

Pugin Society e-newsletter

Issue 21

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Pugin at work in Queen's County Ireland

Expert philatelist and postal historian Stan Challis brings news of an online purchase which is bound to intrigue our readers



August 1851, Errill, Queen's County to Thomas Tower at St James Street, at 2d, via Ballybrophy, Dublin and London

It is often said in jest that philately gets you everywhere. In my case, my childhood stamp collecting took me into the world of postal history, and a lot of doors have opened in consequence, my own specialist interest being nineteenth-century Ireland. I once found myself explaining 'postal history' to a sceptical inquisitor at one of those drinks parties at which one feels obliged to make polite conversation as 'the study of who is writing to whom and why, how much did it cost to send and how did it get there'.

A recent acquisition, above, which Pugin Society members may find interesting, has more to it than at first meets the eye and led to my getting in touch with your Secretary, David Bushell. Bought on eBay, the vendor's description read '2d blue (with) BLUE Irish diamond, Errill Borrissinossory on back'. For the uninitiated, the stamp is indeed a 2d blue, this being a dark shade of the '1841' version, variations of which remained in use until 1880. 2d at the time was the rate for an item weighing over a half ounce but not more than an ounce, in effect 'double weight'. The BLUE Irish diamond is the smudged postmark cancelling the stamp, of which more in a moment.

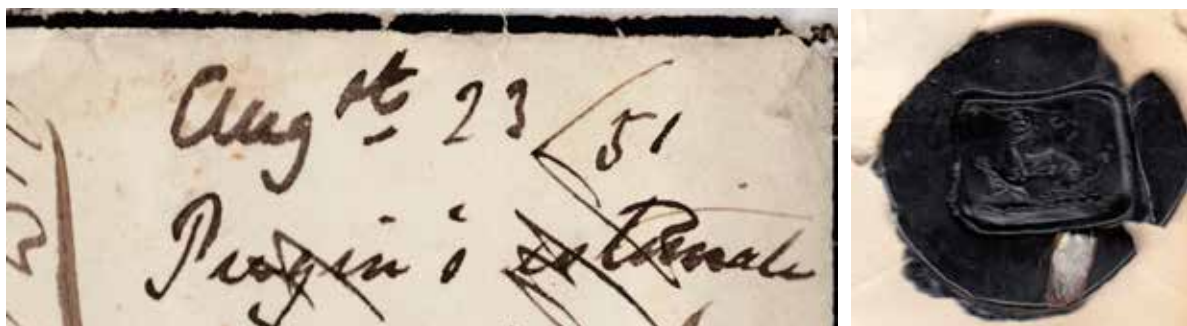
Errill is a village in the south west corner of what was Queen's County, now Co Laois, with a present day population of approximately 200. It is some six miles, by crow, south west of the larger village of Borris, in Ossory which, until the coming of the railways, was a coaching stop on the Dublin to Limerick Mail coach

**The e-newsletter is edited, designed and typeset by Dr John Elliott
Copy editing is undertaken by Catriona Blaker**

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jpelliott@btinternet.com**

route. Errill's Post Office had been opened in 1847 and unsurprisingly it received its mail through the nearest 'Post Town' of Borris, in Ossory. So, the vendor's description, sufficient to attract my attention, cannot be faulted.

It can be seen that the item is addressed to 'Thomas Tower Esq, 45 Jermyn Street, St James Street, London' and from the scan of the reverse the routing is confirmed by the postmarks of Errill, Ballybrophy (in blue to the right of the seal), Dublin (in red, top left) and London (red, at right – the main offices at London, Dublin and Edinburgh used marks without office names at this time). There is also a seal on the reverse and an endorsement at the left of the type so often found on Victorian covers giving details of the original but long lost content.



This, I ignored at first, but on further inspection, saw that it clearly reads 'Pugin's estimate'. Although an architectural ignoramus, the name Pugin rang a bell for me and my interest was stirred. Was Pugin carrying out an assignment in this part of Ireland? Was this his hand? A quick web search confirmed that Pugin had indeed been busy in Ireland but not in this immediate area. That search did however provide me with the address of your Secretary, David Bushell, who kindly consulted one of your experts. Within twenty-four hours, I had an answer, which I quote in full: 'Thomas Tower of Jermyn Street was the agent for John Wilson Fitzpatrick, the elder brother of R W Fitzpatrick for whom Pugin had worked in 1842 (see Belcher letters vol 5 p 215 for full details.) R W died in 1850 and his brother commissioned a memorial comprising a chantry, a tomb and a brass (See Wedgwood 1977 and Meara on Pugin Brasses p 187). Pugin delegated the work to J J McCarthy who was by then carrying out all his commissions in Ireland. In the event Pugin died before it was complete.' I am most grateful to the expert concerned.

Let me now turn to the smudged postmark. Blue postmarks are not uncommon in Ireland and were particularly favoured by the Surveyor for the Midland district of Ireland. As an aside, in a further experiment, Dublin and many offices in the Southern Area of Ireland were to employ bright emerald ink for a period in 1855, these much admired by collectors. The most likely reason to cause the postmark to cancel the stamp poorly was that there was indeed an enclosure, making the envelope less than flat. But what did the postmark read? It has to be a number, and with a good glass and a little imagination it can be deciphered as '454' and herein lies the philatelic interest. We must start with the development of Ireland's railways.



The main Dublin to Cork railway had been opened in stages. In 1847, it reached Ballybrophy, then little more than a point on the map three miles south of Borris in Ossory, the line being extended, in stages, to the outskirts of Cork in

1849. A station, still open, was built at Ballybrophy. For a short period it was the end of the line and a hamlet grew up; later it became the junction for the North Tipperary line but that need not bother us. Ballybrophy was provided with a Post Office, opening on 6 December 1850. It was in fact a 'Head Office', with responsibility for a number of sub offices, which included Borris in Ossory and its former sub offices. It was to be closed by 1855, there being little business.

On the introduction of the 1d black (changed to red in 1841), the Post Office had first used a Maltese Cross device to cancel stamps. The problem with the Maltese Cross was that it gave no indication as to the office of posting. Hence it was decided that each Head Office should be given a numbered postmark to cancel the stamps. The numbers had originally been issued in 1844, the Irish list reaching 450 (Youghal); 451 and 452 soon followed; 453 was allocated to Mount Bellew Bridge in Co Galway on opening in 1849. No list of numbers is available for the early 1850s, not until 1856 in fact, when 454 is shown as Ovoca, Co Wicklow. But Ovoca had not been opened until July 1854 and its outgoing mail was being cancelled at nearby Rathdrum until at least March 1855. So where was the original '454'? (Numbers had a bad habit of being re-allocated!)

I have owned for many years an imperforate, or straight-edged, stamp cancelled in blue with a 454 Irish type postmark. The imperforate stamps had been replaced by those with perforations by mid summer 1854 suggesting that 454 was in use at another office before Ovoca, although late use of stamps is, of course, not unknown. The number had clearly been issued and if not to Ovoca, to which office? Ballybrophy was suspected, being a Head Office with no number, but nothing had ever been found. Now, the 'Pugin cover' confirms use at Ballybrophy. Such items are known as proving covers and as such are much loved by postal historians.

More significantly, however, for members of the Pugin Society, my researches have also told me that the 'memorial comprising a chantry, a tomb and a brass' was actually located in a most rural area at Clogh, Ballacolla, Co Laois and is, sadly, demolished otherwise it would have been an excuse for a diversion on my next Irish trip!

Stanley Shepherd:Pugin's Stained Glass

Excellent news from Alastair Carew-Cox, photographer, who took all the wonderful images for Stanley Shepherd's magnum opus and who also completed the editing of the new online revised and extended version of Stanley's outstanding work. Alastair writes:

I am delighted to let the Pugin Society know, as a supporter of the project, that access to the online A.W.N. Pugin research by Stanley Shepherd and Alastair Carew-Cox is now live! Please see the link <http://www.stanleyshepherdpuginstainedglass.com> and forward it to anyone you feel would be interested, or ask them to contact me if they have a problem. Eventually it will be available on Google; it has been sent to them, but this takes time, so currently the link is the only way of accessing the research until it is picked up by Google.

Thanks so much for your interest and sponsorship. I hope to add more images in future, if funding allows, so I am retaining the gogetfunding page live, where sponsors receive limited edition greetings cards etc. <https://gogetfunding.com/the-stained-glass-of-a-w-n-pugin/>

I also plan to add an index to the churches on the Stanley Shepherd site and if there are any volunteers to help with this please do get in touch!

It has been a real pleasure to work on this exciting and valuable project.

All the best to everyone and I would be interested in any feedback you care to give.

Alastair Carew-Cox
Seraphim Press Ltd
07860 257007

Another stained glass roundel from St Stephen's Hall, Westminster

Dr Julian Litten FSA, conservationist and funerary historian, has sent us an interesting follow-up to a contribution in our last issue. He writes:

Further to George Grimes' article in the e-Newsletter No 19, readers might be interested to learn that not all of the damaged Pugin glass from St Stephen's Hall, Westminster ended up with John Hardman & Co for conversion into objects to sell and aid the war effort. In the summer of 2000, or 2001, I led a party of members of the Friends of British Museum - or, perhaps, it was the Friends of the Royal Academy, I confess that I forget which - around Pugin's church of St Thomas', Fulham. Whilst I was there, a member of the congregation showed me some five or six roundels of stained glass which her late husband had picked up on the morning of 11 May 1941 following the bombing of St Stephen's Hall, Westminster the night before. She told me how, on that day, Old Palace Yard was in complete turmoil, with fragments of stone and glass littering the ground. Her husband walked into the area and was able to gather up some fragments of the glass, and would I like one of them? They were very fine indeed and, not wanting to look a kindly 'gift horse' in the mouth, I selected the lesser of the group, a 4in diameter roundel depicting a lion's head, as illustrated, which now hangs in one of my windows at home. I only hope that the other items from this lady's collection found a suitably appreciative home.



Found at Auction

It is always a joy to see where love of the Gothic (Revival) can lead and to make yet more discoveries. Paul Atterbury and Rosemary Hill report on an intriguing, if enigmatic, lot from a sale in Dorchester. Is it possible that one of our readers could perhaps work on tracking down further details of the original owner and compiler of this lot?

A recent auction at Duke's salesroom in Dorchester, Dorset, included a nineteenth-century album assembled by an antiquary, or perhaps an architectural enthusiast with antiquarian tastes. A hand painted bookplate in an illuminated style has the name A Bhouley, or Baouley, and the date 1862.



The pages are filled with engravings and lithographs cut from books, journals and other publications, revealing an informed taste for Gothic. There are images of medieval and later buildings in various Gothic styles, with examples drawn from all over Britain and European countries including France, Belgium and Germany. These range from the famous - Wells, Salisbury and other cathedrals - to the obscure, such as minor local domestic buildings. They appear to date from the 1840s onwards, so the album may have been a rationalisation of a long established collection. One surprising discovery was the inclusion of a hand coloured version of Pugin's wedding card, captioned as such and depicting the Pugin and Knill crests, En Avant, and some floriated ornament. Rosemary Hill has seen other copies of this document and it is illustrated in Benjamin Ferrey's biography, but it is not widely known. Its appearance in this album is, therefore a surprise, and raises several questions. Was the compiler of the album known to Pugin? As he (or just possibly she) was active in the 1840s that may be the case. The card was sent only to close friends. Pugin had a horror of personal material being published more widely; he famously destroyed all his correspondence as soon as he read it and was annoyed with Crace for marketing a paper Pugin had designed for the Grange because it was 'quite a family' pattern. By 1862, however, Pugin was dead and the decline in his reputation so marked that his friends'



concern to reanimate it was the spur for Ferrey's biography. Perhaps the card was lightly given or thrown away by someone who inherited it. We are not likely to find the answer unless the identity of the creator of the album can be established.

The album also contains hand coloured depictions of memorial brasses, drawings of architectural details in a Ruskinian style, and painted copies of illuminated letterforms, in some cases bearing the AB monogram. It carries the story of the Gothic Revival on into the High Victorian period with contemporary engravings of major new buildings by Pugin's rivals and admirers: the chapel of Notre Dame, Boulogne, by C F Hansom; St Finn Barr, Cork, by Burges; St James the Less, Westminster, and St Philip and St James, Oxford by Street; All Saints, Margaret Street and St Alban's, Grays Inn by Butterfield as well as Norman Shaw's famous writing table and bookcase, shown in the 1862 international exhibition, and now in the V&A. Whoever compiled this collection had a finger firmly on the pulse of the Gothic and it bears witness to Pugin's enormous influence on the later revival.

Do continue to send your material in for inclusion in the e-newsletter. The next edition will be published in July or August.

All material for future editions, and comments on the current edition, should be sent to jpelliott@btinternet.com

Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, St Leonard's on Sea, East Sussex

This site, with its remarkable EWP Pugin chapel, and its regrettably ongoing problems, has been known to the Society for some time, and EWP expert and member Gerard Hyland gave an excellent lecture on its architectural history there in 2016. Our on-the-spot informant Christopher Maxwell-Stewart, of St Leonards, has kindly sent us the latest news on the Convent, which can be summarized as follow:

The site, which includes Edward Pugin's magnificent convent chapel of St Michael and All the Holy Angels (1867-68), and much more, was acquired by the Spanish Goicolea family, c.1976. Since then there have been ongoing problems and no satisfactory or viable solution has been found with regard to restoring the chapel and other buildings. The Society is very sorry to hear that DKSS Holdings, which took over management of the site in 2019 and commenced restoration of the Chapel and other related listed buildings has now gone into administration. Once again there is stalemate here. Anna Goicolea has however retained the former presbytery (architect John Wilkinson Wardell) for the family's use and the restoration of that building is continuing.

Planning consent for the acquisition and development of the site, which is extensive and where much new build could take place, is subject to prior restoration of the listed buildings (including the chapel) and so a massive investment is required on the part of any purchaser. The heritage of this site cannot be overestimated, and it is grievous indeed that the chapel, in particular, cannot be in public use.

Christopher Maxwell-Stewart had earlier described the site and added a short history of it:

This circa 10 acre site occupies a very valuable elevated position with commanding views of





the English Channel on the border of St Leonards with Hastings. It lies within the Magdalen Road Conservation Area No 11 of which the convent site constitutes approximately 50%. The whole of the convent site, including its sandstone boundaries walls, is listed for conservation on the basis of the architectural and historical importance of the buildings on it. The only damage suffered during WW2 was destruction of the glazing in the east window of St Michael's chapel (Listed Grade 2*). This contrasts to the extensive bomb damage which did so much to impair the architectural heritage in other parts of lower St Leonards. Its status under Town Planning Regulations is for education and associated residential uses. The downside of the site is its exposure to the salt-laden south-west gales which make maintenance of its older buildings expensive.

The site was purchased from the Eversfield Estate in 1834 with the objective of re-establishing the Roman Catholic Church in eastern Sussex following the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act. Originally it was planned to be the site of a convent and the mother church of the Deanery of St Leonards (which extends westwards to the Pevensey Marshes, northwards to Wadhurst and eastwards to the Kent border).

All that changed with the arrival in 1846 of the remarkable Cornelia Connelly (born Cornelia Peacock 1809 Philadelphia, USA). Following the traumatic and notorious break up of her marriage, Cornelia set about establishing an order of nuns who would educate girls to be proactive contributors to society. To this end she founded the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, which has grown to provide excellent education for girls and young women in England, the United States, Nigeria and Chile. Such was the feminist zeal of Cornelia that she managed to get total control of the St Leonards site even to the extent of excluding the local priests from the presbytery on St Margaret's Road. She got the support of rich Catholic patrons notably the Towneley family, the Duchess of Leeds and the Earl of Shrewsbury. The last named introduced her to the Catholic Gothic Revivalist architects William Wilkinson Wardell and Edward Welby Pugin.

The St Leonards convent thrived as the mother convent of the Holy Child Order until the 1960s when the Order ran into two problems. (A) a decline in vocations; (B) falling demand for boarding education consequent to the establishment of good local secondary schools. The St Leonards Catholic primary school (the successor to the original Girls Poor School) operating from rooms

in the Wardell buildings immediately adjacent the Gateway on Magdalen Road was relocated to the north of the site and amalgamated with the corresponding Hastings Catholic primary school to become St Mary Star of the Sea primary school. The option of also siting the new local Catholic secondary school (St Richard's College) on the site was not taken up largely because the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton judged that a "green fields" site in west Bexhill would better serve the catchment area of the school. This left the Order little option but to sell the site.

The purchasers were a Spanish family [see above] who until very recently ran it as a summer language school for children. Although one of the family remained resident there throughout most of the year and the family employed a resident caretaker, the great majority of its buildings were unoccupied for up to 9 months every year. In consequence most of them were not heated or ventilated during the wetter periods of every year. Further, as the income from the site was meagre, there was no financial rationale for thorough maintenance of the buildings. Wet and dry rot began to infest parts of the extensive buildings. A particular problem was maintaining the extensive boundary wall constructed in the local soft sandstone. These suffered serious degradation particularly on the east boundary of the site with the public open space of White Rock Gardens. Vandals thus gained easy access to the site and despite the vigilance by the caretaker, repeatedly broke into the buildings and vandalised parts of them. There has never been any evidence that the owners of the site deliberately neglected it. Their situation was simply that they had not the resources to maintain the extensive buildings and grounds of this large site.

Faced with pressure from the local Conservation Officer and Historic England, the owners sought to raise funds to restore particularly the Chapel by obtaining planning consents to convert some of the heritage buildings to residential units and to build 135 new housing units on the playing fields on the north of the site. Thus 2010 saw the planning application HS/FA/10/00207 and the Listed building application HS/LB/10/00206. Ten years later neither of those applications had been decided. The applicants have the right to have them determined by appeal but have not availed themselves of it. One cannot be sure as to the reasons for this impasse but it can be surmised that whilst Hastings Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority, would be pleased to have the new housing constructed, it is concerned that the great increase in the financial value of the site arising from granting consents, would not be devoted to restoring the Listed buildings. Consequently the Council and probably also Historic England require prior restoration of at least the Chapel. The owners on the other hand have not appealed because of the risk that consents will not be achieved by this process bearing in mind the many objections which would be submitted to the formal examination of their appeal.

An important outcome of this confrontation was the adoption by Hastings Borough Council of Planning Policy ENV 7 under which the extensive undeveloped area south of the Chapel extending to the boundary wall with St Margaret's Road is designated as "private open space" – thus not considered suitable for ANY development.

Meanwhile the deterioration of Chapel of St Michael resulted in it being placed on Historic England's "Heritage at Risk" Register and a threat of a Repairs Notice given to its owners. This resulted in an architect preparing, in consultation with Historic England, estimates of the costs of essential repairs. Historic England has identified funds to contribute to such restoration costs on condition that public access be granted to the restored Chapel. A proposal for applications to the Heritage Lottery and other grant sources to raise the balance of needed funds is being formulated. First steps in this task were the detailed drawings supporting listed building application HS/LB/19/00392 to unblock and restore the original accesses to the Sacristy and a northern entrance to the Chapel. These were approved, and it understood that works were put in hand.

A promising development occurred in 2018 under which an organisation, understood to provide sports training to youths, was given permission to use the playing fields and many of the buildings on condition that essential conservation works were initiated.

But alas, the current situation at this site, four years later and post pandemic, can be read at the beginning of this feature. (Catriona Blaker)

Both photographs by Dr Gerard Hyland

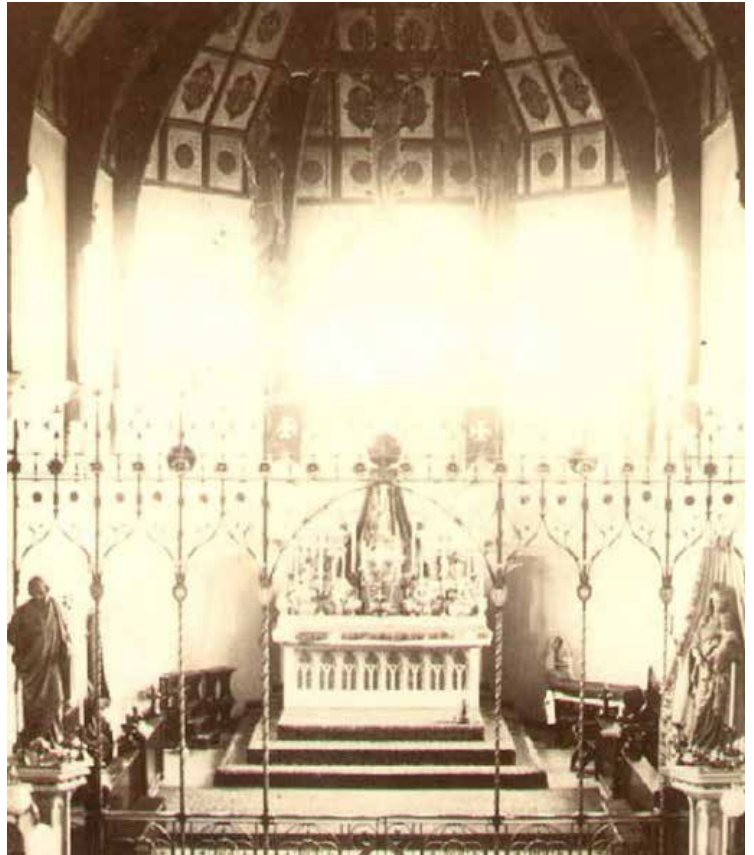
Update on the Rugby Altars

Some further reflections on these altars from contributor Nick Beveridge

In my previous newsletter piece tracing Pugin's former Ladye Chapel altar in St Marie's Church, Rugby, to St Alban-on-the-Moors, Cardiff, I mentioned that the fate of the original reredos was unclear. I also mentioned that the two panels of the reredos at St Alban's echoed the blind tracery arcade on the front of the original Pugin high altar mensa in St Marie's.



One of the panels from the reredos



Original high altar temporarily in EW Pugin's sanctuary

Since then, I have received images of the two panels, each consisting of a traceried pointed two-light 'window' with gold foliated spandrels. The 'windows' are filled with painted decoration on a gold ground, the surmounting trefoil having a red quatrefoil with a religious symbol (the sacred monogram IHS in one and the winged lion of St Mark in the other) surrounded by foliage and flowers. In each of the two lights below is a red Latin cross fleury entwined with what appears to be the foliage and flowers of bindweed (*Convolvulus* sp.). The decoration looks original but the salmon pink paintwork on the tracery was added about 10 years ago.

On revisiting the image of the original high altar in its temporary location in the sanctuary of EW Pugin's extension, the eight panels fronting the mensa look identical to those on the St Alban's reredos, and to be similarly decorated.

However, on closer inspection of the St Alban's reredos there appears to be *three* such panels, the central one being hidden behind a large statue of the Madonna and Child. Could they be the three missing panels from the original high altar of eight panels since reduced to five?

Even though the decoration (apart from the salmon pink trim) looks to be original, does its style and sentimental symbolism, e.g. bindweed representing bondage and sin, suggests that it could be post-Pugin?

Which still leaves the unsolved mystery of what happened to the original Ladye Chapel altar reredos!

Thanks to Fr Jonathan Jones CO and Br David-Lewis Baker CO of the Cardiff Oratory for their help and the images of two of the panels.



High altar in its current shortened form

St John the Evangelist, Banbury at Easter

These photos were taken at St John the Evangelist Rman Catholic church, Banbury, over the Easter period. The church was built to the designs of Hickman and Derick in 1838. The chancel was added by Pugin around 1841. (Barbara Bennett)



Events

13 July: The Pugin Dynasty and Architectural Heritage in Ramsgate

Ramsgate is the proud possessor of a remarkable collection of Gothic Revival buildings by Augustus Pugin and his sons. The event aims to introduce members to this body of work and to give insight into the Ramsgate lives and times of this architectural dynasty. The programme begins with a coach tour of the old town, seafront promenades and Royal harbour. Our guide, Terry Prue of the Ramsgate Society, will provide an entertaining and informative commentary, with contributions from local members of the Pugin Society, Catriona Blaker and Jayne Evelyn.

First, we will visit the outside of the clustered complex on Ramsgate's West Cliff, comprising AWN Pugin's home, the Grange, revolutionary prototype of the modern family house; his ideal church and personal burial place, St Augustine's; his presbytery, St Edward's, home to the Pugins for many years after AWP's untimely demise; and St Augustine's Monastery, built by his eldest son, Edward, to complete his deceased father's vision.

Our second stop will be at EWP's residential 'modern Gothic' Granville House, built on Ramsgate's East Cliff and central to a speculative venture to develop the area as St Lawrence-on-Sea and attract an elite clientele. The third stop will be a mile inland at EWP's former, industrial steam-powered flour mill, recently converted into a luxury apartment block.

This will be followed by lunch at a local restaurant with glorious sea views.

In the afternoon we will have an in-depth tour of St Augustine's Church and Shrine, guided by Andrew Kelly, Shrine and Visitor Centre manager. There will be a rare opportunity to view two exquisite, petite panels of French medieval glass from Louis IX's Sainte Chapelle in Paris. Father Simon Heans, Chaplain at the Shrine, will be on hand in the Pugin Archives to welcome visitors wishing to view the library and several rare items of Puginalia.

The day starts outside Ramsgate railway station at 11.30. We will aim to meet the 10.12 train from St Pancras. The coach will return to the station by 4.30. The St Pancras train leaves at 5.07.

Cost: £55, includes coach tour with commentary, a two course lunch at a local restaurant with sea views, church tour and gratuities. Lunch menus will be sent in advance as pre-ordering is required.

Booking: please email the Events Organizer, Professor Julia Twigg at j.m.twigg@kent.ac.uk.

18 August: The Pugins at Ushaw

A study day at Ushaw College, near Durham, exploring the ecclesiastical and domestic work of the Pugin dynasty, including architecture by A.W.N. Pugin, Edward Welby Pugin, Peter Paul Pugin, Sebastian Pugin Powell, and stained glass by A.W.N. Pugin, John Hardman Powell and Dunstan John Powell.

We will see parts of the complex not normally available; and there will be an opportunity to view church plate, metalwork, vestments and drawings by A.W.N. Pugin and John Hardman Powell.

The day will be led by Dr Gerard Hyland, an expert on the work of Edward Pugin. Claire Marsland, the curator of Ushaw, will show us plate, metal work and vestments. We will also have an opportunity to see drawings and letters held at Ushaw in the company of Matthew Watson, a member of the library and archiving team.

The day starts at 9.30 with coffee and ends at 4.30. Lunch is available for purchase in the refectory. Ushaw is located four miles outside Durham city. There is parking on site; and taxis are available from the railway station.

Cost: £30

Booking: the day is organised jointly with the Friends of Ushaw. To book, please go to their website <https://ushaw.org/whatson/the-pugins-at-ushaw/>

23 September: Pugin at Oxford

A day visit led by Dr David Lewis exploring Pugin and the politics of the Gothic Revival in Oxford. More details later.