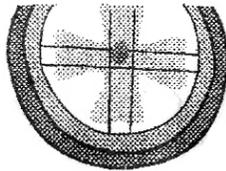


ascension of our Lord the fourteenth year from his passion ' .. went into divers countries, and preached the word of God,"

These paintings were first discovered in the middle of the nineteenth century, although at that time only the upper part of the saints were uncovered, and a thin black line in oil paint was painted around the figures creating a sort of frame. A border was also painted just above the wooden dado (in an oil paint). This took the form of a stylised fleur de lys pattern, a small section of which still survives in the north west corner. In 1986 two layers of the wooden dado panelling were removed along with the more recently applied glazed wooden frame to the paintings. This enabled the lower part of these three beautifully painted female saints to be revealed allowing the high quality of these paintings to be recognised again. They can probably be attributed to the "Winchester School" (the Bishop of Winchester held the Manor of Farnborough). At the same time a further two of the original twelve consecration crosses were discovered on the west wall, part of a third one was already visible to the west of Eugenia, not unlike the consecration crosses to be found in Winchester. Note, the burnt slightly greasy centres of the crosses; lights were burnt before the crosses on the anniversary of the consecration of the Church.



The blackened cheeks of Eugenia and Agnes are discoloured pigments, they would originally have been red, either vermilion or red lead. Traces of yellow ochre appear on the wall above the saints Agnes and Maria presumably an indication of further paintings higher up the wall.

It is interesting to note that there have been some lines scored in the plaster prior to the paintings being executed (some of the paint can be seen to go into the scored lines). These lines seem to be masons' setting out lines .

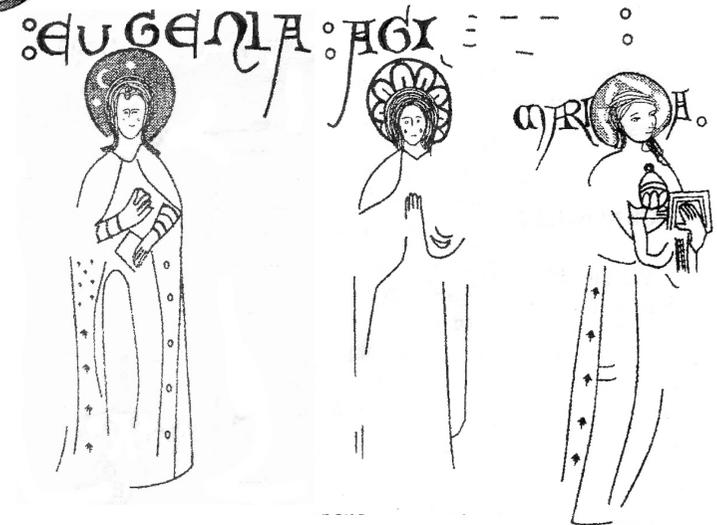
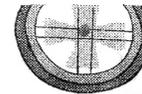
ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

We are deeply grateful to Miss Ann Ballantyne of St Paul's Road. Richmond, Surrey, for producing this valuable commentary on our wall paintings.

St Peter's Old Parish Church. Farnborough, Hampshire.

March 1989

Early Thirteenth Century Wall Paintings in Saint Peter's Church, Farnborough



With stories of the saints from
"The Golden Legends"
1270 AD.

EARLY THIRTEENTH CENTURY WALL PAINTINGS IN SAINT PETER'S CHURCH, FARNBOROUGH

On the North wall to the West of the door can be seen wall paintings that date from the early part of the thirteenth century of Saint Eugenia, Saint Agnes and Saint Maria. This would appear to be the only representation of Saint Eugenia in this country.

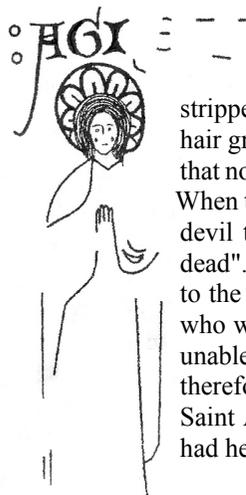
Saint Eugenia has a red halo decorated with estoil (stars) and goutte (drops) within crescents, her hair (worn loose to indicate her maidenly status) has been painted in very fine detail. She carries a book in her left hand, symbolising her learning and education, her right hand holds her breast through a split in her dress; a reference to the way in which she proved her innocence at her trial. For according to the version of The Golden

◦ E U G E N I A



Legends that were written by Jacobus de Voragine (Archbishop of Genoa) in 1270 and Englished by William Caxton 1470, Vol 11 p.151, Eugenia was a noble virgin, daughter to Philip Duke of Alexandria, Governor under Rome of Egypt; who disguised as a man and accompanied by two servants entered an Abbey where she led so holy a life that she eventually was made Abbot, no one suspected that she was a woman. Having been accused of adultery she was condemned to death by the judge (her father) and imprisoned. "At last she said to her father much things for to draw him to the faith of Jesu Christ She rent her coat and showed to him that she was a woman and daughter of him that held her in prison. and so she converted her father unto the Christian faith ... and the lady that had falsely accused Eugenia was burnt with fire of hell". Sometime later, having converted many to the Christian faith in Rome, she was martyred by beheading.

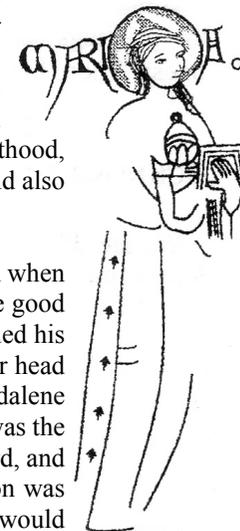
Saint Agnes. Only the letters AGNE are clear but there are indications of there once having been further letters, presumably TIS or TIA. The : which appears before the word Eugenia, and between Eugenia and AGNE also appears at the end of AGNE--above Maria's head. Agnes is shown with her hair loose, indicating her maidenhood, her halo is decorated with a curious fluted pattern. In her left hand she carries a book. An interesting detail of costume is the way in which the material of her right sleeve is held in place by a loop round the third (?) finger of her up-raised right hand. Saint Agnes according to the Golden Legends, vol II p.245, was martyred aged thirteen during the reign of Constantine the Great. She was "much wise and well taught". She rejected marriage to the son of the Prefect (Provost) of Rome despite repeated and increasing offers of rich gems and jewels, saying at great length that she was loved of another who gave her far greater riches (meaning Christ) and when the provost tried



to force her to marry his son Saint Agnes said "do what thou wilt, for my purpose shalt thou never change".

When she refused to sacrifice to the idols she was stripped and led naked to the bordel (brothel) but miraculously her hair grew to her feet so that her body was not seen. She was so pure that no man came near her and she turned the bordel into her oratory. When the Provost's son "entered for to accomplish his evil will ... the devil took him by the throat and strangled him that he fell down dead". After much pleading from the Provost, Saint Agnes prayed to the Lord and an Angel came and raised to life the Provost's son who went out praising God and denying the idols. The Provost felt unable to give up Saint Agnes to the Bishop of the idols and therefore resigned his post to Aspasins who built a great fire and had Saint Agnes cast upon it. When the fire did not burn her Aspasins had her put to death by the sword.

Saint Maria has a dark red halo, her hair is loose indicating her unmarried status, though she does wear a cap with lappets, her cloak is of ermine, an indication of her social rank; her left hand, covered by a fold of her cloak, holds a book (symbolising humility and learning). She carries in her right hand a fluted vase or pot with a cover that has a knob finial. There can be very little doubt that this Maria represents Mary Magdalene. Again, according to Voragine's version "of The Golden Legends. Vol. IV p.72, Mary Magdalene was born of noble parents descended from kings, bearing the surname Magdalo. Her father was Cyrus and her mother Eucharis. With her brother Lazarus and her sister Martha she possessed the Castle of Magdalo. two miles from Nazareth, and Bethany a castle near Jerusalem, and also a great part of Jerusalem. "When Mary gave herself to all delights of the body, and Lazarus entended all to knighthood, Martha which was wise governed nobly her brother's part and also her sister's"



When Mary Magdalene heard Christ preach she repented and when He dined in the house of Simon "she dared not go before the good people but remained behind at the feet of our Lord and washed his feet with the tears of her eyes dried them with the hair of her head and anointed them with precious ointments". This Mary Magdalene is she that ... "did solemn penance in the time of grace, and was the first that chose the best part, which was at the feet of our Lord, and heard his preaching. Which anointed his head; at his passion was neigh unto the cross; which made ready ointments, and would anoint his body, and would not depart from the monument when his disciples departed. To whom Jesu Christ appeared first after his resurrection, and was fellow to the apostles and made of our Lord apostollesse of the apostles, then after the