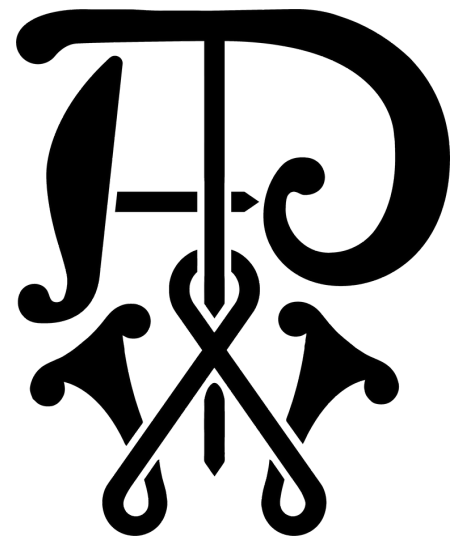


The Pugin Society e-newsletter

Issue 34

Spring 2026



FROM THE EDITOR

A Happy New Year to all our members and welcome to our spring e-newsletter, issue No. 34. Very sadly, the most significant item to report is the recent death of our Patron, Alexandra (Sandra) Lady Wedgwood, in December last year, of which most of you will already be aware. She was a key figure in our world and will be greatly missed. Ways of perpetuating her memory are already being discussed, and there will be an official obituary of her in the forthcoming Present State. However, we also have positive news to think about, some interesting contributions, and we look forward to another year of events and also to much exciting work going forward on our website, which is undergoing revision and which will eventually include a prestigious tie-up with the Victoria & Albert Museum. Watch this space.

• *Catriona Blaker*

A.W.N. PUGIN IN SPANISH: ON THE NEED TO TRANSLATE PUGIN'S THEORETICAL WRITINGS

*The Society is delighted to introduce our new committee member, the Spanish academic and medievalist **Dr Leticia Bermejo de Rueda** of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Here Leticia gives us a compelling and convincing justification for her impressive project to translate the writings of Pugin into Spanish. What a great scheme!*



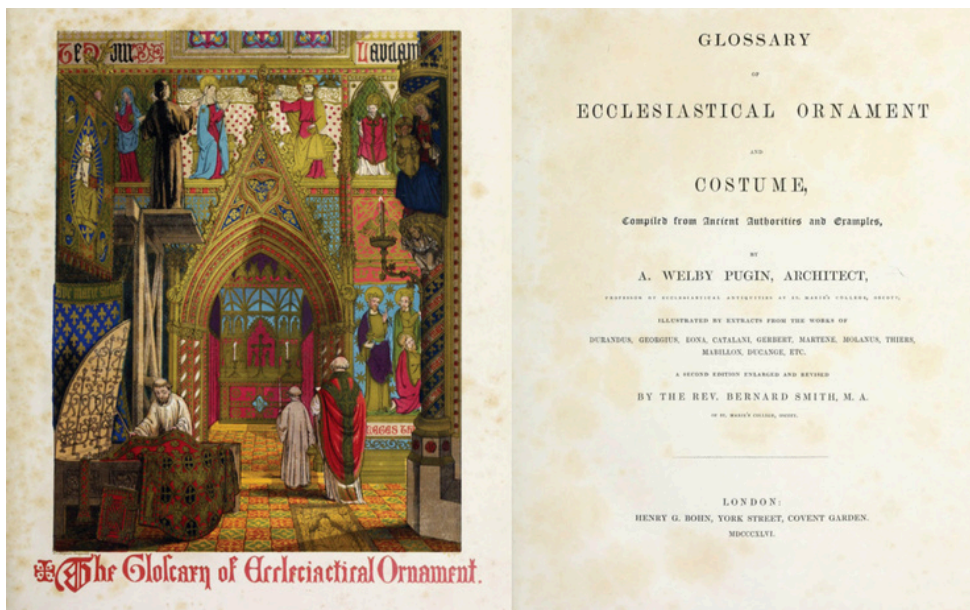
The theoretical work of A.W.N. Pugin occupies a central place in reflections on the revival of Gothic art in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, despite his recognition within the Anglophone world, he remains a figure of limited accessibility in the Spanish language, particularly with regard to his theoretical writings. The purpose here is not to reiterate his importance, but rather to address a

more specific question: why it is necessary today to translate his theoretical work into Spanish, and what such a translation may contribute to the study of medieval art, architecture, and liturgy.

The limited circulation of Pugin's work in the Spanish-speaking world stands in marked contrast to the broad reception enjoyed by other contemporary architectural theorists, most notably Viollet-le-Duc, whose influence in Spain was favoured by cultural proximity to France and by his connections with prominent Spanish intellectuals and artists in the second half of the nineteenth century. This situation has contributed to a certain historiographical imbalance, relegating Pugin to a secondary position, despite the fact that his theoretical thought and methodology offer an approach to Gothic art that is profoundly different and complementary.

Translating Pugin is therefore not merely an exercise in historiographical recovery, but a means of broadening the critical framework through which nineteenth-century medievalism has been studied. His writings articulate an integrated vision in which architecture, ornament, liturgy, and ecclesiastical life form an inseparable whole. From this perspective, his work is especially valuable for understanding how the nineteenth century reinterpreted the Middle Ages not simply as an artistic style, but as a cultural, symbolic, and religious model.

The translation of his texts into Spanish is also entirely feasible from a legal standpoint, as his works are in the public domain. This circumstance allows attention to be focused on the central issue: the academic and cultural value of making fundamental primary sources available to the Spanish-speaking world; sources that have hitherto circulated almost exclusively in English.



Frontispiece and title page of the *Glossary*, second edition

the English context of the nineteenth century. His approach to the medieval cannot be understood as a full and continuous historical recovery of the liturgical tradition, but rather as a reconstruction as a result of, and shaped by, the rupture with Rome following the reign of Henry VIII. Pugin's historical framework entailed a fragmented reception of subsequent liturgical developments, in which the reforms and codifications established by the Council of Trent did not occupy a central place. For this very reason, Pugin's work is particularly revealing: not as a normative model of liturgy, but as a testimony to how the nineteenth century imagined, selected, and idealised the Middle Ages.

Providing direct access to these texts would enable researchers, art historians, architects, and liturgists to work with greater rigour and critical independence.

The starting point of this project will be the *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament and Costume* (1844), and this choice is grounded in clearly defined reasons. This work is directly linked to my own research interests in medieval liturgy and to an understanding of how Pugin interpreted and constructed it from within

The *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament* allows this vision to be analysed with particular clarity, as Pugin does not merely list terms or objects, but integrates them into a coherent system of aesthetic, symbolic, and liturgical values. His determination to document, classify, and explain the elements of ecclesiastical ornament reveals a methodology grounded in direct observation and in profound practical knowledge, the result of years of study and close engagement with medieval buildings and objects. Translating this work into Spanish would not only provide an essential reference tool, but would also allow his ideas to be critically assessed from a different liturgical tradition, one more directly connected to Roman continuity.

Within specialised circles, particularly those concerned with liturgy and the history of the Church in England, Pugin is recognised and valued for his role in the recovery of Catholic sensibilities and practices, as well as for his association with the Cambridge Camden Society. However, this recognition has not been effectively transferred to the Spanish-speaking world, thereby limiting an understanding of his thought and of his influence on the visual and religious culture of the nineteenth century. Translating his theoretical work would help to remedy this situation and enrich the historiographical debate with an indispensable voice.

For all these reasons, undertaking the translation into Spanish of the theoretical work of A.W.N. Pugin is not merely a personal initiative, but a necessary task.

Beginning this epic undertaking with the *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament* reflects a well-founded conviction: that his texts, when read critically and from a rigorous historical and liturgical perspective, can offer new insights into the modern reception of the Middle Ages. Making this body of work accessible in Spanish will allow for a more just appraisal of Pugin's figure and will open new avenues of research into Gothic art, liturgy, and nineteenth-century artistic thought.

PRESERVING A.W.N. PUGIN'S CHURCH AT ST MARY'S, WYMESWOLD, LEICESTERSHIRE

*It is a pleasure to have this account by **Professor Emerita Elizabeth Tingle** of the Anglican church of St Mary's and Pugin's considerable involvement with it. We would also very much like to draw our members' attention to the day conference/colloquium which Professor Tingle is organising and which is being held at the church on 11th April. Hopefully members living in the area - or even further afield - may be able to attend. There is much to celebrate at this splendid church, following recent restoration! For further details contact Professor Tingle at PCCWymeswold@outlook.com*



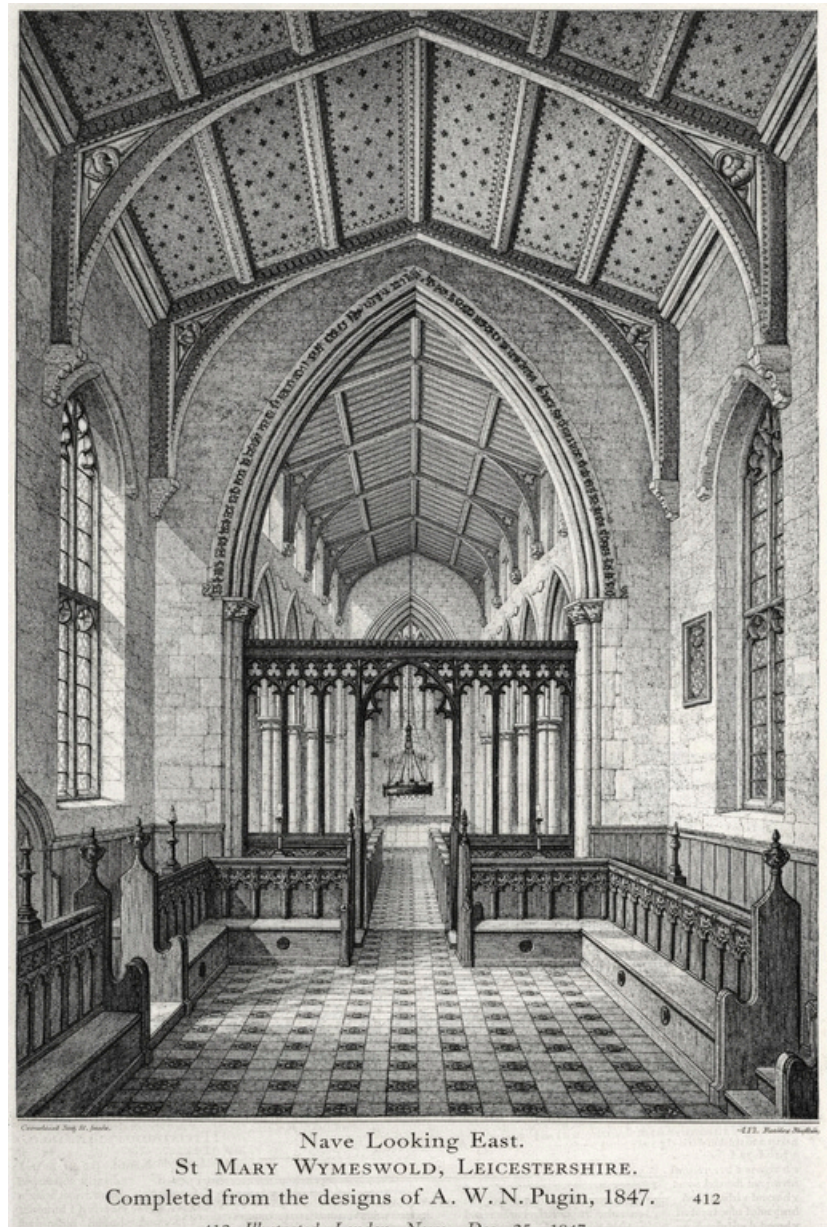
The church of St Mary, Wymeswold, seen from the north. Photo: William Tingle

St Mary's is a grade-1 listed parish church which sits at the heart of Wymeswold village, in north Leicestershire. There has been a church on the site since at least the 1170s and we know from remaining fragments that a stone building was erected in the twelfth or early thirteenth century. Most of the present fabric dates to the fourteenth century when the nave and tower were constructed. In the fifteenth century, the chancel and tower were rebuilt, and a clerestory was added above the nave. But the special interest of the church is that it was restored in 1844-46 by A.W.N. Pugin. In this short piece, Pugin's work at Wymeswold is outlined, as well as the details of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project which has been awarded to preserve, or at least to restore, Pugin's refurbishment of St Mary's church.

Background to the 1840s Restoration of St Mary's

In 1835, the Reverend Henry Alford was appointed to the living of St Mary's church by the patron, Trinity College Cambridge. Alford was aged twenty-five and interested in the ideas of the Tractarians and the Cambridge Camden Society, which he joined in 1844. When the Rev. Alford arrived in Wymeswold, he found the church in a poor state. In his own words the church 'presented the appearance of a venerable building disguised by decay and disfigurement.' In Alford's view, the state of the church meant there was need for constant, expensive repairs; more importantly, the interior was unfit for proper, dignified worship. Then in 1842 the roof of the south aisle threatened to collapse. All this 'decay, filth and unseemliness' needed a radical overhaul. The money was raised with some effort and in 1844-46, A.W.N. Pugin was commissioned to do the work.

We do not know how the Rev. Alford came to be in contact with Pugin, but it is likely to have occurred through their mutual acquaintance Ambrose March Phillipps De Lisle of Grace Dieu in Leicestershire. Alford and De Lisle were contemporaries at Trinity College, Cambridge, and after De Lisle's conversion to Roman Catholicism, they remained friends. Pugin was also a visitor to the De Lises' house, and he worked on many Midlands Roman Catholic churches. Pugin and Alford probably met through their Leicestershire contacts.



The interior as completed by A.W.N. Pugin (1847).

The Restoration of 1844-46

Pugin undertook a thorough refurbishment of St Mary's. Restoration commenced in 1844 with the rebuilding of the south aisle, the removal of the west gallery and the unblocking of the tower arch into the nave. The new work was in the Decorated Gothic style. Next, the north aisle was rebuilt along with a two-storey porch which had a vestry with a fireplace on the upper floor. Trinity College, Cambridge paid for the restoration of the chancel and a small extension on its north side to accommodate the organ. During the work, unfortunately, the nave roof collapsed and had to be replaced. The chancel arch was removed and a new one put in to match the tower arch.

For the interior of the church, new fittings were added, largely by Pugin. The pews were designed as copies of the original ones, with linenfold decoration. The medieval rood screen was removed as it was considered too decayed for restoration, and a new one was added. A new pulpit and font replaced the post-Reformation furniture. There were wall paintings; a Decalogue behind the high altar and texts above the nave arches. Lights, sconces and a new lectern Bible were made by Hardman & Co of Birmingham. New glazing was added to Pugin's designs, and also to those of his son-in-law John Hardman Powell, by William Wailes of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and by the Hardman firm in the aisle windows, whilst some quarries in the chancel windows were made by James Powell of the Whitechapel Glass Company.



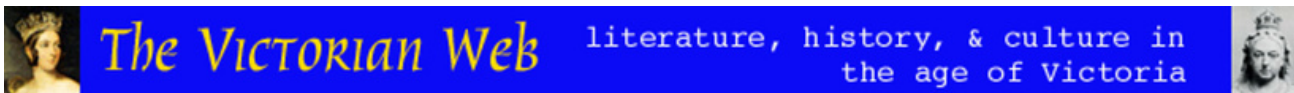
Dry rot and its replacement 2025. Photo: Richard Bimson.

Renovation 2025-26

Until the 1950s, the church needed only limited repairs. In 1954, dry rot was discovered in the roof timbers, and the nave walls were damp. An extensive campaign was undertaken to remedy this, which, as we found out, used a good deal of concrete. In 2022, dry rot was again discovered in the nave roof woodwork and was repaired. This was insufficient to stem the problem and all the major timbers of the nave needed to be replaced. The concrete guttering had caused widespread problems of fungal growth. Fortunately, the National Lottery Heritage Fund gave a generous grant of just over £451,000. Under the church architect Mark Stewart, working with Ackroyd's construction firm of Nottingham, major repairs have been taking place across 2025-early 2026.

A HEROINE IN THE FIELD: DR JACQUELINE BANERJEE AND THE VICTORIAN WEB

The Society would like commend, and bring to members' attention, Dr Jacqueline Banerjee, Editor-in-Chief and Webmaster of the Victorian Web, for the massive quantity of scholarly and wide ranging contributions she has made to that site, for her excellent photographs, and for currently holding the reins of the VW so competently in her hands. The Victorian Web was founded by Professor George Landow of Brown University, Rhode Island, USA in 1987. He was a visionary indeed. This is a wonderful site, which is constantly updated, with new contributions constantly appearing in a large number of different areas of Victorian studies. Part of its original aim was to make interdisciplinary links, so that it is possible to move easily, for example, from architecture and painting to the great literature of the period, or to issues of science or music or questions of faith and much more. A particular advantage of the site is the very extensive number of images, of all sorts, that can be looked at in detail and enlarged for closer examination. Jacqueline has contributed many pieces relating to Pugin churches and has also reviewed some of the books with which we have been involved, and this has been but a very small part of her work. She is also a loyal and encouraging member of the Pugin Society. Do have a look at this site if you do not know it; you will be amazed to discover and explore the riches within, and will learn so much.



Visit the website at www.victorianweb.org

FOR YOUR BOOKSHELF

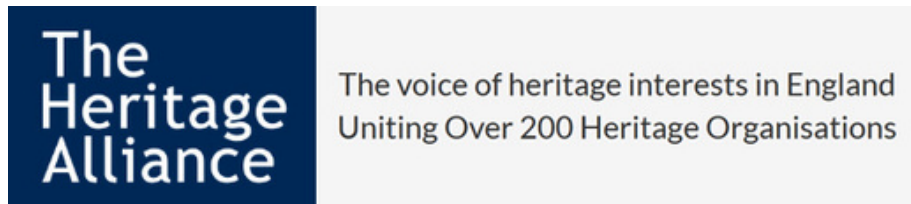
The Society has a number of publications still available for sale at extremely modest prices. These include a lively account of the eccentric Edward Pugin's life and work in Kent, *Edward Pugin and Kent*, and a wonderful eye-witness description, *Pugin in his home*, by Pugin's son-in-law, John Hardman Powell, of what it was like living with Pugin and his family at The Grange in Ramsgate as a very young man. Also available are a publication describing in detail the stained glass, both nineteenth-century and earlier, of St Augustine's church, Ramsgate, and a slim but richly illustrated and useful account for those new to Pugin, *Presenting Pugin*, produced by the Society in 2012. Even with postage, none of these worthwhile titles cost more than £10 each. A bit more expensive, but indispensable, is Gerard Hyland's definitive *The Life and Work of Edward Welby Pugin, 1834-1875*. We also have a few copies of the intriguing *Palace of Pugin: the Westminster Conspiracy*, a novel by Nick Corbett, which presents a different and interesting way in - albeit fictional - to the world of Pugin, suitable in particular for teens.

For further details, or to order any of these publications, please go to BOOKSHOP on the Pugin Society website www.thepuginsociety.co.uk



ARE YOU AWARE OF THE HISTORIC RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS ALLIANCE?

The HRB Alliance was set up in 2008, and is an independently funded group within The Heritage Alliance. The Heritage Alliance describes itself as ‘the biggest alliance of heritage interests within the UK and set up to promote the central role of the non-Government movement in the heritage sector’. It is of great value to Pugin Society members and to all those interested in heritage and wanting to protect it.



The Historic Religious Buildings Alliance www.hrballiance.org.uk aims to keep everyone up to date with news and events concerning the future of historic religious buildings. It produces a free newsletter, although it is also possible to become a subscribing member. This organisation is a splendid way to network and keep up to date within the conservation sector, see what is happening, and assist in campaigning when this is felt necessary. This and The Heritage Alliance itself www.theheritagealliance.org.uk are strongly recommended.

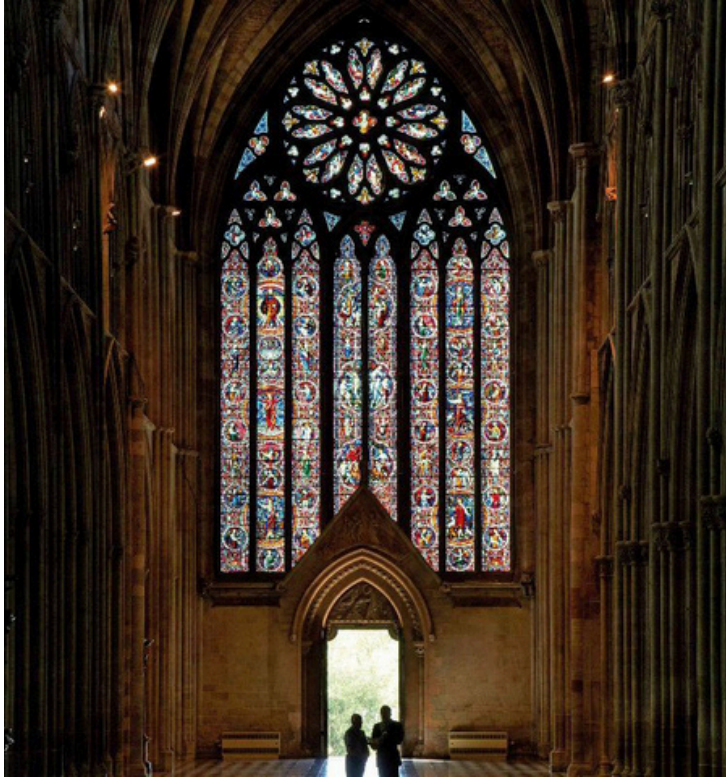
TROUBLE AT WALMER, NEAR DEAL, KENT

The Society has recently been contacted re the 1881 Pugin & Pugin church of the Sacred Heart, Upper Walmer. The church, which has been brought to the Society's notice in the past, was listed Grade II in 2001. It is all that remains of a convent, since demolished, which once adjoined it. The church's accompanying and slightly later bell tower, a striking feature in the area, and which is part of the listing, was acquired by Kent County Council in 1982, whilst the church itself is still the property of the Archdiocese of Southwark. Unusually, the pavement of the nearby main road runs through two ground level archways of the tower, which straddles the pavement. Recently, debris has been falling from the tower and is a possible hazard to pedestrians, or even cars. Steps have been taken to prevent further problems of this sort, but the future of the tower is uncertain, and KCC are closely considering what to do with it in the long term. Click to read the informative [Tower of the Church of the Sacred Heart Dover Road Walmer Kent PDF planning document](#).



Church of the Sacred Heart, Dover Road, Walmer. Photo: Pam Fray/Wikipedia

JOHN HARDMAN POWELL, CHIEF ASSISTANT AND SON-IN-LAW OF AUGUSTUS PUGIN



We were thrilled to discover that the Great West Window of Worcester Cathedral, a masterpiece by JHP, was one of twelve finalists – with stiff competition and from all periods of glass design – in an event organised by the Association of English Cathedrals to find the nation’s most popular stained glass window (in a cathedral). Finalists were short listed from the most liked windows as seen across the Association’s social media platforms. By the time you read this we shall know who won, but in any case, hurrah for John Hardman Powell and also for those perceptive people at Worcester Cathedral who early on valued their Victorian glass and promoted it at a time when this was not always the case.

*Left: John Hardman Powell’s Great West Window
Photo: Worcester Cathedral Facebook page*

PUGIN SOCIETY EVENTS

We are very pleased to be able to give you dates for forthcoming events. Further details and fine tuning will be forthcoming in due course, but in the meantime if you have any queries please contact our Events Organiser, Dr Peter Lindfield on puginsocietyevents@outlook.com

- **NOTTINGHAM CATHEDRAL RESTORATION PROJECT AND CITY VISIT - SATURDAY 30TH MAY**

Organised jointly with The Victorian Society, this trip to Nottingham Cathedral will examine the restoration project and includes a city visit.

- **ALTON CASTLE AND ST GILES, CHEADLE - MONDAY 15TH JUNE**

This trip to Staffordshire includes two sites associated with Pugin - his work at Lord Shrewsbury’s Alton Castle and his “gem” of a church, St Giles, Cheadle which he called his "consolation in all afflictions."

- **SHREWSBURY CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL ANNIVERSARY AND RESTORATION PROJECT - WEDNESDAY 15TH JULY**

This restoration is working towards the reordering of the cathedral in sympathy with its 1850s/Pugin roots. Coinciding with the Cathedral's anniversary programming, we've got a special visit to the foundation designed by AWN Pugin for John Talbot, 16th Earl of Shrewsbury, and completed by EW Pugin. Mass at 12.00–1.00 (optional); tour from 1pm–3pm. Cafe on-site (closes 3pm).

- **CARDIFF: WILLIAM BURGESS AND PUGIN & PUGIN - WEDNESDAY 5TH AUGUST**

Visits to Cardiff Castle and Castell Coch (both by William Burgess) and the City's rebuilt Pugin & Pugin Catholic Cathedral of St David's.

- **RETURN TO THE V&A - DATE TBA (AUTUMN)**

Special V&A visit to explore more of AWN Pugin's manuscripts.

NON PUGIN SOCIETY EVENTS

- **ST MARY'S CHURCH, WYMESWOLD, LEICESTERSHIRE - SATURDAY 11TH APRIL**

St Mary's Church, Wymeswold, Leicestershire (see also article by Professor Tingle above). Day conference connected to the repair of St Mary's; a medieval church AWN Pugin restored 1844–46.

- **PUGIN AND EASTNOR CASTLE - MONDAY 29TH JUNE - THURSDAY 2ND JULY**

Tour director Nicholas Merchant is once again offering a very special tour and stay on the dates above in Eastnor Castle, in beautiful Herefordshire. Nicholas writes:

For the second year I am delighted to offer you a chance to stay in one of Britain's great houses, Eastnor Castle. This is chance to stay in the sumptuous surroundings of a 19th century Gothic castle in Herefordshire, the family home of the Hervey-Bathurst family.

The castle was built in the early 19th century for the Lord Chancellor, Lord Somers. He chose as architect, Robert Smirke, later to design the British Museum, but the interiors at Eastnor were later embellished by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin. These splendid interiors will be your home for three days.



Your bedroom



Pugin's Gothic Drawing Room

Here is the Pugin Gothic Drawing room, before whose comforting log fire you will take your pre and post dinner drinks each evening. Dinner will be taken in the Gothic dining room around the gleaming, silver-laden dinner table supervised by the ancestral portraits hanging on the dark blue walls.

Every morning after breakfast we sally forth to visit places of interest in the vicinity - this could be a neighbouring country house or even a specially opened museum. I, Nicholas Merchant, will give short talks to help set the scene for the various destinations. Price £3250 per person to include accommodation, all meals, talks, visits, and all drinks both in the drawing room and at the dinner table.

For all further information, including booking arrangements, please contact Nicholas Merchant (Tour Lecturer) 01423340017 merchantn@btconnect.com www.aspectevents.co.uk

• **ARTS AND CRAFTS LUXURY TOURS**

On the colourful website artsandcraftstours.com you will find details of some very tempting tours organised by this New York-based company. One of them, Stained-Glass Tour in Ireland, June 13-23rd, sounds particularly enticing, actually with a descendant of Pugin and Hardman's employee Thomas Earley taking part, and including much that is relevant to the Society's interests glass-wise. Even if you are not a US resident do take time to look at this site.

PUGIN STAINED GLASS

The Stained Glass Repository is delighted to present a rare opportunity to acquire stained glass panels from the west window at Sherborne Abbey. Designed by Pugin and made by Hardman, these panels were originally installed in 1851. We feel our members would benefit from this opportunity. To learn more and view the available panels, visit <https://stainedglassrepository.uk/about/introducing-the-pugin-panels>



FINIS



In memoriam, Sandra Wedgwood

THE PUGIN SOCIETY E-NEWSLETTER

Editor: Catriona Blaker

Design, layout, and general assistance: Dr Jamie Jacobs

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 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 1st April 2026. We are looking for short contributions (no longer than 800 words) of a relevant nature and NEWS items. After all, this is a newsletter, and it is important to share topical news.

