

# The Church of the Holy Trinity, Pontargothi, Carmarthenshire.

Peter Rowland





Produced by Peter Rowland – Summer 2024

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Described in the Carmarthenshire & Ceredigion' volume of the Pevsner 'The Buildings of Wales (1); as ".... a church without parallel in Wales for its interior which combines painted decoration and stained glass in a single scheme,...". Quite simply this church is an absolute gem, not just for the beauty of the building but also for its location beside the River Cothi.."

## Location.

The first inclusion of the church, as well as the house Alltyferin, on an Ordnance Survey map was on the 6 inches to the mile map dated 1888, surveyed in 1886. Fig 1 & 1a

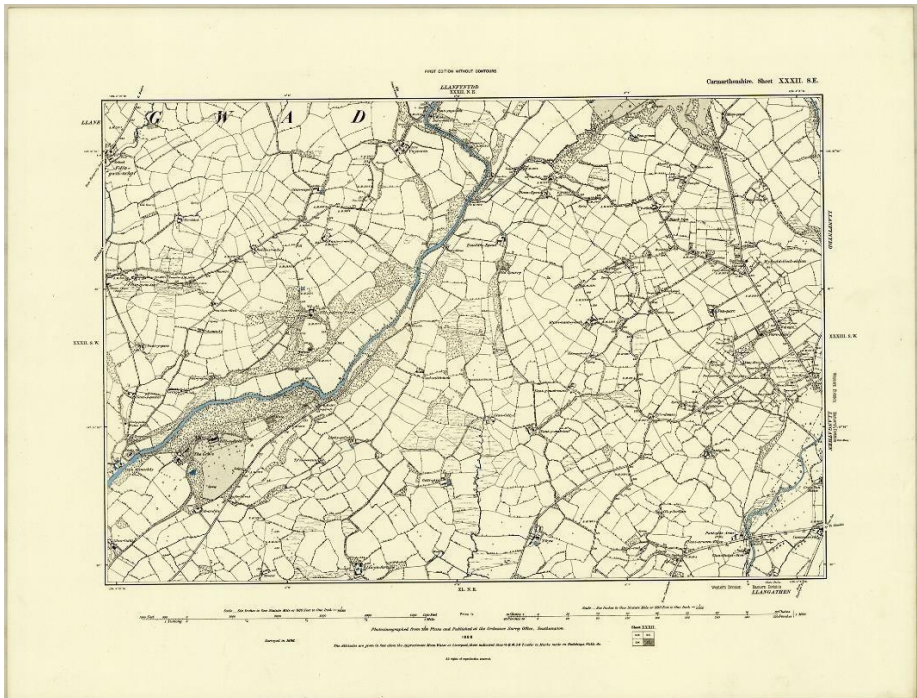


Fig 1 (National Library of Scotland)

The two sites just fit in the bottom right-hand corner of the map, see below.

The Grid References for the church is SN 50972261 at an elevation of 106 feet, and for the house SN 51542268 at an elevation of 208 feet.

There were two revisions issued, one in 1907, surveyed 1905, and the second in 1952, surveyed in 1948. In all three editions the bridge used by



the family to get across the River Cothi was still in place. Today only a single stanchion remains.

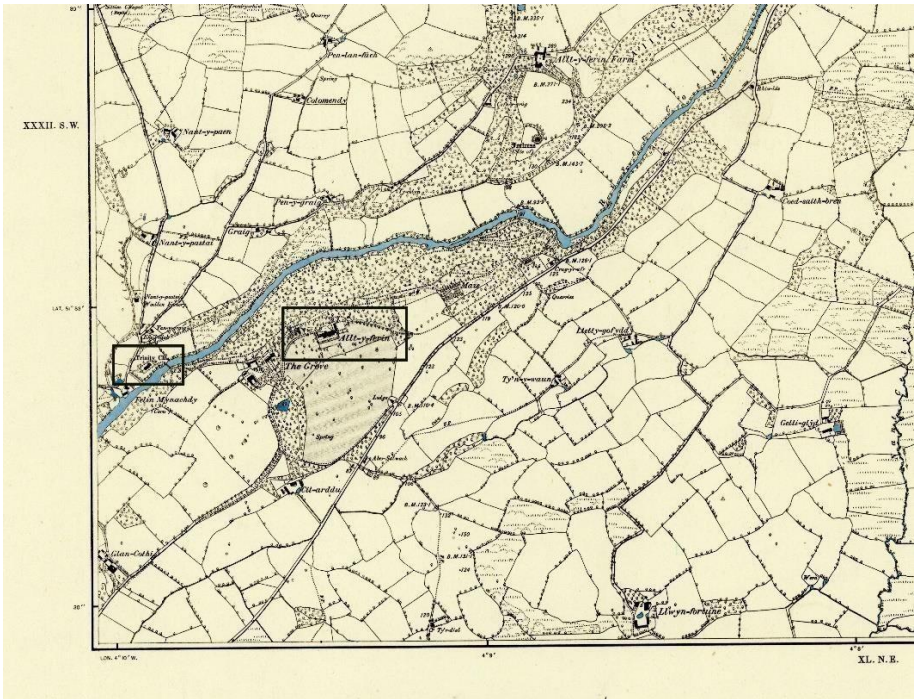


Fig 1a

## First reactions.

Until the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 I was totally unaware of this church, only knowing of it due to a visit planned by Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society in the Autumn of 2024.

I was visiting the nearby church, St Egwad's, in Llanegwad, with the Rev'd Rhobert Pattinson to take photographs of the stained-glass windows located there, to place on the Dyfed Archaeology 'Churches' website. During our conversation it was mentioned that Holy Trinity Church, Pontargothi was very close by. This name immediately rang a bell and so I asked if it would be possible to visit there also. Fortunately, it was, and I could go there once I had taken the photographs, I needed at St Egwad's.

From Pontargothi we followed a typical Carmarthenshire narrow, twisting lane until, eventually arriving at an opening in the woodland beside the River Cothi, where Holy Trinity church is located.

I have been lucky to have travelled a lot, spending time climbing in the French and Swiss Alps. My first reaction when seeing this building was that I could be back in the Alps. The only difference was the lack of mountains, but the style was very similar. (Fig 1)

The next surprise was when we entered the church via the Vestry. To put it simply, I felt total amazement. The interior is completely painted with stencilled patterns highlighting a series of murals that, at first glance, looked like tapestries. Not what I expected.

I had intended to photograph the interior but due to the dark weather I decided I would not do it justice; to do so would take more than a quick visit, probably a couple of days. It took until February 2024 for the weather to settle a bit and I could at least start taking photographs.

In the meantime, I thought a lot about this church. I started to collect as much detail as I could find with a view of maybe a detailed article. What follows is the result.

### **The start of it all:**

The building of Holy Trinity Church, once privately owned, commenced in 1865. It was the brainchild of, and funded by, Henry James Bath (1821-1875) and his wife Margaret (d 1902), daughter of Charles Lambert of Coquimbo in Chile. Henry James was the eldest son of Henry Bath of Langland, near Swansea. He was educated at the Friends School at Sidcot, Somerset, and at eighteen he joined his father in the family business, Henry Bath & Son. The family's wealth was accumulated firstly with Cornish tin and eventually through the exporting of Welsh coal and importation of copper, from Chile, and the processing of it in the Swansea Valley where they lived until 1868.

Once the rail link between Swansea and Carmarthenshire was completed, they bought land and constructed their new home, named Alltyferin (Fig 2), a magnificent building, sadly demolished in the 1960's. This was where they lived from 1868. Henry Bath was a very religious Anglican and decided to build his own church, rather than impose his views and methods on the

residents, who worshipped at St Egwad's, where services were conducted in the Welsh language. His new church was built on land owned by Talley Abbey, linked by a small bridge to the Alltyferin estate.



Fig 2 (Carmarthenshire Museum, Abergwili)

Although work on the church started in 1865, it was not consecrated until 1878, 3 years after Henry's untimely death from a stroke when returning on their ship from Chile. (2)(3) His niece, Margaret Lambert, who, on the same vessel, was returning from a family visit in Chile also died and is buried in St Egwad's churchyard, Llanegwad. The family were benefactors of the churches of Llanegwad and Pontargothi, and they never had children. At one point Henry James was a Carmarthenshire Justice of the Peace and, in 1869, High Sheriff.

### **Building design and construction begins:**

Bath employed Benjamin Bucknall (1833-1895), to design and oversee the building of his new church. On the 'Imaging the Bible in Wales' website (4) Bucknall is described as a Victorian Architect who worked in the Gothic Revival style, and his principal influence was from the French architect Eugene Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), who was famous for the restoration of a number of prominent medieval landmarks in France, including Notre-

Dame de Paris, Paris, 1845-1864. (5) The English architect, William Burges, admitted in his later life, “We all cribbed on Viollet-le-Duc even though no one could read French”. The influence of Viollet-le-Duc, on Burges can be seen in the designs for his own home, The Tower House, Holland Park, London and for Castell Coch near Cardiff. (6) Bucknall translated no fewer than five of Viollet-le-Duc’s books from French to English.

The start of Bucknall’s working life, however, was far from architecture; he was firstly apprenticed as a millwright. It was in 1852 that Bucknall’s interest in medieval art and crafts came to the attention of the architect William Leigh (1807-1873). Leigh arranged for him to start learning his architectural skills with the architect Charles Hansom (1817-1888) in Clifton, Bristol. (7)(8)

Bucknall’s most noted work at this time, though never completed, was Woodchester Mansion, in Gloucestershire, a Gothic Revival mansion, now a Grade 1 Listed Building. It was built for Leigh, but funding stopped before it was completed when Leigh died in 1873. It was around this time that Bucknall converted and became a Roman Catholic, possibly influenced by Leigh and the monks of the monastery in South Woodchester. Many of his commissions were for Catholic patrons. These included churches in Abergavenny and Monmouth, plus extensions to St David’s Priory Church in Swansea. It must be assumed that it was during his time working in Swansea that his relationship with Henry Bath started.

With regards to Holy Trinity, Bucknall must have been greatly guided by Bath in how the finished church should look, with the Gothic Revival style very much to the fore, even down to the Gothic style bell tower. Bath even insisted on there being a crypt that he intended to be used for family burials. However, although it was completed, it was never consecrated meaning it could not be used for burials. Unusually, there are no graves in what might be considered as the churchyard, only a single Celtic Cross made from Bath Stone. This is again down to the fact that the land around the church was never consecrated.

Nothing remains of any documentation or architectural drawings produced. It seems that when the church was transferred into the Church in Wales, several decades ago, all these records were either lost or



destroyed. Basically, there is no archive. Even today there is very little written detail retained.

Building work commenced during 1865 but the church was not consecrated till 1878. (Fig 3) The death of Henry in 1875, meant work stopped for a while. Eventually Margaret, with the help of their nephew, Edward Henry Bath (1851-1908) oversaw the completion of the work. The west window of the church is a memorial to these three family members.



Fig 3 (Carmarthenshire Museum, Abergwili)

The photograph showing Holy Trinity under construction was taken c1866. Note the, presumably, local men employed to carry out the building work, looking towards the camera.

### **The Church Geology.**

The church is built with Old Devonian Sandstone, sourced locally, plus Bath Stone, a Yellow Carboniferous Limestone. Bath Stone was, and still is, commonly used for buildings because it can be sawn and trimmed in more than one direction. It is also ideal for carving. Looking at Holy Trinity we can see carved Bath Limestone, particularly in the pillars either side of the West door. (Fig 4)



Fig 4

Within the building and in the Sanctuary, we can see a slab of polished Limestone, possibly from Swansea, on which the Reredos is standing. On close inspection we can see fossils in the stone.

In the nave, the pulpit is made of a cream-coloured Marble plus green alabaster pillars all thought to be from Italy.



Fig 5 & 5a

Finally, the simple Pedestal Font, is located at the Southwest corner of the Nave, is made of Bath Stones, and dated 1900.

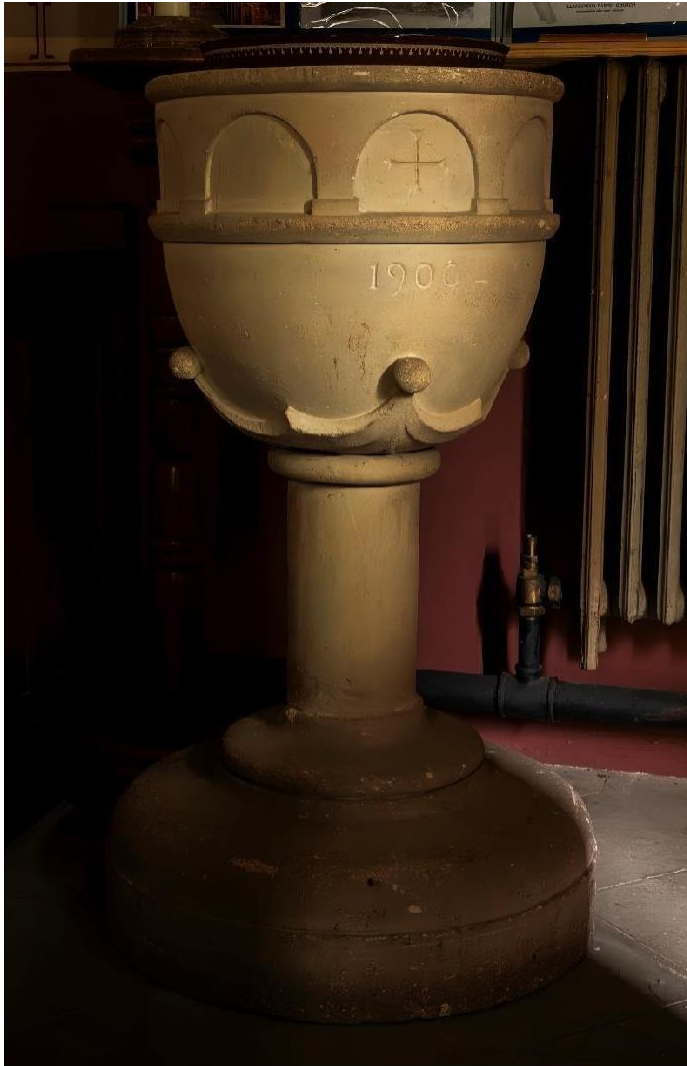


Fig 6

## Stained Glass:

Built into the Sanctuary, Chancel and Nave of the church are a total of 13 windows, all of which are glazed with stained glass in the style of the Gothic Revival. They were produced by the Regent Street, London company of Clayton & Bell, founded in 1855, working continually till 1993. The founders were Richard Clayton (1827-1913) and Alfred Bell (1832-1893). Prior to joining Clayton, Bell worked in George Gilbert Scott's studio. Cheshire describes them as 'the rising stars of Victorian stained glass' (9)

The principal reason for the commercial success of the Clayton & Bell business was down to the high demand for stained glass at the time, their use of the best quality glass, the excellent designs and the efficient methods of manufacturing. The latter, in some people's minds, eventually resulted in a drop in quality due to the production line approach. Gilbert Scott commented in 1879 (10), "stretched, mawkish attempts at picture painting'. He went on to say on Clayton & Bell, 'from which better things might have been hoped and who have produced fine works'. Holy Trinity is certainly one location where we can view some of their finest works.

The Clayton & Bell windows were noted for their brilliant luminosity. This is explained by their quick adoption of advice given by the student of Medieval glass Charles Winston (1814-1865) (11). Winston collected medieval stained glass and aided by Dr. Henry Medlock of the Royal College of Chemistry, arranged physical and chemical investigations to see if similar glass could be reproduced in the then modern times. Winston went on to work with Edward Green, the chemist for James Powell & Sons, to produce the 'new' glass.

The Hadleys commented: 'Windows in the 1860's are to modern eyes particularly enjoyable as artists and craftsmen reveled in the quality and colour range of the glass which was newly available, and commercial pressures had not yet built up enough to remove the sense of freshness and enthusiasm.'. (12)

At Holy Trinity we can view some of the high-quality windows produced by Clayton and Bell. I feel sure Bucknall employed them for the windows because of their growing reputation.

The 13 Clayton and Bell windows located here include two 3-light windows, one in the east wall, the second in the west, the remainder being all single-light windows. We will look, proceeding east to west, from the Sanctuary to the west wall.

**Sanctuary – East wall (Fig 7a, b & c):**

A 3-light window depicting scenes of the Crucifixion (centre light), the Resurrection (left light) and the Ascension (right light). (Fig a)

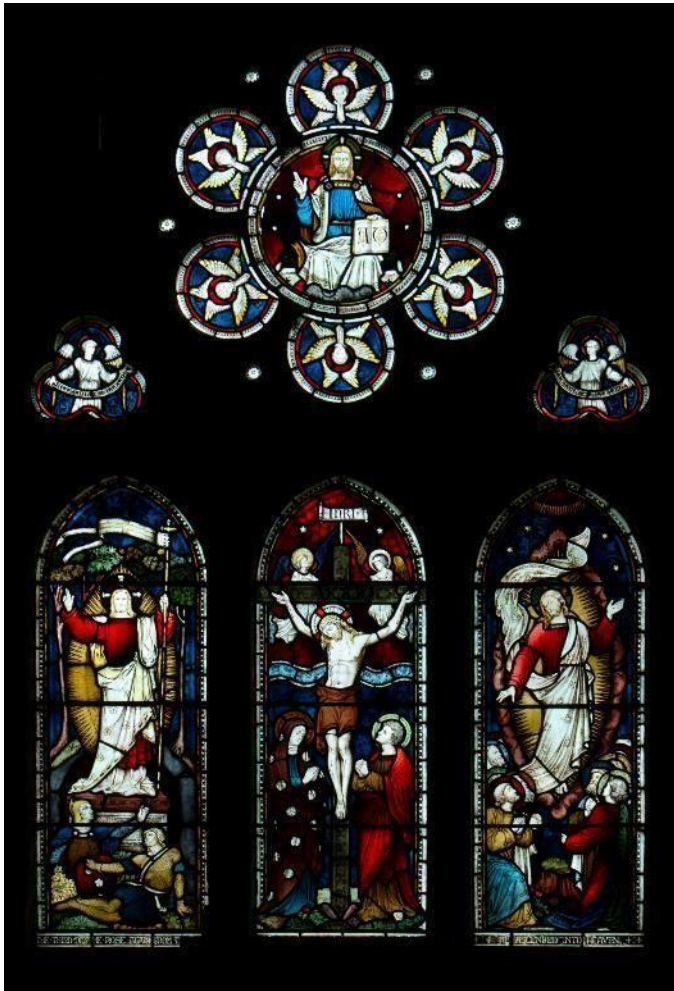


Fig 7a





Fig 7b

At the top of the window is a depiction of God holding an open book (Fig 7b). On the pages we see Alpha, depicting the beginning, and Omega, depicting the end. This theme is repeated below in the Reredos (Fig 7c), where again are the Alpha and Omega signs.



Fig 7c

### Sanctuary - North and South walls Figs 8 & 9:

Two single light windows showing angels holding plaques. The north window angel's plaque says "PATER", meaning father, in this context GOD. The south angel holds a plaque that says "FILIOS", which means male son, in this context Jesus, son of God.



Figs 8 & 9

### Chancel – South wall (Fig 10):

Like the two windows in the Sanctuary, this window depicts an angel holding a plaque on which we see "S:SPTS" (S Spiritus) inscribed. This window represents the Holy Spirit.

The Trinity is in the Christian doctrine, the unity of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit as three persons in one. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the central Christian affirmations about God. It is rooted in the fact that God came to meet Christians in a threefold figure: (1) as **Creator**, Lord of the history of salvation, **Father**, and **Judge**; (2) as the Lord who, in the incarnated figure of Jesus Christ, lived among human beings and

was present in their midst as the “Resurrected One”; and (3) as the Holy Spirit, whom they experienced as the helper or intercessor in the power of the new life. (13)



Fig 10

### Nave North wall:

Four single light windows, each showing one of the Evangelists. From east to west are depictions of St John, St Luke, St Mark and St Mathew (Fig 11).

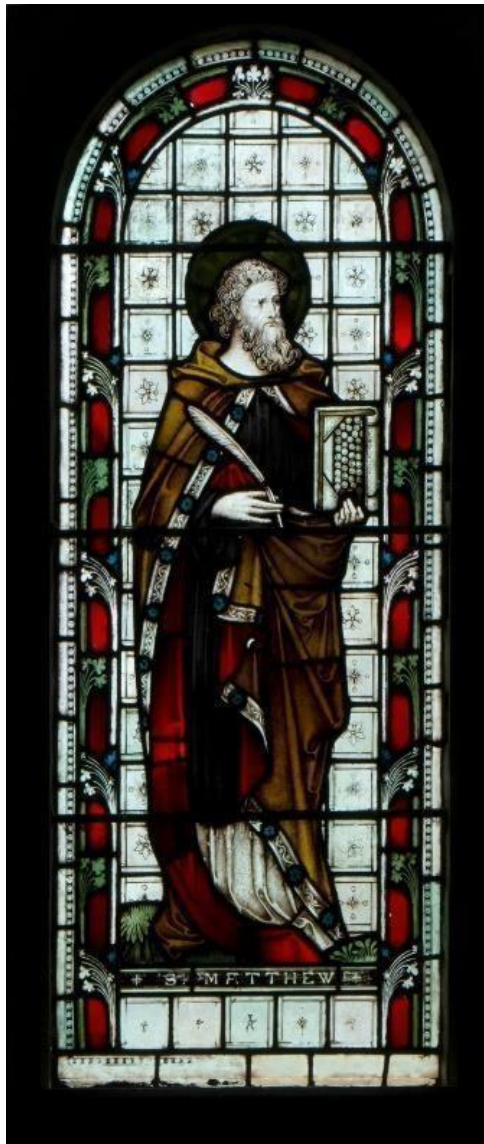


Fig 12

### Nave South wall:

Again, four single light windows, each one showing one of the Prophets. From east to west are depictions of Daniel, Ezekiel, Isiah (Fig 12) and Jeremiah.

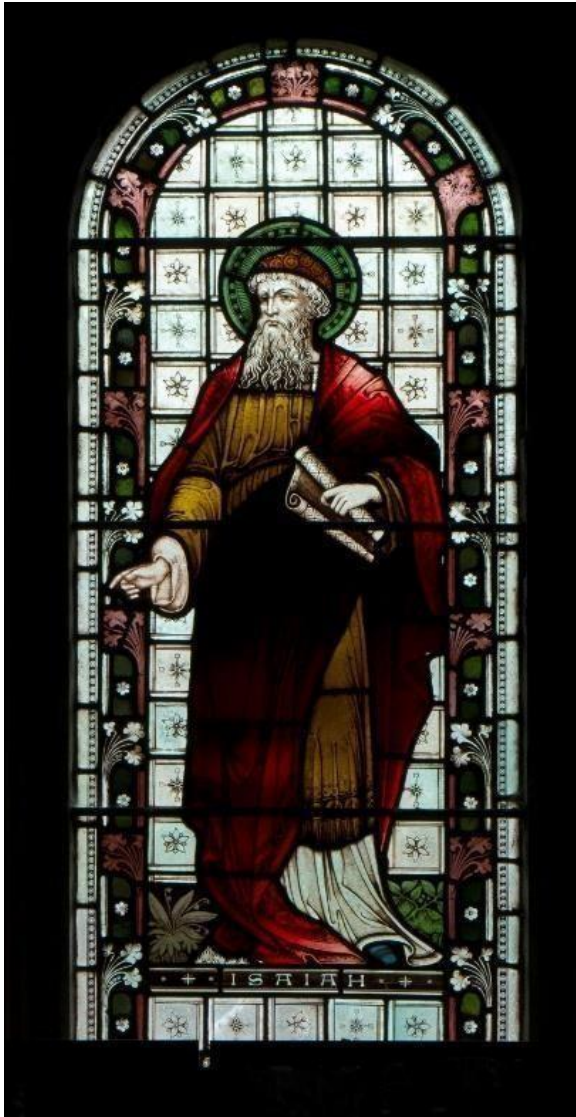


Fig 12

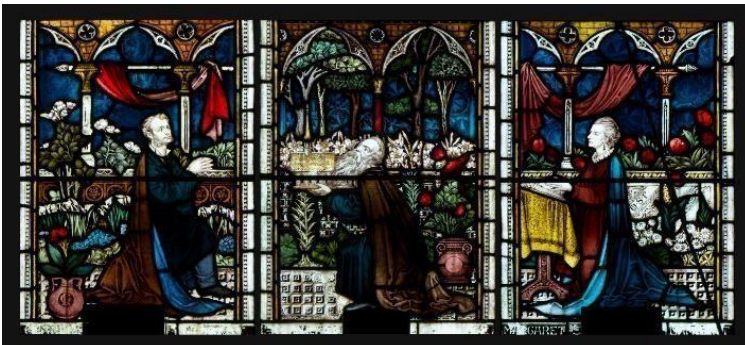


### Nave West wall (Figs 13, 14, 15 & 16):

Here we see the second of the 3-light windows. In Pevsner it says that it represents 'Christ's promise of Eternal Life, and Faith, Hope and Charity'. (Fig 13) (14). The window can also be seen as a memorial window, where we can see three kneeling figures of the Bath family. In the centre light is Henry Bath, (Fig 14), presenting a model of the church, in the right and left lights, Margaret Bath, (Fig 15), and nephew Edward Henry Bath, (Fig 16).



Fig 13



Figs 16, 14 & 15

All in all, an excellent set of Gothic Revival-stained glass and good examples of the high quality produced by Clayton and Bell in the 1860's.

### **Interior Wall Decoration:**

Bucknall employed his friend the builder and artist Alfred Stansell (1820-1900). to do the interior artwork. Bucknall's friendship with Stansell possibly formed while he worked, in 1861, on St Georges Roman Catholic Church, a Grade II\* Listed Building, in Billet Street, Taunton, Stansell's hometown in Somerset.

Alfred was the younger of two children to William (1794-1851) and Ann (1796-1872) Stansell; his sibling was an older sister, Emily. (15) William Stansell grew up in Middlesex, London but in 1814 he moved, with Ann, to Taunton where he established the firm Stansell & Son, church and house decorators in 1823, 3 years after Alfred's birth. (16) There is very little else recorded of Alfred's life other than his involvement at Pontargothi. To find what we have was only found by searching using his father's name.

As mentioned before, there are no records of how the building work progressed, which is disappointing. It would be interesting to see how Alfred Stansell approached the huge task of decorating the interior. Sadly, we can only speculate.

I think there is a clue on techniques employed in one of the Viollet-le-Duc volumes that Bucknall translated from French to English entitled 'Painted Tapestry'. (17) In the Victorian period, a method of painting images onto cloth was developed. The reason for doing this was a way of producing a pseudo tapestry at a lower cost. There was a lot of development and experimentation needed to produce paints that would retain their colours once they had dried.

Techniques were also developed for creating an outline on the cloth to assist the artist. For this, as with stained glass, an outline was drawn on a sheet of paper the same size as the cloth. In the manufacture of stained glass, the result of this is known as a 'cartoon'. Over the 'cartoon' a sheet of tracing paper was placed and the outline redrawn. The outline on the tracing paper was now worked on, using a special tool that looked very much like a modern pizza cutter but with pins rather than a blade, to punch holes through the tracing paper along the outline. Next the tracing paper was placed over the cloth and, taking a pad full of charcoal dust, it was

tapped all over until the full image had been covered. Upon removing the tracing paper, they would see dots of charcoal that had passed through the punched holes. Using the original paper outline as a guide, the artist would now join up the dots, using a pencil or charcoal, to create the full outline on the cloth. They now have a master that they now fill using paint; all very much like modern painting with numbers. My belief is that this is the technique used by Stansell, no doubt guided by Bucknall, who had probably witnessed all this in practice during his visits to France. For the wall murals, they simply fixed the tracing paper to the wall rather than to a cloth.

A lot of the preparation work could be done away from the church, probably in Taunton. Due to Bucknall's high standards his architectural drawings would have been very accurate and too scale. Stansell could have used these to produce full sized outlines and prepare the perforated tracing paper off site, as well as the stencils for the decorations around the windows and the ceiling. Once the plastering of the walls and ceilings were completed and properly dry, they could move to site and quickly get on with the decorations and murals. The resulting quality of work is very high with every internal surface covered.

## Description of the Pontargothi Murals: Sanctuary:



Fig 17

East wall left:

'Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.'

*Mathew 26:39*

*Jesus prays at Gethsemane.*

East wall right:

'Whom Jesus loved.'

*John 21*

North wall: (Fig 17)

'Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep.'

*John 21:15-17*

*After the Resurrection, Jesus appears to the Disciples.  
Breakfast by the sea.*

South wall:

*'Come ye after me. I will make you fishers of men.'*

*Mathew 4*

*The Temptation of Jesus.*

On the east wall of the Sanctuary, we can see two more paintings. In both cases we see Angels holding a scroll showing the word **'Alleluia'**, Figs 18 & 19

**'Alleluia'** is the Greek spelling of a Hebrew expression, "Hallelu Yah[weh]," which simply means "praise the Lord." That phrase is found in the Old Testament as a frame around several of the psalms (Ps. 103-106; 146-150) and in the New Testament in Revelation 19: 1-6. (18)



East



West

Figs 18 & 19



## Chancel:



Fig 20a & b

North wall - East:

'Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.'

*John 2:2*

*A marriage in Cana Galilee.*

North wall – West:

*St Paul.*

South wall – East 1: (Fig 20a)

'Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace.'

*Luke 2:29*

*Christ born to Mary.*

*Said after Mary gave birth to Christ.*

South wall – East 2: (Fig 20b)

'For unto you is born this day a saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'

*Luke 2:11*

South wall – West 1:

'Fear not, Mary: for thou has favour with God.'

*Luke 1:30*

## *The Birth of Jesus foretold.*

South wall – West 2:

*St Peter*

**Nave – North wall:**

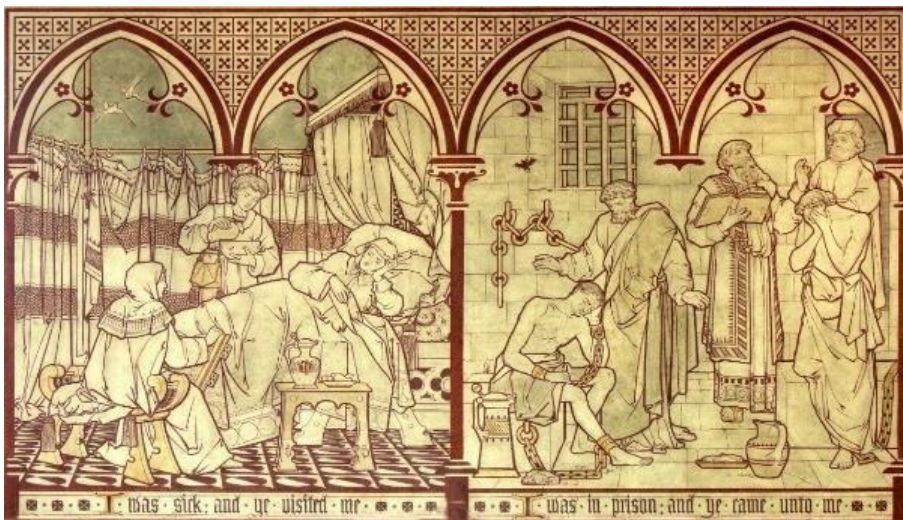


Fig 21a & b

North wall 1a:

'Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil.'

*Job 2:10*

North wall 1b:

'I was hungred (sic hungered) and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty and ye gave me drink.'

*Mathew 25:35*

North wall 2a (Fig 21a)

'I was sick, and you visited me.'

*Mathew 25:36*

North wall 2b: (Fig 21b)

'I was in prison, and you came unto me.'

*Mathew 25:36*

North wall 3a:

'I know thou fearest God saying thou hast not withheld thine only son from me.'

*Genesis 22:12*

North wall 3b:

'Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me keep my commandments.'

*Exodus 20:6*

Northeast Corner East wall:

'While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.'

*Mathew 25:5*

Northeast Corner North wall:

'This poor widow has cast in more than they all.'

*Luke 21:3*

Northwest Corner North wall:

'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'

*Genesis 2:17*

Northwest Corner West wall:

'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of God.'

*Mathew 18:4*

## Nave – South wall:

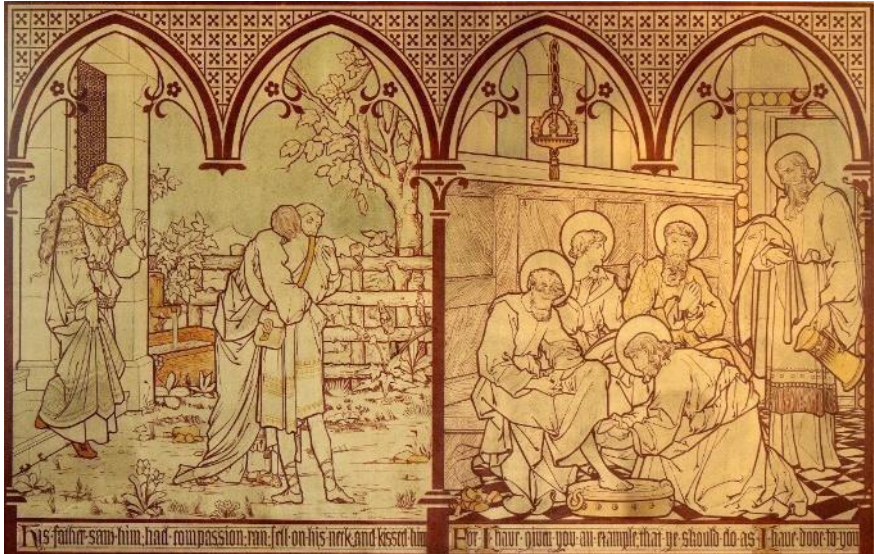


Fig 22a & b

### South wall 1a (Fig 22a)

‘His father saw him, had compassion; ran; fell on his neck, and kissed him.’

*Luke 15:20*

### South wall 1b Fig 22b):

‘For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have dooe (sic done) to you.’

*John 13:15*

### South wall 2a:

‘I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven: for she loved much.’

*Luke 7:47*

### South wall 2b:

‘Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.’

*Mathew 25:34*

### South wall 3a:

‘If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.’

*Mark 5:28*

South wall 3b:

'Jesus spake unto them. Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.'

*Mathew 14:27*

Southeast Corner East wall:

'At midnight there was a cry made. Behold the bridegroom cometh.'

*Mathew 25:6*

Southeast Corner South wall:

I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father.

*Luke 15:17-18*

Southwest Corner West wall:

'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.'

*Mathew 19:14*

Southwest Corner South wall:

'Jesus said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, Lazarus come forth.'

*John 11:41*

*Note: All Bible references are from the King James Version.*

*Images of all the Stained Glass and Murals are available for purchase;  
Monies raised for the Church Fund. Contact: [prowland49@gmail.com](mailto:prowland49@gmail.com)*

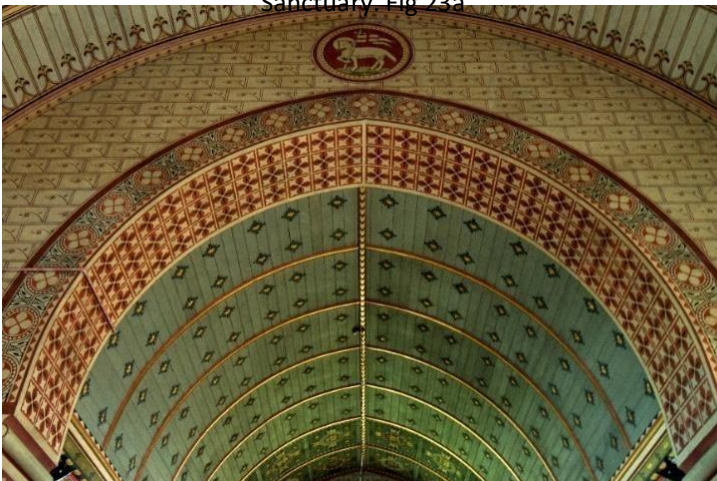


### Ceilings (Figs 23a, b &c):

The ceiling artwork was carried out mainly with the use of stencils on a paint underlayer. I suspect much of the work here was carried out by 'Rawlins, of Taunton', hence the signature found during the restorations. Note the nave ceiling the gilded stars have individually been stuck onto the painted surface.



Sanctuary. Fig 23a



Chancel. Fig 23b



Nave, showing the Cross Beam. Fig 23c

## Memorials.

As stated earlier, the churches grounds and the Crypt were never consecrated, the reason why there are no burials in the Churchyard. However, what we do see are numerous memorials, twenty painted and eighteen brass plaques, located in the church's interior. Eighteen of the painted memorials are dated 1878 or earlier, therefore it is possible that some were produced by Alfred Stansell's team. All eighteen of the brass memorials are post 1878.

### Painted Memorials:

#### Sanctuary.

##### North:

IN MEMORIAM  
WILLIAM GIBBS OF TYNTESFIELD, APRIL 3<sup>RD</sup> 1875  
"BLESSED AS HE THAT CONSIDERETH THE POOR"

##### South:

IN MEMORIAM  
GEORGE THOMAS DAVEY COLSTON BASSETT, MAY 13<sup>TH</sup> 1875  
"THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED"

#### Chancel South wall.

IN MEMORIAM  
CHARLES EDWARD STUBBS, JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> 1875  
EDWARD ELLIOTT STUBBS. MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup> 1877  
"THY WILL BE DONE"

#### Nave.

##### North wall:

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF NORMAN BOND BROWN, JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup> 1873  
"OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

IN MEMORIAM OF JOHN LUCAS POPKIN, FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> 1871  
"GRACIOUS IN THE LORD AND RIGHTEOUS,  
YEA OUR GOD IS MERCIFUL"

CHARLES BATH  
OF FFYNONE, SWANSEA  
DIED DECEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup> 1881

IN REMEMBRANCE OF JOHN WILLIAM JAMES, JANUARY 17<sup>TH</sup> 1877  
"WHO SHALL ASCEND INTO THE HILL OF THE LORD.  
HE THAT HAVE CLEAN HANDS, AND A PURE HEART"

MARY ANN JAMES  
DIED MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup> 1891  
WILLIAM HARRIES FRANKS  
DIED MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup> 1882

IN MEMORIAM OF WILLIAM SPENCER, JULY 3<sup>RD</sup> 1863  
"THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED"

ELIZA ANN SPENCER  
JANUARY 9<sup>TH</sup> 1881  
"BLESSED ARE THE MEEK"

### **South wall:**

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE, WILLIAM EDWARD BLACK, MARCH 24<sup>TH</sup> 1878  
"HE GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP"

IN MEMORIAM, WILLIAM PENROSE MARK, JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup> 1872  
"TO DIE IS GAIN"

IN REMEMBRANCE OF WILLIAM GARNONS HUGHES, MAY 10<sup>TH</sup> 1875  
"IN THEE THE FATHERLESS FINDETH MERCY"

IN MEMORIAM, MABEL LILIAN NICHOL, JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup> 1878

"HE WILL GATHER HIS LAMBS WITH HIS ARMS  
AND CARRY THEM IN HIS BOSOM."

REV THOMAS BEYNON NICHOLL

NOVEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> 1881

"GIVETH THY FATHERLESS CHILDREN I WILL PRESERVE  
THEM ALIVE AND LET THY WIDOWS TRUST IN ME."

**West wall (South to North):**

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART"

IN LOVING REMEBRANCE OF ROBERT SPEARS BATH,

DIED AT SWANSEA, August 26<sup>TH</sup> 1871

"THEY ARE WITHOUT FAULT BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD"

"I WAS AN HUNGERED AND YE GAVE ME MEAT"

IN LOVING REMEBRANCE OF HENRY BATH

FELLASLEEP AT FALMOUTH DECEMBER 13<sup>th</sup>, 1864

"BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL"

"PEACE, I LEAVE WITH YOU"

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF

SUSAN BATH

DIED AT SWANSEA, JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup> 1861

"BLESSED, ARE THEY MOURN"

"GOD IS LOVE"

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF

CHARLES LAMBERT

DIED AT ALLTYFERIN, AUGUST 4<sup>TH</sup> 1876

"LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW"



"LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED"  
IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF  
JANET LAMBERT  
DIED AT LONDON, JANUARY 10<sup>TH</sup> 1859  
"BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH D? HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER  
RIGHTEOUSNESS"

"LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER"  
IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF  
ROBERT SPEARS LAMBERT  
DIED AT SWANSEA, August 1<sup>ST</sup> 1858  
"I HAVE LOVED THEE WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE"

### **Brass Plaque Memorials.**

#### **Nave Northeast wall:**

IN LOVING MEMORY  
CHARLES LAMBERT BATH  
BORN JANUARY 3<sup>RD</sup> 1858  
DIED NOVEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup> 1899

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
EDWARD HENRY BATH  
OF ALLTYFERIN  
BORN FEBRUARY 3<sup>RD</sup> 1851  
DIED MAY 18<sup>TH</sup> 1908

#### **Nave North wall – east to west:**

IN LOVING MEMORY  
MY BELOVED HUSBAND  
KENNETH LAMBERT BATH  
BORN DECEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup> 1871  
DIED AUGUST 26<sup>TH</sup> 1916  
AGED 45 YEARS

IN LOVING  
MEMORY OF  
HENRY  
ONLY SON OF  
EDWARD HENRY BATH  
OF ALLTYFERRIN

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
JANET LAMBERT MILFORD  
BORN 11<sup>TH</sup> JULY 1852  
DIED 22<sup>ND</sup> APRIL 1904  
“HER CHILDREN ARISE UP AND CALL HER BLESSED”

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
KATHERINE EDITH BERKELEY  
BORN SEPTEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup> 1881  
DIED JULY 24<sup>TH</sup> 1908  
“WITH CHRIST WHICH IS FAR BETTER”  
THIS TABLET DEDICATED BY HER SISTERS

KENNETH BILL  
TROOPER ‘2<sup>ND</sup> KING EDWARDS HORSE’  
“FESTUBERT” APRIL 18<sup>TH</sup> 1918  
AGED 24 YEARS

REGINALD ALEXANDER STOKES  
LIEUT 9<sup>TH</sup> BATTALION KINGS OWN YORKSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY  
“La BASEE” FEBRUARY 24<sup>TH</sup> 1917  
AGED 26 YEARS

IN PROUD AND LOVING MEMORY  
THEY DIED THAT BRITAIN MIGHT LIVE  
‘AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND  
IN THE MORNING, WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

HUGH LATIMER  
2<sup>ND</sup> LIEUT ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT  
"OVALERS" JULY 3<sup>RD</sup> 1915  
AGED 19 YEARS

WILLIAM TRANT CHAMBERS  
MAJOR ROYAL ARTILLERY  
"BEUVRY" JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup> 1915  
AGED 33 YEARS

JOHN FRANCIS BILL  
CAPTAIN 24<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT  
NEUVE CHAPELLE MARCH 28<sup>TH</sup> 1915  
AGED 34 YEARS

JAMES GORDON BILL  
LIEUT COLONAL late ROYAL ARTILLERY  
ONLY SURVIVING SON OF RONALD EDWARD BILL  
AND EUGINIE LAMBERT BILL  
DIED WESTMINSTER 24<sup>TH</sup> NOV 1960

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
CHRISTOPHER JAMES  
BORN 3<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 1846  
DIED 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 1910

**Nave South wall – east to west:**

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
GEOFFREY HUGH BROWN  
OF THE IMPERIAL TASMANIAN BUSHMEN  
WHO FOUGHT AND DIED FOR HIS QUEEN  
AT WARMBAD, TRANSVAAL  
20<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1900  
AGED 27 YEARS

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
DAVID DANIEL  
OF ALLTYFERRIN  
BORN 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 1863  
DIED 21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 1937

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
THOMAS ELLIS JONES-DAVIES  
M.A. M.D iContab) F.R.C.P. (Lond)  
1906 – 1960  
CONSULTANT PHYSICIAN  
WEST WALES GENERAL HOSPITAL  
Col.R.A.MC (A.E.R.)

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF  
EDGAR PENROSE WARDLAW  
Capt'n & Adju't  
11 BATALIAN DUKE of CORNWALL'S LIGHT INFANTRY  
SON OF THE LATE PEROSE MARK  
H.B.M. CONSUL, MALAGA  
KILLED IN ACTION FEBRUARY 18<sup>TH</sup> 1900 PAARDEBERG SOUTH AFRICA  
AGED 33 YEARS  
"PEASE, PERFECT PEASE, WITH LOVED ONES FAR AWAY?  
IN JESUS KEEPING, WE ARE SAFE AND THEY"

### The War Memorial Plaques.



Fig 24

## **Summer/Autmn 2006 interior restoration.**

From 1878 the church was unheated until the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century when a coke fuelled boiler was installed; interestingly it can still be seen in the crypt. Eventually gas fuelled lighting was installed The church now being heated, and the lighting was good for the congregation, however, the consequence was a slow build-up of a layer of soot and grime on the interior walls. In 2006. restoration of the interior art was carried out.

Unfortunately, again there is no written material recording inspections prior to restoration, nor even covering the work done. Even more surprising is that there are no records at CADW nor in the Welsh Historic Monument Listed Building records of any restoration work having been carried out.

Fortunately, the company that did the restorations, Lloyd Haslam Conservation, is still in business and I was able to speak to Cath Lloyd Haslam, who kindly sent me a draft of an article on the work carried out. (19) Three conservators carried out the work, Cath Lloyd Haslam. Sarah Warburton and Jane Turner.

The architect that oversaw the restoration work was Roger Phillip Clive Powell (1944-2015). In his funeral notice he was described as a ‘... superb conservation architect, a kind and gentle, ever helpful person, greatly loved and respected by many.’ (20) It was Powell who rescued the Town Hall in Lampeter and turned it into the Welsh Quilt Centre.

Fortunately, the church is now heated by a gas fired boiler, totally soot free and electric lighting. What we see today is testament to the expertise and high skills offered by the Lloyd Haslam team. With regards to the stained glass, no conservation was required.

What is the guidance for good conservation? The International Council for Museums, Committee for Conservation define it as – ‘all measures and actions aimed at safeguarding tangible cultural heritage while ensuring its accessibility to present and future generations. Conservation embraces preventive conservation, remedial conservation and restoration. All measures and actions should respect the significance and the physical



properties of the cultural heritage item.’ It is obvious this guidance was followed.”



Fig 25

During our conversations Cath Lloyd-Haslam mentioned that there were some signs of restoration work on the north side of the chancel roof. She suspected that maybe there had been a problem with a leaky roof in that area that had damaged the original paint. Attempted repairs of a poor quality to the paintwork had been carried out by overpainting. Overpainting is where paint is applied, that covers the original paint, quite often too excessive and as in this case, hides areas of damage. It was decided to remove the ‘new’ paint layer down to the original paint surface and make good.

While working in the ceiling area a signature, ‘Rawlins, Taunton’, was found. Rawlins was probably an assistant to Alfred Stansell while the work at the church was being carried out.

Surface cleaning of all the interior surfaces was carefully carried out using micro fibre sponges and de-ionised water. The decision to use this technique was made after extensive testing of other methods, Fig 25. During this phase it was noted that there was no evidence of a varnish layer, which is not uncommon in this type of art. It was also noticed in some areas the original pencil lines were still visible. In addition to the pencil lines we can see a few letters, possibly indicating the colour of paint to be used.



Fig 26

Generally, in the nave the murals are monochromes of ochre on cream. Entering the chancel and sanctuary area the monochrome gives way to more colourful, work with gilded embellishment.

Cath Lloyd-Haslam mentioned that locally it is thought that there was possibly a falling out of some sort and the work in the nave was never completed. Is there any truth in this? I am not sure. I wonder if the problem was the death of Henry Bath in 1875 when the work came to a halt until Margaret Bath eventually got things going again. Perhaps the Stansell team were not asked back, or too busy elsewhere. This means the original project, in the nave, was never completed.

*Note: The left-hand image in Fig 26 shows a section on the south wall probably unfinished and the right-hand image the 'Before and After' restoration.*

Once the cleaning, and any retouching required, was completed all surfaces were covered with a varnish layer to act as a seal. The consequence of this is that 18 years after the restorations were completed the images are still in excellent condition.

The restoration took approximately 4 months to complete, which I feel is quite impressive bearing in mind the area of wall surface to be cleaned.

## Conclusion:

All in all, the Church of the Holy Trinity, Pont-ar-Gothi, Carmarthenshire is a wonderful Victorian, Gothic Revival building located in a fabulous setting. The Rev'd Rhobert Pattinson is extremely proud of the church and being part of the history of the site. Without his guidance, particularly with some of the Theology, I might have struggled and risked wrong interpretations. Also, thanks to the Church Warden Mrs. Nelly Jones, for giving me access and the offer of refreshments whenever I visited.

A huge thank you to Cath Lloyd Haslam for the draft of the magazine article written once work was completed, plus 2 images used, and for her memories of 2006.

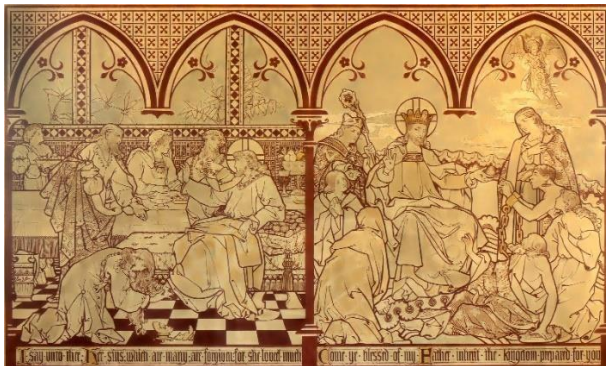
The lack of formal documentation has meant some deep digging into the web, and as always, the Pevsner publications have proved most valuable. Of course, there are a few assumptions made, hopefully sometime in the future material may appear that could confirm these or allow corrections.

My thanks also to David Thorne for his proof reading and advice. Any errors remaining are completely down to me.



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# The Church of the Holy Trinity,

Pontargothi, Carmarthenshire.

A real gem of a Victorian Gothic Revival church tucked away in a wooded area beside the River Cothi.

Completed in 1878 and houses colourful stained glass by Clayton & Bell, London, and all interior walls painted by Alfred Stansell, of Taunton, Somerset.

Built by Henry Bath as a private church, it is now under the umbrella of the Church in Wales.

Still very much an active church.