

SPECIAL BI-CENTENARY ISSUE

Included in this edition:

- *Alexandra Wedgwood, Pugin's Bi-centenary and the House of Lords*
- *Fr Anthony Symondson SJ, Pugin and the Late Gothic Revival*

Welcome to the sixty-sixth Friends Newsletter, our special Bi-centenary issue commemorating Pugin's birth on 1 March 1812.

To mark this significant milestone we invited two eminent English architectural historians to write articles for the issue and we are most grateful that they agreed.

Lady Alexandra Wedgwood is the doyenne of Pugin scholars, Patron of our English sister organization the Pugin Society and a valued Friend of Pugin. Her research and publications on Pugin and his works are highly regarded and are a continuing important resource for all seeking to better understand the man and his significance in the history of design. She was for many years the Architectural Archivist in The Parliamentary Archives, so we especially welcome her contribution on the House of Lords in this issue.

Fr Anthony Symondson is an authority on the late-Victorian and Edwardian currents in church architecture, particularly in their liturgical context and planning. He is ideally equipped to show how Pugin's theories and ideals had a late and glorious flowering in that

era, and we are delighted to have his article on this topic to share with you.

With kind regards,

Jude Andrews
Administrative Officer

Brian Andrews
Executive Officer



*Pugin's portrait, painted in 1845 by his friend John Rogers Herbert R.A, the frame designed by Pugin
(Image: courtesy Palace of Westminster)*



Pugin's Bi-centenary and the House of Lords

Alexandra Wedgwood

The bi-centenary of Pugin's birth has come at a time when his reputation has never been higher. One hundred years ago it was a very different situation and this is clearly marked by looking at his standing in relation to the House of Lords.

with Barry on the interiors of the now demolished King Edward VI Grammar School in Birmingham. Pugin continued to help Barry with drawings from which the estimates for the Houses of Parliament were made until his own career as an independent architect took off in 1837. Then in September 1844, soon after Pugin's second wife had died, Barry wrote to Pugin asking him to help him with the decoration of the House of Lords. The Lords were very uncomfortable in their temporary House following the fire and were pushing hard for their new House to be completed. Barry was a perfectionist and realised that he needed both Pugin's unrivalled knowledge of Gothic detail and his ability to draw it and draw it fast in order to make the building a success. At this date Pugin's

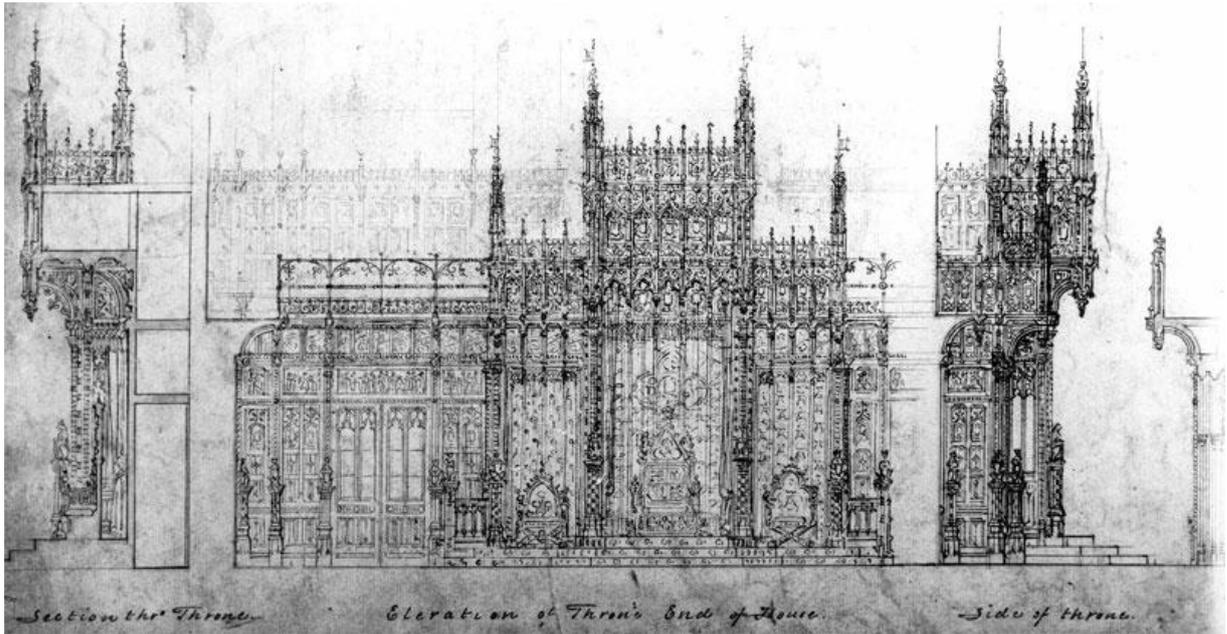


The Palace of Westminster (Source: Wikipedia Commons)

The House of Lords in the New Palace at Westminster as built after the fire of October 1834 has always been enthusiastically admired. It was opened by Queen Victoria in April 1847, the first part of the new building to be seen by the public and was an instant success. The words which *The Illustrated London News* first used to describe it: 'without doubt the finest specimen of Gothic civil architecture in Europe: its proportions, arrangements and decorations, may be said to be perfect' were still being used a hundred years later in the major guide book. But they were being used without any mention of Pugin.

It is now well known that Pugin drew the entry with which Charles Barry (1795–1860) won the competition to rebuild the Houses of Parliament in 1835 and that at the same time Pugin was working

own reputation was substantial as an architect and writer and he must have realised that he would always be in a junior capacity to Barry. Possibly it was the high status of the New Palace at Westminster, which those involved often referred to as 'the Great Work' which led to his decision to rejoin Barry. Although the two men had very different ideals and Barry's preferred style was the Italianate of c.1500, the House of Lords is often considered their joint masterpiece. Pugin, and his inexhaustible wealth of invention, became essential to the building and from this date it became one of his major preoccupations until his death. The evidence shows that the two men collaborated harmoniously but it is also obvious that Barry was in control and would vet Pugin's designs and alter them if he wanted to.



Detail from the contract drawing for the fittings for the House of Lords by Charles Barry, signed and dated 17 December 1844. This is the result of the joint efforts of Barry and Pugin, although innumerable minor alterations were made later (Source: RIBA Library)

to her right, each place indicated above by appropriate heraldry. The carved wood is everywhere superb.

Pugin was given an official appointment as superintendent of woodcarving at the Thames Bank government workshops. These workshops were critical in obtaining the results that both men wanted and Pugin filled them with exemplars, usually plaster casts but with some actual medieval pieces, of the kind of carving that he wanted. Also principally young men were employed who had not developed their own style, but it is still extraordinary, given the number of carpenters, how excellent are the results. The proportions of the chamber and the outline of the throne and its canopy are the work of Barry. Pugin would have preferred a more pointed canopy, similar to that above a Bishop's throne, but he was over-ruled.

The traditional decoration behind the throne was called the 'cloth of estate' and, as its name indicates, an embroidered textile. Here, however, it is a splendid piece of carved wood. The throne itself is closely based on the fourteenth century Coronation chair in Westminster Abbey but more glamorous. It was made of course for a Queen regnant, with the Consort on her left and the heir



The throne and its canopy (Source: The Palace of Westminster collection)

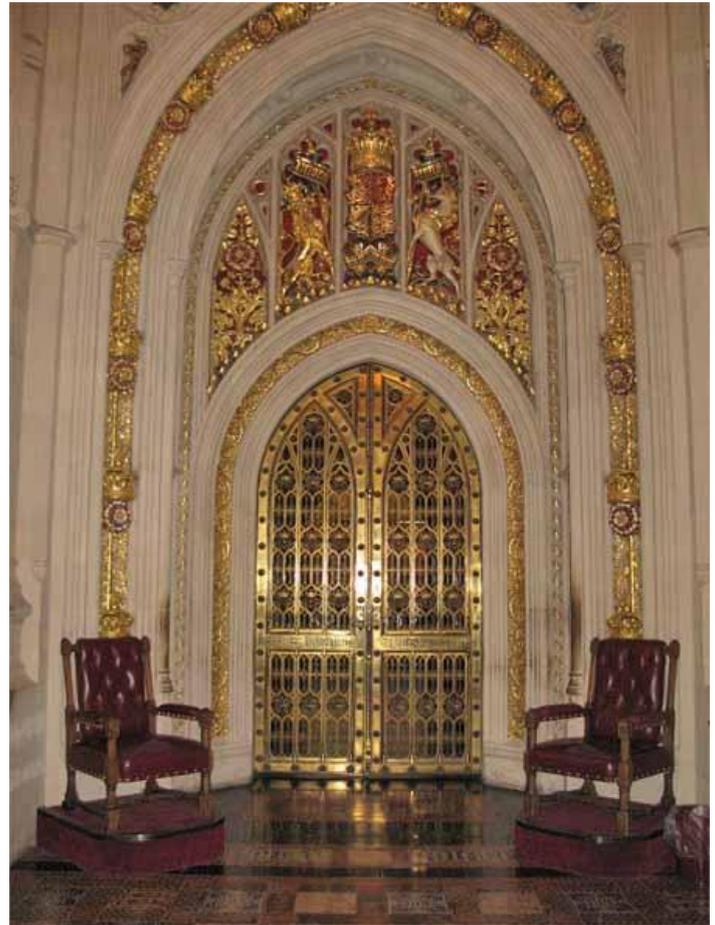


Carved wood detail on the canopy behind the throne (Source: The Palace of Westminster collection)

The ceiling, painted by Crace, who knew Pugin and had worked with him, is panelled. Each large panel is subdivided with a magnificent gilded wooden device in the central lozenge, and is surrounded by a pierced inscription with the repeated words 'Dieu et mon Droit', which formed part of the original ventilation system.

The carved wood is complemented by the brasswork of the candelabra and railings which were all made in Birmingham by Pugin's closest colleague, John Hardman. The manufacture of all these items proved very complicated. The Lords could not make up their minds how to light the chamber; the choice was between candles and gas and one of the chief deciding factors was safety, always remembering the danger of fire. Eventually, after several false starts, the decision was for candles on the floor of the chamber and gas in the galleries where the gas lights were to be supplied by the manufacturer James Faraday following experiments by his brother, the scientist Michael. The railings to the House also suffered several changes of design but the greatest challenge for Hardman was the spectacular entrance doors from the Peers Lobby which were of unparalleled size and weight. Nothing similar had been made for centuries and Pugin's inspiration for them was the magnificent bronze gates to the chapel of Henry V11 in Westminster Abbey. Both the exterior and interior of this chapel gave Pugin and Barry many

motifs for the confident Tudor Gothic in which the New Palace was built and decorated.



The Peers Lobby entrance doors (Source: The Palace of Westminster collection)

As well as all this there were stained glass windows and carpets, plus the 'Fine Art' elements of three frescos at each end of the chamber. Not everything was finished in 1847 when the chamber came into use and was highly praised. At that date Pugin had seized the opportunity for a break from the hard work and he was already in the south of France. 1846 had been a particularly bad year for him, still a lonely widower and often ill. There were of course a few people who understood how Barry and Pugin were collaborating and the account in one guidebook describes the situation accurately: 'The drawings for the fittings and decorations were made by Mr. Pugin, under the supervision of Mr. Barry. There is, perhaps, no one living so well



qualified for such a task.¹ The same words are used in the publication of c.1857 by the same firm. It was, however, the exception. Generally there is no mention of Pugin's name or his role in the many tributes to Barry, though the artists of the frescoes and Hardman and Crace were mentioned. This remained the situation until after Barry's death in 1860. He had been knighted in 1852 on the occasion of the opening of the House of Commons and his biography was written by his son, Alfred, and published in 1867. This publication spurred Pugin's eldest son, the irascible Edward, to write the pamphlet, *Who was the Art Architect of the Houses of Parliament?: A Statement of Facts, Founded on the Letters of Sir Charles Barry and the Diaries of Augustus Welby Pugin*, London 1867. The family no doubt felt aggrieved that Pugin had not been given his due in all the comments but Edward Pugin's exaggerated claims did not help to set the record straight. It was answered by Alfred Barry, *The Architect of the new Palace at Westminster. A reply to the statements of Mr. E. Pugin*, 1868. But Edward did not let the matter drop and promptly wrote *Notes on the reply of the Rev. Alfred Barry, D.D., to the 'infatuated statements' made by E.W. Pugin on the Houses of Parliament*, 1868. A final comment, also in 1868, was added by E.M. Barry, another son and an architect who was completing his father's work at Westminster, *Correspondence with Mr. J.R. Herbert, R.A., and letters of the late Mr. Pugin*. This quarrel has given historians much interesting detail about the construction of the building but did not change the situation as far as Pugin's reputation went.

Slowly, however, things were changing as historians got to work studying the evidence. In 1930 *A Short Guide to the Houses of Parliament* was written by Bryan H. Fell. He was a Senior Clerk in the House of Commons and realised that there was no good existing history of 'the Palace of Westminster, where Parliament sits' and so determined to write one which had 'the authority of the Lord Great Chamberlain and the Speaker of the House of Commons'. He wrote 'Sir Charles Barry foresaw the possibilities of the decoration of the Palace, and, as soon as his design had won the

completion, he invited his friend Pugin to assist him in his endless task. Most of the elaborate detail of the building is due to the graceful fantasy of Pugin' (p.11). Also, in an appendix on the Speaker's chair he mentioned that it was designed by Pugin (p.91). Where Fell obtained this information is unknown but in 1932 a second biography of Pugin appeared written by Michael Trappes-Lomax. He had had access to family papers and included two chapters in his book referring to the Palace of Westminster and giving much documentary evidence.

At the outbreak of war the protection of the building and its contents was considered. The medieval parts, and especially Westminster Hall, were thought valuable and worth saving but the then Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum did not think that even the obviously vulnerable nineteenth-century stained glass should be protected. The building was in fact hit by several bombs, resulting in the complete destruction of the House of Commons and considerable loss of glass. It is difficult now to remember the contempt in which most Victorian architecture was held in the first half of the twentieth century. When Dr Pevsner as Slade Professor at Cambridge gave his inaugural lecture in 1949 on Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt, a great Victorian eclectic architect and writer and the first Slade Professor, his audience found the subject funny and laughed. The main Parliamentary guidebook, which had been published by Warrington since 1847, continued not to mention Pugin. When Fell's official guide was revised by another Senior Clerk, K.R. Mackenzie, c.1950 his references to Pugin were repeated.

Probably the next step in the revival of Pugin's reputation came about as the result of the research done by Phoebe Stanton who began work on her thesis in 1949 supervised by Pevsner. She rediscovered the Pugin family's papers and letters and studied the Hardman archive. She wrote a number of articles and published a short biography of Pugin in 1971. By this time all sorts of things were happening to raise Pugin's profile: there were various exhibitions at the V&A which held many drawings and artefacts by him, the Victorian Society was founded and catalogues written of

¹ *The House of Lords. A Description of that Magnificent Apartment, together with the Peers' Lobby and the Victoria Hall, in the New Palace of Westminster.* London H.G. Clarke & Co, 278 Strand, 1847, p.15.



some of the major holdings of his work.² At the Houses of Parliament a Conservative MP, Sir Robert Cooke, was fascinated by him and managed to encourage the gradual restoration of the interiors back to their original conditions. The drama of Pugin's life made him into a popular figure with the media, certainly when compared with the straightforward establishment persona of Sir Charles Barry. The reputations of the two men were almost reversed, which of course was as unjust to Barry as it had previously been to Pugin.

Finally we can all take delight in the fact that, as we celebrate the bi-centenary of Pugin's birth, this wonderful building is well looked after and that the work of both Pugin and Barry is treasured. In a present guidebook, by Robert Wilson, a Deputy Principal Clerk in the House of Commons, he writes in the first paragraph: 'Charles Barry was already [in 1834] a leading architect but his success two years later in the competition to design a new Parliament House was crucial to his reputation. The New Palace with its picturesque exterior and its well-organised interior stands as the main monument to him and to his collaborator, Augustus Welby Pugin (1812–52), whose genius dominated the design of the elaborate furniture, carving and fittings.'

Pugin and the Late Gothic Revival

Fr Anthony Symondson SJ

Writing from Ramsgate in 1892 to one of his clients, Richard Norman Shaw told her, 'There is a charming little church here (Roman Catholic), built by the great Pugin, some 45 years ago, for himself. He designed and *paid* for the whole thing and it is beautiful, so full of interest all through. Hideous

² Editor's note: Two key catalogues are by the author, namely, Alexandra Wedgwood, *Catalogue of the Drawings Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects: The Pugin Family*, Farnborough, Gregg International, 1977, and Alexandra Wedgwood, *Catalogues of Architectural Drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum: A.W.N. Pugin and the Pugin Family*, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1985.

stained glass, but in spite of that serious drawback, a most delightful and interesting work, and done *so* long ago. I am afraid we have not advanced much. Such a work makes one feel small, *very* small.' He refers, of course, to Pugin's own St Augustine's, the church over which he had complete control. Shaw had just built All Saints, Richards Castle, on the borders of Herefordshire and Shropshire, in which Andrew Saint maintains that he upheld the 'earnest ideals of Pugin and Carpenter once again, as though the wheel had turned full circle and Shaw was content to see himself as a disciple of the Gothic of "fifty years ago".³

Pugin's greatest legacy lay in the noble, incense-drowned churches with spiritual interiors and liturgical plans of the late Gothic Revival. The architects responsible for the best were George Frederick Bodley, Thomas Garner, his partner, George Gilbert Scott Junior, John Thomas Micklethwaite, an influential theorist, J. L. Pearson, John Dando Sedding and J. F. Bentley. All but Shaw, Sedding and Bentley were pupils of Sir George Gilbert Scott, while the latter were pupils of George Edmund Street and Henry Clutton respectively. Pearson, an outsider, was a pupil of Philip Hardwick, the designer of the Euston Arch. Their work was continued in the twentieth century by Temple Lushington Moore, a pupil of the younger Scott, Sir Ninian Comper, Sir Walter Tapper and F. C. Eden, all pupils of Bodley, and Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, a pupil of Temple Moore. This pantheon represented the climax of the Revival but also its decline, sapped by the economic consequences of the Great War. In the United States of America a vigorous late Gothic-Revival tradition, embodied in the work of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson and their followers, continued until the economic collapse of 1929. None of these powerful developments would have come into being independently of Pugin's work, structural principles and liturgical experiments of the 1840s. Indeed, he was recognised, and his principles advocated, as the source of all that came later.

³ Andrew Saint, *Richard Norman Shaw*, revised edition, Yale, 2010, p.316.



The turn of the wheel of the Gothic Revival had, however, come earlier than 1892. It was Bodley who first returned to Pugin's style and principles in his second designs for All Saints', Cambridge, in 1862, ten years after Pugin's death. A first design composed of Early French Gothic influences was replaced by one in a purely English, 14th-century Decorated style verging on the Perpendicular with a deep chancel, only one aisle and a battlemented tower with a small spire. The interior was decorated with polychromatic diaper-patterns and mural painting by Frederick Leach and Wyndham Hope Hughes, glass by William Morris and later by C. E. Kempe. The patterns were redolent of Pugin's diapering of the 1840s, strengthened in their outlines and executed in muted half-tones rather than heraldic colours. All Saints created a new look for English churches. The church opened a chapter that heralded the late Gothic Revival and, under Bodley's influence, the Puginian ideal was fulfilled on a scale that surpassed the work of the master.⁴

Bodley, however, was a stylist rather than a liturgical planner. When he designed his first church, St Michael and All Angels', Brighton, he adopted the liturgical precepts set out in the *Directorium Anglicanum*, by John Purchas, published in 1858, the year of St Michael's design. These were refined by F. G. Lee in 1865 in the second edition, illustrated by Edmund Sedding. They were an adaptation of Roman rubrics applied to Anglo-Catholic churches on the basis not only of their inherent authority but for what was deemed their antiquity. This view was challenged in 1886 by J. Wickham Legg, a liturgical scholar intent on medievalising Anglican worship, in a paper, 'On Some Ancient Liturgical Customs', given to the St Paul's Ecclesiological Society. He entertained an aversion to Bodley's work because of the incipient Romanism of the planning. His criterion lay in a romantic interpretation of the ornaments rubric of the *Book of Common Prayer* which declared that 'chancels should remain as they have done in times past', and that the ornaments should be retained as they were in the 'Second Year of the Reign of King Edward VI: 1548-9.

⁴ H. R. Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Pelican History of Art, second edition, Penguin Books, 1963, p.184.

I am sure we must raise the cry of *Back to Pugin*, to the principles which Pugin advanced; we must throw away the worldly spirit of the Renaissance and take our inspiration from the Middle Ages, remembering the direction of the Prayer Book that the chancels shall remain as in time past, and holding fast to a medieval liberty of practice as contrasted with the attempts of the Congregation of Rites to establish all over the world the iron uniformity which is the aspiration in most things of the nineteenth century.⁵

In 1879 a group of Catholic laymen founded the Guild of St Gregory and St Luke for 'the purpose of promoting the study of Christian antiquities and of propagating the principles of Christian art'. W. H. James Weale, a liturgiologist and authority on Flemish art, Edmund Bishop, also a liturgiologist, and Everard Green, an antiquary and herald, were uncritically devoted to Pugin. Several architects were members including J. F. Bentley, J. A. Hansom, Frederick Walters, J. H. Eastwood and Leonard Stokes. This coalition imbibed Pugin's principles, liturgical and architectural, and led to a late-19th-century flowering of English Catholic church architecture in reaction to the continental influences introduced by E. W. Pugin after his father's death. The Guild was, through Weale, directly influenced by Pugin. He had previously been a leading member, with Baron Bethune, of the Belgian Guild of St Thomas and St Luke which he helped to found in 1862. The guild kept Pugin's principles alive in the Low Countries, mainly through the influence of Thomas King and Sir John Sutton, after they had been overshadowed after his death in 1852.⁶

The only leading architects of the late Gothic Revival engaged in liturgical planning on a scientific basis were J. T. Micklethwaite, George Gilbert Scott Junior, and J. N. Comper. In 1874 Micklethwaite published *Modern Parish Churches*. His book is a seminal work for the evolution of the

⁵ J. Wickham Legg, 'On some ancient liturgical customs now falling into disuse', *Transactions of the St Paul's Ecclesiological Society*, II, 1886-90, p.129.

⁶ Nigel Abercrombie, *The Life and Work of Edmund Bishop*, London, 1959, pp.76-9.





late-Victorian church. It launched an attack on pedantic antiquarianism, commercialism and ‘go’, three elements inimical to good architecture. Church architecture, Micklethwaite believed, should have function as its foundation. He advocated a return to Pugin and Carpenter as arbiters of function and style, and condemned commercialism, perpetrated by the rise of church furnishers and glass-painters. In the literature of the next twenty years, culminating in the opaque prose of Bodley, Micklethwaite’s phrases and illustrations were transmitted from one writer to another. He proposed three ways forward: a return to rational church design; an appeal to the liturgical principles of worship in determining the plan and function of a church; reference to the future, a theme he reiterated with increasing urgency as the nineteenth century approached an end. Contemporary churches, he maintained, should pave the way to Eucharistic worship.⁷

In 1880 Scott published *An Essay on the History of English Church Architecture Prior to the Separation of England from the Roman Obedience*. Scott approached church architecture by putting English work in the context of historical continuity dating from the 4th-century plans of the Roman basilicas and their determining influence on planning. Comper did not read this book until 1900, it profoundly influenced his evolution of church architecture on a stylistically unitive basis and he came to think it the best book on the subject ever written. His own liturgical studies originated in 1893 in a paper on the character of the Gothic altar and thereafter spasmodically he worked on the theme of the altar until his final paper, *On the Christian Altar and the Buildings which Contain It*, published in 1950. The ideas of these architects reached fulfilment in St Agnes’, Kennington Park, in London, (1874–91), Comper’s early churches and restorations and St Mary’s, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, (1904–31).

It is necessary to disentangle these themes if Pugin’s influence on the late Gothic Revival is to be established. It was not merely stylistic but influenced the design of churches for liturgical worship in the wake of the developing ritualist

movement. Bodley and Garner believed that they were designing modern churches to serve the contemporary needs of the Church of England. Scott moved beyond them by understanding that it was meaningless to revive medievalist architecture without reviving the worship it had been designed to serve. The members of the Guild of St Gregory and St Luke, under Bishop’s influence, were intent on discovering the true form of the altar in order to make liturgical worship more authentic.

All Saints’, Cambridge, was fulfilled in Bodley’s church of St John the Baptist, Tue Brook, Liverpool (1868–70). Charles Eastlake singled it out for praise in *A History of the Gothic Revival*, recognising the ‘charm of colour’ and an ‘additional element of beauty which pervades the whole building from its primary construction to the last touch of its embellishment.’ Built of red sandstone in the late-Decorated style, it is a realisation of the Puginian vision with a structural rood loft and rood-mural decorated and painted by Kempe, walls painted by Leach with flowing diapering, and the ceilings in late-Gothic stencilling and chevrons, while the high altar stands before a finely-detailed painted reredos. It formed the climax of Bodley’s independent years as an architect and was the first fully developed late-Victorian parish church, anticipating the flowering of the Gothic Revival in late-Gothic terms, and breaking new ground as much for its furniture as its style.

In 1868 Bodley established a partnership with Thomas Garner. In the years they worked together they built some of the finest churches of the period, beginning with St Augustine’s, Pendlebury, Lancashire, (1871–4) which was regarded as the first modern church because of its scale and plan as a single vessel. Modelled on the Dominican church in Ghent, this vast, sublime building was commissioned by a Manchester banker to serve a large mining village on the outskirts of Salford. After visiting Germany in 1845, Pugin wrote to Bishop Sharples that he believed ‘that something even grander than most of the old things can be produced by simplicity combined with gigantic proportions’, and that ‘lofty arches & pillars, huge projecting buttresses, grand severe lines are the

⁷ J. T. Micklethwaite, *Modern Parish Churches*, London, 1874, *passim*.

true thing.⁸ This could almost be a prophecy of the mature achievement of Bodley & Garner at St Augustine's and of George Gilbert Scott Junior at St Agnes', Kennington, London, (1874–91), both of which inaugurated the bare style. Declared by Pevsner to be one of the most moving of all Victorian churches, he described the interior of St Augustine's as being of 'breath-taking majesty and purity', and that it was 'one of the English churches of all time.' The high altar stands elevated on steps before a gilded reredos painted in the manner of Dürer; the chancel is divided from the nave (delineated by passage aisles pierced through internal buttresses) by a wooden screen.

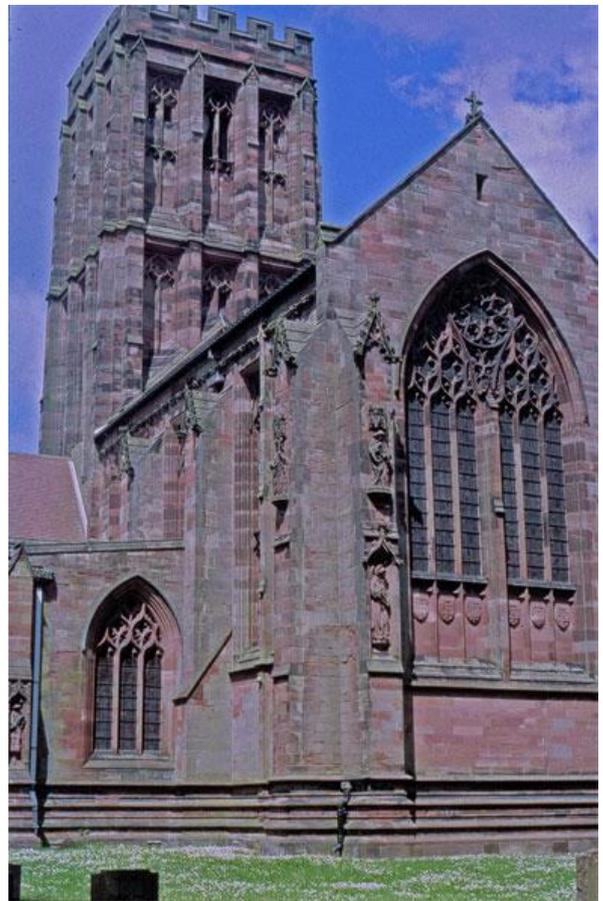


St Augustine's, Pendlebury (Source: Wikipedia Commons)

It was not only in liturgical planning and the Decorated style that Pugin's legacy was fulfilled in the late 19th century. Culminating in the splendour of the Gothic Court in the Great Exhibition of 1851, Pugin's pioneer work in designing church furniture, textiles, stained glass and metalwork (precious and base), laid foundations that led to two consequences. One was an ecclesiastical trade of an uninspired and repetitive standard; the other was commercialism directed by architects, allied with workmanship and artistry of the highest order. Both patterns emerged soon after Pugin's death in 1852. His lead was paralleled by almost every one of his successors, although with surprisingly little

⁸ Quoted in Rosemary Hill, *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain*, Allen Lane, 2007, p.341.

overlap. At the time of the Pugin exhibition, mounted at the Victoria & Albert Museum, South Kensington, London, in 1994, some observed how much better stained glass and church furniture were thirty years later. The leading church furnishing and stained glass establishments such as Burlison & Grylls, glass-painters, Barkentin & Krall, silversmiths and metalworkers, and Watts & Co, church furnishers - to isolate three associated with Bodley & Garner, the younger Scott and their contemporaries – perfected Pugin's early experiments to the point that much work not only equalled the Middle Ages technically, but sometimes surpassed it in execution. The late Gothic Revival was marked by a perfectionist sensibility defined by excellence.



Holy Angels', Hoar Cross (Image: Brian Andrews)

These tendencies coalesced in two churches: the Holy Angels', Hoar Cross, Staffordshire, (1872–1906), designed by Bodley & Garner, and St Agnes', Kennington, London, (1874–91), by the younger Scott. The Holy Angels is different from St Augustine's, Pendlebury. It is an estate church

designed as a mausoleum in the Staffordshire countryside, built by the Hon Emily Meynell Ingram as a memorial to her husband, Hugo, who had died in a riding accident. She was the sister of Charles Wood, second Viscount Halifax, the lay leader of the Anglo-Catholic movement, and she shared her brother's religious convictions. Built of stone with a tower rising above the crossing, conspicuous for its massing, it is an elaborate evocation of a 14th-century English parish church. Furnished with a rood screen, chantries, Stations of the Cross from the Low Countries, a font with an elaborate painted wooden cover richly adorned with figures, the interior culminates in the vaulted chancel. Rising above the nave, it is lined with statues of saints in niches carved by Farmer & Brindley in stone, paved in black and white marble inlaid with a heraldic centrepiece; the richly-adorned altar stands before a stone reredos.

The Holy Angels is furnished with properly appointed altars, embroidered altar frontals made by Watts & Co to Bodley & Garner's design, new and antique vestments of great splendour, fine altar plate and ornaments by Barkentin & Krall and delicately painted glass by Burlison & Grylls. It is emblematic of the doctrine of the Church as the Communion of Saints. William Morris admired the church and wrote, 'I think if I had gone into it in the dusk I should really have taken it for a genuine building of the 15th century', but he criticised the 'mechanical' carving as opposed to the 'savagery' of medieval work.⁹ None of this could have come into being without Pugin's pioneer work and it defines the fulfilment of his aims.



Hoar Cross chancel (Image: John Maidment)



St Agnes', Kennington, destroyed in World War 2

St Agnes', Kennington, was a town church built of red brick on a continental scale with white, plastered walls, a wainscot, and arches dying into their piers. It was glazed by Kempe who also decorated the aisle vaults (some of the work was executed by the youthful Comper during the year he spent in his drawing office) and designed altar frontals, banners and vestments. But what made it

⁹ William Morris, 'The Gothic Revival -II', *A Bibliography of William Morris*, Eugene D. Le Mire, pp.83-4.

exceptional was the furniture. It had a functional rood screen with a loft used for singing the Gospel and, on other occasions, by an orchestra which accompanied Masses on major festivals. The sanctuary was furnished with a triptych behind the high altar and the steps were designed for ceremonial informed by the rubrics of the Sarum Use. St Agnes' became the leading church of the Anglo-Catholic movement to embrace the ceremonial of the Sarum Use anachronistically applied to Prayer Book worship. T. Francis Bumpus, the ecclesiologist, believed that it 'might be taken for a church built during the palmiest days of the Early Perpendicular by some wealthy wool-stapler who had brought with him reminiscences of Flanders'.¹⁰ Many regarded it as the best church of the Gothic Revival but its significance has been overlooked due to its destruction by an incendiary bomb in 1941. No church of this standard could have been built in Pugin's lifetime; it represented the gains in design, liturgical planning, building and execution achieved since his death.

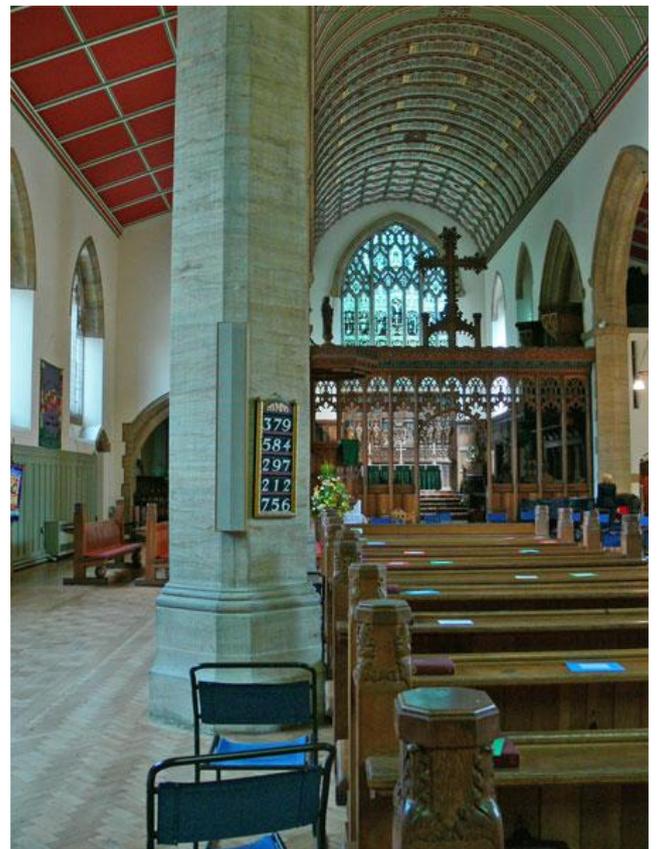


St Paul's, Wimbledon Park (Image: John Maidment)

Micklethwaite designed the majority of his churches in partnership with Somers Clarke. One of their happiest collaborations was at St Paul's, Wimbledon Park, (1888–96), in South London, a church which not only reflected the influence of St Agnes', Kennington, but in its refinement was

¹⁰ T. Francis Bumpus, *London Churches Ancient and Modern*, 2nd Series, T. Werner Laurie, 1908, p.356.

emblematic of the noble suburban churches of red brick with stone dressings that characterised the period. The window tracery, arcades and other details are of great elegance and the furniture, notably the reredos and a triptych in the Lady Chapel, and stained glass are notable works by Kempe. Canon Basil Clarke described St Paul's as 'the Victorian suburban church at its best'.¹¹



St Paul's interior (Image: John Maidment)

Micklethwaite alone is to be found at the red brick church of the Holy Spirit (originally St Matthew's), Southsea, (1898–1924) where the aisles were almost as tall as the nave and the ten bays had a continuous roof. This church combined the influences of St Agnes', Kennington, with St Mary Magdalene's, Munster Square, (1849–52), by R. C. Carpenter, where Micklethwaite worshipped. The second influence once more takes the late Gothic Revival back to the Puginian era; his influence on St Mary Magdalene's was palpable. According to Peter Howell, 'Micklethwaite is said to have wanted to try the effect of black-painted walls in the nave, with the roof white and the piers gilded, and

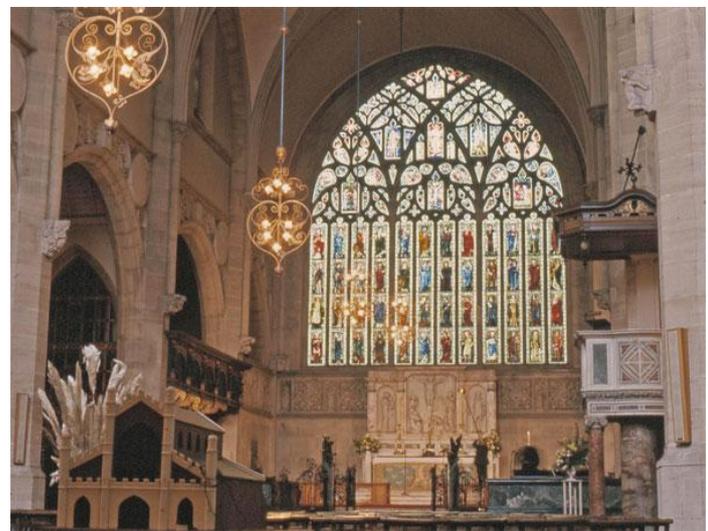
¹¹ B. F. L. Clarke, *Parish Churches of London*, Batsford, 1966, p.277.

reduced his fees to secure the vicar's agreement' but contemporary photographs provide no evidence that this startling scheme was ever executed.¹² The church was gutted in 1941 and rebuilt by Stephen Dykes Bower who wanted to incorporate the surviving furniture from Kennington.¹³

J. D. Sedding instigated a departure from strict Puginian influence. In St Clement's, Boscombe, (1871–73) in Hampshire, he designed a large, elegant and refined stone church of five bays in the hitherto unfavoured Perpendicular style but the plan was entirely Puginian. He wanted to design 'living churches for living men' and was the principle instigator of the Arts & Crafts style of architecture, fostered by members of the Art Workers' Guild, known as late Gothic freely treated. Like Pugin, Sedding was consumed by a liturgical passion that coincided with the deliberations of the Catholic Guild of St Gregory and St Luke. An advanced Anglo-Catholic, he was a master of spatial and liturgical design and had a profound belief in the Incarnation.

It was in Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, Chelsea, (1888–90), that, in terms of workmanship, the result of Pugin's pioneer work in the applied arts came to fulfilment. Pugin has long been recognised as the father of the Arts & Crafts Movement because of his revival of medievalist craft techniques. But the irony lay in his engagement of Hardman's Medieval Manufactures to achieve his aims. Hardman, a button maker, was a Birmingham businessman who established a firm of church furnishers. While Pugin was in charge of design all went well, but after his death Hardman & Co developed as a purely commercial enterprise with the firm's own body of designers (many of them excellent) working in Pugin's style, often in an elaborated form. While Pugin was opposed to industrialism, he turned the making of church furniture into an industry and became an industrial designer.

The Arts & Crafts Movement was conscientiously opposed to commercialism and brought into being the elevated status of the artist-craftsman. But without Pugin's early experiments in hand-raising precious metal, glass-painting, forging, embroidery, Gothic pattern-design and the weaving of Gothic textiles, little of the craft endeavour of the Movement would have been possible. On Pugin's death *The Illustrated London News* noted that he was 'the originator of all the ideas, without him there was no development'. While Sedding went further and wrote in 1888: 'we should have no Morris, no Street, no Burges, no Shaw, no Webb, no Bodley, no Rossetti, no Burne-Jones, no Crane, but for Pugin.'



Holy Trinity, Sloane Street (Image: Brian Andrews)

Evidence of this is found in Holy Trinity where Sedding brought together a galaxy of artists, craftsmen, and sculptors to furnish and glaze his freely-designed Perpendicular masterpiece. The church achieves the integration of fine art with architecture that the Gothic Revival had been seeking since the 1840s but had so rarely achieved. There was not a trace of commercialism, superior or otherwise. From Burne-Jones's east window onwards, leading members of the Art Workers' Guild and the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society manifested their collective genius in the church. Sedding believed in taking up 'the threads of Gothic tradition where they were left in the fifteenth century and weav[ing] them into the weft of modern need and thought'. Modern need and

¹²Peter Howell, 'A man at once strong in the present and reverent of the past' – John Thomas Micklethwaite', in Christopher Webster ed, *Episodes in the Gothic Revival*, Spire Studies in Architectural History, I, Spire Books, 2011, p.216.

¹³ Anthony Symondson, *Stephen Dykes Bower*, RIBA Publications, 2011, pp.118–21.



thought was found in making provision for Eucharistic worship.¹⁴

The plan of Holy Trinity is a free rendering of Gerona Cathedral, devoid of an apse and structural divisions at the east end. The broad nave is contained within a cell of five bays beneath a ribbed vault. In the chancel the choir stalls are kept low and divided by a broad pavement raised on marble steps, giving visibility and effortlessly leading to a long high altar which commands the church and was originally to be completed by a carved and gilded triptych. A low screen separates the chancel from the nave. Medievalism was abandoned and Holy Trinity was designed for the ceremonial of High Mass taken from the *Pontificale Romanum*. For Sedding it was the Western Christian tradition which fulfilled the demands of modern worship and which he believed would continue until the end of time. This aspiration did not realise its potential, however, because Holy Trinity, under the influence of Lord Cadogan, the patron, followed a moderate path of churchmanship.

The deliberations of the Guild of St Gregory and St Luke resulted in many fine late-19th-century Catholic churches. Perhaps the most conspicuous is Downside Abbey in Somerset. This remarkable church is almost medieval in conception for being executed by many different hands. Pugin made plans for the original abbey in 1842 which were published in 'The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England' in the *Dublin Review* but remained unexecuted. In 1873 Dunn & Hansom made new plans for the Abbey in the Early English style; the monastic accommodation was built but the great church only achieved the building of the transepts, the base of the spire and part of a chevet of chapels surrounding the proposed quire. Hansom's bad health brought the project to a close in 1895.

In the meanwhile, the influence of the Guild was brought to bear under the aegis of Everard Green, Edmund Bishop, his friend and the leading English liturgiologist, Nathaniel Westlake, a painter and

glass-painter, and the architect Frederick Walters. Green was anxious for the church to be designed by Bentley, or Norman Shaw, George Gilbert Scott Jnr or Bodley. He was described by Bishop's biographer, Nigel Abercrombie, as 'uncritically devoted to Pugin *et hoc genus omne* and somewhat pugnaciously English in his preferences where the externals of religious practice were concerned'. Bentley he considered 'miles ahead of all talent of the day, and (thank God) is a splendid Catholic'. Due to Bentley's work at Westminster Cathedral, the commission for the quire went, instead, to Garner (whom Bentley considered a genius), newly converted to Catholicism in 1896, and who had been brought into this circle. Green became a loyal supporter of his work and Garner worked closely with Bishop.



Downside Abbey Church (Image: Nicholas Callinan)

The noble choir was brilliantly integrated into Dunn & Hansom's partly-finished chevet and completed in 1905. He went on to design St Sebastian's chapel on the north side and elevated gallery chapels on the south. The choir set the standard and form of the nave when it came to be built as a memorial to old boys of the school who

¹⁴ Henry Wilson, 'Some considerations of John Sedding's work', republished by Alastair Service (ed), *Edwardian Architecture and its Origins*, Architectural Press, 1975, p.277.

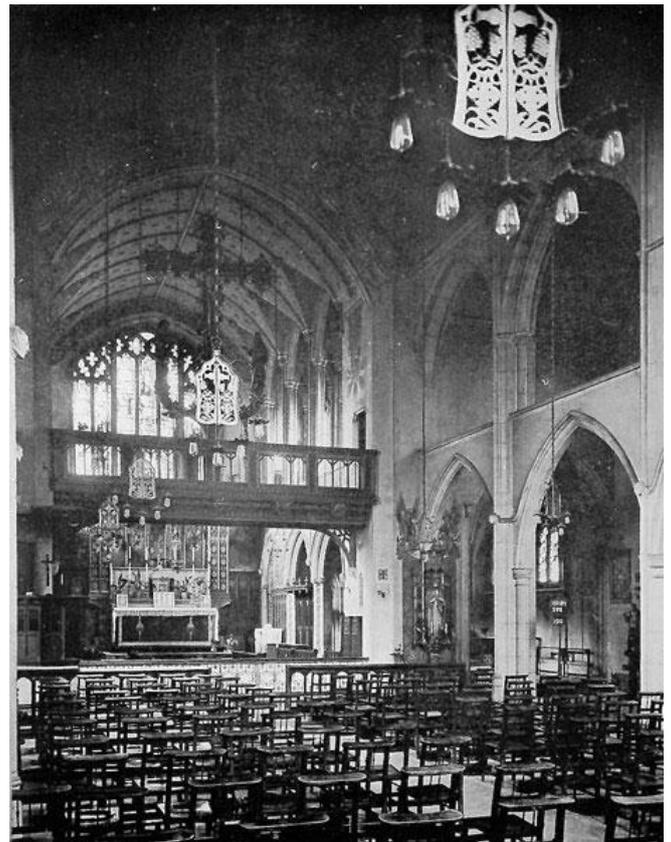


had died in the Great War to the designs of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1917-35, followed by the tower. Walters designed a monastic sacristy with panelled presses containing vestments for individual celebrants and an altar-like vesting press for High Mass, and chapels to the south-east of the choir, decorated with stained glass and a reredos by Westlake. Sir Nikolaus Pevsner visited Downside Abbey in the mid-1950s and thought that 'with its commanding tower it is Pugin's dream of the future of English Catholicism at last come true'. Some would say that the abbey church is the finest achievement of the Gothic Revival, unparalleled by no other, and the greatest tribute to Pugin's influence.¹⁵

In a parochial setting, Walters's Jesuit church of the Sacred Heart, Wimbledon, in South London (1886), embodied the Guild of St Gregory and St Luke's liturgical ideals. It is one of the largest and most impressive Catholic churches in Greater London and was built in the Decorated style. Edmund Bishop was insistent that a ciborium magnum, or baldacchino, was an essential part of the Christian altar. Walters designed a fine Gothic ciborium above the high altar (since removed) as a statement of a liturgically pure altar translated into Gothic terms. Other members of the Guild were responsible for designing much of the furniture and stained glass. Bentley designed the altar rails and Stations of the Cross, executed by Nathaniel Westlake, and Westlake himself designed stained glass executed by Lavers & Barraud. There is a magnificent rood designed by Walters and carved by the fine chisel of John McCulloch, the favoured wood and stone carver of George Gilbert Scott, Junior.¹⁶

The most significant architect associated with the Guild was J. F. Bentley. In such masterpieces as the church of the Holy Rood, Watford, in Hertfordshire (1883-90), he produced for the Catholic Church buildings that fully matched the achievements of the later Gothic Revival in the Anglican Church and were wholly English in their

forms. Pevsner regarded the church as 'one of the noblest examples of the refined, knowledgeable and sensitive Gothic Revival of the time'. While H. S. Goodhart-Rendel believed that Bentley surpassed Bodley as a church architect. Writing with a Catholic convert's zeal he said that the Holy Rood has 'strong claims to be considered the most lovely church the nineteenth century gave to England' and simply captioned an illustration of the exterior in his book *English Architecture Since the Regency*, 'perfection'.



Holy Rood, Watford, interior (Source: W.W. Scott-Moncrieff, John Francis Bentley, London, 1924)

Dominated by a magnificent rood loft without a screen, Bentley wrote that 'The church when completed will fully represent an old English church of the Hertfordshire district prior to the Reformation, though it is in no way a copy of any particular church.' Referring to the rood, 'he believed it was the largest example of a Rood erected in this country since Edward VI ordered that all such should be removed and burnt'. In its Englishness and the delicacy of the late-Gothic furniture once more Pugin's principles are realised in superlative terms.

¹⁵ Dom Aidan Bellenger OSB, *Downside Abbey: An Architectural History*, Merrell, 2011, *passim*.

¹⁶ Anthony Symondson SJ, 'Theology, worship and the late Victorian church', Chris Brooks and Andrew Saint eds, *The Victorian Church: Architecture and Society*, Manchester University Press, 1995, pp.211-12.

But if Pugin was ever fully realised as a liturgical designer it was in the work of Bodley's most original pupil, J. N. Comper, the only one who developed his work in a new form. When he was eighteen, Comper had been given a copy of Pugin's *Treatise on Chancel Screens and Rood Lofts* by Robert Taylor, his uncle. In 1916 he was commissioned to furnish St Mary & All Saints, Checkley, in Staffordshire, a church close to the Holy Angels', Hoar Cross, and Pugin's St Giles', Cheadle. On his initial visit he took the opportunity to go on to see both churches, St Giles' for the first time. The latter came as a revelation; Comper thought it the better of the two churches, and was astonished to discover that what he thought he was doing for the first time in the 1890s, had been attempted by Pugin fifty years previously. It was only the altar which, in his opinion, 'failed completely'.¹⁷

The altar was of as much concern to Comper as it was to Edmund Bishop. As a young man he was a mediaevalist even purer than the younger Scott. He believed that the Ornaments Rubric of the Book of Common Prayer confined the furnishing of churches to the years 1548–9 in which erroneously he believed that English chancels remained unaffected by the English Reformation. He came to see that Bodley's tall altar screens with gradines, taken from the *Directorium Anglicanum*, were inauthentic Gothic altars. The study of late-medieval illuminations and Flemish 15th-century panel paintings disclosed a different conception of authenticity.

A Gothic altar was deep (Pugin's were little better than shelves), preferably of stone, and had four riddle posts, hung with curtains suspended by silk chords looped in split rings running on black iron rods, supporting gilded figures of kneeling angels holding tall tapers. There were no gradines, or shelves for a crucifix and six candlesticks, only a low reredos—carved, coloured and gilded—or a long curtain in the form of a halpas. There should be an overhanging canopy, or tester, with a pyx for reservation suspended 'with its gold and snow-white linen glittering in front of the expanse of

silver glass ... bearing its jewelled images of the saints that ever surround the Presence'.

These were novel ideas for Anglicans and Catholics and it was at Downside that one of the earliest was installed in the Lady Chapel in 1896, to be superseded in 1913 by another of even greater splendour. The first was given by a liturgically-minded convert, Arthur Stapylton Barnes, who had been at the spearhead of Anglo-Catholic medievalism. The second was presented by General Sir William Butler to commemorate the priestly ordination of his son, Dom Urban Butler. The east wall was decorated with Islamic patterns in blue and gold while the five panels of the retable are framed within a stem of Jesse emulating Nottingham alabasters. New riddle posts, decorated in blue and gold, were provided. Above the altar stands a crucifix flanked by figures of St Mary and St John and further flanked by four gilded feretories containing relics. The altar frontal of cloth of gold has black silk orphreys which refer to the text from the Song of Songs. Above the altar a tester is suspended from the vault, depicting the coronation of the Virgin Mary, and the corners are terminated with the arms of the West Country abbeys dedicated to the Virgin. Of all Comper's Gothic altars, this is one of the finest works of religious art of the early twentieth century.¹⁸



The Lady Altar, Downside Abbey Church (Image: Nicholas Callinan)

¹⁷ Quoted in Anthony Symondson, *Sir Ninian Comper: the Last Gothic Revivalist*, RIBA, 1988, p.12.

¹⁸ Anthony Symondson SJ and Stephen Bucknall, *Sir Ninian Comper an Introduction to His Life and Work with Complete Gazetteer*, Spire Books and the Ecclesiological Society, 2006, p.46–7.

The church that fully embodied Pugin's and Comper's liturgical aspirations was St Cyprian's, Clarence Gate, Marylebone, London (1902-3), built in the Perpendicular style. A simple, red-brick, stone-dressed exterior gives no impression of the beauty and surprise of the interior. It is a fusion of controlled austerity and splendour. Austerity, created by the wide spacing and severe detail of the arcades, white walls, and low windows of great width and web-like tracery, filled in the aisles with bottle-end glass to cast a gentle diffusion of light; splendour in the gilded and painted tracery of the screen, stretching for the entire width of the church, with a loft, rood, figures of St Mary and St John and winged seraphim.

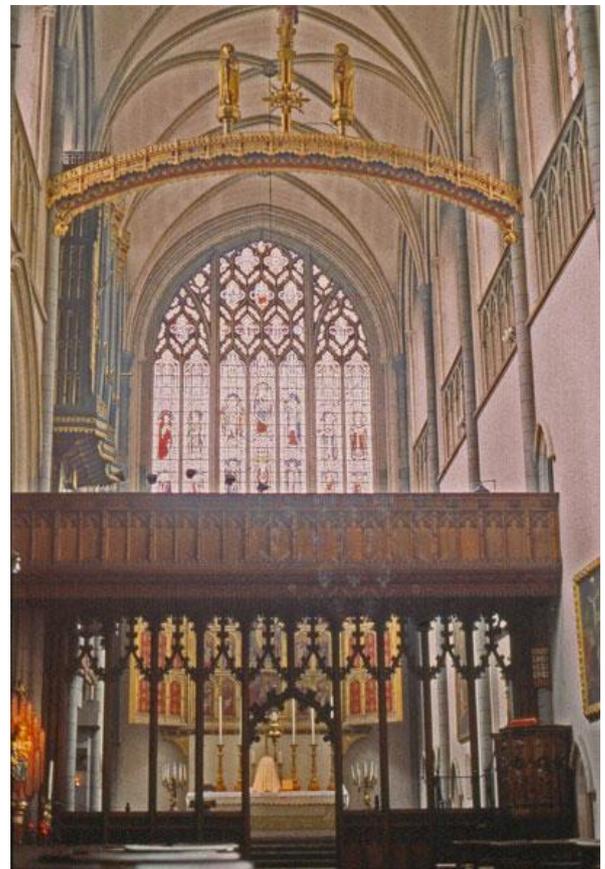


St Cyprian's, Clarence Gate (Image: Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett)

It is the Gothic altar which forms the heart of the building, made public to the entire body of the worshippers, but enshrined in the transparency of gilded screens. Comper described St Cyprian's as a

'lantern and the altar ... the flame within it'. To his admirers the church was a beautiful and individualistic interpretation of Gothic, an inevitably right expression of Anglican propriety and, liturgically, the most satisfactory church of its period in Britain. Comper's work, like Pugin's, represents a lost Catholic world of the late Middle Ages, delightfully re-captured with the most finished artistry.¹⁹

Not far from St Cyprian's is the church of the Annunciation, Bryanston Street, near Marble Arch in London (1911-14), designed by Bodley's office manager, Walter Tapper, and built of brown brick.



The Annunciation, Bryanston Street (Image: Brian Andrews)

What St Cyprian's gains in delicacy, the Annunciation transcends in structural weight. Defined externally by battered buttresses, the asymmetrical plan of a nave, north aisle and further northern passage aisle, has a giant arcade of clustered shafts of Purbeck marble continuing

¹⁹ Symondson & Bucknall *op cit*, pp.87-97.

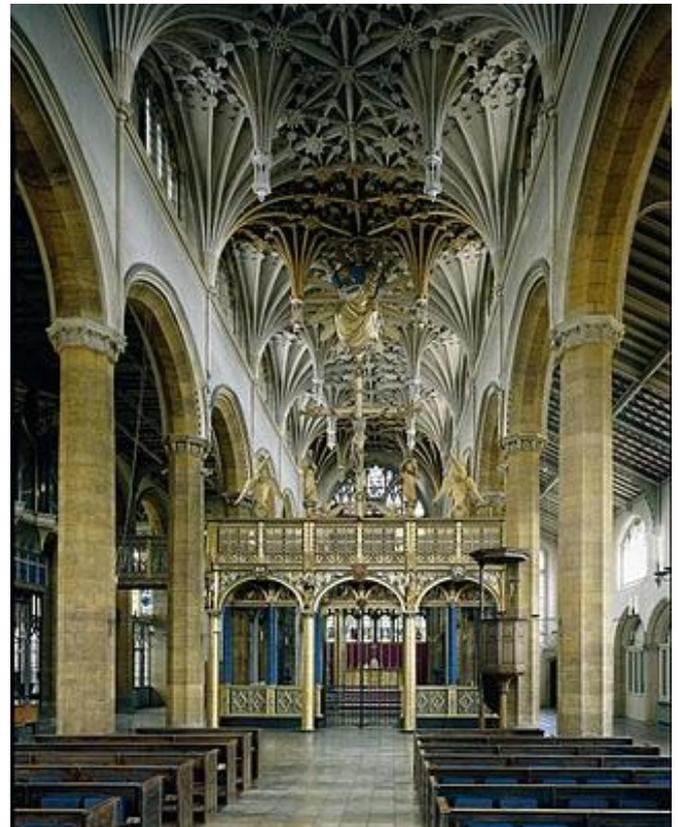
down the centre of the church, standing beneath vaulted roofs. It fulfils Pugin's aims set out in his letter to Bishop Sharples. Of great height, the gilded and curved rood is modelled on Scott's at St Agnes', Kennington, and it spans the nave above a constructional loft and screen. The walls are lime-washed and behind the high altar rises a tall, gilded triptych, painted by J. C. N. Bewsey, which stands beneath a broad east window glazed in Perpendicular glass by the same artist. At the west end is a gallery also modelled on the west end of St Agnes'. While less ground-breaking than St Cyprian's, the Annunciation brings to a triumphant climax the ambitious programme of late-Gothic Revival urban church building, brought to a cruel conclusion by the Great War. In its references it is a compendium of the leading influences of late-Victorian church architecture.²⁰

These architects revered Pugin and achieved his potential. Paul Waterhouse recognized the roots of the late Gothic Revival in Pugin in a serialized biography of him published in the *Architectural Review* under the editorship of Sedding's pupil, Henry Wilson, and illustrated by some of the leading architectural draughtsmen of the time. This prestigious monthly magazine was founded in 1897 and published all that was best in British architecture, regardless of style, and was in the vanguard of taste. From 1901 onwards newly-discovered drawings by Pugin and correspondence were published intermittently and these reflect continuing interest in his work and principles. Fifty years after his death he was far from invisible.

It was Comper who brought Gothic Revival church architecture to a surprising conclusion. St Mary's, Wellingborough, in Northamptonshire (1904-31), most fully exemplified his development from Northern European late-Gothic to what he described as 'unity by inclusion' – the fusion of Greek and Gothic architecture into a unified whole governed by the controlling mind of the architect. Pugin would not, one assumes, have approved of this development which, at best, he might have construed as church architecture spoken in broken English. But without Pugin's initial influence,

theory and experimentation St Mary's would not have come into being.

The generous scale of the interior assumes an almost continental dimension, and amazement is inspired by a blaze of decorative abandonment. Although Perpendicular elements give the church stylistic unity, the building is a synthesis of far-ranging European influences in which Comper declared his unitive perceptions in a major statement. The wide nave of eight bays is broken by octagonal piers derived from North Leach in Gloucestershire with the same fluting as the Parthenon and capitals decorated with lilies. The lierne vault of plaster, with fan pendants concealing electric light bulbs, extends from east to west, awaiting its colouring of blue and gold.



St Mary's, Wellingborough (Source: Wellingborough Parish)

The altar, inspired by Edmund Bishop's theories, stands beneath Comper's first major ciborium, gleaming with burnished gold, and surmounted by a youthful figure of the Resurrection surrounded by *putti* engaged in playful pursuits such as

²⁰ Clarke, *op cit*, p.135.

dropping rose petals on the heads of those below. But it is placed far in advance of the east wall and screens enclose the altar on three sides rather than across the width of the church, thereby emphasising its centrality at the heart of the building. The chancel screen is an astonishing synthesis of motifs and imagery ‘with mouldings and acanthus straight from Greece and a general design which is as much Italian as English and English as Italian’.

The rood stands upon a loft with Gothic fretted panels within a classical frame and has vivid green and gold dragons taken from medieval Greece discovered in Mistra. Above, dominating the building on a giant scale, was suspended a Majestas of the beardless Christ, gleaming in burnished gold. No church demonstrates so fully the progression of Comper’s ideas nor such a convincing solution to the post-Puginian battle of the styles, where Gothic and classic are combined without compromise. St Mary’s embodies the beauty and refinement developed in the final flowering of the Gothic Revival.²¹



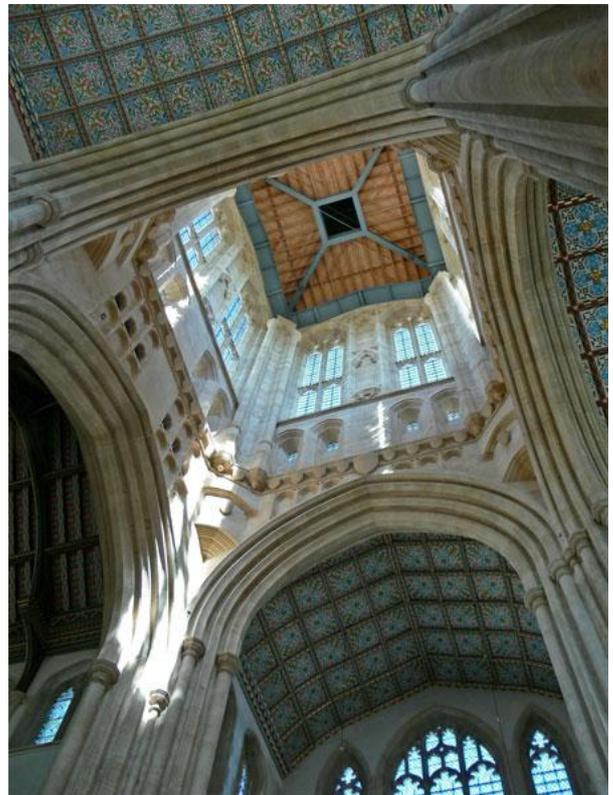
St Edmundsbury Cathedral (Image: John Maidment)

Sir Giles Gilbert Scott’s monumental Liverpool Cathedral (1901–78) forms the climax of the late

²¹ Symondson and Bucknall, *ibid*, pp.190–205.

Gothic Revival but liturgically falls outside the scope of this article. In 2006 St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Suffolk was completed by a magnificent central tower with gilded weathervanes and crocketed pinnacles, flint flushwork battlements and stepped buttresses. It was built of Barnack stone on medieval principles in load-bearing mass masonry set in lime mortar as would have been done in the fifteenth century. The architect was Warwick Pethers, the last pupil and assistant of Stephen Dykes Bower, an architect who had worked consistently in the historic styles throughout the middle and end of the twentieth century and who understood the liturgical planning of churches.

The interior creates a lantern that floods the altar below with light. Not only does the St Edmundsbury tower continue the structural logic of Gothic rediscovered by Pugin, but vindicates the validity of using the Gothic style of architecture, so successfully revived by him in the nineteenth century that went on to embody one of the most creative periods of English architecture.²²



View into the crossing tower, St Edmundsbury Cathedral (Image: John Maidment)

²² Symondson, *op cit*, pp.73–78.