

Included in this edition:

- *Metalwork Marvels—Altar Crucifix*
- *Pugin's Designs—Baptismal Fonts & Rood Screens (Part 5)*



Welcome to the twenty-first Friends Newsletter. A special thank you to so many of our Friends who have so speedily renewed their 2008/09 membership. The generous donations received will make a significant contribution to restoration works and will be personally acknowledged when the projects to which they have contributed are completed.

As a result of a bequest and a generous donation to the Richmond Catholic Parish we are presently working towards installing a beautiful shrine of Our Lady of Colebrook in St Patrick's Church.

For the shrine a *Vierge à l'oiseau* statue of the Virgin and Child has been carved from French oak and polychromed by nuns of the Atelier Saint Joseph in their monastery at Mougères in the south of France. Their community belongs to a rapidly growing contemplative congregation entitled the Monastères de Bethléem de l'Assomption de la Vierge et de Saint Bruno, established in 1975 and now widely spread throughout Europe, the Middle East, North and South America.

The bequest and generous donation will also provide a hanging lamp and a wrought iron votive candle stand, based on one in Downside Abbey, Somerset, to complement the statue.

We hope to install the new shrine, which will respect the character of this Pugin church and its design values, once the present conservation works, outlined in the last Newsletter, have been completed.

We hope that you enjoy this Newsletter and on behalf of the Pugin Foundation I thank you again for your continuing encouragement and generosity to us.

Every best wish,
Jude Andrews
Administrative Officer

The new Virgin and Child statue for St Patrick's, Colebrook, carved and polychromed by nuns in the south of France (Image: Atelier Saint Joseph, Mougères).

Metalwork Marvels

Each issue we bring you an exquisite example of Pugin's astonishing creativity in reviving the spirit of medieval metalwork.



Altar crucifix:

designed 1846, made by John Hardman & Company, Birmingham, 1846; the cross of electroplated German Silver plates over wooden former with gilt corpus, the foot of electroplated German Silver, decorated with enamel and semi-precious stones; 68.5cm high. Hardman Metal Day Book entry dated 16 July 1846: 'C. Scott Murray Esq. Danesfield. A G.S. plated Altar Cross, set with Stones, & Gilt Figure, etc. £15'. Exhibited: *Victorian Church Art*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, November 1971–January 1972.

Pugin's Designs

In this series we are looking in detail at Pugin's designs for buildings, furnishings and objects. In this issue we continue an examination of his baptismal fonts and his surviving rood screens.

Baptismal Fonts (Part 5)

Although Pugin was involved in conservation works on several English medieval churches for Anglican clergy, he only designed one complete Anglican church, namely, St Lawrence's, Tubney, Berkshire, for his friend Rev. John Rouse Bloxam of Magdalen College, Oxford. A small two-compartment building of the same genre as his Balmain, Berrima, Brisbane and Oatlands churches in Australia, it was built in 1844 by his favoured builder George Myers whose men also carved the baptismal font.

The bowl is octagonal in form with chamfered upper edge and carving, including a dove symbolic of the Holy Spirit, sunk in trefoil-headed arches with foliated spandrels to the cardinal faces. The moulded underside of the



bowl has four foliated bosses alternating with four angel busts. A

*The Tubney baptismal font
(Image: Brian Andrews).*

short octagonal shaft stands on the octagonal base which has a chamfered upper edge and pyramidal stops to its vertical faces, forming a square footprint on the octagonal plinth.

Rood Screens (Part 5)

The great stone jubé screen in St Edmund's College Chapel, Ware, is unquestionably Pugin's most complex and spectacular surviving screen.¹

A new chapel for the college had been discussed with Pugin as early as 1842 and two years later he was commissioned by Dr Thomas Griffiths, Vicar-Apostolic of the London District, to prepare the plans.² The Chapel, whose foundation stone was laid on 28 October 1845, had a Tee-shaped ground plan characteristic of a number of medieval university college chapels in Oxford, the cross-arm of the Tee forming an ante-chapel and its main arm the choir, furnished with stalls ranged along the side walls in antiphonal form and the high altar against the east wall. Pugin's screen would span the west entrance to the choir.

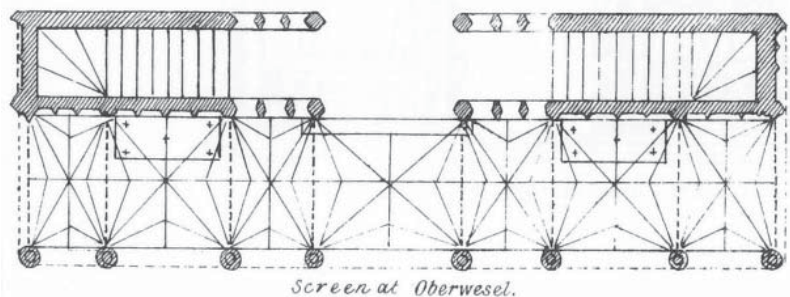
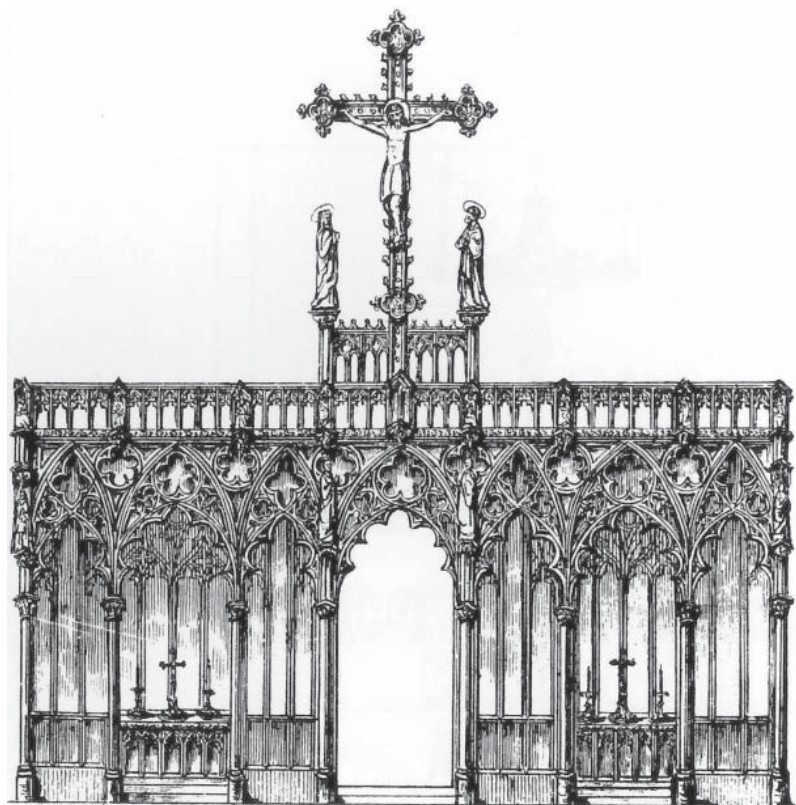
Funds for the construction of the church by George Myers—whose sons were afterwards at the college—and for the furnishings were slow in the raising, and it was not until the autumn of 1849 that it was decided to begin work on the screen.³ The requisite funds for the screen were raised through 'the sale of a valuable ancient Sarum Missal belonging to the College'.⁴ In the event it would take more than a year to finish and erect because, as Myers explained, 'he was anxious on no account to hurry it, as he said it was to be the feature of the church and should be done well.'⁵

Pugin's design for the St Edmund's College screen was a closely considered development of that in the great fourteenth-century Church of Our Lady, Oberwesel, in Germany's Rhineland which he had visited and sketched in August 1845. It appeared as an illustration

in his 1851 Chancel Screens and Rood Lofts treatise where he described it as 'one of the most perfect, as well as the most beautiful screens in Germany'.⁶ Two bays in depth, its front bays consisted of a central opening with three bays on either side having traceried heads, the middle bay being wider than the flanking ones and having an altar against its rear wall. The opening and the six bays were stone vaulted. Behind this the rear bay had two staircases giving access to the rood loft, the full two bays in depth, with an open parapet along its front face.

Pugin's perspective drawing for the Ware screen, which with the exception of the traceried support structure for the rood group was essentially as constructed, shows that he generally followed the rhythm of the Oberwesel bays with their open traceried parapet. But he created a much more complex and interesting space below the loft by vaulting all bays, supporting the internal bay intersections with columns and leaving the upper part of the screen rear wall open to provide vistas to the choir beyond through traceried arches. As for Oberwesel he placed altars at the rear of the middle bays either side of the central opening, but standing them in his case against the blind-traceried lower part of the rear wall. Access to the loft was gained via a winding staircase accessed through a door in the south wall of the screen's south-west bay.

The screen was built of Caen stone except for the shafts, capitals and bases which were of Bolsover stone.⁷ Standing in the loft on an elaborately traceried rectangular frame was the rood group, the cross of which was carved in Riga oak, the figures of Christ, St Mary and St John being in limewood painted



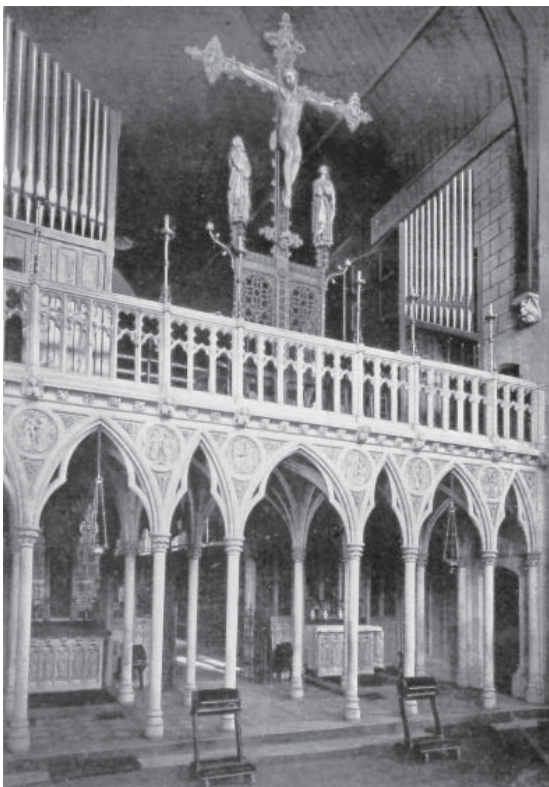
and gilt.⁸ The richly carved rood cross with its supporting frame was exhibited in the much-admired Mediaeval Court at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in the Crystal Palace, London. Pugin had designed all the exhibits in the Court and they had been made by his industrial partners Hardman, Myers, Minton and Crace. The exhibit, but without the figure of Christ, St Mary and St John, can be seen in the left rear of the accompanying illustration of the Mediaeval Court. [See page 6.] Respected Pugin historian and Friend of Pugin Alexandra Wedgwood considers that they 'must have been removed in deference to Protestant sensibilities'.⁹

Pugin's drawing of the screen in the Church of Our Lady, Oberwesel (Source: Pugin's Treatise on Chancel Screens and Rood Lofts, 1851).



*Pugin's perspective drawing of the Ware screen
(Source: St Edmund's College, Ware).*

The screen viewed from the north-west, c.1903 (Source: Bernard Ward, St Edmund's College Chapel, 1903).



The rood group, c.1903 (Source: Bernard Ward, St Edmund's College Chapel, 1903).



A contemporary illustration of the Mediaeval Gallery at the Great Exhibition, 1851 (Digital facsimile of Louis Haghe chromolithograph).

There appear to have been few changes to the screen over the past century and a half. An organ by Bishop of London was built soon after the screen was completed. It was placed in the loft in a divided case, as can be seen in the accompanying 1903 image, and was in place for the opening of the Chapel. A cover for the action between the two halves of the instrument necessitated a slightly raised floor which had the fortunate consequence of enabling more of Pugin's exquisite traceried support frame for the rood group to be seen from the ante-chapel. With the removal of the organ from the loft the rood group was lowered to its present level.

In describing the detail of this glorious screen and its two altars we can do no better than to reproduce the account given in Bernard Ward's 1903 monograph on the Chapel:

'The Screen, which is double, is pierced by seven arches, seven being the mystical number of perfection. In the spandrels between these there are six bas-reliefs in quatrefoils surrounded by circles and flower-subjects. These

The central section of the screen (Image: Brian Andrews).

carvings represent scenes from the life of Our Lady, the Espousals, the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation of Our Lord and the Coronation. The moulding over these is filled at intervals by eight angels and flower-ornaments. Above is a light open parapet of trefoiled lights surmounted by quatrefoils.

At the extremities of the rood on the side facing the ante-chapel are the emblems of





the four evangelists, on the reverse side the four doctors of the Church. Two iron brackets to hold lights are attached to the side of the rood.¹⁰ The six brass standard candlesticks were added to the screen in 1872.

Beneath the screen are two altars. That on the Epistle side,¹¹ known as St. Aloysius's, was originally dedicated to SS. Charles Borromeo and Aloysius conjointly. The carved front of

the altar is divided into five niches each containing an angel. In the window looking into the choir are three lights representing a half-length figure of St. Paul, with St. Lawrence on his right and St. Catherine on his left. This painted glass was inserted when the screen was built. Beneath St. Paul is a light showing St. Aloysius with a small group of boys. This was given about the year 1865.¹²

A view through the screen into the choir, 2004 (Image: Nicholas Callinan).



In the vaulting of the screen before this altar there are six carved bosses, the subjects being—Cross with the Five Wounds; Angel with the Cross on a shield; a Floriated Cross; a Flower-Piece; a Mitred Head; and the letter E entwined with a pallium and surmounted by a mitre.¹³

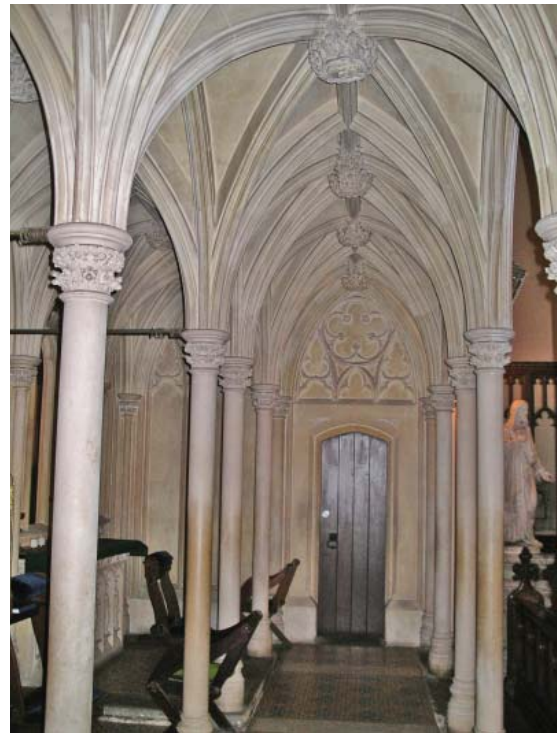
The screen altar on the Gospel side,¹⁴ originally dedicated to St. Peter and the Holy Doctors, is now known as the altar of the Sacred Heart. The altar is similar to that of St. Aloysius, the original painted glass showing St. Peter in half-length, with the head of St. Stephen on his right and St. Agnes on his left, while the centre panel is a full length of Our Lord showing the Sacred Heart, with adoring angels.¹⁵

Cinquefoil light of St Paul in the east face of the Ware screen (Image: Nicholas Callinan).

The subjects of the bosses in the vaulting are two Floriated Crosses, Angel with Cross on a shield, the Crossed Keys, the Tiara, and a Mitred Head. The two remaining bosses in the centre of the screen show the head of Our Lord and the letter M.

The Brass gates were given by Mgr. Fenton in 1898, to replace those in wrought iron which had previously been there. The new gates bear two inscriptions—HÆC EST DOMUS DEI ET PORTA CÆLI [This is the house of God and the door of heaven], and SANCTE EDMUNDE ORA PRO NOBIS [St Edmund pray for us]. The intertwined rings of St. Edmund appear in the decoration.¹⁶

*Detail of the screen vaulting
(Image: Nicholas Callinan).*



Footnotes

¹ A jubé screen was one in which the uppermost part was in the form of a loft from which the Epistle and Gospel were solemnly sung. They were more commonly to be found in cathedrals and larger churches. For a detailed treatment of their origins and usage see A. Welby Pugin, *A Treatise on Chancel Screens and Rood Lofts, Their Antiquity, Use and Symbolic Signification*, Charles Dolman, London, 1851, pp. 17–21. A re-edition by Gracewing Publishing with an introduction by Roderick O'Donnell was published in 2005.

² Bernard Ward, *St. Edmund's College Chapel: An Account, Historical and Descriptive, Written on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Opening*, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1903, p. 31. Before the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850 English bishops had the title of Vicar-Apostolic.

³ *ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Pugin, *Chancel Screens*, op. cit., p. 37.

⁷ Ward, op. cit., p. 80. Caen stone is a whitish-cream oolitic limestone quarried in Normandy. Bolsover Moor stone is a yellow-brown magnesian limestone quarried in Derbyshire.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Alexandra Wedgwood, 'The Mediaeval Court', in Paul Atterbury & Clive Wainwright (eds), *Pugin: A Gothic Passion*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1994, p. 239.

¹⁰ These now appear to be made of brass.

¹¹ The right side as seen facing the high altar.

¹² The St Aloysius light has been removed.

¹³ A pallium is a strip of white woollen material marked with five black crosses. It is conferred by the Pope on archbishops of metropolitan sees and is worn over the chasuble.

¹⁴ The left side as seen facing the high altar.

¹⁵ The Sacred Heart light has also been removed.

¹⁶ Ward, op. cit., pp. 80–3.

New Friends of Pugin

We welcome:

Ms Julia Farrell

Mr Desmond and Mrs Margaret Hiscutt

Mr Michael Kent

Battery Point, Tasmania

Howth, Tasmania

Sandy Bay, Tasmania

Our thanks to

Ms Jude Andrews

Col. Nell Espie

Ms Julia Farrell

Mr Derek and Mrs Mary Loré

Mrs Lynette Munnings

Hon. Graham and Mrs Anne Prior

Rev. Donald Richardson

Mr Don and Mrs Cath Sponberg

Lady Alexandra Wedgwood

for their kind donations.