PUGIN FOUNDATION
FRIENDS OF PUGIN

Newsletter

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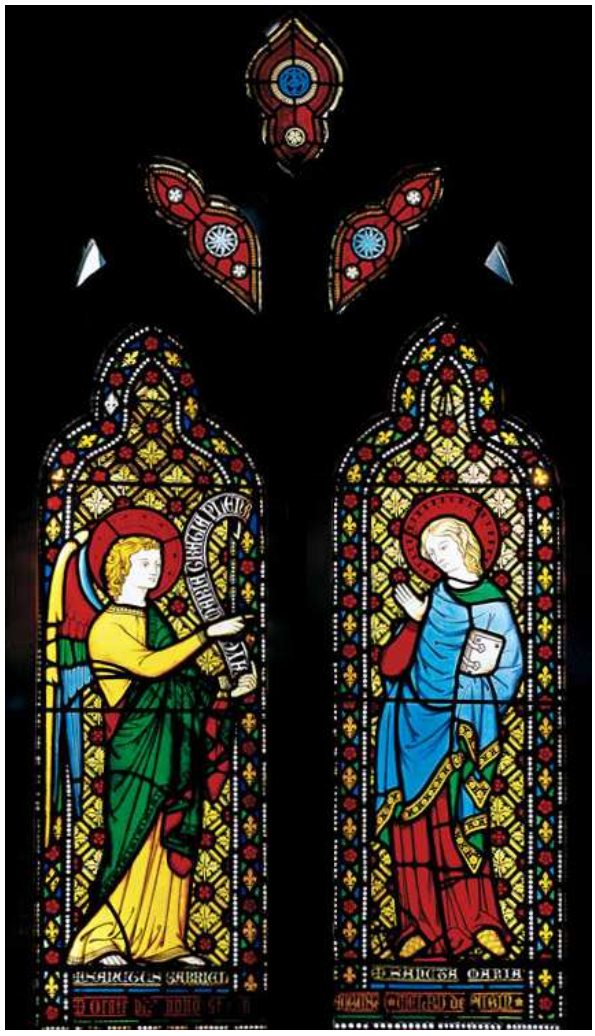
Included in this edition:

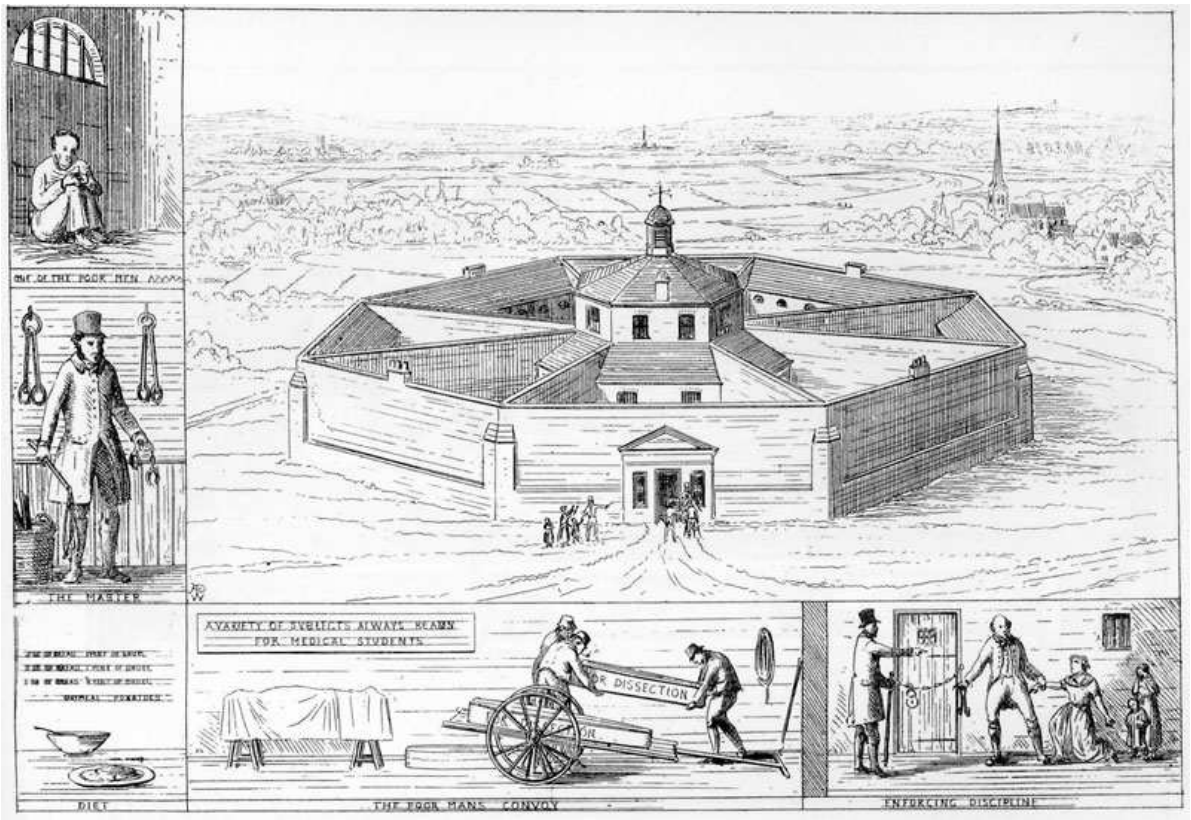
Welcome to the twenty-ninth Friends Newsletter.

On Sunday 8 March Executive Officer Brian Andrews is giving an illustrated talk for the Australian Catholic Historical Society in St Mary's Cathedral School Hall, Sydney, at 2.30pm. The topic is *Tasmania's Catholic Cultural Heritage*. Sydney and NSW Friends of Pugin may like the opportunity to attend.

The efforts of Tasmania's first Catholic Bishop, Robert William Willson, in assisting Irish convict women in Tasmania was recently acknowledged during a tree planting ceremony at the site of the Cascades Women's Prison in South Hobart. The Governor General of Australia, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce, planted a flowering cherry tree in memory of the thousands of women and children who passed through the prison. During the speeches Mr Peter Rae acknowledged Archbishop Adrian Doyle, a Patron of the Pugin Foundation, who was in attendance, and recognised the efforts of Bishop Willson who was instrumental in achieving the abolition of particularly inhumane methods of convict treatment and punishment. He brought about a number of significant changes to the appalling conditions under which the women were imprisoned, including stopping the practice of shaving the female prisoners' heads. Bishop Willson was also influential in having the infamous Norfolk Island penal establishment closed and he had a major impact on the care of the mentally ill in the then Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.



Pugin's gift to his close friend Bishop Willson, the 1847 Annunciation window in St Joseph's Church, Hobart (Image: Private collection)



'Modern Poor House', one of a pair of illustrations of 'Contrasted Residences for the Poor' in A. Welby Pugin, Contrasts: or, A Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages, and Corresponding Buildings of the Present Day; Shewing the Present Decay of Taste*, 2nd edn, Charles Dolman, London, 1841.*

Pugin's illustration of a contemporary poor house in his controversial first major book *Contrasts*, with its depiction of suffering, brutal punishment and a panopticon building, has striking parallels with what Bishop Willson found in Tasmania.

The eminent British Historian Phillip Hughes considered that Bishop Willson was 'undoubtedly a great man, that rare figure indeed in our modern (Catholic) history, who has exercised a real influence upon the public social development of his time'. Hughes also noted that Willson was the striking exception to Cardinal Manning's judgement that 'in all the great English humanitarian activity of the early nineteenth century there was no Catholic name'.

There is a splendid stained glass window in Hobart, an 1847 gift from Pugin to Bishop Willson. Probably intended for Willson's projected cathedral in Hobart, it was installed in his pro-cathedral St Joseph's in 1856. A unique testimony to the close bond between the two men it bears an entreaty not to be found in any other of Pugin's window designs: '*Orate pro bono statu Augusti Welby de Pugin*' (Pray for the good estate of Augustus Welby de Pugin).

Jude Andrews
Administrative Officer

Friends of Pugin

We welcome back:

Fr Paul O'Donnell *Camperdown, NSW*

Metalwork Marvels

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

Processional Cross: designed c.1838–9, made by John Hardman & Company, Birmingham, c.1840; brass with blue enamel; 209.5cm high, 32.5cm wide. The crucifix proper is a cast copy of a circa 16th century original now in Oscott College, Birmingham. The remainder, including the attendant figures of St Mary and St John, was designed by Pugin to match the crucifix. At least nine were produced between 1839 and 1852, with red or black or no enamel.

Pugin's Designs

In this series we are looking in detail at Pugin's designs for buildings, furnishings and objects. We continue our examination of his baptismal fonts.

Baptismal Fonts (Part 11)

Pugin's magnificent font in his own St Augustine's, Ramsgate, which we described in our October 2008 Newsletter, is only rivalled in splendour by that which he designed for the renowned St Giles', Cheadle, a building he described as being in the style 'which prevailed during the reigns of the Edwards, commonly called decorated; and no labour or expense has been spared to render it, as far as possible, a perfect revival of the art of that glorious period'.[1]

The Cheadle baptistery (Image: Nicholas Callinan)

We can do no better in describing this polychromed and gilded masterpiece and its baptistery than to use Pugin's own words, quoted by the editor of *Dolman's Magazine* in an account of the consecration and opening of the church, which took place on 31 August and 1 September 1846:

> *The western bay of the south aisle is divided off by carved oak screens, supported by brass shafts. The font, which is of alabaster, is fixed in the centre of this inclosure, and octagonal in form; four monsters, or dragons, are represented, crushed, under the pedestal, emblematic of sin destroyed by the sacrament of Baptism. The bowl is surrounded by quatrefoils, containing emblems of the four Evangelists, and angels, bearing crowns. The cover is framed of oak, and forms a central canopy, supported by eight flying buttresses and pinnacles, and surmounted by a finial, to which chains are attached, for the convenient raising and lowering of the same. The baptistery window is divided into three lights; in the centre, an image of St. John the Baptist, holding the lamb; above, the Holy Spirit descending, surrounded by rays and seven stars. The side lights are divided into eight floriated quatrefoils, containing representations of the virtues, such as:— Humility, Charity, Mercy, Modesty, &c., as females, overcoming contrary vices under the form of animals.*[2]

Detail of the font proper (Image: Nicholas Callinan)

[1] *Lord Shrewsbury's New Church of St. Giles, in Staffordshire: being a description of the edifice, and an account of the Consecration and Opening. By the editor of Dolman's Magazine.* Charles Dolman, London, 1846, p. 6.

[2] ibid., p. 9.

Pugin's Australian Built Heritage

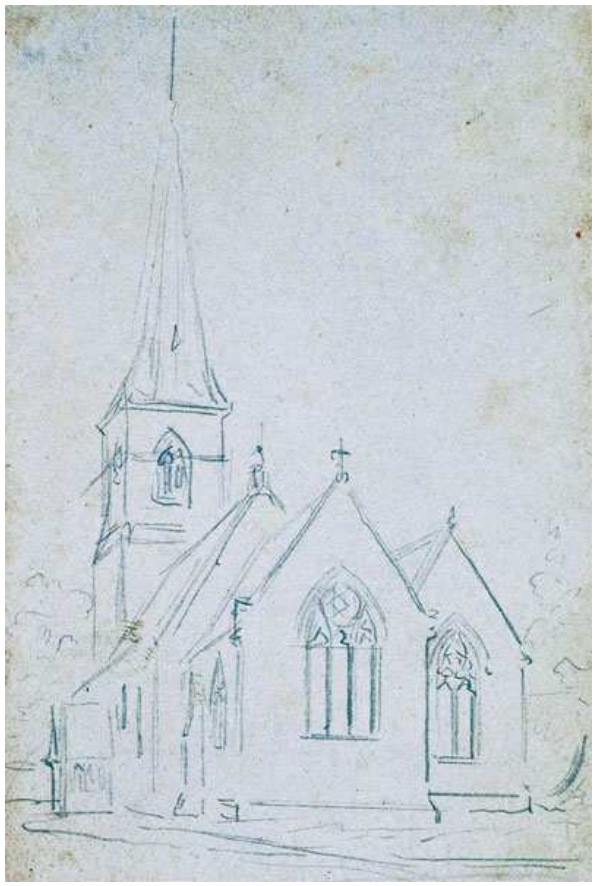
This series deals in some detail with the surviving Australian buildings to Pugin's designs, describing their construction history and analysing them, including later additions and modifications. In this issue we continue our examination of Australia's oldest continuously used Catholic church, St John the Evangelist's, Richmond, Tasmania. Additions derived from one of Pugin's three 1843 designs for Bishop Robert William Willson were made to it in 1859.

St John the Evangelist's, Richmond (Part 2)

The Pugin additions

By 1858, Goodridge's Gothick St John's, Richmond, must have seemed decidedly unfashionable to its pastor Fr William Dunne. Dunne had just erected the charming St Patrick's, Colebrook, from Pugin's second church model, so the as-yet unused third model would have presented a potentially useful source of components to convert the existing building into one that was more ecclesiologically appropriate, with a chancel, a sacristy, a tower and a spire.[3]

The model used for extensions to St John's, Richmond, was—like the other two—a scholarly and completely convincing, yet totally original, evocation of a small English medieval village church. The problem in knowing the composition and details of this, the largest of the three church designs provided as models to Bishop Willson, is purely because only parts of it were used as a basis for the extensions. However, there is a possible source of information. Listed among Pugin's unidentified designs in Alexandra Wedgwood's valuable catalogue of the Pugin family works in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London,[4] is a modest sketch which may possibly be his initial thoughts for this building.



A possible early design sketch for Pugin's third church model (#640 in Alexandra Wedgwood, A.W.N. Pugin and the Pugin Family. *Catalogues of Architectural Drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1985)*

It consists of a nave, two-bay chancel, north aisle, north chapel, south porch and a west tower with broach spire. The building appears to be Early English with a Decorated chancel, an arrangement widely applied to Pugin's Australian designs, combining ease of construction with propriety. The unbuttressed chancel east wall together with the form of its kneelers, as well as the form of the tower upper stages and plain broach spire, closely approximate the arrangement at Richmond. Pugin had used a similar form for the tower upper stages and broach spire—particularly the battered transition to the belfry stage—in his 1842 design

[3] The first of Pugin's church models was used to construct St Paul's, Oatlands (1850–51).

[4] Alexandra Wedgwood, *A.W.N. Pugin and the Pugin Family*. Catalogues of Architectural Drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1985, p. 246.

for St John the Evangelist's, Kirkham. The astringency of the St Mary's, Brewood, tower and spire design, also of 1842, likewise prefigured the third church model approach.

Detail of the steeple, St John the Evangelist's, Kirkham (Image: Brian Andrews)

It needs to be stressed, however, that the above possible source is little better than speculation. Nevertheless, elements of it do, as we have seen, approximate details of the parts of the third model that were actually constructed.

By analogy with the other two church models, there would have been a rood screen across the chancel arch. There was a west door for ceremonial usage, such as processions or the visit of a bishop, and the chancel would have been fitted with sedilia and a piscina in the south wall and an Easter sepulchre in the north wall opposite the sedilia.[5] It was thus liturgically furnished, as was Pugin's normal practice, for the Use of Sarum, an English variant in non-essentials—one of a host of such variants—of the Roman Rite that prevailed throughout late medieval Western Christendom.

The Decorated windows in the chancel were the most elaborately developed elements in the building's structure, and that for reasons of propriety. In *True Principles* Pugin had defined propriety as an essential attribute of a building, whereby '*the external and internal appearance of an edifice should be illustrative of, and in accordance with, the purpose for which it is destined*'.[6] For churches this meant that the chancel should be the most highly elaborated part of the building because it was, in Pugin's view, 'the place of sacrifice, the most sacred part of the edifice'.[7]

Abutting the centre of the nave west wall was a three-stage tower surmounted by an elegant broach spire, the belfry stage pierced on all sides by louvred two-light Early English plate tracery openings. In his 1841 *Dublin Review* article Pugin had stated: 'A church tower is a beacon to direct the faithful to the house of God. … Let no one imagine that a tower is a superfluous expense, it forms an essential part of the building, and should always be provided in the plan of a parochial church. A tower, to be complete, should be terminated by a spire …'[8]

The sedilia were simple in form, and designed to be made from wood, as for the two other model churches. Medieval English sedilia were either stepped or level (as in the case of Richmond), the priest always occupying the easternmost seat with the deacon and sub-deacon to his west, according to the Use of Sarum. In the Roman Rite the priest occupied the central seat, requiring sedilia to be level so that the priest would not be seated lower than the deacon. Pugin designed sedilia of both types, however, in his Australian church designs the sedilia were always level, their ambiguity making them suitable for either the Roman Rite or the Use of Sarum.

The extent to which Pugin simplified his model church furnishings so as to put their fabrication within the reach of antipodean artisans with limited skills is dramatically illustrated by comparing the

[5] Again, the presence of an Easter sepulchre is by analogy with the evidence presented in St Paul's, Oatlands, the first church to be built from a model.

[6] Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, John Weale, London, 1841, p. 50.
[7] [A. Welby Pugin], 'On the Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England', *Dublin Review*, vol. X, May 1841, p. 330.
[8] ibid., p. 317.

Richmond sedilia with his 1839 wooden sedilia, of similar overall form, in St Mary's, Derby.

The sedilia (Image: Brian Andrews)

The piscina, to the east of the sedilia, would be copied from one of the two stone exemplar piscinas carved by George Myers' men and brought out with the church models by Bishop Willson. In fact, the same exemplar as had been copied for St Patrick's, Colebrook, was again used at Richmond.

The piscina (Image: Brian Andrews

The sedilia, St Mary's, Derby (Image: Brian Andrews)

There would have undoubtedly been a holy water stoup in the porch west wall. Being situated in the porch and thus outside the church proper it would have conformed to Pugin's 1841 *Dublin Review* exposition. In this respect he had stated:

> *Holy water stoups were generally hollowed out of the porch walls, and frequently built in niches on either side of the external arch, as at Bury St. Edmund's; all stoups for hallowed water should be placed outside [Pugin's emphasis] the building.*[9]

There was another stoup in the tower base wall inner face for the use of those entering via the west door on ceremonial occasions. **To be continued.**

[9] ibid., p. 320.