

# The Pugin Society e~newsletter

Issue 30

Winter 2025



*Riding into 2025: a Happy New Year to all, from Strawberry Hill, with thanks to George Garbutt for this splendid photograph*

## The Pugin Society e~newsletter

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The copy deadline for the next edition of the e-newsletter is Sunday, 6th March 2025 for publication in April 2025

## Pugin Society AGM 2024

The Society's 2024 AGM was held on 14th December at the Art Workers' Guild. While slightly down on attendance compared with 2023, those present were able to enjoy a lecture from Professor Grace Lees-Maffei entitled: *Pugin to Papercuts: Design Reform and Socially-Engaged Contemporary Art Practice*. The event concluded with tea and other refreshments allowing members to mingle and chat and the opportunity to question the lecturer further.

The AGM business was all reported as set out in the agenda papers. Members approved the raising of subscriptions to reflect the 35% inflation since the subscriptions were last amended in 2015 and the Hon Treasurer will be looking to move future payments away from PayPal and standing orders to a direct debiting system. On behalf of the Society, David Bushell gave a vote of thanks to Mike Galloway who was standing down as Chair, having served on the committee for ten years, first as Hon Treasurer and then Chair from 2019. In this time, he has directed the Society through the Covid period and introduced remote meetings for the committee (and the 2020 and 2021 AGMs), as well as development of our publications with the introduction of the e-newsletter. The meeting welcomed, and approved the appointment as Chair, Martin Levy, of H. Blairman & Sons Ltd, dealers in 18th, 19th and early 20th century English and French furniture and works of art. He has published extensively on 19th century design, manufacture and patronage. The meeting also noted the stepping down after 25 years of Professor Julia Twigg as Events Organiser. Rosemary Hill gave an eloquent vote of thanks to Julia noting the many qualities displayed by her over

the years in organising and running events for the Society, qualities both apparent and less so yet essential to the smooth running of events and dealing with hosts and members in the field. A fuller description of Rosemary's words is set out in a separate item in this e-newsletter. Mike and Julia were each presented with wine and a book token.

The Art Workers' Guild has been booked again for the 2025 AGM, to be held on Saturday 29 November.

Professor Grace Lees-Maffei's lecture noted traces of Pugin in the Arts and Crafts Movement and in contemporary art and design reform. There was discussion of both industrial/machine manufacture and handcraft processes. Ideas from the work of Augustus Pugin, John Ruskin and William Morris were taken to examine two examples of 21st century creative practice: the socially and politically engaged papercuts of Rob Ryan and the Wandsworth Quilt. Ryan exhibited his designs at Walthamstow's Morris Gallery in 2019 reflecting on the housing inequality in London. The Wandsworth Quilt was commissioned by the Victoria & Albert Museum as a contribution to its exhibition *Quilts 1700–2010*. Facilitated by the social enterprise Fine Art Cell, the quilt was designed and put together by about forty HMP Wandsworth prisoners reflecting the physical layout of the prison and their experiences and feelings about incarceration and their prison and about stitching. Appropriate to the location of the lecture, Morris was Master of the Art Workers' Guild in 1892, and Ryan is its Master in 2024. □

**David Bushell**  
Hon Secretary

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### The vote of thanks to Julia Twigg given by Rosemary Hill at the Pugin Society's AGM in December 2024

It is hard to know what to say to thank Julia for a quarter century of service and commitment to the Society - but I will do my best.

Thanks to her, the Pugin Society has had an events programme comparable in scope and quality to societies such as C20th and the Victorian Society which have up to ten times as many members, as well as paid staff and an office. Julia has had no such support. She has called in experts where she needed them, but you can't find an expert unless you know something about the subject yourself. She is deeply scholarly and widely read in fields far beyond her own specialism. She is also something of an 'expert whisperer'. Many a putative guide

who was determined not to commit to anything when the phone rang has found as they put it down that they have promised to do whatever Julia, so kindly, suggested.

Pugin famously described himself as 'a locomotive being' and, thanks to Julia, we have been a remarkably locomotive society.

The first full event Julia ran was to Bruges in 2001, exploring the Gothic Revival in the low countries, Pugin's influence there and its influence on him. This theme was developed with trips to Lille and Leuven. We went all round Ireland and to every country in the UK following in Pugin's footsteps in the Welsh borders, Scotland and criss-crossing England from Birmingham and Liverpool to Kent.



*A close-up of Julia on the visit to Salisbury in 2016*



*Gavin Stamp and Julia with other Pugin Society members on the visit to Ramsgate in 2006*

memorable case, locked in the crypt of Liverpool Cathedral); they don't read the carefully prepared notes you hand out; and no matter how often you tell them what time the coach leaves they will ask you - one after another- as they get off: 'What time does the coach leave?'

Julia's unfailing patience, kindness and competence in the face of all this have in no small measure made the Society what it is. Her events had helped both scholarship and friendship to flourish and to make us more than the sum of our parts. We can never repay the debt we owe you Julia, but we would like to offer this small gift of a book token and some wine which we hope you will have time to enjoy in some well-earned leisure. □

If there is any role in life that requires that elusive quality 'grace under pressure' it is that of the event organiser. The better you do it, the less anyone notices what you do. People who have not organised events and have only been on Julia's may feel as if it is easy. Everything follows on seamlessly. I have organised events, and I know that they require the ability to plan ahead in detail, while remaining calm and flexible in the moment because however much you plan, things go wrong. The coach gets stuck in a country lane and has to reverse for what feels like five miles; it pours with rain or - a frequent one this - the vicar isn't there to open the church. People get lost (or, in one

**Rosemary Hill**



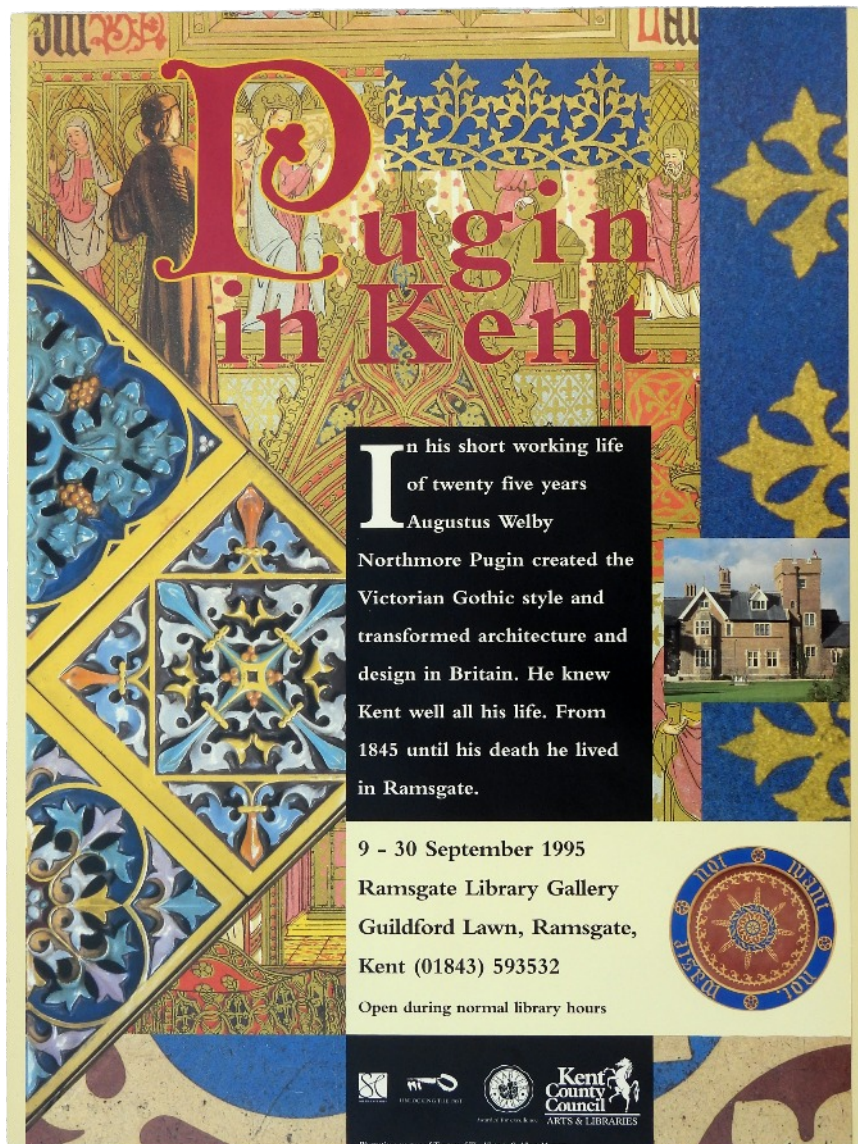
*Julia with other Pugin Society members on the visit to Salisbury in 2016*

## THIRTY YEARS OF THE PUGIN SOCIETY

Happy Birthday to us; we are now thirty years old! This is a sobering thought. In 1995 we started with such excitement and enthusiasm. We have learnt along the way; our experience has grown, and much has been achieved in the way of publications, website, study tours and other events. And, although not an amenity society, we hope that we have been able to have some influence in helping to determine decisions made on Pugin buildings, and to be a voice that can be appealed to if necessary. Let us hope that we can proceed positively and constructively into 2025, developing appropriately with the changing world around us. □

**Catriona Blaker**

*The magnificent design for the A3 poster advertising the "Pugin in Kent" exhibition that was held in the Ramsgate Library Gallery in 1995 following the "Pugin: A Gothic Passion" exhibition that was held at the V&A the previous year. Ramsgate Library was destroyed by arson in August 2004 but the façade of the building was subsequently retained when a new library building was constructed a few years later. Sadly, many of the historic contents of the old building were destroyed in the fire*



## PUGIN AT THE V&A

Members of the Society had an exciting visit last October to South Kensington to see a selection of some of the Pugin drawings in the wonderful and extensive collection acquired last year by the museum, from our President Sarah Houle, who was with us. Staff were most helpful and welcoming, and had prepared a marvellous assortment of work for us to look at; it was quite something to see, for example, Pugin's minute and intricate designs for the Palace of Westminster, ranging from umbrella stands to the monarch's throne at close quarters. It was particularly encouraging to note how engaged and enthusiastic the curators were and to learn that early next year they will be mounting an exhibition showing a selection from this very important archive.

We look forward to building up further positive connections with the V&A and to seeing the exhibition in due course. It will be a treat for those dreary days in February, when it is thought the exhibition will be held.

We were ably led by the hardworking Dr Peter Lindfield, early Gothic Revival expert and also our Treasurer. In addition to seeing the archive, Peter gave us an informative and concise tour around the Gothick and later sections of the British Galleries, culminating with items by Pugin himself, just to help put things in context. We concluded with a convivial lunch. □

**Catriona Blaker**

## ROUND AND ABOUT

**Taymouth Castle, Perthshire**, last visited by the Pugin Society in 2004 as part of an inspiring study tour to Scotland led by Rosemary Hill, has been attracting much attention in recent months, some of it controversial. At this A-listed (Scottish terminology for Historic England Grade I listings) castle Pugin designed important lavish and unforgettable fittings, in particular for what became known as the Banner Hall, and the library. This remarkable and romantic site was visited by Queen Victoria in 1842 and triggered her enduring love of all things Scottish, pre-Balmoral. Such a vast estate as Taymouth Castle and its environs has always had problems of ownership and upkeep. Now, however, it seems as if the current owners, the US-based luxury residential developer Discovery Land Company, who acquired the property in 2018, are really making headway. There has been a major historic restoration of the castle itself, and the park and woodlands are being restored also, plus the golf course. A number of homes, approximately 145, are planned in phased development on the estate. This will be a place for the very wealthy to stay. Controversy arises because of possible problems involving rights of way, proper use and development of the estate generally, and the position of locals in relation to it. However, although the word 'Pugin' does not appear on the developer's website, the interior is at least being cared for and looks sumptuous. See [discoverylandco.com](http://discoverylandco.com) for images.

### **Mount St Mary's Church, Richmond Hill, Leeds**

This impressive large-scale and dramatically sited Grade II\* church was founded by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and constructed by JA Hansom, William Wardell and with an east end added by our own EW Pugin in 1865-6. St Mary's has had a chequered history ever since it was abandoned in 1989. When the Pugin Society visited it in 2002 it was already a sad sight. Since then schemes to develop the site have fallen by the wayside, mainly due to lack of funding, and to the Covid years. Now, though, the property investment firm Aspen Woolf has devised some sort of solution. Though this involves demolition of the nave area and the substitution there of 175 apartments, the east end - the work of Edward Pugin and the windows by John Hardman Powell in the apse - will be retained and highlighted, giving special significance to the project, which will be called 'The Mount', and referencing the church's historic importance as a place of late nineteenth-century Catholic - predominantly Irish - worship in the (then) very deprived area of Richmond Hill. The



*The west end of Mount St Mary's church. Even in 2002 this was how the building was looking. Photo, Catriona Blaker*

development is to be completed by 2026. See [aspenwoolf.co.uk/properties/leeds](http://aspenwoolf.co.uk/properties/leeds) for further details.

### **All Saints Church, Barton-on-Irwell, Manchester**

All Saints is an outstanding Grade I church of immense quality by Edward Pugin, and considered his finest work. The church, constructed between 1863 and 1868, was founded by donor Sir Humphrey de Trafford, and the de Trafford family chantry chapel is here. The church has a polychromatic interior of red and white sandstone, and fittings include fine sculpture and a dramatic high altar by RL Boulton, a mural by JA Pippet which includes a portrait of Edward Pugin with the plan of the church, finely painted and inlaid ceilings, some Hardman glass and more. This is no longer a parish church and since 1961 has been in the hands of the Friars Minor Conventual, or Greyfriars. The order now wishes to move, and the question arises of who should take on the care of such an important building and who would have the necessary knowledge and experience to do so. It appears that the Friars wish to offer the church and associated buildings to the Prince of Peace

Community, a charismatic Catholic organisation. The Pugin Society, the Victorian Society and the Patrimony Committee of the Bishops Conference of England and Wales have all expressed concern over the suitability of this choice. Further news is awaited. *See also Elena Curti in The Tablet 16 November 2024, p.30.*

**St Augustine's Church, Ramsgate, Grade I**  
Despite the wonderful restoration and revitalising of Pugin's own St Augustine's, culminating in 2017, under the supervision of Father Marcus Holden and with the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund, work on conserving churches never stops, as readers will know, and, as Pugin himself found, more

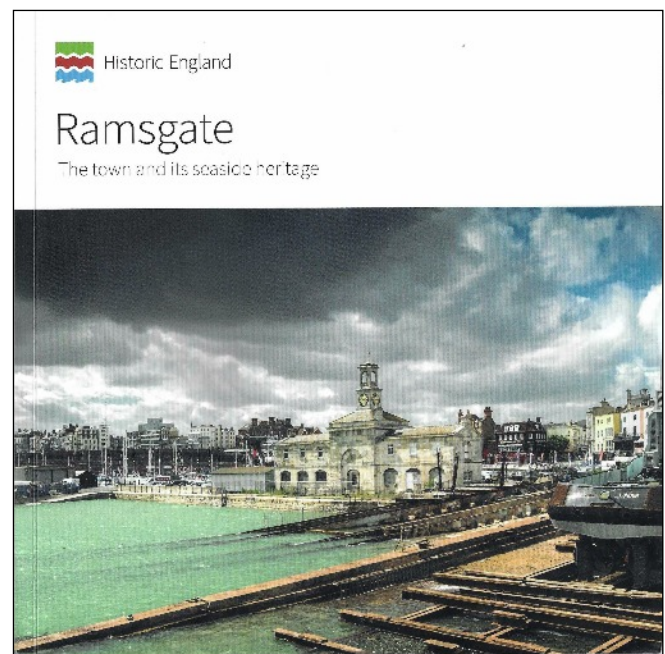
funding is always needed. Of primary concern here at the moment is the condition of the tracery surrounding the upper sections of the window in the Pugin chantry, the most significant one in the church, commemorating the founder himself. Also at risk is the three-light window in the south aisle facing the font and also the south-west window, showing King Ethelbert of Kent and his queen. The surrounding stone in the mullions of these windows is crumbling and in places there are actually visible gaps between the glass panels and their surrounds. This is the next project for which funding must be sought urgently. □

**Catriona Blaker**

## THE ELUSIVE ELLINGTON COTTAGE

Although Pugin's sojourn in 1833/5 at Ellington Cottage, St Lawrence, Ramsgate, and his letters from that address, have been known about well before the commencement of the Pugin Society, concern locally about the actual whereabouts of the cottage really only arose when the 1995 'Pugin in Kent' exhibition, a spin-off from the V&A exhibition the previous year, was mounted in Ramsgate library and it became necessary to produce a leaflet including a Pugin Trail. Library staff had problems locating Ellington Cottage but eventually concluded it must be a small house tucked away behind Ellington Place and now numbered 188 Grange Road. I went to look at this house and it did not look promising, although it had an incised plaque on it with the name 'Ellington Cottage'. Later on, I was invited in, and although the exterior had been greatly altered and extended the rooms to the immediate left of the front door seemed to be of considerable age, with modest but apparently old woodwork and fittings. It was very difficult to find out more without appearing intrusive.

However, in 2020 the book *Ramsgate*, by Historic England's Geraint Franklin appeared. Geraint did much excellent research for this book. He discovered that in 1831 the *Kentish Weekly Post* advertised two houses for sale, one of which was 'the modern and substantial brick built dwelling called ELLINGTON COTTAGE'. The other house, still standing, was Chapel Cottage. Lot 4 in the sale was the adjoining plot to Ellington Cottage, which consisted of a garden and a 'two-stall stable and chaise house'. I wonder if this was the property *now* called Ellington Cottage, which is in the correct position for this to be possible. We know that when Pugin lived in Ellington Cottage he found traces of the adjacent ancient chapel of the Trinity in the garden, but this would have been the



*The cover of Geraint Franklin's superb book Ramsgate*

case from either Ellington Cottage. Geraint's perusal of various OS maps revealed a property very close to, but detached from, Chapel Cottage. This was demolished in 1993, and he believes this to have been the true Ellington Cottage. I have no memory of what this house looked like, and wonder, as does Geraint, why it was demolished when Chapel Cottage was retained and listed. So far, I have not been able to obtain a photograph of it, but I shall persist.

It is interesting that the young Pugin had to rent a 'modern' residence when he removed to Ramsgate; no wonder he was so anxious to soften its interiors by furnishing them with his already growing collection of antiquities, hangings and *objets d'art*. □

**Catriona Blaker**

## Dr Julian Litten FSA 1947-2024

*The Society was very sorry to hear of the death of distinguished funerary historian and member Dr Julian Litten. We understand that he did not wish for an obituary as such, but here are a few words from our Editor:*

I was very pleased to receive arrived in my Inbox on 16th July of this year a contribution from Dr Julian Litten. I had never met him but I had bought a copy of his book *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral Since 1450* shortly after it was first published in 1991 (around that time, I was living in Surrey and spent much of my spare time exploring Brookwood Cemetery and, occasionally, leading groups around that cemetery) and I remembered his name. Julian had kindly sent me an article together with a photograph to accompany his article. I immediately copied-and-pasted his article, laid it out using my desktop-publishing software and sent him my first draft of the article as a PDF, asking him if he would let me know of any changes/corrections that he would wish me to make. I also took the opportunity to tell him that I had bought a copy of his book, how interesting I had found it, and that I still had it in my book collection. I received an immediate response on 17th July from Julian, reading: 'Perfect! No changes to be made at all. Goodness, *The English Way of Death* came out some 30 plus years ago.



*Image courtesy of The Coffin Works Museum*

*Dr Julian Litten holding a skull*

I'm now getting to the stage when I shall shortly be the object of my subject'.

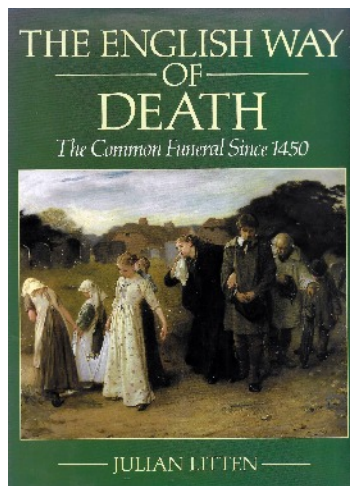
I received another e-mail from Julian the following day (18th July) telling me of his descent into the Pugin vault at Ramsgate on 29th October 1992. He wrote: 'There were only four who descended into the Pugin

Vault on that day. Ronald [Robert] Arnold-Pugin, the Rev David Meara, the late Fr Anthony Couchman and myself'.

Sadly, the prophecy contained in Julian's e-mail that I received on 17th July turned out to be true, for he died at his home in King's Lynn on 19th October at the age of 77 after a period of ill health.

The Autumn 2024 issue of our e-newsletter (containing Julian Litten's article *An Unidentified Pugin Monstrance*) was sent out to members on 25th September so I like to think that, at least, he saw his article published before he sadly died only twenty-five days later. □

**James Brazier**



*Peter Lindfield (in red trousers) addressing Pugin Society members during their visit to Strawberry Hill on 26th September 2024.*

*This is another of George Garbutt's excellent photographs*

## Michael Whiteway (1948-2024): a tribute

Michael Whiteway is a name that will be well known to members of the Pugin Society. Michael was, from the early 1970s, London's leading dealer in nineteenth-century design. His sharp eye and deep curiosity were quickly noticed. Haslam & Whiteway became a fertile source for collectors and curators from across the globe, seeking to build their holdings of everything from 'Pugin to Mackintosh', and far more. Collectors loved the seemingly disorganised arrangement of his shop, where Michael, a cherished mentor to so many, deliberately gave the impression that there were discoveries to be made. Michael is also warmly remembered for his generosity towards scholars and curators, with whom he forged unbreakable friendships (see Rosemary Hill below). Michael died on 29th November, aged 75.

In 1881, John Dando Sedding (1838-91) declared: 'We should have no Morris, no Street, no Burges, no Shaw, no Webb, no Bodley, no Rossetti, no Burne-Jones, no Crane, but for Pugin.' And Pugin was someone whose work was invariably to be found on a visit to the shop at 105, Kensington Church Street.

Michael enjoyed a strong bond, built on mutual respect, with Clive Wainwright (1942-1999), who was responsible for much Pugin scholarship during his career at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It was with Clive's help that Michael was able to establish the identity of a missing Pugin giltwood Chair of State, supplied in 1847 by John Webb to the Palace of Westminster. The chair, like so much during those halcyon days of discovery, appeared unannounced in a provincial auction, on this occasion, Sotheby's secondary saleroom in Sussex. The chair returned to Westminster in 1998. Also now at Westminster, in the Speaker's House, is a Pugin sideboard made for Sir Stuart Knill, around 1850; this had been picked up by Michael in 1985, from Sotheby's in London.

The 1981 exhibition 'Architect-Designers Pugin to Mackintosh', mounted in conjunction with the Fine Art Society, had an introduction written by Clive, and a table from his own collection, originally at Pugin's Convent of Mercy, Handsworth (illustrated on the front cover of the catalogue and on the following page of this e-newsletter). The exhibition also included a 'model chalice' designed by Pugin and manufactured by John Hardman & Co., now in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago.

The collector John Scott (1935-2020), who was Michael's earliest and most dedicated customer, accumulated a substantial Pugin collection, most acquired through Michael. When, in 2015, Scott disposed of his collection through Michael and the Fine Art Society, the eighth volume of the catalogues



*Michael Whiteway polishing an A.W.N. Pugin jug from John Scott's Collection*

*Architect-Designers from Pugin to Voysey*, contained no fewer than 47 entries of furniture, metalwork, ceramics and glass by or attributed to Pugin. The star was Pugin's cabinet from The Grange, now at the V&A. But there was also Pugin's own *prie dieu* and a collection of panelling from the Palace of Westminster, both acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

As is clear from the book he co-wrote with Charlotte Gere, *Nineteenth-Century Design from Pugin to Mackintosh* (1993), Michael had a passion for Pugin, as well as for all those great designers who followed in his wake. He was a key figure in the revival of Pugin's reputation in the 20th century and we owe him a great debt of gratitude. □

**Martin P. Levy**

### ***Rosemary Hill writes:***

Michael was one of the first people I met when I moved to London after university. I was already interested in the Arts and Crafts Movement, and I learned much of what I know from sitting in Michael's shop in Kensington Church Street and listening to him -and his friends- talking. When he

started his business Victorian decorative arts and furniture were so far out of fashion as to be almost invisible. Pieces from the Palace of Westminster - by Pugin and others - were sold off as government surplus along with unwanted filing cabinets in the Old Kent Road. Michael had a brilliant almost supernatural ability to find them - he once discovered a Burges table in the B&B he was staying at in order to go to a nearby auction. It wasn't of course ESP, it was that he had a brilliant eye and he had been trained as an artist. He could think himself into the mind of a designer and know what they would - or would not - have done. I remember him once carrying a large wooden-framed sofa into the shop (he was also known as the strongest man in the antiques trade), depositing it in the middle of the floor and regarding it thoughtfully. 'My God it's ugly' he said admiringly 'it must be *BY* somebody'.

He would then set off to the V&A to try and work out who that might be. He often found the drawings for a piece, including one of the Pugin pianos from the Great Exhibition, that would secure the attribution. Michael was the ideal of the scholar-dealer. His research not only increased the value of the pieces he found, it also ensured that they were reinserted where they belonged in history and in the world, in museums or, as Martin Levy recalls, (above) at the Palace of Westminster. He never got

lost in the archives however, he kept his eye always on the objects. I remember him showing me how, on a Pugin table, the braces had been cut with the grain of the wood to make it stronger. He was also generous. When I was researching my biography he gave me a watercolour by the antiquary William Fowler of the stained-glass window in Ropsley church in Lincolnshire depicting Pugin's medieval ancestor Sir Johannes de Welby. I was especially grateful for it after a disappointing trip to look at the original, only to discover that, since the latest volume of Pevsner, it had been destroyed!

In the early days of our friendship, Michael told me that if there was anything he didn't know then there was a man at the V&A who knew everything. This, of course, was Clive Wainwright. He and Michael were friends and collaborators in the revival of Pugin's reputation in the 20th century. Without their pioneering efforts there would have been no V&A exhibition in 1994, I should probably not have written *God's Architect* and there might perhaps be no Pugin Society. Michael's legacy is great and enduring. □

**Rosemary Hill**

Rosemary Hill's *God's Architect: Pugin and building of Romantic Britain*, was published in 2007.



Writing table designed by A.W.N. Pugin for Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Handsworth, Birmingham



The cover of the book *Nineteenth-Century Design: From Pugin to Mackintosh*, jointly written by Charlotte Gere and Michael Whiteway and first published in 1993 by George Weidenfeld and Nicholson Ltd.

In the opinion of your editor, this book is a 'tour-de-force' and is quite outstanding. The text is extremely well researched and the illustrations in the book are superb

◀ This writing table was once owned by Michael Whiteway and was exhibited by him at the 1981 exhibition 'Architect-Designers Pugin to Mackintosh' - see Martin P. Levy's tribute to Michael Whiteway on the previous page