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Welcome to the thirtieth Friends Newsletter.

Our Executive Officer Brian Andrews' well-attended lecture entitled 'Tasmania's Catholic Cultural Heritage', the first in the Australian Catholic Historical Society's 2009 series, was delivered on Sunday 8 March in Sydney. It was wonderful that Sydney Friends of Pugin Daniel Hill, Fr Paul O'Donnell and Don Spongberg could attend. Michael Sternbeck, Geoffrey Britton and Dr David Daintree sent their apologies. Brian's topic ranged in time from a c.1200 Norman baptismal font to a 1931 gold monstrance, one of the last works by the noted Tasmanian Arts and Crafts architect and designer Alan Walker, but not unexpectedly the major contribution was from Pugin.

The fragility of our Australian Pugin heritage, and the consequent urgent need to identify and preserve it, has recently been highlighted by the actions of one of our Friends of Pugin. He was given a long disused monstrance by a Sydney priest who was about to dispose of it. Suspecting that it was a Pugin design, the Friend sought the advice of our Executive Officer who confirmed that it is indeed so, being an important variant of one exhibited in the 2002–03 Australian national travelling exhibition *Creating a Gothic Paradise: Pugin at the Antipodes*.



At right, the Pugin monstrance recently identified as such by Brian Andrews and saved from the scrap heap by one of our Friends of Pugin (Image: Private collection)

The monstrance lacks its surmounting cross and the lunette, and a small part of the foliated cresting has been broken off but not lost. Whereas the exhibited monstrance was of gilt base metal, this one is part silver and part plated base metal, and its foot is more elaborate, being decorated both with engraving and repoussé work. Our Friend was informed that the monstrance originally had a glory of rays backing the cresting. This is entirely in keeping with Pugin's original design drawing which shows the rays as an option. Indeed, an 1852 order by Bishop Goold of Melbourne for six such monstrances included versions without rays, with rays, set with eight stones, and with a plain foot.

The salvaged discarded monstrance is quite capable of being fully restored because we have a copy of the design drawing, and we sincerely hope that one day it might be.

We trust that you will enjoy this Newsletter and we wish you Easter blessings.

Jude Andrews
Administrative Officer

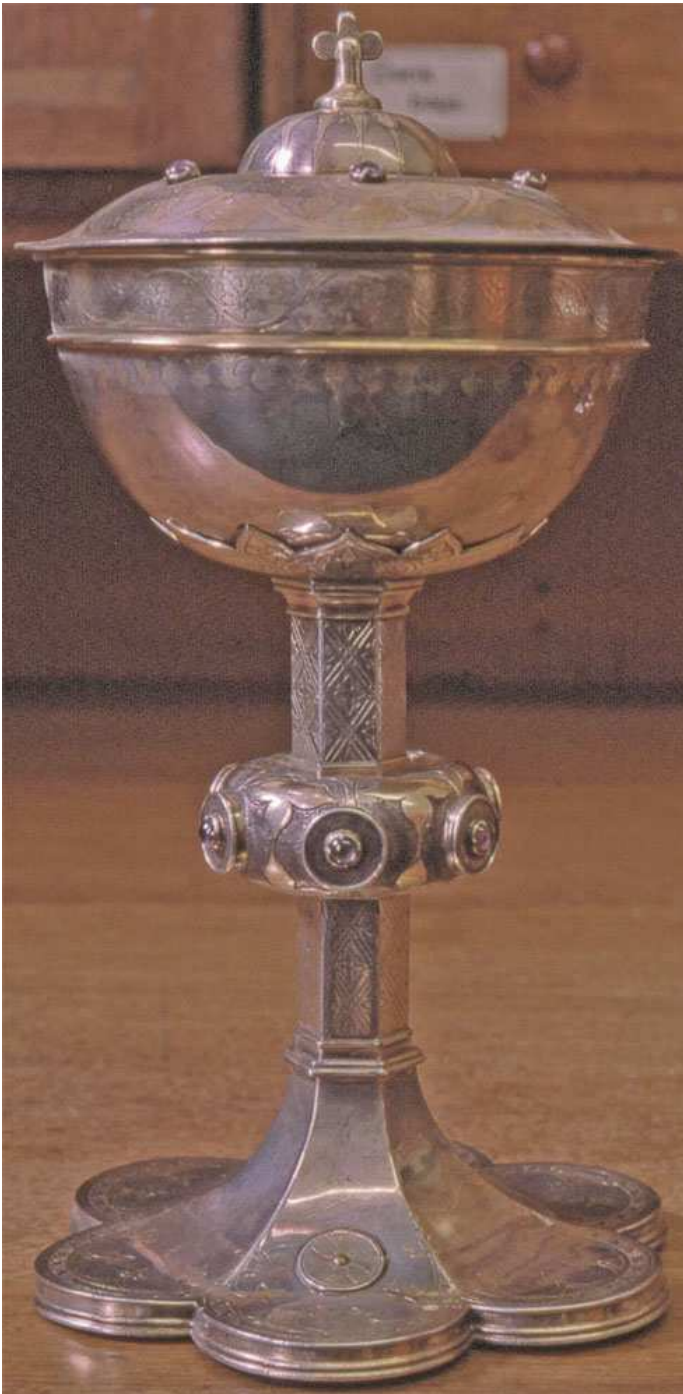


At left, Pugin's c.1845–46 monstrance design drawing (Image: Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery); above, Bishop Goold's monstrance, one of six purchased by him from Hardmans for the Diocese of Melbourne on 13 October 1852 (Image: Private collection)

Metalwork Marvels

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

Ciborium: designed c.1844, made by John Hardman & Company, Birmingham, 1844–5; maker's mark of Hardman and Iliffe (H&I); silver, parcel-gilt, the lid and knot decorated with cabochon amethysts; 29.0cm high, 15.0cm dia. lid, 15.9cm across lobes of sexfoil base.





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 12)

In his first of two articles for the *Dublin Review* 'On the Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England' Pugin gave a number of examples of his church designs in which screens and roods were 'either completed or in course of erection'.¹ One of the buildings was St Mary's, Dudley, which he described as 'a small, simple, but complete, church lately erected ...'² He gave a plan of the church, describing it and listing the contents of the sacristy in a footnote which concluded with the following: 'The whole cost of this building, including all the abovementioned ornaments, vestments, stained glass, architect's charges, and every expense, was 3165£, which fully proves for how moderate a sum a real Catholic church may be erected, if the funds are judiciously employed.'³

The baptismal font in St Mary's is a good example of Pugin's judicious employment of the funds. Lacking nothing in bulk or proportions its simple forms are achieved with minimal carved detail. The plain octagonal bowl has a chamfered upper edge, and it once had the usual wooden lid. There is a moulded transition to a simple octagonal shaft and the octagonal base has a substantial chamfer similar to that on Bishop Willson's exemplar font in St John the Evangelist's Church, Richmond, Tasmania.



The baptismal font, St Mary's, Dudley (Image: Brian Andrews)

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.

¹ [A. Welby Pugin], 'On the Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England', *Dublin Review*, vol. X, February 1841, p. 327.

² *ibid.*, p. 329.

³ *ibid.*, p. 330.



St John the Evangelist's, Richmond (Part 3)

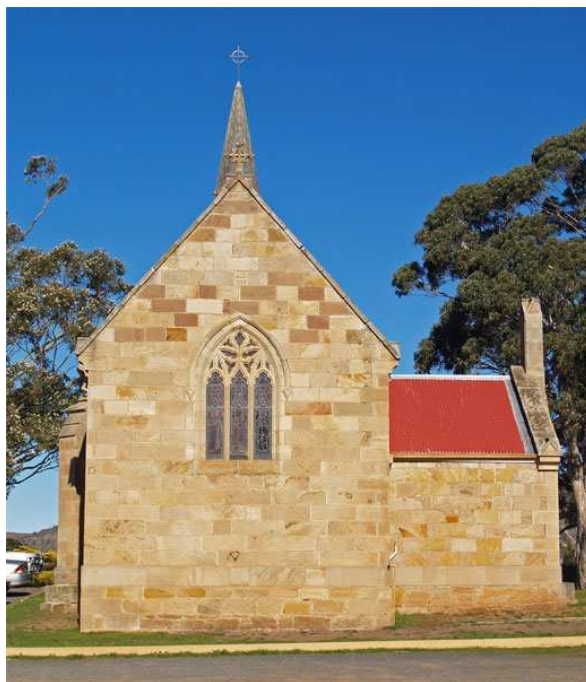
Construction

The problem in using Pugin's model three design for the extensions was that it was for a church substantially larger than St John's. The Hobart architect Frederick Thomas (1817–1885), who had been given custody of the models by Bishop Willson and had drawn up plans from them, was charged with adapting parts of the model.

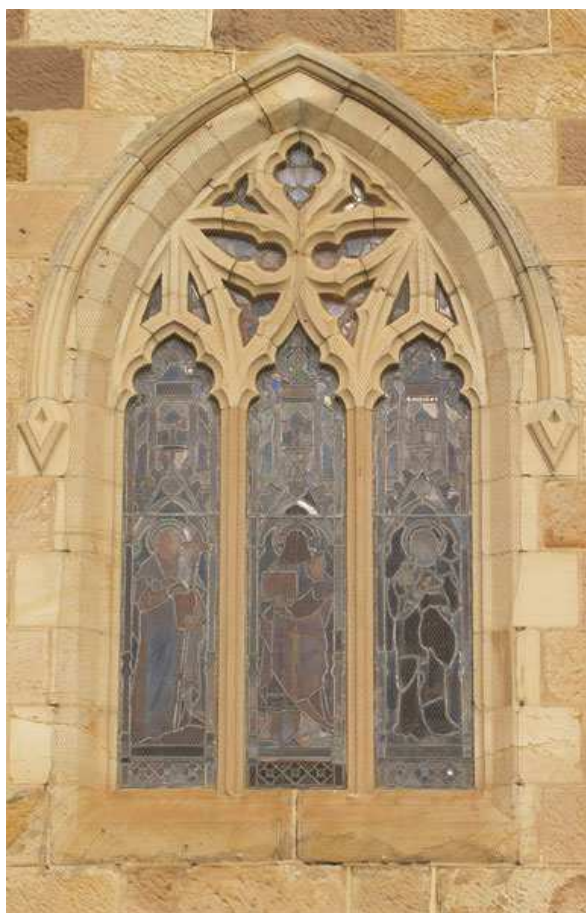
Thomas had been sentenced to transportation to New South Wales in 1834 for swindling. He was further sentenced in 1842 to fifteen years in a penal settlement for stealing and arrived in Hobart Town in February 1843. While still on probation he was assigned as an unqualified draftsman and clerk to the Public Works Department on 1 July 1847, then was later promoted to Senior Draftsman and eventually Clerk of Works. He evidently had the right to private practice, for Willson entrusted Pugin's models to him.⁴

That Thomas was no Pugin is evident from the results. Goodridge's church, with new diagonal buttressing to the corners, was retained as the nave. Thomas tacked on a single-bay chancel that was a reduced-scale version of that on the model. Because it was smaller, there was no room for Pugin's three-light east window, so Thomas took what appears to have been the model's transitional Flowing Decorated/Perpendicular chancel south-east window and built it into the chancel east wall. The tracery in this window has some affinity with that in the chancel east wall of Pugin's Jesus Chapel, Pontefract, West Yorkshire.

The ungainly trussed rafter roof for the chancel, with collar ties just above the wall plate level, was almost certainly a Thomas touch. Certainly his was the awkward four-centred chancel arch, necessary because, for the width of the opening, a normal two-centred arch as in the model would have risen above the height of the nave east wall.



The east elevation with Thomas' reduced-scale chancel and sacristy derived from Pugin's model three design; below, the chancel east window (Images: Brian Andrews)



⁴ Thomas' biographical details are largely drawn from E. Graeme Robertson, *Early Buildings of Southern Tasmania*, 2 vols, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1970, vol. 1, p. 19.

Fitting a reduced-size rood screen extracted from the model across the chancel arch proved beyond Thomas's competence and he substituted conventional communion rails.⁵ He did, however, install sedilia and a piscina in the chancel south wall and added what is almost certainly a scaled-down version of the model three sacristy against the chancel north wall.

It is interesting to note that, as for the other two Pugin designs for Bishop Willson, the sacristy had—uncharacteristically—no external door. This may perhaps be due to the generally bleak picture of the state of Tasmanian society that had been conveyed to Willson after his nomination as first Bishop of Hobart Town, likely by Fr (later Bishop) William Bernard Ullathorne OSB who had experience of Tasmania dating from the 1830s.

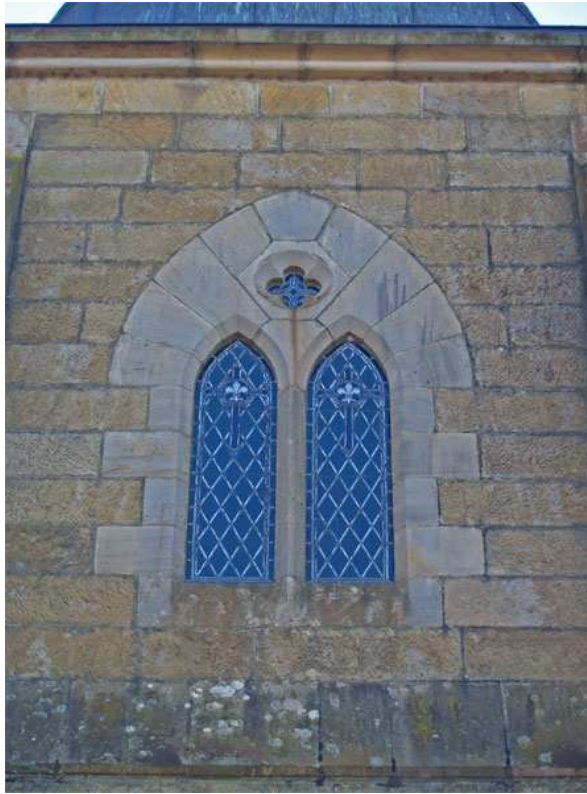


⁵ Henry Hunter was placing rood screens in his Tasmanian churches, for example, St John's, Glenorchy, at exactly the same time, so leaving out the rood screen in Richmond was not a case of ecclesiological preference on Fr Dunne's part. He had completed St Patrick's, Colebrook, including a rood screen, just one year earlier. It is conceivable that the details of Thomas' communion rails came from the bottom section of the model three rood screen.

Goodridge's nave roof had, as previously mentioned, a shallower pitch than later Gothic Revival buildings. In implementing a reduced version of the third model chancel Thomas could not make its roof pitch as steep as the model's because it would have resulted in the chancel side walls being too low. His compromise is evident in the differing slopes of the nave and chancel roofs. On the eastern apex of both roofs he placed copies of exemplar gable crosses as he had done for St Paul's, Oatlands. The nave gable saddle stones, copings, kneelers and skew corbel stones were also copied from the model.



At left, the chancel east gable cross, copied from a stone exemplar; at right, the nave east gable cross, also copied from exemplar stonework. Note the steeper slope of the chancel roof, a compromise by Thomas between the chancel roof slope on Pugin's model and the shallow pitch of Goodridge's Gothick nave roof (Images: Brian Andrews)



A belfry light on Pugin's model three which Thomas inserted into the upper stage of his truncated tower (Image: Brian Andrews)

The tower and spire presented an even greater challenge. Thomas crudely solved the problem of the disparity in size by simply guillotining the belfry stage and shortening the lowest one, but in his ignorance left the spire at its original size. The result was comical to say the least, with a massive spire perched like a dunce's cap on the squat vestigial tower, whose lowest buttress set-offs were virtually at ground level. He inserted one of the two-light plate tracery lights from the omitted belfry stage into the west face of the tower upper stage.

These illiterate efforts of Thomas, exemplified by the bizarre sui generis dripstone terminations to the chancel window and west door must surely have confirmed Willson in his 1854 choice of the young Henry Hunter to design his future churches.

Pugin never made his spires longer than their supporting towers. Sometimes they were shorter, but in his classic steeples the spire was the same height as the tower. Given the measured height of the Richmond tower as truncated by Thomas and the proportions of the tower and spire, measured from old photographs, it is possible to calculate the



An early image of the enlarged church with its 'dunce's cap' spire (Image: Richmond Parish)

height of the Thomas steeple and also the original Pugin steeple on model three, assuming it was of classic proportions.⁶ They are as follows:

Thomas steeple	84 ft	25.6 m
Pugin model three steeple	110 ft	33.5 m

Thomas had reduced Pugin's tower height by 26 ft (7.9 metres) to produce his steeple with its 'dunce's cap'.

On the tower inner face Thomas built an opening, again with an awkward four-centre arch like the chancel arch, so as to make the tower upper stage into a gallery, projecting a wooden extension into the nave.

What a transformation of a Pugin design! Pugin had a well-documented detestation of galleries in churches. Writing to his patron the Earl of Shrewsbury concerning the latter's suggestion to place a gallery in his masterpiece St Giles', Cheadle, he exclaimed: 'Mercy I entreat. Pray my dear Lord Shrewsbury do not mar this great & good work by such a Protestantism as a west gallery. All the sublime effect of the tower arch will be lost.'⁷

On 15 February 1859 the considerably enlarged church was re-opened with High Mass celebrated by Bishop Willson. **To be continued.**



Thomas' tower gallery with Goodridge's original nave west door beneath it (Image: Brian Andrews)

⁶ The calculated figure for the Pugin steeple is its minimum height. If the tower was higher than the spire then the overall steeple height would have been greater. However, all indications are that the model three steeple would have had classic proportions.

⁷ Pugin to Shrewsbury, 9 March 1842, in Margaret Belcher, *The Collected letters of A.W.N. Pugin*, vol. 1: 1830 to 1842, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, pp. 328–9.