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Welcome to the fortieth Friends Newsletter

We are pleased to advise you that all approvals have been received for the conservation work on the chancel east window in St John's church, Richmond, and its surrounding stonework, together with the strengthening of the chancel roof. Work will commence in late February. We examined St John's Church in detail in Newsletters 28 through 31 and we discussed the chancel stained glass in Newsletter 33.

A revised edition of a very important book on George Myers, Pugin's favoured builder, is to be published in February by Gracewing. Written by Patricia Spencer-Silver, a great grand-daughter of George Myers and Friend of Pugin, it is highly recommended, being a significant contribution to our understanding of Pugin and his works. For those interested in obtaining a copy please email or write to us and we will send you a copy of the order form.

Executive Officer, Brian Andrews, taught a one-week course on Pugin this month at the annual Jane Franklin Hall, Hobart, Summer School. Three of the attendees are now Friends of Pugin and we welcome them in this issue.

In response to the many requests to resume our Metalwork Marvels we have decided to provide further examples, starting with this issue.

We welcome you to another year in the life of the Pugin Foundation and trust that 2010 will be yet another successful year.



George Myers (Image: courtesy Patricia Spencer-Silver)

With kind regards,

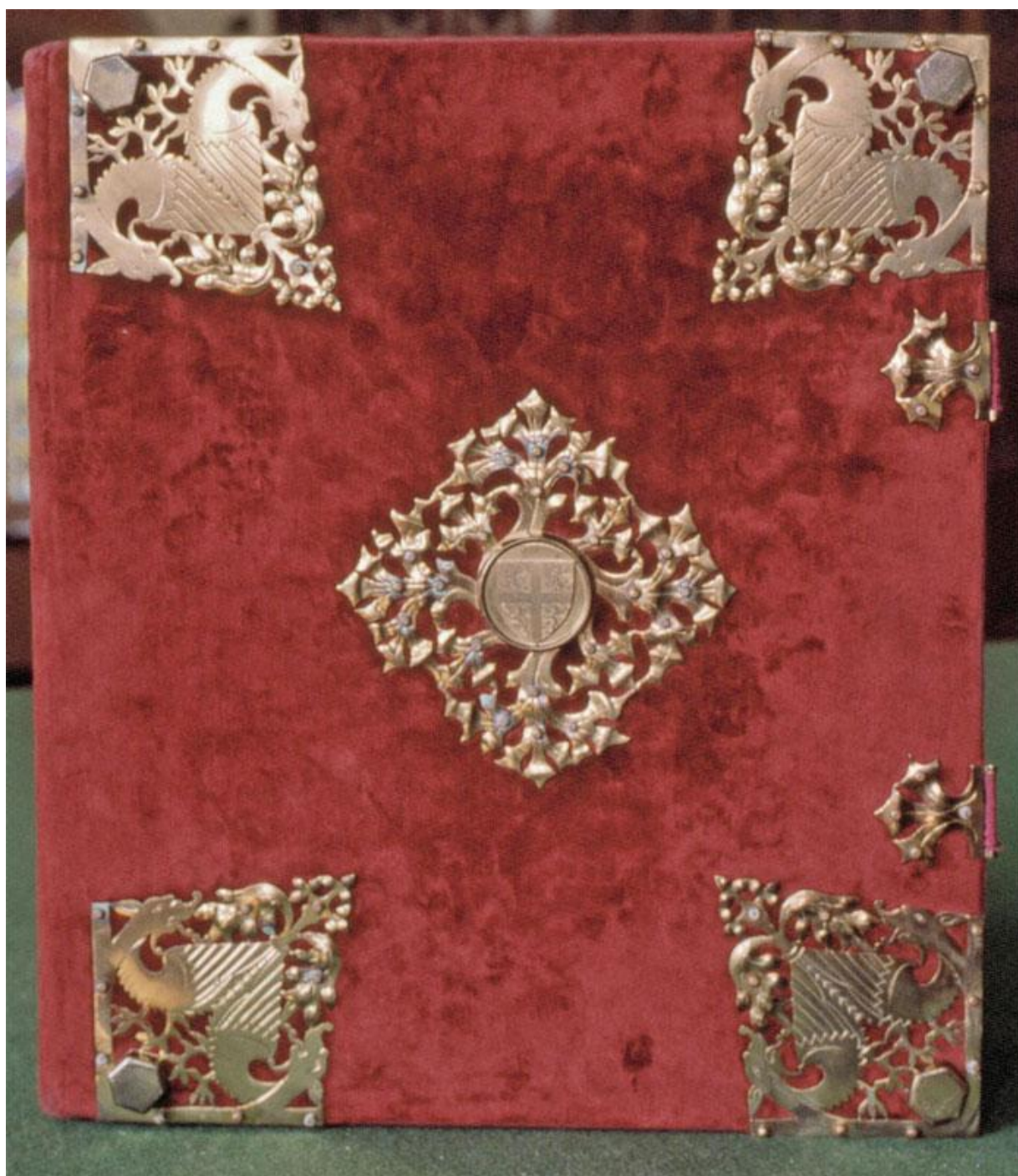
Jude Andrews
Administrative Officer



Metalwork Marvels

In this issue we bring you another exquisite example of Pugin's astonishing creativity in reviving the spirit of medieval metalwork.

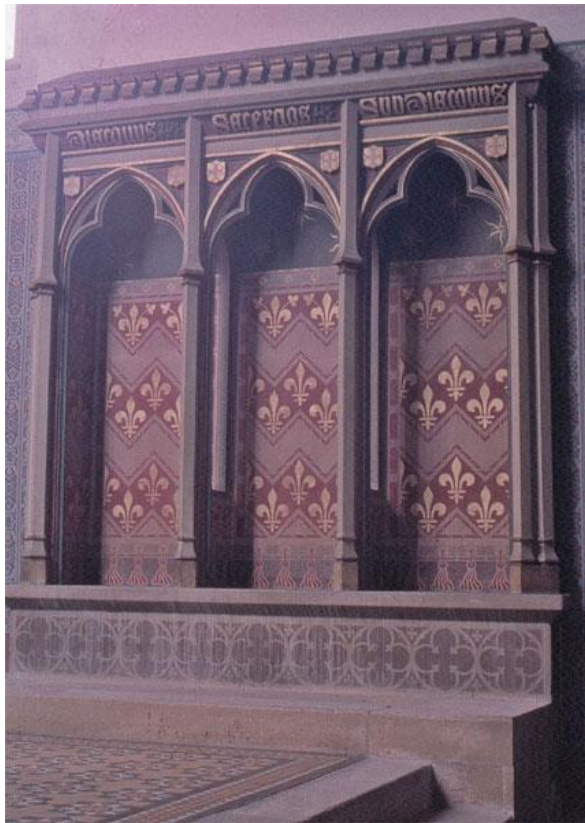
Liber Vitae: the metal fittings designed 1848, fittings made and the book bound by John Hardman & Company, Birmingham, 1848; gilt base metal applied over a red silk velvet cover; book dimensions: 37.2cm high, 33.0cm wide. This illuminated book contains a list of the benefactors of the Pugin-designed chapel of St Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, Co. Durham, the College crest appearing at the centre of the foliated cross on the cover.



Pugin's Designs

Sedilia (Part 6)

We have commented before that Pugin normally furnished his churches for the English medieval Sarum Use, but that on occasion he was obliged to equip their chancels for the prevailing Roman Rite. In respect of sedilia this meant that he could only design them with all three seats on the level so that the officiating priest—seated at the centre in the Roman Rite—would not be lower than the Deacon to his east, as would be the case with stepped sedilia. Such was the case for his Church of St Alban, Macclesfield, solemnly opened in May 1841.



The Macclesfield sedilia (Image: Brian Andrews)

Pugin had gained the commission through the intervention of his munificent patron Lord Shrewsbury. In a letter dated 14 September 1838 Shrewsbury had promised Fr John Hall, priest in charge of the Macclesfield mission, that he would increase his annual donation to the 'Cheshire Fund', set up to provide financial assistance to Catholic clergy in Cheshire County, from £200 to

£250 per annum provided that Pugin was given the task of designing the church.¹

Pugin had completed the plans for the church by December 1838,² placing it amongst his earliest church designs. With regard to the chancel, the original drawings showed a series of broad steps corresponding to each of the sedilia seats, meaning that the sedilia must also have been stepped and thus only applicable to the Sarum Use.³ In the event, the design was altered (at Fr Hall's insistence perhaps?) by the provision of a flight of narrower steeper steps and a level stone platform in front of the sedilia.⁴ The sedilia themselves were re-designed with seating of equal height and, so as to leave no doubt as to the Roman Rite seating arrangements, Pugin had the Latin titles of the clergy carved in the stone above the canopies of their respective seats.

The carved details of the sedilia are in the Perpendicular idiom corresponding with that of the building and its other furnishings, including the fine intact wooden rood screen.

Pugin and Medieval Antiquities

The Cheadle Corona Lucis

In this series we have explored examples of Pugin supplying, and in some instances restoring, medieval antiquities for the churches he designed. It should come as no surprise that he did so for the most splendid and costly of all his churches, the incomparable St Giles', Cheadle, Staffordshire, entirely financed through the boundless generosity of the Earl of Shrewsbury. We can marvel at the exquisite craftsmanship that Pugin fostered in the original detail of the building and its furnishings but we can also see how harmoniously he blended a refurbished medieval relic, the chancel corona lucis, into its exquisite interior.

¹ Shrewsbury to Hall, 14 September 1838, quoted in Michael J. Ullmann, *St Alban's Macclesfield*, St Alban's, Macclesfield, 1982, p. 9.

² Ullmann, *St Alban's*, op. cit., p. 13.

³ *ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴ *ibid.*

In a letter to John Hardman dated 28 December 1844 Pugin gave detailed instructions regarding a number of furnishings for the church and supplied several drawings. He added: 'The corona for the chancel I shall make out of the old iron one we have got.'⁵



*The Corona Lucis in the chancel of St Giles', Cheadle
(Image: John Maidment)*

Pugin scholar Michael Fisher noted in his 2008 work on Hardmans that the concave-sided hexagonal corona is considered to be Flemish, and of fifteenth-century date.⁶ It clearly needed considerable work done to it, for the Hardman Metalwork Day Book entry for 18 July 1846 gave the cost charged to Lord Shrewsbury as £30, describing the job as: 'An Iron Hexagon Corona, with Gilt Inscription, richly pierced & Chains &c & brass pans with Pierced Borders'.⁷

We can do no better than to quote Michael Fisher regarding the reason for the high cost:

The principal expense was no doubt the repair/cutting of the inscription which runs all around the hexagon: a Latin text in honour of the Cross of Christ. Instead of being engraved onto solid metal, as was Pugin's normal practice, the inscription is saw-pierced – a technique sometimes referred to, in respect of lettering, as cut-card work. This made for a much lighter and more delicate result ...⁸

The text on the corona, as Fisher notes, links it firmly to the crucifix atop the rood screen, the latter visibly behind the corona in the image at left.⁹ It reads: 'Tuam crucem/adoramus domine/gloriosam passionem/recolimus etiam/miserere nobis/qui passus es pro nobis' ('We adore your cross, O Lord, and we honour your glorious passion; have mercy upon us for whom you have suffered').¹⁰

Pugin's Irish Works

St Alphonsus' Barntown (Part 1)

We continue our occasional series on the distinctive churches which Pugin designed for Irish clients. St Michael the Archangel's, Gorey, was discussed in Newsletters 12 to 14, July through September 2007, and we investigated the generally overlooked St James', Ramsgrange, in Newsletter 23 dated August 2008. At the outset we wish to acknowledge the permission of Tom and Teresa Wickham to draw extensively upon their fine paper, 'St Alphonsus' Church Barntown', published in the *Journal of the Taghmon Historical Society*, no. 4, 2001.

Introduction

Many of Pugin's churches in England and Ireland came about as a result of the generosity of the Talbot family, and St Alphonsus', Barntown, is no exception.

⁵ Pugin to Hardman, 28 December 1844, in Margaret Belcher, *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin*, Volume 2: 1843–1845, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 310.

⁶ Michael Fisher, *Hardman of Birmingham, Goldsmith and Glasspainter*, Landmark Publishing, Ashbourne, 2008, p. 60.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 199.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 60.

⁹ Michael Fisher, *Pugin-Land: A.W.N. Pugin, Lord Shrewsbury and the Gothic Revival in Staffordshire*, Michael J. Fisher Publishing, Stafford, 2002, p. 110.

¹⁰ *ibid.* Note that in Latin ecclesiastical texts words are often abbreviated. Thus, 'domine' becomes 'dnē'. In this case it enables longer phrases to fit the sides of the hexagon.



St Alphonsus, Barntown, from the north-west (Image: Brian Andrews)

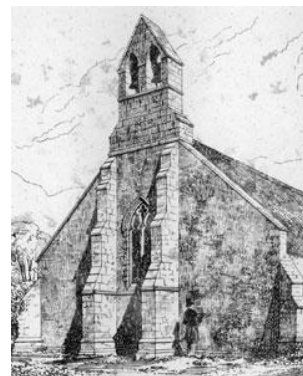
John Hyacinth Talbot MP of Talbot Hall, New Ross, County Wexford, had met Pugin at Alton Towers, Staffordshire, the seat of his nephew John Talbot, 16th Earl of Shrewsbury, in July 1839 and this was to become a fruitful source for Pugin's Irish commissions.¹¹

For many years prior to the 1840s the Catholics in the vicinity of the Three Rocks at Barntown, Co. Wexford, had worshipped in 'what was no more than a shelter in a barn-like structure in the village'.¹² Fr Patrick Murphy, Parish Priest of Glynn, whose responsibilities included the Barntown community, determined to provide his flock with a permanent church and started fundraising in earnest in 1842. Murphy, a man of some influence within the Diocese of Ferns, was friendly with the Talbot family, using this connection 'to maximum advantage in obtaining assistance in the building of his church'.¹³

Through John Hyacinth Talbot he obtained the services of Pugin to design the church.

The Design

For his Barntown composition Pugin chose a type based on the medieval Church of St Michael, Long Stanton, Cambridgeshire. This was a model much admired amongst those seeking to revive the small English village church type in the first, archaeologically-based, phase of the Gothic Revival around the early 1840s. Pugin would use this form with its pent-roofed aisles and distinctive west front surmounted by a double bellcote for three churches, one each in England, Australia and Ireland, namely, St Andrew's, Cambridge (1841), St Charles Borromeo's, Ryde (1842), and St Alphonsus', Barntown (1844).



The Long Stanton (at left) and Cambridge facades

¹¹ Roderick O'Donnell, 'The Pugins in Ireland', A.W.N. Pugin, *Master of Gothic Revival*, Yale University Press, New Haven. 1995, p. 142.

¹² Wickham, 'Barntown', op. cit. n.p.

¹³ *ibid.*



The Ryde (at left) and Barntown facades

For his Cambridge and Ryde designs Pugin supported the bellcote by a local thickening of the nave west wall, whereas at Barntown he more closely followed the Long Stanton exemplar by using a pair of substantial buttresses. In this latter case his most interesting solution to transferring the bellcote load stresses to the ground was via local thickening which extended down from the bellcote via what were in effect embedded 'flying buttresses', leaving between them an arched 'recess' within which were placed the three-light west window and the west door.

Unlike the Long Stanton church, the nave and aisles of which were covered with a single pitched roof, Pugin's three essays all had their aisles separately expressed externally by separate pent roofs.

Whereas the English and Australian designs were for small churches on a par with their Long Stanton exemplar, Barntown was writ large. It consisted of a five-bay nave and two-bay chancel the whole covered by a single roof. Pugin would have intended a wooden rood screen to mark the internal division between nave and chancel. The aisles extended the length of the building. The easternmost two bays of the south aisle were intended for a chapel separated from the chancel and aisle spaces by parcloze screens, as was the penultimate bay of the north aisle.

There was a west door for ceremonial usage, such as processions and the visit of a bishop, and a south porch for congregational use. The sacristy was set against the easternmost two bays of the north side, with its own external entrance via a shouldered arch door set in a pent-roof porch.

To be continued.

New Friends of Pugin

We welcome:

<i>Mrs Patricia McGill</i>	<i>Kiama, NSW</i>
<i>Mr Brian Flanigan</i>	<i>Sunnybank South, Qld</i>
<i>Mrs Sylvia Salverda</i>	<i>Kirribilli, NSW</i>
<i>Mr Joshua Mathewson</i>	<i>Dodges Ferry, Tas</i>
<i>Mrs Dianne Weidner</i>	<i>Croydon, Vic</i>

Renewals

We are delighted that the following Friends have renewed their membership since our last Newsletter:

Kerry & Kevin Morgan
Shirley Wyatt & Carl Phillips
Diana Taylor
Robert Morris-Nunn
Julie Payne
Geoffrey Britton
Fr Paul O'Donnell
Bishop James Grant
Simon & Anna Greener & Family

Donations

We are most grateful to the following for their kind donations:

Brian Flanigan
Patricia McGill
Sylvia Salverda
Shirley Wyatt & Carl Phillips
Fr Terry Rush
Simon & Anna Greener