

The Pugin Society e~newsletter

Issue 31

Spring 2025



The Jesuit Church of The Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, Mayfair: a numinous shaft of light strikes part of the Salvati mosaics and a section of the spectacular A. W. N. Pugin high altar. A cast of the frontal of this altar can be seen in St Augustine's, Ramsgate, where it is in temporary use

Photo: Catriona Blaker



Our Lady and Child, from a window designed by John Hardman Powell, in the Digby Chantry, or Chapel of St John the Evangelist, St Augustine's church, Ramsgate.

Photo: Catriona Blaker

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All material for future editions and comments on the current edition, should be sent to our e-newsletter Editor. Please note that it is the responsibility of contributors to ensure that there is no infringement of copyright in their contributions and that any permissions and credits required are obtained before submission of their contributions which should be submitted in Microsoft Word, with accompanying images sent as JPGs, to:

'All contributions should be sent to the Society's new e-newsletter editor Catriona Blaker at blakermarion@gmail.com

The copy deadline for the next edition of the e-newsletter is 6th June 2025. All contributions welcomed!

MAKERS OF MODERN GOTHIC

This is just a reminder to members that this exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum is now open and will be running until 26th October. You will all have seen Dr Peter Lindfield's e-mail about the Society visit on 8th April, but this is just to emphasise what a joy this display, sympathetically curated by the V&A's Angus Patterson and Max Donnelly, is. Pugin's designs for John Hardman, and various artefacts made for him by Hardman, plus a bulging album of drawings and designs sent to George Myers, and retained by the Myers family, are displayed through two galleries. Part of the pleasure of the exhibition is its rather intimate size, which helps to focus the mind on the concentration of exquisite drawings and objects on show. Whether members are familiar with these already, or if they are coming to Pugin for the first time, it is wonderful to study these mounted and framed designs and drawings in close up and to see, through the well worded and explanatory captions, how they all interrelate, whether we are thinking of the Palace of Westminster, the Great Exhibition, The Grange and St Augustine's church, Ramsgate, or other sites.

The exhibition celebrates the V&A's recent purchase of a magnificent and more than substantial collection of Pugin designs, from a which a selection was picked for this show, and also the acquisition of the George Myers album. Don't miss. □

Catriona Blaker



At the opening reception: our Patron, Lady Wedgwood, with Dr Rory O'Donnell

Photograph: Julia Twigg



At the opening reception: our President Sarah Houle, with member Martin Peach

Photograph: Julia Twigg

FROM THE SALEROOM

In a sale at Batemans Auction House, Stamford, Lincolnshire on 1st February some interesting lots appeared. These included watercolours by A.W.N. Pugin and also a collection of photographs, letters and ephemera belonging to his third wife, Jane Welby Pugin. The provenance of all these items was excellent – they came from the estate of Ralph Robert Alford, son of Robert Edwin Alford, and Teresa, Lady Alford, Lady Alford being the great granddaughter of Augustus and Jane Pugin, through their daughter Margaret.

In addition to Lot 150, relating to Jane Pugin, there were four Pugin watercolours and one fine pencil drawing in the sale (Lots 179-183). The most fully realised of these, the interior of the church of St Vincent, Rouen, of 1837, went for £1,250, and a most intriguing though less highly coloured view of a crane and pulley, with a wheel, hauling stone up from a quayside, with the sails of other ships visible, and a horse and cart standing by, sold for £360. This was not titled; one would rather like it to



Lot 181. Church above the Rhine

have been stone being unloaded at Ramsgate, for St Augustine’s church, but perhaps this is wishful thinking. A most picturesque (or even Picturesque) and rather vertiginous mountainous view of a church on the Rhine went for £460, a continental street scene in pencil and sepia wash for £420, and a beautifully observed and detailed drawing of ‘La Tour de Beurre, Rouen Cathedral’, of 1832, for £460.

Catriona Blaker



Lot 180. Where can this be?

Membership Subscriptions: Update

At the 2024 AGM, an increase in membership subscription rates was passed. This is the first increase in the Society's annual dues for nearly a decade: increasing membership rates, proposed after careful consideration, will help the Society in the face of increasing costs - especially for printing and postage. We are also moving away from Standing Orders to Direct Debit: new members joining this year are already using the industry standard online Direct Debit payment processor (GoCardless), and it is receiving very positive feedback.

Full instructions about how to convert to/set up your Direct Debit (for all except for life members), will be circulated shortly and well ahead of the 1st July due date.

Dr Peter N. Lindfield FSA
Hon. Treasurer
The Pugin Society

Farewell to our e-newsletter editor

Members will have noticed from the front page of this e-newsletter that we now have a new editor with effect from the next issue - Catriona Blaker - who will be known to many - if not all - of our members.

James Brazier, a long-standing member of the Society, took over the editorship two years ago has reluctantly given up the position due to ill health. James writes: "I have much enjoyed putting the last eight issues together and have learnt a lot in the process despite the many software problems and gremlins that he encountered in the process."



James particularly expresses his thanks to Catriona for her invaluable advice and her many contributions to the e-newsletter over the last two years.

I wish Catriona every success in the future.

James Brazier

PUGIN SOCIETY EVENTS

The Society AGM will be on Saturday, 29th November 2025 at the Art Workers' Guild. Our guest speaker will be Rupert Maas, dealer and expert on Victorian painting, and known to many through the Antiques Roadshow, He will be in conversation with Nicholas Williams, collector and member of the Society.

There are some other most interesting plans in the pipeline, but these will be announced slightly later in the year and in the next e-newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP

If you enjoy being a member of The Pugin Society and reading this e-newsletter and our hard-copy publication *Present State*, can you help us by recruiting new members? If all existing members were to recruit one member each, think what an advance this would be! We need you.

The Ecclesiological Society

The above Society is holding their Annual Lecture on Friday, 13th 2025 which will be online and open to both members and non-members of their Society. Their Annual lecture, starting at 7:15pm, will be given by Prof John Cooper on “St Stephen’s Chapel Westminster and the House of Commons 1292-1950”. **Details of their Annual Lecture, as provided by the Ecclesiological Society, are as follows:**

*The Society’s Annual General Meeting and Lecture will be held on **Friday 13th June**. The meeting and lecture will be online, enabling the largest possible number of people to attend. The AGM will start at **6:30pm** during which we will give our grateful thanks to **Bishop David Stancliffe**, who has decided to retire as our President. The Society’s Council will then move to propose the **Revd Prof Diarmaid MacCulloch, Kt**, currently a Vice President of the Society as our new President.*

*After the AGM, our Annual Lecture begin at **7:15pm**, and will be given by **Prof John Cooper** on “**St Stephen's Chapel Westminster and the House of Commons, 1292-1950**”. John is Professor of History at the University of York and Director of the Society of Antiquaries of London. We are very grateful to him for agreeing to add this lecture to an already very busy diary. His lecture will draw upon his leadership of a three-year major research project between the University of York, the Palace of Westminster, the History of Parliament Trust and the Institute of Historical Research, which explored every facet in the chapels long and fascinating ecclesiastical and political history.*

Tickets for the Lecture are free but need to be booked. Please keep an eye on the Society’s website for booking details, which will be available shortly. The Lecture is open to both members and non-members.

The Ecclesiological Society’s website is: ecclsoc.org