind.

There is no evidence in the unplastered masonry in the arch, nor on the floors of any significant rising damp. Ground level outside is low and appears well drained and I can rule out rising damp affecting the painted plaster.

The arrangement of rainwater gutters and pipes is poor and I suspect this to be the primary cause of water entering the masonry in this area. Gutters are shallow and contain an awkward bend and are liable to overflow easily.

File A
I recommend that gutters should be replaced with deeper sections fixed carefully close under the eaves slates. Ideally, new gutters should be 4" x 3" cast iron box section, though these are quite expensive. Each section should have a separate downpipe, kept away from the internal angle of the wall. This presents a small problem as there is a gravestone close against the wall, preventing the construction of a new gully. *Normally covered*

Such an arrangement of gutters and pipes, if carefully maintained, should prevent any quantity of water soaking the masonry in this vulnerable area.

B
The opportunity should be taken, whilst rainwater goods are taken down, to repoint the masonry joints, at present hidden behind the rainwater pipes and hopper. This should be done with care, using a mortar mix of 1 part cement, 2 parts lime and 9 parts coarse brown sand. *Good*

C
Internally, I recommend any practical measures that can be adopted to create an airflow through the building and allow the masonry to breathe. There are no opening casements in windows and few opportunities to introduce these, because of extensive stained glass. A casement could be fitted in the transept north window and, more readily accessible, louver framed glass replaced in the north chancel aisle window.

/continued

R C Trant Esq
6029/2
23rd January 1989

The tower door and quatrefoil openings into the bell-chamber can be opened to introduce airflow from the tower. Needless to say, these need to be systematically opened through the week and closed before the heating is switched on for services.

Removal of the recent render on either side of the chancel arch will help the masonry to breathe.

I hope this report will be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Edward Barnaby

Edward Barnaby

*Very good idea
Replace with lime-based
plaster.*

0548 810 663

Ref. DAG/T.14/592.90

Spare
The Veau,

Ringmore,

Kingsbridge,

Devon, TQ7 4HL.

The Secretary,
Diocesan Advisory Committee,
Diocesan House,
Palace Gate,
Exeter EX1 1HX.

22 October 1990.

Dear Miss Bethel,

All Hallows, Ringmore.

Thankyou for your letter of 13 October. I have written to Luke, Dampney, quoting the third paragraph of that letter and asking for an exact description of the proposals. I hope that this will clear the DAC's point; I have passed the specifications for the plaster and mortar to our builder.

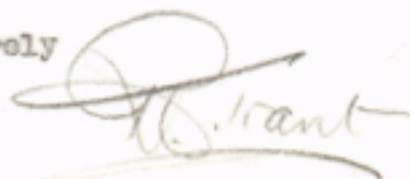
Thankyou too for your kind remarks about my note on the Conference. I was somewhat taken aback by the Archdeacon's proposal that I should write something (in a very short time too) but I am glad it was acceptable.

May I now raise two different points - if you ought to have separate letters, I apologize and hope you don't mind. One is fairly simple and must have been raised elsewhere. Most churches have lists of their incumbents hanging somewhere; I have noticed that many of these have little room for more entries- and with the increasing mobility of the clergy, these will become more frequent. We here have no room for our present incumbent's name. Has the DAC any general advice on this? Do we try to copy the previous style and have a second board or should we start again with a larger 'canvas', from the beginning and leaving much more room for the future than our forerunners left us?

The second point is the one I mentioned at Abbotsbury. Two years ago, I came across banners of the four Evangelists rolled up in a blue fertilizer bag in our tower room. This did not seem to be the best storage place; Michael Swanton and Marion Glasgow from the University were measuring the church at the time and agreed that plastic was not the best cover so I have them at home at the moment, rolled on their staves.

I enclose a photograph of them en bloc. Each measures 28½" x 44½"; the material is "Crocketts Original Leather Cloth West Ham" and naturally the paint is suffering from what I suppose could be called craquelure in some circles. Has the DAC advice on the treatment which might be given and how they banners should be stored?

Yours sincerely



R. G. Trant
Churchwarden.

Belle Vue, Ringmore, Kingsbridge, S.Devon, TQ7 4HJ
01548 810286

from: Dr Diane Collinson
email: user483219@aol.com

Dear Lady Wedgwood,

Sir Roy Strong has suggested I write to you about a painted wall in the church in the small village where I live.

The church is thirteenth-century and the painting in question is on the chancel-arch wall. The plaster has been dated as late fourteenth- or early fifteenth century. I enclose some pictures of it. The painting was uncovered in the 1860s by the then Rector who found it under three layers of decalogues and who recognized its antiquity and charm.

Members of the village Historical Society are trying to put together a history of the church, but we have no information about the painting. At the very least we'd like to discover the significance of the repeated motif. (People who have been to Compostela say that it reminds them of decorative patterns seen there.)

If you can direct us to some line of enquiry we might pursue, we shall be most grateful.

9 St. Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1SB
tel. 01273 479 564

9/3/01

Dr. Diane Collinson,
Belle Vue, Ringmore,
Kingsbridge, South Devon, TQ7 4HJ

Dear Dr. Collinson,

Thank you very much for drawing my attention to your fascinating painted chancel arch. I suspect that it has not featured in the literature of medieval wall paintings, because people have assumed, at first glance, that it is entirely of the 19th century. However, I am confident that, as you say, it is of c1400 or a trifle later, though I suspect that the rector of the 1860's had it fairly thoroughly restored. I had written this before I turned your photograph over, and discovered a note to the same effect. For one thing, however careful he was in removing the three layers of decalogues, I doubt whether the Medieval layer could have emerged in the condition suggested by your photographs. Secondly, I am sure the painting originally continued over the stone of the arch itself. Tidying off plaster work to reveal quoins was a typically 19th century habit. Thirdly, he was dealing with a repeat pattern, and who could blame him for reproducing what could so easily be reproduced? But my fourth reason is that I cannot believe the chancel arch, being one of the most important focuses for wall painting in the church, was originally treated solely with a decorative repeat. I suspect that there were raw areas of rough walling under the decalogues, where there had been two projecting stone brackets, one either side, which had carried figures of the Virgin and St. John, and in the centre there had been a crucifixion, all of stone or painted wood. Examination in a raking light would possibly reveal traces of such features. They would have been cut back at the Reformation to provide a flat surface for the decalogues.

Repeat patterns as a background to figures, or alone in positions of no great iconographic significance, are a feature of medieval wall paintings. In the thirteenth century they usually take the form of masonry pattern (for example the walling inside the great arches of Peterborough Cathedral west front). This goes back to a classical tradition - (I found it at Pompeii.) It is sometimes varied with a stencilled formalised flower. In the fourteenth century this rather boring formula gives way to leafy sprays, for example in the Reliquary Chapel at Norwich Cathedral. By the mid 15th century a large brocade pattern was favoured, as at Willingham in Cambridgeshire.

Your design falls between the earlier fourteenth century sprays and the mid 15th century onwards brocades. I am not surprised friends saw links with work at Compostella. There is a similarity with Moorish tiles. However, I think the source was probably nearer to hand. I have not seen anything quite like it in wall painting. However, I enclose a photocopy of the wall painting at Great Hockham in Norfolk, which is quite a good parallel. As you may be able to see, the repeat pattern there is set in diamonds, like your's, but the floral motives are much clumsier and more fleshy than your's - and generally 'later'. The photograph shows the Virgin Annunciate, on the north side of the chancel arch, and according to Alan Caiger-Smith, from whose book, *English Medieval Wall Paintings* (Oxford 1963) this image and information come, she was balanced on the other side by St. John. This makes poor iconographic sense, and I wonder whether the other figure was the angel Gabriel. In the centre is the Christ of the Wounds, so, as often in the late Middle Ages, the composition offered a shorthand of the whole Christian story. In any case, it shows you that such repeat patterns were used behind and between figures. I hesitate to suggest that the figures at Kingsbridge were painted, as in that case you would expect something of them to have survived, and interested the 1870's.

I have gone through a number of flowers in medieval MSS, and found consistently that the closest comparisons were with MSS of c1400-1430. The floral forms look at a quick glance to be of great diversity, but when you examine them more closely a few occur again and again - roses, lilies, periwinkles, a form recalling the acorn - there is no sense of scale - in foliage largely derived from vine or acanthus (wrongly termed 'cabbage leaf' to my view). A staple remains the persistent daisy bud in profile which had been going since the early 14th century. In the amazing generation who were young in the 1250's, and inspired by the wave of Franciscanism, artists looked to nature for inspiration in conveying plants. But throughout most of the Middle Ages it was more common to copy other works of art. This is particularly sad in view of the range of wild flowers with which they were surrounded - but no one treasures until they have nearly lost.

So I interpret your motif as a misunderstood daisy bud. It has the right colouring. The rays of pistils springing from the closed petals are entirely formal, but very much part of a fashion that enjoyed the cusping of the diamonds.

I enclose a photocopy of a page from the Nevill Hours, which survive at Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire. This shows several of the floral motives I have mentioned, and a shallow cusping round the border. It is generally dated to

Unfortunately, it is carried out in gold in this instance.

If you wanted anyone to make a careful examination of your wall, I could suggest you get in touch with Dr. Warwick Rodwell FSA., The Old Vicarage, Stockhill Road, Downside, Chilcompton, Somerset, BA3 4JQ. He is the best Archaeologist of Medieval churches in England. If the condition of the paintings are giving cause for concern - of which your photographs show no sign - then you can get in touch with the Paintings Committee of the Council for the Care of Churches, Secretary Andrew Argyakis, Fielden House, Little College Street, London SW1P 3SH. In any case, I am sure David Park, their Chairman, would like to see your photographs. Feel free to share with him my opinion of your painting. He might have a different view. He runs the Conservation of Wall Paintings Department of the Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, The Strand, London WC2R 0RN.

Thank you again for introducing me to so interesting a scheme. I return your photographs, which you will need again. I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir Roy Strong.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Tudor-Craig, FSA (Pamela Lady Wedgwood)

see preceding
King's bridge
drawings -
MS. early 15th c.



83. Worshipper before
Nevill Hours, Gloucest
Berkeley Castle, f. 7v

early fifteenth-century English depictions in a Book of Hours of a male worshipper before the Virgin (ill. 83).¹³ Strictly speaking the miniature falls in a pattern discussed earlier, where the worshipper is outside the frame of the miniature, since it should be noted that the cushion on which he kneels overlaps the border. In other ways the image is quite similar to those in the Carew-1 Hours or the Bohun Hours in the Bodleian, if however more intense in the of the sacred beings on the worshipper. Both the Virgin and her draped Christ Child are turned toward the supplicant, and the Christ Child almost crawls out of the Virgin's lap in eagerness to bless the man. He is seen, and the image serves as proof, even though, with his eyes lifted upward, he cannot 'see' in a physical sense.

These English miniatures of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century represent a kind of private religious devotion far removed from the ceremonial of the Wilton Diptych, in which the worshipper is backed by two supporters and the Virgin surrounded by angels. Nevertheless, in one

Tourette family at prayer
(c. 1465)



Note diamond pattern, (chain or rope)
in background, containing flower motif.



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The background to this painted chancel arch at Great Hockham, Norfolk, has an all-over diamond pattern. It is the one referred to in Dr Tucker-Craig's letters.

GREAT HOCKHAM PARISH CHURCH

In the year 1853 the roof of the church was in a state of collapse and a new one was erected. A workman on moving some plaster, saw a painted head with a halo. Further investigation caused an invitation to an expert in mural paintings Miss Eva Baker ARCA, to investigate. She spent several months discovering the whole of the wall painting across the chancel arch and those in the north aisle.

The parish church of Great Hockham was for three hundred years in the patronage of the Priory of Thetford. This was a Cluniac order. The monks of this order had to spend part of their time at the Mother House of Cluny. The painters there were the finest in France. There are some examples around Lewes in Sussex - Lewes was also a Cluniac order - It would be of the greatest interest if it could be shown that the Great Hockham painting had Cluniac connections. It is certain that Great Hockham must have been a very important church for the Prior of Thetford himself became vicar here at the Reformation period.

The experts regard this as a very important work, and an eminent Danish expert has given it as his opinion that this is the only unspoilt wall painting in England. The painting on the north aisle is dated 1350 and that across the chancel arch 1450.

The church is dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Thus the painting depicts - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. On the lower left hand side is Mary the Mother of Jesus, and on the other side of the arch, Gabriel can be seen greeting Her.

Belle Vue, Ringmore, Kingsbridge, S.Devon TQ7 4HJ
01548 810286

from: Dr Diané Collinson

email: user483219@aol.com

Dear Lady Wedgwood,

Your wonderfully detailed reply to my query about the painted wall in the church at Ringmore has delighted and enthralled me. Thankyou very much indeed for your interest, help and generosity.

I don't want to bombard you with lots more matter, but I would like you to know how extremely apposite your findings are, and what follows is largely directed to that end.

1. You are absolutely right to conclude that some people have assumed C19 work throughout the church, among them Pevsner, from whom many have taken authority (understandably) to perpetuate the judgement. After the consultation with a conservator in 1992, the then churchwarden saw to it that corrections were made in future editions of Pevsner.

2. Yes, the 1860s Rector certainly did some restoration of the painting. I enclose a copy of 2 extracts from his writings that refer.

3. Your detection of the daisy motif in the Bedford Hours delights me (I now have 4 daisy buds lying in front of me on my desk). It is so exactly like the Ringmore motif. There has been endless conjecture about what the motif is or might signify and I deliberately did not mention that when I first wrote to you. Suggestions have included a pheasant's eye, a pilgrim's scallop shell, and the view - formalized - of the cove, the English Channel and the setting sun as seen from the village. I'm inclined to think that the Bedford Hours daisy motif will be strongly persuasive in making us think afresh.

4. The possibility of figures once having been superimposed on the diamond/diaper background is intriguing. There is certainly clear evidence that a rood once occupied a high, central position above the arch. We shall have to look carefully for evidence of possible supports for other figures.

5. In a little book of reproductions of Books of Hours I have come across a diamond background marked out in chains that are closely similar to the chains that define the Ringmore diamonds. The florets in the Hours diamonds are 'looser', not formalized, but there is some similarity. The date is 1465 and it shows the Tourotte family at prayer (Walker's Art Gallery, Baltimore).

6. I will certainly consult the Historical Society about getting in touch with Dr Warwick Rodwell. (A Somerset address sounds comfortingly near.) I believe David Park was approached some years back (before I came to Ringmore) and, if I am correctly remembering what I was told, confessed himself mystified, although interested, by the photograph sent to him. I shall have to check this with files not in my possession.

On a slightly different tack: our present Churchwarden has approached the Ringmore Historical Society to ask support in making a submission to the Department for Media, Culture and Sport to amend the church's Listing. We have already constructed a letter of support (I enclose a copy) but I am now wondering if you would allow us to offer the Churchwarden some sections of your letter for inclusion in the submission. If the listing can be zoomed up from Grade 2 to a starred 2 or even a 1, the PCC would be in a much stronger position for seeking a grant for dealing with damp and restoration. The painted wall is, as far as is known, in a good state, but there is much that is not.

Thankyou again for your help and illumination which, I know, will be greatly valued and enjoyed by all of us. Should you come westwards and wish to see the church we would be delighted to entertain you.



THE MEDIAEVAL WALL PAINTING

① 'The walls of the Nave (unlike those of the Chancel, which were pointed internally), were plastered throughout, and richly adorned with colour, of which there were traces everywhere. Above the Chancel-arch, which is of Thirteenth Century work, the painting remains, the whole surface of the wall looking westward being covered with a bold and beautiful diaper-pattern of the same early date. In the days of ignorance it had been hidden by successive coats of coarse plaster and white wash, on which several sets of the decalogue had been coarsely painted at successive periods;⁴ but happily, no injury was done to the interesting and precious treasure of antient village-art which they concealed, and very little touching-up was needed to restore it to its original beauty. Here the plaster, as thin as a biscuit and wonderfully hard, is as sound and firm as it ever was; but that of the other walls had taken wet everywhere, and was so utterly rotten that none of it could be retained. Of course, the paintings perished with it; but here and there fragments of the subjects could be traced - a picture of the Crucifixion hard by where the antient pulpit must have stood, and the new one stands and the Legend of St Christopher opposite the main entrance...'

② 'I cannot refrain from telling of the surprise and joy with which, under three sets of the commandments, painted on successive coats of plaster or whitewash (the innermost of which, in black letter, and bordered with Arabesque scrollwork, was evidently of the date of the ordinance) I found, and with my own hands helped to uncover, a unique and beautiful mural painting in perfect condition, contemporaneous with, and covering the whole of, the east wall of the nave above the chancel arch.'

(Written by Hingeston-Randolph, probably in the 1880s)

⁴These inscriptions of the Decalogue (the ten commandments) were present as the result of an Ordinance of Henry the Eighth.

Higbury (0548)
810 663

The Vean
Ringmore
Kingsbridge
Devon TQ7 4NL

Edward Barnaby Esq., B. Sc., Dip. Arch. RIBA
138 Whitchurch Road
Tavistock
Devon, PL19 9DE

4 January 1989.


Ringmore, All Hallows,
Chancel Arch.

I spoke to you in September last about a patch on the southern end of the painting on the chancel arch. I enclose a photograph of the patch taken by the conservator who reported on the painting and one taken of the church in the 1930's (?) (I shall be grateful for their return in due course.)

The reference to this patch in the conservator's report reads "...some deterioration caused by rising damp is apparent, especially on the lower south side; obviously a long standing problem". I sent the report to the Central Council for the Care of Churches, applying for a grant, and Dr. Gem replied, quoting this comment, and saying that I should "discuss with your architect the rising damp and devise a solution to this." You and I then talked about this problem and decided to take moisture measurement readings weekly for a period of six weeks and link them with notes of the current weather conditions.

My Council agreed with this and I have now concluded the series of readings, using a moisture meter supplied by a local tool hire centre. Since the readings were not of concrete mixes, I used the 'arbitrary scale' of the meter; I enclose the results, together with notes of the rainfall at the time.

Perhaps we can arrange a convenient date for you to visit us to discuss?


R. C. Grant.
Churchwarden.

Ringsboro All Mallows

Chancel Arch moisture readings

<u>Day</u>	<u>Meter reading</u>	<u>Thorn's corr'n.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>External weather</u>
Tues. 29 Nov	1.25	plus 0.2	1.45	Heavy rain(0.6 in) after days of dryness.
Tues. 6 Dec.	1.00	" 0.2	1.2	1.85 ins in previous 72 hours.
Mon. 12 Dec.	0.7	" 0.1	0.8	6 days without rain (of which two days 'damp')
Mon. 19 Dec.	1.5	" 0.1	1.6	4 days dry, 2 days mist.
Thur. 29 Dec.	1.7	" 0.1	1.8	0.25 ins. in ten days.
Tues. 3 Jan. '89.	1.15	" 0.1	1.25	5 days dry.

