

THE LEAVES AND FLOWERS OF ST MARY'S, STRATFIELD MORTIMER: NATURALISTIC STONE CARVINGS IN A VICTORIAN CHURCH ON THE HAMPSHIRE-BERKSHIRE BORDER

By J R L ALLEN and PETRA DARK

ABSTRACT

The stone church of St. Mary the Virgin, one of the most costly in Hampshire and Berkshire, was built between 1866 and 1869 in the High Victorian manner based on the Medieval Early Decorated (Geometrical) style. It was richly and profusely decorated inside and out with mainly naturalistic stonecarvings, executed by James Allen of Battersea Park, London, who spent 32 weeks in all on the work. At least 20, mainly native, commonly occurring plants are identifiable, the most frequent being hawthorn, buttercups, ivy, primrose, grape-vine and wild strawberry. Crop plants and exotic species, such as passionflower, are also represented. Several of the plants have Christian and specifically Marian symbolism. In their composition, diversity and quality, the carvings at St. Mary's compare with naturalistic assemblages found in English ecclesiastical buildings of the late 13th and early 14th centuries, the period in the development of Gothic which many Victorian church architects took as a model.

INTRODUCTION

Workers from north Hampshire and south Berkshire parishes came together with others in the late 1860s to rebuild the medieval church of St. Mary the Virgin in the parish of Stratfield Mortimer, on the Hampshire-Berkshire border. The work extended from September 1866 to July 1869 under the day-to-day direction of William Rhind, the young Scottish Clerk of Works, who sent to the sponsor 152 weekly accounts of his activities (BRO D/EBy Q19). On the basis of these and other data it has been possible to reconstruct in considerable detail the labour

force involved, the sources and costs of materials and services, and the building programme (Allen 2008). The church was designed in the High Victorian manner by the little-known London architect Richard Armstrong Snr, and paid for by Richard Fellowes Benyon (VCHB, vol. III, 1923), the owner of the Englefield Estate, with properties chiefly in Berkshire but also in London and Essex. Richard Fellowes succeeded to the Englefield Estate in 1854, on the death of his uncle Richard Benyon and on condition that he took the name of Benyon until his own death, in 1897. A Christian philanthropist, Richard Benyon built over this long tenure several Anglican churches and schools on the estate, of which St Mary's in Stratfield Mortimer is an early example. His association with the architect Richard Armstrong (and later with Armstrong's son) had begun much earlier, and continued for many years.

The direct costs of the rebuilding of St Mary's, Stratfield Mortimer (c. £10,000), plus indirect costs, came to about £15,000 (D/EBy Q19, D/EBy Q20), making the church one of the most expensive in historic Berkshire: the cost per seat was £20–22, on the basis of the direct costs (Allen 2008), as compared to an average of £10.1 /seat for 'late' churches in the county (Allen 2007) and £8.2 /seat for equivalent buildings in north Hampshire (Allen 2010). St. Mary's is a large, conspicuous and sturdy building (Fig. 1), of Swindon stone (external) and Bath stone (internal), and one that Pevsner (1966) was moved to describe as 'quite a stately church'.

St. Mary's is exceptional among the late churches of the region in the extent to which it was embellished inside and out by largely

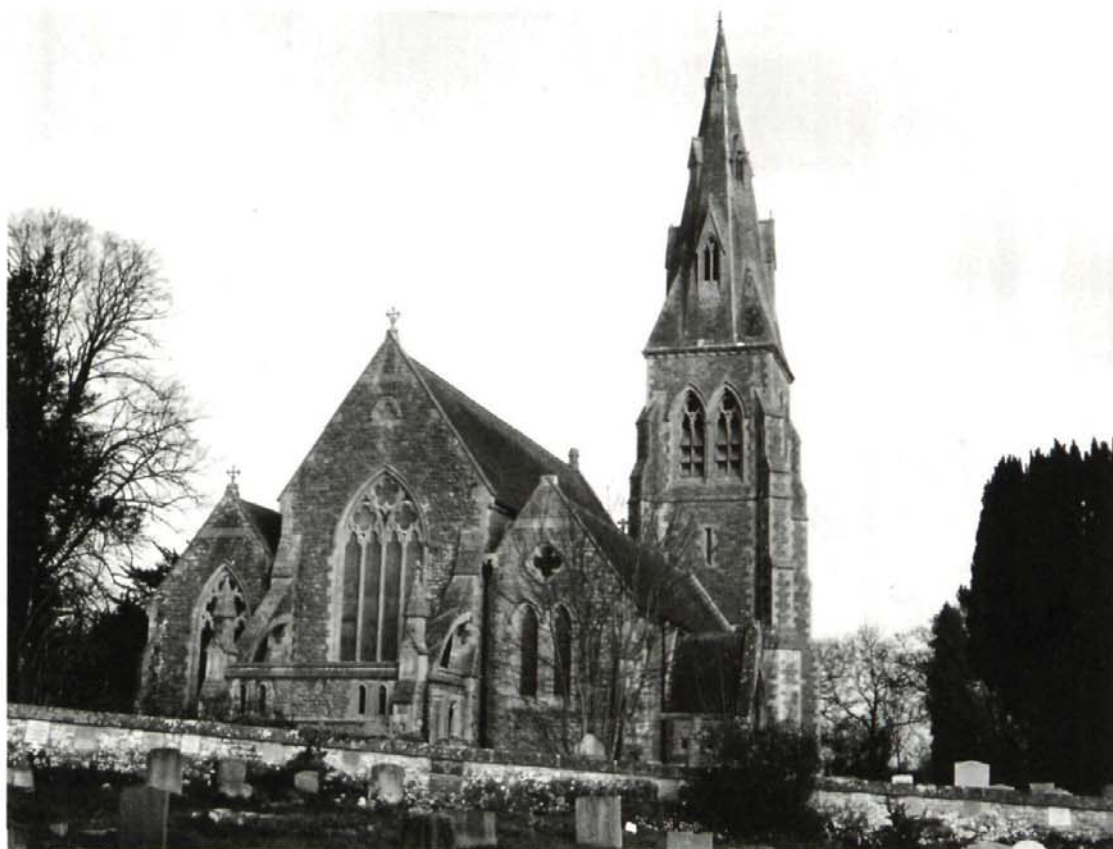


Fig. 1 St. Mary's from the southwest. Photograph: J.R.L. Allen

naturalistic carvings of flowers and leaves. These were executed in Bath stone from Box by James Allen, a self-employed London artist living in Battersea Park, who was paid a total of *c.* £103 for work extending over 32 weeks beginning in late March 1868. More than 100 of these carvings are to be seen, on cornices, drainheads, corbels, window and door stops, and on the capitals of columns, colonettes, window shafts and door shafts. Allen's external carvings are now somewhat softened by weathering, but his much more elaborate internal work is of considerable delicacy and remains crisp and fresh-looking. The carvings are a mixture of the stylised and the chiefly naturalistic, the latter embracing at least 20

recognisable *taxa* of native and exotic plants, which it is our purpose briefly to describe and comment on.

It is not surprising to find some naturalistic carvings in a High Victorian church. Just as church architects of this period sought general models largely among Early English and Early Decorated (Geometrical) medieval churches (Dixon and Muthesius 1978), so in choosing decoration they turned to the naturalistic carvings widely made at that time. St. Mary's constitutes an outstanding example among the late churches in Hampshire and Berkshire of this aspect of the Decorative Tradition, which Ruskin promoted so significantly (Barnard 1973).

IDENTIFICATION OF FLOWERS AND LEAVES

There is some variation in the degree to which the Victorian carvings at St. Mary's can be assigned to specific plants, as botanists investigating medieval examples also found (e.g. Seward 1935; Salisbury in Pevsner 1945). For the exterior carvings this is at least partly because of loss of detail due to weathering, but the original level of detail of individual

carvings, and the degree of 'artistic licence' employed, even in representations of what are apparently the same species, varies also. For some carvings it is clear that leaves, flowers and fruits from different plants have been combined, a common feature in medieval ecclesiastical art (e.g. Seward 1935; Pevsner 1945).

Most of the carvings at St. Mary's can be assigned to species on the basis of details of leaf, flower or fruit morphology, as described by accepted authorities (e.g. Ross-Craig 1948–73; Clapham *et al.* 1987; Stace 1991), but the identification of some carvings remains elusive. Of the unidentifiable carvings, there are just two types which appear to represent real plants, the rest – perhaps ten per cent of the total – being too stylised to be considered accurate depictions. The range of possible plants represented is not, of course, at this Victorian date confined to the native flora and crops, and it is possible that some of the carvings not identified here represent popular garden or glasshouse plants of the period.

The plants recognised are listed in Table 1, together with their distribution between the interior and exterior of the building. Figure 2 shows the location of those that can be readily examined from ground/floor level. The higher carvings – at the gable windows of the aisles and at the windows of the bell-chamber in the tower – require the use of binoculars if viewed from the ground, and are not shown on this plan. We do not show the positions of completely unidentifiable carvings, or *cf.* primrose on drain heads.

Table 1 List and distribution of plant species represented at St. Mary's

<i>Species</i>	<i>External (no.)</i>	<i>Internal (no.)</i>
blackberry	–	1
dog rose or other wild rose		1
field maple	4	–
hawthorn	21	3
ivy	6	3
pedunculate oak	2	–
buttercups	4	9
columbine	2	–
hedge bindweed	1	2
<i>cf.</i> primrose	8	–
silverweed	–	1
thistle	1	–
wild strawberry	5	–
hart's-tongue fern	–	1
stylised fern (<i>cf.</i> spleenwort)	–	2
bread wheat	–	2
cultivated rose	1	1
grape-vine	5	2
lily	–	1
passion-flower	–	2
totals	60	31

NATIVE TREES, SHRUBS AND WOODY CLIMBERS (W1–W6)

Blackberry or bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*)

Leaves and fruits attributed to blackberry (Fig. 3A) appear on a single carving on the north nave arcade. The plump compound fruits are distinctive, although on some of the carvings of grape-vine the bunches of grapes are shown in a similar fashion.

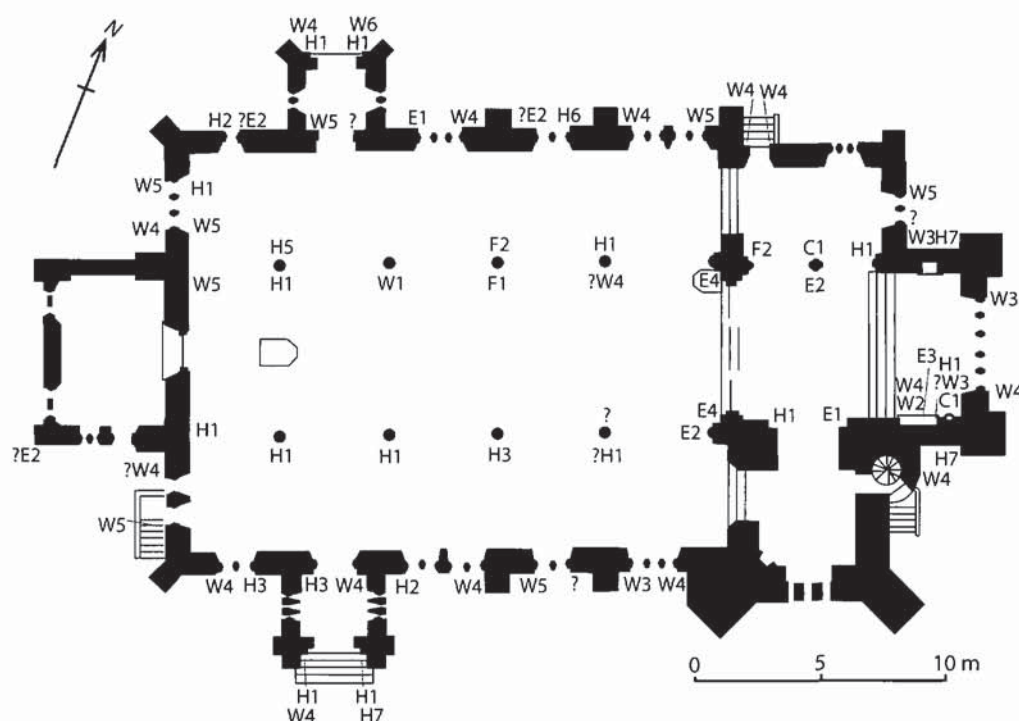


Fig. 2 Location of stonecarvings at St. Mary's depicting identified plant species, based on the plan of the church as prepared for the building of the 1896 vestry. *Native trees, shrubs and woody climbers*: W1 – blackberry; W2 – dog rose; W3 – field maple; W4 – hawthorn; W5 – ivy; W6 – pedunculate oak. *Native herbs*: H1 – buttercups; H2 – columbine; H3 – hedge bindweed; H5 – silverweed; H6 – thistle; H7 – wild strawberry. *Native ferns*: F1 – hart's-tongue fern; F2 – cf. spleenwort. *Crop plants*: C1 – bread wheat. *Exotic forms*: E1 – cultivated rose; E2 – grape-vine; E3 – lily; E4 – passion-flower. The plan does not indicate the character and location of carvings (20) that occur high up on the outside of the building (bell-chamber windows, gable windows), which include depictions of grape, hawthorn, ivy, maple and oak or the location of cf. primrose on drain heads.

Dog rose or other wild rose (Rosa sp.)

Depicted on one internal carving, on the *sedilia* in the chancel, are leaves and flowers resembling a species of wild rose (Fig. 3B). The leaves are shown with two pairs of elliptical leaflets and one apical leaflet, all with toothed margins. The flowers have five petals, and a ring of conspicuous stamens, denoted in the carving by small holes.

Field maple (Acer campestre)

Leaves apparently of field maple appear on four external carvings (Fig. 4A), on two of which they are accompanied by what seem to be grapes

and on one of these a hawthorn-style flower. Similar leaves also appear above the capital of one internal column in the *sedilia* (although there is some overlap with the depiction of buttercup leaves on the same column), and as a more stylised motif elsewhere on the internal walls. The leaves are five-lobed, each lobe being shallowly trilobed. The characteristic winged fruits are not shown.

Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna)

Leaves and flowers to varying degrees resembling hawthorn (Fig. 4B) occur on 21 external carvings and on three internal ones (although on one of these there is a



Fig. 3 Depictions of plants. A – blackberry with fruit (int.); B – wild rose (int.); C – ivy with berries (int.); D – buttercup (int.). Photographs: James Watkins.

similarity to some depictions of buttercup leaves). Hawthorn leaves usually have three to seven lobes, the lobes being particularly deeply cut in *C. monogyna* (in contrast to the Midland hawthorn *C. laevigata*). The lobes may be sparingly toothed toward their apices, as depicted in many of the carvings. The five-petalled flowers have a prominent ring of stamens, which the stonemason has indicated as a central hollow ring on the carving in the south porch. On some external carvings, however, the sculptor has depicted the flowers with a raised or hollow centre, the latter possibly where the ring has eroded

away. Several of the external carvings bear small clusters of fruits.

Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

On three internal carvings and six external ones appear the leaves and berries of ivy (Fig. 3C). In all cases the leaves are carved in the palmately five-lobed form, which occurs on the root-bearing climbing and creeping stems. In life, the leaves on the flowering stems are usually entire and ovate or rhombic rather than lobed, so the stonemason has used a degree of artistic license in combining shade leaves with berries

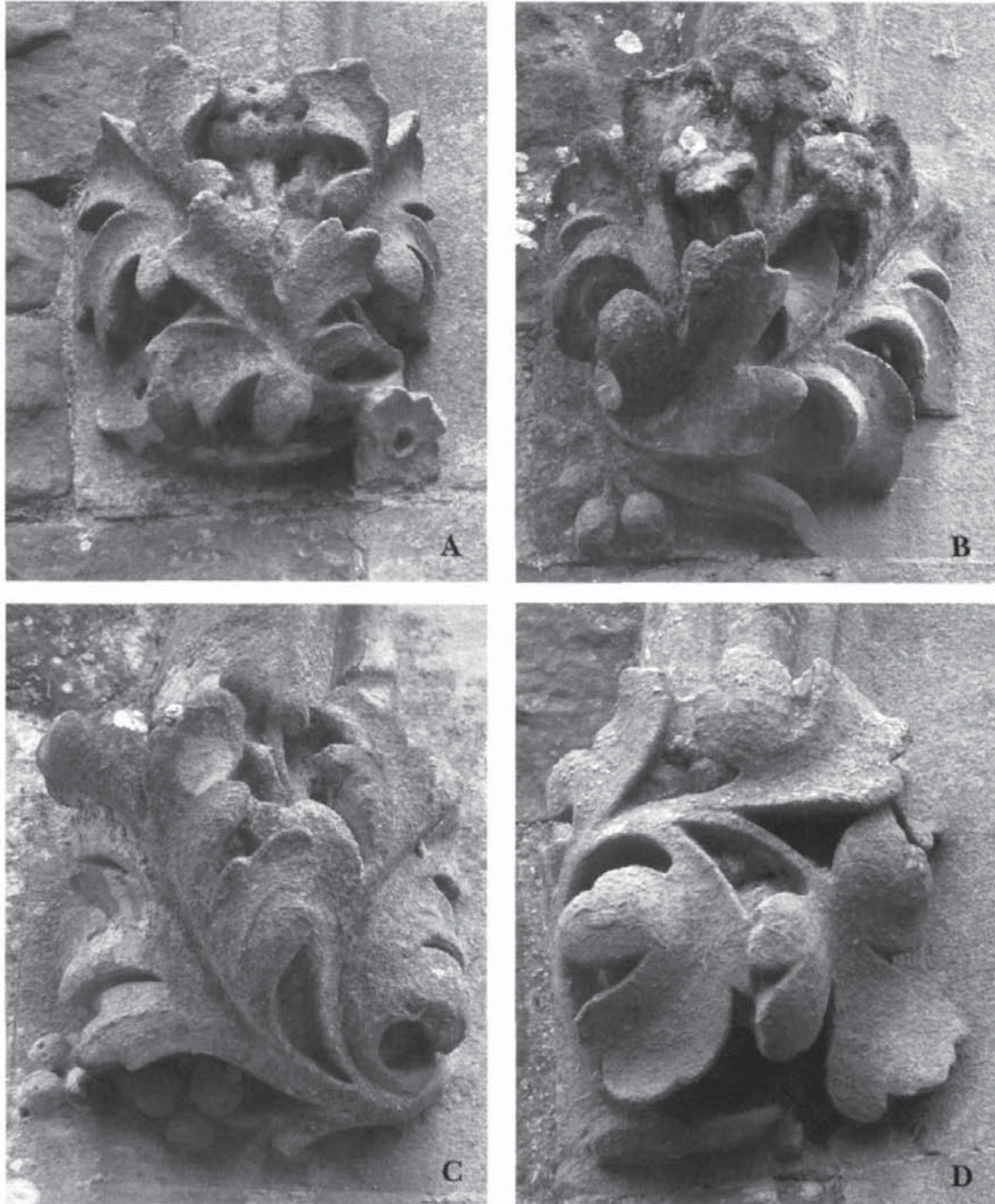


Fig. 4 Depictions of plants. A – field maple leaves (ext.); B – hawthorn, leaves with flowers and berries (ext.); C – oak with acorns (ext.); D – columbine (ext.). Photographs: James Watkins.



Fig. 5 Hedge bindweed, leaves and flowers (int.). Photograph: James Watkins.

on the same stems. Details of the venation appear on the internal carvings, but these have been eroded from external examples.

Pedunculate oak (Quercus robur)

Leaves and acorns or empty acorn cups of pedunculate oak (Fig. 4C) are depicted on two external carvings, one outside the north porch and another on the west face of the tower at bell-chamber level. The deeply lobed leaves are distinctive, as are the clusters of acorns on a common stalk.

NATIVE HERBS (H1–H7)

Buttercups (Ranunculus spp.)

Leaves and flowers of at least one species of

buttercup (Fig. 3D) are depicted on nine, if not more, internal carvings and four external ones, flanking the entrances to both porches, although the leaves are stylised to varying degrees. The extent to which the artist has attempted to depict toothing along the leaf margins varies considerably. The leaves of creeping buttercup (*R. repens*) and bulbous buttercup (*R. bulbosus*) are characteristically divided into three segments, of which the central segment is relatively long-stalked, and this arrangement occurs in several of the carvings thought to represent buttercup. In others, the carved leaves more closely resemble a stylised version of those of the meadow buttercup (*R. acris*), which are palmately lobed with further lobes to each segment. All three species are highly variable in leaf form, making it difficult to assign even the most detailed carvings to any one with certainty. The five-petaled flowers

are quite accurately depicted, with the small achenes that form the head in the middle of the flower denoted by a raised centre.

Columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris*)

Two carvings outside the north and south aisles show leaves resembling stylised versions of columbine (Fig. 4D). The key characteristics of the leaves are that they are biternate, with stalked leaflets that are irregularly three-lobed with crenate margins. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in view of their complex form, the flowers of columbine are not shown.

Hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*)

Leaves and flowers of hedge bindweed (Fig. 5) are depicted in two locations internally, on the south nave arcade and in the south porch, and one outside the south aisle. The sagittate form of the leaves, and the large trumpet-shaped flowers, are unmistakable. This plant climbs by twining, but a tendril appears to have been added, incorrectly, to the carving in the south porch.

Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*)

Leaves and five-petalled flowers resembling highly stylised primroses occur in eight shallow-relief carvings, all on drainheads (Fig. 6A). The obovate leaves are shown with much deeper serrations than in life, and the rendition of the five-petalled flowers resembles that of the carvings of buttercup.

Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*)

Possibly attributable to this plant are leaves and flowers (Fig. 6B) that occur on one carving in the north arcade, accompanied by leaves of buttercup. However, the execution of the pinnate leaves is stylised. In life, the plant has seven to 12 pairs of main leaflets to each leaf, alternating with much smaller leaflets, while the stonemason has shown just three pairs of large leaflets before the apical leaflet. The leaflets are correctly depicted as serrate, but the teeth

are not as deeply cut as in the plant. The five-petalled flowers are reasonably accurate.

Thistle (*Cirsium* *sp.*)

Leaves and flowers of a species of thistle (Fig. 7A) appear on one carving outside the north aisle. The shape of the flower heads and the spiny, deeply pinnatifid leaves with lobed segments are distinctive.

Wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*)

Trifoliate leaves and five-petalled flowers resembling those of wild strawberry (Fig. 7B) are shown on five external carvings, one of which bears a cluster of fruits more closely resembling the depiction of grapes than strawberries. The leaves are correctly shown with toothed margins.

NATIVE FERNS (F1–F2)

Hart's-tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*/
Phyllitis scolopendrium)

Leaves of this fern are depicted on one carving on the north arcade (Fig. 8), alternating with leaves of another, much more stylised fern (see below). The leaves are distinctive by their strap-shaped blade, cordate base and tapering form. Even the parallel veins to the leaves are faithfully reproduced.

Stylised fern (?*spleenwort*, *Asplenium* *sp.*)

Highly stylised fern fronds are depicted on two internal carvings. The leaves are pinnately divided, with toothed/lobed *pinnae*. The carvings do not closely resemble any native fern, but the form of the fronds is not dissimilar to some species of spleenwort (*Asplenium*).

CROP PLANTS (C1)

The distinctive spikes of bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) are shown on two internal carvings,

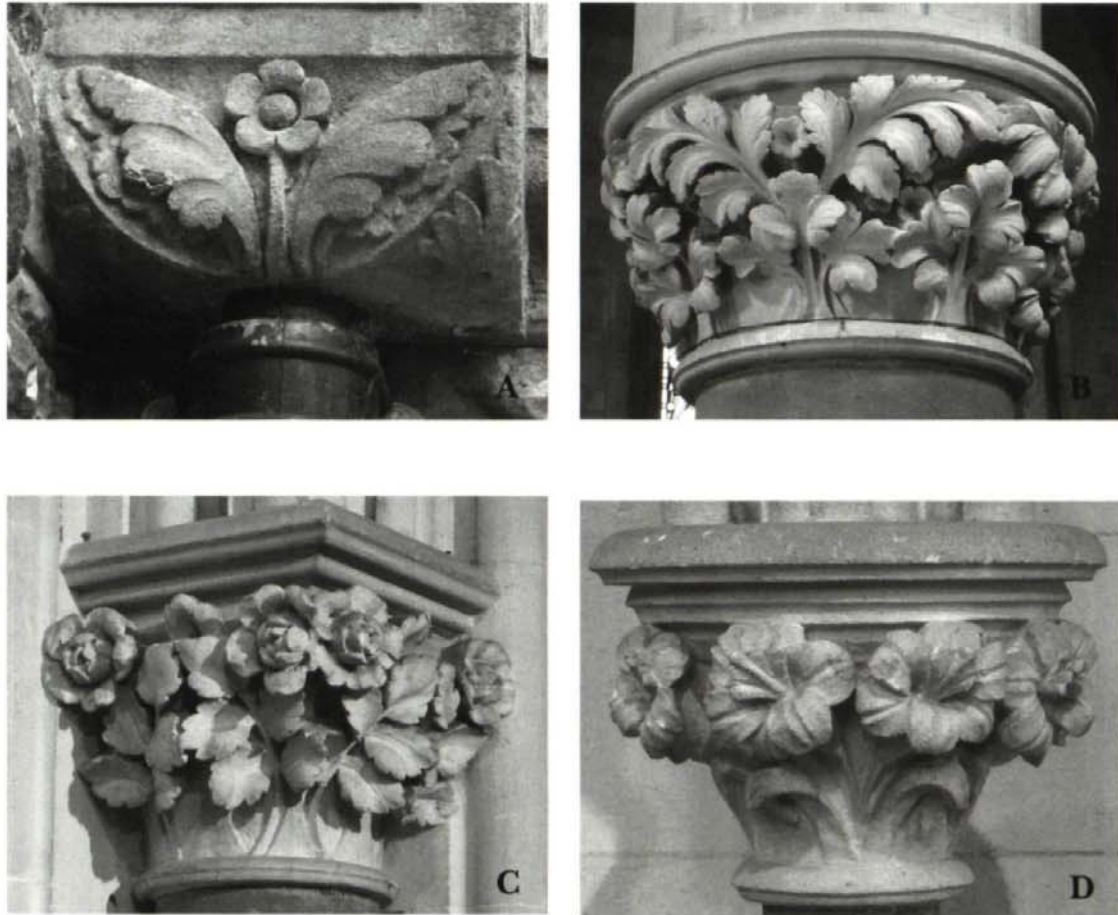


Fig. 6 Depictions of plants. A – primrose (ext.); B – silverweed with buttercup (int.); C – cultivated rose (int.); D – lily, flowers and leaves (int.). Photographs: James Watkins.

intermingled with vine leaves (Fig. 9). One of these carvings occurs on the support of the *piscina* in the chancel.

EXOTICS (E1-E4)

Cultivated rose (*Rosa*)

A double-flowered cultivar of the rose is depicted on one internal and one external carving (Fig. 6C). The pinnate leaves are

distinctive, the leaflets having toothed margins.

Grape-vine (*Vitis vinifera*)

Depictions of what appear to be the leaves and fruits of grape-vine (Fig. 10) are found on two internal and five external carvings, although the treatment of the palmately-lobed leaves differs between those sited internally and some of those outside. On two of the external examples, on the north side of the church,



Fig. 7 Depictions of plants. A – thistle, leaves and flowers (ext.); B – wild strawberry, leaves and flowers (ext.). Photographs: James Watkins.

the grapes are accompanied by leaves more closely resembling the internal carvings of passion-flower, both in overall form and lack of serration to the leaf margin. Some of the leaves on the highly eroded carving on the pinnacle of the south-west flying buttress resemble those of field maple. Possibly the difference is attributable to the loss of detail on the leaf margins of the weathered external carvings, but it may be that leaves and fruits of different plants have been mixed.

Lily (Lilium sp.)

Flowers resembling those of a lily (Fig. 6D) appear on one internal carving, in the centre of the *sedilia*. The flowers have six petals, and

a long style surrounded by what appear to be prominent anthers. The strap-like leaves with entire margins are also similar to those of certain species of lily, such as the basal leaves of the Madonna lily, *L. candidum*.

Passion flower (Passiflora caerulea)

Two internal carvings, on the responds of the chancel arch, depict the leaves and highly distinctive blooms of the passion flower (Fig. 11). As noted above, the leaves, which are deeply palmately five-lobed, may occur along with grapes on one or two of the external carvings. The flowers have three stigmas, a corona of filaments, and five petals and five sepals of similar appearance, all reproduced in the carvings.



Fig. 8 Hart's-tongue fern with *cf.* spleenwort (int.). Photograph: James Watkins.



Fig. 9 Bread-wheat with grape-vine (leaves only) (int.). Photograph: James Watkins.



Fig. 10 Grape-vine (int.). Photograph: James Watkins.

SYMBOLISM

No records are known which might suggest why Richard Benyon and his architect chose to embellish St. Mary's with the particular range of common native and exotic plants listed in Table 1. Their choice could have been partly influenced by the keen Victorian interest in the 'language of flowers' (e.g. Bertram 1856; Thiselton Dyer 1889; Greenaway 1977), their desire to emulate medieval predecessors, or simply a wish to celebrate bounteous Nature at Stratfield Mortimer. However, some plants, it may be said with greater confidence, were

selected for their long-accepted Marian or more general Christian or Biblical symbolism, or for their national references (e.g. Anderson 1971; Hulme 1976; Musselman 2007).

One substantial group is widely accepted as symbolic of the Virgin Mary and especially of her purity, or was associated with her in medieval times. These are buttercups (Bertram 1856; Becker 1994), columbine (Murray and Murray 2004), white-flowering hawthorn (Mabey 1996), especially the Madonna lily (Thiselton Dyer 1889; Hulme 1976; Vickery 1995; Murray and Murray 2004), and the rose (Thiselton Dyer 1889; Hulme 1976; Murray



Fig. 11 Passion-flower, leaves and flowers (int.). Photograph: James Watkins.

and Murray 2004). It is noteworthy that all but three of the hawthorn carvings at St. Mary's are external, and the only two carvings in the main body of the church, in the north arcade and *sedilia*, are of leaves only; flowers appear outside and in the south porch. Possibly this distribution reflects the superstition that it was unlucky to bring hawthorn blossom indoors (Vickery 1995; Mabey 1996).

Another group has a broader Christian symbolism. Ivy, a tenacious climber, and therefore a ready symbol of fidelity and matrimony, stands for the mystical betrothal and marriage of Christ and His Church (Bertram 1856). The grape-vine represents Christ the true or fruitful vine of the Evangelists (e.g. John 15:1) and, intermingled with wheat, the elements of the Eucharist (Hulme 1976; Murray and Murray 2004). Hawthorn, like some other spiny plants, has a broader symbolism than a strictly Marian one. The variety flowering in winter as well as

early spring – the Glastonbury thorn associated with St. Joseph of Arimathea – is linked to Christ's Crown of Thorns, as are bramble and wild rose (Thiselton Dyer 1889; Vickery 1995; Mabey 1996). The five-petalled wild strawberry is symbolic of the Five Wounds of the Passion (Becker 1994). Standing in Post-Medieval times for the Crucifixion and the Apostles is the exotic passion flower, with its three stigmas, five anthers, five petals and five sepals (Thiselton Dyer 1889; Johnson and Smith 1972; Grigson 1973; Hulme 1976; Vickery 1995).

Oak is one national symbol seen at St. Mary's. The strength and durability of the wood, and the long-lived nature of the tree, have long made it appeal as a symbol of England (Becker 1994; Vickery 1995). Another emblem of England seen at St. Mary's is the cultivated (red) rose. The single carving of a thistle is perhaps more likely to be an indirect national reference, and intended primarily to commem-

orate the leadership of the Scottish Clerk of Works, William Rhind, in the demanding and lengthy rebuilding.

DISCUSSION

The character of the carvings at St. Mary's suggests that Allen, who appears to have worked alone, did not approach his subjects as a botanical illustrator, but rather as an artist concerned at least to some degree with iconographic design within the constraints of stone and location in the building. While many plants are quite faithfully rendered – given the timing of his visits and the rural setting, he could have worked partly from life – others are stylised or distorted to varying degrees, and are nameable with less certainty. Elements are mixed together in some carvings, for example, the leaves and fruit, or the leaves and flowers, of different species, or simply different leaves, as in medieval stonework he could have known about, for example, at Southwell Minster (Pevsner 1945). Furthermore, the depictions are not always true to scale or of complete leaves.

While St. Mary's is exceptional in the profusion and variety of its naturalist stone carvings, it is not alone among Victorian churches in the region, mainly of the 1850s and 60s, in having this sort of embellishment. Decoration of this kind exists in a scattering of Hampshire churches (Allen 2010), the chancel arch being an especially favoured location, as can be found among the following examples. Colson's churches of St Peter, Stockbridge (1866), and St. Lawrence, Wootton St. Lawrence (1864), illustrate bramble, ferns, holly, lily, oak, passion flower, roses and grape-vine, among other plants. The riot of splendid carvings at Stockbridge was executed by the Exeter artist Harry Hems (Poole 2000). At two of the churches designed by William White, St. Mary's, Longstock (1880), and St. Michael, Lyndhurst (1857), there are leaves with some lilies and roses, the decoration at Lyndhurst being the more profuse. Pevsner and Lloyd (2002) attribute the Lyndhurst carvings to the stonemason G. W. Seale.

The architect Henry Woodyer embellished many of his churches with naturalistic carvings. Finely executed buttercups, ferns, lily, passion flower and grape-vine can be seen at St. Mary's, Lasham (1866), and St. Mary's and St. John's, Newtown (1865). The extensive work at Newtown (Allen 2010) was done by Thomas Nicholls of Lambeth, a London artist frequently employed by Woodyer (Elliott and Pritchard 2002). Oak with acorns, roses and passion flower appear in P. C. Hardwick's garrison church of All Saints in Aldershot (1867), and grape-vine and wheat at S. S. Teulon's St. Peter and St Paul, Hawkley (1865). Other churches with such carvings are J. P. Harrison's St. Matthew in Netley Marsh (1855), T. H. Wyatt's St. Laurence at Weston Patrick (1868), and E. Christian's Christ Church, Winchester (1861). The work at the latter, including grape-vine, lily and passion flower, was undertaken by an unnamed artist from the widely-active London firm of Farmer and Brindley (HRO 57M81W/PV1). A little decoration of this kind can be found even in out-of-the-way churches, such as the undedicated church by G. Guthrie in West Tytherley near the western border of the county.

Historic Berkshire, the smaller county, presents correspondingly fewer examples. Naturalistic carvings, chiefly of leaves, were used by G. E. Street to embellish his St. Michael and All Angels, Sandhurst (1853), All Saints, Brightwalton (1861), and St. Mary, Great Fawley (1864). Elliott and Pritchard (1998) identify the artist as the previously mentioned Thomas Nicholls, who figures again as the carver of the elaborate naturalistic capitals at Woodyer's Christ Church (1861–2) in south Reading (Elliott and Pritchard 2002). Carvings of common, local plants decorate the capitals in the private chapel (1861–3) of Wellington College, Crowthorne, designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott.

Naturalistic carvings of exceptional quality at one secular building of the period in the region deserve mention, although their purpose was representational and didactic rather than symbolic. The capitals and corbels of the interior court of the Ruskin-influenced, Gothic-style Museum of Natural History in Oxford, by

Sir Thomas Deane, Son and Woodward, were profusely decorated between 1858–60 with representations of plants and animals by the Irish cousins James and John O'Shea, and Edward Whelan (Haward 1991; O'Dwyer 1997). These artists are known to have carved from life, bringing to work fresh specimens of the plants they sought to portray. Many native British species are depicted, including some represented in churches, as well as exotic plants such as palms. Controversially, the external carvings were never completed, as it is easy to see.

These mid-Victorian architects of the Gothic Revival took as their model the creations in stone, and also in wood (e.g. Remnant 1969; Barnes *et al.*, 2007), of medieval sculptors working mainly a decade or two either side of the turn of the 13th century. The jewel, and best described, among these is undoubtedly the Chapter House of c. 1293 at Southwell Minster (Seward 1935; Pevsner 1945), with its profuse and skilful renderings in the interior. Here professional botanists successfully identified most of the native species carved later at St. Mary's and elsewhere in Hampshire and Berkshire. An assemblage comparable in diversity, profuseness and quality to Southwell Minster can be seen in the Chapter House and Vestibule of the 1270s and 1280s at York Minster (Pevsner 1972). Other ecclesiastical buildings with naturalistic carvings of common plants are the late 13th-century parts of Westminster Abbey (Bond 1909; Cave 1948); the choir (before 1280) and east cloister at Lincoln Cathedral (Bond 1913;

Cave 1948); the tombs of Bishops Cantilupe (1286) and Sinefield (c. 1317) at Hereford (Colling 1874; Gardner 1927); the southeast cloister (c. 1297) at Norwich Cathedral (Rose and Hedgecoe 1997); St. Frideswide's shrine (c. 1290–1300) at Christ Church, Oxford (Bond, 1906, 1913); the east nave (before c. 1310) of Exeter Cathedral (Colling 1874; Bond 1913; Gardner 1927; Cave 1948, 1953); and the Lady Chapel (1320s) at Ely (Colling 1874). The practice of naturalistic carving had occasional precursors, however, as at Norman Corcomroe Abbey in Ireland (Nelson and Stalley 1989), and also sporadic successors, for example, copiously with much stylisation in the late 15th-century Rosslyn Chapel near Edinburgh (Dyer 2001, 2002).

Sadly, St. Mary's is no longer in regular use, the population of the parish having migrated westwards. The future of the building and its exceptional carvings is consequently uncertain.

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Authors: J.R.L. Allen and Petra Dark, Department of Archaeology, School of Human and Environmental Sciences, Geoscience Building, The University of Reading, PO Box 227 Whiteknights, Reading RG6 6AB. Email: j.r.l.allen@reading.ac.uk