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Welcome to the eighty-fifth Friends Newsletter.

We are very pleased to report to you that repairs have at long last been carried out on the south aisle east end coping at St Patrick's, Colebrook. Several of the coping stones dating—like the building—from 1856 had severely deteriorated along with their mortar joints. These stones have now been replaced and all the joints properly sealed with lime mortar. Our picture at right shows work in progress with stonemason Edrei Stanton at left and his offsider.

We had been experiencing water ingress into the south aisle east wall fabric, as well as water finding its way onto the south aisle floor. The soakage into the wall will take perhaps years to dry out. In the meantime it will affect the plaster and paint on that wall. So even though the source of the problem has been eliminated its effects will be felt for some time, perhaps necessitating re-plastering and re-painting in due course.

Old buildings are a bit like old people—their parts start to wear out and they need more and more 'medical' attention.

With kind regards,

Jude Andrews  
Administrative Officer



*Much needed repairs in progress on the south aisle east end coping of St Patrick's Church, Colebrook (Image: David Daintree)*

## *St Aidan's Cathedral, Enniscorthy*



This lovely atmospheric portrait of St Aidan's Cathedral was taken from the graveyard behind the chancel. The building dominates the Enniscorthy townscape as Pugin would surely have wished and is the mother church of the Diocese of Ferns of which St Aidan (+626), its first bishop, is the patron.

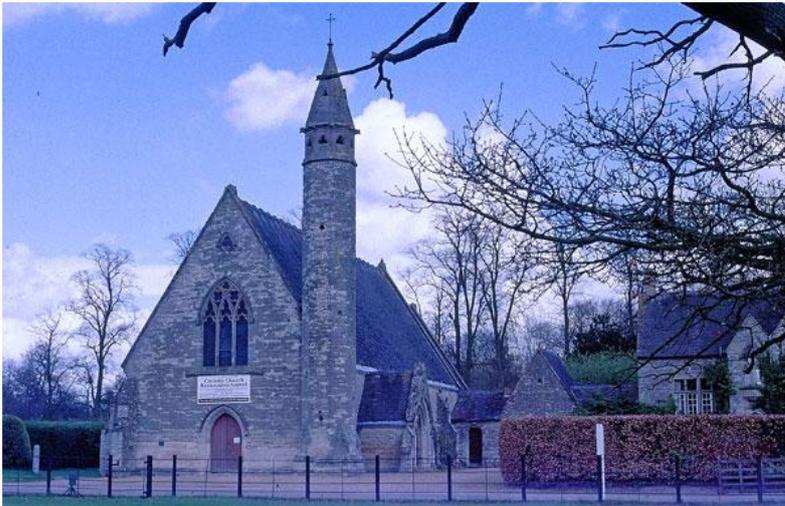
## *Metalwork Marvels*

In this issue we bring you another exquisite example of Pugin's astonishing creativity in reviving the spirit of medieval metalwork. This elegant and refined processional cross head has been worked up from the flat and then pinned to a wooden former. There is much foliated detail—typical of Pugin—on the arms and the fleur-de-lis terminations as well as symbols of the four Evangelists set in quatrefoils.



# Charles Hansom, a Pugin Follower (Part 3)

In our last issue when dealing with John Bunn Denny's Australian works we noted how Charles Hansom's design for St Patrick's, Ballarat, was a version of his English Church of Ss Mary & John, Wolverhampton. This modus operandi was followed by Hansom for many—but not all—of his Australian church buildings. Thus, we find this relationship between, for example: Ss Thomas & Elizabeth, Thurnham, Lancashire, and Sacred Heart Church, Darlington; St Osburg's, Coventry, and Ss Michael & John's Church (later Cathedral), Bathurst; and Ss Peter & Paul & St Elizabeth, Coughton, Warwickshire, and St Patrick's, Port Fairy (see images below).<sup>1</sup>



*Ss Peter & Paul & St Elizabeth, Coughton (image: Brian Andrews)*

Our next Hansom church, Our Blessed Lady and St Alphonsus', Blackmore Park, Worcestershire, has significant connections with Pugin but also a fascinating Australian connection.

<sup>1</sup> For Hansom's Australian churches see Brian Andrews, 'The English Benedictine Connection: The Works of Charles Hansom in Australia', *Fabrications*, Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand, No. 1, December 1989, pp. 33–55.



*St Patrick's, Port Fairy (Image: Brian Andrews)*

The church was built on the edge of the Blackmore Park estate a short distance north of the village of Hanley Swan. This estate had been owned since the sixteenth century by the Hornyholds, a staunch Recusant family whose head Thomas Charles Hornyhold became High Sheriff of Worcestershire in 1841.<sup>2</sup> It was his nephew John Vincent Gandolfi, son of Count Pietro Gandolfi, who paid for the entire cost of the new church, begun in 1844 and opened in 1846. Gandolfi's wealthy Genoese family traded as Gandolfi and Co., silk merchants of Throckmorton Street, London.<sup>3</sup>

It was while Hansom's Coventry church for Fr (later) Archbishop William Bernard Ullathorne OSB was being constructed (see Newsletter No. 72) that he received the commission for Blackmore Park. Again, Ullathorne had a key involvement in the composition of this sumptuous building as he had for his own church in Coventry:

I had had something to say in the designing of that beautiful church, the nave of which is an adaptation of the one at Skelton [c.1247], near York, designed by the architect of the transept of York Minster. And the porch at Blackmore, one of the most beautiful of modern designs, was planned by Mr

<sup>2</sup> Peter Howell, 'The Church of Our Lady and St Alphonsus, Blackmore Park, Worcestershire', n.d., n.p.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

Hansom at my suggestion, being developed from the door at Skelton, which is only a thickening of the wall to secure well-recessed jambs ... I also suggested the adoption of the decorated style in the chancel, so as to express in the transition from the plain lancet of the nave into the more floriated and lightsome, the passage from the secular of the nave to the more sacred and mystical portion of the building. It was thus I thought that the different styles might be combined with significant effect, now that we possess them all.<sup>4</sup>

Skelton Church was very small, consisting of just a two-bay nave and one-bay chancel, both with side aisles, the junction of the nave and chancel being marked by a double bellcote. The whole composition sat under a continuous gabled roof.

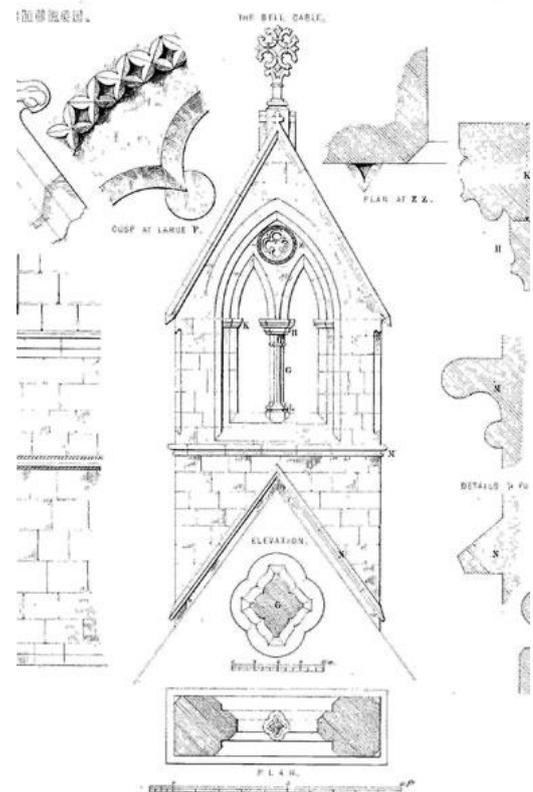


*Skelton Church (Source: Ewan Christian, Architectural Illustrations of Skelton Church, Yorkshire)*

The evidence would appear to show that Hansom visited Skelton Church before starting his design and made comprehensive measured drawings of the building. In 1844 when he started to prepare his design the only published information on Skelton had appeared in a work of the same year by

<sup>4</sup> William Bernard Ullathorne, *From Cabin Boy to Archbishop - The Autobiography of Archbishop Ullathorne*. Shane Leslie [Ed.], Burns, Oates and Co., London, 1941, p. 211.

George Poole entitled *The Churches of Yorkshire*.<sup>5</sup> But the illustrations therein were not accurate scale drawings that could account for the level of detail and fidelity to the actual building shown in Hansom's Blackmore Park essay. The accuracy of his design is clear from an actual pattern book by Ewan Christian, published in 1846 and therefore too late for Hansom to have used.<sup>6</sup> An example is given below which tallies remarkably closely with Hansom's building.



*The Skelton bellcote (Source: Ewan Christian, Architectural Illustrations of Skelton Church, Yorkshire)*

Hansom's design included a monastery for a community of Redemptorists.

Gandolfi had arranged this as a base for their missions. It was connected to the church by a passage, the whole in its quintessential English rural setting complete with lychgate and churchyard making for a charming and thoroughly Puginesque revival of old Catholic life.

<sup>5</sup> George Poole, *The Churches of Yorkshire*, T.W. Green and Co., Leeds. 1844, vol. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ewan Christian, *Architectural Illustrations of Skelton Church, Yorkshire*, George Bell, London, 1846.



*Above: The church and monastery with connecting passage (Image: Brian Andrews); below: Hansom's 1845 lithographic engraving of his design*



The monastery 'contained a library, guest room, refectory, kitchen, etc., and nine cells. The Redemptorists remained here only until 1851; they preferred to conduct missions in more populous districts. The church has since been secular.<sup>7</sup>



*The delightful and thoroughly Puginesque monastery, later presbytery, with its passage connecting to the church (Image: Brian Andrews)*

In December 1845, most probably at the urging of Ullathorne, Hansom sent a copy of the lithographic engraving illustrated on our previous page via the Australian hierarchy's English agent Fr Thomas Paulinus Heptonstall OSB to Archbishop Polding.<sup>8</sup> Polding visited Europe from February 1848 to March 1848 during which time on 5 August 1846 he preached at the dedication of Hansom's Church of St Anne, Edge Hill, Liverpool.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps it was this experience coupled with the Blackmore Park engraving that resulted in his obtaining two church plans from Hansom.<sup>10</sup> These plans along with the engraving joined Pugin's 1842 plans for Polding in Sydney. All would in due course become a profitable quarry for William Munro, the Diocesan Architect, about whom we will present a series in later Newsletters.

<sup>7</sup> Howell, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Hansom to Heptonstall, 30 December 1845, Downside Abbey Archives, L463. Heptonstall was Polding's cousin.

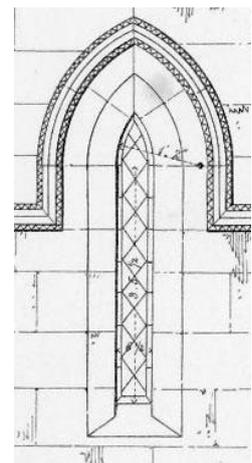
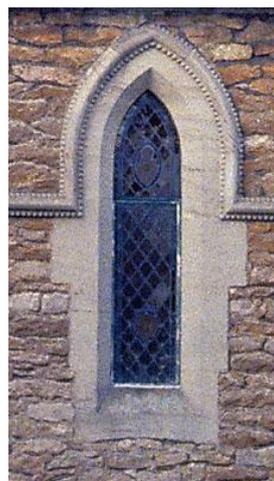
<sup>9</sup> *The Tablet*, 8 August 1846, p. 505. The engraving in this issue showed the church as planned. However, only the nave, aisles, porch and tower without its spire were constructed to Hansom's drawings.

<sup>10</sup> Churches from these plans were built in Darlinghurst and Bathurst.



*St Anne's, Edge Hill, Liverpool (Source: The Tablet, 8 August 1846)*

Turning to the design of the Blackmore Park church we can examine how Hansom used the Skelton exemplar. He doubled the number of nave bays to four, retaining the Skelton scheme of placing nave and aisles under a gabled roof. The nave west front was a replication of that at Skelton except that the aisle lancets were made wider. Likewise, the aisle walls were as at Skelton but with wider lancets.

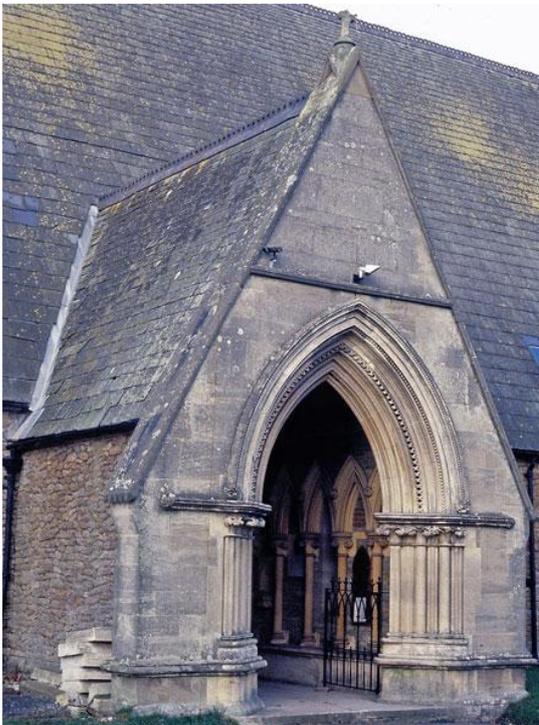


*The nave lancets at Blackmore Park (Image: Brian Andrews) and Skelton ((Source: Ewan Christian, Architectural Illustrations of Skelton Church, Yorkshire)*



*The south-east elevation (Image: Private collection)*

He precisely replicated the double bellcote which sat above the nave and chancel junction at Skelton but shifted it to the nave east wall.



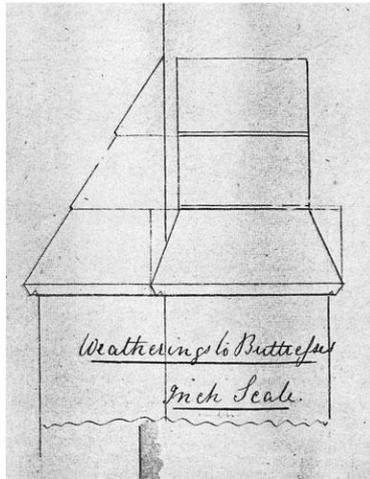
*The south porch (Image: Brian Andrews)*

As for the south porch, Hansom developed it in accordance with Ullathorne's abovementioned comments,<sup>11</sup> replicating the beautiful façade which at Skelton had been merely a thickening of the aisle south wall but here placing it against a deep porch. On their interior faces the east and west walls had elegant blind arcades in immaculate Early English, consonant with the nave's (and Skelton's) detail vocabulary. A gabled organ chamber projected from bay two of the nave north wall.

Hansom followed Ullathorne's suggestion in designing a 'more floriated and lightsome' two-bay chancel in the 'decorated style'. He adopted the Flowing Decorated idiom, expressed particularly in the two-light south windows and the three-light east window with its interesting tracery, but also in the buttresses. These latter were of characteristic Hansom form with the splaying of their width at the bottom stone of the weathering just above the string course (see an illustration of such treatment overleaf).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ullathorne, loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Such treatment of buttresses is to be found, inter alia, on his buildings in Adelaide, Buckland, Cheltenham, Woodchester and the original Ampleforth Priory church.



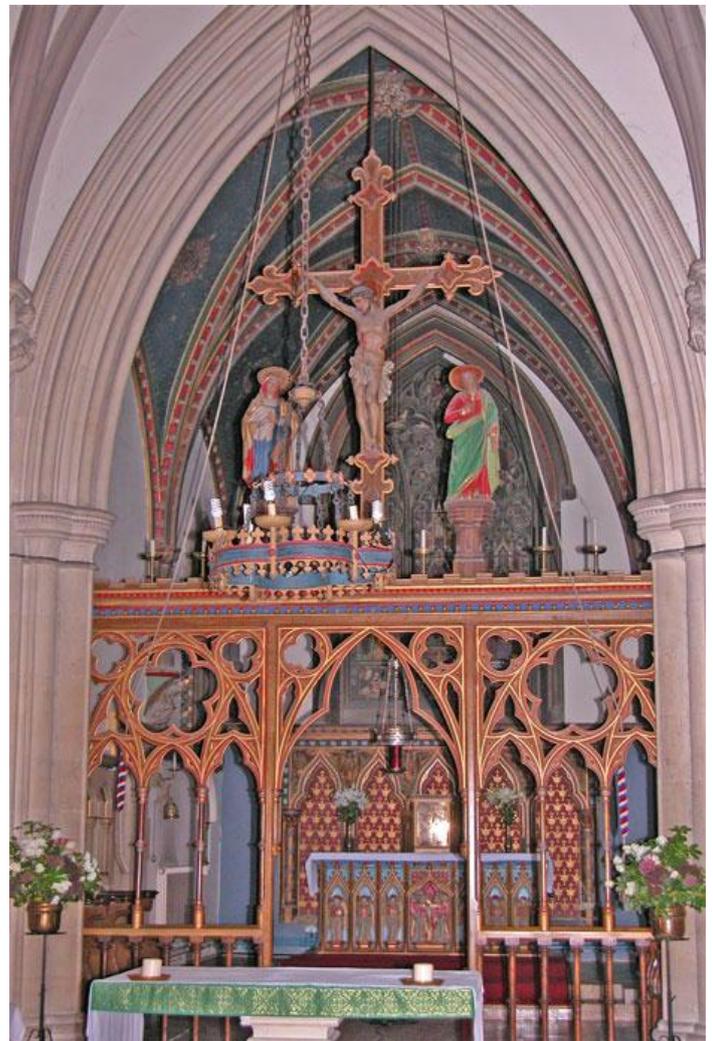
*A buttress drawing on Hansom's plans for St Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Adelaide*

The nave interior followed all the exquisite Early English detail—capitals, columns, bases and so on—which he had measured at Skelton. A plaster vaulted ceiling was also added, although Hansom wasn't to know at this stage that the one in Skelton had only been added in a restoration by Henry Graham in 1814–18.<sup>13</sup>

The easternmost of the side aisle bays were enclosed by parclose screens and arranged as side chapels with carved stone altars, and a rood screen stood at the chancel arch. A sacristy opened off the chancel north wall. The whole building was lavishly furnished and finished, including Hardman metalwork and Minton encaustic floor tiles designed by Pugin.



*The interior looking east (Image: Brian Andrews)*



*The rood screen (Image: Private collection)*

<sup>13</sup> It was removed c.1880.



The nave was lit by a pair of iron corona lucis with brass crestings, one of which is visible in the images on the preceding page, costing £25.<sup>14</sup>



*A detail of the nave floor (Image: Brian Andrews)*

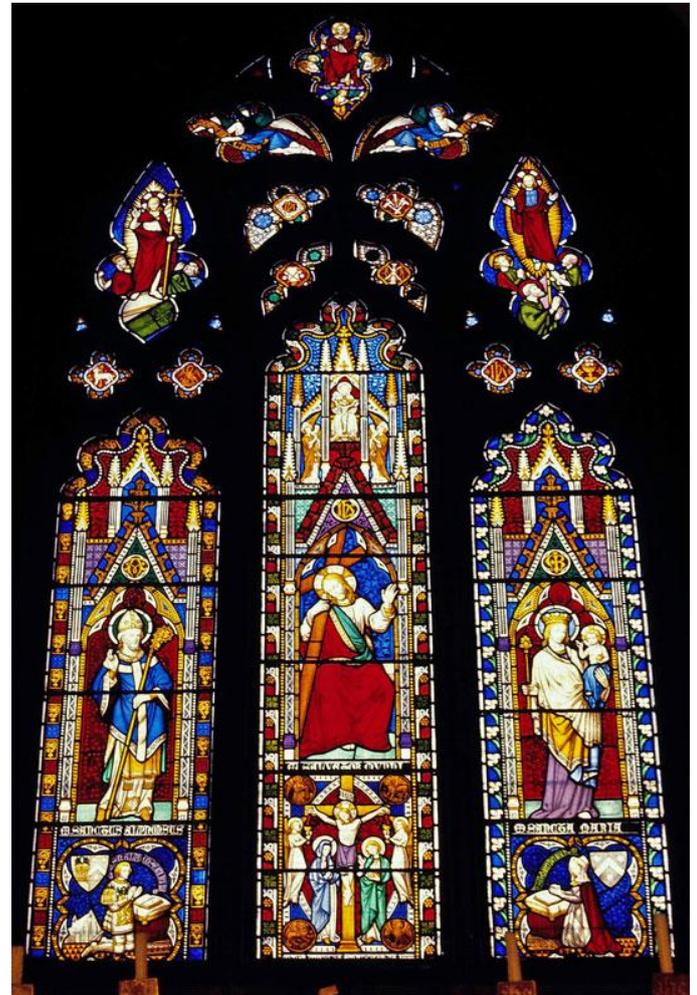


*A detail of the chancel floor (Image: Brian Andrews)*

The floors were entirely paved with tiles, those in the chancel being richer and more colourful than those in the nave, and including the Gandolfi arms. In this differentiation of the chancel floor Hansom was faithfully adhering to Pugin's theory of propriety as enunciated in his *True Principles*. This greater enrichment of the chancel for reasons of

<sup>14</sup> Hardman Day Book, 17 June 1846: 'I.V. Gandolfi, Esq. Hanley 2 coronas to hold 6 lights ea. with Brass Cresting etc. No. 1042. £25', quoted in *Victorian Church Art*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1971, exhibition catalogue, p. 13.

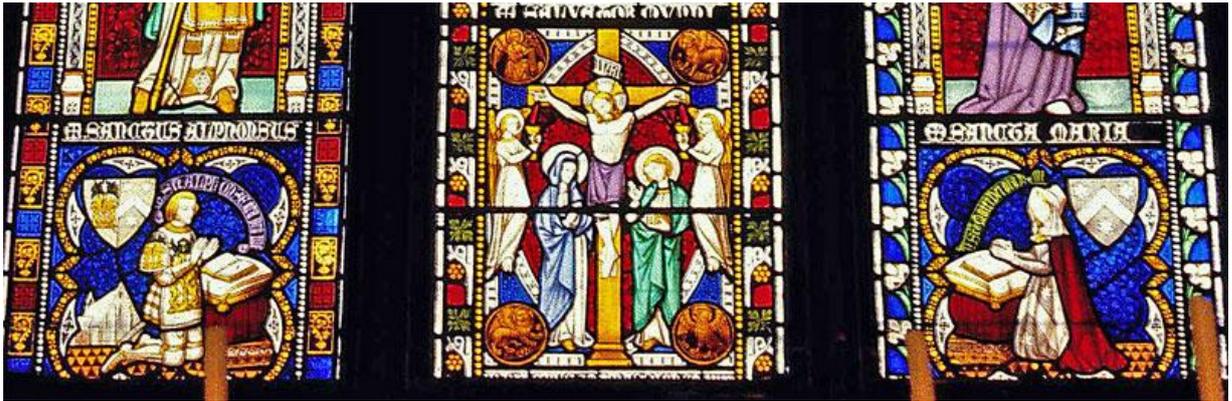
propriety extended to the painted and decorated treatment of the vaulting, windows, string course and wall posts. Every window contained stained glass by Wailes, that in the nave lancets being non-figurative and that in the traceried chancel east and south windows being richly figurative, again a nod by Hansom in the direction of propriety.



*The chancel east window (Image: Brian Andrews)*

Given the style, rich iconography and treatment of the chancel windows it is tempting to attribute their design to Pugin. However, Stanley Shepherd's admirable work on Pugin's stained glass does not include Blackmore Park.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the reason is partly because they were by Wailes who made Pugin's glass for so many years and also because Hansom was such a talented follower of Pugin. A detail of the east window is given overleaf.

<sup>15</sup> Stanley A. Shepherd, *The Stained Glass of A.W.N. Pugin*, Spire Books, Reading, 2009.



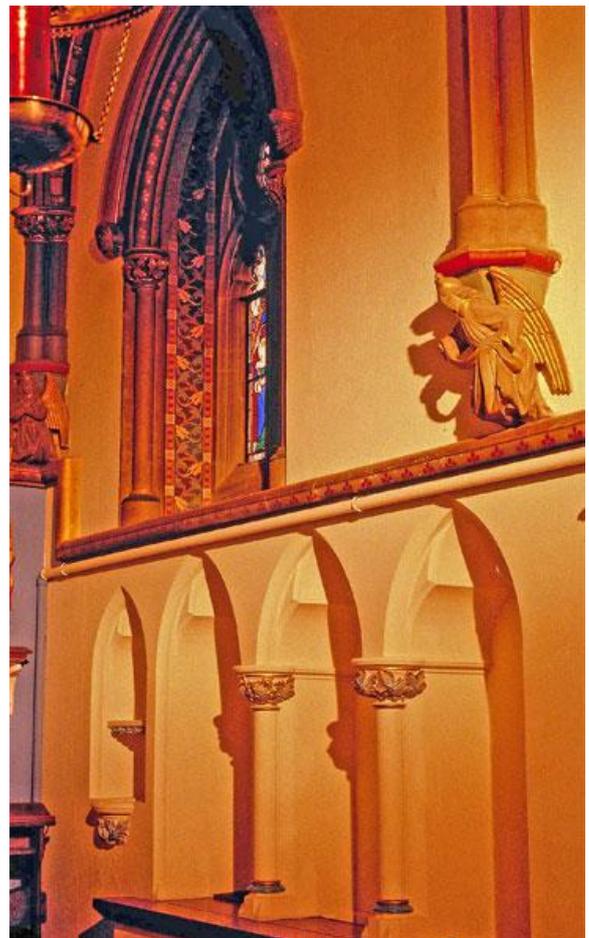
*The base of the chancel east window (Image: Brian Andrews)*

There is lovely detail at the base of the window. In the central light is a Calvary group with angels collecting blood from Christ's hands (a frequent iconographic image of Pugin's), surrounded by symbols of the four Evangelists. At the base of the flanking lights are the donor and his wife kneeling at prayer and invoking the saints in whose honour the church is dedicated. Those images appear directly above the kneeling figures. A traditional medieval touch in the left-hand light is an image of the Blackmore Park church behind the donor.

The Calvary group atop the rood screen may also be a Pugin inclusion. In our series on Pugin's 1847 crucifix figures (Newsletters 50, 52–56) we speculated that the figure on the Blackmore Park crucifix might have been the exemplar for the group of at least twenty-two in England, Ireland and Australia carved by George Myers' men. We are disinclined to believe that the figure is nineteenth-century or of English origin. Likewise for the attendant figures of the Virgin Mary and St John whose unusual modeling and pose (neither gazing up at the crucifix nor inclined towards it) differs markedly from Pugin's rood screen Calvary groups.<sup>16</sup> The attendant figures have a certain naivety and stiffness of pose which suggests to us that they might be of Central European (rural?) origin perhaps from the early eighteenth century.

Did Pugin acquire all three figures in his Continental travels?<sup>17</sup>

The chancel was furnished with a splendid carved and painted high altar as well as sedilia and a sacarium.



*The sedilia and sacarium (Image: Brian Andrews)*

<sup>16</sup> Or, for that matter, from Hansom's rood screen groups in Thurnham, Erdington and Woodchester.

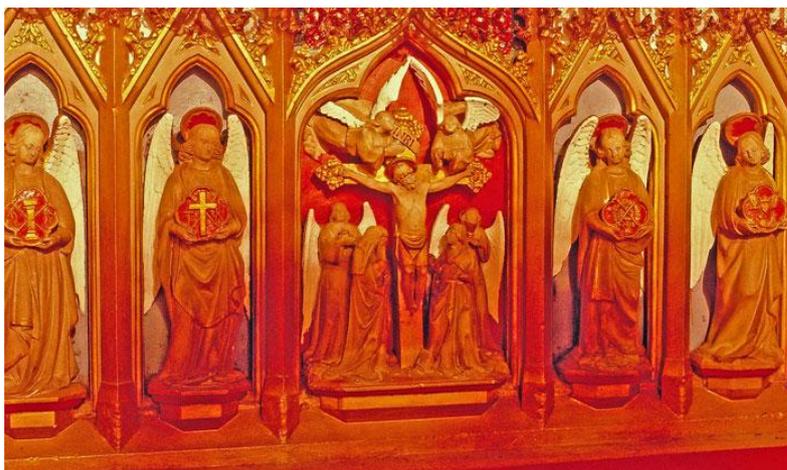
<sup>17</sup> We happily admit that at this juncture the preceding comments are pure speculation.



*The High Altar (Image: Brian Andrews)*

The High Altar with its reredos was entirely in the Pugin idiom, the iconography of the carving to both being based on Catholic belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and in the Mass as sacrifice.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the central panel of the altar was a Calvary scene and it was flanked by angels holding the instruments of the Passion.

The spandrels of the blind arcade on the reredos were carved with six-winged seraphim, the name given in the Old Testament to the guardians of the sacred presence of God.



*The central section of the High Altar front (Image: Brian Andrews)*



*Seraphim on the reredos (Image: Brian Andrews)*

The church was opened for worship on 20 August 1846, just under a fortnight before the solemn opening ceremonies at Pugin's glorious St Giles', Cheadle.<sup>19</sup> All the metalwork had been designed by Pugin and manufactured, as always, by Hardmans. This collection was described by Phoebe Stanton in her 1950 doctoral thesis on Pugin as

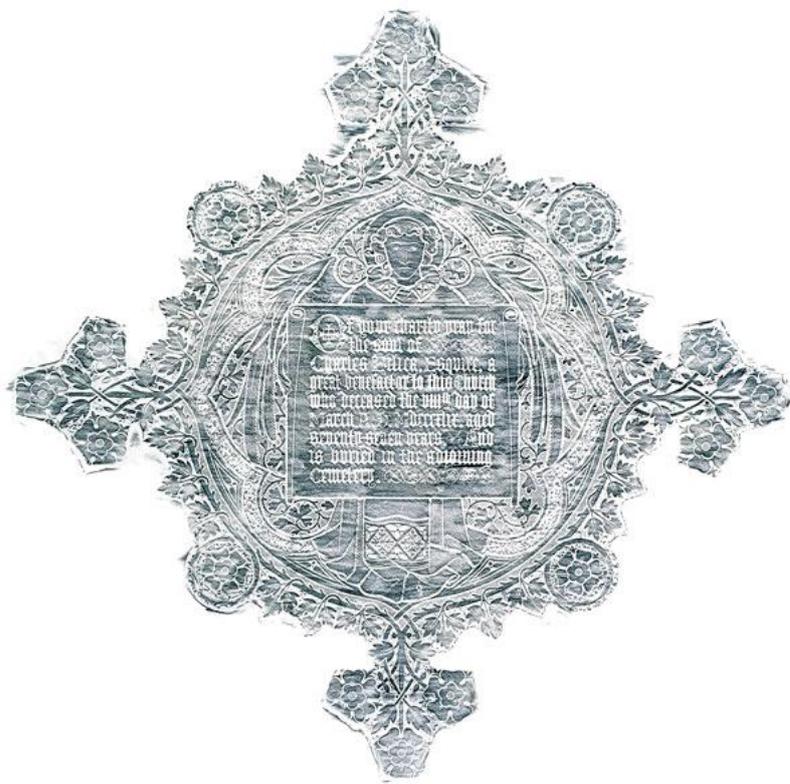
<sup>18</sup> Yet again this demonstrates Hansom's fidelity as a talented follower of Pugin.

<sup>19</sup> *The Tablet*. 29 August 1846, pp. 553–4.



‘unquestionably the most representative collection of Pugin’s church metal work’.<sup>20</sup>

The church has an excellent collection of Hardman memorial brasses, the earliest dating from 1852 and designed by Pugin.<sup>21</sup> The black marble in which this brass is set has a striking diamond-shaped form and the brass is of great elegance of composition. Its inscription reads: ‘Of your charity pray for the soul of Charles Filica, Esquire, a great benefactor of this Church who deceased the VIIIth day of March, A.D. MDCCCXLIX, aged seventy-seven years. And is buried in the adjoining Cemetery.’



*A rubbing of the Pugin-designed Filica memorial brass (Image: Private collection)*

Happily, this splendid Hansom church and its adjoining monastery have survived these last 168 years almost unscathed. With respect to the church

<sup>20</sup> Phoebe Stanton, ‘Welby Pugin and the Gothic Revival’, unpublished PhD thesis, London University, 1950, quoted in *Victorian Church Art*, op. cit., p. 14.  
<sup>21</sup> Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery catalogue No. MB1852/34, listed in David Meara, *A.W.N. Pugin and the Revival of Memorial Brasses*, Mansell, London, 1991, p. 97.

there has been some re-painting of the decorative work on the walls, vaulting and furnishings, not always with a precise match to the original colours, and the rood screen had its uprights removed for a period in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, but these have been reinstated (see before and after images on p. 9). For a time skylights were inserted above the aisle windows (see p. 6) despite Hansom’s windows having been made larger than in the Skelton exemplar, but even these unsightly additions have been removed (see p. 8).

Despite its design origins having not been entirely original, this richly decorated and furnished pastiche surely demonstrates how faithful and accomplished a follower of Pugin was Charles Hansom. **To be continued.**

## *Pugin’s Altars & Altarpieces (Part 1)*

### **Introduction**

In our examination of Pugin’s works over the past eight years we have experienced his steadfast fidelity to the letter and spirit of medieval ecclesiastical architecture and furnishings, yet never descending to mere copyism. For him we might therefore expect that the altar, the visual and liturgical focus of a church interior, situated in the chancel, ‘the place of sacrifice, the most sacred part of the edifice’,<sup>22</sup> would of all things conform with his archaeologically accurate approach to design.

Pugin’s extensive travels throughout England and on the Continent had armed him with a comprehensive knowledge of the form and decorative vocabulary of medieval altars and altarpieces, borne out by the scholarly entry on ‘Altars’ in his hugely influential 1844 *Glossary*.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> A. Welby Pugin, *The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England*, Charles Dolman, London, 1843, p. 30.  
<sup>23</sup> A. Welby Pugin, *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament and Costume*, Henry G. Born, London, 1844.

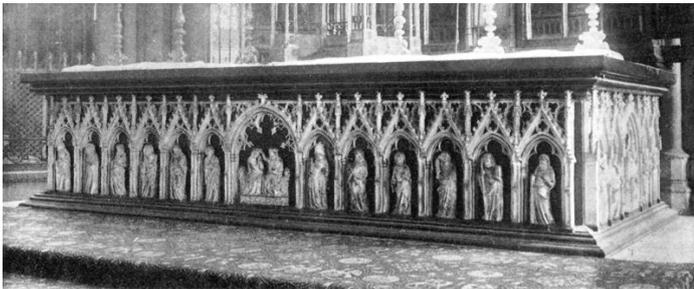




After a short introduction on the historical development of altars he set out the possible form of altars in his own time:

In this country altars may now be constructed with equal propriety in the following different manners :—

1. Of four stone walls, supporting a stone slab, with a frontal of embroidery, chased metal or mosaic work. . . .
2. Four or six low pillars of stone, marble or metal, standing on a raised base, supporting the slab.
3. Stone corbels projecting from the wall, with angels or other imagery, on which the altar stone rests. This method is only available for small altars.
4. Stone walls, with the front divided into compartments, with niches and images somewhat after the fashion of a high tomb. The first example of this kind, is the high altar of the Minster, Cologne.<sup>24</sup>



*The High Altar, Cologne Cathedral*

Regarding altarpieces/reredoses he stated:

The wall behind the altar may be enriched by niches filled with sacred images, or garnished by a low reredos made of oak, gilt and panelled, or of precious metals, enamelled and jewelled. Sometimes the wall was simply hung with needlework, varied with the festivals, or decorated by a triptych, with folding leaves, painted on both sides, to be opened during the time of offering the Holy Sacrifice.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Pugin, *Glossary*, op. cit., 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 1868, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

### **Pugin and late-medieval altars**

Whilst Pugin preferred to base his designs on English medieval precedent, the wholesale destruction of altars during the English Reformation meant that altars with their slabs in place were rare. It was reported by Edward the Sixth's Commissioners in their returns for Lincolnshire that 'one altar slab was converted into a kitchen sink, another to a fire-back, another to a cistern-bottom, another to a hearth-stone, another into a bridge over a brook, another into a stile in the churchyard, while another was converted by the parson into a pair of steps for a staircase.'<sup>26</sup> Thus, in practice, Pugin's source of design ideas was almost entirely confined to Continental examples. **To be continued.**

<sup>26</sup> Francis Bond, *The Chancel of English Churches*, Humphrey Milford, London, 1916, p. 49.

