

All Hallows Church, Ringmore, Kingsbridge, Devon.

Prebendary F.C. Hingeston Randolph

?? circa 1880s.

"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; 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..."

# Medieval wall paintings are revealed in blaze of colour

By David Leigh and Tony Parkinson

Last summer a remote, derelict medieval church in South Wales was demolished. It now exists only as a forlorn group of stones on the marshy banks of the River Loughor at the western edge of Glamorgan.

Yet this was no story of vandalism or the hasty act of a zealous developer. The demolition was deliberate and controlled and the position of every significant stone was carefully recorded. The stones will eventually be transported to the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagan's near Cardiff, where the church will be rebuilt and reconsecrated.

Why this church has been accorded such an extraordinary treatment is that it contained an almost complete scheme of medieval painted decoration. The paintings, too, have been removed and are being restored in the conservation laboratories of the archaeology department at University College, Cardiff.

They will eventually be re-instated on the walls of the rebuilt church, the losses made good, so that visitors will see just what the inside of a medieval church looked like: not a gloomy, bare stone interior, but a blaze of colour, pictures on every wall, bright geometric and floral patterns on every arch and around every window.

The medieval church of St Teilo at Llandeilo Tal-y-Bont was abandoned for services in 1972, but even then it had seen only three services a year since 1852.

The church was scheduled as an ancient monument, mainly because of the exceptionally fine roof timbers and because of small areas of pigment which had become apparent through gaps in the whitewash and which suggested to the staff of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales the possibility of wall paintings.

Scheduling provided no real protection to such a remote

building and in 1984 the slates were stolen from its roof. This event spurred the commission to investigate the possible paintings further. The surprising result of these investigations was the discovery of colour underlying the whitewash on almost every internal wall surface.

Dr Eurwyn Wiliam, of the Welsh Folk Museum, had been on the look-out for just such a church to add to its array of early buildings. Taking down the building demanded prior removal of the paintings; and at some speed since they were cruelly exposed to the weather.

A team of two staff, Dr David Leigh and David Watkinson, and six undergraduate conservation students from the department of archaeology at University College Cardiff began work on the wall paintings in May 1985.

Their first task was to consolidate with resins the already exposed pigment areas, some of which were on plaster which was hanging off the stone walls. The next and major task was to remove all the remaining lime-wash overlying the paintings.

This phase of the operation provided the greatest excitement as hour by hour more of the paintings were exposed to view for the first time for more than 400 years. The extent and the subject matter of the revealed images were truly remarkable.

On the north wall of the nave was a unique scene: the head and shoulders of Christ, staring outwards from the wall, with curly hair falling to each shoulder. On either side two ugly faces with bulbous noses face towards Christ and from their mouths flies spittle which falls down his face. This is the biblical scene of the Mocking of Christ, thought not to be depicted on any other surviving wallpainting in the British Isles.

Next to this is the figure of

Christ with his right hand raised in blessing. Elsewhere there is the scene of Christ displayed to the crowd, beneath the words *Ecce Homo*, complete with a crown of thorns and a ball and chain. There is a probable scene of a deposition, and not far from that a picture of the dead Christ.

Clearly these paintings, together with an angel of passion, comprise parts of a Passion cycle. They are of the early sixteenth century and by somebody who knew something of the current Renaissance styles, to judge by the painted architectural details.

There are other paintings not connected with the Passion cycle, and of varying dates. Perhaps most impressive of all is a full-length portrait of around 1400 of St Catherine holding a long sword, with, at her side, the large wheel with curved knife-like blades round its rim.

Such a wealth and diversity of surviving paintings in a single church is exceptional within any church in the British Isles, and is quite unheard of in Wales. There is no doubt that this is the richest discovery of wall-paintings in Wales for many years.

The policy adopted on restoring the paintings is to infill missing areas of colour where one can be reasonable certain of the artist's intention, using slightly different shades of removable colour. The infilled areas will be detectable but not obtrusive.

The most important paintings should be complete in time for an exhibition in Cardiff later this year. Thereafter they will go back into the church after it has been transported and rebuilt.

Dr David Leigh is lecturer in conservation at University College, Cardiff. Tony Parkinson is an investigator for the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments (Wales) at Aberystwyth.



The Mocking of Christ, a wall painting that was exposed in St Teilo's Church.

The Times

(mid) February  
1987



Bigbury 810663

The Vicar,

Ringmore,

Kingsbridge,

Dr. Chris Brooks,  
48 Park Street,  
Crediton,  
Devon. EX17 3EH

TQ7 4HL

29 May 1987.

Dear Dr. Brooks,

Ringmore Chancel Arch.

When we spoke on the telephone after I had received your letter of 14 April (addressed to the Rev. George Corbett, now retired as our Rector), you said that, initially, you had been trying to find out about the Victorian decoration put up by Prebendary Hingston Randolph.

One of our real villagers tells me that she has one of the metal sheets which used to cover the nave walls. She remembers that, at the time of their removal from the church ( ? in the 1930's), her uncle, who had done a good deal of craft work for H-R and admired him very much, had brought the sheet away to preserve it. When his bungalow was being altered after his death, she had found the sheet and acquired it.

I have also come across an old (again probably of the 1930's) photograph of the church, which I have had copied. I enclose a copy should you wish to retain it. I have also taken a couple more photographs of the painting, one being a close-up of the pattern, which may be of use to the DAC.

Yours sincerely



R. C. Trant.  
Churchwarden.

Ringmore

Kingsbridge,

Devon. TQ7 4HL

8 July, 1987

Mr. David Perry,  
5 Church Lane,  
Chipping Norton,  
Oxfordshire OX7 5HS

All Hallows Church, Ringmore.

We spoke on the telephone about the mural decoration on the chancel arch of Ringmore Church, which Dr. Chris Brooks of Exeter Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches had mentioned to you. You said that you would be interested to visit Ringmore and to give a detailed report on the decoration; you estimated that the total cost of such a report would not be in excess of £100.

I have discussed the proposal with the Standing Committee of the Ringmore PCC and we would be glad if you would carry out this assignment to enable us and others concerned with such matters to decide on any action which should be taken in connection with the decoration.

I am advised that, to be of value, the terms of the report should be quite specific and should concentrate on the following matters :-

1. The physical condition of the paint and the plaster ground.
2. The original painting technique and the constitution of the medieval paint.
3. The means of removing the render that has been splashed onto the scheme.
4. The extent of the nineteenth-century overpainting, how well it is adhering, and whether there are any physical problems in its relationship to the medieval paint.
5. The extent to which all the medieval paint has been revealed.
6. The options for conservation and the extent of what can be conserved.
7. The options for cleaning and the likely appearance of the scheme after cleaning.
8. The cost of any work undertaken, related to the different options available under 6 and 7.



# THE PERRY LITHGOW PARTNERSHIP

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V.A.T. REGISTRATION NO. 348 7765 03

7th September 1987

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

Dear Mr. Trant

All Hallows Church, Ringmore

Thank you for your letter.

Unfortunately I have been unable to make the time to carry out the inspection of your wall paintings and fear that no date seems possible before October.

We will be working in Wareham during that month and would be happy to look at the paintings then.

I understand however, that this delay may not suit your plans and you may wish to contact other conservators. If however the October date is acceptable, please let me know as soon as possible to avoid any further delays.

Yours sincerely

*David Perry*

David Perry

Telephoned Mr. Perry & left message<sup>①</sup> that I would be away in October  
① that the arrangement I had suggested (in my 8 July) still stood.

8/11. Since he had not arrived, telephoned Mr. Perry today. He had  
not received my message of 9/9 !! (He said that he had been having  
problems with his answering machine - to the best of my memory, it was not a  
machine which took the message.) He is very sorry, since the Wareham

R.D. 9/11



# MICHELIN

Michelin Tyre Public Limited Company

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Harrow, Middx. HA1 2DQ  
telex: 919071 fax: 01-863 0680  
tel: 01-861 2121

dcb/sr

14 September 1987

Mr R C Trant  
The Vean  
Ringmore  
Kingsbridge  
Devon  
TQ7 4HL

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter of 27th August. We apologise for the delay in replying.

We are sorry that you should not have found the reference to Parson's Quay in our guide 'England - The West Country' and following your comments we shall consider most carefully the possibility of an index reference to the text which is included on page 114 under the heading 'River Tamar'.

We are sorry that you should have had such difficulty but trust you will remain confident in our publications.

Yours faithfully  
MICHELIN TYRE PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY

Tourism Department

*Parson's Quay, Landulph, Cornwall. The quay is one of several marking the river banks on either side. Once used to embark the lead, silver, tin, copper & arsenic mined locally. The quays now serve as pleasure craft moorings. Parson's Quay was, in addition, an embarkation point in 15C for pilgrims setting out on the venturesome journey to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain.*



0548 810 663

The Veian  
Ringmore  
Kingsbridge  
Devon TQ7 4HL

Your ref deb/sr

Tourism Department  
Michelin Tyre plc.  
Davy House  
Lyon Road  
Harrow, Middx., HA1 2DQ

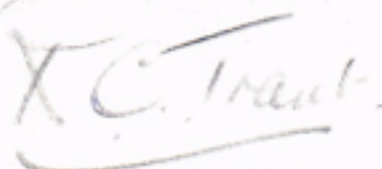
17 September 1987.

Dear Sir,

I am much obliged for your letter of 14 September.  
I shall be going to Plymouth for the check to the car before  
our Iberian trip and will check the reference you have given  
in case it has a bearing on our search.

Should anything of interest turn up I will keep  
you informed in case it might be worth including a reference  
to Ringmore in a future edition of "The West Country".  
I have been told that the revisers of Pevsner are quite  
interested.

Yours faithfully,



R.C. Trant.

Sr. Keil n. Prof.

1. The Information Office in the Santiago suggested that I should get in touch with you about my enquiry. I do hope that ~~I am~~ you will be interested.

2. I am the senior layman ("churchwarden") in my small parish in England where our church dates from the thirteenth century. ~~The fact was~~ <sup>changed</sup> ~~unapproachable~~

It was restored <sup>over</sup> ~~from~~ <sup>100</sup> ~~one~~ hundred years ago when the

parish priest was also an archaeologist. The walls <sup>(and richly adorned with colour)</sup>

of the nave had been plastered throughout; sadly he found that the exterior walls had become ~~wet~~ <sup>rotten</sup> everywhere so

that the plaster was rotten and the paintings were destroyed — fragments showed that a Crucifixion

was painted near the pulpit and a St. Christopher with the Child <sup>opposite</sup> the main door.

Above the Chancel arch, the wall looking westward <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ in the 1870's, ~~was~~ covered with coarse plaster and whitewash; over the <sup>centuries</sup> ~~years~~ successive sets of the Decalogue had been ~~then~~ painted on this. However beneath the coarse plaster was a thin, hard, firm plaster, on which he discovered the diaper-pattern



diagon in the ~~diagonal~~ photographs which I enclose.  
(The differing colours result from using different photographic films. - my wife considers that the colour in (2) is more correct than those in (1) & (3).)

The painting is beginning to excite interest among antiquarians and conservationists, but so far no one has produced a satisfactory explanation of the diaper pattern. One possibility is that it copies some designs from an illuminated manuscript. Another - the reason for my call on you - came from a visiting priest who asked me what connection Ringmore had with St. James? Since I knew of none, he suggested that a <sup>mediaeval</sup> parishioner had made the

to Compostela

- Pilgrimage/ and on his return was allowed to decorate the wall with this pattern as a symbol of his connection with Santiago. Our parish is on the south coast of Devon, about 25 kms. east of Plymouth (on the River Tamar) from <sup>which place</sup> ~~whence~~ it is known that pilgrims from England did sail to la Coruña or Vigo, so that this is not an <sup>absurd</sup> ~~impossible~~ proposition. - if the pattern has ~~any~~ some connection with ~~the~~ ~~San~~ Santiago.

This suggestion has not met with much favour among the ~~some~~ few experts with whom it has been discussed. However a casual visitor to the church did suggest that she had seen <sup>on a recent visit there</sup> something similar in France, and <sup>tried</sup> ~~I have been trying~~ to see <sup>if</sup> I could find anything <sup>similar</sup> in the churches on the Pilgrim routes. ~~but she~~ was prevented from doing so.

Since ~~my~~ wife and I are <sup>travelling</sup> ~~spending~~ through the Spain and Portugal, I thought that I should at least try to show the pictures in Santiago and elsewhere in the hope that the pattern might be recognised. I have already had



two suggestions, (<sup>both</sup> quite unprompted) one that ~~it~~  
<sup>could be</sup> "Moorish", the other that it showed "Arab  
influences".

§ If you are able to give me any  
possible origin of the  
information about the pattern, I shall be  
greatly indebted most grateful. The art  
experts are ~~very~~ saying that <sup>the painting</sup> it is the best example  
of late mediæval work in Devon and possibly in  
the South West of England, so that all the information  
that can be gathered about it will be of value.  
I enclose an International Reply Coupon for your reply  
and the return of the photographs please.

I apologise for not ~~being~~ <sup>finding</sup> a Spanish speaker in  
Portugal to translate this for you. If you wish to reply in  
Spanish, please do <sup>not hesitate to do so</sup> as I have a friend in England who has  
been a teacher of your language.

Santiago "Moorish" - information office.

(Sunday) Coimbra (young student guides at Museo Machado de Castro.) "Arabic", immediate.

Granada. (Sunday): Museums in the Palace of Charles V closed  
(Of course) two guards shown decoration picture said "here".

Priest with little English but some French very interested  
quite certain that there was some link with decorations  
in the Alcazar.

Córdoba girl in art shop. - "not here; here Mussulman. Possibly Granada".

Dr. Chris Brooke, 48 Park Street, Crediton EX 17 3EH.

Dear Dr Brooke. As I may have to dash off to the States in a few days (urgent family business) I thought I would let you have this line for interest. My wife & I have just come back from a month in Spain & Portugal and since our planning led that way, I thought that I would take the chance photographs to see if by chance there was anything to find or found at Santiago de Compostela.

I went to the Information Office and the Director was very interested. He referred me to a Prof. Ramón Ortíz Trujillo, in the Faculty of Geography & History (History of Art) at the University "who was bound to know". Meanwhile the office staff expressed the general view that it was "Moorish". (This shocked me). I went to the Univ. where the Prof. was lecturing and, sadly, did not come back to his office afterwards, as expected. I waited an hour but we had to push on, so I left him a note saying I would write.

As we were going down into ex - "Moorish" territory, I thought



I ~~would make some~~ had better make some more checks, by showing just the large photograph of the detail of the pattern first, without comment. In Coimbra (Portugal), it was Sunday but the Museum Machado de Castro was open and the young guides there - students, I guess or new graduates - immediately said "Arab".

Back in Spain, we went to Granada to show our friends the Alhambra. Another Sunday but this time the Museum of Fine Arts in the Emperor Charles V's Palace was closed. However, two of the attendants outside said "here" and a priest I met just outside was very interested. He had possibly a little more English than my Spanish but we managed with that and some French. He seemed quite certain that there was some link with the decoration in the Alcázar.

On the way back up Spain, we went to Córdoba and I tried it out on a girl in an art shop who said "No, not here. Here is Mussulman art. This is Moorish, possibly Granada".

~~So there you are, so far.~~ I did write to Prof. Otero Nuez with the pictures when we stopped in the Algarve but have had ~~not~~ no reply yet. I intend, when I have time, to write to the Granada Museum director and see what they say.

~~The~~ So there you are, so far - nothing firm or definitive, merely bits of "hearsay" (? see-say) evidence which amusingly match. If it should turn out to be right though of course the mystery deepens - who knew & why.

Bay Trees Slapton  
Kingsbridge Devon TQ7 2PN  
Kingsbridge 580564

Nov 18th.

Dear Mr Grant

I have just got back after a few days away and received your kind invitation to the occasion<sup>\*</sup> at Bigbury. Unfortunately I shall be in Plymouth that day and shall not be able to come.

You certainly seem to be going to a lot of trouble to solve your mystery - I hope your detective work leads to some interesting developments. You deserve it!

Yours sincerely

Cyril H. Ingram

\* Installation  
of Arthur Dowden.



Bightury  
(6543)  
810663

The Veon  
Ringsmore  
Kingsbridge

Devon TQ7 4HL

Dr. Chris Brooks,  
48 Park Street,  
Crediton,  
Devon EX17 3EH

5 December 1987

Dear Dr. Brooks,

Ringsmore Chancel Arch.

My wife and I, with a couple of friends, spent October driving through Spain and Portugal. As one of our visiting priests had suggested that there might be a link with Santiago de Compostela in the pattern of the decoration, and we were going to Santiago anyway, I took my photographs of the pattern with me just in case.

At Santiago, the Director of the Tourist Information Office was very interested and referred me to Prof. Ramón Ortero Tuñes, in the Faculty of Geography & History (History of Art) at the University "who was bound to know". Meanwhile the office staff had expressed the general view that it was "Moorish". (This shook me). I went to the University, where the Prof. was lecturing; I went back when he was supposed to be in his office but although I waited for an hour, he did not appear - I left him a note saying that I would write, since we had to press on.

In view of the suggestion that there might be a Moorish element in the design, and we were going down into that area, I thought I had better try some more enquiries. This I did by starting with the large photograph of the design without any comment. In Portugal - Coimbra - it was Sunday but the Museum Machado de Castro was open and the young guides (fresh Art students/graduates I guess) immediately said "Arab". In Lisbon, they wouldn't comment - anyway there was a language barrier! Back in Spain, we went to Granada to show our friends the Alhambra; it was another Sunday and this time the Museo de Bellas Artes was closed. However two attendants of the Alhambra said "Here" and a priest taking some people round the gardens was very interested. He had possibly a little more English than my Spanish but we managed with that and some French. He seemed quite certain that there was a link with the decorations in the Alcázar.

On our way north we went to Córdoba and I tried again with the reply "Not here - here Mussulman. This Moorish, Perhaps Granada".

I did write to Prof. Ortero Tuñes when we stopped in the Algarve, with the pictures, but so far have heard nothing..

I intend to write to the Granada Museum when I get some more photographs developed.

So there you are, so far - nothing firm or definitive, merely bits of hearsay (? see - say) evidence which amusingly happen to match. Should they turn out to be right, of course the mystery deepens - how? why? who?

Of course we must have the analysis of the paint; Kyr Perry has not yet been - he replied in September saying that he could come in October when he was at Marcham and I rang him at once to say yes. On my return from Spain, I found that he had ~~been~~ not been, so rang him and found that he had not had my message.... He was going to write to me but has not yet done so. I shall have to write again.

Yours sincerely

R. G. Trant.

cc The Archdeacon of Totnes

Lt. Col. Grimshaw.

E<sup>no</sup> Sr. Director

Museo de Bellas Artes

Palacio de Carlos Cuarto

Alhambra

Granada



Bigbury-on-Sea  
(0548) 810 663

The Veau  
Ringmore  
Kingsbridge  
Devon TQ7 4HL

The Perry Lithgow  
Partnership,  
5 Church Lane  
Chipping Norton  
Oxon, OX7 5NS

18 April 1988

All Hallows Church, Ringmore.

We don't seem to have much luck in getting in touch with each other. However, my annual church meeting has had to be adjourned until next Sunday, so we still have time. I shall be glad to know if you have any idea when you may be able to visit Ringmore and report on the wall decoration. I had been hoping to hear from you since we spoke on 8 November last and you said that you would write.

I am still waiting to hear from Spain whether the suggestions that the design is Moorish/Arabic in origin has any validity. I shall be writing to the Museum in Granada about it, as there have been two if not three, pointers in the direction of the Alcazar there.

R.C. Trant.

P.S. I have recently met a practitioner in another part of your conservation mysteries who knows of you and explained some of the problems of the business!

Mrs. Perry telephoned 23 April 1988

Friday 29 April 1988. = 1030-1100?

John M-S will bring ladder. RT 25%





The Veau  
Ringmore  
Kingsbridge  
Devon TQ7 4HL

Prof. Ramon Ortero Tuncz  
Facultad de Geografia e Historia  
c/ Plaza Universidad, 1  
SANTIAGO  
Spain.

4 May 1988

Muy estimado Profesor

Le escribí en inglés en manuscrit del Algarve incluyendo algunas fotografías de la decoración del arco del entre coro de nuestra pequeña iglesia aquí en Devon y pidiendo si por casualidad Vd podría darnos informaciones acerca del dibujo de la decoración - que puede ser del siglo 14 - 15.

Después de partir del Portugal visitamos Granada y Córdoba. Desgraciadamente escogimos Domingo para ir al Alhambra y el Museo de Bellas Artes estaba cerrado pero un asistente del Alhambra y un cura con un grupo de amigos parecían ciertos de que había un eslabón entre las fotografías y algo en el Alcazar. Espero escribir al Director del Museo cuando haya sacado mejoras fotografías que enviarle.

En Córdoba, por desgracia, no tuve tiempo de visitar la Universidad o un museo pero alguien (quien parecía experto) comentó "No, no, no aquí. Aquí Musulman. Creo Granada."

Todo esto es muy sorprendente y interesante. Me pregunto si Vd ha podido reconocer algo? Estaré muy agra decido saber si es el caso.

Remito adjunto un cupón de respuesta internacional.

Soy de Vd af<sup>mo</sup> atento y S.S.







Bisbury-on-Sea  
810663

The Veon,  
Ringmore,  
Kingsbridge,  
Devon, TQ7 4HL

Dr. David Leigh,  
University College,  
Cardiff.

30 March 1987.

Dear Sir

I was most interested to read the recent article in The Times by you and Mr. Parkinson, both for its general content and for a particular reference at the end of the fourth paragraph - "bright geometric and floral patterns on every arch".

Oh dear!  
R.C.T.  
Dec 1999  
I am the warden of the church in Ringmore (H.R. SK 652460); I enclose a photograph of the south side of the chancel arch; the entire arch is covered with this decoration. It seems to us here to be an unusual pattern and I have not yet found anyone who knows of anything similar, except for a visitor last summer who thought she remembered something like it in Normandy or Brittany - a possibility, since we are less than a mile from the coast.

Probendary Hingston Randolph, the Rector here for sixty years, who restored the church from its very dilapidated state, wrote about the decorations that he found; I enclose an extract since there appears to be a distinct similarity to the decoration in St. Tello's.

Having reached this point in my draft for this letter, I then read the following entry in our Visitor's Book :-

"28.3.87. Dr. Martin Cherry, Conservation Officer, Leicestershire County. There is good reason to believe the decoration above the chancel arch to be late medieval. The hard render that has been applied below it is forcing damp upwards, and this is beginning to destroy the painted plasterwork. Professional advice should be sought urgently".

We are most grateful to Dr. Cherry (to whom I am copying this letter) for his comments and will ask our Diocesan experts for advice. Our first reaction is that we think that the 'Tyrolean' finish on the plaster of the church walls was applied carelessly in the angle of the arch and has discoloured the decoration. There is also a patch (actually spreading over the four diamonds in the left top corner of the photograph, but not discernible through the shadow) above the centre of the arch. This may be due to some cleaning attempt in the past. We keep watch on these patches but they appear to be static.

We shall be interested to have any comments and, in particular to know if the pattern has any similarity to those with which you are dealing, has it any meaning or particular significance and could the colours by any chance have a vegetable origin?

Yours sincerely

Never replied!

R. C. Trant.

- Copies
1. Dr. Cherry
  2. Rural Dean
  3. Chairman, Ringmore Historical Society
  4. File

Cardiff College  
had a cut in staff in 1987  
Probably Dr Leigh had moved on!



Bigbury-on-Sea  
810663

The Vicar,

Ringmore,

Kingsbridge,

Devon, TQ7 4HL

The Rural Dean,  
Woodleigh Deanery,  
The Vicarage,  
Devon Road,  
Salcombe, TQ8 8HJ.

30 March 1987

Dear Mr. Rural Dean

I enclose a copy of a letter I have written to the lecturer in conservation at Cardiff University, which is self-explanatory. I also enclose a photocopy of the article in The Times and of my photograph (which I would be glad to have back in due course. I will have more copies made if required or try to take more photographs). Would you pass them on through the appropriate channels please?

Yours sincerely

R. G. Trant.

File





# THE PERRY LITHGOW PARTNERSHIP

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V.A.T. REGISTRATION NO. 348 7765 03

DP/SMP

25th May 1988

01608

82  
64  
80

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

Dear Mr. Trant

I was most pleased to meet you at All Hallows on 29th April 1988.

I enclose my report, photographs and account for the inspection.

If you need any further information, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

*Sue Perry*

pp David Perry

Enclosures :






1/15. Mason. Chancel Arch - conservation of painting  
The P.C.C. decided in 1987 that up to

£100 could be spent on the initial report on  
the painting on the chancel arch.

The Conservator has now sent in his report and  
his invoice for £92 and we should now pay it.

18 ~~June~~ <sup>June</sup> 1988

  
Churchwarden

Paid 18/6. Chq. 10871 £92.



E. Clive House Esq.

Dear Sir,

I am the churchwarden of All Hallows Ringmore where ~~the entire upper part above the front papilion of the west side of~~ the chancel arch is decorated with a ~~printed~~ diaper or a diaper pattern in an obviously rustic ~~style~~. Since I ~~returned~~ <sup>came</sup> to ~~live~~ <sup>live</sup> on my retirement (my family are South Devonian, but I was born at Harefield - across the <sup>Colne</sup> valley from Gerrards Cross) I have been interested in this decoration and ~~to~~ <sup>in retrospect</sup> suspicious of the story that it was Victorian. In the last two years by a series of coincidences - more correctly, "happenstances" - other people have become interested; we have had a conservator's report confirming that the plaster was medieval but none has any firm views on the motif within the diaper pattern.

One or two suggestions have been put forward; the view down the valley to the sea certainly has two ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> in-curling hills which could form the basis of the design but the crossed palm fronds(?) in gold in the bottom of the lozenge are then odd. A visiting Priest ~~has~~ asked what connection Ringmore had



with St. James ~~and~~ to which I had to reply "not  
so far as I am aware." He thought he ~~was~~  
~~strong tradition~~ <sup>He thought he was</sup> ~~There is of~~ <sup>was</sup> a  
strong tradition ~~to~~ <sup>see</sup> what he could be  
described as "a highly stylized scallop  
shell motif" and suggested that a parishioner  
might have made the pilgrimage. I have since  
discovered that there was a strong tradition of  
Devon folk going to Vigo or Comina by boat  
from Plymouth the Tamar (much more convenient than  
walking all through France and across Spain); ~~so~~  
I gather that this was the first regular fare-paying  
ferry service.

My wife and I happened to be going through  
Santiago a <sup>some time</sup> ~~little while~~ later so I made ~~an~~  
enquiry <sup>Bigbury-on-Sea</sup> there. Unfortunately the professor to  
whom I was referred ~~it~~ was not available and  
has not replied to letters but the information  
~~and~~ <sup>Bigbury-on-Sea</sup> people - not art experts ~~from~~ -  
thought that the design was Moorish! I therefore  
showed the design ~~to~~ <sup>rather</sup> to people in other  
cities. Ce



# DIOCESE OF EXETER

DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
for the CARE of CHURCHES

Diocesan House,  
Palace Gate,  
Exeter EX1 1HX.  
Exeter (0392) 72686

Our Ref: DAC/T.14.2./

Secretary: Miss M. Bethel  
Tel.(home): Topsham (039 287) 3748

7th July, 1988

R.C. Trant Esq.,  
The Vean,  
Ringmore,  
KINGSBRIDGE, Devon,  
TQ7 4HL

Dear Mr. Trant,

RINGMORE ALL HALLOWS: Chancel Arch wallpainting

Thank you for your letter of 24th June enclosing a copy of the estimate for conservation of the above from Perry Lithgow Partnership.

Dr. Brooks reported to the Committee last year about the wallpainting, and I will put your letter on the agenda for the next meeting on 22nd July, in the hope that we can make some helpful suggestions about sources of grant-aid.

Yours sincerely,

Hon. Secretary

Bigbury-on-Sea  
(0548) 810 663

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

24 August 1988.

The Secretary,  
The Council for the Care of Churches,  
83, London Wall,  
London. EC2M 5HA

Dear Sir,

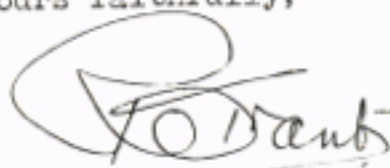
Ringmore All Hallows, Dioc. Exeter.

Chancel Arch wallpainting.

I enclose a copy of a letter I wrote to the Exeter D.A.C. recently. The D.A.C. have now replied that the PCC should apply to your Council for a grant to enable the wall-painting to be cleaned, repaired and preserved. I shall be glad to know if this letter will suffice for the application or if there are further details which the Council will require.

Photographs and some background information on the paintings are available should they be useful.

Yours faithfully,



R. C. Trant,  
Churchwarden.

cc Rector  
Dr. Brooks

(Spare)

14<sup>th</sup> August 1995

Dear Ello Dicks,

You may remember to visit  
my mother and I passed to you  
in Nov 1998. We enjoyed  
it all so much.

We were very intrigued  
by the bell design in Ringmore  
Church, and made a sketch of it.  
Some friends were showing me some  
photographs from Turkey recently, and  
the pavement showed me a design  
very similar to Ringmore. I thought



you might like to have it  
anyhow

I hope you are glad  
herbans are well. You need  
have too, fitchy of the L. d. sp.

All good with,

Yours sincerely,

Priska L. H. d. sp.

0458 x  
0548 810 663

The Vicar  
Ringsmore  
Kingsbridge  
Devon TQ7 4NL

Your ref.  
DAS/T.14.2/88.370

11 February 1989

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

Dear Miss Bethel,

Ringsmore All Hallows.  
Chancel arch wallpainting.

Following your letter of 4 August 1988, I wrote to the Central Council for the Care of Churches. Dr. Gompert replied on behalf of Mr. Burnan saying that we ought to get the dampness to which David Perry had referred cleared first and holding out little chance of help in respect of the conservation. I discussed this with our architect and we agreed that I should take weekly readings with a moisture meter together with notes of external weather conditions over a period, after which he would visit the church.

This has now happened and I enclose a copy of his report. I expect our PCC will accept this and go ahead with the work on the gutters - I presume we do not need any cover for this.

The problem of the air-flow is more difficult. The two windows to which Mr. Barnaby refers are the only ones with plain glass in the church. The window in the "north chancel aisle" measures 38" x 38"; the plate glass has been cracked at some time in the past and could be replaced with advantage. If the PCC agrees to this, we shall need to get an estimate. Has the DAS any firms on their lists who make louvre frames? I shall be grateful for advice.

I am copying this to the Archdeacon of Totnes and to Dr. Brooks as well as to Rector here.

Yours sincerely

  
R. G. Trant,  
Churchwarden.



The Churchwarden All Hallows Church  
Rugby.

21 July, 1957.

Miss Luke, Dampney etc.

27 K New Street

Plymouth.

Dear Sirs,

We have a problem of damp in a  
which is affecting a medieval wall painting. One  
of the remedies our architect suggests is that we should  
increase the air flow through the church; he says "a  
casement could be fitted to the transept north window  
and, more readily, accessible, have framed glass replaced  
in the north chancel aisle window."

I approached the D.N.C., who are not sure what "have  
framed glass" is but think that the intention is for a panel  
of glass about a foot high, hinged at the bottom, which  
opens into a hopper. They suggest that one of these  
should be inserted into each window and gave me your  
name in this connection. (I have also seen the work you  
have recently done in our sister church at Bigbury).

The two windows are:-

- (i) in the north chancel aisle, a single light  $38\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{8}$ "  
glazed in plain plate glass, at some time cracked without  
displacing any glass.
- (ii) the central light of the 3 light window in the vestry,  
in the north transept, at present glazed with leaded  
glass,  $13\frac{3}{4}$ " between the stone.

We should be most grateful to have  
an estimate of the cost for this work.

Yours sincerely

Rang L, D. "1/9

Hopes to visit by end  
of this week.





Notes

On 6 Sept. 1989, John Milne-Smith<sup>1</sup> made a close inspection of the guttering on the south wall from the tower east to the external chancel arch and visually to the east end. (See drawings)  
The tiles of the nave roof overhung the existing 3" half-round guttering by 2"; from the tower wall to the edge of the belfry stair roof the length of guttering is 6'5" and from the belfry stair wall to the nave end is 8'10" (4.63 metres overall). The guttering along the arch wall is 0.46 m. and the length ~~to the~~ from the chancel wall to the east end is 7.40 m.

The slope of the nave guttering is constant until about 2' from the arch when it increases visibly. The chancel guttering has a reasonable fall from the east to the running outlet against the arch but has a decided horizontal bulge in the middle, following the bulge in the chancel wall and the similar curve in the slate edges.

We found a hole in the stone work of the arch just above and behind the guttering and the mortar around this appeared to be weak; the lead sheet set under the tiles and bent at right angles up the west side of the arch wall was covered with mortar for most of its length but ~~about~~ <sup>there</sup> was a gap in the mortar for about 12"-18" up from the wall end. Clearly this all needs repointing as the architect's report recommends.

Since the recommended gutter size is 3" across and 4" in depth against the present 3" half round, the <sup>new</sup> capacity would be about 70% more it seemed possible that the need for a separate down pipe for the nave section might be overcome especially if the extra slope in the present run was smoothed out. The architect had already noted that there was a gravestone close against the nave wall which made the provision of a new gully difficult.

I therefore spoke on the telephone to Mr. Barnaby on 8 Sept.  
and

he agreed that this might be attempted so long as we kept the position carefully in mind - when rain finally comes.

He was interested to hear of the loss of mortar in the arch & agreed that this was probably the cause of the problem ~~and that the mortar~~ should ~~not be~~ be. He would not object to a reduction of the cement content in the mortar mix, but thought that there should be remain a half part.

45

10/9/89

£40 K. 250-300 R

Memo

It was reported at the P.C.C. on 14 May 1990 that nothing had been heard from Luke Dampier. I telephoned on 15 May to the firm and was told that an estimate had been passed by phone for "£40 for the job at Kingston and £250-£300 for Ringmore".

~~This repeats the amount mentioned~~ This repeats the amount mentioned to the P.C.C. on 20 Nov. 1989.



The Vein,

Ringmore,

Kingsbridge,

Devon, TQ7 4HL

*9 November*  
25 October 1990.

Keith Critchlow Esq.,  
 Department of Islamic Studies,  
 The Royal College of Art,  
 London.

(Kensington Gore  
 SW7 2GU)

Dear Mr. Critchlow,

At a family gathering in the beginning of this year, I asked for help from my niece, Carolyn Trant, and she suggested that I should approach you - hence my temerity. I am the churchwarden here; our church has painting on the chancel arch which has now been declared medieval, possibly late 15th century from the plaster. Pevsner made no comment on it when he saw the church, possibly because the nave walls were then covered with sheets of metal put up by our Victorian Rector and restorer, and Pevsner condemned all the painting as Victorian. I have been told that the new Editor of Pevsner is impressed by the arch, while another expert on church decoration thinks it is the best in Devon and possibly in the South West.

A year or two ago, a visiting cleric asked if we had any connection with St. James; he thought that he could see something of the cockleshell in the pattern. This was a new idea to me; I cannot see it myself though I agree that there is a possible...transmutation (?). However, I was going through Santiago later in the year and while there, I asked the Information Office for a possible lead. They sent me to Prof. ~~Dr~~ Ramón Ortero Tuñez at the University, but unfortunately he did not turn up when expected - and has/replied to two letters (my translator tells me that this is not uncommon in Spain) nor returned my photographs. When I went back to the Tourist Office they shook me severely; looking at the pictures, they said that it was possibly a "Moorish" design.

/not

Having recovered from my shock, I decided to show the photographs wherever people might be interested, with the following results (I showed them first the pattern alone) :-

Coimbra (young art student guides at Museo Machado de Castro)  
 "Arab" at once.

Lisbon - complete language block; no comment.

Granada (Sunday - Museo de Bellas Artes closed)

- (i) two attendants outside the Palace - "Here".
- (ii) a local priest - in French - very interested; quite certain that there was link with decorations in the Alcazar. Sadly, no time to check.

Cordoba (Young art shop owner, knowledgeable) immediately  
 "Not here, here Mussulman." (Having read the Michelin,  
 I knew what she meant) "Possibly Granada."



That is as far as I have got - nothing authoritative but quite interesting. (Perhaps I should say that I have looked at a number of pilgrim churches on the routes de St. Jacques in France in the hope of seeing something similar - without success.) I ought to write to the Museo in Granada but I am a little chary of trying Spain again. I was wondering whether to try the V. & A. when ~~it~~ I met Carolyn.

Could you suggest where I might turn next, please? I know that if it does turn out to be Arabic/Moorish, then we are off on another trail - who? when? how come? Maybe I'll leave that to my successors. By the way, Devon has been well known for producing pilgrims from wayback. Being typical Devonians of course they did not go to Santiago by Dover and the long walk through France and Spain - they took boats from the Tamar above Plymouth to Vigo or Coruña and walked the twenty or so kilometres up to Santiago.

When we have finished the necessary work to stop damp affecting the painting, we shall have to raise the money to pay for the conservators to work on the plaster and paint; not too much, thank goodness, but we are less than 200 in the village so I need to have as good a story as I can to attract cash from English Heritage or whoever!

*Your sincerely*  


R. G. Trant.

Churchwarden, All Hallows  
 Ringsmore.

The Secretary,  
Fabrics Department,  
Victoria & Albert Museum,  
Kensington,  
LONDON.

6 December 1990

Dear Secretary,

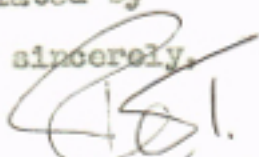
Dr. Critchley of the RCA Visual  
Islamic & Traditional Arts, has suggested  
that I should check the enclosed photographs  
with your department.

The conservator who studied the plaster  
on which the design is painted, dates it  
late 13th century. Various people in Spain  
and Portugal have expressed opinions that the  
design is "Moorish" or "Arabic"; (unfortunately  
my letters to a Spanish art expert have not  
received replies).

If it is, could it perhaps have been  
taken from material brought back some time  
before by a crusader or, later, by a pilgrim  
to Santiago de Compostella (popular in this  
part of the country)? A number of speculative  
suggestions have been made to describe the  
pattern - to which Dr. Critchley has now added  
another.

Any lead which might be given will be  
greatly appreciated by

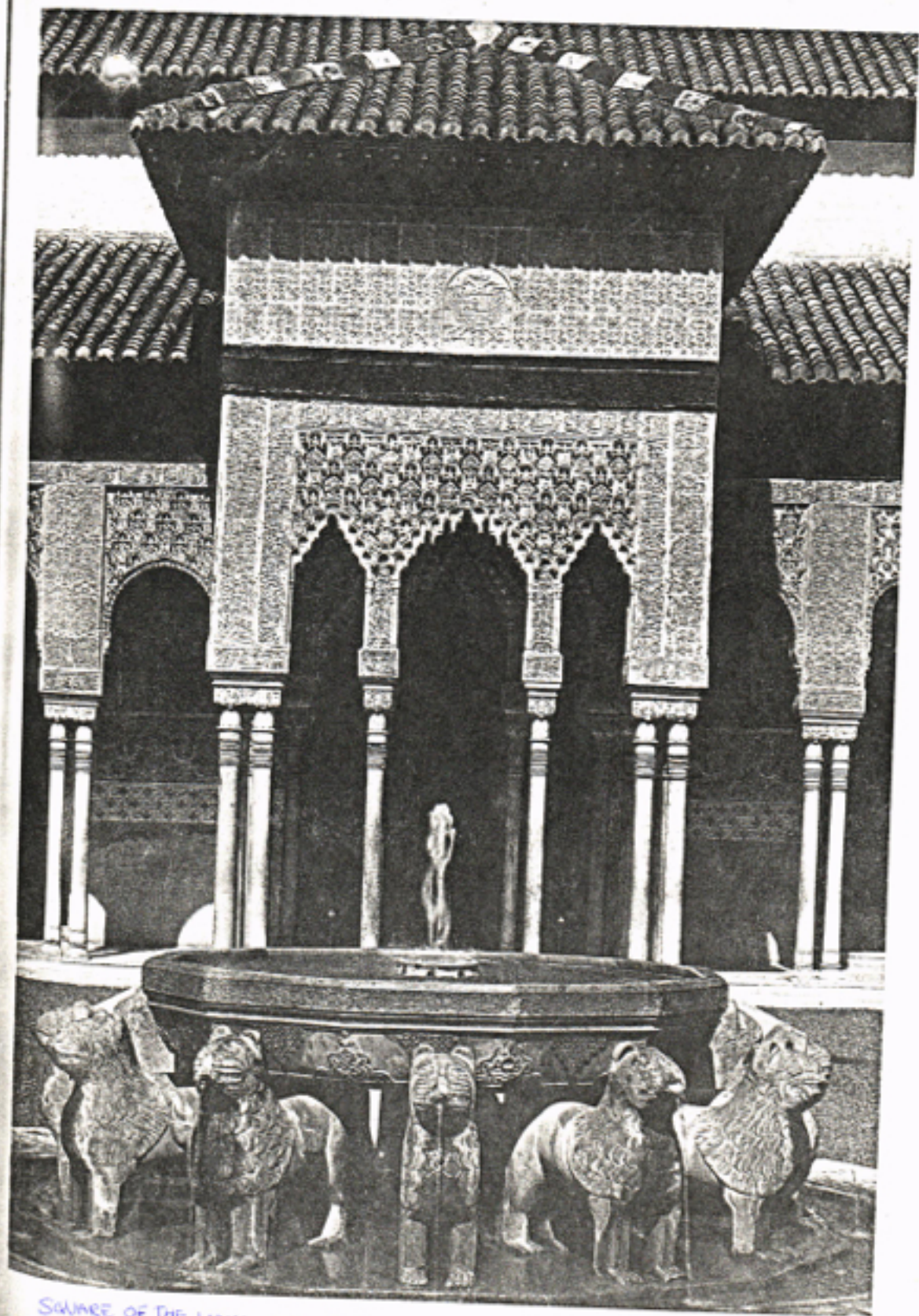
Yours sincerely,



R.C. Trant.

(Churchwarden, All Hallows Church,  
Ringmore.)





SQUARE OF THE LIONS, THE ALHAMBRA FROM: GRANADA BY ANTONIO GALLEGO Y BURIN



## English Heritage

Fortress House 23 Savile Row London W1X 1AB Telephone 071-973 3000 Fax 071-973 3001

Mr G Rogers  
Wheelhouse Barn  
Marwell Farm  
Ringmore  
NR KINGSBRIDGE  
Devon

Direct dial: 071 973 3190

15 June 1992

Dear Mr Rogers

You wrote to English Heritage as long ago as 13 March 1991 about the painting discovered in Ringmore Parish Church and although you had an acknowledgement from our Membership Department, as far as I can make out you have not had any substantive reply from us.

I can only apologise for this appalling inefficiency and bad manners. The fact is that your letter and photograph have only just come to light among the papers of a staff member who has now left the organisation.

The authority on medieval wallpaintings is Dr David Park of the Courtauld Institute of Art, North Block, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 2LS. I suggest that you contact him and I am returning your photograph. The Courtauld Institute is in fact in the process of establishing a nationwide inventory of medieval wallpaintings and they will, I am sure, be interested in your photograph.

I am very sorry that it has taken us so long to reply.

Yours sincerely

A HUNT  
Casework Manager  
Conservation South West

Recd from Mr Rogers  
2/8/92.  
Ackd (m.s.)  
12/8/92.



The Casework Manager  
Conservation South West  
English Heritage  
Fortress House  
23 Savile Row  
L. W1X 1AB.

Dear Mr Hunt

Ringmore Chancel Arch.

You wrote on 15 June 1992 to Mr Rogers  
in reply to his enquiry of 13 March 1991 about the  
painting on ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> chancel arch of our church. Since  
he wrote, Mr Rogers ~~went to working~~ <sup>has been</sup> abroad; ~~and~~ <sup>he</sup> has  
just come back ~~for~~ <sup>leave</sup> on furlough & found your letter.

Since he had offered to ~~contact~~ <sup>to contact</sup> ~~on my~~ <sup>to English Heritage</sup> ~~on my~~ <sup>on my</sup> behalf, he  
has given your letter to me and I thank you for your help

→ (For amusement - I ~~have written~~ <sup>wrote</sup> ~~two~~ <sup>two</sup> letters to  
a Professor in Spain some years ago on this subject and  
have not yet had any reply at all. I am told that this  
is "par for the course".)

I have tried the R.C.A & the V&A, who have  
given me another lead, but I will certainly try  
the Courtauld Institute.

Tel. 0548 810 663

The Vicar,

Ringmore,

Kingsbridge,

Devon, TQ7 4HL.

Dr. David Park,  
The Courtauld Institute of Art,  
North Block,  
Somerset House,  
Strand,  
London WC2R2LS.

16<sup>th</sup> August 1992.

Dear Dr. Park,

All Hallows Church, Ringmore

I have been referred to you by English Heritage, to whom an architect, then resident in our parish, had written about the wall painting on the chancel arch of our church, All Hallows. The west side of the arch is covered with a diaper pattern; the conservator who inspected the paintings for us (David Perry, Perry Lithgow Partnership) reported that the work was "painted in the fresco secco technique". The pattern was most unusual; he could recall anything similar from the literature.

For some years I have been trying to discover where the pattern might have come from. I enclose copies of

(1)

a letter to the RCA setting out the story at the time.

Dr. Critchlow referred me to the V & A, who thought that the source for the painting was unlikely to have been from a Spanish/Islamic textile, but gave me a contact in the Faculty Bellas Artes, Univ. Complutense in Madrid - which I have yet to take up.

(ii) an extract from a local paper in the 1880s. Mr. Randolph was our Rector for many years. (He was an archaeologist, architect and archivist as well).

(iii) Photographs of the arch and of the detail of the pattern.

I shall be most grateful for any information you may be able to give and very happy to see you if you visit the West Country at all.

Yours sincerely,

R. C. Trant,

(Churchwarden)



Compton (Surrey)



FILE COPY

01548 810 663

Mirkland

Ringmore

Kingsbridge

Devon TQ7 4HR

Jeremy Lake Esq.,  
English Heritage  
23 Savile Row,  
London W1X 1AB

27 January 1997

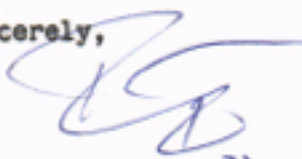
All Hallows Church, Ringmore.

Thank you very much for your letter of 21 January (confirming my belief!). Since you will be amending the entry in respect of the church in general, may I ask you to consider also the reference to the chancel arch?

It reads "Plain chancel arch with C19 painting <sup>above</sup> ~~white~~". Some of us here have never been happy with that description: an architect then resident in our parish wrote to English Heritage <sup>about</sup> ~~about~~ it and Mr. Hunt, the Casework Manager, Conservation South West, replied on 15 June 1992. By then, the writer had gone abroad and he ~~passed~~ the letter to me when he came back on leave; in turn I wrote to Dr. Park at the Courtauld Institute, as suggested. He had never seen anything quite like the wall painting; he thought <sup>it</sup> ~~he~~ is probably 15th or early 16th century work. The conservator who examined it in 1988 said that the plaster was undoubtedly medieval.

We would be very grateful if this could also be looked at.

Yours sincerely,



R.C. Trant,

Churchwarden.

*Min file*

*All errors corrected on  
top copy!  
except one....*

*cc: George*

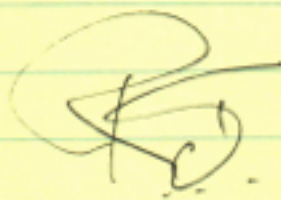


15 October 1998.

1. Rang Mr.D.A.Perry of The Perry Lithgow Partnership who had visited us in 1988 and reported on the wall painting. He has recently retired but

Mr.Lithgow is carrying on .. He gave me Lithgow's number 01608 658 067

2. Rang him in the evening (he is working in St.Albans). He was happy to help. and will look for our file at the weekend. I asked him if he could give me an idea of the present cost of the work Mr.Perry had recommended. (The 1988 figure was £2,150 + VAT; this included all expenses, except of scaffolding.) Since then there have been considerable increases - e.g. the insurance for individuals working up scaffolding is much more than they used to pay. He hopes to be able to give me a rough idea. I said of course we would not take the figure as anything more than that.



13.10.98.

17. 11. 98 Mr. L. Lithgow telephoned this morning.

[He apologised for mislaying his note]

He has examined Mr Perry's papers and estimates that ~~if~~ if nothing further has gone wrong with the painting, the job should ~~be~~ cost around £5,000. Of course there would have to be a proper inspection, as Mr. Perry had ~~made~~ ~~respected~~ ~~to~~ if we wanted

Por favor ??

Trying to be polite  
but he might have asked!

Prof. Ramón Ortero Tuñez

Universidad de Santiago

Faculty of Geography & History (History of Art)

& Facultad de Geografía e Historia

The University of Plaza Universidad 1

Santiago de Compostela

Spain

Dear Prof.

(Señor Excl<sup>mo</sup> Prof ??) <sup>read by</sup> Muy estimado Profesor

I wrote to you in manuscript from the Algarve

Le escribí en inglés en manuscrito del Algarve

enclosing some photographs of <sup>decoration</sup> ~~ornamentation~~ on the chancel

incluyendo algunas fotografías de la decoración del arco

arch of <sup>the</sup> small church here in Devon and asking if

del entre coro de nuestra pequeña iglesia aquí en Devon y pidiendo si

by any chance you could give any information about the

if por casualidad <sup>podría</sup> darnos informaciones acerca del

decoration design of the decoration - which may be of the 13<sup>th</sup>

decoración dibujo de la decoración que puede ser del siglo 13<sup>o</sup>

After we left Portugal, we happened visited

Después de partir del Portugal visitamos

Granada and Córdoba. ~~At~~ Unfortunately, we chose a Sunday

" y " Desgraciadamente escogimos

to go to the Alhambra and the Museo de Bellas Artes was →

Domingo para ir al Alhambra y el Museo de Bellas Artes



closed but an attendant of the Alhambra, and a priest  
estaba cerrado pero un asistente del Alhambra y un cura  
who was showing friends around, ~~was~~ seemed certain that  
con un grupo de amigos parecían ciertos de que  
there was a link between the photographs and something in  
había un eslabón entre las fotografías y algo en  
the Alcázar. I <sup>hope to write to</sup> have been trying to ~~get~~ take better photographs  
el Alcázar. Espero escribir al Director del Museo  
~~to send to~~ the Director of the Museo but have not yet  
~~ago~~ cuando haya sacado ~~mejores~~ mejoras  
been able to take better photographs to send to him.

fotografías que enviarle

At Cordoba, unfortunately, I did not have time to  
En Córdoba, por desgracia, no tuve tiempo de  
~~to visit an expert~~ visit the University or a museum  
visitar la Universidad o un museo

but someone (who appeared to be an expert) commented  
pero alguien (<sup>quien</sup> ~~alguien~~ parecía experto) comentó  
(sic) "No, not here. Here Mussulman. I think Granada."  
"No, no, no aquí Aquí Musulman. Creo Granada."

All this is very surprising and interesting. I wonder  
Todo esto es muy sorprendente y interesante.  
if you have been able to recognise anything? I shall  
Me pregunto si Vd ha podido reconocer algo Estaré  
be most grateful to know if you have.  
muy agradecido saber ~~si~~ si es el caso

I enclose an "International reply coupon" <sup>stamp</sup>  
Remito adjunto un cupón de respuesta  
for your reply. internacional

Note

Mr. David Perry visited us on Friday 29 April, 1988. ~~At~~ (Mr. Mike-Smith - whose ladder was used - was with me and Col. Grimesham joined us during the visit)

Mr. Perry immediately said that the plaster used on the arch was, in the main, undoubtedly medieval. The discoloured patch, roughly circular, <sup>vertically</sup> ~~above~~ the midway between the point of the arch and the roof, was of a very different plaster. Possibly something had been fixed there (? a Rood; the Royal coat-of-arms; doubtfully a window from a rood loft) and filled in at a later date.

There had been some retouching - e.g. the patches of vermillion red, which were obviously different from the original red ochre - but the general painting seemed to be of the ~~the~~ same time as the plaster; at a guess, this might be around 1500 and of a rustic quality. The pattern was most unusual; Mr. Perry had not come across anything like it and could not immediately call something similar to mind from the literature. There might be a connection with stonework screens, where the black patches would represent <sup>the</sup> holes through the screen.

In general, there appeared to be little that needed to be done. It would probably be difficult to remove the ~~render~~ render which had been splashed on the arch when the nave walls were being rendered but he would consider this in his report. At first thought, he would like to consider using a lime wash to "fix" the decoration ~~at~~ which in places showed signs of wear. This was a comparatively simple job but would necessitate the use of scaffolding.

Mr. Perry would ~~give~~ <sup>write</sup> his report on the lines of Mr. Schofield's



2/10/87 Nora Spoke to Dr. Brooks on the telephone about  
the entry in the Church Visitors' Book.

He said that it had been made by Peter Burman  
the Secretary of the Council for the Care of Churches, whom  
he (Mike Brooks) had brought down to see the chancel decoration  
(and the windows) so that when any request for funds was made,  
Mr. Burman would know what was being talked about.

Mr. Burman had been impressed by the decoration, ~~and hoped that~~  
~~as~~ As regards the windows, Dr. Brooks wondered if the  
East window and one of the south chancel windows could have been  
designed by Pugin. He thought that there were parallels and  
would be grateful <sup>to know</sup> if there was any evidence from Rev. Hingston -  
Randolph's papers as to who had designed them.

I spoke to Lt. Col. Grimsshaw who had some information  
and would send it to Dr. Brooks.

FB  
2/10

8/11 See note on letter of 7/9 re telecon 8/11.

Copy of entry in the Church Visitors Book  
(1987)

" 24 September / Peter Burman / Council for the Care of Churches  
↳ London / Wonderful wall painting  
and 19<sup>th</sup> c glass ! " |

48 Park Street,  
Crediton,  
Devon.  
EX17 3EH.

Mr R.C. Trant,  
The Veau,  
Ringmore,  
PQ7 4HL.

3 July 1987

Dear Mr Trant,

As promised I recently visited Ringmore again in company with John Schofield, who is a conservation and repair architect of considerable experience. In his view the condition of the mural scheme does give rise to concern. The principle worry is that the paint appears to be beginning to flake away from the lime plaster to which it was applied when the scheme was first carried out. The hard render to the side walls of the nave and the base of the tower arch may be a contributory factor in this process, though the main reason is probably simple age. There has been some overpainting in the nineteenth century, but this appears to be largely confined to the red. As far as he could tell, the cracking that is evident on parts of the plaster presents no immediate danger.

Such conclusions as John Schofield was able to come to were necessarily tentative. Even so, he was sure that, if the mural decoration is to be made secure for the future, then it needs expert re-fixing, which may involve cleaning as well. This can only be done by a conservator experienced in working on medieval paintwork and plaster. The first step would be to commission a detailed report from the conservator. The terms of the report should be quite specific and John Schofield suggests that it should concentrate on the following matters:

1. The physical condition of the paint and the plaster ground.
2. The original painting technique and the constitution of the medieval paint.
3. The means of removing the render that has been splashed onto the scheme.
4. The extent of the nineteenth-century overpainting, how well it is adhering, and whether there are any physical problems in its relationship to the medieval paint.
5. The extent to which all the medieval paint has been revealed.
6. The options for conservation and the extent of what can be conserved.
7. The options for cleaning and the likely appearance of the scheme after cleaning.
8. The cost of any work undertaken, related to the different options available under 6 and 7.

Obviously any such report would cost money. The mural decoration is, however, of considerable importance and there should be a very good chance of attracting grant aid, both for commissioning the report and for approved subsequent work. I feel sure that Peter Burman, the Secretary of the Council for the Care of Churches, will be very interested in the Ringmore decoration and I am sending a copy of this letter to him.

The conservator that John Schofield recommends, both to compile the report and to carry out any future work, is David Perry of the conservation partnership Perry Lithgow. His address is 5 Church Lane, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 5NS (Tel: 0608 3645). I have spoken to him briefly and I understand that, if the parish should decide to proceed in the way I have outlined, it would be helpful to him if you could get in contact within the next six weeks.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me on any matter arising out of this that you would like to discuss.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Chris Brooks

cc. Peter Burman  
The Archdeacon of Totnes

< > £100

1. Spoke to Mr. Perry 7/7. He is interested to do this and could come down from current job (? Shotton, Hants). He does not think the cost for travelling expenses examination and writing time & report should exceed £100. Would be grateful for request in writing. *RS*
2. Spoke to the Archdeacon 8/7. He agrees that a report of this nature is the necessary base for any progress and hopes that we can agree to the expenditure; clearly we are not committing the PCC to any more expenditure if we do this and there may well be grounds for getting a grant for the cost of the report. I said that I felt we must, as trustees, at least start action on this way & he agrees. *RS*



Mem 16 April 1987

The Rev. Mr. Tiequet, a retired priest from Slapton, celebrated at our Maundy Thursday Communion service. On seeing the ornamentation on the chancel arch, he enquired what connection we had with St. James to explain why we had the "cockleshell" motif on the arch. He seemed to think that each diamond was ~~was~~ a shell, the sign of the pilgrims who had been to Santiago de Compostella. He thought it was quite likely that some one or some people from here had made the pilgrimage, either by going through France or, more likely, in this part of England by ~~boat~~ direct to northern Spain. On their return, they would have been allowed to decorate their church with the shell emblem.

He advised getting in touch with the Society of St. James, who might well have lists of people known to have made the pilgrimage and/or of churches from whence pilgrims came.

opened R.C.T. 27/4

48 Park Street,  
Crediton, 036 32  
Devon. 3274  
EX17 3EH.

Rev. George Corbett,  
The Rectory,  
Ringmore,  
Kingsbridge,  
Devon.

14 April 1987

Dear Mr Corbett,

I am a lecturer at the University of Exeter and a member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches. As part of my research, I visited Ringmore some four or five weeks ago and was surprised - and delighted - to find the late medieval mural painting over the chancel arch. This painting seems to be almost unknown: certainly, it is not mentioned in any of the standard scholarly works; yet it is of major importance both aesthetically and historically.

I re-visited the church more recently, accompanied by a former colleague, Dr Martin Cherry, who is currently assistant conservation officer in Leicestershire. Primarily, I wished to show him the painting, but I also wanted to ask his advice about its condition, which had caused me some concern on my previous visit. I understand that you have been in contact with him since then. My concern - which he shares - relates to the hard cement render with which the side walls and the lower part of the chancel arch has been covered. Firstly, a lot of this has been splashed onto the medieval painting; secondly, it seems likely that the render, being non-porous, is forcing damp up the wall and this is beginning to damage the decoration. (i.e. me. R.T.)

In my view the mural painting needs to be inspected by an expert conservator with a view to removing the render that has been splashed onto it, and to sorting out the apparent problem of damp. Obviously this will cost money, but, given the major importance of the mural, I think there will be ways of securing grant-aid. I would be very glad to know your views.

I am sending copies of this letter to Dr Cherry and to the Archdeacon of Totnes.

Yours sincerely,

I spoke to Dr Brooks. He is very excited about the painting. (altho' he himself is not a medievalist but a 19<sup>th</sup> Century man) and reckons it to be the largest & best medieval painting in Devon and possibly in the South West. He has told the editor responsible for 'Pevsner' Dr Chris Brooks and she also is excited. I gave him the background on my side and we arranged that - to avoid any duplication - he would find out when my letter to the R.D. has got to and give it a push in the right direction. As to cost, he thinks it likely that English Heritage might be interested.

He was depressing about the "hard cement render" (= 'Tyrolean' finish) which was -

# THE PERRY LITHGOW PARTNERSHIP

D. A. PERRY, N.D.D.

R. P. LITHGOW, B.A.

M. A. PERRY, B.A.

● CONSERVATORS

5 CHURCH LANE  
CHIPPING NORTON  
OXON. OX7 5NS  
TEL. STD. (0608) 3645

V.A.T. REGISTRATION NO. 348 7765 03

DP/SMP

25th May 1988

## ALL HALLOWS CHURCH, RINGMORE

I visited the church to inspect the wall paintings on 29th April 1988.

The painting is situated on the chancel arch wall and covers the whole of the upper part from capital level. The design appears to be a highly stylized scallop shell motif within a diaper pattern although this theory may need to be reconsidered in the final analysis.

### Condition

Painted in the fresco secco technique, it is difficult to believe that this was the first representation on the wall, although it is clear that if there was an earlier painting it has been thoroughly scraped off. The plaster seems to be the first application and consists of a slaked lime and sand mortar, quite coarsely rendered.

Fortunately no so-called preservative, ie. wax, has been applied to the surface and for this reason the physical condition of the plaster and paint layer is comparatively good. However, some deterioration caused by rising damp is apparent, especially on the lower south side; obviously a long standing problem.

Some rather crude retouching has been carried out in the past and further disfigurement of the painting has been caused by the splashing on to the surface of the surrounding rendering. Although this does not cover a large area, it is quite tenacious and will need to be removed with great care to preserve the paint below. It seems that the retouching was done with water-bound paints which should be quite simple to remove.

An area in the centre of the wall above the arch appears to be a 19th century repair, possibly where a rood was once attached, and should be investigated.



ALL HALLOWS CHURCH, RINGMORE

Treatment

1. Cleaning - this will need to be carried out using dry methods, as the colour is susceptible to moisture
2. Stabilization - infusions of lime water will be applied to strengthen the mortar, limewash and stabilize the colour.
3. Repairs - all repairs will be carried out using slaked lime and sand mortar integrated for strength and tonality.
4. Removal of render - this may prove to be quite time consuming, but might soften sufficiently after lime watering to be removed with scalpels.

The general appearance of the painting would be course be improved greatly by the processes described above, but more pertinently, the physical decay would be arrested and a most unusual and interesting scheme preserved.

This work will take two conservators approximately two weeks to complete at a cost of £2,150.00 + VAT.

The above quotation includes all expenses, except that of scaffolding.



Dr Chris Brooks

13 December 1993

I saw in the Church Times "Books for Christmas" (26 Nov) ~~that~~ page v! that Babford have produced the "Encyclopaedia of Medieval Church Art" by Edward G. Tasker. At £45 this is unlikely to appear in our local library! ~~Would it appear in the Exeter library?~~ <sup>responsibly</sup> ~~do you think?~~ I would like to think that our chancel arch design appeared in it without our knowledge (or that there might be references to this type of work without quoting ours).

P.S. Our church Banners of the Evangelists are still rolled up at home - any ideas of how these should be treated? Peter Pizzani

## "Report on the fabric goods & ornaments of the church"

The fabric of the church is, to the best of my knowledge, in good order except for one instance to which I will refer later. The ~~the~~ quinquennial inspection ~~by our architect~~ falls due ~~in 19~~ next year and at the present time I do not anticipate any heavy expenditure. However, with such an ancient building ~~we~~ must always be prepared for the unanticipated happening and in our case one day it will be the roof timbers. Our architect is a careful inspector and makes considerable use of the long ladder during his visit so ~~far~~ I hope that we shall not be caught unawares. May I put in a 'plug' here for the Devon Historic Churches Fund Day on the second Saturday in September. This is their third annual affair when people are asked to walk, ride (on <sup>two wheels</sup> ~~would be~~ or four legs) <sup>to visit</sup> ~~between~~ as many churches and chapels as they can, obtaining sponsors for the number of ~~churches~~ places they <sup>are able</sup> ~~can~~ reach. We ~~can~~ have somebody at the church all day to stamp visitors cards and of course if anyone from the parish feels able to walk, bicycle or ride a horse - then they can nominate a church to receive half the money they collect. The Fund ~~has~~ <sup>has</sup> helped us in the past ~~with a loan~~ and we should do what we can to help other churches.

The bells count as part of the fabric - and in 1988 the Diocesan Advisor on bells visited the tower and reported on the condition of the bells. ~~The~~ The action taken as a result of his visit took place in ~~the~~ this year and will therefore be reported to the next APCM but I have already written about it in the Ringmere newsletter. I repeat my thanks to John (Mrs) and ~~other~~ <sup>those who helped him</sup> ~~other~~ helpers for their work. John also replaced the

1988

'skirt' on the face of the boiler in the north transept. We shall repeat the treatment on the other face this year.

As regards goods, Professor Swanton of Exeter University, and a colleague visited us in September to measure the church for record purposes, and did so meticulously. In the process they saw ~~the~~ the banners of the four evangelists which used to hang in the chancel and the original "gates" for the chancel screen, ~~to~~ <sup>all</sup> of which were in the ringing chamber. They thought the banners were ~~of~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~not~~ worthy of care and would let me know how they should be treated. However I have not ~~been~~ yet heard from them, or been able to get in touch. As regards the gates, they said that we must <sup>NOT</sup> let them get thrown away.

The only 'ornament' I need mention is the <sup>wall</sup> painting on the chancel arch. The conservator visited the church just after the last APCM and confirmed that it was probably late 14<sup>th</sup> Century work [for those of you who, like me, ~~suspected~~ could not fix that period in any framework - Richard I was on the throne and was deposed in 1099] ~~to~~ <sup>repaired</sup> The circular patch in the centre above the point of the arch appeared to be of a 19<sup>th</sup> C. repair. Possibly a rood had been there or the Royal Arms. He recommended treatment to arrest the physical decay, greatly improve the general appearance and preserve a most unusual and interesting scheme. His estimate for the conservation work was £250, plus VAT plus the cost of scaffolding. We approached the Diocesan Advisory Committee about funding this work & they suggested applying to the Central Council for the Care of Churches for a grant - the Secretary of the Central Council visited All Hallows in 1987 and was most interested - The Council ~~suggests~~ want us to tackle the damp patch first and was naturally cautious about any further steps. Mr. Barnaby



Bigbury-on-Sea  
810 663

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

24 June, 1988

The Secretary,  
Diocesan Advisory Committee,  
Diocesan House,  
Exeter.

Dear Madam,

All Hallows, Ringmore (T.14/2)

Chancel Arch Decoration.

During 1987, I was in correspondence with Dr. Brooks (copied to the Archdeacon of Totnes) about the decoration which covers the whole of the west side of the chancel arch in All Hallows Church.

Dr. Brooks, with Mr. John Schofield, visited the church a year ago and recommended that we should obtain a detailed report from a conservator. With the consent of the Archdeacon, my F.C.C. agreed to commission a report from Perry Lithgow Partnership. Mr. Perry recently visited Ringmore and I enclose a copy of his report. You will see that his estimate for the work he considers necessary, excluding the cost of scaffolding, is £2,150 plus VAT - £2,573.

As you will know from the Diocesan Directory, our village is small (under 200 adult population); with an ancient church to keep in the best order we can, expenditure of this nature, however desirable, is not something we could undertake lightly. I shall be most grateful if the Committee could give advice on the action the F.C.C. should take.

Yours sincerely,

*R. C. Trant*

R. C. Trant.

Churchwarden.

cc. Dr. Chris Brooks. ~~He~~  
The Archdeacon of Totnes.





# DIOCESE OF EXETER

DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
for the CARE of CHURCHES

Diocesan House,  
Palace Gate,  
Exeter EX1 1HX.

Exeter (0392) 72686

Our Ref: DAC/T.14.2/88.370

Secretary: Miss M. Bethel  
Tel.(home): Topsham (039 287) 3748

4th August, 1988

R.C. Trant Esq.,  
The Vean,  
Ringmore,  
KINGSBRIDGE, Devon,  
TQ7 4HL

Dear Mr. Trant,

RINGMORE ALL HALLOWS: Chancel arch wallpainting

Further to your letter of 24th June and mine of 7th July, I am pleased to tell you that the question of the funding of conservation for your wall painting was discussed at the recent meeting. It was agreed to advise that your P.C.C. should make application to the Council for the Care of Churches for a grant, and Dr. Brocks will support your case at the next meeting of the Wallpaintings Committee of the Council, of which he is a member. He will also discuss your case in advance of that meeting with Dr. Richard Gem. of the Council.

I do hope that these steps will have a successful outcome for the parish. Please do not hesitate to come back to us if you wish to discuss anything further about it.

Yours sincerely,

*Marion R. Bethel*

Hon. Secretary

c.c. Revd. A. Drowley  
Archdeacon of Totnes  
(designate)

Bigbury-on-Sea

(0548) 810 663

The Vean,

Ringmore,

Kingsbridge,

Devon. TQ7 4HL.

Peter Burnian Esq.,  
The Secretary,  
CCC.

24 August, 1988

I am sorry that I did not see you when you visited Ringmore with Dr. Chris Brooks in September last - but thank you for the entry in our Visitors Book.

The reference in Mr. Perry's report to "a highly stylized scallop shell motif" repeats what a visiting priest suggested during our recent interregnum, when he enquired if there was any connection between All Hallows and Santiago de Compostella. I had to reply that nothing was known of any pilgrim from the village. Later in the year, I visited Santiago and tried to find an expert in the history of art who could give an opinion. Unfortunately, the Professor to whom I had been referred did not arrive as expected and I have received no replies to the two letters I have written.

However the Information Office shook me by saying that the motif reminded them of Moorish work, so I showed the picture of that alone to various other people in the art world on the way south through Portugal and back through Spain, with the following results :-

Coimbra	"Arab"
Lisbon	No comment
Granada (1)	"Here" ( the Alhambra)
	(11) "Yes, here in the Alcazar" - no chance to check further.
Cordoba	"Not here - here Mussulman; this Moorish, perhaps Granada."

which are interesting but not conclusive. Perhaps someone in London might have views ?

Two further comments on this - my revered friend, the Chairman of our Historical Society, thinks it could well be a stylized representation of the view down our valley to the sea at sunset, while I have recently come across a

/comment

comment in Colin Platt's book "Medieval England" that

'One of the qualities of the Stoke Orchard paintings is a distinct Byzantine influence, having parallels with contemporary work, similarly influenced, at the Palace of Westminster, commissioned by Henry III.'

A visit to Stoke Orchard seems called for.

You mentioned our 19th century glass in your note. Our historians have found out that several of the windows were designed by a man from Frome in Somerset - (? Howarth) I can get the information if you would care to have it.

45

\* Page 80.





THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Council for the Care of Churches

83 London Wall, London EC2M 5NA Telephone: 01-638 0971

20 Sept 88

R. C. Trant esq

Jonathan Goodchild.

Dear Mr Trant

All Hallows, Ringmore: Wallpaintings

Thank you for your letters of 24 August to my colleague Peter Burman, who is currently on sabbatical leave for health reasons.

Our Council does have certain small funds which it is able to give in grant aid, but because of our restricted budget this can only be allocated in cases of urgent need where the painting is in real danger. I see from

Mr Perry's report, however, that he considers the painting in 'comparatively good' condition as a whole.

He goes on to suggest that where there is deterioration, on the lower south side, this is the result of rising damp. If this

degradation were to be remedied. Therefore,  
it would clearly be necessary to  
do something first to improve the  
damp problem. Perhaps your  
initial step then should be to discuss  
with your architect<sup>X</sup> the rising damp  
and devise a solution to this.

When any necessary remedial  
work had been carried out you  
might think again about the paintings.  
I suspect that at most, however,  
we could help towards conserving the  
damaged parts.

Yours sincerely

Richard Gem

X I spoke to our architect, Mr. Barnaby of Tavistock about  
this. He is willing to come over and look at the patch but we are not sure  
about the dampness (cf the photograph of the arch in the 1920s or 30s). We decided  
that it would be useful to have "moisture measurement" readings taken at weekly  
intervals for 6 weeks, together with notes of the weather conditions during  
the period. When we had them, I could discuss them with Mr. Barnaby.

Visited K/B Tool Hire (Reading). They have moisture measures. <sup>RT. 23/9</sup> They could be  
borrowed and returned on the same day for @ £1.50 + VAT. Holes about 2" deep should be made in the patch  
to take the probes. <sup>RT. 24/9</sup>

Bigbury (0548)  
810 663

The Veal  
Ringmore  
Kingsbridge  
Devon TQ7 4HL

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

4 January 1989.

Dear Mr. Barnaby

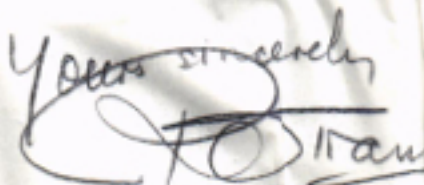
Ringmore, All Hallows,  
Chancel Arch.

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 the 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?

Yours sincerely  


R. C. Grant.  
Churchwarden.

cc Reckar



Ringmore All Hallows  
Chancel Arch moisture readings

<u>Day</u>	<u>Meter reading</u>	<u>Therm'r 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.

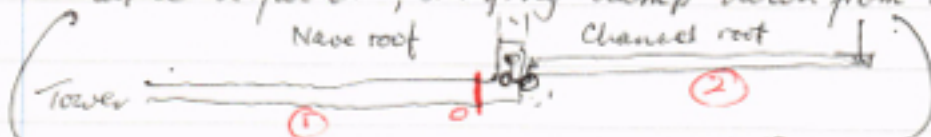
Note

20 Jan 1989

Mr. Barnaby, our Church Architect, visited the church today as arranged, following my letter of 4 January 1989, to examine the patch at the southern end of the channel arch.

He will render a report for us to use.

He can see no sign of rising damp; the external wall is in good condition. It is possible that the rainwater guttering arrangement may be a factor, bringing damp down from above.



He recommends that the gutterings <sup>(1) & (2)</sup> from the tower to the E. end be replaced by a deeper pattern and that the nave guttering <sup>(1)</sup> be given its own down pipe; ~~and~~ this would replace the present corner gutter which takes rainwater into the hopper of the channel roof gutter. The new down pipe could be led into the existing drain at ground level.

This would reduce the possibility of rain water entering the arch wall externally behind the hopper. The wall should be re-pointed in that area when the work was being done.

~~The renders~~ Internally, the ~~existing~~ rendering on the arch below the painting (behind the pulpit) might be removed. (It sounds hollow to the tapping...) This would allow the stonework to breathe.

The flow of air through the church is probably insufficient. It is difficult to arrange for this to be increased but if the ~~the~~ ventilators from the belfry might be left open [even the belfry door also] and the plain window in the lady chapel - already broken - might be replaced by a louvre window to provide a throughput of air. [These would have to be closed on Saturdays when heating was put on!]



**Edward Barnaby BSc Dip Arch RIBA  
Architect**

my ref. 6029  
your ref.

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

23rd January 1989

Bill received 10/3/89  
(£68.04)  
to Rector  
2. Mrs. Mason (Treasurer)

R C Trant Esq  
The Vean  
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.

X 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.

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

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.

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, louvre framed glass replaced in the north chancel aisle window.

/continued

X see minute of conversation with  
Mr. Barnaby on 10/9/89



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

CHANCEL ARCH

Note of telephone conversation with Dr. Brooks of the  
Diocesan Advisory Committee.

12 April 1989

1. Dr. Brooks has discussed my letter of 11 February, which enclosed Mr. Barnaby's report, with the Chairman (Frank Crowe) and other members of the DAC.

They think that the recommendations in the report put forward an extremely sensible programme.

2. Taken individually - the replacement of the gutters meets with full approval; 4" x 3" is the size the DAC normally recommends. The repointing of the masonry joints should certainly be done as proposed.

3. The internal proposals are also approved. They are not quite sure what Mr. Barnaby meant by "louvre framed glass" but think that he means a panel of glass about a foot high, hinged at the bottom, which opens into a 'hopper'. They suggest that one of these should be inserted into both the small aisle window and the north window (the central light) in the transept.

The two firms they recommend for this work are  
Luke, Dampney & Co. of 27 K, New Street, Plymouth (tel. 268149)  
or David Gubbin of 4 Well Street, Exeter (72799)

4. Finally, they think that the suggested removal of the render on the arch below the decoration is a very good idea; it should be replaced with a lime-based plaster.

An Archdeacon's Certificate will cover all this work.

cc. Rector  
Lt. Col. Grimshaw.  
Mr. Milne-Smith.

 12/4/89

R. C. TRANT



Royal College of Art

R C Trant  
The Veian  
Ringmore  
Kingsbridge  
DEVON  
TQ7 4HL

VISUAL ISLAMIC & TRADITIONAL ARTS

13 November 1990

Kensington Gore, London SW 7 2EU Telephone: 071 584 5020 Fax: 071 225 1487

Dear Mr Trant

Thank you for your letter dated 9 November 90.

Dr Keith Critchlow believes that the photos you sent him may be angelic wings. He suggests that you check with the fabrics people at the Victoria and Albert Museum for guidance.

Thank you for your interest in the Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts.

Yours sincerely

Ririko Suzuki  
V.I.T.A. Secretary

Reck'd 6/12/90

If any link found with Islamic<sup>art</sup>, to  
let V.I.T.A. know for their archives.



4 January 1991

Mr R C Trant  
The Veau  
Ringmore  
KINGSBRIDGE  
Devon  
TQ7 4HL

Dear Mr Trant

Thank you for your letter of 6 December and enclosed photographs of the wall-paintings in the church. I do apologise for the delay in replying, but I have consulted the Sculpture Section about the possible source of the design and also moved offices, the latter with some resultant disorganisation I am afraid!

As far as I am aware the source for these wallpaintings is unlikely to have been from a Spanish/Islamic textile. It was certainly a plausible idea but I do not know of any Spanish textiles with quite this type of design although many 'Hispano-Moresque' textiles do of course have infinitely repeated designs so suited to the tenets of Islam.

However, a colleague in the Sculpture Section, Marjorie Trusted, has sent me the enclosed photocopy of Hispano-Moresque plasterwork in the Alhambra nad this seems closer in style than any pattern I have seen on textiles. She has suggested you might write to: Tonia Raquejo  
Facultad Bellas Artes  
Univ. Complutense  
c/ Greco 2  
MADRID 28040  
Spain

who has apparently done a lot of work on Spanish influence on England and also answers letters!

Textiles were frequently transmitters of design being easily portable, but in this case not I think a direct influence.

Another colleague to whom I have shown your photographs has tentatively suggested that the wallpainting does have strong similarities to mid 19th century work of the type produced by William Burges, the British architect. The colouring, she believes, is very similar and it also follows the style

2.

of the very distinctive light fittings, which date from this time. Is it possible that such a fashionable architect could have decorated the church at this time or possibly completed restoration work in this very distinctive style?

I am returning your photographs.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Linda Woolley', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Linda Woolley (Miss)  
Assistant Curator  
Textiles and Dress

Encs

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 Sr. Raguejo 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 Deaologue 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*

*R. C. Trant*

/painted





UNIVERSITY OF LONDON  
CONSERVATION OF WALL PAINTING DEPARTMENT  
COURTAULD INSTITUTE OF ART  
Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN  
Telephone: 071 - 872 0220

2 September 1992

Mr R. C. Trant  
The Vean  
Ringmore  
Kingsbridge  
Devon TQ7 4HL

Dear Mr Trant,

**All Hallows Church, Ringmore**

Thank you for your letter of 16 August, with its interesting enclosures.

I have never seen anything quite like the wall paintings in your church, but I think it is probably 15th- or early 16th-century, and quite substantially retouched in the 19th century. I believe it is most likely to have formed the backdrop for a sculptured rood placed within the chancel arch, or perhaps on the chancel arch wall itself (since from the photographs it would appear that there are repainted plaster repairs in the appropriate locations).

Other examples of such painted backdrops to a rood exist e.g. at Llantwit Major (Glamorgan), and at Compton (Surrey) where there is a perspectival lozenge pattern, but I have not come across an example similar to the design at Ringmore. If I do, I will let you know. Like you, I cannot see a cockleshell in the pattern, but in general the style and diaper patterning would not seem to require a non-English source.

Yours sincerely,

David Park

David Park  
Head  
Conservation of Wall Painting Department

Spring 1996

The mural is most attractive, isn't it?

My initial thought is that it imitates the patterns of murals in early Roman churches, in Rome, and so I think it's worth looking through books on the murals in Roman churches. Mosaic decoration was thought appropriate for the triumphal arch before the chancel and high altar apse.

Secondly, since the date is rather late for imitating mosaic, the idea could be to imitate a cloth of honour or tapestry such as is found in paintings adorning a throne of a secular monarch, or hanging on a seat framing the portrayal of the Virgin or Christ. The way the pattern disappears behind the rosette-adorned framing of the gothic arch would support the idea of imitating a tapestry/woven cloth pattern. So one line of enquiry would look at books on tapestry and woven designs in silk from Italy etc., or tapestry from England (at the National Art Library in the V and A, for instance). However, the painting does not imitate the folds of cloth in a hanging, so that perhaps the mosaic is still a good option.

"Textiles & Dress"  
V & A M. 1.91

The motif is difficult to describe. Presumably, it is many removes from some original naturalistic image. Again, it makes me think of the fan vaults or apses in Roman churches which recollect the shell-vaulted mosaics adorning Antique/Imperial Roman vaults, as in/like the San Clemente in Rome.

I fear that my experience of Italy/Rome is biasing my response rather unfortunately. It may be that a gothic expert with knowledge of French and German would respond differently. Meanwhile I would search out English and Italian textiles and Roman mosaics.

Dr. Catherine King  
Senior Lecturer : Open University.

Belle Vue  
Ringmore  
Kingsbridge  
South Devon  
TQ7 4HJ

01548 810286

18-3-96

Reg -

Here's the response from my OU colleague,  
Catherine King, to the photograph of  
the mural.

Best wishes -

Di

I am most grateful to Dr King for her fascinating note. She has  
opened up a new line of enquiry & which perhaps I should have given  
you a precis of <sup>the enquiry</sup> ~~what~~ I have already ~~looked~~ <sup>used</sup> but ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~forward~~ on our  
travels through Spain and Portugal ~~that~~ I deliberately only showed that  
picture or one of the pattern alone to begin with. Each ~~place~~ <sup>person who saw</sup> ~~that~~ I  
~~would~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~said~~ immediately "Arabic" or "Moorish". At Granada two different  
people said here in the Alcazar and at Cordoba. "No not here, here Muslims,  
I think Granada." I haven't been able to go to Granada since then.  
I too had thought about, say, a Crusader cloth or something but