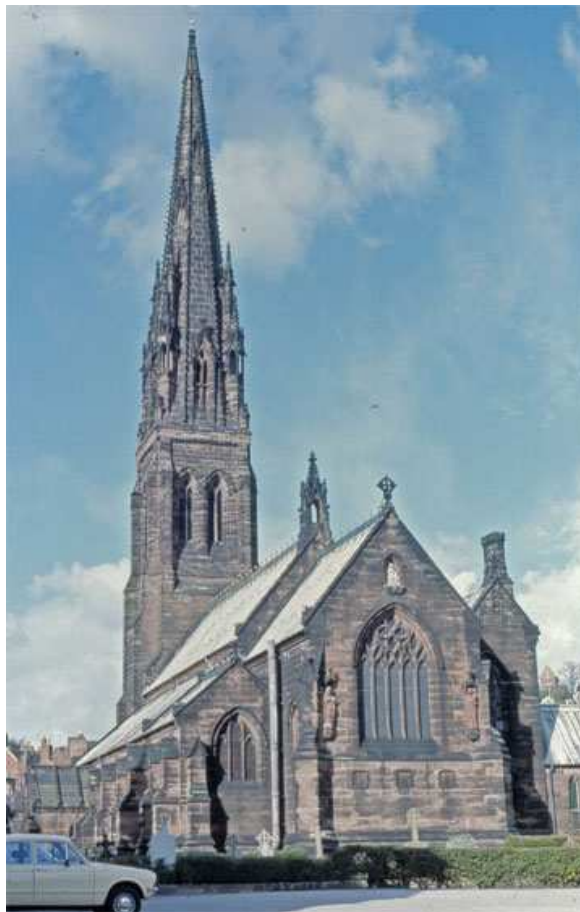


Pugin Foundation

Pugin's own description of St Giles' Church, Cheadle, August 1846

[This description has been transcribed, with original punctuation and spelling, from: *Lord Shrewsbury's New Church of St. Giles, in Staffordshire: being a description of the edifice, and an account of the Consecration and Opening. By the editor of Dolman's Magazine.* Charles Dolman, London, 1846, pp. 6–13. Images by Brian Andrews, Nicholas Callinan Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett and John Maidment.]

The church of St. Giles, at Cheadle, has been erected at the sole cost of the Earl of Shrewsbury, from the designs of Mr. Welby Pugin, and has occupied nearly six years in erection. It consists of a western tower, surmounted by a lofty spire; a nave of five compartments, with north and south aisles and porches; a Lady chapel; a chapel of the Blessed Sacrament; a chancel, with sacristies and organ-loft on the north. The style is that which prevailed during the reigns of the Edwards, commonly called decorated; and no labour or expense has been spared to render it, as far as possible, a perfect revival of the art of that glorious period.



The western entrance is in the tower; it consists of a deeply-moulded doorway, enriched with lion's heads, and oak branches, in the hollows; the label is square, resting on two shafts, and forming large spandrils, filled with foliage and Talbot shields. The doors are of English oak, strongly braced, and hung with hinges fashioned after the form of rampant lions, nearly covering the whole door; these are gilt, and the face of the doors painted red, and bordered with iron gilt engrailing, being the armorial bearings of the family. In the lower part of the tower buttresses are two canopied niches, containing stone images of St. Peter and St. Paul. Above the first stringcourse, on the south-west angle of the tower, two niches are formed out

of the buttresses; in the southern one is an image of St. Giles; and in the other, an effigy of the Earl of Shrewsbury, kneeling with a model of the church, as founder, with his patron, St. John the Baptist, standing behind him. Under St. Giles is a corbel, with a hind, surrounded by foliage, in accordance with the legend of the saint; and the other corbel is sculptured with the Shrewsbury arms, supported by two talbots. Immediately over the west door is a single window of three lights, with foliage work in the jambs and arch. Over this are the windows of the ringing chamber, which is ascended by a spiral staircase, forming an external turret on the south side. The belfry windows are eight in number, and the spaces between the mullions are filled with perforated lead work, securely fastened to the stone-work by iron cramps.



The bells are supported by a strongly-braced oak framing, rising from the floor of the ringing chamber, where it springs from a stone projection in the wall, carried out by corbel work, visible from the interior of the church. The bells have the following inscriptions, cast in ancient capitals:—

1. † Laudate Dominum de cœlis. Laudate eum in excelsis.
2. † Sancte Francisce, ora pro nobis.
3. † Sancte Cœdda, ora pro nobis.
4. † Ave Maria, gratia plena.
5. † Sancte Egidie, ora pro nobis.
6. † Tu es Petrus, et super hanc Petram edificabo ecclesiam meam.

This fine peal was cast by Messrs. Mears, of Whitechapel, London, and is the second executed in this country for the solemnities of Catholic worship since the revival of religion.

At the spring of the belfry windows, the internal angles of the tower are gathered into an octagon, by segmental arches; and the junction of the spire and the tower is strongly secured by an iron tie, cased in copper. The four emblems of the Evangelists are sculptured on four small gablets, resting on stone weatherings at the angles of the spire; above these are four richly-canopied niches, running up into crocketed work and pinnacles, containing images of the four Latin doctors, seated on thrones of the natural size, carved in stone.



The eight crocketed ribs, which gradually diminish in size and projection as they approach the apex, spring from eight talbots at the base of the spire, and terminate in as many gablets, with bosses to receive them.

There are four double-light windows at the base of the spire, terminated by crocketed gables and crosses; four immediately above the angle pinnacles, and four smaller ones near the upper part of the spire. The whole is terminated by a cross, composed of iron and copper, partly gilt, and surmounted by a cock, and secured to the spire, passing down the centre of the stone-work, about twenty feet, and fastened to four bars of iron, bolted to an iron collar, going entirely round the interior of the spire. The whole height, including the cross, is about 200 feet from the level of the churchyard.

The southern porch is vaulted with intersecting stone ribs, springing from six engaged shafts, and enriched with foliage and heraldic bosses. The external roof is entirely composed of stone. The horizontal joints are all weathered, and the vertical ones covered with ribs, terminated by gablets above the stringcourse. The label of the external arch is crocketed, and terminates in a corbel, supporting an image of our blessed Lady, with our Lord, under a rich canopy, with angels holding thuribles, in quatrefoils, on either side.



The floor is paved with encaustic tiles, of various devices, with this inscription:— ‘We will go into the house of the Lord, with gladness.’ On each side of the inner doorway are holy water stoups, in niches.



The northern porch is similar in proportions, but plainer in design. The internal vault, as well as the roof, are of stone, but ribbed and arched instead of groined. The niche over the external arch contains an image of our Lord giving benediction, and the floor is laid with encaustic tiles.

The eastern end of the chancel is supported by two angle buttresses, with niches, containing images of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. In the apex of the gable, over the great window, is another niche, with an image of our blessed Lady, with our Lord. The gable is terminated by a stone floriated cross, and immediately below the syl of the east window are three angels in quatrefoils bearing sacred emblems. The eastern gable of the nave

rises considerably above the chancel, and supports a belfry, containing the Sanctus bell. This belfry is composed of four pinnacles, with intermediated gables, and a centre termination. The words, 'Sanctus,† Sanctus,† Sanctus,†' are cast around the bells, which, as its name implies, is rung to give notice of the commencement of the canon.



The chapel of the Blessed Sacrament extends eastward from the end of the south aisle, being groined with stone. The external buttresses are more massive; and the one which is placed at the end of the aisle wall contains a niche, with an image of the resurrection of our Lord.



On the north side of the chancel are the sacristies and organ-loft, ascended by a spiral staircase in a turret, weathered with stone, and terminated by a lion.

The roofs are very high pitched, are all covered with strong lead, secured by rolls at short intervals; the ridges are surmounted by cresting, partly gilt. This cresting, which was anciently found on all roofs of ecclesiastical and important buildings, not only produces a rich and beautiful effect, but is actually useful in confining the lead, and securing it from violent storms of wind.

The tower is open to the nave, as high as the roof of the ringing chamber, by a large arch, splayed off with massive mouldings, and several feet in depth.

The floor of the tower is laid with tiles charged with the bearings of Talbot and Comyn, intersected by borders. A wrought iron screen runs across the lower part of the great arch, dividing off the tower entrance; but it is provided with large gates, that can be opened at pleasure.

The nave consists of five bays, or compartments, of twelve feet each; in height, forty-five feet, and in width, including the aisles, forty feet.



The ten arches are supported by eight detached, and four engaged, pillars, with richly-foliated caps, all of different designs; these pillars, as well as every portion of the roof, walls, arches, &c., are covered with gilding and painted enrichments. Over every arch are two circles, containing heads of prophets, copied from ancient Italian frescoes. The roof is framed entirely of English oak, all the beams, rafters, braces, &c., being open to the ceiling, and carved and moulded; each principal rests on a stone corbel, representing an angel playing on some musical instrument. The floor is laid with encaustic tiles, and stone alleys, with borders of inscription-tiles, having sentences from the pontifical office for the consecration of a church. A stone seat is built round the side and end walls, which are lined to the height of four feet five inches, with blue and yellow glazed tiles.



The western bay of the south aisle is divided off by carved oak screens, supported by brass shafts. The font, which is of alabaster, is fixed in the centre of this inclosure, and octagonal in form; four monsters, or dragons, are represented, crushed, under the pedestal, emblematic of sin destroyed by the sacrament of Baptism. The bowl is surrounded by quatrefoils, containing emblems of the four Evangelists, and angels, bearing crowns. The cover is framed of oak, and forms a central canopy, supported by eight flying buttresses and

pinnacles, and surmounted by a finial, to which chains are attached, for the convenient raising and lowering of the same. The baptistery window is divided into three lights; in the centre, an image of St. John the Baptist, holding the lamb; above, the Holy Spirit descending, surrounded by rays and seven stars.

The side lights are divided into eight floriated quatrefoils, containing representations of the virtues, such as:— Humility, Charity, Mercy, Modesty, &c., as females, overcoming contrary vices under the form of animals.



The seats are low and open. In the aisle, opposite the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, are several praying stools, with inscriptions carved on them:— “Vigilate et orate”; “Adoremus in æternum sanctissimum sacramentum.”

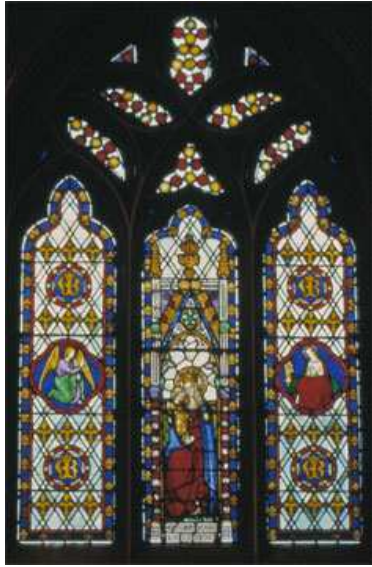
The Lady chapel is divided off from the north aisle and nave by a low screen of painted oak, gilt and painted, and by a cresting of iron wrought into fleur-de-luces.

The floor of this chapel is laid with encaustic tiles, representing roses and lilies, emblems of our blessed Lady.

The altar is cut in alabaster and divided into three front and two angle niches, containing angels bearing emblems, richly painted and gilt. The centre of an ancient oak triptych, of exquisite workmanship, of the Flemish school of the fifteenth century, is fixed over the altar; it represents the passion of our Lord, and is divided into three larger subjects, and a number of small groups.



The window of this chapel contains three lights, in the centre an image of our Blessed Lady with our Lord, and the sides the Annunciation, on a rich diaper of flower-de-luces.



The pulpit, which joins the Lady Chapel, is octagonal in plan. The four sides facing the nave contain subjects representing St. John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness; towards the chapel the three great friar preachers, St. Francis, St. Dominic, and St. Bernardin. It is ascended by a staircase in the sacristy, leading to a door in the east wall.

The window next to the Lady Chapel contains a representation of the seven corporal works of mercy.

The middle window, images of St. Peter and St. Paul under canopies.

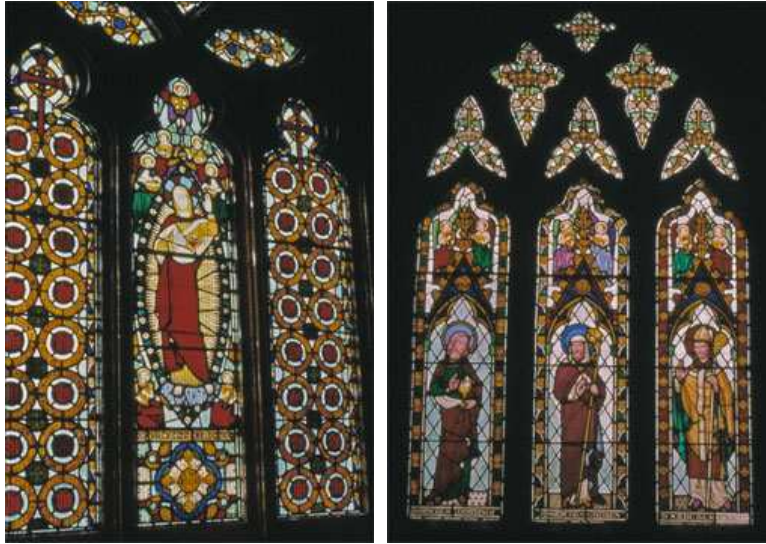
The westernmost window in the north aisle is filled with a diaper of foliage and sixfoils, with heads of Saxon saints.



The window adjoining the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament contains an image of our Lord in the centre light, pointing to his sacred heart, and surrounded by angels; beneath is this scripture:— ‘Vulnerasti corm eum.’ These side lights are filled with monograms of the holy name, encircled with petitions of the Litany of Jesus.

The next window contains images of St. John the Evangelist, St. Giles, and St. Chad, under canopies, and surmounted with angels playing on musical instruments.

In the third window next to the south porch, an image of our Blessed Lady stands on a moon crescent, with this inscription:— ‘Pulchra ut Luna.’ On either side emblems from the Litany of Loretto on a rich diaper.



Four coronæ of iron and brass, painted and partly gilt, each containing twenty-four tapers, are suspended by chains and counter-weights from the roof. These are sixfoil in shape, and the Scripture ‘† Domine da nobis Lucem’ is painted round them.

Immediately over the chancel arch, which is wide and lofty, is a painting of the Doom or Judgment, filling up the whole space of the roof. It was painted by Hauser, at Rome.

The rood loft extends across the chancel arch, and is approached from the organ-loft by a passage in the thickness of the wall. This loft is entirely of English oak, and consists of a central doorway and six lateral divisions, each separated by a shaft, from which the overhanging groining springs, after the manner of several ancient examples in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Somersetshire. The front brentsummer is most artificially wrought with foliage, grapes, &c., and along it is this Scripture:— ‘† Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem: mortem autem crucis; propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et donavit illum nomen quod est super omne nomen.’



The sides of the loft are protected by pierced quatrefoils and carving, relieved by painting and gilding, and the lower part contains twelve panels, intended to be filled with images of the Apostles. From the centre of the loft rises the great rood and crucifix, with the attendant images of our Blessed Lady and St. John, which are placed on pedestals untied to the foot of the rood with rich tracery. The cross is crocketed at the sides, and terminates at the

extremities with quatrefoils, containing emblems of the Evangelists, and surrounded with foliage.

Brass standards for tapers, to be lighted on great festivals, are fixed along the front of the loft, and branches for the same purpose from the sides of the rood.

The chapel of the Blessed Sacrament is divided from the south aisle by a stone arch and an open screen of wrought brass. The lower panels are filled with chased and perforated work, representing chalices, with the blessed sacrament and lambs alternately, and a pierced cresting surmounts the upper part, rising to crosses and crowns for tapers. Although light in appearance, this screen is of immense weight, and has occupied nearly two years in execution.



The pavement in front of the arch contains the inscription,— ‘Domine non sum dignus’, &c., and on the risers of the two steps leading up to the chapel,— ‘† Panem Angelorum manducavit homo;’ and ‘Panem de cœlo dedit eis.’

Immediately over this arch, a very rich cross is painted on the wall, with angels adoring, and this inscription:— ‘† Adoremus in æternum sanctissimum sacramentum.’

The chapel itself is entirely covered with gilding and decoration. The ribs of the groining, which is of stone, are richly diapered. The spandrils are filled with passion-flowers and foliage, and circles containing lambs, surrounded by running borders. The bosses are composed of vine leaves and grapes.

The upper parts of the walls are powdered with crowns and rays, with crosses alternate; while the lower portion is diapered with a continuous pattern of vine leaves.



The reredos of the altar is entirely composed of encaustic tiles, heightened with gold. In the centre is the tabernacle of metal gilt, covered with enamels.

The altar is carved in alabaster, and is divided into five compartments, filled with winged cherubim.

The floor is laid with encaustic tiles, in appropriate patterns, such as the lamb and cross, with the word 'sanctus' repeated within a border.



The east window is composed of three lights, in the centre an image of our Lord under a high canopy terminating in a cross, with the Evangelists. Beneath the feet of our Lord is the Scripture:— '† Amen, amen, dico vobis, ego sum panis vivus qui de cœlo descendit.' In the side lights a continuous vine forms six quatrefoils, containing cherubim holding labels, with Scriptures in honour of the holy mystery of the blessed Eucharist.



From a boss in the centre of the chapel, a lamp is suspended from a coronal divided into six parts, symbolising the six attributes of God, and inscribed '† virtus, † honor, † sapiential, † charitas, † benedictio, † fortitudo.'

The altar is furnished with rich candlesticks, linen, and ornaments, and every detail of this chapel has been designed with reference to the adorable mystery to which it is consecrated.

The chancel is twenty-seven feet in length, and nearly the same width as the nave. The ceiling is of oak, arched and divided into panels by moulded ribs, with carved bosses at every intersection.

The panels are powdered with gilt stars, with monograms of the holy name in the centres, surrounded by radiating borders. A stone stringcourse, richly moulded, runs along either side, immediately under the ceiling, with angels holding crowns, gilt and painted.

The ground of the chancel walls is entirely gilt; angels bearing scrolls with Scriptures from the *Te Deum*, *Benedictus*, &c., are painted at intervals, encircled by garlands, which are connected by a continuous diaper of quatrefoils and foliage.



The great east window represents the root of Jesse, or genealogy of our Lord. On each side of this window are two niches with projecting canopies, containing images of St. Giles and St. Chad. The high altar is carved in alabaster; the front is filled with angels seated on thrones under elaborate tabernacle work, playing diverse instruments, relieved by gilding and colour. The reredos represents the coronation of our Blessed Lady. This subject fills the centre compartment, while three niches on either side contain angels bearing thuribles and tapers. A stringcourse, richly carved with angels, runs above the tabernacle work, surmounted by perforated brattishing level with the syl of the east window. At either end metal brackets support curtains of tapestry with cipherings.



The sedilia are elevated one above the other on the three steps approaching the platform of the altar. The respective emblems of the priest, deacon and sub-deacon, are carved in panels at the back of the seats, and the whole is surmounted by elaborate canopies and pinnacles. Immediately opposite the sedilia is the sepulchre for the Easter service, under a deeply moulded inverted arch.



The organ loft opens into the church by six arches, three towards the chancel and three in the north, all filled with perforated brass screens. An ancient iron corona of most exquisite workmanship, brought from Flanders, is suspended in the centre of the chancel. It was executed in the fifteenth century, and although considered injured when originally purchased, it has been perfectly restored, and forms one of the most interesting and beautiful pieces of church furniture in this country.



All the sacred vessels, plate, linen, and ornaments, with which this church is abundantly furnished, have been carefully designed, after ancient examples, in a style corresponding to that of the building; and the pious founder has not omitted anything that could contribute to the solemn performance of the sacred mysteries.

The church is surrounded by a spacious garth, or church-yard, enclosed by a massive coped wall, and entered by two lich gates, the boundary of which will be planted with elm and other trees. In the south-west angle of the ground, and adjoining the porch, a lofty stone cross has been erected. It consists of a flight of steps, on which the base is raised; at every angle is an emblem of an Evangelist, and on the four sides a chalice with blood flowing into it from the foot of the cross, symbolic of our Lord shedding His blood for the four quarters of the earth. A floriated shaft rises several feet above the base, from the stem of which are two

projecting branches, sustaining images of St. Mary and St. John, with our Lord crucified between them, under a canopy.



To the eastward of the church are the schools for boys and girls, with a guildhall, seventy feet in length by twenty in width, over them; at the end a schoolmaster's house, with a bell-turret and other conveniences.



A rectory house is in the course of erection, and some land adjoining the south side has been purchased for the purpose of erecting a conventual establishment, to be attached to the mission.