

## Some 16th and 17th Century Domestic Paintings in Oxford

By E. CLIVE ROUSE

DOMESTIC wall and panel or ceiling paintings of Elizabethan and Jacobean date seem to have been exceptionally numerous in Oxford, being found in all kinds of situations from Colleges and Inns down to private houses and quite humble properties. The number and technical skill of many of these paintings makes one wonder whether there was not a Painters' Guild in Oxford at this time, though it might well have been controlled by the Painter Stainers in London. The wide range of style, design and subject represented in the examples we shall consider is remarkable when one remembers that the date bracket covering most of them is probably little more than 50 or 60 years. Indeed, the extent of decoration of this period is still hardly realized, because so many examples are destroyed without record; and when a painting became dilapidated or unfashionable, it was scarcely ever repaired or preserved, but was covered by panelling, or plastered over or obscured by wall papers set in front of the wall on canvas and battens. The paintings are then only revealed during demolition or drastic alteration of the premises.

A good many examples are already well known, and most of them have been published, such as the great series of painted ceilings in the Bodleian Library (Duke Humfrey, Arts End and the Tower Room of the Picture Gallery);<sup>1</sup> and the similar roof of the Old Library at Christ Church.<sup>2</sup> The Painted Room at No. 3 Cornmarket<sup>3</sup> and the two schemes at the adjoining Golden Cross have all been discussed, as well as fragments from demolished houses in Broad Street,<sup>4</sup> and the old Clarendon Hotel<sup>5</sup> where important murals were disclosed during demolition.

A number of other instances have come to light over the last ten or twelve years; and it may be useful to record these briefly, and discuss one or two of them at length.

### THE GOLDEN CROSS, CORNMARKE STREET

One of the most interesting paintings was disclosed at the Golden Cross, during alterations in 1968 to convert the premises from an hotel into a series

<sup>1</sup> *Bodleian Library Record*, v, No. 5, 303 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> E. C. Rouse, *Oxoniensia*, xxvi/xxvii (1961/2), 219-43.

<sup>3</sup> E. T. Leeds, *Oxoniensia*, i (1936), 144-50, and plates XX and XXI.

<sup>4</sup> W. A. Pantin, *Oxoniensia*, II (1937), 177-8.

<sup>5</sup> E. M. Jope and W. A. Pantin, *Oxoniensia*, xxii (1958), 100-1. The arcaded tops, etc. of panels are noticed by F. W. Reader in *Arch. Journ.*, lxxxiv (1933), 146, fig. 9, and varieties of this in *Arch. Journ.*, xcvi (1942), plate III and figs. 1 and 2. The vogue for painted representations of panelling was a large one, and Reader gives comparative tables of these in *Arch. Journ.*, xcvi (1942), plates XII, XIII, XIV and XV as well as several figures. The painting of actual wooden panels with strapwork and other designs was also common, and an example may be seen at No. 3 Cornmarket in the room adjoining the Painted Room.

of restaurants and bars. Here, the new owners, Messrs. Chef and Brewer, and their Architect, Mr. G. D. Tabraham, A.R.I.B.A., and their workmen, gave the utmost co-operation throughout; and the structural alterations were kept in check under the supervision of the Oxford City Council's Planning Department. Mr. K. Lichtenstein, Alderman P. S. Spokes, F.S.A. (then Lord Mayor), and Dr. W. A. Pantin, F.S.A., all rendered valuable assistance and advice.

The original series of paintings at the Golden Cross in the Prince's Chamber, had been discussed by Dr. Pantin and myself in a paper in *Oxoniensia*<sup>6</sup> and it was stated there (p. 53) that in rooms 56 and 57 on the plan (opposite p. 82) identified as the Little Crown Chamber and the Crown Chamber respectively, there was evidence of painting behind plaster-board and wall paper that could not then be investigated. The work in 1968 gave opportunity for full uncovering and conservation. Incidentally, some small extensions were found in an adjoining room to the black and white scheme in the Prince's Chamber, having originally been part of the same room, but divided off by a modern partition to make a series of small bedrooms (PL. XVIII, A).

Here, as in the Prince's Chamber, there were two schemes of painting of different dates superimposed. The upper or later one, consisted not of birds, foliage, cherubs, etc., as in the other room, but a representation of marble panels in cream, veined in black and grey, framed by uprights and horizontals in green, cream and white. The remains of this, over the fireplace, were photographed by Mr. Spokes before removal to reveal the earlier painting beneath (PL. XVIII, B).

The earlier painting consists of an all-over decorative repeat design of geometrical form, being a kind of derivative from strapwork, a Tudor rose and a many-petalled flower forming alternate centre-pieces in the composition. The colour-range is wide, but low in tone, and includes red, yellow, purple, brown and many shades in between. Relief in the pattern is suggested by the adoption of an arbitrary scheme of lighting, the edges being outlined in black or white, representing shadows and highlights respectively, the light source being assumed to be above and to the left (PL. XVIII, C).

But perhaps the most remarkable discovery was that the design was continued above the fireplace on linen, the greater part of this area surviving, though black with soot and perished at the base by heat. The linen was used to make a level surface where the wall (in this case the rough brickwork of the chimney-breast) was uneven and set back from the level of the rest of the walls in the room; similarly, where the painting had been carried over the timber studs and horizontals, the area between, where the plaster was recessed, had been covered with linen, some shreds of which survived in some areas, with the hand-made nails and leather washers for fixing, the sharp edges of the painting being quite clear (PL. XIX, A).

The linen had been tucked in behind the edge of the plaster ceiling above

<sup>6</sup> W. A. Pantin and E. C. Rouse, *Oxoniensia*, xx (1955), 46-89. Both the later Golden Cross painting and the destroyed Cornmarket painting were particularly valuable in that it was possible to date them fairly closely from initials.

the fireplace, and there was a deep frieze having an adaptation of the main design and a central panel framed by guilloche bearing a text in blackletter—

THE RYCHE MANS GOODS WILL HIM PERMITE, NO QUIET REST TO TAKE

WHEN NATURE WOULD THAT HE SHOULD SLEPE, THEY CAUSE HIM ALWAY TO WAKE.

—a nice sentiment, this, for one of the best bedrooms in the best hostelry in Oxford! The verse appears to be a metrical version of Ecclesiastes V, 12, 'The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much : but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep'. This practice of turning Biblical texts into verse seems to have been popular about this time, in addition to the Metrical Psalms. Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins produced many editions of the Psalms between 1549 and 1612. A series of these is found in the frieze of some elaborate domestic wall paintings at Great Pednor Manor, Bucks, corresponding closely to John Day's edition of 1583. A metrical version of Ecclesiasticus VII, 36 ('Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end and thou shalt never do amiss') was found in the Barrack Yard, Chalfont St. Peter, with paintings closely dateable to about 1603. 'When anything thou takest in hand to do or enterprise, first mark well the final end thereof that may arise'. These are both published in *Records of Buckinghamshire*, xv, 88, 92.

All the painting was cleaned and conserved and plaster repairs effected. The linen was taken down, cleaned and treated, mounted on new linen of matching weave, and the whole refixed in its original position, using copper nails and leather washers as in the original. This work was most skilfully accomplished by my assistant, Miss Ann Ballantyne, after I had taken down the linen and prepared it on a sheet of plywood. The medium of the painting was probably size (PL. XIX, B).

The use of linen, or 'painted cloths' to fill in frieze spaces above panelling, and for levelling off or covering uneven surfaces, as well as in their own right must have been quite a common practice. The Inventories in the paper on the Golden Cross already referred to contain numerous instances of the presence of 'painted clothes', 'painted borders', etc., valued by the yard. In the 1594 Inventory the reference is 'Item, the painted borders there being xiiij yards at vjd. the yard', in the Crown Chamber itself.<sup>7</sup> But by the time of the 1656 Inventory, no painted cloths or borders are listed in this room. The general use of wall paintings as decoration, and painted cloths (perhaps as a substitute for tapestry, though more likely for the purposes I have indicated above) is borne out by a number of references to such things by Shakespeare, quoted by F. W. Reader.<sup>8</sup> Whether the medium or vehicle was always the same it is not possible to say. Falstaff in *Henry IV* speaks of '... and for thy walls a pretty slight drollery, or the story of the Prodigal ... in water-work ...'. But I am not aware of any other substantial survival of this material outside the Golden Cross. The date of these paintings must be pre-1594 and probably about 1570-80.

<sup>7</sup> *Oxoniensia*, xx (1955), 66.

<sup>8</sup> *Arch. Journ.*, LXXXIX (1933), 124/125.

## NO. 118 HIGH STREET

In August 1970 I received a request from the Oxford City Council to investigate the reported presence of painting in an upper, back room at No. 118 High Street, then in process of alteration or conversion to offices for 'A' Plan Insurances. The eagle eye of Mr. Lichtenstein of the Surveyor's Department had noticed colour where some panelling had been removed to investigate the entry of water and a settlement in the south-east corner of the room.

On the removal of the rest of the panelling, the entire length of the wall, 20 ft., was revealed to be painted in a most unusual way. The decoration was not on plaster or painted linen, but on 19 tongued and grooved boards or planks, each 5 ft. 9 ins. high, 1 ft. wide and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick. The Forestry Department identified the timber as elm except one plank nearest the door which is of oak (PL. XX, A).

The timber is in excellent condition except at the southern end where damage has been caused by entry of water, and subsequently some beetle infestation, and the painting likewise is in remarkably good order, though extremely dirty when first exposed. The joins between the boards had been masked by paper pasted over and painted in with the design—a common practice.<sup>9</sup> Where the floor had tended to sink a little towards the middle, the tongues and grooves had slipped, thus giving a slightly 'stepped' effect to the design; and the joins had also tended to open out a little due to slight subsidence at the southern end of the room, thus tearing the paper covering. But apart from this slight blemish, the decoration is in almost perfect condition. A small area at the base is obscured by the floor boards, where the floor level had been raised at some time; and the ceiling of the room was heightened at the same time, thus mutilating the beam above the painted boards.

The work needed little more than meticulous cleaning, and securing of the loose paper edges, in which I gratefully acknowledge the skilful help of Mrs. Lichtenstein. The new tenants were most co-operative, and adopted various suggestions for the conservation and display of the paintings *in situ*. I recommended that no more than essential cleaning and conservation should be done. It would have been impossible to re-align the tongues and grooves without removal of the whole; and to repair the paper strips would have meant almost total renewal and repainting.

The elements of the design contain a number of unusual features. There is a frieze or border at the top about 1 foot in depth, consisting of scrolls and foliage and having some vague memory of debased strapwork. These leaves and geometrical scrollwork motifs are on a red background and are in pale mauve and yellow. This is contained between yellow and black lines top and bottom, with a single cable or twist (not quite a true guilloche) in lemon yellow. From this frieze hangs a kind of scalloped pelmet, each downward curve occupying the width of one plank, with the same pinky-red background, decorated and

<sup>9</sup> E. C. Rouse, *Records of Bucks*, xv (1947-52), 91 and coloured frontispiece. The joins were similar to the Golden Cross technique where canvas rather than paper was used.

fringed in yellow and shaded or highlighted in white, and a bob or tassel from the bottom of each, and between the planks.

The whole area below this has what appears to be, at first sight, a black background, but is in fact a deep charcoal grey. On this background is fine, thin, delicate line scrollwork arranged in a repeating geometrical pattern in lemon yellow with leaves in true black, and repeated flowers of honeysuckle, rose, cornflower, periwinkle, etc., in pale mauve, pink, red and white. There appears never to have been a dado at the base (PL. XX, B).

While the main elements of the composition conform to late Elizabethan or Jacobean general practice in this field of mural decoration—frieze, strapwork, geometrical repeat patterns, twist or guilloche, and flowers—I know of no precise parallel; and the fringed ‘pelmet’ motif is unique in my experience. The thin delicacy and precision of the geometrical pattern is particularly striking. Mrs. Cole (see appendix) thinks it has the feeling of silver or metal engraving or decoration; and I have seen something like it in tooled and gilded book-bindings where the gilded and coloured decoration shows up light against a dark background. The sort of thing can be seen in a Cambridge binding of a Bible of 1677 in my own possession or in bindings in the Bodleian illustrated in one of the Bodleian Picture Books.<sup>10</sup> Something like it was found at No. 1 London End, Beaconsfield, but in black outline, and meandering rather than geometrically repetitive.<sup>11</sup> There was difficulty in dating those paintings, and I suggested a date of around 1600. In the present case, I feel their sophistication and certain other features, demand a later date, and I agree with Mrs. Cole’s suggestion of something around 1620–30.

Here, the history of the house and its owners and tenants (astonishingly complete since 1419) can help, and Mrs. Cole has gone into this with most interesting results (see Appendix).

#### Oriel College

Dr. W. A. Pantin noticed remains of painting on the wall over a fireplace in a room immediately north of the Porter’s Lodge, when some modern plaster boarding was removed, in August 1970, during extensive alterations in this part of the College. This my assistant fully uncovered, repaired, cleaned and consolidated in 1971.

The work was evidently a centre-piece, though no evidence of painting survived elsewhere in the room. The painting is executed on a thick hair plaster set on laths over an elaborately moulded and chamfered fireplace, itself also formerly completely coloured. The medium seems to have been a parchment or leather size, and the colour scheme is a restrained one consisting of a blue/green, black, white and a mixture of brown-reds, the latter perhaps intended to represent marbling on the stonework of the fireplace.

The painting is purely decorative and is a bold and unusually open and free

<sup>10</sup> *Bodleian Picture Books, No. 2, Gold-tooled Bindings*, first published in 1951, with an introduction by I. G. Philip. See especially plates 9, 10 and 11 (mid 16th century) and 16 (about 1630).

<sup>11</sup> E. C. Rouse and J. D. Broadbent, *Records of Bucks*, xviii, Part 1 (1966), 79 and Plate XI, a and b.



composition, consisting of pierced strapwork with 'flourishes', and pinnacles or obelisks standing on balls at the apex of each element of the composition. This is all in green with black outline, and a conventional scheme of shading or lighting to suggest relief. There is a green band at the base, and a red band across the top of the stone lintel of the fireplace (PL. XXII, B).

The date of the buildings is about 1620;<sup>12</sup> and the painting certainly seems to be part of an original decoration of this period.

Panelled doors have been arranged so as to open when anyone wishes to see the painting.

#### LINCOLN COLLEGE

As long ago as 1962 some extensive wall paintings were found on the temporary removal of panelling set on battens in a room on the first floor of the East Range in the Chapel Quadrangle at Lincoln College. The Rector, Dr. W. F. Oakeshott, asked me to examine and report on these, which I did. The paintings were very dirty and in rather poor condition, and it would have been difficult to justify the very extensive treatment they would have required and the removal of very nice panelling to allow them to remain exposed in any acceptable condition. The paintings were, therefore, roughly cleaned and consolidated, and six of the panels made into hinged doors so that the paintings could be seen at any time. They were then photographed by Mr. J. W. Thomas.

The painting at one time evidently covered the whole room, but now only survives, considerably damaged, on the North wall, and a small section on the South, in a recess. It extends the full height of the room (some 9 feet or more) and represents a 'verdure' tapestry landscape, with fantastic or romantic buildings. There is an upper border or frieze 1 ft. 6 ins. to 2 ft. deep with a very dark green base, with grass shoots and widely spread trees. Below this the horizontal timber framing is painted green and black. In the main section, nearly 5 ft. in depth, there is a very wide expanse of sky, white, pale blue and cream, with clouds; and in a parkland landscape there are groups of castles or fantastic buildings with turrets, spires, towers, etc. At the base there is a deep dado in dark brown (PL. XXI, A, B).

The other small section is exactly similar but the main building is more castle-like and is placed on a hill.

It is strange that on the visible portions there is no sign of figures, animals or birds, except possibly a crudely painted flight to the right of the main building. The whole work is very free and almost crude, but effective as a piece of decoration.

The date of the range in which the paintings occur is 1629-31;<sup>13</sup> and the work is presumably contemporary, though having features reminiscent of earlier work, particularly in the stippled treatment of the trees. Similar paintings were found in a house in Sudbury, Suffolk, but with even more elaborate buildings and landscape, and with the introduction of grotesque figures and beasts, and certainly of earlier date. (Two panels are now in the possession of Mr. Edward

<sup>12</sup> *Royal Commission on Hist. Monts., City of Oxford* (1939), 92 and dated plan.

<sup>13</sup> *R.C.H.M.*, op. cit., 64 and dated plan. The Chapel and East Range here were built largely at the expense of John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, 1621-49.

Croft-Murray.) The landscape setting of the figures of the Nine Worthies in a house in High Street, Amersham, Bucks (late 16th century), is also very similar,<sup>14</sup> with the long, wispy grass at the base.

#### WADHAM COLLEGE

In 1968 considerable works were in progress in the range of buildings on the south side of the main quadrangle. In the course of this work a number of fragmentary paintings, evidently parts of complete schemes, were revealed. I was asked by Mr. Robert Potter, the architect in charge, to inspect and report on these. The following is an extract from my report of 23 August 1968 to Mr. Potter and the Estates Bursar, Mr. P. Carter.

The paintings occur in a ground floor room of the range of buildings on the south side of the main quadrangle, building between 1610 and 1613.<sup>15</sup>

The first area of painting occurs over a window and in the splays and surrounding the opening in the north wall. The splays and soffit of the window are outlined in dark green, framed by a black outer line. There is a white frieze above the window with the same dark green band finishing it at the top and on the white frieze are two stencilled flowers in red and the date 1659.

A superficial cleaning of the area revealed that in fact this painting is placed on top of an earlier one, this latter being presumably contemporary with the actual building of the range in 1612 or 1613. This earlier decoration consists of a broad band outlining the window reveal in pale blue and white, with scrollwork and ornaments at the commencement of the curve of the soffit and over it, actually running under the later painting.

The east fireplace in the same room has received elaborate painted decoration on it and above it, and this also appears to have been of two periods, but it is so fragmentary that it is not easy to see what the nature of the earlier painting was. The later work is carried out mainly in dark green and black and consists largely of architectural motifs, curved broken pediments and strapwork. The blue occurring in this area seems to belong to an earlier scheme.

Over the west fireplace there is also evidence of blue and green colouring having designs on it, probably scrollwork, in black, and two vertical features in red outlined in black leading up to some composition above the fireplace, now destroyed.

#### TRINITY COLLEGE

As long ago as 1963 an entry or overflow of water brought down the plaster ceiling above the Bursary in the East Range of the Durham Quadrangle.<sup>16</sup> This revealed the late medieval timbers of the original roof of this room, which were seen to be completely painted. I was asked to inspect and report on the discovery, and the following is an extract from my notes of 5 March 1963.

There is still controversy as to the precise date of this decoration, some believing it to be 15th century. I myself feel it is considerably later, and I give

<sup>14</sup> *Archaeological Journal*, LXXXIX (1933), pls. IX and X.

<sup>15</sup> *R.C.H.M.*, op. cit., 118 and plan.

<sup>16</sup> *R.C.H.M.*, op. cit., 108 and dated plan.

my reasons for this in the report. In any event, it may be useful to publish the findings. Mr. Arnold Taylor (now Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, England) felt that it could well be of about 1420; and Mr. Michael MacLagan saw some resemblance to painted ceilings in the North of Scotland, mostly of later date.

I may quote three examples of the use of a type of scroll in 16th or 17th century decoration. One is from Monastery House, Ipswich, another from the King's Arms, Amersham, and a third from a house in London End, Beaconsfield.<sup>17</sup>

Architecturally the Range itself, containing the Library over, dates from 1417-21 and the closely spaced beams of the ceiling supporting the floor above are of this date, but the decoration itself appears to me to be a much later feature. It consists of a lime white background, on which have been painted scrolls in wine red, with foliage, fruit and flowers in red, with vermilion or orange spots and two shades of green. While it is quite true that the scroll is a traditionally medieval form of ornament, it was getting rare as a motif by the middle of the 15th century; so that its presence on these beams in any event would be a rarity at the date of 1425. The form of the scroll is quite uncharacteristic of medieval work and the devices attached to it are typically Tudor, probably Elizabethan at the earliest, and possibly even later. The gourd-like fruits in particular are typical of late Elizabethan and early Jacobean decorative painting and may be seen on many of the roof panels in the Tower Room of the Bodleian and elsewhere. Works were going on after the re-founding of the College by Sir Thomas Pope and his wife in the 1570s, and in the East Range in 1602, and either date would be quite suitable for decoration of this kind (PL. XXII, A).

There are not many examples of the use of the scroll at this date, but it does occur, as on the plaster panels from Monastery House, Ipswich, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and other panels from the same house preserved in Ipswich. A scroll more like the Trinity College example was found at the White Hart Hotel, St. Albans, and another at Clovile Hall, West Hanningfield, Essex; these were published by the late Francis W. Reader.<sup>18</sup>

As this is such an extensive and complete example of decoration of this period, it is to be hoped that means may be found for preserving it exposed.

## APPENDIX

### THE WALL PAINTINGS AT NO. 118 HIGH STREET, OXFORD: A POSSIBLE ATTRIBUTION

CATHERINE COLE

ON stylistic evidence these paintings were probably executed around 1620-30, and the panelling which subsequently covered them also belongs to approximately this date.

Nos. 118/119 High Street were originally the western part of a Medieval

<sup>17</sup> The first two are illustrated by F. W. Reader in *Arch. Journ.*, xciii, pl. XI and fig. 3, and fig. 8. The third in *Records of Bucks*, xviii, pl. XIII, b.

<sup>18</sup> Reader, *op. cit.*, note 17.



dwelling called 'Redcocks' which came into the hands of the City in 1419, being purchased from Oriel College. Throughout the 17th century these two houses were always leased together with the exception of the shop at the front of the ground floor of No. 119.<sup>1</sup> Until 1660 this shop belonged to New College, and was, therefore, let separately.<sup>2</sup> At this period the property was held by a succession of Goldsmiths whose interconnections can be traced. The first of these was Walter Wilkins, a recently elected Alderman,<sup>3</sup> to whom the City granted a lease for 41 years at a rent of 40/- in December 1618.<sup>4</sup> Wilkins had been apprenticed to the well-known Oxford Goldsmith, William Wright, and obtained his freedom in 1610. He had a growing family and probably one or two resident apprentices and, therefore, doubtless occupied the whole of the two houses.

In February 1621 he became ill and made a will<sup>5</sup> in which he mentioned his three sons, John, Timothy and Peter, and his daughters, Mary and Martha—another daughter, Jane, was born to him in 1623.<sup>6</sup> He had apparently recovered sufficiently from this illness by September 1622 to be re-elected to the Common Council, and to be nominated next year as his Chamberlain by the incoming Mayor, 'the same being well accepted by the whole house'. Some three months later he died and was buried in the churchyard of All Saints on 6 December 1623.<sup>7</sup> His widow remarried very soon, but it seems that she lost her second husband by 1634 when she was living in the east part of her former house, No. 118, and was described as 'Jane Pope—widow'.<sup>8</sup> No. 119 was then occupied by Thomas Berry who had been her first husband's apprentice, and obtained his freedom in 1619.<sup>9</sup> He was probably carrying on his late master's business.

In 1637 Berry was occupying No. 119 which was his home for many years, and it seems that Jane Pope had died, as the lease was then taken over by her father, the Vicar of Fawsley in Northamptonshire.<sup>10</sup>

It is not clear whom Jane Pope married, but there was a Pope . . . 'a Puritan Preacher at All Hallows', mentioned by Wood,<sup>11</sup> and Francis Pope 'Clerk to All Saints' was buried there in 1631, so it seems that this was probably the man she had chosen. His daughter, Sarah, was christened in 1630, and a son, Walter, was born in his grandfather's house at Fawsley. He later became a distinguished Philosopher. The fact that he was called after Jane's first husband perhaps indicates that his father was an old friend of the family.

Jane herself came of interesting parentage. Her father was John Dod, a distinguished Puritan divine, and her mother had been the sister of Dr. Thomas

<sup>1</sup> H. E. Salter, *Oxford City Properties* (1926), 126.

<sup>2</sup> New College Archives, Registrum olim ad Firm No. 7, 144.

<sup>3</sup> *O.C.P.*, 127.

<sup>4</sup> H. E. Salter, *Oxford Council Acts*, 1583-1626 (1928), 200.

<sup>5</sup> His Will is in the Bodleian Library. Bod. Lib. MS. Wills Oxon 197/36.

<sup>6</sup> All Saints Registers.

<sup>7</sup> Endorsement of his Will.

<sup>8</sup> *O.C.P.*, 129.

<sup>9</sup> *O.C.A.*, 1583-1626, 281.

<sup>10</sup> *O.C.P.*, 127.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Wood, *Life & Times*. (Oxford Historical Soc., II, 96.)

Bownde (or Bond), a strict Sabbatarian of great contemporary weight.<sup>12</sup> Of Jane's three sons by Walter Wilkins we know a good deal. John, the eldest, became the famous Warden of Wadham, a friend of Christopher Wren and one of the co-founders of the Royal Society. He married a sister of Oliver Cromwell and died Bishop of Chester. He was said to have been a great lover of music.<sup>13</sup>

The second son, Timothy, joined first the Parliamentary Army, then changed sides and became a Captain in the King's Forces. In 1648 he was appointed Esquire Bedel in Divinity, but later set up as a brewer, went bankrupt and then kept an eating house. He was a tavern friend of Wood's who says of him that 'he died and lived an Epicure, much in debt'.<sup>14</sup> Peter, the Wilkins' third son, was a lawyer and in that capacity we find him acting in concert with his eldest brother John.<sup>15</sup>

Since his life was cut short before its prime, Walter Wilkins himself left little to record, but one knows enough to gain some slight picture of this man. In his Will he left a legacy to his good friend Timothy Dod of Hanwell, doubtless his wife's brother, so he may well have been intimate in his father-in-law's circle even before his marriage. He was also 'well-known' to that interesting and erratic experimenter William Porter, who is quoted by John Aubrey in his 'Brief Lives' as saying of him that he was a very ingenious man with a very mechanical head. 'He was much for the trying of experiments and his head ran much upon the perpetual motion'. When we add to this picture his sons' love of music and Epicurian tendencies, we may also perhaps detect a hereditary trait which might have emerged in their father in delicate and aesthetic craftsmanship.

This aesthetic quality stands out clearly in the wall painting at No. 118, which in many respects resembles the art of the engraver, rather than that of the orthodox Painter-Stainer. It is, therefore, not beyond the bounds of possibility that Walter Wilkins executed this work himself, perhaps to lessen the tedium of his convalescence in the spring and early summer of 1621.<sup>16</sup>

This explanation would also provide an answer to the problem of why the panelling was so soon put over the painting. If Jane Pope and her second husband occupied the same chambers on her remarriage, it would seem natural that they should wish to make this change. Whether that is the right explanation must remain uncertain, but at any rate, the knowledge that the painting formed a background for this interesting household perhaps adds something to its value.

<sup>12</sup> For John and Timothy Dod, Dr. Bond and Walter Pope, see *Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>13</sup> *D.N.B.* and references.

<sup>14</sup> *Life & Times*, I, 329 and v. 74.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 61.

<sup>16</sup> The flowers are early summer flowers.



A. Fragment of painting formerly in the Prince's Chamber.  
B. Painted cloth in the Crown Chamber, after removal for cleaning, showing later scheme.

*Photos: P. S. Spoker*



C. Wall painting flanking the fireplace in the Crown Chamber.  
THE GOLDEN CROSS, OXFORD

*Photo: David Campbell*

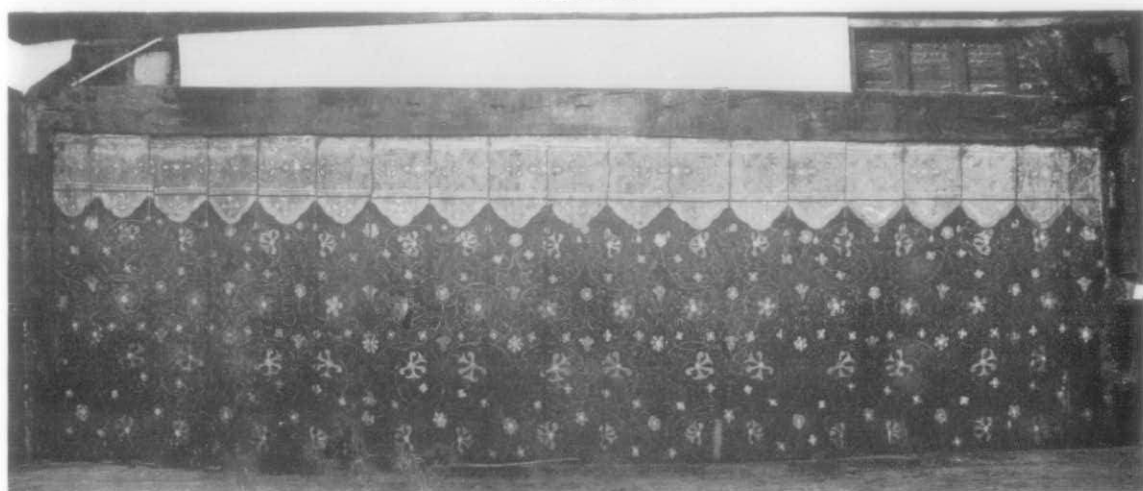


A. Detail of painting on timbers, showing nails, outline of painted cloth, and washers.

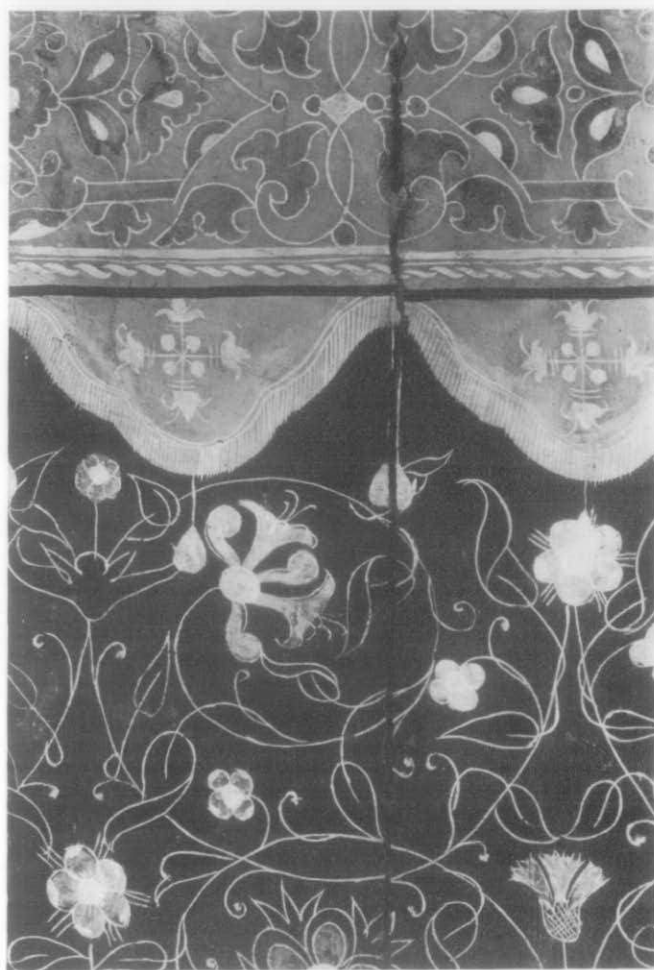


B. Painted wall, and painted cloth after cleaning and remounting.  
THE GOLDEN CROSS, OXFORD, Crown Chamber.

*Photos : David Campbell*



A. Painted boarding.

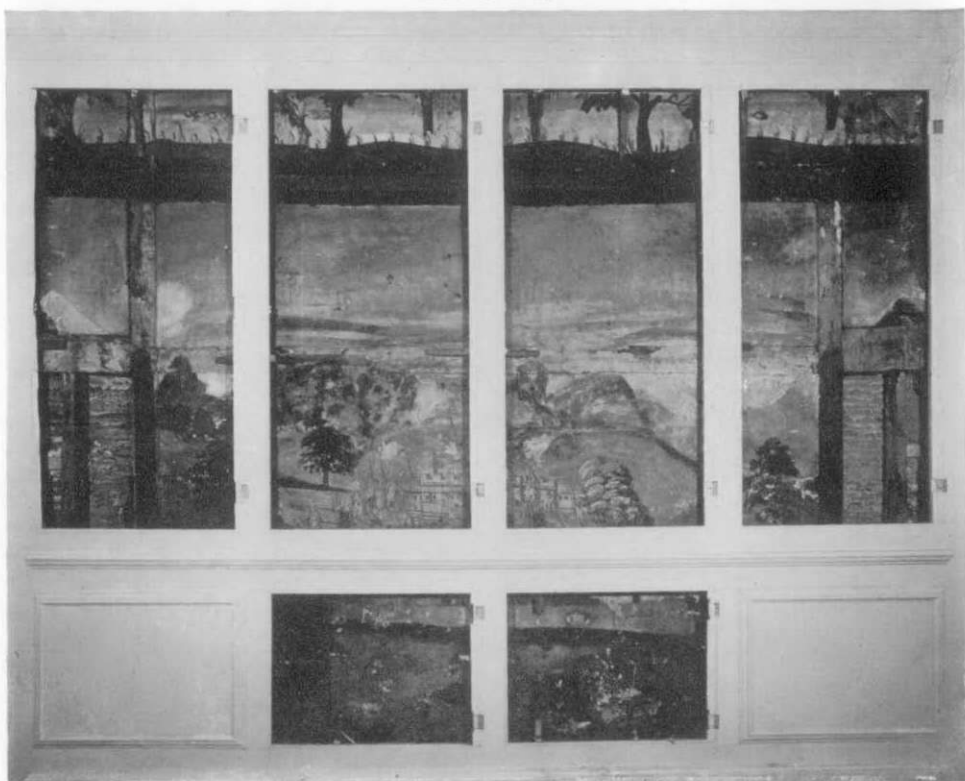


B. Detail.

118 HIGH STREET, OXFORD

*Photos : Oxford Press Photography*





A. Painting behind the panelling in the Chapel Quad.



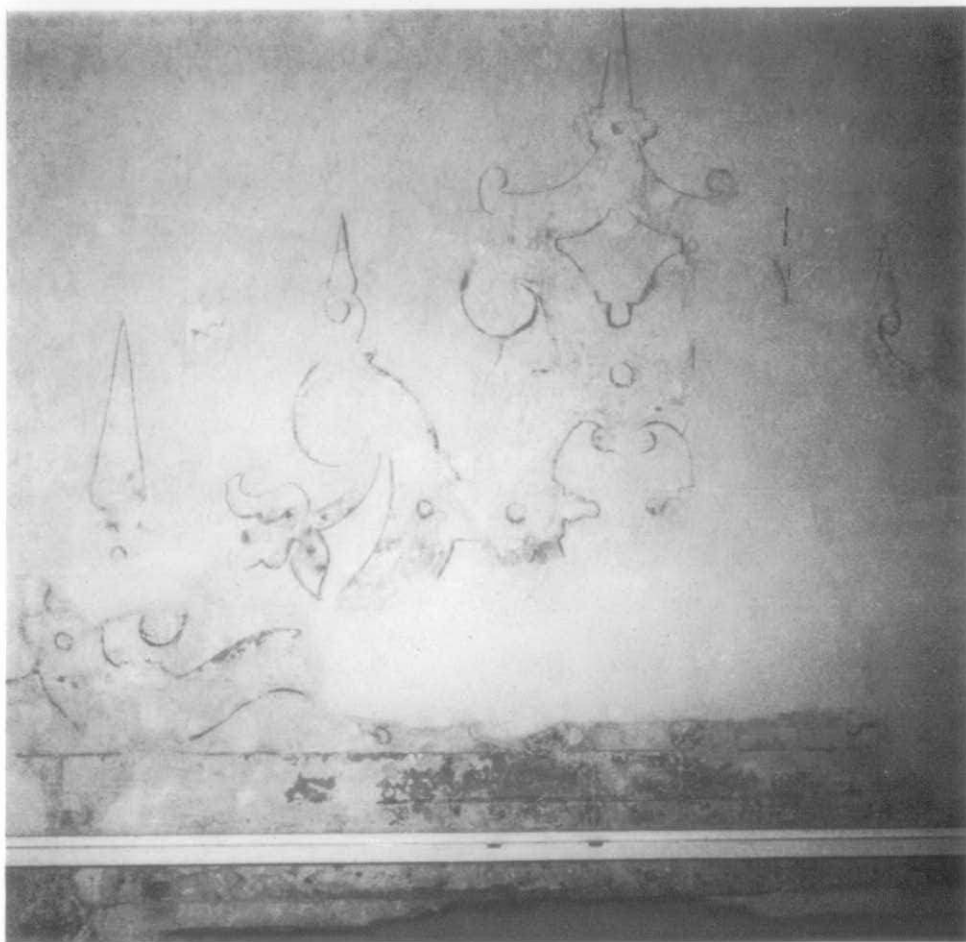
B. Detail.  
LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD

*Photos : Thomas Photos*



A. Trinity College, Oxford. Painted roof timbers in the old Durham College wing.

*Photo : P. S. Spokes*



B. Oriel College, Oxford. Painting in Front Quad, West Range.

*Photo : P. S. Spokes*