

October 2006

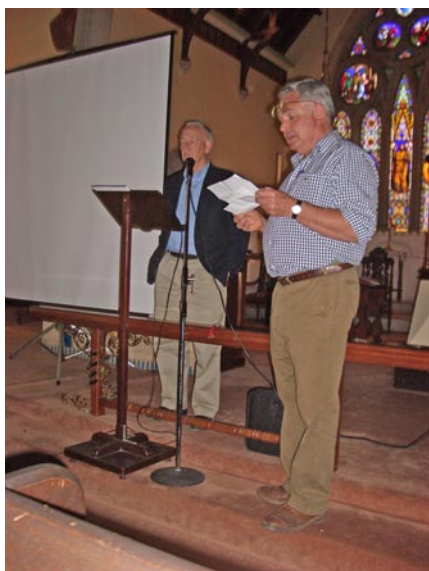
Number 4

Included in this edition:

- *The Renaissance of St Patrick's, Colebrook* (continued)
- *Pugin's Designs - Churchyard Crosses* (Part 4)
- *Pugin News Worldwide*
- *Pugin's Australian Built Heritage - St Francis Xavier's, Berrima* (Part 4)

Welcome to the fourth Friends Newsletter, and to the latest Friends Videoletter, which details the conservation activities on the rood screen from St Patrick's Church, Colebrook.

The video is in two parts and runs for just over 18 minutes. We apologize for the noise in the background but it is due to the intense, wild winds that were blowing in Hobart on the day of filming. Tony Colman, Historic Furniture Conservator, outlines his conservation of the Rood Screen and its crucifix in conversation with Executive Officer Brian Andrews. This pair has recently had very exciting adventures under the chancel floor of St Patrick's and have been up to all sorts of tricks. What a find! Our dust and filth-covered heroes emerged with 6 cardboard boxes full of treasure, although they did leave the mummified cat down there! They cannot wait to get down there again and are planning another day. We will bring you a detailed report on these findings, along with photographs, in the next Newsletter.



Every month reveals exciting discoveries and much progress for the Pugin Foundation.

The progress on the Colebrook bellcote reinstatement is reported in this issue and, as promised, we include the bellcote drawing. You will soon have the privilege of choosing to be a part of this historic Pugin construction work. We are posting an invitation on our website for people all over the world to dedicate a stone, or one of the bells, or the gilt cross, and we will be including a downloadable form for that purpose. These donations will be fully tax-deductible for Australian donors.

Brian Andrews' Pugin lecture on 7 October in St John the Baptist's Anglican Church, Mudgee, in aid of the restoration of its historic organ, was very well received. Pugin Friend David Mort (pictured here) gave Brian, through this invitation to speak, an unanticipated gift in the form of elements of Pugin's Australian designs recycled into St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church in Mudgee. The discovery is detailed in this issue.

It is such a privilege for the Friends to have welcomed one of the Foundation's Patrons, The Hon William Cox AC, Governor of Tasmania, as a Friend of Pugin.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

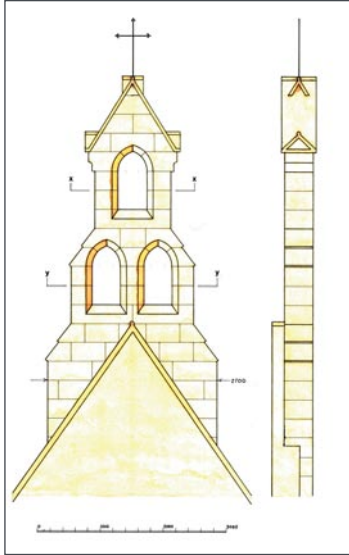
With kind regards,
Jude Andrews
Administrative Officer

Local Friend of Pugin David Mort introduces Brian Andrews for his talk in St John the Baptist's Anglican Church, Mudgee, on 7 October.

The Renaissance of St Patrick's, Colebrook

Continuing our news of conservation activities we report on activities aimed at reinstatement of the triple bellcote on the nave east gable.

As reported in last month's Newsletter, the final working drawings for the bellcote have now been completed and the main elevations are reproduced here. It should be



The Colebrook bellcote

a most handsome structure, and what a privilege—and responsibility—it is to be involved in the construction of part of a Pugin building for the first time in 150 years!

A critical aspect of the bellcote's reinstatement will be ensuring that it does not collapse again. It is a tall slender structure, being some 6.1 metres high from its junction with

the nave east wall, but just 45 centimetres thick. Further, it is in a particularly high wind environment in an exposed position on the side of the Coal River valley. Project engineer Peter Spratt has remarked with tongue firmly in cheek that it was obviously designed by an architect, not an engineer, and that it was bound to fall sooner or later.

Leading Australian structural engineer Bill Jordan, who worked on the repairs and strengthening of Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Newcastle, New South Wales, after the 1989 earthquake there, has done the structural analysis of the bellcote. His solution entails the incorporation of stainless steel reinforcement within the bellcote, extending well down into the nave east wall proper, as well as a number of stiffening measures for the entire building, all designed to achieve the desired end without compromising its heritage values.

Stone for the church was originally quarried on the far side of the valley, on the present day Daisy Banks property. In July this year Peter Spratt inspected several quarry sites on Daisy Banks. Although some material is of suitable quality (particularly regarding low clay content) the overburden accumulated over 150 years of disuse means that it would not prove economical to re-open the quarry.

Fortunately, there is available an adequate amount of cured quality Tasmanian sandstone of compatible texture and colour sourced from the Bryn Estyn quarry in the Derwent Valley, Southern Tasmania, and this will be used for the bellcote.

We intend to fit the bellcote with three bells and to this end have engaged Hervey Bagot, founder and director of the oldest established bell business in Australia, to design, procure and install them. The bells will sound notes C, D and E from the heaviest to the lightest and they will be named Patrick, William and Ave Maria respectively. Patrick will be tolled for funerals. William is named after William Willson, first Bishop of Hobart Town, also Fr William Dunne, who built the church and is buried in the adjoining cemetery, and will be tolled for all other services. Ave Maria will sound the Angelus at noon. They will be procured in France and possibly fitted with Australian jarrah supports.

The bells will be clocked electromagnetically from a control unit in the sacristy. Hervey has an old book of melodies for bells in the South of France and a number of them are based on the notes C, D and E. Ten or so of these melodies, each lasting between 30 seconds and one minute, will be programmed into the control unit and one of them will be played each day at, say, 2.00 pm in rotation. It will become Colebrook's special signature and, hopefully, draw tourists to the area to the betterment of the village's economic wellbeing. One longer melody will be used for weddings.

If all goes according to plan, the bellcote should be reinstated and the bells installed before the middle of 2007.



Project engineer Peter Spratt, on the right, inspects a quarry site on Daisy Banks, Colebrook, with the owner Cyril Laidlaw on 12 July 2006

Pugin's Designs

In this series we are looking in detail at Pugin's designs for buildings, furnishings and objects. An examination of some of his churchyard crosses continues in this issue, but firstly a correction to last month's article on the Cheadle cross. Our English readers and those of you who noticed the angle of the shadows in the image of the cross will know that the cross is on the south, or sunny, side of the church, not the north. This is an occupational hazard for those of us in the southern hemisphere describing buildings north of the equator.

Churchyard Crosses (Part 4)



The churchyard cross, St John the Evangelist's Church, Kirkham, Lancashire

Pugin's Church of St John the Evangelist, Kirkham, was opened on 23 April 1845. An aisled clerestoried building with western tower and spire, it is in the Gothic idiom that prevailed in England in the first two decades of the fourteenth century. It is flanked on its west and south by an extensive cemetery, in the midst of which is the churchyard cross. It would appear that this beautiful cross has at some stage been subjected to the mindless vandalism that plagues cemeteries worldwide with the result that the rather banal surmounting cross is clearly not original. The remainder, as would be expected, is in the same style as the church itself. The top of the square-section shaft has a blind trefoiled gablet to each face, the shaft itself having roll mouldings to the corners and carved foliated ornament. Standing on slight moulded projections at the base of the shaft are exquisitely carved lively symbols of the four evangelists, as we have already noted on Pugin's crosses at Alton, Kenilworth and Cheadle.

The moulded square base stands on a substantial moulded square plinth with a row of quatrefoils sunk in each face. Given the beauty of this now incomplete Pugin design one can only imagine how splendid its surmounting cross must have been and regret its loss.



St Mary of the Presentation Church, Mudjee

Pugin News Worldwide

St Mary of the Presentation Church, Mudjee

While Brian Andrews was in Mudjee, in the Central West of New South Wales, on 7 October to give his Pugin talk he had the opportunity to study St Mary of the Presentation Catholic Church, a fine building whose early provenance has been the subject of speculation by architectural historians. Here are his conclusions.

The present aisled clerestoried church (1873–76), as is well documented, was designed by the Bathurst architect Edward Gell to largely replace a smaller two-compartment church constructed between 1857 and 1860. Gell retained the chancel and sacristy from the earlier structure and also re-cycled its nave windows and buttresses into his building.

The most salient aspect of the chancel is its priest's door in the north wall. Such doors were common in English medieval churches and were placed on the south, or sunny, side of the chancel.



A view of the St Mary's chancel showing the priest's door

I only know of one English Catholic architect who included priest's doors in his designs, namely, Pugin. His early ground plans for St Giles', Cheadle, and St Marie's, Stockton on Tees, given in his article 'On the Present

State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England', in the May 1841 issue of the *Dublin Review*, showed priest's doors, although they were not constructed. (The addition of a Blessed Sacrament Chapel against the chancel south wall at Cheadle and a different chancel design constructed at Stockton on Tees meant their elimination.)

Two of Pugin's 1842 plans delivered to Archbishop Polding of Sydney definitely included priest's doors. The plans were used for St Benedict's, Broadway, and for St Augustine of Hippo's, Balmain, the latter plan also used for St Francis Xavier's, Berrima. Measured drawings of Broadway from 1931, well before its shortening and widening, show the priest's door in the chancel north wall. Likewise, the door exists in the Balmain chancel north wall but was omitted when the same plans were used to construct Berrima.

So, are the chancel and other surviving parts of the earlier church by Pugin? The answer is more or less yes, but indirectly. The Scottish Presbyterian builder William Munro, who had constructed the Berrima church between 1849 and 1851, re-badged himself as an architect and, in the latter half of the 1850s, was appointed diocesan architect for the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. As such he came into possession of a number of Pugin's plans which he then proceeded to quarry for details that he used in his own designs for churches throughout the Archdiocese. These confected buildings form a fascinating and unique group, which I intend to discuss in due course in this Newsletter. They have no parallel in Pugin's church oeuvre, all his other plans being used but once.

The Mudjee chancel form is that of the Balmain/Berrima design, but its east window is from the Pugin plans used for St Patrick's, Parramatta. Likewise, the aisle windows and buttresses, re-cycled from Munro's nave, are from the Parramatta plans. So we are looking at Pugin elements as assembled by Munro. It is safe to say that the priest's door has never been used.

I cannot leave the Mudjee church without showing a detail of its wonderful late Victorian church-wide flat decoration, a rare survivor in Australia, executed by the Sydney firm of Lyon and Cottier.



Decoration by Lyon and Cottier on the chancel east wall of St Mary's, Mudjee

Pugin's Australian Built Heritage

This series deals in some detail with the surviving Australian buildings to Pugin's designs, describing their construction history and analysing them, including later additions and modifications. We complete our examination of his delightful little village Church of St Francis Xavier, Berrima, in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales.

St Francis Xavier's, Berrima (Part 4) Construction

The historic village of Berrima in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales was surveyed as early as 1830 with a view to the establishment of a settlement that would become the administrative, commercial and manufacturing centre of the County, "where the wool of Argyle and Camden might be made into cloth and the hide into leather".¹ Convicts in leg irons carried out much of the work involved in setting up the village, including the building of the road and the bridge over the Wingecarribee River. These road gangs were housed in temporary wooden stockades near the southern edge of the village for this purpose.

In 1840, Dean James Alipius Goold, the priest in charge of the Cambelltown mission—and future first Catholic Bishop of Melbourne—looking for a place in Berrima where he might say Mass, was given two of the huts formerly used to house the chain gangs.² Converted into a chapel, these huts served the Catholics of the Berrima district for several years, but a successor of Goold, Dean John Grant, determined to erect something more substantial. To that end, in 1846, he took the opportunity of a stopover at Berrima by Archbishop Polding, who was on his way back to Sydney from Queanbeyan, to suggest a site for a permanent church. Polding agreed, supplying plans for a small village church by Pugin, and within a few months Grant had already collected £300 towards its erection.³

Dean Grant's successor, Fr. William McGinty had Polding down to Berrima to bless and lay the foundation stone of the new Church of St Scholastica in mid 1847,⁴ but work on its erection did not commence for another two years, with William Munro as builder.⁵ The choice of the name St Scholastica, St Benedict's sister, was undoubtedly that of Polding, a Benedictine monk. By the late nineteenth-century it had been changed to St Francis Xavier, the title it retains.⁶

Munro was a very competent builder, and this is reflected in the quality of workmanship in the church. St Francis Xavier's was built of ashlar sandstone laid in 12 in. (30 cm) courses. The nave and north porch interiors were likewise finished in ashlar, the only instance of a Pugin church, apart from his own Church of St Augustine, Ramsgate, being so treated. His interiors were normally plastered, as indeed are the sacristy and chancel walls at Berrima. Pugin would have designed the latter as such, intending them to carry a program of painted and stencilled decoration as is still in evidence in the most comprehensively realised example of his small village church genre, Our Lady and St. Wilfrid's, Warwick Bridge, Cumbria. This building gives one a tantalising glimpse of Berrima carried to its Puginian conclusion.

The closely fitted ashlar work in the nave east wall only extended upwards to level with the top of the north and south walls. Above this the wall surface was flat, but the faces and edges of the stones were not worked with the same precision as elsewhere, and the mortar joints were, accordingly, wider and rougher. This is a clear indication that the upper gabled part of the wall was intended to be covered up by a Doom painting.

The church was opened in 1851.



*A view of St Francis Xavier's c.1905.
(Photo: courtesy Berrima District Historical Society)*

Furnishings

With the principal exceptions of the forward altar and the baptismal font most of the furnishings are 'cast-offs' from neighbouring churches and were placed in St Francis Xavier's following its re-opening in 1984 after having been closed for some eleven years.⁷ They add no grace to Pugin's fine interior.



*St Francis Xavier's interior looking east.
(Photo: Ray Ryan)*

The forward altar is of interest, being the original one minus its reredos, and it seems at least probable that Munro copied it from one shown on the Pugin drawings. Given the typical sketchy nature of Pugin's architectural designs there would not have been much detail to guide Munro. He seems to have fabricated the upper and lower mouldings from standard domestic materials like skirting boards, but the composition of the altar's front—tripartite, with sunk quatrefoils enclosing decoration, in this case uncarved shields—is one that Pugin used quite widely. It is to be found inter alia on his high altars at St Mary's, Brewood; Sacred Heart, St Ives (the church an enlargement of St Andrew's, formerly in Cambridge); St Augustine's, Solihull; and St Mary's, Uttoxeter.



Conclusion

As the only unaltered Pugin building in Australia, St Francis Xavier's, Berrima, is of national significance. With its English sister churches of St Laurence's, Tubney, and Our Lady and St Wilfrid's, Warwick Bridge, it shares the distinction of being one of three intact surviving examples of Pugin's most common building type, namely, the small two-compartment village church.

New Friends of Pugin

We welcome:

Bowral ADFAS Church Recorders' Group

Mr Geoffrey Britton

Hon. William Cox AC

Mrs Gail Hughes-Gage

Most Revd Geoffrey Jarrett

Ms Ann Knight & Mr Daniel Drew

Miss Judith O'Connell

Fr Paul O'Donnell

Dom David Tomlins OCSO & the

Tarrawarra Abbey community

Mrs Jane Ward

Bowral, New South Wales

Zetland, New South Wales

Government House, Hobart, Tasmania

Colebrook, Tasmania

Lismore, New South Wales

Brunswick West, Victoria

Berrima, New South Wales

Camperdown, New South Wales

Yarra Glen, Victoria

Surrey, United Kingdom

Donations

Our thanks to:

Hon. William Cox AC

Mrs Gail Hughes-Gage

Most Revd Geoffrey Jarrett

Ms Ann Knight & Mr Daniel Drew

for their kind donations.

¹ Quoted in *Berrima, New South Wales*, Scancoleur (Australia), Melbourne, 1984, n.p.

² T.J. Linane and F.A. Mecham (eds), *The Men of '38 and Other Pioneer Priests*, by 'John O'Brien', Lowden Publishing Co., Kilmore, 1975, p. 134.

³ *loc. cit.*

⁴ Linane & Mecham, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁵ Eleanor Joan Kerr, 'Designing a Colonial Church: Church Building in New South Wales 1788-1888', D.Phil. thesis, University of York, 1977, 2 vols, vol. I, pp. 243-4.

⁶ Linda Emery, 'Historic Churches in the Southern Highlands: St Francis Xavier, Berrima', *Highlife*, vol. 5, no. 2, December 2000/January 2001, p. 138.

⁷ The main and side altars came from the old St Thomas Aquinas' Church, Bowral, after it was closed in the mid 1980s and replaced by a contemporary structure. Other items including some of the pews came from the Catholic church at Sutton Forest.