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Welcome to the thirty-eighth Friends Newsletter.

We have some excellent news about Pugin's Church of St Francis Xavier, Berrima.

In May of this year the Moss Vale, NSW, Parish community applied for funding for the much-needed conservation and other works on St Francis Xavier's Church and its grounds through the Australian Government's Jobs Funding initiative. The proposed works were developed from a Conservation Management Plan for the church, prepared in 2006 by our Executive Officer Brian Andrews.

He subsequently submitted a successful bid to have the building entered in the NSW Heritage Register.

A sum of \$116,820 was sought under the scheme, and we are delighted to say that the full amount has been approved. Works are underway with Brian assisting as honorary Heritage Adviser.

With kind regards,

[Jude Andrews](#)
Administrative Officer.



St Francis Xavier's, Berrima (Image: Ian Stapleton)

Metalwork Marvels

We bring you the twentieth and final exquisite instalment of Pugin's astonishing creativity in reviving the spirit of medieval metalwork. Here are three examples of his thuribles, ranging from the complex to the unadorned. All have the architectural detail vocabulary characteristic of medieval metalwork, a quality so well understood and applied by Pugin.





Pugin's Designs

Sedilia (Part 4)

Most of Pugin's sedilia were constructed in stone as integral parts of the walls in which they were situated.¹ However, a number were designed as free-standing wooden furnishings.

There was medieval precedent for such sedilia, as Pugin well knew, the most famous being those in Westminster Abbey.



The Westminster Abbey sedilia

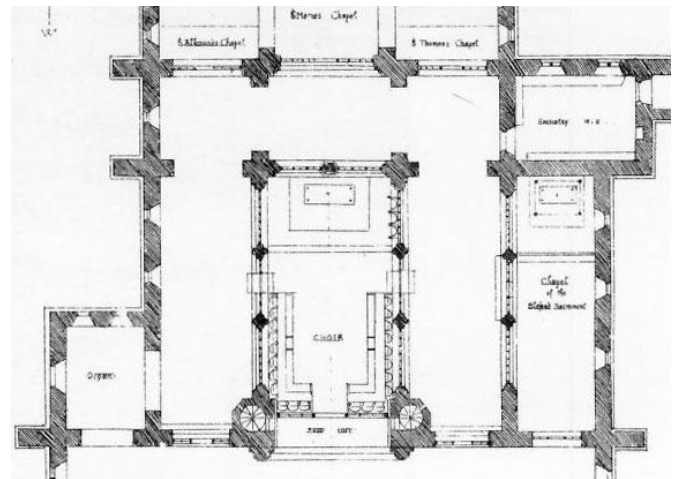
Pugin did indeed use these sedilia as a basis for several of his own designs. A description of St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, in the *Tablet* for 19 June 1841, likely written by Pugin, states that the sedilia were copied from those in Westminster Abbey.²

A later set of Pugin's sedilia were also based on the same source. In his 1842 description of St Barnabas' Church (later Cathedral), Nottingham, he stated:

On the epistle side of the altar will be fixed the sedilia, framed and carved in wood, similar in design to those still remaining in

the choir of Westminster, and vulgarly called King Sebert's tomb.³

The thinking behind such use here is evident because the chancel of St Barnabas' was aisled and framed by an open arcade of columns, preventing a wall-based design. A detail of the ground plan shows the sedilia set against a wooden parclose screen.⁴



A detail of the St Barnabas', Nottingham, ground plan showing the wooden sedilia against the south side of the chancel (Source: 'Present State', op. cit.)

It is to be regretted that the Nottingham chancel sedilia have long since been removed. However, a photograph of the refurbished and re-decorated chancel, dating from the early 1930s, allows us the merest glimpse of part of the sedilia, captured against the right-hand edge of the image. This sliver of the photo is reproduced overleaf. It clearly confirms Pugin's stated basis for his design.

St Barnabas' Cathedral is of added interest in this regard because it has a second set of sedilia in the Lady Chapel. This chapel is located to the east of the chancel against the ambulatory and on the cathedral's central axis.

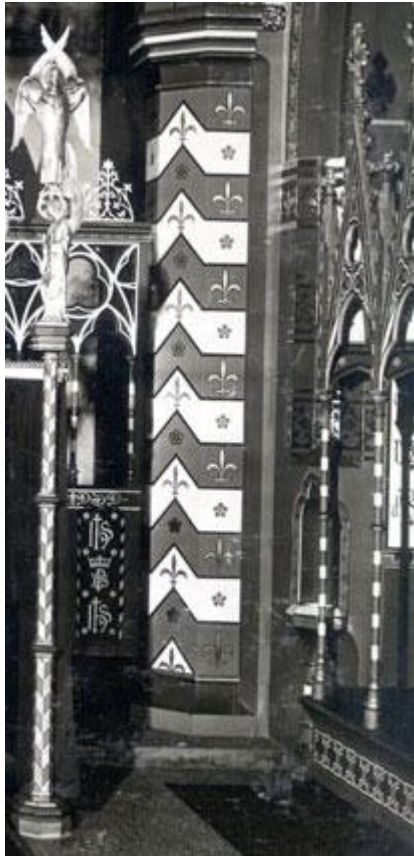
Because the south wall of the Lady Chapel is solid masonry it houses stone sedilia. They are in the Early English style in keeping with the building's architecture and all three seats are on the one level.

¹ Notable exceptions to the wall-based sedilia which were not constructed from stone were the wooden ones in his Tasmanian buildings, designed as such to obviate stone-cutting problems.

² 'St Chad's, Birmingham', *Tablet*, no. 58, 19 June 1841, pp. 397–8, in Margaret Belcher, A.W.N. Pugin: An annotated critical bibliography, Mansell Publishing Ltd, London, 1987, p. 198. Belcher regards Pugin as the likely author.

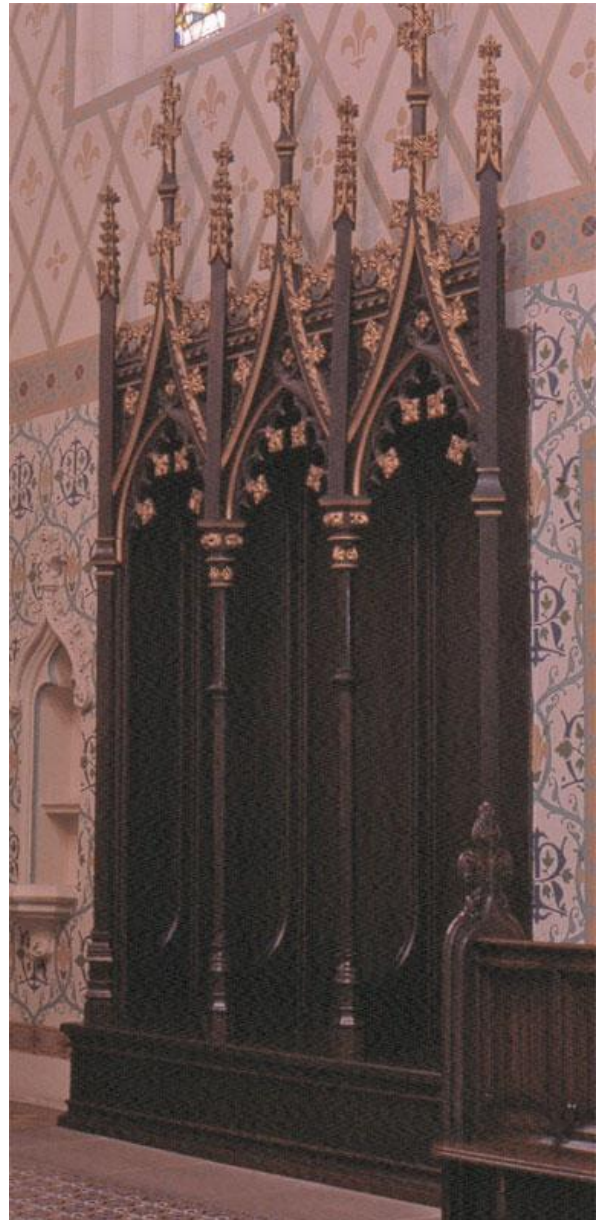
³ [A. Welby Pugin], 'On the Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England', *Dublin Review*, vol. XII, February 1842, p. 89.

⁴ *ibid.*

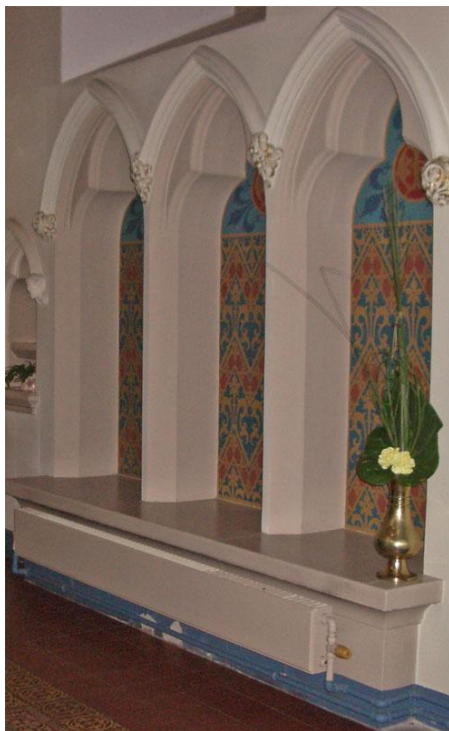


A tantalizing glimpse of part of the St Barnabas' Cathedral sedilia, early 1930s (Source: Nottingham Diocesan Archives)

A fine early set of partially gilded wooden sedilia remains in Pugin's St Mary's, Derby. A gift from Pugin himself,⁵ they stand against the south wall of the apsidally-terminated chancel and are in an elegant Flowing Decorated idiom. The building itself is in the Perpendicular style and was dedicated on 9 October 1839.



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



The Nottingham Lady Chapel sedilia (Image: Brian Andrews)

⁵ W.J. Lilley, *St Mary's Church, Derby*, Derby, 1989, p. 7.

Pugin and Medieval Antiquities

Sieneese Chalice (Part 3)

In our Newsletters for July and August 2009 we considered Sieneese chalices of a type described by Charles Oman as ‘made of a cheaper style’.⁶ We conclude our examination of Pugin’s involvement with Sieneese chalices by considering another repaired and brought back into service, but one of a higher quality. This one, for St Chad’s Cathedral, Birmingham, would be the design inspiration for a number of splendid Pugin chalices manufactured by Hardmans.



The Birmingham chalice (Image: Nicholas Callinan)

Typically, these higher grade chalices had more extensive enamelling to the calyx, stem, knot, lower collet and foot, the enamelled plaques on the foot set within elaborate raised work. For the Birmingham example Pugin designed a new bowl and new champlevé enamel sexfoil plaques for the knot bosses and the foot. The original enamel to the calyx, stem and foot, including the naïve cherubs was retained.



Birmingham chalice detail (Image: Nicholas Callinan)

Pugin designed his own version of this chalice with substantially similar form and detail. One major difference was the substitution of engraved detail for enamelled work on the calyx and stem. He also omitted the band of enamelled lettering from the moulded collet at the lower end of the stem.

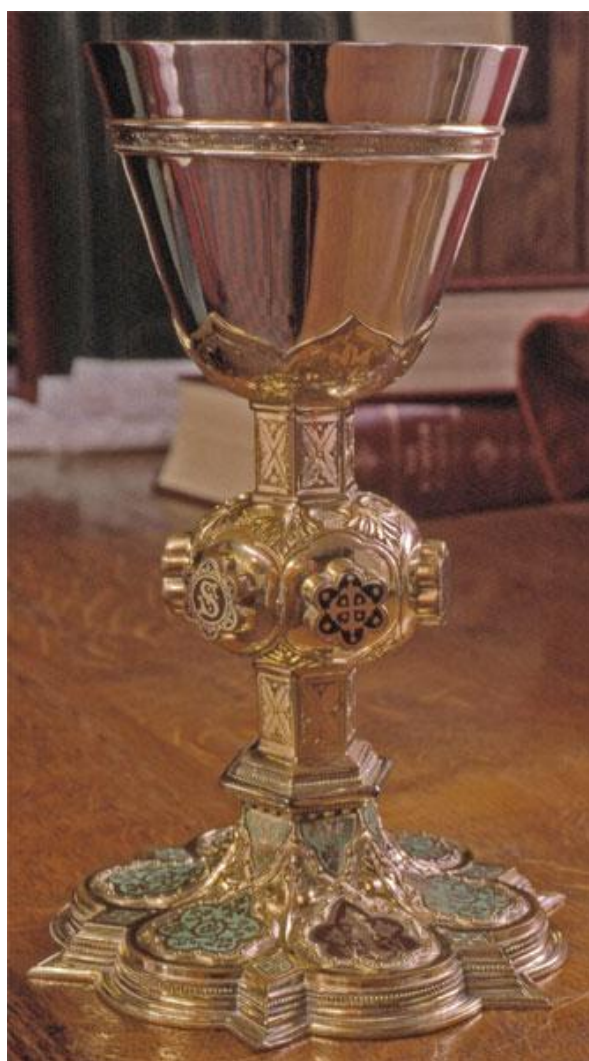
The first to this design was paid for by recent Catholic convert William Leigh of Leamington Spa—and later Woodchester—a gift for the priest at St Paul’s, Leamington, Dr Henry Weedall, sometime President of Oscott College, who had ordered it from Hardmans. It was silver, parcel gilt, the six champlevé enamel plaques to the knot bosses bearing ‘+IESUS’, and a band around the collet being engraved with the angelic salutation ‘+ Ave Maria gratia plena Dominus tecum’ in place of

⁶ Charles Oman, ‘Some Sieneese Chalices’, *Apollo*, vol. 81, 1965, p. 281.

the identical enamelled inscription on the Birmingham exemplar. The six sexfoil champlevé enamel plaques on the foot were decorated with foliated ornament and a foliated cross. The Hardman metal sales ledger recorded on 22 February 1845 the supply to Leigh of a 'Silver Parcel Gilt Chalice & Paten £37 15 0'.⁷

Pugin explicitly referred to the Italian origin of the design in an undated letter to John Hardman where he says 'The Detail is in the early Italian style which is the best of the sort'.⁸

A second chalice was made to this design, for St Giles', Cheadle, but lacking the engraved inscription to the collet.



The Cheadle chalice, designed after the Birmingham Sienese exemplar (Image: Brian Andrews)

⁷ *Birmingham Gold and Silver 1773–1973*, City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, 1973, n.p., exhibit C.5.

⁸ *ibid.*

Pugin referred to this chalice too in his correspondence with Hardman, in a letter dated probably 27 December 1844:

I send you the [enamel] for Dr Weedall's chalice. I think you better make the Cheadle Chalice only the foot *copper gilt* or german silver plated and parcel gilt for Lord S. [Shrewsbury] is sure to ask me and he will be angry if it is all silver had you better make another of the same chalice for stock I think it would be a good [th]ing to make 3 or 4 of a sort when we have a good pattern.⁹

William Leigh was involved with another chalice based on the Birmingham exemplar, but this one dating from 1854 was a piece of plagiarism. It was made by the Birmingham firm of Brawn and Thomason, being silver parcel gilt. With the exception of the bowl and stem the source is clear when compared with the Cheadle chalice at left.



William Leigh's gift chalice for Bishop Murphy of Adelaide, South Australia (Image: Simon Cuthbert)

⁹ *ibid.* Most of the plate for Cheadle was not made from silver because of expense. The Earl of Shrewsbury paid for the magnificent church and its furnishings.

Thomas Thomason had been for some years the foreman of Hardman's silver workshop, leaving to set up a business in competition with his old firm. He evidently helped himself to a quantity of Pugin's metalwork designs.

William Leigh had business interests in the infant Colony of South Australia and, after his conversion, was particularly generous to the first Catholic Bishop of Adelaide, Francis Murphy. He was somewhat influenced by the opinions of Fr (later Bishop) William Bernard Ullathorne who convinced him to seek a design for a church for Murphy from the Pugin follower Charles Hansom on the basis that Pugin would prove too expensive. Ullathorne may have similarly suggested that Leigh purchase from Brawn and Thomason.

Hardmans were still making chalices with many of the Pugin Sienese-based design elements after his death, witness the image below of a chalice purchased by Bishop Willson in 1854.¹⁰



Bishop Willson's 1854 chalice foot (Image: Brian Andrews)

¹⁰ Birmingham City Archives, Hardman Archive, Metal Day Book 1849–54, September 1854: 'Rt Revd Bishop Willson Hobart Town To a silver gilt chalice & paten, the chalice richly enamelled, beaten & engraved, the paten [blank] in dia £38 38 0 0; to engraving inscription underneath foot 1 2 0; to a case for above chalice & paten 1 10 0'.

Renewals

We are most grateful to the following Friends who have renewed their membership since our last Newsletter:

[Mr Simon & Mrs Anna Greener and family](#)

[Mr Tony Colman](#)

[Mr Desmond & Mrs Margaret Hiscutt](#)

Donations

We thank the following Friend for his generous donation:

[Simon Greener](#)