



PRESENT STATE

the news sheet of the Pugin Society

January 2007 Number Five

Registered Charity No 1074766



'...arrived at Ramsgate at ½ past 3 o'clock. The flag was hoisted for the first time.'
Jane Pugin reaches her new home, the Grange, after her wedding in London on 10th August, 1848

WELCOME to our fifth *Present State*. New members may like to know that this title is a reference to Pugin's *The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England* of 1843, and that the monogram 'AWP' is taken from the title page designed by him for his *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, first edition 1841. *Present State* will be followed in late summer by our Journal, *True Principles*, edited by Dr Timothy Brittain-Catlin.

THE GRANGE The completion of this mammoth project is the most important Pugin event to date to have occurred during the life of the Society. Following various celebrations and a triumphant couple of Open Days on 24 and 25 June last, when over 3,000 people visited the Grange, and after extensive press coverage, the Pugin family's fully restored house is now - after nine years - open for guests and booked for many months ahead. The Society's AGM weekend in Ramsgate, last September, was rendered memorable by the residence of our President Mrs Sarah Houle and her family at the Grange, and we would like to record our thanks to her for her generosity in so readily sharing her Pugin heritage with so many others.

NB Guided tours of the house and St Augustine's church are available on Wednesday afternoons 2-4. To arrange a visit contact the Landmark Trust on 01628 825925.

****GOD'S ARCHITECT**** The significance of the restoration of the Grange is to be matched this coming autumn by an equally significant literary event – the appearance of Rosemary Hill's *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain*, the first biography of Pugin for over seventy years, to be published by Penguin. This book will promote Pugin far and wide. In bookshops across the land the public will be encountering him, many perhaps for the first time. Hurray for Pugin, the author, and the printed word!

Rosemary describes vividly how it all began:

I remember my first visit to St Augustine's, on an Easter Monday in the early 1990s. I was driving back to London with my husband after a weekend at Walmer. Christopher suddenly demanded that I stop the car which, as we were on a double-yellow line on that dangerous bend in Grange Road where I have been so often nearly run over since, I declined to do. I pulled up somewhere safer and asked what the fuss was about. 'That's Pugin's church' he said, 'let's go and have a look.' Pugin was no more than a name to me but I was curious and while Christopher went round the outside I tried the door and went in. The impression of the interior was overwhelming. The uneasy pull of the off-centre symmetry and the intense colours of the light through the glass made it unlike any church I had seen before. The phrase that came into my mind was: 'This is like being inside Gerard Manley Hopkins's head'. It became important to me then to find out more about the man who had created such a powerfully strange place.

I was recalled to the present by a monk, whom I now know to be Fr Dunstan, who was up a ladder removing Easter decorations and demanded to know how I'd got in, sounding none too pleased about the fact. Despite this unpromising start Dunstan showed me round and told me about the church. He told me that if I was interested in Pugin I should talk to Brother [Dom] Bede, which I did. Bede and Dunstan were the first of many friends that my work on Pugin brought me. It was some three years later that I began writing a biography. I thought it astonishing, given Pugin's importance, that there had been no life of him since 1932, but when I started work I found out why. The material was daunting - thousands of unpublished and barely legible letters - most of them undated; drawings scattered across Britain, America and, it later transpired, Australia. Architectural historians seemed deeply divided about his importance as an architect - medievalist or pioneer modernist? - while for all his fame there were many simple biographical facts missing - who, precisely, was Pugin's father? Why did Pugin himself die so young? (over to page two)

Rosemary Hill (continued)

My great good luck was in beginning my researches at a time when interest in Pugin was reviving. Clive Wainwright and Paul Atterbury were curating the great Victoria and Albert exhibition, the first ever devoted to Pugin. Brian Andrews was starting work on the Australian end of Pugin's career, Stanley Shepherd was studying the stained glass. Most importantly the Pugin Society was founded and became a focus for Pugin studies. I benefited hugely from everyone else's knowledge and as time went on I could contribute my own discoveries and theories. Pugin's reputation stands higher now than ever. When God's Architect appears in August it will mark the end of a chapter in my life, but no more than a milestone on Pugin's long journey into posterity.

MORE PUBLICATIONS *Hardman of Birmingham*, to be written by Michael Fisher, is scheduled for publication in time for Christmas 2007. Illustrated mainly in colour, it will bring the Hardman story up to date with details of recent metalwork and stained glass commissions, as well as surveying the firm's many activities since its foundation in 1838. Further details will appear in *True Principles*, but any preliminary enquiries should be made to Landmark Publishing, 01335 347349, e-mail landmark@clara.net. Timothy Brittain-Catlin is currently working on *The English Parsonage in the Early Nineteenth Century*, to be published by Spire Books, and members can also look forward to Tim's *Need to Know? How to Read a Building* (Harper Collins, July), and which contains, as we would expect, a chapter on Pugin and the Revival.

PUGIN CHANTRY RESTORATION Work in the chantry is scheduled to start shortly after Easter, under the supervision of architects Purcell Miller Tritton. The Parish is to be applauded for the hard work it has done in raising money for work on the window, which will cost considerably more than the conservation work on the tomb. The Pugin Society was not successful in applying for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (mainly because of accessibility issues) but has now applied for funding from the Kent-based Colyer-Fergusson Trust. We await an announcement re possible funding in March. The overall figure for repair of both window and tomb will be in the region of £35,000. £19,000 has been applied for.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, LEIGH near Uttoxeter, Staffs. This is a large church by a little known architect, Thomas Johnson of Lichfield, 1844-46, in Camdenian style. Pugin designed the chancel furnishings, exactly contemporary with his work at Wymeswold (Leics), including screen and choir-stalls made by Myers, a big east window by Wailes, and a profusion of rich Minton floor tiles incorporating the arms of Richard Bagot, Bishop of Oxford, who held the living. Thanks to the generosity of a local resident, the tiled pavement and the chancel decorations are to be expertly restored early this year. Leigh is a church of considerable importance as the design of a recent convert to ecclesiology working in conjunction with Pugin on an Anglican project. **Michael Fisher** (who also contributed the following two items).

A PLEA FROM CHIRK Following the sale of 2004 at Chirk Castle, Clwyd, when the Myddleton-Biddulph family virtually emptied the east wing, all but a small part of the castle has been leased to the National Trust. Augustus Pugin was at work there between 1845 and 1852 when unfinished building and decorative work was taken over by his son Edward. Much of the Pugin-Crace decoration was, sadly, obliterated in the 1950s, but the National Trust is trying to re-create the Pugin 'feel' in rooms where chimneypieces, doors, metalwork and stained glass are still in place. Any information/photographs relating to Chirk prior to the 1950s would be appreciated. Contact Sarah Kay (project curator) on 01746 781653. See further news on page four.

GLITZ AND GOTHIC The 'Cher' sale, October 2006. Having passed through a 'Gothic' phase, the American singer, Cher, decided to give her Malibu mansion a Moroccan-Tibetan makeover. She offloaded a large quantity of furnishings and effects via Sotheby's, Beverley Hills, on 3-4 October 2006. Included among the lots was a brass bed designed by E W Pugin for Scarisbrick Hall (\$84,000). The catalogue – in which Pugin items rub shoulders with glitzy dresses, shoes and fashion jewellery – makes interesting reading. Neil Phillips, of the John Hardman Trading Company, managed to secure a few lots, including *coronae* and a collection of metalwork drawings by John Hardman Powell.

PUGIN AND DECIMALISATION A recent browse on e-bay has revealed that a book published in 1854, by Nathaniel Cooke, and entitled *The Decimal System: In Numbers, Coins and Accounts*, by Sir John Bowring, LL D, was recently put up for sale. The vendor, antiquarian book dealers, Bibliografi, states that: 'The drawing on the title page depicts the first appearance of a Gothic florin, designed by A S W [sic] Pugin, shortly before his death in 1852'. This page is shown, but unfortunately it is not possible on-line to decipher something that could very probably be Pugin's monogram and which appears between the two sides of the florin, as illustrated. Does any member have evidence of Pugin's involvement?

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to : Professor Mosette Broderick, David Burton, The Most Rev Daniel Dolan, Anthony Edwards, Robert Galea, Jane Gallagher, Kenneth Goodyear, The Rt Hon John Selwyn Gummer MP, Kevin Hall, Kathy Hammond, Richard Harrold, Richard and Gillian Henschley, Peter N Hirschmann, Sarah Kay, Thomas John Pugin Knill, Ann and Fred Ledden, Adrienne Mainwaring, Jonathan Martin, Mrs Joyce Millard, Professor I R Netton, John Rennie, Jane Rozé, Colin and Judy Seymour-Ure, Ken Smith, C Terrey, Julia Walton, Christopher Waters, Sally Willsher, Carol and John Wilson, Tony and Sue Woolfenden

SOCIETY WEBSITE The site (www.pugin-society.org) is undergoing a programme of revision under Controller Keith Andrews. This will affect both appearance and, in particular, standard and accuracy of content. Various alterations have already been made and members may like to have a look at the site and see what they think. We look forward to constructive comment or even possibly to receiving additional - closely checked - listings, or descriptions of buildings. These should be kept short and factual. Good images are welcome. Contact Keith Andrews on 01843 861019 or e-mail: Aksandrews@aol.com

PUGIN AND KIRBY Parishioner Barbara Howell of the Church of the Sacred Heart (RC, closed 2004), Hindsford, Lancs, designed by Edmund Kirby, has come up with some interesting information re Edward Pugin and Kirby, who was EWP's pupil. She refers to Stuart Marsden, who is currently writing on Edmund Kirby, and reports: 'In his last letter he states that while Edmund Kirby was studying in Birmingham Augustus Pugin was so impressed by his work that it was he who introduced Edmund to E W P. Stuart goes on to say that Edmund remained with EWP for five years'. Do any members have more to add re the Pugin/Kirby connection? Please contact Barbara.Howell@salford.gov.uk if you can help.

FRESH EVIDENCE Active researcher-member Michael Egan has submitted further material to the Society regarding the Welby family, in particular Catherine Welby, Augustus Pugin's mother. The Welbys, together with the Dayes, were referred to in the last issue of *True Principles* (Vol. iii, no. iii, pp. 52,53). This material is based on information received by Michael since the appearance of the last *True Principles*, and his new findings will appear in full in the forthcoming *True Principles*.

THREAT TO CATHOLIC CHURCHES *Building Design*, of December 8, 2006, reports English Heritage as commenting on the critical state that historic Catholic churches are in today. Only 18% are listed, as compared with 80% of Anglican churches and so are not eligible for repair grants. No-one knows of the parlous state of these buildings better than us – particularly those by Pugin family members, not to mention many other Catholic gems that are at risk. The more support and publicity from EH the better.

BLUE PLAQUE We are delighted indeed to hear that Salisbury Civic Society is putting up a blue plaque to Pugin on his St Osmund's Church (1847/8), Salisbury. This will occur in early summer, possibly on 6 June, the anniversary of the day on which Pugin converted to Catholicism in that city in 1835.

BUILDING REPORTS

Good news regarding

St Marie's RC Church, Widnes, Cheshire (E W Pugin). Listed Grade II in December and saved from intended demolition. **St Thomas's RC Church**, Fulham (A W Pugin). Interior restoration, completed July 2006. **Taymouth Castle**, Perthshire, (additions and alterations by A W Pugin). Two of our members have reported encouraging restoration work in progress on this mighty complex, due to become, in time, a luxury hotel. **St Monica's RC Church**, Hoxton, London (E W Pugin). Fr Paul Graham, the priest at St Monica's, wishes in due course to restore the interior in an appropriate manner and has consulted us for advice. Many positive events are occurring at the **Monastery and RC Church of St Francis**, Gorton, Manchester (E W Pugin). See the enterprising www.gortonmonastery.co.uk for further information and for ways in which members can help support this impressive project. In Tasmania, at **St Patrick's RC Church**, Colebrook, the rood screen has been restored and replaced and major exterior works will be commenced later this year.

Less good news regarding

Chapel at Inglewood House (the former Inglewood Health Hydro), Kintbury, Berks (attributed E W Pugin). This case climaxed just before Christmas. The Society requested a spot-listing, knowing that this chapel was in danger of demolition by developer/owners Audley Court. Because English Heritage Inspectors were obliged to inform the owners of their impending visit, it meant that when the Inspectors finally arrived on site there had been time for most of the high-quality Puginesque interior fittings to have been removed, thus rendering the chapel unlistable. Members can see photographs showing the chapel before this happened on www.pugin-society.org. **Mount St Mary's RC Church**, Leeds (J A Hansom, W Wardell and EW Pugin). Developers Rushbond plc, owners of this eye-catching but problematic church, are undertaking necessary repair work on this Grade II* site and a draft planning application is in preparation. This would include retention of the EW Pugin chancel and transepts but demolition of the nave, to be replaced by flats in a contemporary architectural idiom. The Society is writing to various bodies to express our concern and our wish to be consulted in future developments. **Scarisbrick Hall**, Ormskirk, Lancs (A W and EW Pugin). The news that Kingswood College, the school based at Scarisbrick, is to close this summer, and the consequent uncertainties of the future of the Hall, are of grave concern.

Finally, ending on an upbeat note,

though with Sir George Gilbert Scott rather than Pugin, we were pleased to see the headline in the *Telegraph* of 5 December, 'Shanghai's Anglican Cathedral to rise again'. Scott's fine polychromatic colonial-era Anglican cathedral is to be restored. What an example the Protestant Church in China sets. **NB** Our official *Buildings at Risk* editor, **James Jago**, will be giving more in-depth coverage of various sites in *True Principles* later this year.

PUGIN SOCIETY EVENTS FOR SPRING AND SUMMER 2007

'I never saw heavier rain, and those who had any luggage got it soaked; thanks to my large pockets and mackintosh I escaped dry. It is quite delightful to travel without encumbrances. I care nothing for custom houses and baggage offices. I have everything about me ... it is the only way to travel with comfort.'

A W N Pugin, 1840

Saturday 21 April: Private visit to the Collection of John Scott

We will be visiting one of the great collections of nineteenth and twentieth century decorative arts and sculpture, housed in the home of John Scott, Ladbroke Grove, London. Our focus will be on the Pugin and Hardman artefacts, but there is a wealth of beautiful and fascinating objects to see. The visit will start at 2.00 and we will be entertained to tea. Cost: £20, which John Scott will kindly donate to Pugin Society funds. Please send SAE for joining details.

Tuesday 15 May: Windsor Castle and Frogmore

A day visit to Windsor where we will see the rarely accessible Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore, as well as the main apartments of the Castle, where we will be welcomed by Sir Hugh Roberts, Director of the Royal Collection and Surveyor of the Queen's Works of Art. We will also visit the Library to see drawings and artefacts connected with Pugin's early work at the Castle, where we will be greeted by the Librarian, Lady Roberts. Cost: £25. Send cheque and SAE for joining details.

Thursday 26-Sunday 29 July: History and Mystery on the Welsh Borders

The focus of the study tour is Chirk Castle and the Welsh borders, where we will be pursuing the complex and sometimes mysterious story of Pugin's involvement in the area. We will visit Chirk Castle to see the newly opened exhibition of Hardman artefacts (see also below) and to learn of further developments in the restoration of the Pugin interiors. We also hope to see Holywell, which Pugin visited on his honeymoon, Pantasaph, and other treats on the Welsh borders. We will be based in the lovely city of Chester, and the tour will be led by Michael Fisher, who has published widely on Pugin and the Gothic Revival. SAE for further details.

Saturday 8 September: Celebration to launch Rosemary Hill's biography of Pugin

A celebratory book launch for the eagerly awaited biography of A.W.N. Pugin by Rosemary Hill, *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain*, to be held in the Grange, Ramsgate, Pugin's house, by kind permission of the Landmark Trust. Drinks, and a special opportunity to talk to the author in a superbly appropriate venue. Starts 6.30. Please apply for free ticket. Numbers are limited and requests will be dealt with on a first come first served basis.

Saturday 27 October: AGM at St Anne's Church, Soho, London (further details in our summer mailing).

Please make cheques for all events payable to: The Pugin Society, and send to Julia Twigg, 9 Nunnery Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3LS. Please assume that you have a place unless you hear to the contrary. If you would like confirmation of your booking, or want to make further enquiries, ring 01227 766879, email j.m.twigg@kent.ac.uk.

ASSOCIATED EVENT

Saturday 21 April: Chirk: Lecture by Michael Fisher, *A Passion for Gothic*, and evening champagne reception to launch an exhibition of Hardman's stained glass and metalwork in the Castle's Bow Drawing Room. This exhibition will continue until the end of October. Tickets for both these events are available from Chirk Castle, tel. 01691 777701. Also at Chirk from **Saturday 24 March – Sunday 4 November** the family apartments in the east wing of the Castle will be open. Curator Sarah Kay writes: "Visitors will see the rooms as an example of 'conservation in action', with the processes being explained in an exhibition outlining the history of the east wing, the impact of Pugin, and the ongoing conservation work".

ONE LAST POINT

Society Balance Sheet Since our last AGM was unusually early last autumn, it was not possible to present end of financial year accounts at that time. We therefore enclose them now, on a separate sheet.

† Laus Deo ! †