True Principles

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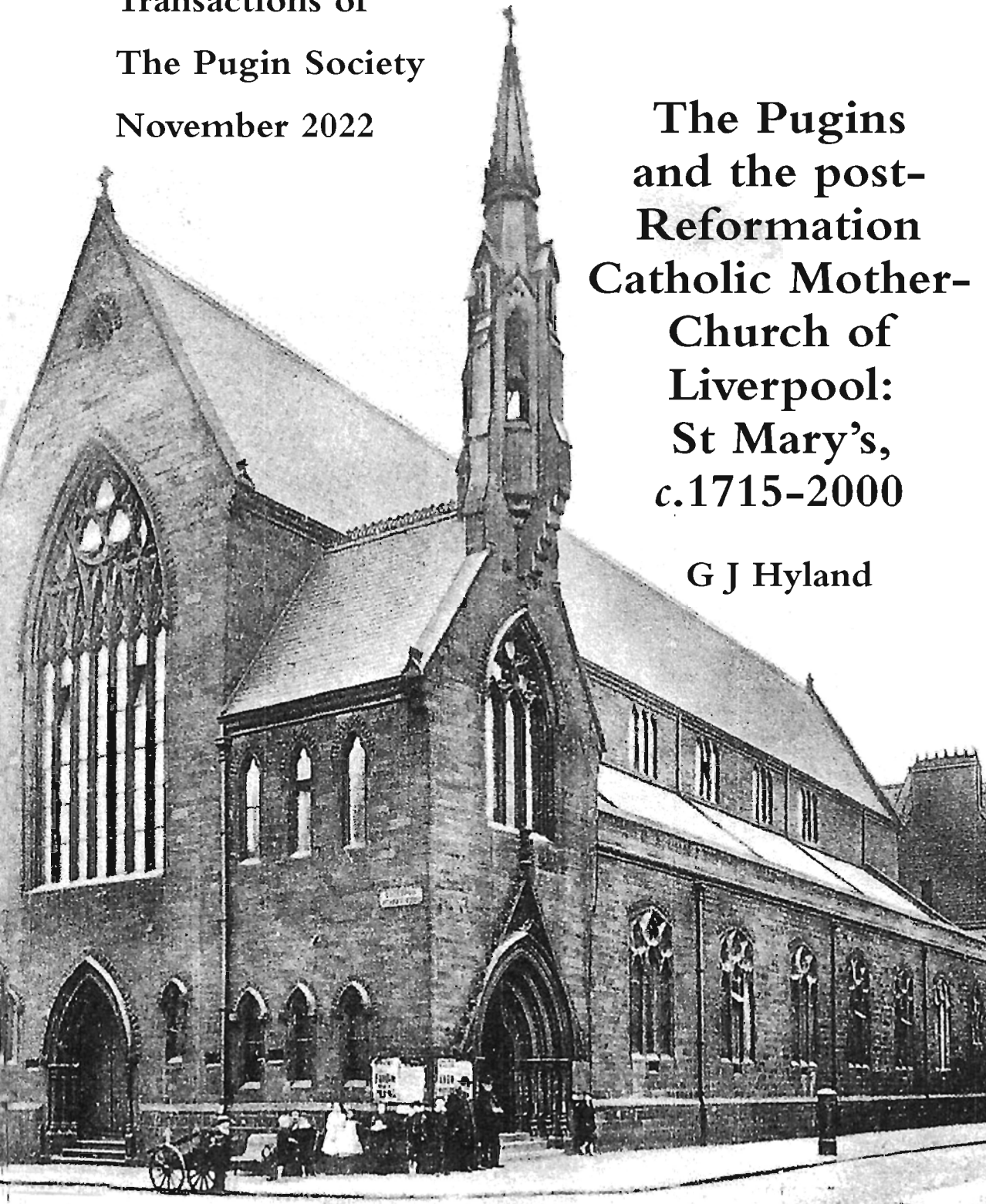

The Pugins and the post-Reformation Catholic Mother-Church of Liverpool: St Mary's, *c.*1715-2000

G J Hyland

Editor: Dr John Elliott, South Barn, Old Standlynch Farm, Downton, Salisbury SP5 3QR
e-mail: jpelliott@btinternet.com

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Dom George Bede Cox OSB,

Rector of St Mary's, 1894-1938

Ancestral Family Friend

and Beloved Pastor,

to whose memory this paper is dedicated.

Requiescat in pace

Foreword

Saint Mary's story perhaps exemplifies that of the Catholic Church, and church buildings generally in England. It began with a low-key missionary church of the later penal times – a small chapel in Edmund Street, which was later demolished by a mob, and re-built in the same street disguised as a warehouse; it was served by the Jesuits until 1783 when monks of the Benedictine Order took over responsibility for the mission, which they continued to serve for another 186 years. Saint Mary's parish was made up of a small recusant community that had survived in Liverpool through the penal times and an ever-growing and largely poor Irish community numbering many thousands, even before the waves of Irish who landed at Liverpool fleeing for their lives in the Great Famine of the 1840s.

Michael McCarthy, my great-great grandfather, was one such early migrant originally from Tipperary who, living in Leeds Street, a stone's throw from the chapel, was welcomed by the recusant Catholics and became part of the Saint Mary's parish community. He was, perhaps, as a tea dealer, a little more prosperous than most of the Irish immigrants and, with others, set about raising funds to build an imposing Pugin church on Edmund Street, built literally with the pennies of the Irish poor.

This church survived for only 40 years before the development of a nearby railway station necessitated its removal. So loved was the church that, in order to preserve it, it was carefully dismantled stone by stone and reassembled on a site close-by in Highfield Street, where it continued to serve the parish for another 56 years.

As the local residential population declined, decimated by the destruction of the Luftwaffe blitz to which the Highfield Street church fell prey, by re-settlement schemes and urban post-war redevelopment, the post-war, re-built Saint Mary's found herself in the 1950s in the commercial district of Liverpool, now serving numerous members of Liverpool's city-centre business and professional community, the majority commuting daily from the suburbia, who maintained Saint Mary's vibrancy long after the departure of the Benedictines in 1969. This new Catholic middle class was the beneficiary of the spiritual formation, education and social activities provided by Saint Mary's church and schools – a pattern replicated by many Catholic church communities during the first half of the twentieth century.

The phenomenal nineteenth century growth of a largely Irish and working-class church; the post-World War II expansion of an educated, more affluent laity; the surge of hope of renewal after the Second Vatican Council; a wave of secularism with falling Mass attendance and crippling depletion of vocations to the priesthood is a pattern experienced across England. The post-Reformation Mother-church of Liverpool was closed and the re-built 1950s building demolished in 2001.

A handsome silver medal, one of only thirty struck, depicting on one side the interior of the Pugin church in Edmund Street, the third Saint Mary's, the other side being inscribed with a message of gratitude to Michael McCarthy, is a family treasure marking a particular poignancy for my family spanning over 150 years. It was through a serendipitous series of events that this medal, a treasured family curio, presented to

my great-great grandfather and namesake, took the interest of Dr. Gerard Hyland and what set out to be a short article has blossomed over the past two years to become the thoroughly researched, impressive and detailed account of the Pugins and Saint Mary's, Liverpool.

Fr Michael Harwood,
Priest of the Archdiocese of Liverpool

Historical preamble

Since two of the five churches discussed in this paper pre-date the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1791, which allowed Catholics to practise their religion once more and to build churches without fear of penalties, it might be helpful, in order to 'set the scene' contextually, to consider the prevailing situation in seventeenth- and eighteenth- century England, pre-1791, both politically and in terms of the civil disabilities then suffered by Catholics, some of which were not lifted until the twentieth century.

Under the Penal Laws, enacted after the Reformation and during the following century, practice of the Catholic religion was proscribed, attending Mass being punished by fines and imprisonment; even more severe were the penalties imposed on Catholic priests who were discovered to have practised their ministry, which in some circumstances, included the death sentence. Catholics were not allowed to own or inherit land and property, were barred from the professions, teaching, the universities (Oxford and Cambridge), from holding civil or military office, and taking seats in parliament.

In 1685, James Stuart, whose conversion to Catholicism had become known by 1673, succeeded his brother Charles II as King James II of England and James VII of Scotland. Although Parliament was not enthusiastic about having a Catholic monarch[1], he was tolerated[2] because, at the time, there was no prospect of a Catholic dynasty since James had only two daughters, Mary and Anne, both of whom had been brought up as Anglicans; furthermore, the husband of Mary, the heiress presumptive, was the Sovereign Prince William III of Orange (her first cousin, m. 1677, and James' nephew) who was a leading figure in the militaristic defence of Continental Protestantism against the aggressive Catholic expansionist agenda of Louis XIV.

Two years later, James II issued (as a Royal Prerogative) his Declaration of Indulgence,[3] the aim of which was to extend to others the same freedom to worship according to their beliefs as was enjoyed by members of the Church of England. To this end, the Declaration dispensed Catholics and Dissenters from the penalties to which they had hitherto been subjected, including the necessity of Catholics having to take certain oaths (in particular that of the 1673 Test Act,[4] requiring abjuration of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation) as a prerequisite for holding civil or military office. James' attempts to promulgate and impose his Declaration provoked much hostility, and alienated many of his former High Church Tory supporters.

The following year, 1688, James successfully petitioned the Holy See to sanction the division of England and Wales into four ecclesiastical districts (Apostolic Vicariates[5]), each to be administered by a titular bishop[6] who acted as the Pope's vicar (Vicar Apostolic).

In June of the same year (1688), James II's second wife, Mary of Modena (m. 1673), gave birth to a son, James Francis Edward, who preceded Mary as heir apparent, entailing now the very real prospect of a Catholic (Stuart) dynasty. Given this unexpected development, together with James' intention to have the Test Act repealed and his overtly pro-Catholic appointments, William was invited to invade militarily (as had already been mooted[7] even before the birth of James' son), not with the intention of deposing him, but to protect the Established Church[8] against Catholic subversion by dissuading James II

from pursuing his pro-Catholic agenda, and to protect the authority of parliament from being undermined by unrestrained use of the Royal Prerogative.

The invasion[9] took place on 5 November 1688. Owing to numerous defections, however, James' army put up little resistance, and by December, at the second attempt, he had succeeded in fleeing to France where he was welcomed by his cousin Louis XIV who made available for him a royal chàteau at Saint-Germaine-en-Laye near Paris, where, for the rest of his life,[10] he set up Court, claiming to be the rightful King of England. In this claim, James had the support of many loyal followers (Jacobites) in a number of countries whose avowed aim was to restore him, (and his Stuart descendants) to the British and Irish thrones.

In January 1689, William summoned a Convention,[11] which eventually deemed that, by fleeing, James had effectively abdicated, and the crown was offered, not to his (Catholic) son but, to his elder Protestant daughter, Mary; William, however, was not prepared to be only her Consort, and threatened to return to Holland unless he and his wife ruled as joint monarchs, and he himself as sole monarch should Mary predecease him as she did by eight years, in 1694; to this the Convention agreed, and they were crowned as William III[12] & Mary II on 11 April.

Following their accession, and despite William's earlier promise[13] of extending religious toleration to Catholics (and others), Catholics were, in the end, excluded from the freedom to worship granted to Protestant Nonconformists by the Toleration Act of 1689.[14] In December that year, the Bill of Rights was passed, regulating the use of the Royal Prerogative and settling once and for all the line of succession after William and Mary, from which Catholics were explicitly excluded.

Nine years later, the Popery Act[15] of 1698 reinforced the ban on Catholics inheriting or buying land and on Catholic schooling, commuted to life imprisonment the former death penalty for priests (and those who ran a school), and offered £100 reward for information leading to the apprehension of a Catholic priest caught exercising his ministry.

It would appear, however, that during the latter part of the seventeenth century, the Penal Laws were only sporadically and nonuniformly enforced across the Country, and in the eighteenth century were largely ignored, during which time there was an unbroken succession of Vicars Apostolic, which continued into the first half of the nineteenth century. In the main, the authorities appear to have been reluctant to intervene and prosecute, unless provoked to do so by events such as the Gun Powder Plot of 1605 and the Jacobite risings in the first half of the eighteenth century; life imprisonment of a Catholic priest was very much the exception.[16] By the end of the eighteenth century, Catholics had ceased to be considered the social and political danger they had been at the beginning; nevertheless, they continued to attend Mass discreetly in buildings designed so as not to betray their true purpose, in order not to attract or provoke unwelcome attention.

In urban areas, Mass was still often said in the houses of Catholic families, whilst rurally, where Catholics appear to have coexisted quite peaceably with their non-Catholic neighbours, the Faithful often attended Mass in the domestic chapels of recusant landed gentry (of whom there were many in Lancashire), or in chapels on their estates.

After the death of James II in 1701, his son, James Francis Edward (disparagingly known as the Old Pretender by his detractors who were opposed to a Catholic Stuart monarch), living at first in France and later in Rome, claimed to be the rightful heir to the English, Scottish and Irish crowns, as James III of England and Ireland and James VIII of Scotland, and was supported in this claim by the monarchs of France, Spain, Modena, and Pope Clement XI who, in 1719, offered him the Palazzo Muti in Rome, which he accepted.[17] After the death of William III in 1702, the crown passed to James II's younger Protestant daughter, Anne, who ruled until her death in 1714. She was succeeded, under the 1701 Act of Settlement[18] by her closest Protestant relative, the Elector of Hanover[19] (a Lutheran and a second cousin[20] of James Francis Edward) who ruled as George I.

In 1715, believing that they could capitalise on the widespread public discontent at the Hanoverian accession, following George's coronation the previous year, the English Jacobites marched south from Northumberland, only to be defeated at the Battle of Preston in the November. Many prisoners were sent to Liverpool where, since the town was strongly pro-Hanoverian, it could be guaranteed that they would be dealt with severely; four were publicly hanged and hundreds more deported.[21] The following year, in response to this Jacobite rising, the Papist Act of 1716 was enacted,[22] requiring disaffected Catholics to take oaths of allegiance and supremacy and an oath of abjuration of James II's son; in addition, Catholic landowners were required to register their estates to facilitate the levying of discriminatory taxes, which were doubled for those who refused to take the oath of allegiance.

Thirty years later, an attempt was made by a predominantly Scottish[23] Jacobite army, led by James Francis Edward's son, Charles Edward (known as The Young Pretender, aka Bonnie Prince Charlie) to regain the British crown for his father, but this too was crushed by British Government forces at the Battle of Culloden (near Inverness in the Scottish Highlands) in April 1746, effectively ending Jacobite hopes of a Stuart Restoration, despite Charles' conversion to Anglicanism in 1750 in the hope that this would increase his chance of succeeding to the throne.[24] In 1759, during the reign of George II, it was planned that Charles Edward would lead a Franco-Jacobite invasion of England, but for various reasons this never materialised. The significance of the dates 1715, 1746 and 1759 in the early history of St Mary's mission in Liverpool will soon become apparent.

After the death of James Francis Edward Stuart[25] in 1766, the Papacy refused to recognise his son's claim to the British and Irish thrones,[26] and eventually accepted George III as the lawful monarch of England, Scotland and Ireland, thereby paving the way for a gradual dismantling of the Penal Laws in England over the next sixty years, culminating in the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829, precursors of which were two other Relief Acts enacted towards the end of the eighteenth century. The first of these, in 1778, repealed the anti-Catholic Popery Act of 1698[27] and rescinded the former penalty of life imprisonment for miscreant bishops, priests and schoolmasters; in addition, Catholics were now allowed to inherit and own property, join the army, and the £100 reward payable to informers was abolished; the erection of churches or chapels was still prohibited, however. Given that the Popery Act had been largely ignored for many years and rarely enforced, many leading Catholics were actually opposed to its repeal, fearing it would stir up anti-Catholic sentiment for little practical return, as indeed turned out to be the case with the passing of the 1778 Relief Act,[28] which provoked a fierce

backlash culminating in the Gordon Riots of 1780, when, over the period of one week, hundreds of people lost their lives, many Catholic properties in London were destroyed or vandalised, and the chapels in some foreign embassies burned down.

A second Relief Act,[29] passed thirteen years later in 1791, was more far-reaching, and provided a much greater measure of freedom. Subject to swearing an oath of loyalty to the monarch (George III), Catholics were once more allowed to practise their religion without fear of persecution, provided that the chapel in which Mass was celebrated was duly registered and did not have 'a steeple and bell', a consequence of which was that many of the first Catholic chapels built after this date tended to resemble Nonconformist Meeting Houses of the period. By a further provision of the Act, Catholics were now allowed to run their own schools, and be admitted to the professions. In many ways, however, the benefits provided by this Act were actually formal, in that it simply legalised practices that had already been going on unopposed for years, as is exemplified, for example, by the building of the Catholic chapel in Seel Street in Liverpool in 1788, despite the prohibition that was then still officially in force – a good example of how much things had improved since the building of the second St Mary's church, forty-two years earlier.

The Roman Catholic Relief Act[30] of 1829 removed most of the remaining penal impediments, and Catholics embarked on a more ambitious and extrovert programme of church building, studiously ignoring the continuing prohibition of steeples and bells at places of worship (which extended also to the wearing of ecclesiastical vestments in public); it is unlikely, however, that this ban, which was not repealed until the Roman Catholic Relief Act[31] of 1926,[32] was ever enforced.

In 1850, the Catholic Hierarchy in England and Wales was restored[33] by Pope Pius IX, again provoking nationwide anti-Catholic demonstrations and rioting, such as that in Birkenhead in November 1850, and in Stockport in 1852 where two Catholic chapels were sacked and desecrated. In place of the former ecclesiastical Districts, which in 1840 had been increased from four to eight[34] (one of the new ones being the Lancashire District to which Liverpool belonged), thirteen new dioceses were created, each with its own[35] bishop, one of the most populous being the Diocese of Liverpool. Despite the restoration of the English and Welsh Hierarchies in 1850[36], it was only in 1918 that parishes were officially re-established, replacing the former missions. It should also be noted that until late in the nineteenth century, secular Catholic priests were referred to as Rev. Mr, the title Fr being then reserved for members of the regular clergy.

Introduction

Four members of the Pugin family, spanning three generations, were involved with two of the four Catholic places of worship in Liverpool, which for two and a half centuries (1746 to 2000) enjoyed direct lineage with the first chapel built there since the Reformation, dating from sometime between 1715 and 1727. Each of these places of worship inherited, in turn, the mantle of the Catholic Mother-church of the town/city,[37] and were thus more important than an ordinary parish church, being, in effect, the parish church of all Liverpool.[38]

At some date yet to be established,[39] one of the first two chapels (most probably the second, built in 1746) became known as St Mary's, and in what follows, despite this uncertainty, each of the five chapels/churches will be referred to as such, and distinguished by their ordinal prefixes, first, second etc.

The origin of the Marian dedication is unclear, but could well have been chosen in an attempt to reconnect with the former nearby, pre-Reformation, waterfront chapel at the river end of the eponymous Chapel Street, which had itself been dedicated to Our Lady under the title St Mary del Key[40] (Quay). After the Reformation, this chapel was closed and used firstly as a warehouse and then for a time as a schoolroom; part of it was demolished in 1746, the remainder in 1814.

Each of the five St Mary's was situated near what became the commercial district of Liverpool, centred on the Exchange, a few hundred yards distant, but which was originally on the northern outskirts of the town. Although the first St Mary's dates from sometime between 1715 and 1727, its congregation comprised people who had previously regularly worshipped together since 1707 at a domestic venue in the centre

Fig.1: Commemorating the pre-Reformation Liverpool chapel of St Mary. (*David Nathan*)

of the town, and this is why (what eventually became) St Mary's mission is usually said to have been founded in 1707. It was in this year that Fr William Gillibrand SJ became the first Catholic priest since the Reformation to be resident in Liverpool; he started to say Mass regularly, but clandestinely, in the house of the Catholic family with whom he lodged in the centre of the town, a practice that was continued, at a different address, by his successor, Fr Francis Mannock SJ. Within a few years, however, the congregation had outgrown such domestic venues, and accordingly, the next priest, Fr John Hardesty SJ, decided to erect a purpose-built chapel, large enough to accommodate the sizable congregation he had inherited, and at the same time build an adjacent house for himself, large enough to accommodate, in due course, an assistant priest.

Whilst Hardesty's building is invariably referred to as a chapel, it should be appreciated that, because of the then recent tightening-up of the Penal Laws under William and Mary, and the ongoing fear of provoking anti-Catholic hostility, particularly following the Jacobite rising of 1715,[41] the exterior of the chapel would have been such as not to betray its true purpose. Indeed, given its location on the edge of the town, it could well have resembled something akin to a farm building.

This chapel, the first St Mary's, was destroyed by a 'No Popery' mob in 1746, in an orgy of rejoicing at the defeat of the Scottish Jacobites at the Battle of Culloden in April that year. It was soon replaced by a larger building on a site a few hundred yards distant along the same street (Edmund Street), which was partially disguised to look like a warehouse; its upper floor became the second St Mary's. This building too was attacked in 1759, but was not seriously damaged, and continued to serve as a chapel for almost 100 years until it was replaced, on the same site, by a large neo-Gothic church designed by AWN Pugin, built 1844-45, within which a chantry chapel was created in 1861 by his eldest son Edward.

This church, the third St Mary's, survived for almost 40 years before it had to be demolished in 1883, in order to make way for a new approach-road to a nearby railway station that was then being enlarged and redeveloped. The church was carefully dismantled stone by stone and re-erected, 1883-85, as the fourth St Mary's (with a few external differences) on a nearby site in Highfield Street, under the supervision of AWN Pugin's youngest son, Peter Paul. In 1926, at the initiative of the Rector, Dom George Bede Cox OSB, the original bell-turret on the gable of the SW porch was replaced by a large bell-tower, most probably designed by Pugin's grandson, Charles Henry Cuthbert Purcell of the Liverpool office of *Pugin & Pugin*. The church survived for over 50 years before being totally destroyed by incendiary bombs during the heaviest air-raid of the May Blitz of 1941, which wreaked such terrible destruction in Merseyside, and Liverpool in particular, where, in the course of the month, 1453 people were killed and 1065 injured.

The fifth (and final) St Mary's was a post-war, brutalist replacement to the design of Alfred Bullen of the Liverpool firm of *Weightman & Bullen*, and was built 1950-53 on the same site as its predecessor, it survived for over 50 years before being demolished in 2001.

St Mary's, Liverpool, is the only instance of four different members of the Pugin family spanning three generations being involved with two successive churches in the same parish.

St Mary's mission was served for the first 76 years of its existence by Jesuits until 1783 when, for reasons that will be explained later, they were replaced by Benedictines who remained for 186 years until their withdrawal from the parish in 1969, after which it was served for another 31 years by diocesan priests until its closure in 2000.

Until 1788, when its daughter chapel of St Peter[42] opened in Seel Street on the other side of the town, and another chapel[43] close to Edmund St, St Mary's was the only Catholic chapel in Liverpool.

Although the two St Mary's with Pugin provenance are probably of greater interest to readers of *Transactions*, their place and significance within the evolution of this historic and unique parish only becomes apparent once their connection with the other three chapels/churches is understood, and to this end an overview of all five places of worship will firstly be given, before considering the architectural features of the two Pugin churches in more detail.

Time-line

1707: Fr William Gillibrand SJ takes up residence in Liverpool – the first Catholic priest to do so since the Reformation; he starts to say Mass regularly in the house wherein he lodges in the centre of the town.

1710: Fr Gillibrand is replaced by Fr Francis Mannock SJ, who continues to say Mass in another private house.

1715: Fr John Hardesty SJ replaces Fr Mannock, and decides to build a chapel large enough to accommodate the large congregation he inherits. English Jacobites are defeated at the Battle of Preston.

Post-1715–27: Sometime between these dates, Fr Hardesty's chapel is opened in Edmund St – the first Catholic place of worship (the first St Mary's) to be built in Liverpool, and in an English town, since the Reformation.

1746: Scottish Jacobites are defeated at the Battle of Culloden. An anti-Catholic 'No Popery' mob burns down the chapel and adjoining priests' house. A replacement building is erected at the opposite (east) end of Edmund St, partially disguised as a warehouse, the upper storey of which serves as the second St Mary's.

1759: A planned Franco-Jacobite invasion of England fails to materialise. The warehouse-chapel building is attacked, but is not destroyed, and reopens the following year.

1783: The Edmund Street mission of St Mary is transferred to the Benedictine Fathers.

1788: St Peter's chapel in Seel St, Liverpool, is founded from St Mary's.

1797: The warehouse-chapel is enlarged.

1844: The warehouse-chapel is demolished to make way for the third St Mary's, a large neo-gothic church designed by AWN Pugin.

1845: The third St Mary's is opened on 18 August.

1849: A chapel-of-ease (St Augustine's) is founded in Great Howard St, Liverpool, from St Mary's.

1861: A chantry chapel to the design of EW Pugin is created in St Mary's.

1883: The expansion and redevelopment of the neighbouring Exchange Railway Station necessitates the acquisition of the site of the Pugin church in Edmund St; the church is carefully dismantled stone by stone, and re-erected, under the supervision of PP Pugin, as the fourth St Mary's (with a few external differences from its predecessor), on a nearby site in Highfield St.

1885: The fourth St Mary's is opened in Highfield St on 19 July.

1926: The original bell-turret on the SW porch is replaced by a large bell-tower to the design of CHC Purcell, a grandson of AWN Pugin.

1941: The church is totally destroyed by incendiary bombs on the night of 3 May.

1950: Building of the fifth and final St Mary's to the design of Alfred Bullen, commences on the same site as its predecessor.

1953: The fifth St Mary's is opened on 21 June.

1969: The Benedictines withdraw from the parish at the end of August after 186 years, and are replaced by diocesan priests.

2000: The parish of St Mary's is closed.

2001: The fifth St Mary's is demolished.

The five St Mary's

The first St Mary's (post-1715-46), Edmund St: This chapel, the first to be built in Liverpool since the Reformation, was erected in Edmund St, then on the northern outskirts of the town, by the third Jesuit priest to be resident in Liverpool after 1707, Fr John Hardesty[44] SJ. From a letter written by Hardesty to his Jesuit Superior many years later in 1751, it is clear that the chapel and associated priests' house were financed mainly by himself through savings amassed from his frugal lifestyle, and with the financial help from some friends.[45]

According to the oldest known source,[46] both chapel and house were situated on land at the SW corner of Edmund Street (near its junction with Old Hall St, marked † in Fig.2a below). An old print of Liverpool (which can no longer be traced) shows the chapel to have been 'simple, rectangular, and with round-headed side windows';[47] it must also have been large enough to have accommodated the 256 worshippers who, according to the entry in Nicholas Blundell's diary,[48] received their palms on Palm Sunday (26 March, Julian Calendar) in 1727.[49] Unfortunately, it has not been possible to establish how long before this date the chapel was built, since although there are earlier diary entries recording visits by Blundell and his wife to Fr Hardesty in Liverpool, such as that[50] on Sunday 22 June 1718, it cannot be assumed that the chapel was by then in existence. It is quite possible that at this date (only three years after his arrival) Hardesty was still occupying some kind of temporary accommodation (wherein he also said Mass) while he continued to save enough money to be able to commence building; how long this took is unknown. The same holds, *a fortiori*, concerning an earlier visit[51] to hear Hardesty preach on Sunday 11 September 1715, only six months after his arrival in Liverpool.

Given this uncertainty, it impossible to know whether Hardesty's chapel pre-dated that in West Lane on Blundell's estate in Little Crosby, 8 miles north-west of Liverpool, dating from 1719, which is generally considered to have been the first built in the whole Country since the Reformation.[52]

Fr Hardesty's chapel and adjoining house were destroyed on 30 April[53] 1746 by an anti-Catholic 'No Popery' mob, comprising seamen, ships' carpenters and others, rejoicing at the defeat by British Government forces of the Scottish Jacobites[54] under Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) at the Battle of Culloden, two weeks earlier. The event was recorded as follows,[55] in 1833 by one, Thomas Green (then in his old age), whose mother had been present:

> When the Scots had retreated from Derby in 1746,[56] so far to the north as to relieve the people of Liverpool from any danger of a visit from them, the mob there assembled to pull down the small RC chapel … The incumbents, the Reverends Messrs Hermenigild Carpenter and Thomas Stanley[57] met the mob, which behaved with the greatest respect to the priests and several of the principal Roman Catholic inhabitants attending there [including Miss Elizabeth Clifton – the future Mrs Green, mother of the author of the account], and without noise or violence, opened a passage for the Reverend Mr Carpenter to go up to the altar and take the ciborium out of the tabernacle, and carry it by the same passage out of the chapel. Only then did the mob tore [sic] up the benches, and made a bonfire of everything combustible in the chapel and priests' house, and pulled down the whole of both down.

After the attack on the chapel, a friendly Presbyterian neighbour welcomed the priest into his house in St Paul's Square, a short distance north of Edmund St, wherein he took refuge from the mob.[58]

Such was the sad end of the first St Mary's, the first Catholic place of worship to be built in Liverpool since the Reformation.

The second St Mary's (1746-1844), Edmund Street/Lumber Street: This came about as follows, again according to Thomas Green's account:[59]

> Soon after the Battle of Culloden in 1746, Henry Pippard;[60] Esq, a principal [Liverpool] merchant, treated with the Mayor and Corporation to allow the Roman Catholics to rebuild their chapel. This they peremptorily refused.[61] Mr Pippard observed to them that no law could hinder him from building a warehouse, and making whatever use he pleased of it. It was acknowledged that he might do that, but at his own risk. Mr Pippard, therefore collected the subscriptions of the Roman Catholics, and built a warehouse of two storeys.

The land on which the warehouse was built (denoted as 'Romish Chapel' in Fig.2a.) was purchased from a Catholic family, and was located at the opposite end of Edmund Street from where the first chapel (marked †) had been situated.

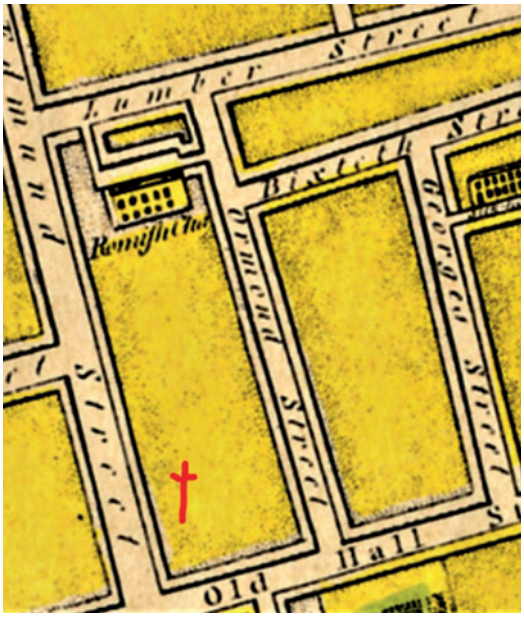


Fig.2**a**

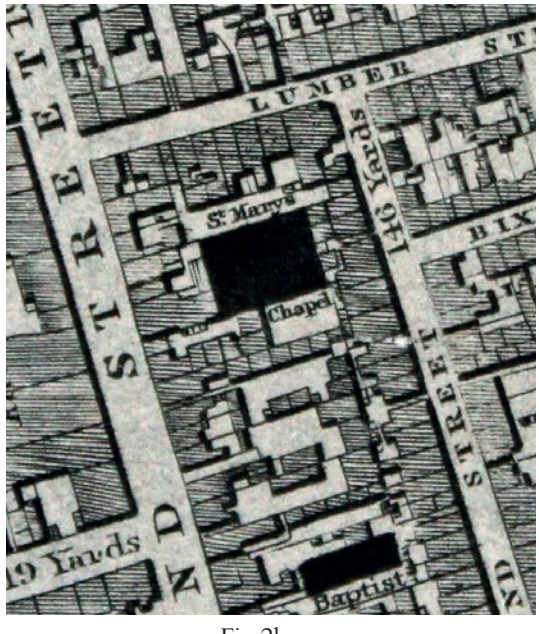


Fig.2b

Street maps showing the environs of the first and second Edmund St chapels:

a) John Eyes' Plan of Liverpool, 1768;[62] b) MA Gage's Trigonometrical Plan of Liverpool, 1836.[63]

The upper storey of the warehouse became the second St Mary's; while it was being built, Mass was said on Sundays and Holydays in the garret of Thomas Green's parents' house in Dale St, the congregation overspilling onto the two storeys below.[64]

Not only did the strategy of building a warehouse circumvent the prohibition on the rebuilding of the first St Mary's as a chapel, but also, it was hoped, would help conceal its true purpose, thereby making it less vulnerable to attack. This subterfuge worked until 1759, when it was attacked again ('to the disgrace of the police and of a small portion of the inhabitants'[65]), but, being so sturdily built, it was not seriously damaged, and reopened the following year.[66] It is hard to believe, however, that, during the intervening period of 13 years, the several hundred people who regularly entered the chapel each Sunday morning could have been assumed to have been workers, as opposed to worshippers, especially since in those days Sunday was a day of rest. It is more likely that the neighbours of the chapel simply 'turned a blind eye', until something provoked them into hostile action; what precisely provoked the attack in 1759 is unclear, but it was possibly connected with a perceived fear of a Jacobite renaissance[67] and an associated Franco-Jacobite invasion of England, but to what extent this was common knowledge at the time is again unclear.

Evidence of such (informal) improved toleration during this time was the fact that by 1768 the building was being openly identified as 'Romish Chapel' on a street map published that year (see Fig.2a), 23 years before the passing of the 1791 Relief Act, which permitted Catholics to practise their religion without fear of civil penalties and to worship in chapels (provided they were registered and did not have a steeple and bell).

After the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773,[68] St Mary's continued to be served by the same priests (although no longer Jesuits) for another ten years, after which the mission was handed over to the Benedictines on 3 April 1783 because of irreconcilable differences that had arisen during the preceding five years between the two resident priests, Fathers Joseph Gittins (alias Williams) and Raymond Hormasa (alias Harris), which were causing an unseemly schism within the parish and beyond.[69] The background to these events is as follows:

Five years after his arrival in Liverpool in 1773, Hormasa fell out with Gittins (the senior priest) when the latter took it upon himself to administer all the finances of the mission, contrary to the conditions of a trust that had been set up by his Jesuit predecessor in 1758. The conditions of the trust stipulated that it was to be administered by lay trustees nominated by the bench holders who were to ensure that any income, including bench-rents, was divided equally between the two priests who, in accordance with the conditions of the trust, were to be provided by the Society of Jesus. Hormasa rightly claimed that Gittins was denying him his fair share of the bench-rents.

The congregation took sides in the dispute, interest in which extended to missions in other parts of Lancashire, where congregations espoused the cause of one or other of the contending parties, sometimes divisively so. In 1779, there being no Jesuit Superior to adjudicate, Hormasa, armed with the support of 60 of the 104 bench holders, appealed to the Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District (Bishop Thomas Walton) who at first found in their favour, recommending equal division of available funds between the two priests. When Gittins refused to comply, the Vicar Apostolic appointed two lay arbitrators, Henry Blundell of Ince Blundell and Thomas Clifton of Lytham, who found

in favour of Hormasa and Gittins, respectively. In an attempt to break this impasse after a further five years of wrangling, Walton's successor as Vicar Apostolic, Bishop Matthew Gibson, consulted his advisor on matters involving the suppressed Society (the ex-Jesuit Rev. Mr Joseph Emmott) who recommended that the mission be handed over to the Benedictines. To this the Vicar Apostolic agreed, and, in addition, banned Gittins and Hormasa from exercising their ministry within ten miles of Liverpool. Further details of this lamentable affair can be found in Burke[70] and in Gillow.[71]

The Benedictines took possession of St Mary's on 3 April 1783, with Dom Benedict MacDonald OSB as Missionary Rector, assisted for a short time by Dom Bede Brewer OSB. The transfer did not take place peacefully, however, because of MacDonald's insistence on the right to collect bench-rents, which engendered much opposition, resulting in rioting and law suits on the part of some of the congregation, further details of which can again be found in Burke.[72] He held his ground, however, and was supported by the Vicar Apostolic who instructed Dom Benedict's flock, under pain of excommunication, not to impede him in the exercise of his spiritual functions, by insulting or abusing him. Dom Benedict remained at St Mary's for only 5 years, before leaving in 1788 to found a mission dedicated to St Peter, in Seel Street, then on the southern edge of the town.

The warehouse-chapel was built in brick, faced with stucco, and had two storeys.[73] It was located in a courtyard bounded by Edmund Street to the N, Ormond Street to the S and to the E by a narrow lane (midway between Bixteth Street and Lumber Street) running from Ormond Street parallel to Lumber Street, which it joined further north just before Edmund Street, as shown in Fig.2a. [Lumber Street ran approximately N-S].

The access was from the Lumber Street side,[74] giving rise to the chapel being sometimes referred to as the Lumber Street Chapel, as it is in some of *Gore's Liverpool Directories*, prior to 1821.

According to the Directory of 1821,[75] the external dimensions of the building were 63ft x 43ft-8 inches [the longer dimension lying approximately north-south], with walls 1ft-6 inches thick.

The chapel was on the upper floor, which was accessed by two broad staircases, one rising from each side of an end section of the ground-floor. This section was bricked up from the rest of the ground-floor, and was secured from without by strong double-doors. The area between the staircases, which was used to store lumber as part of the disguise, afforded protection to worshippers during inclement weather and avoided them having to congregate in the adjacent street whilst waiting to be admitted, which could have attracted unwelcome attention.

The most vulnerable side of the building was that to the east, which faced across the narrow northerly extension of Bixteth Street to the back of a row of houses on the western side of Lumber Street (see Fig.2a); the three other sides were protected by adjacent properties, in some of which lived Catholics who could be relied upon to defend the building. Accordingly, it was decided to camouflage the eastern side of the building by making it look like a warehouse. This was achieved by fixing two large folding doors, one above the other, which had they been opened would have revealed only a solid wall! Above the doors were affixed a teagle rope and pulley with a block and hook, the latter being capped to protect it against rain, similar to that shown in Fig.3 at another location in Liverpool:

Fig.3
Typical Liverpool warehouse,[76] displaying elements in common with those of the warehouse-chapel building (*Phil Nash*)

There were leaded windows on the eastern and western sides, and two large sash-windows to the south, all of which were fitted with shutters; those on the eastern side were kept permanently closed, whilst those on the southern and western sides were opened only during services. The warehouse-chapel precinct was protected by strong double folding gates at strategic points.[77]

Although, as mentioned above, access to the chapel was stated to have been from 'the Lumber Street [E] side' (via a narrow passage from Lumber Street – see Fig.2a), it was not stated where the entrance to the building was located. The fact, however, that the altar faced S[78] (and was thus at the N end, consistent with the absence of any mention of windows in that end) suggests that the entrance was at the S [Ormond Street] end of the building.

According to Blundell,[79] the warehouse-chapel was enlarged in 1797 – an action that would have been permitted by the Relief Act of 1791; comparison of the building footprint in street maps published before and after 1797 reveals, however, that the area covered by the footprint remains essentially the same.

Note: The image in *The Churches of Liverpool*,[80] under the heading 'The Catholic Church of St Mary' is not St Mary's, but a Baptist Chapel, located further W along Edmund

Street;[81] it is shown (and labelled as such) in Fig.2b as the narrow, shaded rectangle situated some distance below the wider rectangular imprint of St Mary's, the latter being in line with Bixteth Street.

The third St Mary's (1844-83), Edmund St: By 1840, the warehouse-chapel had become utterly inadequate to accommodate the rapidly increasing Catholic population of the district, even before the great increase during and after the Irish Potato Famine of 1845-52.

To address this situation, the St Mary's Society was founded in 1840, at a meeting held on 26 July in the schoolroom of the daughter mission of St Peter in Seel St, with the express purpose of erecting a church 'sufficiently commodious to accommodate the increasing wants of its populous neighbourhood'[82] – and 'worthy of the rising importance of the town and the position of Catholics'.[83] This new-found confidence derived from the passing of the Catholic Relief Act of 1829, eleven years earlier, which removed most of the remaining penal impediments of the 1791 Relief Act. In proposing the resolution[84] that 'the time had now come to assist in erecting a church in which the Catholic religion could appear in all its holiness', the distinguished Liverpool barrister-at-law, John Rosson[85] went on to say that he 'trusted the talents of a Pugin would be employed in its erection; architects ought not only to be talented men, but pious men.' Rosson's hope was more than fulfilled, AWN Pugin himself being subsequently commissioned, later the same[86] year (1840), to design the church, although work did not begin for another four years:

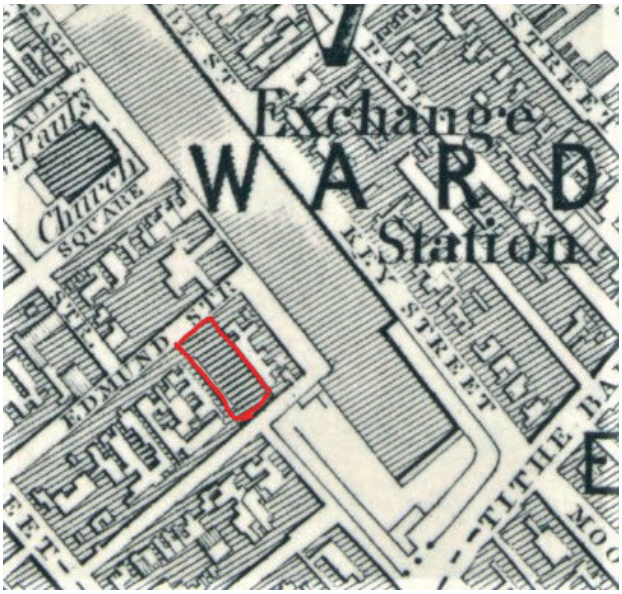
> I have got the great[87] church at Liverpool, with a crypt 150 ft long by 60 wide, well vaulted.[88]

Following the first Annual Meeting of the St Mary's Society on 15 August 1841 at St Peter's, a meeting of St Peter's parishioners was convened at the end of September 1841, 'for the purpose of adopting measures to assist the St Mary's Society in their efforts to erect a new church for the accommodation of the very numerous body of Catholics residing in the populous district of the Exchange and St Paul's Church'. Collectors were then appointed to canvass the district for subscriptions.'[89] The report in *The Tablet* concluded as follows:

> We are informed that so inadequate is the present chapel to accommodate the numerous worshippers who attend there at the various services on the Sunday, that on average six to seven hundred are unable to obtain admission, and are consequently exposed to all the inclemency of the weather during the hours of divine service.

Covering a greater area (by a factor of 3) than the warehouse-chapel and its precincts, more land had to be acquired for the church that was planned to extend south from Edmund Street to Ormond Street (see Figs.4); this necessitated the demolition of some of the houses that formerly enclosed the warehouse-chapel precinct, and compensating the owners appropriately.

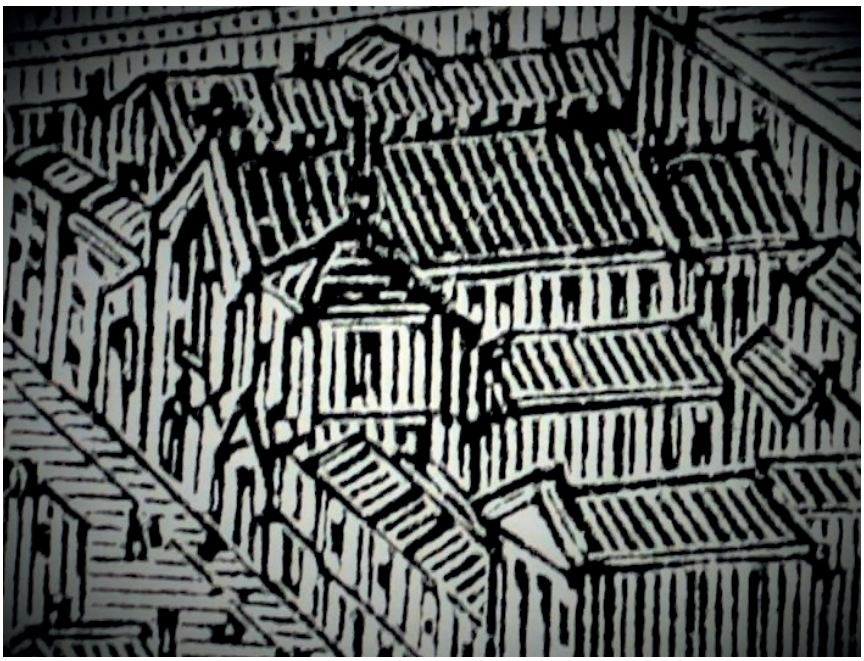
The associated additional expenditure amounted to £4000, and brought the total



The third St Mary's, Edmund St

Left: Fig.4a: OS 6-inch, Lancashire Sheet 106, 1851;St Mary's is outlined in red[90]

Below: Fig.4b: *Illustrated London News*, 1864[91]



estimated cost (including the church) to £14,467. Between 1841 and the time the church opened in 1845, £2150, mainly from the poor in pennies and half pennies, had been raised by weekly collections made by members of the congregation. It had been decided by the St Mary's Society at its 2nd AGM in 1842[92] that 'it was the intention of the committee to present each collector, who had acted in that capacity for three years,

with a medal as a mark of respect for his services towards the erection of St Mary's Church', and, just prior to the opening of the church three years later, '30 of these zealous and praiseworthy individuals received this mark of the Society's regards.'[93]

One such recipient was a Mr Michael McCarthy whose bespokely inscribed medal has recently come to light,[94] it is shown in Figs.5 below:

On the reverse side of the medal is a view of the interior of the church looking east; this

Fig.5 The silver medal awarded to Michael McCarthy. Around the rim of the medal is inscribed (clockwise):

CHURCH OPENED 19 AUGUST 1845 SCHOOLS 12 FEBRY 1844

On the face of the medal is inscribed:

PRESENTED
BY THE SOCIETY FOR
ERECTING THE CATHOLIC
CHURCH AND SCHOOL
OF ST MARY LIVERPOOL
TO
Mr Michael McCarthy
IN GRATITUDE FOR
HIS SERVICES AS
A COLLECTOR

view is identical to that in a lithograph[95] by Pugin, dated[96] 1843, which is shown below in Fig.6.

The only known image of the exterior of the church (apart from an artist's impression

Fig.6
The projected interior, looking east[97]

shown in Fig.13c) is that shown in Fig.4b, which has been extracted from 'View of Liverpool from the Mersey' published in 1864 in the *Illustrated London News*[98], part of which (in the vicinity of St Mary's and Exchange Station) is reproduced over in Fig.7:

The foundation stone of the third St Mary's was laid on 1 May 1844 by Bishop Sharples,[99] coadjutor to the Vicar Apostolic of the Lancashire District, Bishop GH Brown who, in the presence of another four bishops and seventy priests, solemnly consecrated[100] and opened the church the following year, on 19 August 1845. Consecration of the church in 1845 was possible, despite the existence at the time of an outstanding debt of £855 on the church building, because more than enough money (£8,110) had been collected (1840-45) to cover the cost of the land (£4,000).[101]

Dr Brown's successor (1856-72), as Bishop of Liverpool,[102] Rt. Rev. Alexander Goss), is reported[103] to have once said of this church: 'This *is* the church of my diocese.'

In 1848, at a meeting at St Mary's on 15 February, it was proposed to erect a Chapel of Ease, about one mile from St Mary's, as a memorial to two priests from that mission

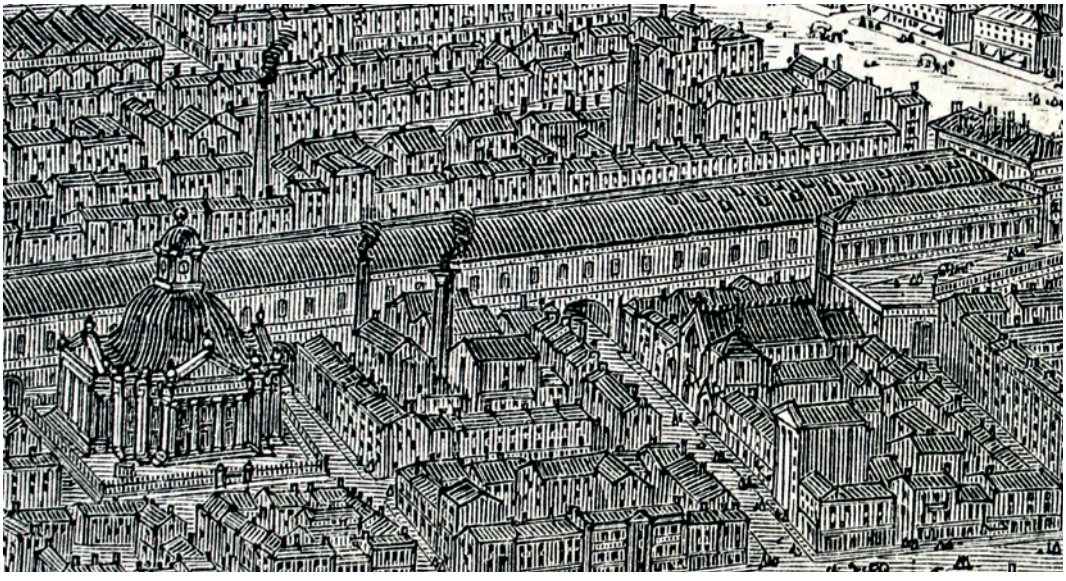


Fig.7
Panoramic view of the environs of Exchange Station showing the third St Mary's (just right of centre), and Edmund St running beneath the elevated (enclosed) rail-track (*Illustrated London News*).

who had died of typhus (locally known as the 'Black Plague') ministering to the sick during the plague of 1847.[104]The chapel, dedicated to St Augustine (and sometimes known as The Martyrs Church) was built in Great Howard St, and was opened by Bishops Sharples and Morris on 9 September the following year.[105] The last Mass there was said during the summer of 1976, and the church was demolished in the autumn of 1997, having been used for some time as a builder's warehouse.[106]

AWN Pugin's church in Edmund Street survived for 38 years until, through an Act of Parliament, the land on which it stood was acquired by the *Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Company* for the construction of a new approach-road to their extended and redeveloped Exchange Station nearby (so called because of its proximity to the Exchange). Mass was said for the last time[107] on Sunday 11 November 1883, by which date the church had already been stripped of many interior fittings.[108]

In their discussions with the Railway Co during 1881-82, the clergy of St Mary's were adamant that they would not sell the church itself, but only the land on which it stood, and entertained the hope of preserving their beloved church by carefully dismantling it stone by stone and reassembling it on another site, so that the church, 'to which are attached so many hallowed associations, may still remain the glory of Liverpool.'[109] They believed that if this could be done, it would be of….

> ... some compensation to those who have so faithfully and constantly contributed to the erection of the church and the liquidation of the debt, and a subject of consolation to them that the church which they have paid for, will not be lost, but continue as a standing memorial of their charity and perseverance.[110].

By the following year it had become clear that this strategy could indeed be achieved,

the Railway Company having paid £30,500 for the site,[111] an enormous sum (equal to twice the original cost in 1844 of the church and land) that was more than sufficient to finance not only the transplantation of the church (which had been sanctioned by the Holy See), but also to liquidate the outstanding £855 debt on the church itself.[112]

Starting either late 1883 or early 1884, the third St Mary's was dismantled stone by stone. The dismantling was done in a highly organised way, the contractor having been given very detailed instructions by the architect, PP Pugin, as to how every aspect of the work was to be executed,[113] including how the various materials were to be cleaned and stored, pending their re-assembly, approximately 0.15 miles distant on the opposite (eastern) side of Exchange Station, on a site (said[114] to have been given by the Blundell family, and marked in red in Fig.8a) bounded to the (geographic) east by Highfield Street and Cockspur Street to the south.

To mark the opening of the rebuilt church, the *Catholic Times* of 17 July 1885 published the following appreciation of its predecessor in Edmund St:

> The sacred edifice has been so intimately associated with the uprise and progress of Catholicism in the city, that it has become a landmark of Catholic history. It was the precursor of that religious energy which spread a network of Catholic churches and schools throughout Liverpool. It fought the good fight of Catholicism when the tide of war rolled furiously against it, and in the struggle for religious freedom it nobly led the way.

The architecture of the third St Mary's is described in the penultimate section of this paper.

The fourth St Mary's (1883-1941), Highfield St:

The re-assembly of the church on the Highfield St site took place during the rectorship (1878-94) of Dom Benedict Snow OSB who worked closely with the architect in supervising the move. During the rebuilding, the congregation worshipped in a temporary iron church that had been erected in Pownall Square, (geographically) just SE of the new site.

The foundation stone of the fourth St Mary's was laid on 3 August 1884 by Rt Rev Bernard O'Reilly, Bishop of Liverpool,[115] and the church was consecrated on 7 July 1885 by Dr WB Scarisbrick[116] OSB, Bishop of Port Louis, Mauritius (1871-87), at the request of Bishop O'Reilly in whose presence the church was solemnly opened on 9 July; also present were the Bishop of Newport & Menevia, the Bishop of Shrewsbury and numerous clergy, both regular (including many Benedictines) and secular; the celebrant at the first Mass was Bishop Scarisbrick OSB.

The contractors were *Messrs Hughes & Stirling* of Liverpool, the excellence of whose work was acknowledged by the architect, PP Pugin.

The re-siting of the church at this location was the cause of much friction[117] between the Benedictines and the Rector (Fr Roche OMI) of the neighbouring Oblate parish of Holy Cross, in consequence of the proximity of the site to the boundary of his parish and attendant concerns over the 'poaching' of parishioners, and schoolchildren, in particular.

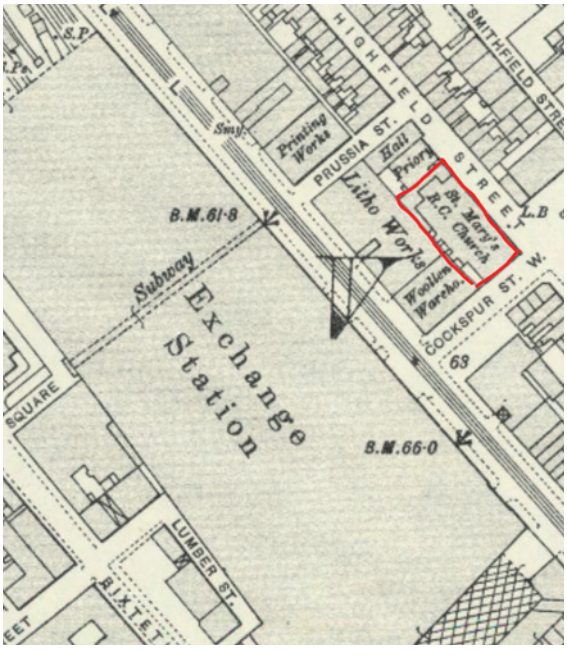
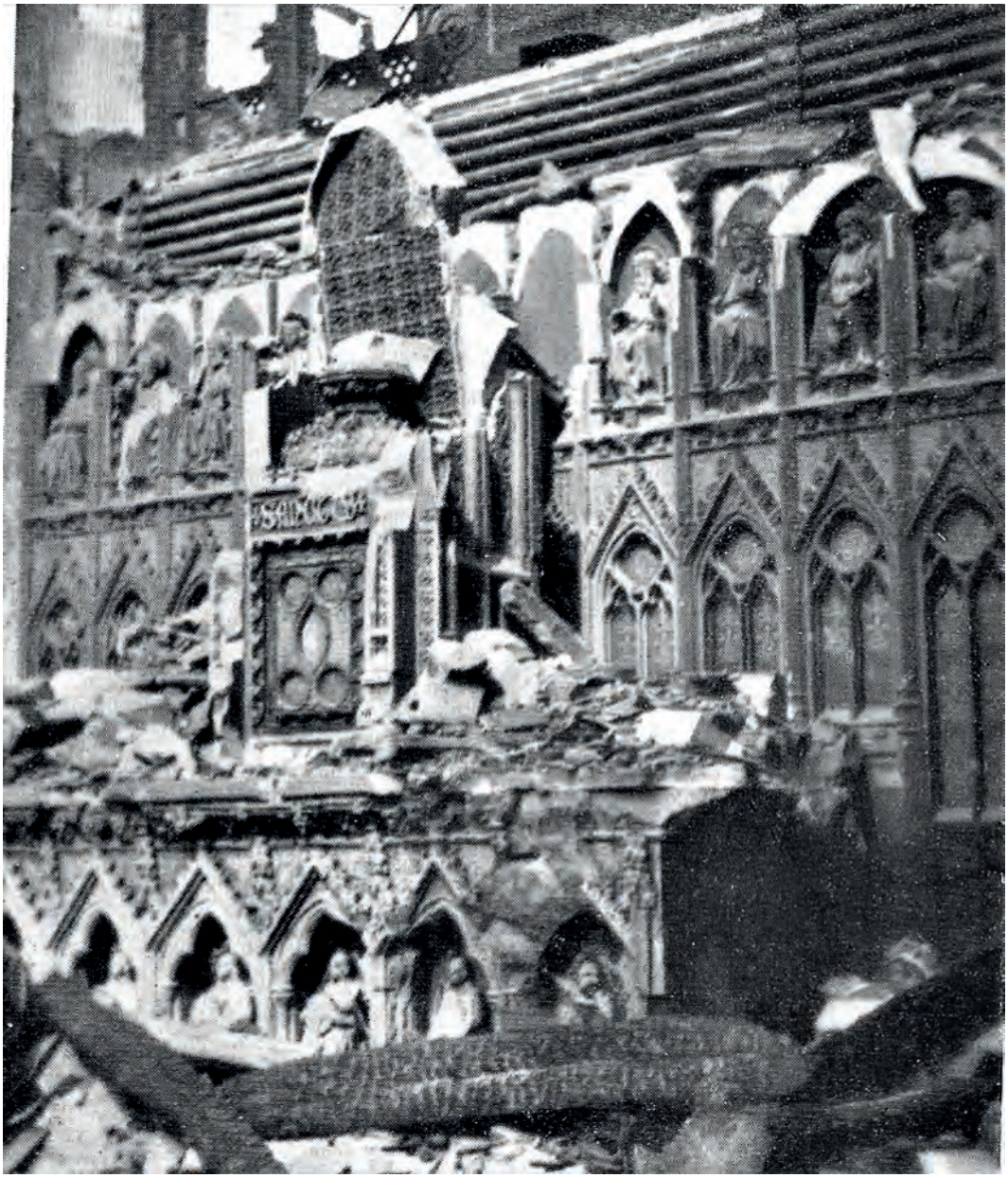


Fig.8a Fig.8b

The fourth St Mary's:
a) OS 25-inch Lancashire map 106.10, 1908[118] b) From Pownall Square, pre-1926.[119]



The fourth St Mary's:

Lower Opposite & Above: Figs.9a & b

Bomb damage sustained in the May Blitz of 1941: a) St Mary's from the NW[120] (Cockspur Street in the foreground and Highfield Street to the rear) b) The High altar.[121]

The church survived for 56 years before being destroyed[122] by incendiary bombs on the night of 3 May 1941, during the rectorship of Dom Ambrose Agius OSB. Apart from the tabernacle (Fig.9b), the lining of the baptismal font, and three of the bells from the belfry (Fig.17b), all that remained was a gutted shell; the debris was removed by the authorities, who during the autumn of 1941 (without informing the clergy) requisitioned the crypt of the church for use as an emergency water tank. All the salvaged items were later re-utilised in the post-war successor church (the fifth St Mary's).

The architecture of the fourth St Mary's is described in the penultimate section of this paper.

The fifth (and final) St Mary's, Highfield St (here the cardinal points are ritual, not geographic; the source of the information given below is *St Mary's, Highfield Street*[123]):

In 1946, the Rector of St Mary's, Dom Damian Jowett OSB, applied for a licence to rebuild the church that had been destroyed by bombing, but it was not until June 1949 that the application was approved by the Ministry of Works, under the condition that it was a 'plain substitute building'; work on the fifth (and final) St Mary's commenced during the summer of 1950. The new church, which occupied the same site as its predecessor (see Fig.8a), and covered a similar area (but accommodated a few hundred

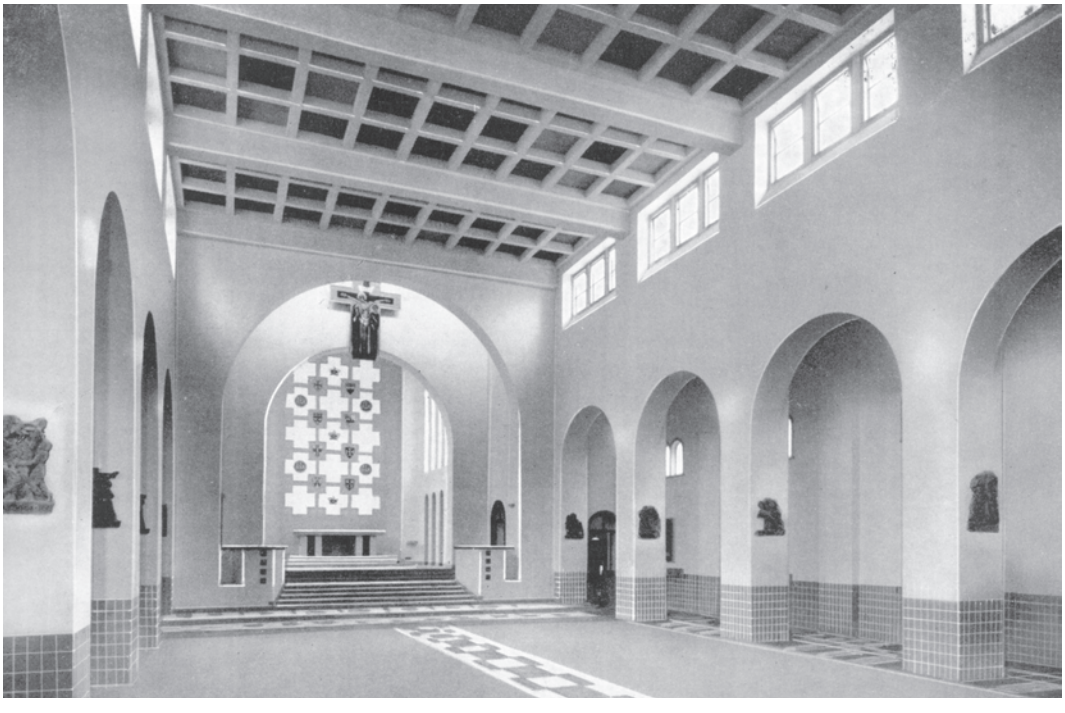
less than its predecessor), was designed by Alfred Bullen FRIBA, of the Liverpool firm of *Weightman & Bullen*,[124] who had to operate in a climate of the greatest stringency and in conformity to the limitations of money and materials available in the immediate post-war years.[125]

The new church was solemnly opened on Sunday 21 June 1953, but not, as planned, by the Most Reverend Richard Downey, Archbishop of Liverpool, for he had died 5 days earlier on 16 June.

It is said that this was the first Catholic church in the UK to be entirely rebuilt after WWII. The principal contractors were *Messrs Wm Moss & Sons* of Roscoe St, Liverpool.

Post-war restrictions on the use of steel and timber 'resulted in a brick and reinforced concrete construction' – an early essay in brutalism. The wartime emergency water tank, into which the crypt of the former church had been converted, was refashioned as a basement of the new church, for use as a Boys' Club.[126] To realise the necessary head-room, however, the floor of the nave had to be elevated about 5ft above pavement level from where the 3-door main entrance was approached from Cockspur St by a broad flight of steps (Fig.10a) between the projecting aisles.

The aisles were under a lower roof than the nave, and off the aisles were a number of shrines and altars; the confessionals were off the (ritual) N aisle. At each end of the 5-bay nave was a semi-circular arch: to the rear of that at the W end was the choir gallery and narthex, whilst within that at the E end were steps leading to a second, narrower arch further east, the two forming a kind of 'chancel' crossing; the second arch, being



The fifth & final St Mary's:
Left: Fig.10a The exterior, with the 1885 priory in the extreme RHS background;[127]
Above: Fig.10b The interior before completion.[128]

narrower, served to focus attention on the High altar beyond. On each side of the first ('chancel') arch were ambones, whilst, from the second, more steps led to the sanctuary pavement, which was thus well elevated above the level of the nave, ensuring good visibility of the High altar (Fig.10b).

The roof of the 'crossing' and the sanctuary further east was higher than that of the nave, permitting concealed windows that allowed the second ('chancel') arch, affixed to which was a gilded Rood Cross, to be floodlit. The sanctuary was lit by three long, narrow vertical windows in each side wall, the nave by 3-light clerestorey windows, one per bay, and the west gallery and aisles by high-sited 2-light windows, one per bay.

The mensa of the High altar was a single slab of Travertine marble 12ft in length, and the reredos had the shields of the 8 monasteries of the English Benedictine Congregation. The Altar Frontals and all vestments were designed and made by Dom Oswald Sumner OSB of Downside Abbey.[129]

At the W end of one of the aisles was the baptistery, and at the other were stairs leading to the choir gallery.

The belfry (about 100ft high) was situated towards the SE corner of the building (Fig.10a), in line with the first 'chancel' arch; it contained a carillon (by *Messrs Taylor* of Loughborough), the bells of which were recasts of the three that had been salvaged from the previous church after the Blitz.

In the base of the belfry tower was a chapel dedicated to St Augustine (which could be accessed directly from Highfield St, as indicated in Fig.10a), from where the sanctuary could be viewed through a metal grille.The tabernacle on the altar in this chapel was that from the 1885 church (see Fig.9b), and was one of the few items to survive the bombing. Opposite this chapel on the other side of the church were the sacristies, and behind the sanctuary was a narrow passage leading to the Priory,[130] which is just visible in the far-right background of Fig.10a; it ceased to be used as such *c.*1960.

During the 1960s, when slum clearance and inner-city redevelopment had reduced the population of the parish from 3000 in 1930 to less than 1000, the Benedictines devised a new apostolate directed at the many office-staff (some from far afield) who came each day to work in the vicinity of the parish: they provided lunchtime Masses and confessions, the former being very well attended, particularly on Holydays.

After serving the parish of St Mary's continuously for 186 years, the Benedictines were recalled to Downside in 1969; it may be noted, however, that their withdrawal had been first discussed[131] in the late 1950s, within five years of the opening of the rebuilt church. They were replaced on the first weekend of September 1969 by diocesan priests who continued the lunchtime Masses until January 2000 when, the resident congregation having dwindled[132] to 120, the fifth St Mary's was closed; it was sold to developers in March 2000, and demolished in 2001.

Given that the fourth St Mary's had been so loved by clergy and congregation alike, and had served the parish so well for over half a century, one can only lament that its post-war replacement was not entrusted to *Pugin & Pugin*. For their rebuild of the neighbouring parish church of Holy Cross[133], almost contemporaneously with St Mary's, and under the same restrictive post-war conditions, showed that a traditional design (Figs.11) was, financially, an equally viable alternative to the brutalist style adopted by *Weightman & Bullen* for their 'plain substitute' replacement of St Mary's. Both churches

Holy Cross, Liverpool (*Jeremy Charles Pugin Purcell*)
Rebuilt, 1952-54, to the design of CHC Purcell of P*ugin & Pugin*.
Above: Fig.11a Exterior.
Over: Fig.11b Interior.

received comparable levels of compensation from the War Damage Commission: at St Mary's, the entire cost of rebuilding (£75,000) was met (the cubic capacity here being only about 85% of its predecessor[134]), compared with 70% (£85,000) of the total cost (£120,000) in the case of Holy Cross.[135]

The two Pugin churches revisited

(The cardinal points N, S, E, W, are here *ritual*, unless stated otherwise.)

Having recounted the origin of the two Pugin churches and their place within the overall history of the parish of St Mary's, this contribution to *Transactions* concludes with a consideration of their architecture in more detail. Because of the unique situation concerning the inter-relation of the two churches (one being essentially a transplantation of the other to a new site), some degree of overlap in the following descriptions is unavoidable.

The third St Mary's (1845-85), Edmund St.

Exterior:

According to Eastlake,[136] the church was built of local red sandstone by G Myers,[137] AWN Pugin's preferred builder. The red sandstone of the E end of the church is clearly visible in the following watercolour by WG Herdman,[138] dated 1859:

Fig.12

The E end of the third St Mary's from Ormond Street.

The overall dimensions of the church were 151ft x 55ft.[139]

The only known image of the exterior of the W end of the church is that which has already been shown in Fig.4b (and reproduced below as Fig.13a), which has been extracted from 'View of Liverpool from the Mersey' published in 1864 in the *Illustrated London News*.[140]

Pugin's own description of the church,[141] provided for the opening of the building, begins as follows:

> The church is erected in the style of the early part of the fourteenth century; it consists of a nave and two aisles, with a Ladye Chapel at the north-east end, a tower at the south-west, a chancel of the same width as the nave …

The west front of the realised building (Fig.13a) conformed to that projected (Fig.13b), apart from the spire and tower,[142] of which only the first two stages were built, the truncated tower being covered with a shallow pyramidal roof, surmounted by what appears could have been a small bell-cote. The tower was intended to be 120ft high, supporting a 150ft angle-turreted spire.[143] Indeed, the *Liverpool Mercury* of 8 August 1845 stated that the church was 'complete in every respect, with the exception of the spire and some figures and carved representations for the altar and font.'

Reproduced below are those parts of the description of the building, as supplied by Pugin, which relate to the W front of the realised building (Fig.13a):

> The west front, towards Edmund St, consists of a lofty gable, with a rich, tracery window of seven lights ... In this front there are two deeply-arched and moulded doorways, one immediately under the west window, and the other in the tower; the latter [doorway] is surmounted by a crocketed gablet supported by angels.

He goes on to mention that to the RHS of the crocketed gablet is 'a bas relief image of the patroness of the church, the Blessed Virgin Mary, in a canopied niche'; the latter is clearly visible in Fig.13b, but such details cannot be resolved in Fig.13a, which does, however, show that the E end of the realised church was under a slightly lower roof than the remainder, both being of an acute pitch.

Fig.13a

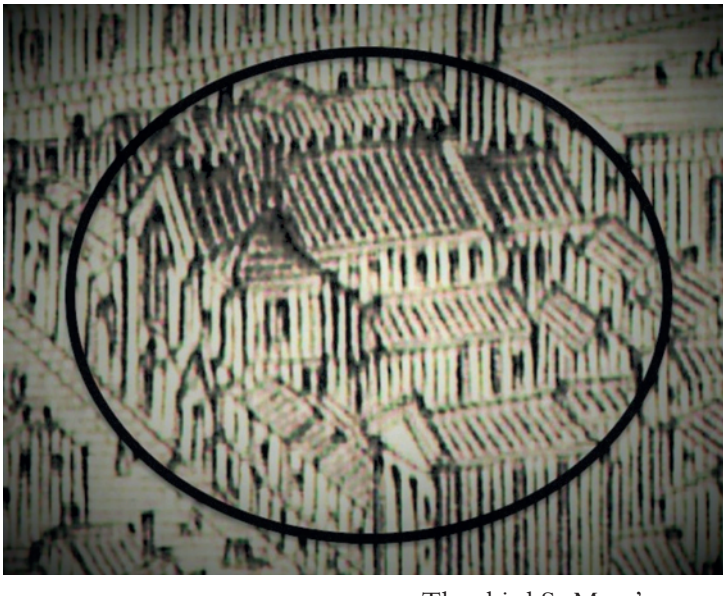
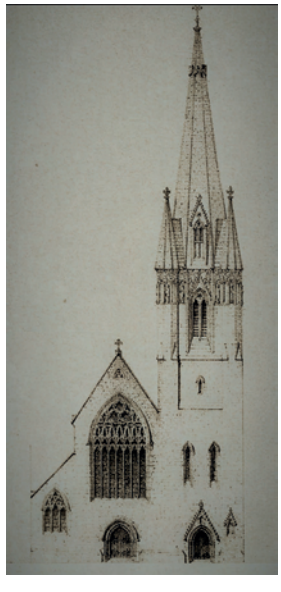


Fig.13b



The third St Mary's:

a) The church as built (*Illustrated London News,* 1864)[144] *b*) The projected W front (*Stanton*, Fig.90)[145]

Eastlake[146] describes the building as follows:

> It is built of local red sandstone, and displays in the mouldings of its door jambs and fashion of its window tracery considerable refinement of detail. It has no chancel in the proper sense of the word, but the easternmost part of the nave serves that purpose. The nave arches are acutely pointed, and their mouldings die into an octagonal block just above the impost moulding of the pier…… St Mary's, in its plan as well as the general character of its composition, is essentially a town church……. It has no claim to architectural grandeur……. Its structural features just do their duty and nothing more. The nave is of great length, and has been left plain and undecorated.

In 1844, CW Clennell published *Liverpool Illustrated* 1844,[147] whose illustration No.14 (shown below as Fig.13c) is captioned as 'Catholic Chapel, Edmund Street'. By the September of the year of this publication, the building is known[148] to have progressed to only 20ft; accordingly, it would not have been apparent that the RHS of the W front was in fact part of the first stage of a tower. Thus, what is shown in Fig.13c is nothing more than Clennell's impression of how a towerless W front might have looked when eventually completed, his assumption as to how the building would be roofed producing the highly asymmetric W front depicted, in which the centrality of the nave is lost. It should be noted that other features of the W front, such as entrances and fenestration (which are located below 20ft) faithfully follow those shown in Fig.13b.

Fig.13c

c) 1844 impression of the third St Mary's

Interior:

Pugin's description of the church continues as follows:

> The church consists of … a chancel of the same width as the nave, separated by an open wooden screen and two lateral screens … a small gallery extends across the western end of the nave … at the west end of the north aisle is the baptistery …..The Ladye Chapel is at the east end of the north aisle.'

As noted above, the eastern end of the church was under a slightly lower roof-line than the remainder; interiorly, this translated into a quasi-chancel under a coved-panelled ceiling (Fig.14), but without any demarcating 'chancel' arch. The roof of the nave was supported by scissor principals springing from long wall-plates supported on corbels.

Given that the church was said[149] to be 'complete in every respect (with the exception of the spire and some figures and carved representations for the altar and font'), and that in the rebuild in Highfield St (see below) the internal roof structure of the E end of the building conformed to that projected for the original church (cf Figs.14, 19b), it may be reasonably assumed, especially since contemporary press reports stress how faithfully PP Pugin reproduced the interior of his father's church ('little or no change has been effected ... reverence for the original design has prevailed throughout'[150]), that the interior of the realised church in Edmund St was indeed very close to that shown in Pugin's lithograph (Fig.14).

Fig.14
The projected interior, looking east[151]

The Rood-screen shown in Fig.14 was never installed, however, provoking the following response from Pugin to an unidentified correspondent (possibly Dom Austin Wilkinson OSB, Missionary Rector 1846-50):

> Your church is ruined for want of screens – it is quite grievous to see it so naked.[152]

According to Pugin's own description[153] of the church, the furnishings were as follows:

> The font is placed on a raised quadrangular flight of steps, ascended from the four sides …The font is octangular; (*see* Fig. 21a) on the first side is carved the Fall of Man, and on the others the seven sacraments ….The stone pulpit, admirably executed in Caen stone…. consists of an octagonal shaft and base corbelled out with foliage work; on four of the panels are the emblems of the four evangelists sculptured in high relief.
>
> The chancel is paved with enamelled encaustic tiles, and the roof is ceiled in panels richly decorated with gilding and painting….. On epistle (S) side are the sedilia consisting of 3 canopied recesses divided by pinnacles; in each division is a carved quatrefoil. The High altar is worked in Caen stone, with a top of white marble. The front is divided into compartments, each containing an angel bearing a sacred emblem. The reredos is divided into 13 compartments of rich tracery and diapering, 12 of which are terminated by canopied niches, containing images of the apostles, and the 13th, in the centre, forms a stone tabernacle of elaborate design, for the reservation of the Holy Eucharist. The whole is surmounted by brattishing of foliated work.

Concerning the High altar, Eastlake commented as follows:

> …. at the east end of the church both architect and craftsmen have lavished their utmost skill. The reredos of the High altar is extremely simple in general form but exhibits great refinement of detail.

In a letter to *The Tablet*,[154] written the year after the church was opened, Pugin commented on the furnishing as follows:

> At St Mary's, Liverpool, the fonts, altars, sedilia, screens and other fittings are certainly a great advance on what has yet been accomplished in other parochial churches.

Pugin's description of the Lady altar is as follows:

> The front of the altar is divided into three compartments, with the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin; the angel Gabriel on the left, the Blessed Virgin kneeling on the right, and a pot of flowering lilies in the centre, entwined by a label with the inscription - 'Ave Maria gratia plena'. The reredos contains a centre niche, with an image of the Blessed Virgin holding Our Lord, seated on a throne, and surmounted by a rich canopy; on either side are two other niches and canopies, with images of angels bearing lights; immediately above the reredos is a tracery window of five lights, filled with stained glass, representing the life of St Anne.

Eastlake stated that the altar and reredos of the Lady Chapel are:

> … most elaborate in design and workmanship. Figures, niches, canopies, pinnacles, crockets and finials crowd into a sumptuous group – worthy of the best workmanship in the latter part of the fourteenth century.

He continued as follows:

> The altar and reredos in the Lady Chapel are real gems in their way, and may be cited as

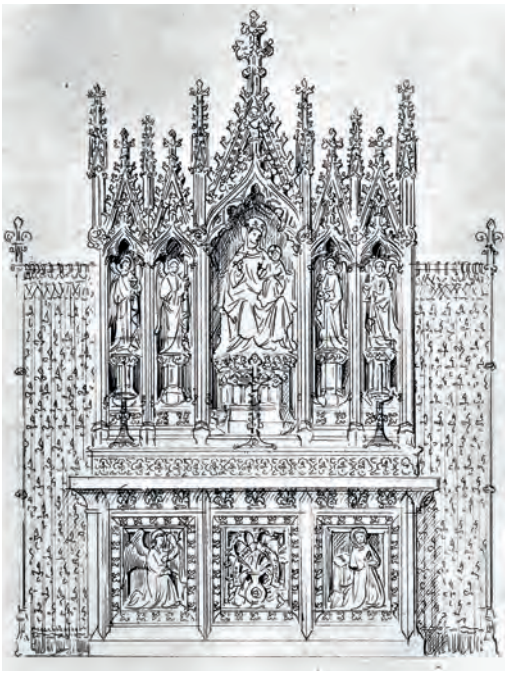


Fig.15a

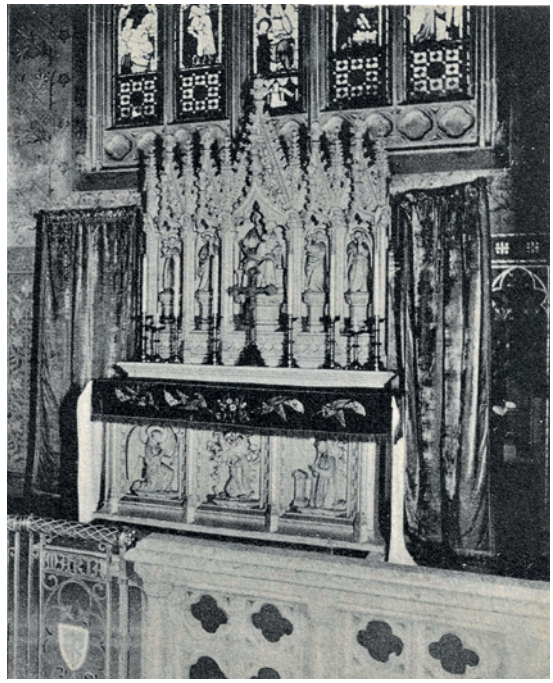


Fig.15b

The Lady altar:[155]

a) Projected

b) As realised

> specimens not only of Pugin's thorough knowledge of detail, but also the success with which in a very few years he had managed to educate up to a standard of excellence, not realised during many previous generations, the art-workmen whom he entrusted to execute his designs.

He does, however, question[156] 'whether such elaboration was judicious in a town church so dimly lit as St Mary's' – a consequence of its close proximity to adjacent properties.

In 1861, a chantry chapel (dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows), containing an altar and tomb-chest designed by EW Pugin, was created at the east end of the south aisle,[157] in a space that had originally been left altar-less by AWN Pugin[158] (the Lady altar being in the opposite, north-east corner). The carving was by EE Geflowski of Liverpool. The chapel was in memory of Dom James Joseph Sheridan OSB who died 8 October 1860; he was Missionary Rector of St Mary's, 1850-60, and was evidently held in high esteem by his parishioners.[159]

The chantry furnishings and other fittings within the church (such as statues, sedilia, etc) were dismantled and re-installed in the fourth St Mary's. Since it is only for this latter church that photographs exist, these items will be illustrated in the following entry for that church.

The fourth St Mary's (1885-1941), Highfield Street

Exterior:

Owing to exigencies of space at the Highfield St site, the re-assembled church was 9ft shorter[160] than its predecessor, with which it is compared in Figs 16. It accommodated 850 persons, and comprised a 2-bay sanctuary under the same roof line as the 6-bay nave, lean-to N and S aisles, and a cross-gabled, SW 2-storey porch surmounted by a large, spired bell-turret.

Top: Fig.16a Bottom: Fig.16b

The third & fourth St Mary's compared:
a) The third St Mary's in Edmund St[161] b) The fourth St Mary's in Highfield St[162]

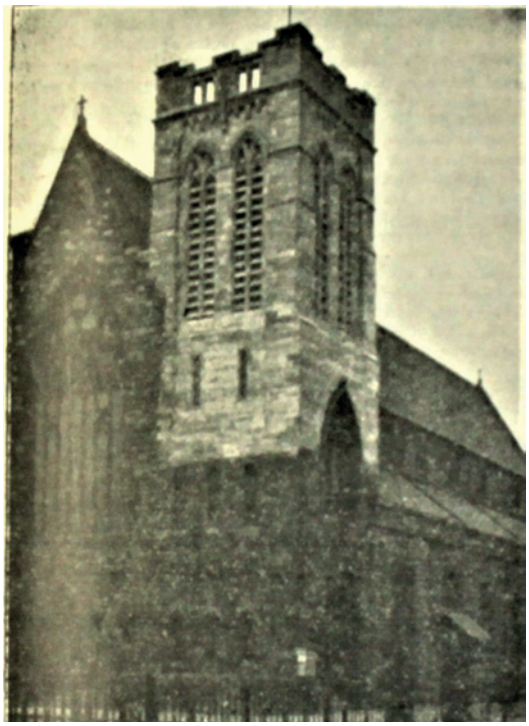
The cross-gabled porch, within which were stairs to the 1st storey on a level with the choir and organ gallery across the W end of the nave, here replaced the truncated SW tower of the Edmund St church, and in place of AWN Pugin's projected spire (Fig.13b) was substituted the bell-turret: effectively, the tower was repositioned anti-clockwise through 90 degrees, so that its original W entrance under a crocketted gable became the S entrance to the porch.

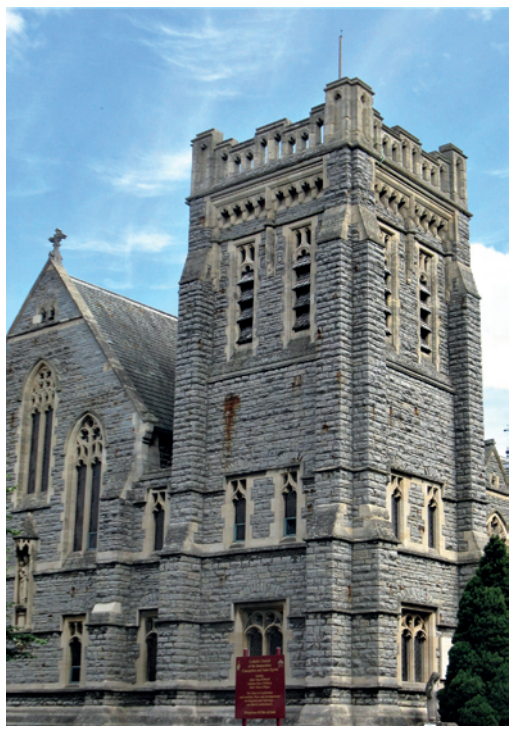
The S aisle bordered Highfield St, in consequence of which the church was much better lit than was its predecessor, where both aisles were partly abutted by neighbouring buildings.

In 1926, the original bell-turret (Fig.16b) was replaced by the large bell-tower shown in Fig.17a – the initiative of the Rector, Dom George Bede Cox OSB, as a memorial to the men of the parish who had fallen in the Great War; the tower cost £2,600, and contained a peal of eight bells.[163]

The bell-tower was designed most probably by AWN Pugin's grandson, Charles Henry Cuthbert Purcell of the Liverpool office of *Pugin & Pugin* – an attribution that is strengthened by the similarity of its upper stages (in particular, the contour of the embattled parapet) with those of the tower designed 15 years earlier by his cousin and fellow partner, Sebastian Pugin Powell, of the firm's London office, for the Catholic church of Ss Mary & Egwin in Evesham, built 1911-12 (see Fig.17b). It might be observed, however, that at St Mary's, Liverpool, the abutment of the tower is less than satisfactory, in consequence of the way it intruded into the S side of the nave roof (Fig.17a).

It is clear from the above that, contrary to what might be inferred from some published accounts, the exterior of the Highfield Street church (the fourth St Mary's) was not an exact replica of its predecessor in Edmund Street, but had a number of quite dis-





tinct features: it was 9ft shorter,[164] the entire church was under the same roof-line, and a cross-gabled, two-storey south porch here replaced the former SW truncated tower.

Interior:

As in the case of its predecessor, there was no distinct chancel, but rather a deep, 2-bay sanctuary under a coved panelled roof (which here, however, was externally under the same roof-line as the 6-bay nave). The sanctuary was separated from the lateral chapels by richly carved parclose screens in wood (Figs.18, 19a), and, towards the E end of the S wall, AWN Pugin's sedilia from the Edmund Street church were re-installed Fig.18.

The High altar and reredos (Fig.18) were re-assemblages of those in the previous church in Edmund St (under which entry they have already been described), apart from the central compartment of the reredos where AWN Pugin's stone tabernacle was replaced by one in brass, surmounted by an exposition throne under an elaborately carved canopy[166] – a genre in which PP Pugin excelled. The bomb-damaged High altar and reredos are shown in Fig.9b.

The steps leading to the High altar were in white Sicilian marble, and the pavement

Opposite
Left: Fig.17a
Right: Fig.17b

St Mary's, Liverpool and Evesham:

a) Liverpool, post-1926[165]
b) Evesham, 1911-12 (*Gerard Hyland*)

Fig.18
The sanctuary, showing the High altar, reredos, sedilia and lateral screen[167]

Top: Fig.19a, lower Fig 19b
The interior of the fourth St Mary's:[168]
a) Looking W from the sanctuary b) Looking E towards the sanctuary

of the sanctuary was composed of octagonal slabs of the same marble and diamonds of black marble.

The nave arcade (Figs.19) comprised 6 acutely pointed arches on slender octagonal piers with moulded capitals (imposts).

On the W side of the first arch into the nave from each side of the sanctuary was an elaborately canopied and pedestalled statue: on the north side (nearest the Lady Chapel), Our Lady holding the Child Jesus (Fig.20), donated by the local branch of the League of the Cross; on the south side, St Joseph – a memorial to Dom Ignatius Callaghan OSB (a priest at St Mary's, 1854-59). Towards the E end of the wall of the S aisle (just before the Sheridan Chantry) was a life-size statue of St Benedict in Carrara marble on an alabaster and marble pedestal, a memorial to Dom Bede Almond OSB (Rector, 1860-73). All three statues were originally in the Edmund St church.[169]

Projecting off the N aisle, under flat roofs, were four confessionals.

The sanctuary was lit by a large 7-light, traceried E-window (Fig.18), and from each side by a large single window below clerestorey level; the nave by a large 7-light W window (Fig.19a) and by a 3-light clerestorey, one per bay; the aisles by 3-light traceried windows, one per bay.

The great E window was filled with stained glass representing the whole life of the

Fig. 20
Statuary in the third/fourth St Mary's[170]
Our Blessed Lady holding the Child Jesus

Fig.21a Fig.21b

Furnishings:[171]

a) The baptistery b) The pulpit

Blessed Virgin in fourteen compartments, surmounted by canopies; the tracery was filled with lilies, stars, and other devices of the Blessed Virgin, interspersed with angels bearing scrolls; the glass was by *W Wailes* of Newcastle.

The baptistery at the W end of the N aisle, containing AWN Pugin's octagonal font from the Edmund St church, is shown in Fig.21a:

The Stations of the Cross carved in Caen stone by AB Wall[172] of Cheltenham, referred to on page 107 of *The Builder* of 18 July 1885 (and visible at the LHS of Fig. 20), were not inherited from the former church, but were commissioned anew. The same most likely applies[173] to the octagonal pulpit shown in Fig.21b (positioned against the first free-standing pillar of the N arcade) whose side-panels contained high-relief statuary and other emblems behind cusped ogee arches, very similar to those in the pedestals of the two canopied statues that faced into the nave (see Fig.20). Other items specifically designed for the rebuilt church were the alabaster altar rails.

The furnishings of EW Pugin's 1861 chantry chapel in memory of Dom James Joseph Sheridan OSB, mentioned above in connection with the Edmund Street church, were re-assembled in the SE chapel of the Highfield Street church; the tomb-chest is shown in Fig.22a, and compared in Fig.22b with that designed by EW Pugin for his father's chantry chapel in St Augustine's, Ramsgate:

Top: Fig.22a Lower: Fig.22b The Sheridan Chantry, and Tomb-chests compared.
a) Sheridan Chantry[174] b) AWN Pugin's tomb-chest, St Augustine's, Ramsgate (*Gerard Hyland*)

The front of the chantry altar had 3 roundels with carving in bas-relief, and the reredos consisted of one large pointed carved panel, depicting of the Deposition of Christ, below a high crocketted gable, flanked by high columns that supported statues.[175] The tomb-chest against the S wall comprised a recumbent effigy of the deceased priest on a bevelled marble slab above a tomb-chest (cenotaph), the front of which was divided into three panels, each with a carved roundel, by four marble columns with carved capitals and circular stone bases that rose from a deep bevelled plinth; the end panels were similarly treated. The wall behind the effigy was slightly recessed under a pointed segmental hood-mould with prominent label-stops, and was filled with bas-relief carving, the whole surmounted by a gable with a roundel in the apex. The carving in Caen stone and variously coloured marbles had been done by EE Geflowski[176] of Liverpool in 1861 when the chantry was first installed in the third St Mary's in Edmund St.

In 1895, the sanctuary and its lateral chapels (and possibly also the baptistery) were decorated by JA Pippet of *Hardman & Co*.

In contrast to the exterior, 'little or no change has been effected [interiorly] ... reverence for the original design has prevailed throughout.'[177] The contractors were *Messrs Hughes & Stirling* of Liverpool.

Epilogue

I have a personal interest in the saga narrated above, since my maternal grandmother was baptised in the third St Mary's (after whom she was named), and brought up in the fourth, where the marriage of one of her nieces on 24 April 1941 was the last to take place before the destruction of the church by enemy bombing 9 days later on the night of 3 May. As a young child, I remember being traumatized by the gaunt, charred ruins of this fine church as I passed by with my mother on our way to visit her cousins in Highfield St, in the immediate post-war years; as mentioned above, the crypt of the church had been converted into a war-time emergency water tank, which for me, as a child, heightened the sense of eeriness.

Little did I then know of the illustrious history of St Mary's, and I can only now appreciate why my mother's cousins were so saddened by the loss of their church, of which Dom George Bede Cox had been the revered Rector for forty-three years and a good friend not only to them, but also their parents (whom he married in 1899), their aunts (including my grandmother) and uncle who all once lived nearby in Leeds Street; one can only be grateful that he was spared from witnessing not only the destruction of his beloved church, but also its brutalist replacement, having died at St Mary's in 1938, just before the outbreak of war.

Architecturally, as we have seen, two of the five St Mary's were distinguished by their connection with three generations of the Pugin family: AWN Pugin designed the third St Mary's, which opened in Edmund Street in 1845, in which a chantry chapel was created in 1861 by his eldest son, Edward, whilst his youngest son, Peter Paul, oversaw the dismantling of the church and its re-erection at the nearby site in Highfield Street, 1883-85, only nine years before the arrival of Dom Bede as Rector in 1894, who, over the years, further embellished the church,[178] and in 1926 replaced the original SW bell-turret by a large bell-tower to the design of AWN Pugin's grandson, Charles Henry Cuthbert Purcell of the Liverpool office of *Pugin & Pugin*.

It is hoped that this contribution to *True Principles*: *Transactions of the Pugin Society* will rekindle interest in the now vanished parish of St Mary, which for almost three centuries was the post-Reformation Catholic Mother-Church of Liverpool, and once the pride and glory of the city. Given the religious and historical significance of the associated five successive places of worship, each exemplifying repeated triumphs over adversity, it would surely be fitting (as has been done in the case of the pre-Reformation Mother-church of St Mary del Quay – Fig.1) to have a *Commemorative Plaque* erected in the vicinity of Highfield Street, where the final two churches were located, acknowledging existence of the vibrant and illustrious parish that once flourished there, whose origin dated back to 1707 when the Catholic religion was practised under the shadow of the Penal Laws.

Appendix

The Burning of St Mary's

(Anonymous)

The Downside Review, Vol. LXX, 1942

THE name of St Mary's, Highfield Street, awakens an echo in many hearts. To innumerable parishioners who received most of the Sacraments and grew up under its shadow, to travellers alighting at Exchange Station hard by, or at the floating dock from Ireland and America, to missionary bishops and priests, bidding farewell to their native land, to the clergy of the archdiocese who gather at its confessionals, to business men and women who meet there on festivals or slip away from their business for a mid-day visit, St Mary's has offered generous and ready hospitality. Now that church, fragrant with so many prayers, lies less than a ruin; and those who knew it may like to have the details of its passing.

It is an evening in Spring. To a superficial glance St Mary's is untouched. The priest, as he leaves the pulpit after May Devotions, notices the warm glow of sunshine that draws deeper colour from the massive east window, burnishes the dark tiles of the sanctuary till they glow like flowing water, and settles benign as a blessing on every corner of that beloved building.

But in reality, the church was already shaken. The Battle of the Atlantic, which included air raids on all the Western ports, had reached Liverpool the previous evening. In the early hours of that morning there had fallen a bomb whose blast broke windows, severed radiators, shook down masses of plaster from the roof, dislocated corner stones and a main upright of the big window, and, most ominous, stripped tiles from the roof which lay towards Exchange Station.

Soon after supper the attack was renewed. The first detected of a sheaf of incendiaries was one which fell in a passage alongside the undercroft of the church, where some three hundred parishioners regularly sheltered. The blaze was at first dimly seen. Soon the hose was unravelled, and a spray brought to bear.

The priest went up from the shelter to the hall of the presbytery to investigate. His henchman, president of the C.Y.M.S., said suddenly, 'Look up!' The skylight of the house was bright with a flare, growing momentarily larger.

But there came word of incendiaries on the roof: and the two priests and some men ran upstairs with a chemical extinguisher, and out on the flat library roof. An incendiary was blazing just beyond the sacristy, but as the priest scrambled with the extinguisher over the steep pitch of the roof, he saw through the skylight trickles and runnels of flame moving along the vestments laid out for the Sunday Masses. The other priest went below then, and dealt with the fire by means of another extinguisher. The first proceeded to tackle his incendiary, finishing it off with sand.

Then it was seen that two other incendiaries had lodged firmly in the church roof: one above the Sacred Heart statue near the altar on the Epistle side, one at the far end just short

of the baptistery. With admirable spirit young men of the congregation started swarming up the bare walls. Then a ladder was hoisted from the back-yard and gave readier access. Sand was passed up and applied whilst another detachment hurried round to attack the second bomb. The men bridged the spaces between the confessional roofs with planks and climbed the steep roof of the Church. The priest, long trained to cricket, lobbed a sand-bag on to another incendiary inaccessibly wedged, and outed it with the first throw.

Meanwhile the air was rent with the rapid fire of anti-aircraft guns, and slashed with the hiss of fragments. Unmistakably through the din came the ominous whistle of bombs, and ever and anon, as the roof party flattened themselves against the masonry until the crash was over, a St Mary's boy in khaki, home on leave, would cry out: 'All right: carry on! That one has missed you.' But there were plenty more.

Soon it became apparent that the fire had too firm a hold on the pitch-pine beams to be strangled from the outside, and both parties hurried down into the church. In the darkness the light hose was quickly fitted to the sacristy tap. Nothing happened. The water supply was cut.

Soon a tap in the basement of the house was found to function: ladders were erected: and a stirrup pump set going at each end of the church. It was heart-breaking work to maintain a supply of water in the dark, even with a chain of buckets; but at least the fire was checked.

In the street a Lancashire fire-fighting unit had appeared and an A.F.S. man, a parishioner, made contact with it. Five hoses were fitted, but only one would draw; and even then the pressure was meagre. An attempt to operate from the organ loft failed for the same reason. Then the priest took from its shrine the relic of the Little Flower, and under her invocation full pressure was obtained.

By now the sky was visible through a great hole in the roof, but there seemed every prospect of the fire being checked. The priest went down under the church to see his people. Their uneasiness was being increased by the inrush of fifty or so dishevelled fugitives from Bibby's in Vauxhall Road, now well ablaze. An A.F.S. man was carried in rigid and staring after being blown down the steps by the blast of a bomb. The crockery in the shelter canteen had emptied itself on to the attendant. But these were temporary set-backs. Upstairs the fire unit had deserted to the works just across the road, now well alight. They were recalled by a forcible reminder of' the danger of the women and children under the church, and began to play on the roof from the outside.

But as the priest watched them, he saw trails of fire run across every ceiling of Buckley's warehouse not five yards from his church. And the south-east wind, which had blown on to Buckley's the fatal sparks, now blew cinders and blazing debris on to the exposed beams of the roof. Without adequate water there was no hope of saving the church.

The other priest moved the Blessed Sacrament to a house made available across the road and began to get busy saving the sacristy stuff. There remained the problem of getting the people away.

By now St Mary's was ringed with fire. Buckley's and Dutton's adjoining were now well alight, and blazing wreckage blocked one way of escape. McFie's, now a warehouse, in Tithebarn Street, and many buildings beyond, were on fire. Bibby's was on fire: the top floor of one block of tenements in Highfield Street was on fire: the tobacco warehouse in Leeds

Street was alight beyond remedy. For beside it a dead fireman lay with his head hanging over the crater which had disrupted the water supply. And in the wind, raised by the heat to gale force, sparks flew thick and heavy as hail.

It was arranged that when the bombs eased off a little, the warden should blow his whistle as a sign to evacuate the crypt. The priest went down again and told his people to prepare to move. There was a gathering up of bedding and a dangerous swirl towards the sole remaining exit. It was necessary to post a cordon of calmer folk across the centre, and men at intervals to prevent panic. But the best soporific was the Rosary. The calm, even beat of the familiar prayer soothed and steadied every fluttered heart. Then the priest told of a War Christmas in 1917, and adventures grave and gay, so that when the whistle blew suddenly, nerves were calm again. Slowly and with discipline the crowd drifted out and were escorted to other shelters, the women with hands over their heads, for one's shawl caught fire in the few yards of transit. Last of all priest and warden carried an old woman of seventy-nine, just skin and bone, over the road to safety.

There seemed no reason then why house and hall should not burn too. The priest gathered up a habit and a handful of notes and followed his confrere to security in the house where the Blessed Sacrament lay. He stayed there resting for half an hour, seeing, in retrospect, cruel flames licking the lofty roof above a shining and still unravaged church. At intervals from over the road came crashes of masonry as the heat loosened the mortar and the high groining fell.

Then, unable to rest, he returned to the house and opened the front door. A terrific blaze, orange and crimson, seemed to leap at him, but it was only reflection from the glazed bricks of the yard walls. The flames were still circling like things possessed within the sacristy, devouring cupboards and vestments, gorged with thirty pounds' worth of Exposition candles, but defeated to the end by the iron safe containing the two hundred year-old parish records, and the gold and silver plate. But already the fire was eating into the passage adjoining the house, and its cupboards full of boys' cassocks.

Suddenly things began to happen. A man ran across the road with a stirrup pump in his hand. A woman opposite threw open a window: she had a bathful of water saved. Others found a tap far off in Leeds Street, and hurried to and fro with buckets. A docks foreman arrived and began to clear away the cassocks. A second pump was manned and posted in the passage, whilst the first was operated by a lad perched on top of a bookcase in the library. The unbelievable happened. As he watched the priest saw the devouring flames stay, falter, creep back to the sacristy.

After half an hour of hard encounter (it was now 7.15 a.m.) a full-sized hose was obtained, joined up, found wanting, lengthened, attached to another hydrant: and suddenly, with a tumult sweeter than music, a rush of water leapt into the inferno beyond.

Now up came the old housekeeper: 'Is there going to be a seven o'clock Mass, Father?' 'Go away', said the priest, 'till this fire is under control.' He went up on to the library roof again, and men came after with a pump to attack the fire from above. On the roof of Dutton's beyond a fireman was preparing his hose to play on an outbreak in the adjoining roof. Waiting for the tiles to be hacked open, he lent the aid of his hose; then, swinging on to his proper target, drenched the priest in transit.

But the fire was at bay now, though one lad, working his pump, felt a flicker of flame

brush the back of his hair as it leapt unsuspected from a window. The 'raiders past' signal was a couple of hours old; and outside, these Liverpool Catholics began to drift in past blazing buildings and over ruin-littered streets, looking for Sunday Mass. Word was passed round: 'Mass upstairs in the Hall at eight o'clock.'

The Blessed Sacrament was brought back, wrapped in a charred chasuble. Salvaged branch candlesticks were the only ornaments of the altar. Enough linen and vestments had been rescued for immediate needs, and a chalice and hosts and wine. One woman, lately sick, staggered up with a huge altar stone, carried with superhuman toil from ruined Holy Cross.

People knelt on the dusty floor, grateful for life. To many, Holy Communion was distributed with Hosts consecrated in the days before disaster, a link to be remembered. Immediately after, a terrific explosion rocked the building. Frayed nerves set people starting to their feet. The priest, unrubrically, turned to them and said: 'There is nothing whatever to be alarmed about', and hoped that it was true. There were also time-bombs about, but no further untoward incident occurred.

The old housekeeper scored the last trick. She had saved the Sunday joint, and, in collusion with the District Nurse, provided the jaded Fathers with as good a Sunday dinner as they had ever tasted.

(*Passed by Censor*)

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Rev Michael Harwood (*Pontificio Collegio Beda, Rome*)
Thomas Henderson (*Ushaw College Library*)
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David Nathan (*'Creative Solutions' Liverpool*)
Michael O'Neill (*RC Church Historian*, *Liverpool*)
Steven Parsons (*Downside Abbey Outreach Officer*)
Brian Plumb (*Warrington Historian*)
Jeremy Charles Pugin Purcell (*Great Asby, Cumbria*)
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Paul Wright (*New Brighton*, *Wirral*)

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Notes

1. James II was the first Catholic monarch since Mary Tudor, 132 years earlier. Charles II converted to Catholicism only on his death bed.
2. The 1689 Bill of Rights, which settled the succession of the English and Irish crowns only on Protestants, was still four years in the future. After James' conversion to Catholicism had become known, there were repeated attempts to exclude him from the line of succession, and in 1679, to prevent Parliament from passing the Exclusion Bill, Charles II dissolved it.
3. James II's Declaration was prefigured by the Royal Declaration of Indulgence issued by his brother Charles II in 1672 in an attempt to extend religious liberty to both Catholics and Nonconformists; Charles was compelled to withdraw it, however, by the Cavalier Parliament of 1673.
4. 25 Car. II, c. 2. This (highly anti-Catholic) Act was Parliament's retaliation to Charles II's ill-fated attempt, *via* his Royal Declaration, to promote religious toleration – *vide sup.*
5. The four vicariates were: the London, Western, Midland and Northern Districts. Vicariates differ from dioceses (which were not reintroduced into England and Wales until 1850) in that the latter are under diocesan bishops whose jurisdiction derives directly from their office, unlike that of Vicars Apostolic, which is in the nature of a papal proxy.
6. A titular bishop is a bishop in title only – *i.e.* is not in charge of an extant diocese, but holds the title of one that is now long-defunct (a Titular See).
7. William, whilst sympathetic to freedom of worship, was adamantly opposed to the repeal of the Test Act, believing it to be essential for the safeguarding of the Established Religion, and was fearful that the associated social unrest that its repeal would provoke could jeopardise his wife's succession.
8. At this time, William was not an Anglican, but a Calvinist.
9. For William, the invasion provided an opportunity of engaging with English politics and realising his long-held aim of dissuading James II from forming an anti-Protestant alliance with Catholic France.
10. James made one more attempt to regain his English crown *via* an invasion from Ireland (where he was still considered King), but the attempt was foiled by William III's army which defeated James' in 1690 at the Battle of the Boyne (near Drogheda, 30 miles north of Dublin), after which James escaped back to France, never to return to any of his three kingdoms.
11. A Convention is a parliament assembled without being formally summoned by the Sovereign.
12. William was already William III of Orange.
13. William's promise to extend religious toleration to Catholics was contained in his Declaration (*Protestant Religion and Liberty*) dated 10 October 1688, which he sent from The Hague, in advance of his landing in England at Torbay.
14. The Toleration Act received Royal Assent on 24 May 1689: 1 William & Mary, c. 18 (*see* Section III). The exclusion of Catholics was due to the opposition of the Tories who insisted that what became the 1689 Act of Toleration applied only to Protestant Nonconformists.
15. 11 William III, c. 4.
16. The last recorded instance of a Catholic priest being imprisoned for life was in 1767.
17. After James Francis Edward took possession, it was renamed Palazzo del Re. James lived there until his death in 1766, and his two sons, Charles Edward and Henry Benedict, were born there.
18. The 1701 Act of Settlement (12 & 13 William III, c. 2) evolved out of the 1689 Bill of Rights.

19. The Elector of Hanover was the son of Queen Anne's second cousin Sophia, whose mother (Elizabeth) was a sister of Charles I.
20. Their common great-grandfather was James I (of England).
21. Muir, pp.163-64.
22. 3 George I, c. 18.
23. About half of these Jacobites (both Catholic and Protestant) were Highlanders (including some who had recently returned from the abortive invasion of England during the final two months of 1745); others came (as professionals) from England, Ireland and France.
24. Just prior to Queen Anne's death, Charles Edward's father, James Francis Edward, had been offered the throne on condition that he renounce his Catholicism and convert to Anglicanism; this he steadfastly refused so to do.
25. James Francis Edward was buried in the crypt of St Peter's Basilica in Rome.
26. Charles was allowed, nevertheless, to move into the Palazzo del Re, which his father had occupied for over forty years.
27. 11 William III, c. 4.
28. 18 George III, c. 60.
29. 31 George III, c. 32
30. 10 George IV, c.
31. https://supremacyandsurvival.blogspot.co./2021/04/roman-catholic-relief-act-of1926.html
32. 16 & 17 George V, c. 55.
33. The English & Welsh Hierarchies were restored by the Papal Bull *Universalis Ecclesiae* of 29 September 1850.
34. The eight new vicariates were London, Western, Eastern, Central, Lancashire, Yorkshire, The North, and Wales.
35. Eight of these bishops were the former eight Vicars Apostolic.
36. The Scottish Hierarchy was not restored until 1878.
37. Liverpool became a city in 1880.
38. The second Bishop of Liverpool, Dr Alexander Goss, went even further describing the third St Mary's – that designed by AWN Pugin – as 'the church of my diocese' (Burke, p.75).
39. To date, the earliest mention of this Marian dedication is 1821 – *see* p.141 of the Appendix of *Gore's Liverpool Directory* for this year.
40. Elton, pp.73-118; Peet, pp.12-46 (in particular, the Appendix, pp.39-46).
41. Following their defeat at the Battle of Preston, many Jacobites were taken to Liverpool for trial, and four were there hanged, drawn and quartered in a field between London Road and Islington, which became known as Gallows Field (Muir, p.164).
42. Until its closure in 1978, St Peter's was the oldest extant Catholic place of worship in Liverpool; it was de-consecrated in 1993.
43. Unlike that in Seel St, this chapel, in Sir Thomas' Buildings off Dale St, cannot be considered to have been founded *from* St Mary's, because for eleven years prior to its opening, its founder, the ex-Jesuit Rev Mr John Price, was not attached to St Mary's, but had lived independently in at least two houses in the town at various times. He continued to minister at the chapel from 1788 until his death in 1813, after which the building was used for a number of other purposes, until its demolition in 1898 – *see* Blundell, p. 63, Stoner, p.33.
44. Hardesty was an alias, his true name being Hargreaves. Occasionally, he is referred to also as Fr Tempest, Tempest being his mother's maiden name, which he sometimes used as a second alias – *see* Holt, p.111. The use of an alias was in response to the 1585 Act Against Jesuits and Seminarists (27 Elizabeth, c. 2), which made it an offence to send a son overseas to attend a Jesuit school

or seminary; accordingly, to protect the identity of his family at home, the boy would adopt a pseudonym for the duration of his travel abroad, which in many cases he retained thereafter.

45. Blundell, p.59; Stonor, p.30.
46. Foley, p.364.
47. Little, p.30. Given that the building described by Little does not resemble a chapel, his identification of it with Fr Hardesty's chapel must presumably have been based on information originally supplied with the old print to which he refers.
48. Nicholas Blundell's diary, edited by TE Gibson, was published in 1895.
49. Gibson, p.224; Blundell, p.60; Stonor, p.28.
50. Gibson, p.149.
51. Gibson, p.137.
52. Stoner, p.28.
53. Burke, p.11; Stonor, p.30.
54. The Jacobite army included some who had returned from the abortive invasion of England the previous December.
55. Foley, pp.364-365.
56. The year given in this account for the Jacobite retreat is incorrect: having arrived in Derby (their most southerly incursion into England) on 4 December 1745 under the leadership of James II's grandson, Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie), they retreated back to Scotland (Glasgow) two days later, bypassing Liverpool on both the outward and return journeys, their closest approach being Wigan – *see* Lord, p.213.
57. In 1746, the two incumbents were not these, but Fr Anthony Bedingfeld SJ and Fr Michael Tichborne SJ – Stoner, p.30.
58. Stonor, p.30. Coincidently, almost 100 years later, the Benedictines serving the third St Mary's established their priory at No. 12 in this same Square.
59. Foley, p.365.
60. Pippard was a misspelling of Peppard (*see* Blundell, p.47), an old Liverpool surname dating back to at least 1207 when Liverpool received its Town Charter from King John; the present Old Hall Street, off which (to the east) runs Edmund St, was previously known as Peppard Street. Henry Peppard married Nicholas Blundell's elder daughter, Frances, who inherited her father's Crosby Hall estate upon his death in 1737, when she reassumed the surname and arms of Blundell by Royal Licence, and her husband was thereafter known as Henry Blundell – not to be confused with his name-sake of Ince Blundell Hall, mentioned later in this paper.
61. It is usually stated that the refusal of permission to rebuild was because of fear of provoking further incidents; it should also be noted, however, that at this date, Catholics were, by law, not permitted to build places of worship; this had to await the Relief Act of 1791.
62. Old maps of Liverpool: https://historic-liverpool.co.uk/old-maps-of-liverpool/.
63. See preceding Endnote.
64. Blundell, p.62.
65. Brooke, p.60.
66. Blundell, p.63; Stonor, p.32.
67. See Endnote 65.
68. Pressured by the Bourbon royal courts of Europe, starting with Portugal, France and Spain who in 1759, 1764 and 1767, respectively, had begun to expel Jesuits on account of their propensity to meddle in politics, their perceived pride, and because of a growing mistrust (as enemies of the state, given the strong Jesuit allegiance to the Pope who was himself seen as a potential obstacle to the political objectives of these sovereign countries), the Jesuit-educated Pope Clement XIV,

in the interest of protecting Church-State relations, reluctantly suppressed the Society of Jesus on 21 July 1773, forcing Jesuits throughout the world to renounce their vows and former activities; they remained priests, however. The Society was restored 41 years later by Pope Pius VII (a Benedictine) on 7 August 1814. See *The Suppression of the Society of Jesus*, SF Smith SJ, Gracewing, Leominster, 2005.

69. Stonor, pp.34-36.
70. Burke, pp.14-20.
71. Gillow, pp.188-90.
72. Burke, pp.19-25.
73. See Endnote 59.
74. According to WG Herdman, however, there were two other points of access; these are mentioned on p.31 of Thom (1852-53) and on p.30 of Thom (1854), quoting Herdman as follows: 'This chapel was surrounded by buildings, chiefly houses, and was only approachable by three gate-ways under these houses, namely, by one in Edmund Street, by one in Ormond Street, and by one in Bixteth Street.' [This must be the narrow northerly extension of Bixteth Street shown in Fig.2a; the gate-way in Ormond St is probably that shown in Herdman's watercolour (Fig.12) as the whitewashed building adjacent to the RHS of St Mary's]. Thom goes on to say of himself: 'I remember well this second chapel, and the gateway in Edmund Street, by which I entered it. A few years ago, this was removed in order to make way for the present edifice.' [*i.e.* the third St Mary's]. In a footnote, Thom reproduces some correspondence from Herdman, who had informed him that the [second] chapel 'was situated up a gate-way, over which was the priest's house.'
75. Gore, Appendix p.141.
76. https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101376153)
77. Foley, p.365; Blundell, pp.61-62; Burke, pp.12-13; Stonor, pp.31-32.
78. Foley, p.366.
79. See Endnote 66.
80. Lewis, pp.17-18.
81. The source of the error can be traced to the *Liverpool Bulletin*, Vol. XIII, in which the image on page 13 is identified as 'St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Edmund Street.' This is incorrect. The source of the image is Plate XLIV of Herdman (1857), which shows four chapels, one of which is captioned 'Edmund Street'. From the accompanying text on page 102, it is clear that the chapel was *not* St Mary's, but was one used by a succession of dissenting denominations, including Baptists. He states (as of 1857 – *i.e.* 12 years *after* the Pugin church was opened) that the chapel 'is still in existence'; its pedimented façade can, in fact, be seen in the bottom RH corner of Fig.4b. The authors of the *Liverpool Bulletin* erroneously assumed that the image was of St Mary's, presumably solely on the basis that the latter was in the *same* street as the chapel illustrated by Herdman, without reading the accompanying text.
82. Archives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool: CHC/S10/7/B/10; *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 August 1845
83. See Endnote 82.
84. *The Tablet*, 1 August 1840, p.195.
85. Rosson had been received into the Catholic Church in the warehouse-chapel some years earlier. Such was the respect in which he was held that on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of St Mary's it was he, rather than (as was usual) the officiating bishop, who had the honour of addressing the assembly.
86. In 1840, AWN Pugin would have been known in Liverpool as the architect of the Catholic church of St Oswald in Old Swan, to the east of Liverpool, the foundation stone of which had

been laid the previous year. Pugin's appointment as architect of St Mary's was not announced by the St Mary's Society, however, until their 3rd AGM in 1843 - LAA: RAS 56/2/B10).

87. At the time it was built, St Mary's was Pugin's largest parish church; it was possibly exceeded in length (by one bay) only by his final parish church in Leith, Edinburgh, which was commenced 6 months before his death.
88. Belcher, (2001), p.131. The dimensions were later revised to 151ft x 55ft (*The Tablet*, 7 Sept 1844, p.565).
89. *The Tablet*, 2 Oct 1841, p.639.
90. National Library of Scotland: https://maps.nls.uk
91. See Endnote 62.
92. *The True Tablet*, 3 Sept 1842, p.453.
93. *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 August 1845.
94. Hyland (2022), pp. 12-13. I am indebted to Rev Michael Harwood for the images of his great-great-grandfather's medal and for information relating to it.
95. Blundell, illustration facing p.63.
96. Wedgwood (1985), p.200; *see* also Wedgwood (1977). pp.59-60.
97. See Endnote 95.
98. See Endnote 62.
99. *Liverpool Mercury*, 3 May 1844.
100. *Liverpool Mercury*, 22 August 1845.
101. See Endnote 93.
102. The English & Welsh Hierarchy was restored in 1850.
103. Burke, p.75.
104. In all, ten priests in Liverpool were martyrs to charity, giving their lives attending to the spiritual needs of their sick parishioners.
105. Burke, p.96.
106. Fitzsimons, p.66.
107. *Catholic Times*, 11 November 1883.
108. Archives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool: CHC/S10/7/B/125.
109. Ibid: RAS 56/2/B1; RAS 56/2/B10.
110. See Endnote 109.
111. Archives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool: CHC/S10/7/B/93.
112. Ibid: RAS 56/2/B1.
113. Ibid: RAS 56/1/A2.
114. Anon, p.4.
115. *Catholic Times*, 8 August 1884.
116. Dr Scarisbrick had served at St Peter's, Seel Street, from 1867 to 1871.
117. Archives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool: CHC/S10/7/B/76.
118. See Endnote 90.
119. Downside Abbey Archives: Uncatalogued item.
120. Liverpool Central Library & Archives: 352 PSP/2/121.
121. Anon, p.12.
122. A very moving account (*The Burning of St Mary's*) of the destruction of St Mary's on the night of 3 May, 1941, was published anonymously in Vol. LXX of the *Downside Review* of 1942, and is reproduced here as an Appendix. (The author was actually the Rector, Dom Ambrose Agius OSB, who spearheaded the heroic attempts of his confrère and parishioners to save their beloved church). Incendiary bombs had earlier caused some damage to the roof and windows of the

church on the night of Saturday, 21 December 1940 (during the same raid in which incendiaries partially destroyed the nearby church of Holy Cross). The priory suffered some minor bomb damage the following year on the night of Wednesday 21 December (during the same air-raid in which a landmine completely destroyed what remained of Holy Cross – rebuilt, 1952-54, to the design of CHC Purcell). At the beginning of April, 1941, the blast of two landmines that had fallen on Exchange Station caused damage to some windows in the priory, whilst in the church all the windows of the (ritual) N side of the church (the side nearest to Exchange Station) were broken by the blast, as was part of that in the Lady Chapel. (Downside Abbey Archives: Uncatalogued letters from Fr Agius to the Abbot of Downside.)

123. Anon.
124. *Weightman & Bullen* designed a number of (predominantly modernist) Catholic churches in and around Liverpool, 1950s-60s, and later.
125. See the architect's account in Anon, p.9.
126. The clubrooms could be entered directly from the adjoining streets (the doorway at the W end of the S aisle can be seen in Fig.10a).
127. Anon, p.8.
128. Anon, p.1.
129. Anon, p.11.
130. The Priory was designed by PP Pugin, and dated from the building of the fourth St Mary's, 1883-85; it survived the destruction of the church.
131. Archives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool: St Mary's correspondence file.
132. https://www.thefreelibrary.com/St+Mary%27s+could+be+demolished+for+flats.-a081046909
133. Having been destroyed by bombing 1940-41, Holy Cross church (originally built, 1859-60, to the design of EW Pugin) was rebuilt, 1952-54, to the design of Charles HC Purcell, a grandson of AWN Pugin, and the last surviving partner of the firm *Pugin & Pugin*; after his death in 1958, the firm ceased to exist.
134. Downside Abbey Archives: Uncatalogued correspondence.
135. Communication from Jeremy Charles Pugin Purcell, grandson of Charles HC Purcell, the architect of Holy Cross.
136. Eastlake, p.161.
137. *Liverpool Mercury*, 1 Aug 1845; Spencer-Silver, p.246.
138. Liverpool Central Library & Archives: HC 620E.
139. *The Tablet*, 7 Sept 1844, p.565.
140. See Endnote 62.
141. *Liverpool Mercury*, 1 Aug 1845. This was one of the most detailed of all AWN Pugin's press-releases.
142. See Endnote 141.
143. *The Tablet*, 4 May 1844, p.280.
144. See Endnote 62.
145. The drawing is not by AWN Pugin.
146. See Endnote 136.
147. Clennell.
148. See Endnote 139.
149. See Endnote 93.
150. *Liverpool Mercury*, 10 July 1885.
151. See Endnote 95.
152. Belcher (2009), p.7.
153. See Endnote 141.

154. *The Tablet*, 31 January 1846, p.69.
155. See Endnote 119.
156. Eastlake, p.162.
157. *The Tablet*, 12 October 1861, p.646; 9 November 1861, p.710.
158. See Endnote 141.
159. *The Tablet*, 20 October 1860, p. 660.
160. *Archdiocese of Liverpool Directory* 1930, p.106 – copies in Liverpool Central Library & Archives, and in Archives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
161. See Endnote 62, under *Illustrated London News*, 1864.
162. See Endnote 119.
163. *Archdiocese of Liverpool Directory* 1930, p.106 – copies in Liverpool Central Library & Archives, and in Archives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Coincidentally, the long-standing ban of church belfries was lifted in this year (1926) with the passing of the 1926 Roman Catholic Relief Act – *see* 'Historical Preamble'.
164. See Endnote 163.
165. *Archdiocese of Liverpool Directory* 1930, p.103 – copies in Liverpool Central Library & Archives, and in Archives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
166. *The Builder*, 18 July 1885, p.107.
167. See Endnote 119.
168. See Endnote 119.
169. *The Weekly Register*, 18 July 1885, p.68 – copy in Archives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
170. See Endnote 119.
171. See Endnote 119.
172. AB Wall (*c*.1849-1923) studied under RL Boulton, and, by time of his work at St Mary's, was a leading Catholic sculptor; he was well-known at Downside (from where came the Benedictines who served at St Mary's), having done much carving for the Abbey Church in the early 1880s: https://btsarnia.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/alfred-bernard-wall-catholic-art-works-2.pdf
173. This assumption is based on the observation that the side-panels visible in Fig.21b have sculpted figures, rather than emblems of the evangelists, as stated by AWN Pugin in his description of the Edmund St pulpit (*Liverpool Mercury*, 1 August 1845); also, the finish of the staircase is typical of PP Pugin.
174 See Endnote 119.
175. It could be argued that the High Victorian reredos was somewhat out of keeping with the earlier style of AWN Pugin's Decorated Gothic interior.
176. See Endnote 157.
177. See Endnote 150.
178. For example, in 1920, at his initiative, electric lighting was installed in the church.

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