

FURNISHING FORT AUGUSTUS ABBEY, INVERNESS-SHIRE

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On 15 October 1901 the annalist of Fort Augustus Abbey on Loch Ness recorded: 'Fr Abbot left for Dunskey to select the furniture wh. is to come here, as the new proprietor is pulling down the house & building an entirely new one'.¹

Although a seemingly straightforward sentence, this statement belies the often random nature of the acquisition of property by the Benedictine community, and the quite aristocratic background of its members. This particular entry is the first to mention one of the Abbey's largest gifts of furniture. Dunskey House, in Wigtownshire, Scotland, had become the property of the Benedictines at Fort Augustus in 1884 upon the ordination of its owner.² Now that Dunskey was being sold by the monks, the new owners offered them its furniture. Ironically, almost one hundred years later, on 12 March 1999, the furnishings of Fort Augustus Abbey and its Abbey School, including those originally from Dunskey, were sold through the Glasgow auctioneers McTear's following the closure of both institutions.³ Among the lots was a metamorphic dining table which is generally believed to have come from Dunskey.⁴ (Figures 1-4) The establishment at Fort Augustus of a Roman Catholic abbey and school in the final quarter of the nineteenth century had been an important milestone for the Catholic aristocracy of Great Britain. Its symbolic significance meant that no effort had been spared to involve the leading Catholic designers and benefactors in its building. However, while the story of the Fort Augustus furnishings is intimately connected to the history of Catholicism in Great Britain in the late nineteenth century, it is nevertheless typical of a general process of acquisition by religious communities and churches throughout Great Britain involving a mixture of donation, commission, and purchase.

Centrally located in the Great Glen which runs through the Highlands from east to west, Fort Augustus lies in a strategically important location in the only pass across the mountains to the south. This setting became especially important in the eighteenth century when Fort Augustus occupied the centre of a chain of three forts built by the English army to control the Highlands. Along with Fort Augustus, these military bases included Fort George, built in 1748-69 to replace the damaged Inverness Castle, and Fort William, originally a Cromwellian fort reconstructed in 1690 and again after 1746. Fort Augustus itself was constructed between 1729 and 1742 on the orders of General Wade, according to a design by Captain John Romer (Figure 5). It was named after George II's third son, Prince William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland. Although the Jacobite army, under Charles Edward Stuart, captured Fort Augustus from the English in March 1746, it had to be abandoned two months later after their defeat at Culloden.⁵

By the mid-nineteenth century, the British army no longer had any use for Fort Augustus so the government decided to sell it, finding a buyer in the 12th Lord Lovat, who purchased the buildings in 1867 and used a part of them as a hunting lodge.⁶ Lord Lovat

was a prominent Scottish Catholic who had dreamed of re-establishing a recognised Roman Catholic religious community in his homeland.⁷ In fact, he had offered land to the Scottish Ratisbon Abbey in Germany, which had been suppressed by the Bavarian government in 1862,⁸ but this proposal was not taken up.⁹ That Lord Lovat could cherish such a dream was due, in part, to the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 which opened public life to Catholics who, previous to this, had been subject to a number of penal laws.¹⁰ An optimism and vigour developed within the Catholic Church. This was due not only to the 1829 Act, but also both to the large Irish Catholic population in Great Britain, resulting from the Act of Union of 1800 with the Kingdom of Ireland and, especially after the 1840s famine years, the numerous Irish Catholic immigrants, as well as the prominence of Catholic building projects including churches, schools and convents. In the public eye, however, it was the aristocratic converts from Anglicanism who attracted the most attention.¹¹ The most notable of these, perhaps, came out of the Oxford Movement and included people such as John Henry Newman and Henry Edward Manning.¹² In Scotland, and for the purposes of this history, however, the most significant converts were the Marquis of Bute, who converted in 1868–9,¹³ and David Hunter Blair, who became one of the monks at Fort Augustus Abbey.

The Marquis of Bute, in fact, one of the leading members of the Scottish aristocracy, was the first publicly to moot the idea of a Catholic religious community in Scotland, and even offered the use of some of his own land for the undertaking.¹⁴ Described as ‘that visionary patron, intellectual and connoisseur’ and as ‘the driving force and investor behind so many initiatives aimed at restoring the Roman Catholic tradition in Scotland’, the 3rd Marquis of Bute proposed the idea of a Scottish monastery to the General Chapter of the English Benedictine Congregation in 1874.¹⁵ The Marquis, however, did not maintain his central role as others, including Dom Jerome Vaughan, an English Benedictine originally from Courtfield, Herefordshire,¹⁶ and the 13th Lord Lovat became involved as well. When the latter offered a home to the new community at Fort Augustus, the English Congregation agreed to its foundation in 1875, the Marquis of Bute contributing £5000 instead of land,¹⁷ with the monastery itself opening in 1878 (Figure 6).¹⁸ As Michael Turnbull, a former Fort Augustus pupil, writes, ‘the vision shared by Dom Jerome Vaughan, the Marquis of Bute and Lord Lovat to convert a military fort into a Benedictine Abbey was a magnificent one’.¹⁹

Perhaps not surprisingly, the early community was composed mainly of English monks, many of them aristocrats, and some of the most prominent Catholics in the country were attracted to the undertaking and supported it in one way or another.²⁰ Lady Lovat, the former Alice Weld-Blundell of Ince Blundell Hall, for example, saw two of her brothers enter Fort Augustus monastery, while Dom Jerome Vaughan himself was her cousin.²¹ Other Catholic families who were represented among the monks at Fort Augustus include Stourton, Clifford, Steuart, Cary-Elwes and Lane-Fox.²² Professional Catholic designers were also recruited for the project: the architect Joseph A. Hansom was commissioned to transform the Georgian fort into an independent school and Gothic-style monastery (Figure 7), while Peter Paul Pugin, the youngest son of A.W.N. Pugin, designed the cloister and other areas (Figure 8).²³ Although both men created designs for the Abbey church, neither was to realise his full vision, the elder Hansom having been replaced by the younger, and perhaps more glamorous, Pugin and the project itself suffering from delays and inconsistent funding.²⁴

Although the Marquis of Bute gradually withdrew from involvement in the Fort Augustus project, another 'convert' became instrumental to its early success. David Hunter Blair, who had become a Roman Catholic in 1875 while a student at Oxford,²⁵ entered the monastery as a postulant when it opened in 1878 (Figure 10).²⁶ Referred to by the Fort Augustus Benedictines as 'our great benefactor', he proved to be the most generous supporter of the undertaking, newspapers reporting he had given £20,000 to the monastery around the time he became a postulant.²⁷ He owned the Dunskey estate in Wigtownshire described above,²⁸ and, almost uniquely for a monk, inherited his father's baronetcy in 1896.²⁹ His generosity was legendary and members of the Fort Augustus community still speak of the high-quality furniture brought to the Abbey because of his association with the community.³⁰

The original Dunskey House was built in 1706 and had been the home of the Blair family (Figure 11). When James Hunter married Jean, the heiress of John Blair of Dunskey in 1770, he changed his name to James Hunter Blair, becoming the first baronet of the family in 1786.³¹ Their son, David, built Blairquhan in Ayrshire in the 1820s, supplanting Dunskey as the family seat which became, instead, the home of the 'next in line'. As David Hunter Blair wrote:

Sir James [Hunter Blair] left five sons, John and David, who succeeded him as second and third baronets, and James, Forbes, and Thomas, who in turn (all three died childless) became lairds of Dunskey. Forbes about the year 1842 built a large addition to the house, consisting of dining, drawing, and billiard-rooms with bedrooms above.³²

The old front was left intact and the new block built on at the back....My great-uncle Forbes died in 1833, and was succeeded by his brother Thomas, a Peninsula and Waterloo veteran, who had been wounded and taken prisoner at Talavera, and, after five years' captivity, again wounded at Waterloo...Thomas was at Dunskey very little, as his wife did not like it...My father succeeded to the property [Dunskey] on the General's death in 1849, [and] signs were not wanting that factors had been too long supreme... According to the settlement of the family estates made a generation previously, my father on succeeding to Blairquhan had to divest himself of Dunskey and of a smaller estate in Ayrshire (Brownhill, near Mauchline), in favour of his eldest son. I consequently became on my grandfather's death the baby laird of Dunskey, of course under the guardianship of my father...My grandfather, who had previously bought back the property in the Carrick district of Ayrshire formerly belonging to his maternal ancestors the Kennedys of Blairquhan, had completed the beautiful castellated mansion which was henceforth to be the principal seat of his family.³³

Because no decisive records exist for the mid-nineteenth-century building work described above, it is not clear who ordered the alterations, or when they were carried out. Other family history states that Thomas had Dunskey refurbished or renovated around 1840, or shortly before,³⁴ and the National Monuments Record for Scotland retains designs for Dunskey by William Burn dating from between 1824 and 1830, or 1838.³⁵ However, none of these seem to correspond to pictures found of the nineteenth-century house, and

the Orr-Ewing family, the current owners, whose predecessors had the original house demolished and rebuilt to plans by James Kennedy Hunter in 1901, believe a new Burn house was never built.³⁶ Blairquhan, which was built shortly before Dunskey was revamped, was furnished coherently throughout in c.1824 by Morison & Co who, at the time, were a local firm, but shortly afterwards moved to Edinburgh.³⁷ No bills have been found to reveal the maker of the 1830s or 1840s Dunskey furniture. Nevertheless, when the estate was sold by the Benedictines to the Orr-Ewings in 1901,³⁸ the offer of the contents of the house generated an enthusiasm greater than in many other parts of the Fort Augustus annals:

6 November 1901.

Last night seven truck-loads of furniture came from Dunskey via Spean. It was all carted up to the Play Hall & Novices & Brothers are busy under F. Abbot's supervision in unpacking & selecting for the Lodge, Ardachy, & the Guest House which are all to be practically re-furnished by this windfall. About 4000 books have also come; many of them valueless, but some good ones.

7 November 1901.

The furniture occupied a good many of the Comf. again. A good deal is now disposed of. The surplus is stacked in the old billiard room of the College. The large billiard table from Dunskey is to be set up in the Hospice smoking room for the benefit of the guests, chiefly. On acct of hard work fasting dispensed tomorrow.

8 November 1901.

Furniture pretty well settled now. An hour's longer sleep, no Chapter.³⁹

Usually, an inventory is made of an estate when a will goes through probate court in Scotland. However, possibly because Dunskey was entailed, when Thomas Hunter Blair died the settlement of the estate does not seem to have followed the normal procedure because no inventory was made.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, there is no other inventory or known record describing the furniture which was brought to Fort Augustus from Dunskey, making identification difficult.⁴¹ An image from Fort Augustus, however, may show the billiard table referred to above (Figure 12).

Other furnishings for the monastery came from various sources: donations, purchases, as part of the properties the Benedictines bought or inherited, and, sometimes, as the worldly goods of the monks themselves. Among these are pieces which suggest the hand of P. P. Pugin.⁴² Unfortunately, no furniture designs by Pugin for Fort Augustus appear to exist, aside from an informal drawing of stalls for the chapter house (Figure 13).⁴³ Nevertheless, the 'Pugin style' seems apparent in images of the Abbey interior (Figures 14 – 16). In addition to this furniture, according to a monk who was living at Fort Augustus before it was closed and did some research into the furnishings, several large tables and simple, identical wooden chairs were made on site when the monastery first opened.⁴⁴ Considering the close association of the Lovats with the monastery, surprisingly little furniture appears to have come from the Lovat estate. Only a pair of chairs from Costessey Hall, Norfolk, originally belonging to the 13th Lord Lovat's mother's family

and given by the then Lord and Lady Lovat to the monks in June 1912,⁴⁵ and a vesting table of Spanish oak for the Sacristy,⁴⁶ are recorded as gifts to the Benedictines.

The annals of Fort Augustus do reveal, however, that furniture came to the Abbey from at least three other properties: Ardachie, a local estate with historical family connections to the Lovats;⁴⁷ Fas-na-Coile, another local property which was acquired by the Abbey in 1952;⁴⁸ and Craigston Castle, near Turriff in Aberdeenshire. Among the furniture from Ardachie and Fas-na-Coile nothing appears to have been of outstanding merit. Ardachie is described in a document of 1906 as 'comfortably furnished',⁴⁹ with a 1907 bill from a local cabinet-maker, Robert Cameron, listing various repairs to the furniture there.⁵⁰ There is a more detailed list of, again, quite ordinary furniture from Fas-na-Coile.⁵¹ More interesting, though, is Dom Jerome Pollard-Urquhart's inheritance of Craigston Castle in 1915-16. Unlike Dunskey, Craigston did not become the absolute property of the Abbey.⁵² However, some items did make their way there,⁵³ and the Abbey chronicles mention the following:

9 August 1916.

For Recreation the community met in the former calefactory where the big organ was so long stored.⁵⁴

The large handsome room had been entirely renovated & fitted up with some of the handsome furniture from Craigston Castle.⁵⁵

A later entry could refer either to this furniture or some other specimens from Craigston:

6 May 1918.

The Craigston effects have brought in a considerable asset to our revenues. There were 8 Chippendale chairs, 4 chairs with woollen needlework seats, 4 painted chairs, 1 settee with silk needlework seat & 1 bureau. This lot sold for £200.⁵⁶

The plate fetched £340. The remaining furniture at Craigston Castle fetched £500. And now to-day we have word that 3 out of the 4 Stuart portraits have been bought by the National Gallery of Edinburgh for £1500. The 4th portrait, that of the Chevalier St. George they would not buy, as they had already many years ago acquired an exactly similar one for £21, of which they think ours is a copy, as theirs is a much better picture.⁵⁷

It is also worth mentioning that several large gifts and legacies were given to the Abbey by other benefactors, although there is no evidence that any furniture was given. These donors include Sir James Calder, who paid for the building of an additional wing for the school,⁵⁸ a young Mr. Harrison,⁵⁹ and a Miss Urquhart.⁶⁰ Although a donation and benefaction book for Fort Augustus does exist, it lists principally small gifts such as foodstuffs.⁶¹ Finally, mention should also be made of one entry in the Fort Augustus chronicles of furniture purchased by the Abbey: '17 September 1883: Workmen washing staircase and papering library in the Hospice for which new furniture is ordered.'⁶² No further information is available about these pieces.

Although the words 'church furniture' usually evoke images of pulpits, pews, altars and other ecclesiastical items, domestic pieces also find their way into churches and, in a

large institution like a monastery, are indispensable. The story of Fort Augustus's furnishings, including commissions, donations, and purchases, may not be so dissimilar from that of other religious communities. However, what is unique and, arguably, important about this account is the fact that it is also a physical manifestation of a development in society – the growth in Roman Catholic institutions during the nineteenth century, and the way in which this specifically attracted the attention of the Catholic aristocracy. Fort Augustus has now been sold, and its contents dispersed. For many pieces, this means returning to a domestic use. For others, it signifies an addition to the collection of someone with fond memories of their time at the Abbey school. In this way, the 'church furniture' discussed here is fundamentally like any other furniture, only with a remarkable line to its provenance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PHOTOGRAPHIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Figures 1–4 : Mallett Antiques

Figures 5–9, 12–16: Scottish Catholic Archives

Figures 10–11: James Hunter Blair

REFERENCES

1. 'Annals of the Monastery of St. Benedict, Fort Augustus, Scotland', vol. III 1898–1918. This is an unpublished chronicle held in the archives of the English Benedictine Congregation, Downside Abbey, Somerset. The annalists are unrecorded, but they were monks responsible for writing down the most noteworthy events in the monastery on an almost daily basis. These chronicles of life within Fort Augustus exist from 1874 onward and are among the richest sources of information on the Abbey. Dom Philip Jebb, the annalist at Downside Abbey, believes that most Benedictine communities would have such an unofficial record.
2. 'Annals', vol. II 1883–97, entry for 16 April 1884. According to records held at the Scottish Catholic archives, Lady Hunter Blair, the mother of the monk who gave the estate to the Benedictines, held an annuity of £800 from the Dunskey estate, and it might possibly be this which delayed the community selling the property before her death in 1899, although there is also evidence that the lack of a suitable buyer caused the delay.
3. The Abbey itself has been sold, and developed as luxury apartments.
4. McTear's, Glasgow, *Paintings & Furniture from Fort Augustus Abbey on Loch Ness; Scottish Ceramics, Silver & Jewellery*, 18th September 1998, lot 471.
5. *Fort Augustus Abbey. Past & Present*, 5th ed. (Fort Augustus: Abbey Press, 1963), pp.4–5; and John Gifford, *The Buildings of Scotland: Highlands and Islands* (London: Penguin in association with The Buildings of Scotland Trust, 1992), pp.168, 174, 237 and 241–42.
6. *Abbey. Past & Present*, p.6.
7. Lord Lovat's predecessor, the notorious 11th Lord Lovat, forfeited the Lovat estates and title and was executed in 1747 for his support of the Jacobite rebellion. However, he had also, for a time, supported the Government against the Jacobites, and had manoeuvred his cousin Amelia, Lady Lovat in her own right, out of both her title and, eventually, her estates, after her husband participated in the Jacobite Rising in 1715. See: Charles Mosley, ed., *Burke's Peerage & Baronetage*, 106th edition, vol. II (Crans, Switzerland: Burke's Peerage (Genealogical Books) Ltd., 1999), pp.1769–1770.
8. Probably founded in the twelfth century, St. James, Ratisbon, became, along with the monastery of Erfurt,

the home of Benedictine monks driven from Scotland during the Reformation. Ninian Winzet, who became Ratisbon's abbot in 1576, encouraged this move. By 1713 Ratisbon Abbey had developed a college for training secular priests for Scotland, but in 1840 a twenty-year-long series of negotiations began between the Scottish bishops and Bavarian government to turn the college into a national, as opposed to Scottish, training centre. The last Scottish monk at Ratisbon, Dom Anselm Robertson, left in 1859, eventually joining Fort Augustus, and the Ratisbon Abbey went on to become the local diocesan seminary. See: Peter F. Anson, *The Catholic Church in Modern Scotland 1560-1937* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1937), p.156.

9. *Abbey. Past & Present*, p.6.

10. In fact, many of these laws continued to exist, even after a collective repeal measure of 1884. See: Edward Norton, *Roman Catholicism in England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.64.

11. Norton, *Roman Catholicism*, pp.70-73.

12. *Ibid.*, pp.72-73. Put simply, the Oxford Movement was a phenomenon within the Anglican church whereby some of its High Church members, many of them at Oxford University, tried to show that their church was a direct descendant of the original Christian church founded by the Apostles. Its members published a series of tracts, and some of them ended up converting to Roman Catholicism. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a degree of mistrust existed between some of the 'Old Catholics,' those who descended from the Catholic families who retained their religion after the Reformation, and the new converts.

13. David Hunter Blair, *John Patrick, Third Marquess of Bute, K.T 1847-1900. A Memoir*, (London: John Murray, 1921), p.70.

14. 'Annals', pre-vol. I 1874-78, p.10. Other people to offer land for the new monastery included Robert Monteith of the Cairstairs Estate, and Sir Robert Gordon of Letterfourie, Aberdeenshire.

15. Turnbull, *Abbey Boys*, p.13.

16. 'Annals', pre-vol. I 1874-78, p.10.

17. *Inverness Courier* (17 October 1878), article about the opening of St. Benedict's College, Fort Augustus, attached to October 1878 section of 'Annals', volume II.

18. *Ibid.*, pp.16 & 18.

19. Turnbull, *Abbey Boys*, p.5.

20. Among the initial aristocratic donors of the Abbey were the names Lovat, Bute, Norfolk, Ripon, Stafford, Herries, Denbigh, Beaumont, and Hunter Blair. Many were remembered in the fifteen windows of the refectory where their arms were inserted. See: Gifford, *Buildings*, p.170.

21. Canonesses of St. Augustine Hospitallers of the Mercy of Jesus, *The Story of Ince Blundell Hall. A Short History of the House and the Weld-Blundell Family* (Ince Blundell, Liverpool: Augustinian Sisters, n.d.), pp.24-25, 30-31, 32.

22. This is not a comprehensive list. The names of those who entered Fort Augustus as postulants and those who made their solemn profession are contained in an unpublished register held in the archives of the English Benedictine Congregation, Downside Abbey, Somerset.

23. Gifford, *Buildings*, pp.168-69; and David Hunter Blair, *A Medley of Memories*, p.131. The *Inverness Courier* (17 October 1878) lists the men who worked on the building, including Hansom and Pugin.

24. The replacement of Joseph A. Hansom by Peter Paul Pugin does not seem to have occurred without a great deal of ill feeling, principally caused, it appears, by the then abbot, Dom Jerome Vaughan, who himself did not remain long in his position. In correspondence held by the Scottish Catholic Archives in Edinburgh, Hansom's son, Joseph S. Hansom, charges, among other things, that Dom Jerome asked his father for plans which he then gave to Pugin and that Dom Jerome misrepresented what one of the contractors had said about the costs of Hansom's and Pugin's rival designs (see FA/34/1/1, letter dated 7th October 1878). Dom Jerome, for his part, rather than make a clean break with the senior Hansom, wrote to him on March 24th 1879: 'I have left your last pathetic letter unanswered so long because not seeing how I could reply to it without giving you pain, I thought it better to let events take their course & speak for themselves.' He goes on to say 'I was under the impression that after my letter of May 23. 1878, you would have been quite prepared for this event. For it has long since become clear to us that owing to your advanced age you unfortunately no longer possess that strength of body & activity of mind necessary for the conduct of large & important buildings such as these.' (See: FA/34/1/3.) Things worsened to the point that Hansom's son later wrote: 'Messrs. Hansom regret that there is not cause for them to return thanks, as they consider the Prior has done his worst to kill the senior partner and ruin both. - There is ample reason however for gratitude to Providence in saving us from the Prior's malice;' (See: FA/34/1/4.) Perhaps this situation is ironic for Charles Hansom, the brother of Joseph A. Hansom, submitted rival plans and replaced A.W.N. Pugin as the architect of the Benedictine Downside Abbey

in Somerset, England. Neither Pugin nor Hansom was to build a church at Downside, however, Hansom's son being given the task later in the nineteenth century. (See: "Pugin Designs for Downside Abbey" by Roderick O'Donnell in *The Burlington Magazine*, volume 123, April 1981, pp.230-33.) Neither Hansom nor Pugin was able to complete their plans at Fort Augustus, either. However, well before the Pugin plan was abandoned, J. S. Hansom could not stop himself from writing: 'Mr. Pugin displayed a considerable amount of impudence in responding for Mr. Hansom. He is not the first member of the family who has displayed that quality.' (See: FA/34/1/7.) Reginald Fairlie was called in in the early twentieth century to finish the church (Figure 9), but even this project was not carried out to plan, a much simpler design eventually being adopted. (See: FA/ 34/35.)

25. David Hunter Blair, *In Victorian Days and Other Papers* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1939), p.124.

26. When the monastery and school first opened, they were known as 'St. Benedict's Monastery and College, Fort Augustus.' See: David Hunter Blair, *More Memories and Musings* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1931), p.75. The monastery became an Abbey directly under the authority of the Pope, breaking away from the English Benedictine Congregation in January, 1883. See: Michael Turnbull, *Abbey Boys: Fort Augustus Abbey Schools* (Perth:corbie.com, 2000), p.20. The Abbey was re-joined to the English Congregation in 1910, although it retained its title of Abbey. See: 'Annals', vol. III 1898-1918.

27. 'Annals', vol. I 1878-82, entry for 13 November 1878.

28. Entering a Benedictine monastery occurs in stages. First a man becomes a novice for one year, during which period he may leave at any time should he discover he is not suited to the monastic life. Similarly, the members of the monastery itself may decide a candidate is not adapted to his chosen life path. The community votes after a novice's first year on whether they feel he is ready to take the next step. If he is accepted, a candidate takes vows for three years. At this point, he can still own property, but cannot administer it himself. After this period, a candidate takes his final vows. Before taking these vows, however, he must alienate his property and give it away. A Benedictine monk cannot own property himself. He can give it to anyone he chooses, but in the case of David Hunter Blair, he settled his property on the Benedictine community at Fort Augustus. If a monk inherits property after taking his final vows, usually a discussion between the monk concerned and the abbot results in a decision about the fate of the property. In any case, the monk himself may not accept the inheritance. Information from Dom Philip Jebb, Downside Abbey, Somerset, in conversation with the author, March 2005.29 Mosley, ed., *Burke's*, vol. I, p.1473.

30. Interviews with Dom Francis Davidson in 2003, and Dom Nicholas White in summer 2004, both formerly of Fort Augustus Abbey, by the author.

31. Mosley, ed., *Burke's*, vol. I, p.1472

32. This seems to be a mistake, as Forbes Hunter Blair died in 1933. See: Mosley, ed., *Burke's*, vol. I, p.1473. Either the date should read 1832, or the work was done by Thomas Hunter Blair in 1842.

33. Hunter Blair, *Medley*, pp.2-5.

34. Letter to the author from James Hunter Blair of Blairquhan, 2 July 2003.

35. The National Monuments Record of Scotland, Edinburgh, has a date of 1838 on plans for Dunskey by William Burn on image WGD 26/6. The date is difficult to read on the plan itself, and this may be a misreading of 1830. Howard Colvin, in *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 3rd ed., 1995, p.187, lists 'Dunskey House, Wigtownshire, enlarged or rebuilt for Forbes Hunter Blair, 1830.' Colvin, however, seems to have obtained his information only from the Burn drawings themselves. In the William Burn biographical file at the Royal Institute of British Architects library, London, however, J. L. Donaldson, working shortly after Burn's death in 1870 from the list supplied by the Anderson office which inherited the Burn practice, asserts that the Dunskey alternations were an unexecuted project which went to working drawings.

36. Letter from Mrs. Diana Orr-Ewing of Dunskey to the author, 20 November 2003.

37. Letter from James Hunter Blair of Blairquhan to the author, 2 July 2003; and James Hunter Blair, *Blairquhan* (Ayrshire: MacDonald Lindsay Pindar, n.d.), pp.2, 22, 25, 28.

38. David Hunter Blair, *Medley*, p.271. Mrs. Orr-Ewing was a niece of David Hunter Blair, thus allowing Dunskey to remain in the family.

39. 'Annals', vol. III 1898-1918.

40. Information given to the author by the National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh.

41. David Hunter Blair had the property disentailed before he joined the Fort Augustus community. See: 'Annals', vol. II 1883-97, entry for 16 April 1884 which includes provisions for the Abbey on the occasion of David Hunter Blair, who took the name of Oswald, making his solemn profession. On the same page is a

clipping from an unnamed newspaper, titled 'A Scottish Landowner Becoming a Monk' which also deals with the passing of the Dunskey estate to the Benedictine monks.

42. McTear's Glasgow, *Georgian and Victorian Furnishings and Paintings from Fort Augustus Abbey and Other Properties*, 12th March 1999, lots 12–25 refers to "Pitch Pine Canterbury Chair, of Pugin design..."

43. Letter from Peter Paul Pugin to Father Oswald at Fort Augustus, dated 23rd June 1892. Scottish Catholic Archives, Edinburgh, FA/34/9/13.

44. Letter from Fr. Aelrud Grugan to the author dated 11th August 2004. Although the involvement of P. P. Pugin with the design of the monastery buildings, the McTear's reference to Pugin listed above, and a photo of the monks' dining room revealing some Puginesque furniture (see: *Fort Augustus Abbey* ([Fort Augustus: The Abbey Press, 1970])), may raise the question of whether he also designed some of this early furniture, no clear evidence has been found, to date, to identify which, if any, pieces he may have designed or to which ones Fr. Grugan's research refers.

45. *Abbey. Past & Present*, p.12.

46. *Ibid.*, p.19.

47. 'Annals', vol. II 1883–97 entries for 14 March 1893 and 27 April 1894 record the purchase of Ardachie by the monks and the movement of furniture from Ardachie to the Abbey lodge and guest house. See also: Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the Frasers of Lovat* (Inverness: A. & W. Mackenzie), 1896, p.655.

48. 'Annals', vol. III 1919–60, entry for 25 November 1951. The entry for 21 March 1953 states: 'The Calefactory was restored and fitted with carpets and with some of the late Mrs. Cottington's furniture.' Mrs. Cottington was the owner of Fas-na-Coile.

49. Scottish Catholic Archives, FA/31/23/2.

50. Scottish Catholic Archives, FA/31/23/4: An invoice or estimate from 'Robert Cameron, Cabinetmaker, Walking-Stick Manufacturer and Picture Framer, Undertaker' of Fort Augustus from 14 June 1907.

51. Scottish Catholic Archives, FA/31/14. Fas-na-Coile was purchased from Mrs. Lee Wilson on the death of her aunt, Mrs. Catherine (Kate) Cottington, who had been a parishioner of the Abbey church.

52. Scottish Catholic Archives, FA/31/60 and FA/31/61 suggest that Dom Jerome Pollard-Urquhart had intended or attempted to break the entail on the Craigston Castle property. This did not take place, however, although FA/31/62 shows that the Fort Augustus community had understood that they could claim the contents of Craigston.

53. Scottish Catholic Archives, FA/31/61/2 contains a list of items sent from Craigston Castle to Fort Augustus Abbey.

54. It appears that the organ was seen as an important acquisition by the Abbey, and much correspondence about the choice of instrument exists. See: Scottish Catholic Archives, FA/34/14.

55. *Annals*, vol. III 1898–1918.

56. The sale of this furniture, 'on the basis "that the various pieces are genuinely antique"', may be the subject of a letter preserved in the Scottish Catholic Archives, FA/31/63/2.

57. *Annals*, vol. III 1898–1918.

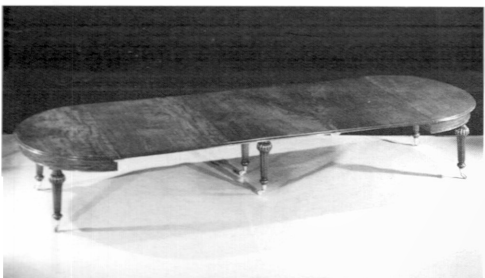
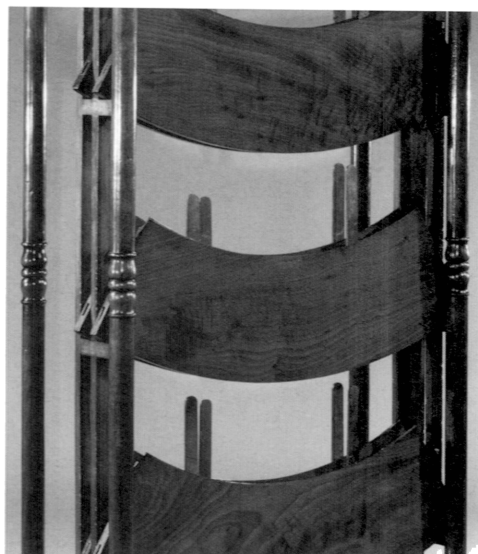
58. Turnbull, *Abbey Boys*, p.127; and *Abbey. Past & Present*, p.23. The new wing was begun in 1958 and finished in 1960.

59. 'Annals', vol. III 1919–60, entry for 14 Sept 1931. John Gordon Cuthbert Harrison left practically his entire estate, worth £200,000, to the Benedictines at Fort Augustus Abbey. He had been instructed in the Catholic faith there, and accepted into it. His half-brother contested the legacy. In various entries for June 1932 it is revealed that the monks eventually paid £35,000 to Harrison's half-brother, but were allowed to keep the rest of the estate according to a Court ruling. An inventory of one of Harrison's properties at 57 Albert Hall Mansions, London, held at the Scottish Catholic Archives, Edinburgh, FA/45/5, does list furniture, including six mahogany cane-back chairs.

60. 'Miss Jessie Urquhart was one of two sisters known as the 'Misses Urquhart' who were benefactors of the Abbey.' There is no reason to believe they were related to the Pollard-Urquhart family. Letter from Dom Aelred Grugan to the author, 25.11.2004.

61. Scottish Catholic Archives FA/47/1. Throughout the Fort Augustus records, the mention of gifts does not seem systematic, nor is it always detailed. With the religious and educational focus of such a community, it is not surprising that, although the number of extant records may be great, specific details of gifts are often inconsistent. Creating records for the use of future furniture historians was not one of their principal aims!

62. 'Annals', vol. II 1883–97.



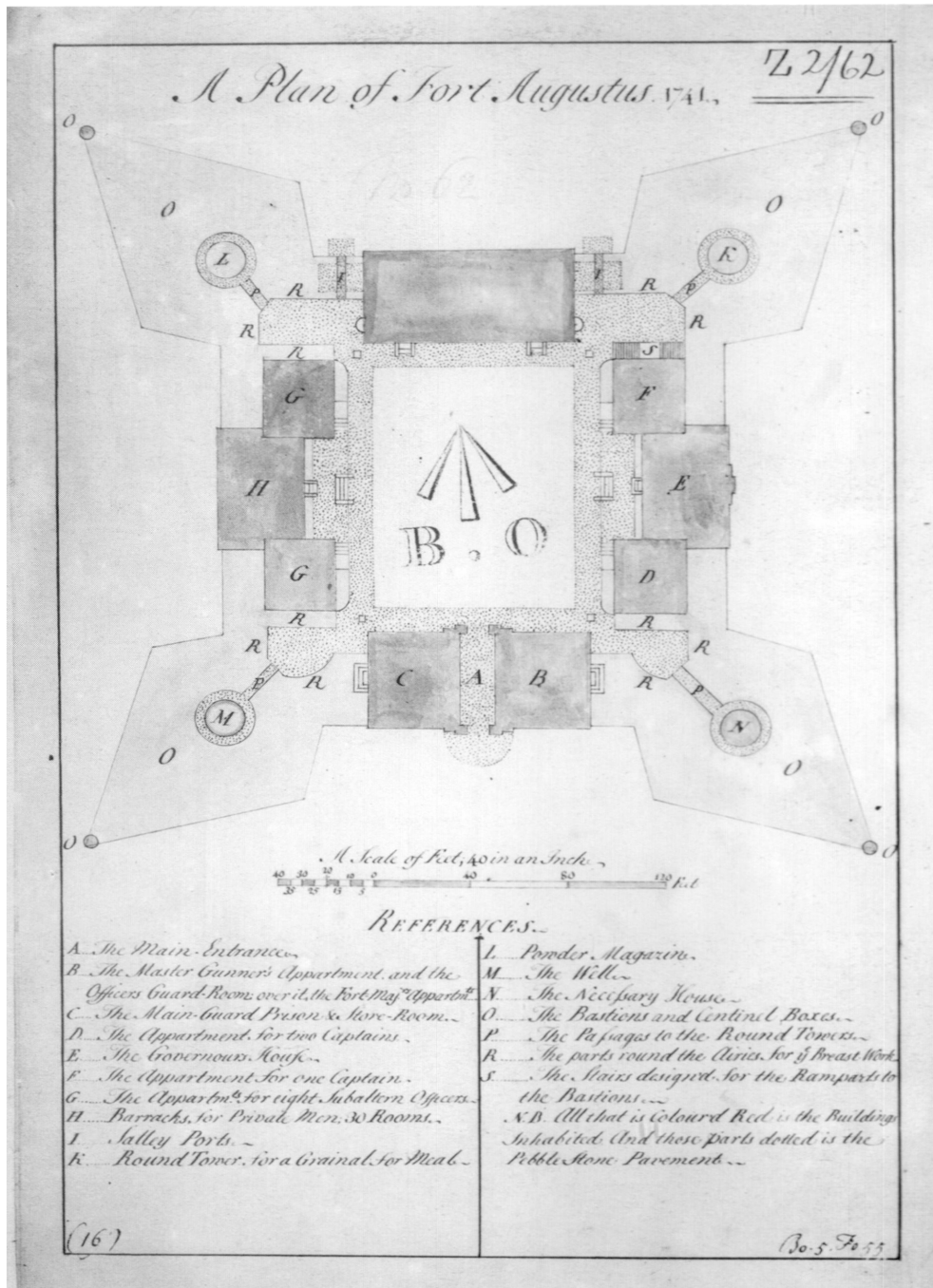
Clockwise from top left

1. Nineteenth century dining table, probably made for Dunskey House, Wigtownshire
Mallet & Son (Antiques) Ltd
2. Dining table leaves in case
Mallet & Son (Antiques) Ltd

3. Nineteenth century dining table, extended
Mallet & Son (Antiques) Ltd

4. Nineteenth century dining table with outer leaves attached
Mallet & Son (Antiques) Ltd

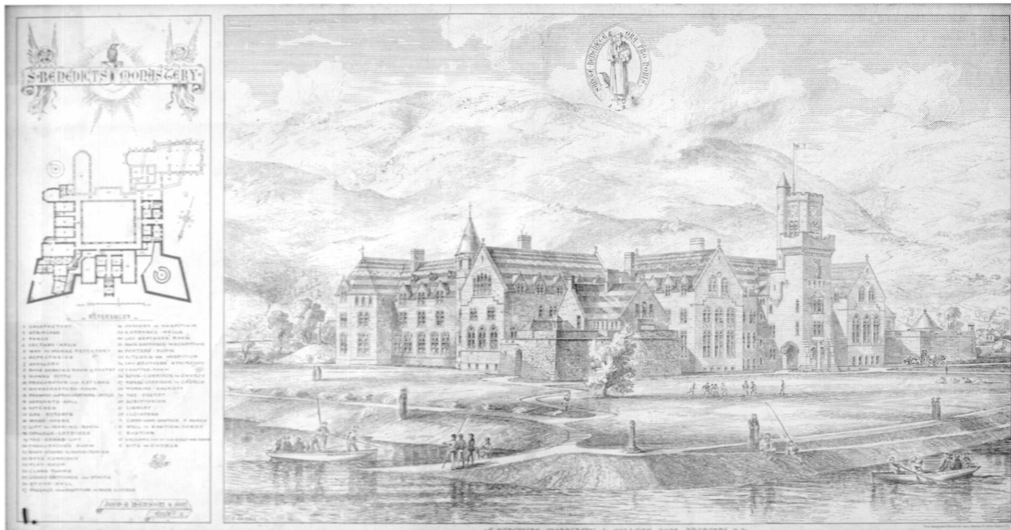




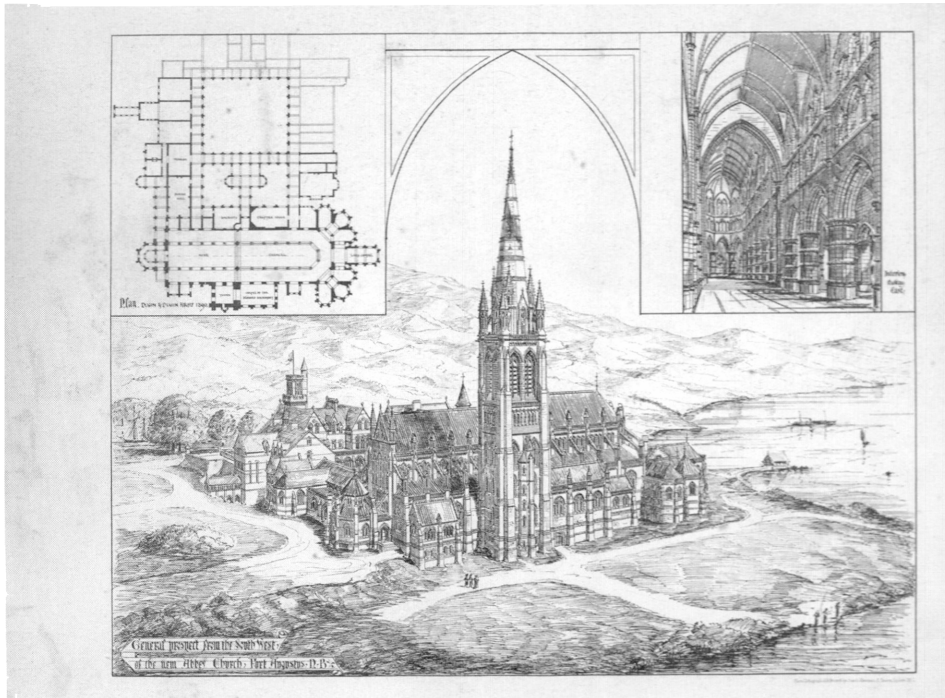
5. Plan of the Georgian Fort Augustus
Scottish Catholic Archives



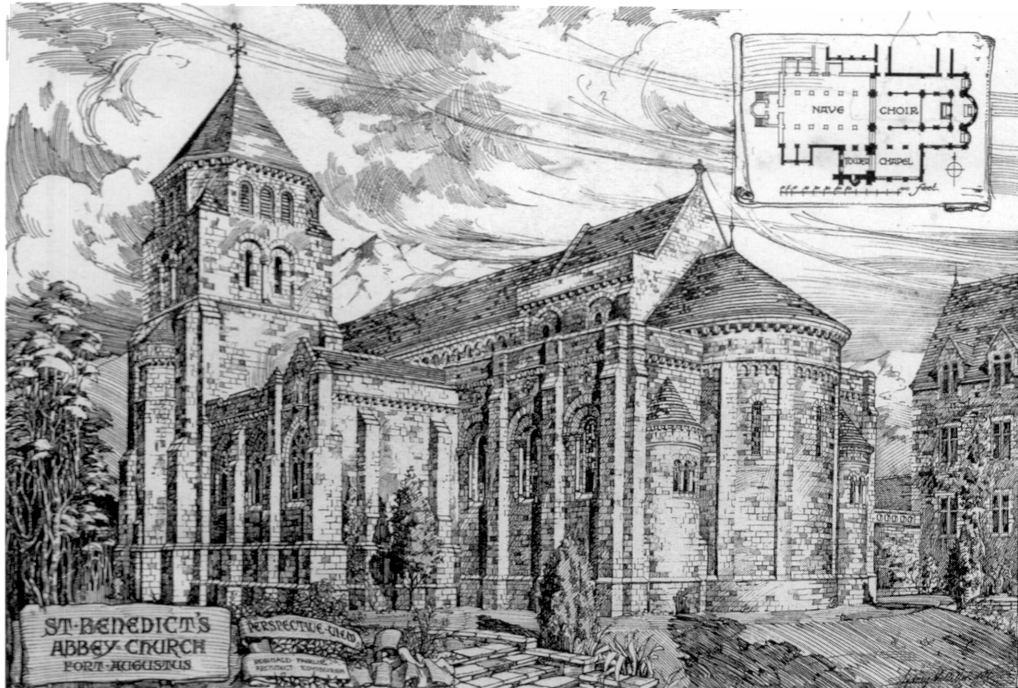
6. Fort Augustus Abbey on the shore of Loch Ness
Scottish Catholic Archives



7. Joseph A. Hansom's plan and design for the Benedictine Monastery at Fort Augustus
Scottish Catholic Archives



8. Peter Paul Pugin's design for the Abbey Church at Fort Augustus
Scottish Catholic Archives



9. Reginald Fairlie's design for the Abbey Church at Fort Augustus
Scottish Catholic Archives



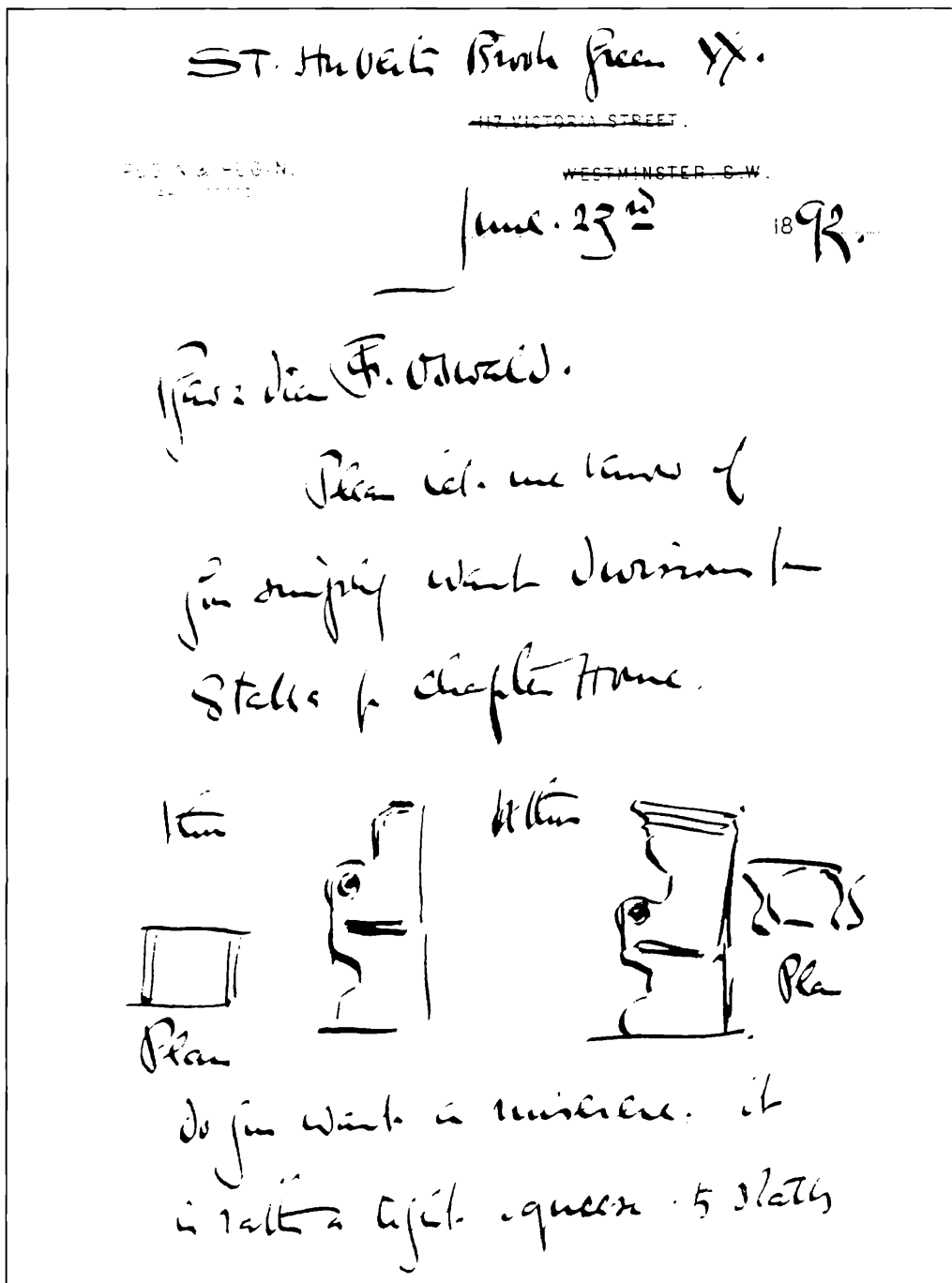
10. Sir David Oswald Hunter Blair
The late James Hunter Blair



11. Detail of *Sir James Hunter Blair and Family* by David Allan, c.1783
with Dunskey House in the background
The late James Hunter Blair



12. Billiard table at Fort Augustus Abbey
Scottish Catholic Archives



13. Drawing by Peter Paul Pugin of stalls for Fort Augustus Abbey Chapter House
 Scottish Catholic Archives



14. The Refectory at Fort Augustus Abbey
Scottish Catholic Archives



15. The Calefactory at Fort Augustus Abbey furnished entirely with 'Glastonbury' chairs
Scottish Catholic Archives



16. The Study at Fort Augustus Abbey
Scottish Catholic Archives