

Challaborough Cottage
Ringmore, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 4HW
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*File
6/9/00*

Mrs Ardene Bennett,
Hill Cottage,
Ringmore,
Kingsbridge,
Devon TQ7 4HW.

August 22, 2000

Dear Ardene

Just a note to say that the sub-committee dealing with the publicity bat/leaflet met this morning, and incorporated many of the changes proposed in your letter.

The PCC will now be asked at its next meeting to consider and approve the amended documents, and I will of course let you know the outcome of the meeting.

Whilst the final documents will be PCC productions and, at your request, will not include any acknowledgement to the Historical Society, we are all very grateful to you and your committee for your work in producing the original document, and for your help and advice subsequently.

With kind regards

Yours

Michael

Hill Cottage
Ringmore
Kingsbridge
Devon
TQ74HW

3rd August 2000

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 28th July, enclosing draft texts for the proposed church "bat" and for a leaflet.

These texts were considered at a meeting of Ringmore Historical Society yesterday and we had considerable reservations about the accuracy of some of the statements contained in them.

We would have been happy at any time to discuss with the PCC any amendments which were felt to be necessary in the draft which we submitted for the "Bat", but the new draft contains so many changes that it would be impossible for us to amend it in the very limited time which you have allowed.

It would be very difficult for us to be associated with statements which may have to be contradicted or modified in our own proposed booklet on the church and so we have decided that the best plan would be to delete references to Ringmore Historical Society from the proposed "Bat" and leaflet.

We are glad that information is to be available for visitors to the church and we wish you well in its production.

Yours sincerely,

Ailene

Will Cottage
Ringmore
9.8.2000

Dear Michael

I think most of the errors which have crept in to your version of the "bat" text arise from making definite statements rather than qualified suppositions-presumably in the interests of brevity. I have set out our comments paragraph by paragraph below, together with some editorial suggestions:-

Paragraph 1

We cannot say definitely that the church incorporates an earlier building. The first paragraph of our text gives the reasons why Hingeston Randolph thought that the north transept might have been Saxon and Reg has recently had some advice that it might have been Anglo-Norman. Why mention Hecce at all? As for the Norman Conquest - since this took place over an extended period of time, it would be more accurate, if you want to mention 1066, to say something such as "before the Norman Invasion in 1066"

Paragraph 2

We think you have missed out "was" after "tower" in line 3 and after "gallery" in line 5.

Paragraph 3

Apart from a dislike of your word "sported" we do not understand your reference to a wooden barrel ceiling. The chancel has a barrel roof now, which was constructed in 1915.

Paragraph 6

St Alban was not the first martyr, though he may have been the first Christian to have been martyred in Britain. Most sources refer to him as a Roman.

Paragraph 7

It would be more accurate to substitute "the King rather than Parliament" for "the king not Cromwell"

Paragraph 8

We do not know why the entrance to the tower was moved from outside to inside the church. Therefore the comment about the bell-ringers should be omitted

Paragraph 9

We do not like the "quiz" style in this paragraph. More importantly we know of no foundation for your reference to the little alcove (11) as a "squint".

Paragraph 10 This reads as if it is the organ which passes beneath the chancel arch. Also the organ was not installed on Christmas Day 1863 but for that day.

Paragraph 13

The quotation from Hingeston-Randolph has been so much shortened that the reference to the wall plate is unclear as is the reason why he wanted room.

Yours sincerely
Adene

copy
(for I lan 4?)

Dear Drina,

I'm writing in response to Jacqueline's letter to me about the brief Guide to All Hallows that the Historical Society has offered to the PCC.

I understand that the PCC will be giving further consideration to the Guide at its next meeting and I'd like to say that if it is thought that I could be helpful in dealing with any queries or suggestions, then I should be very happy to attend the meeting for the appropriate item.

In conversation with me, Jacqueline mentioned the matter of the assigning of the copyright of the Guide to the RHS. Of course, copyright need not be so assigned if that were not thought suitable but, as a temporary measure, copyright does need to be assigned somewhere in order to protect the text.

I do hope we shall soon be able to proceed with the production of the bat and that you will contact me speedily if there are any queries or difficulties that I may be able to resolve, either by coming to the meeting or talking informally with any member of the PCC.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Dr Diane Collinson

THE PADDOCK
RINGMORE
KINGSBRIDGE
DEVON
TQ7 4HW

2

16th June 2000

Dear Dianne,

Thank you for your letter offering assistance with regard to producing an information "Bat" you've offered to the Church as an architectural and historical guide. The Parochial Church Council met on 15th June and has decided that a small sub-Committee is to recommend how best to implement this exciting project and they will present their recommendations at the next meeting in August. I can then let you know what format is to be used. I apologise for the delay but am grateful that you have encouraged us to produce a Church Guide which will give our many visitors a better appreciation of All Hallows.

Thank you again,

Yours sincerely,

Diana H. Williams

(Hon Secretary PCC)

James Partin

Hill Cottage
Ringmore

Dear Colleague,

There will be a meeting to consider the attached proposal from the P.C.C. on Wednesday 2nd August at 4.30pm at Di Collinson's house. (i.e. after the W.I fete).

Yours sincerely

Ardene

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Mrs Ardene Bennett,
Hill Cottage,
Ringmore.

July 28, 2000

Dear Ardene

As you know, the Ringmore PCC set up a small sub-committee (Reg Trant, Mike Wynne-Powell and me) to recommend the form of publicity leaflet to be put in church. This was in response (albeit belatedly) to the excellent offering sent to the PCC by Di Collinson on behalf of the Historical Society. The sub-committee was asked to report back to the PCC at its next meeting, which is on Monday August 8.

From our discussions emerged the idea of two documents. The first (the "bat") would be a cut-down version with limited detail, mainly for casual visitors. The second would be a tri-fold leaflet which would contain the information submitted by Di, supplemented by additional information including comment on the spiritual life of the church.

The PCC were not advised that the Historical Society are in the process of writing a book on Ringmore Church. However, from the conversation which I had with you, what our sub-committee are thinking would seem to fit in very well, with the proposed book providing the really detailed account of the church.

I now enclose a copy of the latest draft of the two documents which we are proposing, and should be grateful for any comments which the Historical Society may have on them. In order to give PCC members a chance to read the documents before the meeting, I am planning to circulate them next Friday. If you feel it would help for me to meet Historical Society members to discuss the drafts, please let me know.

Yours

Michael

WELCOME TO RINGMORE CHURCH

All Hallows Church was built in its present form around 1240, just after Magna Carta, and incorporates an earlier building, possibly a chapel built by the Saxon Hecce, who held the manor of Reimore (and six others) before the Norman Conquest in 1066.

A hundred years later the building was in a sorry state. In 1354, the Rural Dean wrote "The ornaments and altar cloths of the high altar are lost. The nave is dirty, inadequate and needs rebuilding". Work was carried out and the tower added. Further alterations were made in the eighteenth century, when the west window was replaced by a large rectangular one and a musicians' gallery constructed.

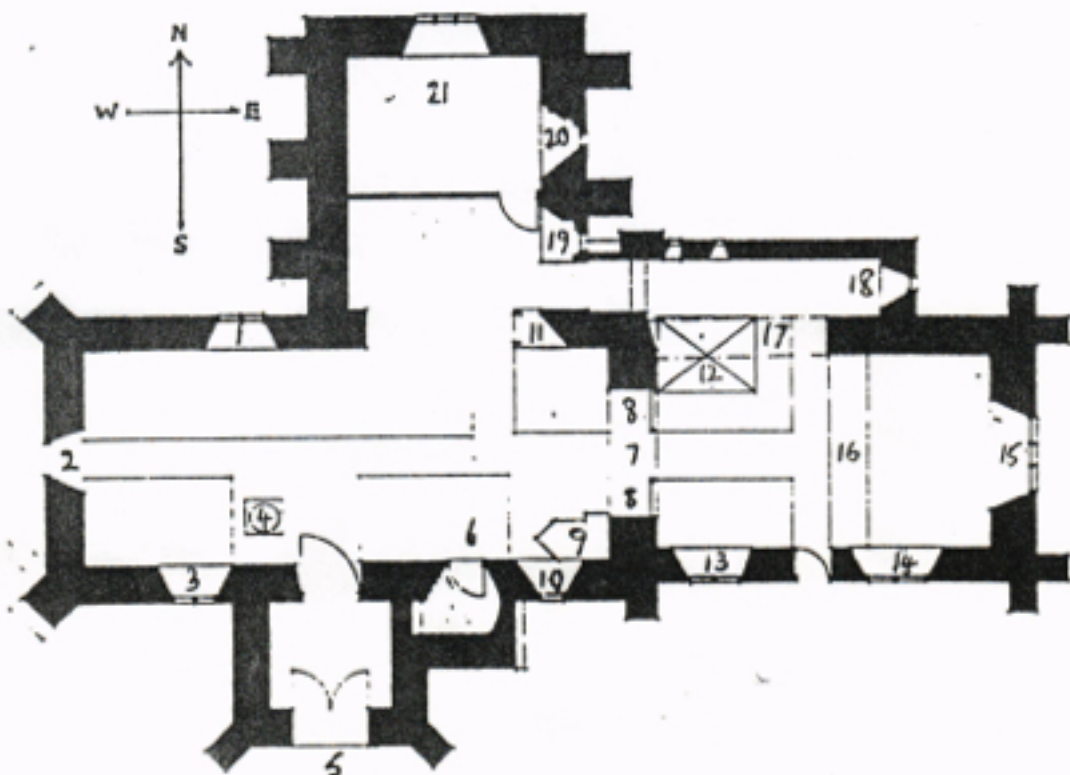
Neglect and gradual deterioration meant that by the latter part of the 19th century; the Rector, Francis Hingeston-Randolph, found it "buried in accumulated soil to a depth, in places, of over eight feet". He began restoration at once, often paying the bills himself. Today's building owes much to his resourcefulness and dedication and several of the windows reveal his interest in Celtic saints.

In the early 20th century, the nave walls were lined with decorative tinplate, but this caused condensation to rot the church's structural timber and was replaced by the present render in 1961. The roof once sported a wooden "barrel" ceiling.

This tour round the church starts from the War Memorial window opposite the main door, and goes round the church anti-clockwise.

The north-west War Memorial window (1) depicts St George as an armoured knight, and lists not only the names of those who died in battle but also the actions in which they died. The round west window (2) replaced the rectangular window when the rickety gallery was removed, and shows Christ in glory with orb and sceptre. The south-west window (3) shows St Augustine and St Alban (the first martyr). The font (4) is of granite on marble pillars. It is of Norman style though of much later workmanship and has a handsome wooden cover.

If you now go outside the church, look at the 18th century sundial on the porch (5). Note that the tower is not at the west end as is most common, but adjoins the south wall. During the Civil War, the Rector supported the king, not Cromwell, and was hidden there for three months by parishioners before escaping to France.



The entrance to the tower used to be outside the church, and the present door (6) was created to make sure that the bell-ringers went to church and did not sneak off once they had finished ringing! There are three bells in the tower. These are not rung in the usual way, but chimed. The bells themselves are fixed, and sound when the ringer pulls cords attached to the clappers, making them strike the edge of the bell.

The chancel arch and wall (7) are part of the 13th century building. The mediaeval mural (14th/15th century) is unique, but its exact origin and significance are unknown: what do you think it means? The screen (8) and pulpit (9) were commissioned as part of the 19th century restoration; they were made in Belgium and are delightfully colourful, picking up the tones and border pattern of the mural. The pulpit window (10) shows David, patron saint of Wales and his abbot friend St Senan. MAYBE Opposite is a "squint" (11) through which the altar could be seen (this was obviously not in its present position – have a look!)

Passing beneath the chancel arch, the organ (12) was installed by Bevington on Christmas Day 1863 and is perfectly suited to the size of the church.

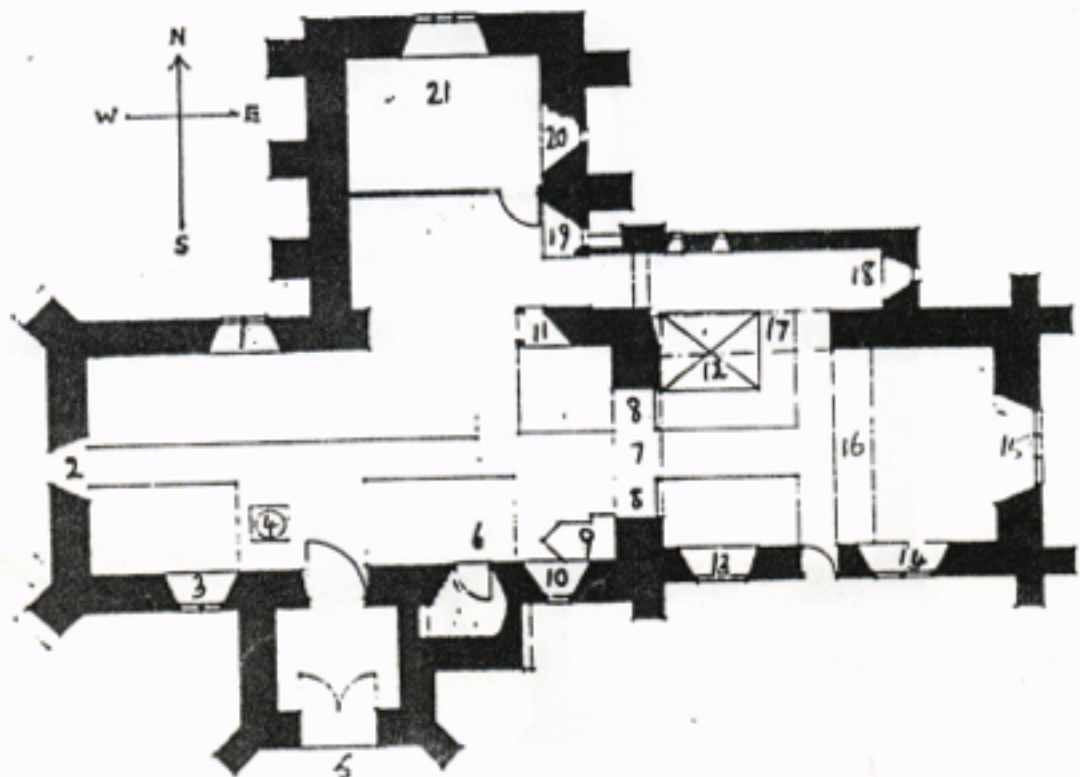
Opposite the organ, the picture window (13) is of the Nativity and the Requisitioning of the Donkey for the Last Supper; Christ at Gethsemane is depicted at the head of the window. The south-east window (14) depicts three Celtic saints: Enlilent, Nectan of Hartland and his sister Morwenna.

The big east window (15) shows Christ crucified, with Mary, His Mother, and St John the Divine. The communion rails (16) were designed by Alexander Wood, Rector from 1955 to 1978, and replaced an ornamental brass rail.

Turning to your left as you stand at the communion rail, you can see over the archway a fragment of the much earlier wooden tracery screen (17) which used to span the chancel arch. Go through the archway and you find yourself in a side chapel (18). This is part of the 19th century restoration and was built, wrote Hingeston-Randolph, "to take the wall plate and give me the room I wanted".

The north transept window (19) depicts Piran, patron saint of Cornwall and small window in the vestry (20) depicts St Ila (St Ives) and is deeply splayed. These walls (21) are thicker than the rest of the church and is the part of the building which may date from the 11th century.

In the north transept you will find the literature table and stands. If you have enjoyed this brief outline of All Hallows Church, take a copy of the leaflet, which will give you more details. We gratefully acknowledge the help of the Ringmore Historical Society in preparing both documents.



The big east window (15) shows Christ crucified, with Mary, His Mother, and St John the Divine. The communion rails (16) were designed by Alexander Wood, Rector from 1955 to 1978, and replaced an ornamental brass rail.

At the left-hand side of the communion rail can be seen over the archway a fragment of the much earlier wooden tracery screen (17) which used to span the chancel arch. Through the archway is a side chapel (18). This was at one time thought to be Norman, but is now known to be part of the 19th century restoration. Hingston-Randolph wrote, "I built it when I put in the organ. The north wall was in a bad state, leaning considerably outwards, just where the organ now stands, and I took down the worst part of it and fixed the wooden framework to take the wall plate and give me the room I wanted".

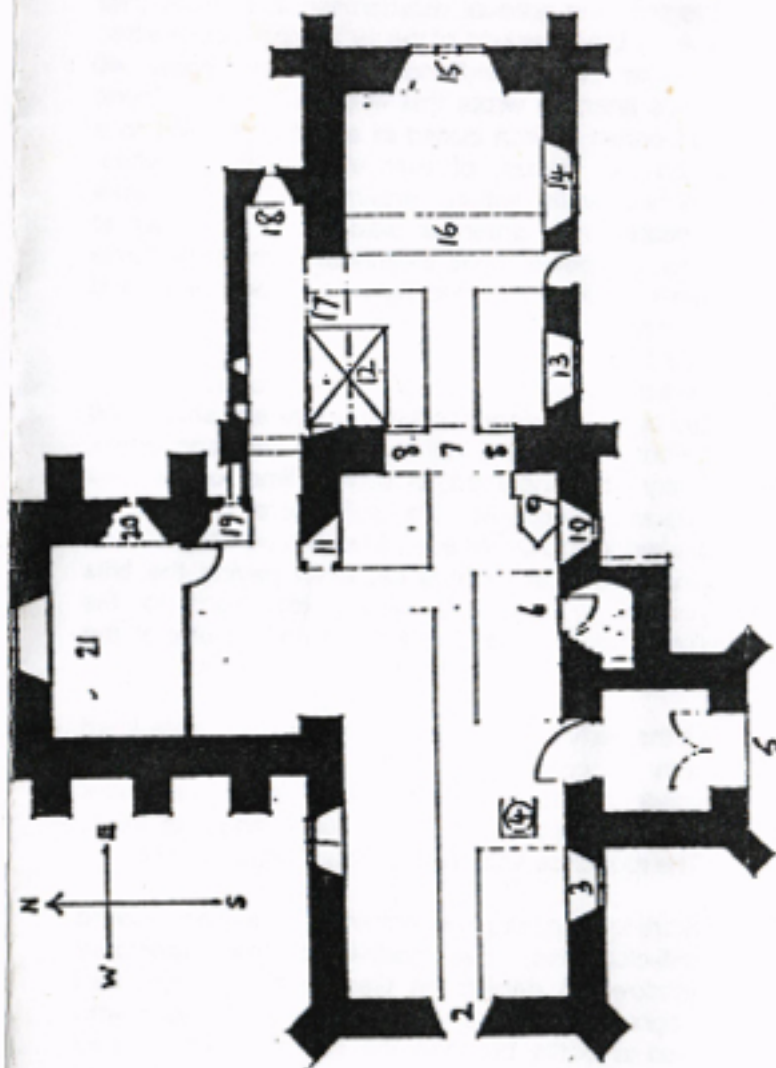
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To preserve and enhance our heritage, we installed a new heating system (1994), which pumps heated fresh air from outside the Church, ensuring we do not cause condensation or damage to the fabric, and a combined induction loop and loudspeaker system (1996), for the hard of hearing.

Today, All Hallows is part of the Modbury Team Ministry, covering Avelon Gifford, Bigbury, East Allington, Kingston, Loddiswell, Modbury, Ringmore and Woodleigh. We share our minister with Bigbury and Kingston, with whom we work closely.

As a worshipping community, we remember that Jesus said: "You shall be my witnesses". Please pray for us to be obedient and effective.

Ringmore Parochial Church Council
August 2000



ALL HALLOWS CHURCH

RINGMORE



A brief guide

We gratefully acknowledge the help of the Ringmore Historical Society in preparing this leaflet.

Parish churches can be seen as museum pieces, a show-piece of architecture and stained glass. But all churches were built to the glory of God as we know him in Jesus Christ. They are active centres of Christian worship, and remind us that God is present in the midst of life and seeks to reach out to everyone. Churches have many things in common:

- Their **shape**, that of a cross (not always, as All Hallows shows), reminding us of the Cross of Jesus Christ
- The **font** by the door, the place of baptism where a person enters the family of God
- The **nave**, a word from the Latin "navis" meaning "ship". Christianity is a spiritual journey through life
- The **Communion Table**, around which worshippers gather to share the bread and wine in obedience to Jesus' command "Do this in remembrance of me".
- The **lectern and pulpit** reminding us that God has revealed himself to us. From the lectern the Bible is read; from the pulpit the Christian faith is taught.

All Hallows Church was built in its present form around 1240, just after Magna Carta. It incorporates an earlier building that became the north transept and present vestry, possibly a chapel built by the Saxon Hecce, who held the manor of Reimore (and six others) before the Norman Conquest in 1066.

A hundred years later the building was in a sorry state. On 3rd August 1354, the Rural Dean (Decornus de Wodeleigh) wrote "The ornaments and altar cloths of the high altar are lost. The nave is dirty, inadequate and needs rebuilding. The parishioners are very poor and their means prevent them from rebuilding ..." However, work was carried out and at the same time the tower was added. Unusually, the tower is not at the west end of the church, but adjoins the south wall and is the only pre-Reformation example in south Devon. In the early eighteenth century the west window was

replaced by a large rectangular one and a musicians' gallery constructed.

Neglect and gradual deterioration again took their toll. By the latter part of the 19th century, the Rector, Francis Hingeston-Randolph, Writing some 40 years later, he wrote that when on arrival "I found the parish church buried in accumulated soil to a depth, in places, of over eight feet; the white-washed walls within, streaming with wet, were smeared with green or black slime from roof to floor; the poverty and meanness of the Holy Table were barely concealed by a still more mean and poverty-stricken covering, a moth-eaten rag which could scarcely hold together; the surplice was bedizened with, literally, hundreds of ironmoulds; the pews, of every conceivable size and shape and height, rotten and ruinous, were breaking down, every now and then, in service time, under their hapless occupants; the bells were cracked, or broken, or hung uselessly to shattered wheels". He began restoration at once, often paying the bills himself. Today's building owes much to his resourcefulness and dedication and several of the windows reveal his interest in Celtic saints.

In the early 20th century, the nave walls were lined with decorative tinplate, but this caused condensation to rot the church's structural timber and was replaced by the present render in 1961. The roof once sported a wooden "barrel" ceiling.

Starting opposite the entrance door and moving anti-clockwise, the north-west War Memorial window (1) depicts St George as an armoured knight, and lists not only the names of those who died in battle but also the actions in which they died. The round west window (2) replaced the rectangular window when the rickety gallery was removed, and shows Christ in glory with orb and sceptre. At that time a double reading desk (no longer in existence) was placed along the south wall, and the seating was re-arranged. The south-west window (3) shows St Augustine and St Alban (the first martyr). The font (4) is of granite on

marble pillars. It is of Norman style though of much later workmanship and has a handsome wooden cover.

On the church porch (5) is an 18th century sundial. During the Civil War, the Rector supported the king, not Cromwell, and was hidden in the tower for three months by parishioners before escaping to France. The entrance to the tower used to be outside the church, and the present door (6) was created to make sure that the bell-ringers went to church and did not sneak off once they had finished ringing! There are three bells in the tower. These are not rung in the usual way, but chimed. The bells themselves are fixed, and sound when the ringer pulls cords attached to the clappers, making them strike the edge of the bell.

The chancel arch and wall (7) are part of the 13th century building. The mediaeval mural (14th/15th century) is unique, but its exact origin and significance are unknown. The screen (8) and pulpit (9) were commissioned as part of the 19th century restoration; they were made in Belgium and are delightfully colourful, picking up the tones and border pattern of the mural. The pulpit window (9) shows David, patron saint of Wales and his abbot friend Senan. Opposite is a hagioscope, possibly Saxon or early Norman (10). This was a "squin" through which the altar could be seen (obviously in a different position to today – have a look).

Passing beneath the chancel arch, the organ (12) was built by Bevington and installed on Christmas Day 1863. Overhauled several times (most recently in 1999), it has one manual, six speaking stops, a Bourdon pedal stop and a coupler. It is perfectly suited to the size of the church.

Opposite the organ, the picture window (13) is of the Nativity and the Requisitioning of the Donkey for the Last Supper; Christ at Gethsemane is depicted at the head of the window. The south-east window (14) depicts three Celtic saints: Enellent, Nectan of Hartland and his sister Morwenna.

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Mrs Ardene Bennett,
Hill Cottage,
Ringmore.

July 28, 2000

Dear Ardene

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From our discussions emerged the idea of two documents. The first (the "bat") would be a cut-down version with limited detail, mainly for casual visitors. The second would be a tri-fold leaflet which would contain the information submitted by Di, supplemented by additional information including comment on the spiritual life of the church.

The PCC were not advised that the Historical Society are in the process of writing a book on Ringmore Church. However, from the conversation which I had with you, what our sub-committee are thinking would seem to fit in very well, with the proposed book providing the really detailed account of the church.

I now enclose a copy of the latest draft of the two documents which we are proposing, and should be grateful for any comments which the Historical Society may have on them. In order to give PCC members a chance to read the documents before the meeting, I am planning to circulate them next Friday. If you feel it would help for me to meet Historical Society members to discuss the drafts, please let me know.

Yours
Michael

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e-mail: met@cix.co.uk

Mrs D J Collinson,
Belle Vue,
Ringmore.
Kingsbridge,
Devon TQ7 4HJ.

August 22, 2000

Dear Di

As you know, the Church Council appointed a small sub-committee to recommend the most suitable format of publicity bat/leaflet, based on the excellent document which you provided.

The sub-committee has had several meetings in arriving at the recommendations which will be put before the PCC at its next meeting. We have also consulted Ardene as Chairman of the Historical Society, and have incorporated a number of helpful suggestions into our work.

It was our intention to include an acknowledgement to the Historical Society, but we understand that they do not wish the PCC to mention their name in the final documents. Whilst we will of course respect this, it was our unanimous wish on the sub-committee to say a sincere thank you for your work in producing the initial draft and, through it, for stirring us into action in producing up-to-date literature for display in the church. Thank you very much indeed.

Ardene tells me that the Historical Society's detailed book on Ringmore Church should be ready in about a year's time, and we look forward to being able to stock it on the church's literature table.

With all best wishes

Yours

Michael

Dear Michael,

Here is the list of points I mentioned to you on the phone. Some are just straightforward slips of the kind that always occur in writing, typing etc; others relate to minor distortions of facts or quite trivial matters of clarity or style that may be ignored entirely if they are not liked. I hope they may be of use to the PCC, to deploy or not deploy as they wish.

'WELCOME' document

- line 1: might it be better to say 'shortly' rather than 'just'? (MC was 1215).
- line 2: comma needed after 'Saxon'.
- line 3: the Norman Conquest took place over an extended period of time, so it would be more accurate to say something such as 'before the Norman Invasion in 1066'.
- line 8: for the sake of easy understanding, perhaps 'was' should be inserted after 'gallery'.
- line 9: comma not needed after 'century'.
- line 10: I believe HR did not hyphenate his name. (You could check on his gravestone.)
- line 34: it's a bit dodgy to say the mural is 'unique'. HR said it was, in the passage quoted in the RHS text, but that does not mean that we, nowadays, are entitled simply to affirm that it is. The fact is that almost everything about the mural is a mystery and we need to be cautious.
- line 37: comma needed after 'Wales'.
- line 40: a more unequivocal correction would be as follows: "'On your left, after passing beneath the chancel arch, is the organ (12) , built by Bevington..etc....'".
- line 48: 'above' is probably a little clearer than 'over' in the context of your sentence.
- line 53: insert 'a' between 'and' and 'small'.
- line 55: 'are' instead of 'is'.

THE LEAFLET

- lines 1 and 2: There's a small confusion here between singulars and plurals. I suggest either: 'Parish churches may be seen as museum pieces, showpieces of architecture and stained glass.'; or: 'A parish church may be seen as a museum piece, a showpiece of architecture and stained glass.'
 - lines 8 - 23 (a really trivial point, but it may just help towards trim presentation): the bullet section needs to have its punctuation made consistent. The usual practice would be to end each bullet except the last with a semicolon. The last then has a full stop.
 - lines 24,25: 'Same point as for line 1 of 'Welcome' document.
 - lines 25-30: this sentence is rather too densely packed for clarity. Might the following be a plainer version: 'It incorporates an earlier building, now the north transept and vestry, that may once have been a chapel built by the Saxon, Hecce, etc...'. Again, '1066' is not really appropriate (for reasons already stated in the line 3 'Welcome' notes). This difficulty could be solved here either by dropping '1066' or by using the word 'invasion' rather than 'Conquest'.
 - line 31: 'a hundred years' after the immediately antecedent date would be 1166. Perhaps you could say 'A hundred years after the church was built'?
 - line 37: a small error has crept in in the transcription of this quotation. It should be '...and their means prevent them from building'. ('Rebuilding' is correct in the first part of the quotation.)
 - line 37: 'Subsequently' would be better than 'however', since it wasn't in spite of but because of the RD's Report that the work was undertaken.
 - line 41: insert 'of its kind' after 'example'?
 - line 44: insert 'was' after 'gallery'?
 - lines 46-48: these lines do not quite make sense as they are. A full stop rather than a comma is needed after 'Hingeston Randolph'. To put it right after that I suggest the following: 'Writing in 1900, he noted that on his arrival in Ringmore he found the church "buried in accumulated soil....etc" '.
 - lines 72-74: a grammatical slip similar to the one about the organ (now corrected): the Memorial window does not start opposite the entrance door and move anti-clockwise. It needs to be made clear that it is the visitor who does the starting and moving.
 - line 79: 'At that time...'. Perhaps an approximate date should be given?
 - lines 110-112: I'm afraid it's most unlikely that this is a squint, or anything of early origin. It is part of the 19th century renovation and the piercing was probably done in order not to obscure the chancel totally from people sitting on the far left of the nave. Perhaps you could say: 'At first sight this looks as if it might be a 'squint', but in fact it is part of the 19th century renovations and does not provide any kind of glimpse of the altar'.
 - line 143: insert 'a' between 'and' and 'small'.
 - line 146: 'are' instead of 'is'.
-

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Mrs D J Collinson,
Belle Vue,
Ringmore.

September 15, 2000

Dear Di

Many thanks for the loan of the enclosed, which makes most interesting reading. I was particularly interested in the comments about the fragments of the early font, and indeed the dating of the present one. If it is "late 15th or early 16th century work" we have used considerable poetic licence in describing it as "of Norman style though of much later workmanship"!

Yours

Michael



Dear Michael,

You are quite right to challenge any certainty about the 'squint'. We do know about the Jean Bide assertion (though note that she qualifies it with 'is believed to be') but 2 or 3 other writers (including Pevsner) have been shown to be wrong about some of the church's features and its possible that she may be wrong as well. I think it would be sensible to say '...but is more likely to be part of the 19th century alterations etc.' *

Many thanks for pointing this out to me.

The case for its not being a squint is roughly as follows. First, as we all know, it does not grant a sight of the holy table, or altar. Second, we have to consider what went on in that area when HR put in the organ and added his lean-to chapel. He needed to strengthen what was then an outside wall to take the organ-plate. The corner in question would have been an outside corner of the building and would need special strengthening since the north transept wall would be weakened by making the opening in it for internal access to the sidechapel. It may therefore be the case that HR built up his masonry in that corner to provide the necessary solidity, and then pierced it, perhaps to make an aesthetic allusion to hagioscopes, but also to diminish the sense of being cut off from the chancel if one happened to be sitting 'round the corner'. In a sense, it is, or may be, some kind of 'scope'.

Of course, much of that is conjecture, but I think the suppositions are reasoned ones. It would be wonderful if, somewhere in some archive, we could discover HR's architectural drawings. They may be in Exeter, in diocesan records, since it is unlikely that such major alterations would be made without diocesan approval.

I have a photocopy (somewhere on file) of a letter from HR to a Miss Cresswell in which he writes about his renovations and the dedication of the church. She had thought the little chapel was Norman, and I sense that he was slightly gleeful that she had been taken in. I will hunt out the letter today and let you see it. He is even more gleeful (it seems) about Miss Cresswell's failure to understand some Latin.

Now, I have written all this, as it were, from memory, because the church is not yet open this morning for me to go and look at that corner again. Later today I will go down and look, to see if I can find any further evidence one way or another. I may have to eat my words!

Best wishes,

Di

t out t

* Or '... but may even be part etc.' if you feel the above suggestion is too much in favour of the no-squint argument?

Di

P.S. I see now, on rereading your letter, that you have made an alteration, so do ignore * above.

George
(top to Di)

(u.e.)

FRANCIS Charles HINGESTON - RANDOLPH

Cathedral 1885,

Prebendary of Exeter, Rector of Ringsore 1860 - 1910

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The Rev. Francis C. Hingeston (to which, after the marriage, he added his wife's ^{family} name, Randolph,) came to Ringsore from his home county, Cornwall, (at that time still part of the Exeter Diocese), in 1860. As well as being a priest, he was a qualified architect, an archivist, an archaeologist - and a benefactor of Ringsore.

While in Cornwall, he had restored the churches of ^{Minor,} St. Columby, Zennor, Manaccan, and the tower of St. Colan (and, later, had a hand in the building of Traro Cathedral). He found ^{his} Ringsore church in a very sad way; ~~and set to work immediately.~~ ^{other} So did a large number of /priests, architects and builders; in Hoskins' tome, "Devon" (page 274) he says "Fortunate indeed was the parish that was too poor to "restore" its church in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s" Ringsore was indeed fortunate in its Rector, with his knowledge, his wish to preserve and his purse. The Diocese was also fortunate - ~~xxx~~ in Hopkins work he says (page 562) in the Bibliography section, on Ecclesiastical History, after commending a book by G. Oliver as "a a great work of scholarship", he continues "Almost on the same level as Oliver are the "Episcopal Registers of the Diocese of Exeter" ed. by F.C.Hingeston-Randolph in 10 vols. (London & Exeter, 1886-1915)c.

He began immediately to work on the dilapidated church - no doubt he had met similar problems in Cornwall - and finished the main repairs in 1863. He brought the present pulpit and the Rood screen from Belgium (the old screen had collapsed), rebuilt the levels in the chancel and moved the north wall of the chancel to allow for the installation of the organ (which he gave to the church). The east end thus created has a ~~narrow~~ narrow window, dedicated to his curate, whose early death had saddened the Rector; the sill is an altar and a piscina is in the south wall. A number of windows were glazed by a firm from Somerset to the designs of the Rector; apart from the Crucifixion in the East window, most of the saints remembered are Cornish Church-builders.

Hingeston-Randolph's great work was the discovery of the wall painting in the west side of the chancel arch and he must be allowed to record this in his own words as given in a paper of the 1830s.

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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..."

That was a general picture of the work. In another, more detailed, report of the same period, he said

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

* in black letter - in Gothic or Old English letters

† the ordinance - the year when churches/required to

the date of the ordinance - the date when churches were

exhibit the required to exhibit the

Ten Commandments, the Decalogue.

[the tenth day of October 1561
is the "in the Third Regnal Year of Elizabeth."

Somehow he does not seem to have spread the news of this discovery - perhaps in 1880 few people would have been interested. Many years later, Hoskins says that Ringmore was "lavishly coloured in the best Victorian manner", and Pevsner, used in the listing, says "Plain chancel arch with C.19 painting above,"; it was not until 1987 that visitors with expert knowledge urged that action should be taken to take care of the painting. Those locals who had believed in the Prebendary took heart, and action to bring the listing up-to-date has been taken.