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Welcome to the sixty-third Friends Newsletter.

We bring you Seasons Greetings.

As one of our valued Friends of Pugin you are receiving with this issue an invitation to attend the Pugin Bi-centenary Mass in St Patrick's, Colebrook, at 10.0am on Sunday 4 March 2012. Because the seating in St Patrick's is very limited we are issuing tickets to attend on a first-come first-served basis. You will need to respond by not later than Friday 21 January 2012, after which any remaining places will be offered to Richmond parishioners.

Our Christmas image opposite is a seated Virgin and Child, unfortunately repainted, from the face of Pugin's High Altar in St Alphonsus' Church, Barntown, Co. Wexford. The Irish image is appropriate here because in this issue we commence a new series on Pugin's superb former Presentation Convent, Waterford.

Overleaf we are pleased to present the first image of our new High Altar in St Patrick's, Colebrook, with its beautiful Pugin-designed painted and gilded reredos along with its frontal and riddel curtains made from Pugin-designed fabrics.

We hope that 2012 brings you much success as well as good health, and we look forward to sharing the Pugin Bi-centenary events here in Tasmania with many of our Friends.

With kind regards,

**Jude Andrews**  
Administrative Officer



*Virgin and Child on the face of the High Altar in St Alphonsus' Church, Barntown, Co. Wexford (Image: Brian Andrews)*



*The new High Altar, installed in St Patrick's, Colebrook, on 1 December 2011. The frontal and riddel curtains were made by Watts & Co., London, with Pugin-designed fabrics (Image: Brian Andrews)*



# *The Present State of Pugin's Ecclesiastical Architecture in Australia*

## *(Part 5)*

### **5. St Benedict's, Broadway**

This church, designed in 1842, was Pugin's largest Australian parish church. Regrettably, it underwent drastic alterations over the ensuing century.



*St Benedict's Church as constructed (Image: Private collection)*

An organ and choir gallery was added to the west end in 1893. In 1910 a new larger sacristy was constructed against the chancel south wall, the original south sacristy being converted into an additional porch. The building was drastically shortened and widened in 1941, the work including different roof structures to the nave and aisles, extra windows to the east and west walls and the removal of the tower string courses.

Pugin's original form can no more be seen, either inside or outside the church. **To be continued.**



*Above, the exterior; below, the interior (Images: Fr Donald Richardson)*



## *The New High Altar, St Patrick's Church, Colebrook*

### *(Part 3)*

Subsequent to the publication of Part 2 in this short series we believe we now know the source of Pugin's *Glossary* illustration which has been



painstakingly replicated for the new Colebrook High Altar reredos.

On 1 August 1843 Pugin wrote to his munificent patron Lord Shrewsbury:

I have arrived safe at Antwerp. The weather has been very bad since I left home but as my work is principally inside the buildings I have got on very well. I am going to work all day at the musée where I shall find the most Beautiful authorities for painted details at chendale above all.<sup>1</sup>

Pugin was referring to the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, founded in 1810, amongst whose treasures was the *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece*, c.1445–1450, by the celebrated Flemish painter Rogier van der Weyden (1399–1464).

This work, with its characteristic finely and accurately rendered details of late medieval furnishings, costumes and metalwork, would prove a mine for Pugin, and he duly sketched a number of them from all three of the triptych panels. Thus, he sketched the left-most angel in the left-hand panel, a priest saying Mass, as well as an eagle lectern, in the central panel, and an ampoule with oil for anointing a dying man in the right-hand panel.<sup>2</sup>

His visit to the Museum, and his study of the *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece* in particular, would also benefit his preparation of illustrations for the *Glossary*, upon which he was working at that time. This is evident in several illustrations within the text of the *Glossary*, including those for ‘Ampul’ and ‘Morse’. The derivations are illustrated overleaf.



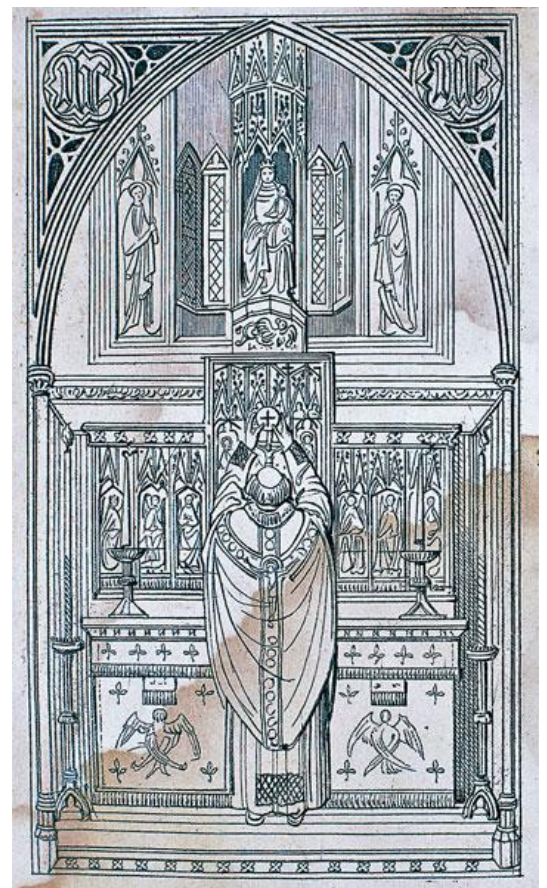
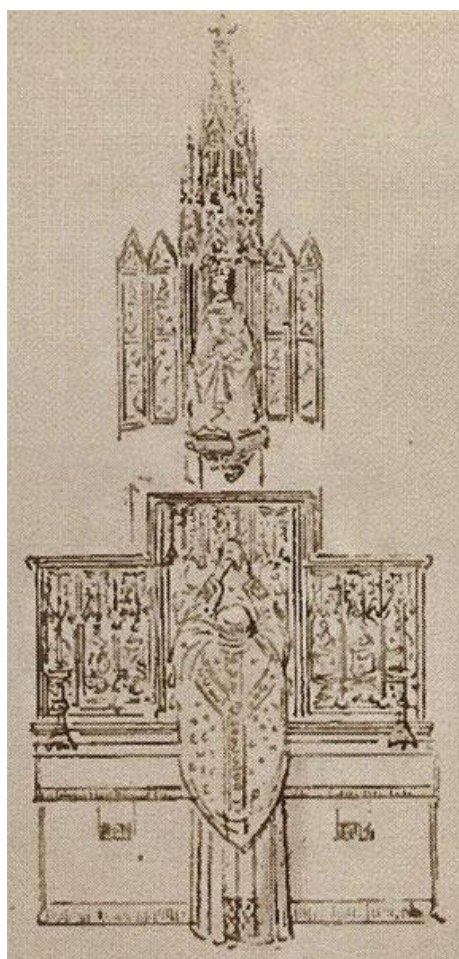
<sup>1</sup> Pugin to Shrewsbury, 1 August 1843, in Margaret Belcher, *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin*, Volume 2 1843–1845, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Ayling, *Photographs from Sketches by Augustus Welby N Pugin*, London, 1865, photographs 38 & 47.





Of more significance for our altar investigation are the three images below.



*From left to right: a detail from the altarpiece central panel; Pugin's sketch of the detail; the frontispiece illustration by Pugin for an 1847 Missal for the Laity, published by Thomas Richardson of Derby*

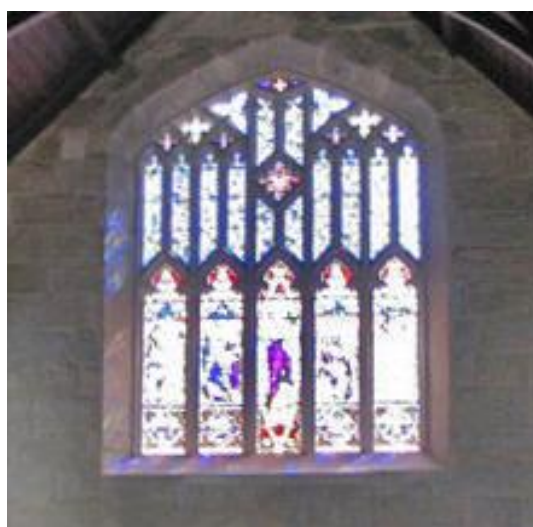


It can be seen that Pugin accurately sketched the altar detail, complete with the surmounting Virgin and Child, canopy and polyptych, which he then re-used with minimal change in his 1847 *Missal for the Laity* frontispiece.

Pugin's inspiration for design details in his works often followed on closely from observed and sketched details made during his many field trips at home and abroad. A good example is his use of material garnered from his visit to Melrose Abbey in October 1842 in designs for Archbishop Polding of Sydney, dispatched some seven weeks later. It would appear on the facade of St Stephen's, Brisbane, and on his extensions for St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney.



*Above: Remnant tracery in the chancel east window of Melrose Abbey; below: the nave west window of St Stephen's, Brisbane, showing the tracery derived by Pugin from Melrose Abbey*



Given, therefore, that Pugin's visit to the Royal Museum of Fine arts occurred during the period when he was preparing material for the *Glossary*, it seems most probable that the form of the reredos in Plate 71 of that work sprang from his sketch of the altar in the *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece*.<sup>3</sup>

**Concluded.**

## *Pugin's Irish Works*

### *Convent of the Presentation, Waterford*

#### *Part 1*

#### **Introduction**

We continue our occasional series on the distinctive buildings which Pugin designed for Irish clients. To date we have considered St Michael the Archangel's, Gorey, St James', Ramsgrange, and St Alphonsus', Barntown, and now we turn to his splendid 1840s work for sisters belonging to the Presentation Order,<sup>4</sup> designing a new convent for them near the then outskirts of Waterford city, County Waterford.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Background**

The Presentation Sisters were founded by the Irish woman Nano Nagle (1718–1784) to educate the children of the poor, their presence in Waterford dating from 1798. From 1800 until the 1840s the sisters occupied a convent in Hennessy's Road, Waterford, but then a move was set in train which resulted in the construction of a new convent in

<sup>3</sup> A reredos form which he never used in actual altars either before or after his 1843 visit to Antwerp.

<sup>4</sup> Properly termed the Congregation of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

<sup>5</sup> In this series I am greatly indebted to Fintan Duffy of the Waterford architectural firm ddb Architects for permission to draw from material contained in the firm's December 2006 conservation report 'Presentation Convent, Waterford, by A.W.N. Pugin and Pugin & Ashlin, A Protected Structure'. I am also grateful to Sr Majella Kelly PBVM of Hobart for locating a loan copy of [Sr Assumpta O'Neill], *Waterford's Presentation Community: A Bicentenary Record 1798–1998*, Waterford, 1998.

the townland of Clowne, Lisduggan, well away from Waterford city.



*The Waterford convent west face (Image: Brian Andrews)*

The reason for the shift of location is not known, but: ‘One tradition has it that the move was made in the hope that the new environment would be a healthier one, and that fewer young nuns would succumb to tuberculosis.<sup>6</sup> Be that as it may, in February 1841 three Waterford citizens, Thomas Meagher, Robert Curtis and John Kearney took a lease of five and a half acres in the aforesaid townland of Clowne, Lisduggan, the landlord Thomas Wyse giving the lease for the building of a convent.<sup>7</sup>

The involvement of Sir Thomas Wyse (1791–1862) may have been behind the selection of Pugin as architect. A career politician and diplomat, Wyse had been educated at the Stonyhurst, the Jesuit college in Lancashire, where he formed a

friendship with John Talbot, 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury, who would become Pugin’s great benefactor.<sup>8</sup> His Irish residence was at St John’s Manor, Waterford, and he consulted Pugin about design alterations to the house.<sup>9</sup> After a visit to Pugin at The Grange in Ramsgate in late 1845, Wyse recounted details of the encounter, possibly to one of his sons, in terms which would suggest that Wyse had indeed been behind the engagement of Pugin for the convent. He wrote:


I had him also on the Tower, Convent, Houses for Tenants, mausoleum or Tomb—in fine, everything possible. He says he will make the whole, a special district, and insists on planting a cross, or Madonna, at the corner of the Convent wall.

<sup>8</sup> Information contained in a typed copy of a MS written by a niece of Thomas Wyse, Winifred M. Wyse, entitled ‘personal Recollections of Augustus Welby Pugin. The content is cited in Margaret Belcher, *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin*, Volume 2 1843–1845, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 494.

<sup>9</sup> It is unclear whether any of Pugin’s proposed alterations were acted upon.

<sup>6</sup> O’Neill, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*



And again:

He says the Convent will be one of the best things he has done, the truest Nunnery built from the Reformation. He has made the Nuns promise not to do anything, however small, without his advice. He wishes I would keep them to it. He says the situation is indeed magnificent. He has seen nothing finer.<sup>10</sup>

In December 1841, around ten months after the lease on the land for the proposed convent had been secured, Pugin noted in his diary, 'Sent drawings to Waterford of Convent'.<sup>11</sup>

**To be continued.**

### Winifred Wyse on Pugin's Home

'The church was not yet begun but the house was simply perfect. A statue of the Blessed Virgin and the Divine Infant was the first object seen on entering the hall, the oaken staircase was painted with inscriptions, giving life and soul to the whole building and true to the conception of a Christian architect he received us in his robe of office, a kind of cassock copied from old pictures which he always wore within his own precincts. Two delighted days we spent there despite bad weather, studying his large collection of beautiful sketches, whilst each morning he worked at designs that were urgent and for which he laughingly told us would bring him in £100. But one most unexpected feature in the dwelling were luxurious and easy chairs of the most modern upholstery besides which the mullioned windows showed plate glass beneath, the upper medallions were of coloured designs. This was apparently in direct contradiction for diamond panes and high backed chairs of Elizabethan pattern, but in reality it only showed the combination of practical good sense and high ideas which differentiated him from common men.' (Source: Belcher, op. cit., pp. 494–5.)

*Winifred Wyse visited Pugin's home, The Grange, with her uncle Thomas Wyse and her mother, probably mid 1845 based on her comment that the church (St Augustine's) next door had not yet begun.*

## New Friends of Pugin

We welcome:

Mr Michael McKenna

*Otago, Tasmania*

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<sup>10</sup> Wyse to [son?], 23 December 1845, reproduces in Belcher, op. cit., pp. 493–4.

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<sup>11</sup> Pugin's diary for 1841, National Art Library, Pressmark 86 MM 60, L5162 1969.