

## November 2006

## Number 5

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Welcome to the fifth Friends Newsletter. There is so much to tell you this month to keep you abreast of the exciting things that happen daily in the Foundation.

The superbly restored rood screen for St Patrick's, Colebrook, will be reinstalled on December 14. This is an important landmark in the transformation of this important Pugin church. We hope to bring you video footage of this milestone in the Colebrook journey. On the same day the new painted and gilded forward altar will be put in place. The altar is a gift to the Foundation from the estate of the late Eric d'Arcy, former Archbishop of Hobart (+ 12 December 2005). The decorative repertoire for the altar is based on an 1865 tabernacle designed by Henry Hunter for his church in Swansea on the east coast of Tasmania. Hunter designed the original altar for St Patrick's. The 1950s altar stone has been kindly donated by Friend of Pugin and Board member Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett of Lismore, New South Wales.

The stone for the bellcote has been purchased and will soon be dressed by the stonemason Robert Whitney. We are working towards having the bellcote completed by Easter 2007. The cast bronze cross (a copy of Pugin's wrought iron original) for the top of the bellcote has been manufactured. It will be coated with triple gold leaf.

The three bells are currently being manufactured in France. We have just received from Hervey Bagot of Adelaide, who is supplying and installing the bells and their striking software, copies of pages from a



1911 French publication *Nouveau Recueil de Carillons* with tunes for our bells to ring at 2.00 pm each day. How splendid this will be in the beautiful Coal River valley.

Friend of Pugin John Maidment of Camberwell, Victoria, had a trip to the UK in September and visited Pugin's house and church in Ramsgate.

*Friend of Pugin John Maidment standing on top of the tower at The Grange, Ramsgate, on 8 September 2006.*

He recently wrote to us: 'When I was in the UK last month I had the welcome opportunity to visit The Grange and St Augustine's Abbey in Ramsgate during a heritage open day. I have images of The Grange from top to bottom – the Landmark Trust were very happy for me to take digital shots with a tripod! The interiors are truly spectacular.' John has kindly offered his images of The Grange for Friends to enjoy. You will be able to find them in our website gallery. Thanks John, it's a wonderful gallery of images.

We recently had a visit from Friend Captain Richard Burgess OAM of Devonport in the north of Tasmania. It was wonderful to be able to share with him first hand the current activities of the Foundation.

Another Friend of Pugin, Fr Don Richardson from Dulwich Hill in NSW, is visiting Hobart in December and will say Mass in St Patrick's, Colebrook, on Sunday 17 December at 11.00 am. This will be the first time Mass will be said using the new altar, and with the rood screen back in place.

Friends Don and Catherine Spongberg are making a visit to the Tasmanian Pugin churches in January. It is always a delight and so rewarding for us to be able to share the activities of the Foundation with our Friends.

You will be receiving an invitation in December for a very special event. On Sunday 21 January 2007 we celebrate the 150th anniversary of St Patrick's, Colebrook. At 11.00 am Mass will be celebrated by Archbishop Adrian Doyle of Hobart, a patron of the Pugin Foundation, with Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett of Lismore and Parish Priest Fr Terry Rush, both of whom are Friends of Pugin. We would welcome as many Friends as possible for this very special day.

With Christmas fast approaching you may like to give a gift membership for the Friends of Pugin to someone as a Christmas present. You can download a membership form from our website or contact me for a membership form and I will send it to you.

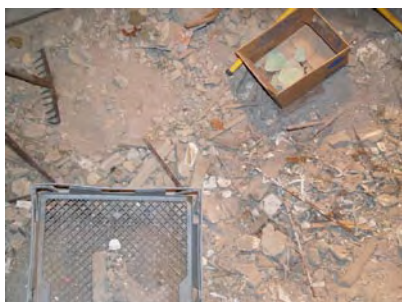
We hope that you enjoy reading this issue.

With kind regards,  
**Jude Andrews**  
Administrative Officer

## The Renaissance of St Patrick's, Colebrook

Continuing our news of conservation activities, Brian Andrews reports on fascinating discoveries recently made under the chancel floor.

As part of the St Patrick's Church works we are progressively and permanently removing the carpets and conservatively rehabilitating the floors. The first section of carpet to be removed earlier this year was that in the chancel, revealing evidence of damage caused by the fall of the bellcote in September 1895. Some sections of the floor boards had been replaced, leading us to think that debris from the bellcote and the chancel roof might still lie beneath the chancel floor. Such evidence, if it existed, might assist in confirming details of the bellcote prior to its planned reinstatement. On 2 October Tony Colman—who has been restoring the Colebrook rood screen—and I removed several of the adjacent replacement floorboards at the eastern end of the chancel and descended into the substantial underfloor space. (The position of the church on the hillside gives an underfloor headspace approaching two metres under the north-west corner of the chancel.) We found three piles of debris corresponding with areas of repaired floor above them, two under the chancel floor and, surprisingly, one under the east end of the nave floor.



Structural engineer Peter Spratt has come up with an explanation for the damage to the nave floor by describing the mechanics of failure of a tall thin structure like the bellcote.

*A view into the chancel underfloor space showing shingles, coloured plaster, statue fragments and parts of the chancel east window.*

When such a structure overturns, the resulting force sets up an opposing moment that causes part of the structure to be thrown in the opposite direction to the main overturning force, hence the damage in the nave.

We found no carved stonework from the bellcote, indicating that the falling chancel roof structure had cushioned the bellcote impact and that the floor damage was more likely inflicted by the roof timbers. It appears that the fallen roof and bellcote fragments on top of it were carted out through the church doors and that all the small debris was then simply pushed through the holes in the floor. Although it was disappointing not to find any fragments of the bellcote, the material that we did find tells much about the chancel and its furnishings immediately prior to the disaster, and of what was destroyed by the flying debris. Our finds largely confirm details in the contemporary account of the fall of the bellcote (see Friends Newsletter No. 1), except that we found evidence of damage to the altar, whereas the account states that: 'The altar, a very fine one by Mr. P. Sheehy, Hobart, escaped'.

The chancel walls were indeed damaged, as stone rubble indicates, and the many pieces

of plaster with a distinctive pale blue-green painted finish confirm one finding of our paint analysis consultancy (Friends Newsletter No. 2). Importantly, it dates that colour to before the fall of the bellcote whereas our consultant had postulated that it might have been applied after the chancel had been repaired.

We know that the present chancel east window dates from 1896. Of great value to our future conservation work is the large amount of debris from the destroyed window—areas of lead calmes with glass still attached, saddle-bars and complete diamond quarries. This evidence will enable us to accurately reinstate the original window scheme. Further, it offers proof of what is apparent in the early 1890s photos of the church, namely, that to cut down light levels on the east and north sides of the building the clear crown glass had been whitewashed up to the levels of the springing of the window arches in the nave north aisle and the chancel east wall. (One of each of the pairs of quatrefoil lights in the nave north clerestory wall had also been similarly treated.)

Many fascinating fragments of the 1883 wooden altar by recently arrived Irish immigrant Patrick Sheehy were found, again exactly corresponding with a contemporary description. *The Tasmanian Catholic Standard* for March 1883 stated that it was eleven feet (3.4 metres) high and 'of a new design in Tasmania ... with its stained glass of numberless designs, beautiful carvings and elaborate workmanship'. We found scarlet-painted wooden trefoils and pieces of watercolour-painted clear glass with patterns in red, blue, aqua, lemon and white. It must have been a remarkable piece of furniture.

Other glass found included: an etched fragment from an oil lamp used for lighting the chancel; a piece of red glass from a sanctuary lamp, an indication that the Sacrament was reserved in the church; and a fragment of a blue glass chimney that must have been part of a votive lamp near the statue of the Virgin and Child. A large number of fragments of this statue and its pedestal were recovered, including the top of the Virgin's head, the Infant's upper torso, an arm, and a section of the base of the figure and its plinth. It was of unpainted plaster in a Gothic idiom and most probably French. Further research is needed to establish its provenance.



*Part of the base of the Virgin and Child statue, the upper torso of the Infant and the upper part of the Virgin's head with crown.*

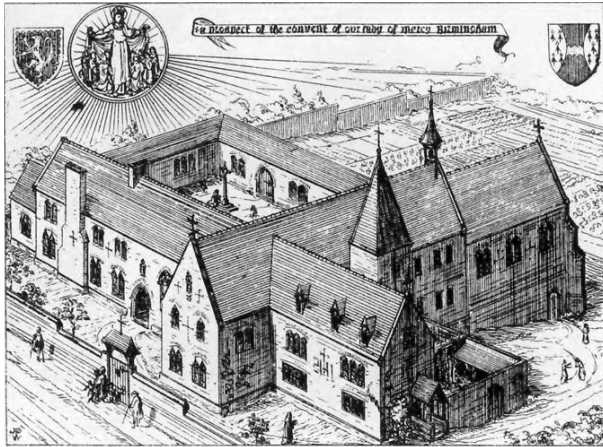
Much else was discovered, including roof shingles, a clay pipe bowl, a workman's boot, the Turk's Head knot from the end of the bell pull and a mummified cat, but we left the last mentioned in situ.



## 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.

### Churchyard Crosses (Part 5)



He described the convent in Handsworth, a little to the north-west of central Birmingham, in considerable detail, pointing out when referring to its cloisters that 'the space inclosed by these cloisters is consecrated for a cemetery with a floriated stone cross, raised on steps in the centre'. Then, as if to underscore the importance of this aspect of the design, he added: 'This may be distinctly perceived by referring to the engraving, which will fully illustrate the external appearance and arrangement of the building.'

The Handsworth convent fared rather badly during World War II, with both the church and the House of Mercy in the convent grounds hit by bombs and subsequently being demolished. But the churchyard cross survived and it looks pretty much as Pugin depicted it in his *Dublin Review* article. The floriated cross has a form widely used by Pugin, being near identical with that on the original Oatlands, Tasmania, churchyard cross, and appearing—with small variations—as a gable cross on a number of his churches, including St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle upon Tyne. The cross stands on a tapered octagonal column with a moulded octagonal capital. At the foot of the column is a transition to a simple cubical base with chamfered upper edge, and the whole stands on a plinth of two steps, just as in Pugin's bird's-eye drawing.

In his second article on 'The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England', which appeared in the February 1842 issue of the *Dublin Review*, Pugin published charming bird's-eye drawings of his designs for convents for the Sisters of Mercy in Birmingham and Liverpool, noting that: 'Among the many important objects that have been lately accomplished by the English Catholics, the establishment of these charitable sisters is one which must prove most beneficial to the poorer classes and to the progress of religion in general'.

*Pugin's bird's-eye drawing of the Handsworth Convent of Mercy (Dublin Review, February 1842).*



*The churchyard cross, Convent of Mercy, Handsworth, Birmingham.*

## *Pugin News Worldwide*

### *The Grange, Ramsgate*

Further to previous news in this segment about the restoration of The Grange we bring you another comparison of the interior before and after its remarkable transformation, courtesy of Friend John Maidment who had a most enjoyable visit there on 8 September. The 'before' is by Brian Andrews and dates from February 1983.



*A fireplace in The Grange, Ramsgate, February 1983.*



*The same fireplace, September 2006  
(Photo: John Maidment).*

Do take a look at the photographs of The Grange in our web gallery, all kindly provided by John.

He informs us that an excellent 40-page illustrated guide to The Grange has been published by the Landmark Trust. Contact details for the Trust can be found on its website: [www.landmarktrust.org.uk](http://www.landmarktrust.org.uk)

## *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. In this issue we commence our examination of St Charles Borromeo's, Ryde

### *St Charles Borromeo's, Ryde (Part 1)*

#### *Introduction*

In our July Newsletter we outlined the background to Archbishop John Bede Polding's securing of a package of designs from Pugin in 1842, including at least five designs for churches of varying sizes to meet the needs of his growing diocese. Three were for two-compartment buildings, one for a triple-gabled structure and another for a modest aisled church with a well-known and much admired medieval pedigree. This last design would be utilized in the 1850s for a village church in the then countryside at Ryde, some 10 km—as the crow flies—north-west of the heart of Sydney.<sup>1</sup>



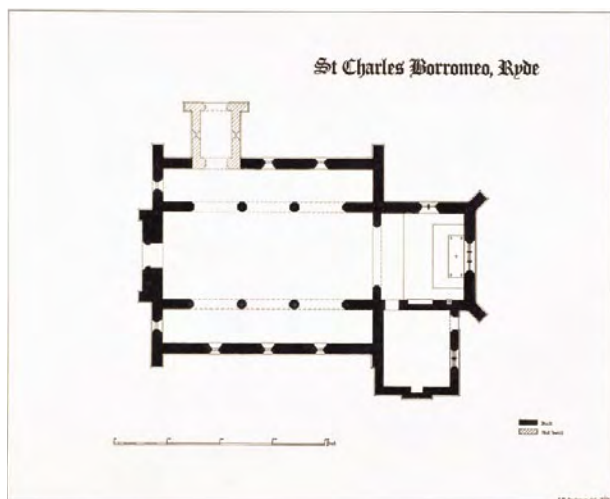
## The Design

The plans were for a beautifully composed and proportioned small aisled church having a nave and aisles area of 119 square metres, the nave west gable being surmounted by a bellcote. This was the third of four Pugin essays with this general format, starting with St Andrew's, Cambridge,<sup>2</sup> and St Winefride's, Shepshed, Leicestershire,<sup>3</sup> both designed in early 1842, and finishing with St Alphonsus', Barntown, County Wexford, designed in 1844. All were developed from the form of the Early English St Michael's, Long Stanton, Cambridgeshire, of c.1230.



*St Michael's, Long Stanton, Cambridgeshire (Raphael and J. Arthur Brandon, Parish Churches, W. Kent & Co., London, 1858, vol. 1, facing p. 41).*

Of these four designs, the one used at Ryde was most faithful in its plan form and composition to the Long Stanton inspiration, yet it was no mere copy. The aisled nave was effectively four bays long, consisting of a three-bay arcade between two stub half-length bays to the east and west, the latter formed by solid nave walls, thereby forming alcoves at the aisle east ends for side altars.



*Ground plan, St Charles Borromeo's, Ryde.*


There was the usual antipodean north porch and a sacristy was tucked into the south east angle of the nave and chancel. The nave arcade had simple chamfered arches supported on cylindrical piers with cushion capitals, the east and west ends of the arcade terminating in engaged half columns.

Like Long Stanton, but unlike the other three designs in this idiom where the nave and chancel were under the one roof,<sup>4</sup> the Ryde chancel was separately expressed externally, despite the nave and chancel being of equal width, their north and south walls being of equal height and their roofs being of equal in pitch. This was achieved by extending the nave east wall to just beyond the roof line and capping it with gable coping and a cross. Unlike Long Stanton where the nave and aisles were under a single roof, the Ryde aisles were separately pent roofed. At the west end of the nave there was a substantial buttressed thickening of the wall, rising in two set-off stages to a tall and particularly elegant double bellcote. This was surmounted by a typical Pugin stone cross moline, as were the chancel and nave east gables.

Pugin had inserted a west door into this plan to cater for formal occasions such as the visit of a bishop and for processions, something lacking in the Long Stanton exemplar. With this facility along with the sacristy the Ryde design represented the practical and liturgical perfecting of a specific medieval type to correspond with Pugin's vision for the contemporary English Catholic Church and, by extension, the Catholic Church in England's Colonial possessions.

Before leaving our discussion of the Ryde plan it should be noted that the plan here illustrated is partly conjectural, an inevitable result of the major changes wrought on the building in the 1930s. It has been developed using field measurements, a c.1912 interior photograph and an outline drawing of the original building published in an article appearing in the Australian journal *Building* for January 1935 about the large church which substantially replaced the Pugin original. The conjectural parts are: the size and details of the north porch; details of the sacristy chimney and exterior door; and the details of the sedilia, piscina and steps in the chancel. Conjectural details are largely based on Pugin's other Australian church designs of 1842, namely, Berrima/Balmain, Brisbane, Parramatta and Broadway, and also his 1843 design used for St Paul's, Oatlands. The porch is a copy of that at Berrima, whose nave bay length of 10 feet (3 metres) corresponds with that at Ryde.

The style of the Ryde nave and aisles was Early English but its chancel and sacristy were in the Flowing Decorated idiom for reasons of propriety. In *True Principles* Pugin had referred to the principle of propriety, stating: 'what I mean by propriety is this, *that the external and internal appearance of an edifice should be illustrative of, and in accordance with, the purpose for which it is destined*'.<sup>5</sup> For him this meant that the chancel of a church, being the more solemn or sacred part of the building, should always have a greater degree of structural and decorative elaboration.



In most of his Australian church designs he achieved this by making the bulk of the building Early English, with its simpler detail vocabulary,<sup>6</sup> and the chancel—generally—in a Flowing Decorated idiom, with stone tracery in the windows.<sup>7</sup> Thus at Ryde the nave and aisle windows were plain lancets, the sacristy window consisted of paired trefoil-headed lights under a square head, the chancel east window was of three lights with reticulated tracery and its north window was a pair of trefoil-headed lights.

To conclude our discussion of this delightful design we note that, like Long Stanton, the Ryde nave had a trussed rafter roof. More generally, even for his smallest churches, Pugin preferred to use fully developed trusses whose pitch corresponded with that of the nave bays.<sup>8</sup>

## ***New Friends of Pugin***

We welcome:

Mr Nicholas Beveridge

Miss Nell Espie

Mrs Shirley Kerin

Mrs Kathleen & Dr John Roche

*Titirangi, Auckland, New Zealand*

*Oatlands, Tasmania*

*South Hobart, Tasmania*

*Sutton Forest, New South Wales*

## ***Donations***

Our thanks to:

Mr Nicholas Beveridge

Miss Nell Espie

Mrs Shirley Kerin

for their kind donations.

<sup>1</sup> The Sydney metropolitan area now extends a good 40 km beyond Ryde.

<sup>2</sup> For details of St Andrew's see Roderick O'Donnell, '... blink [him] by silence'? The Cambridge Camden Society and A.W.N. Pugin', in Christopher Webster and John Elliott (eds), *'A Church as it Should be': The Cambridge Camden Society and its Influence*, Shaun Tyas, Donington, 2000, pp. 107–12. The church was dismantled in 1902 and moved to St Ives, Huntingdonshire, where it was re-erected, with the addition of a clerestory, as Sacred Heart Church. St Andrew's had been superseded by Archibald Dunn and Edward Hansom's noble 1890 Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs.

<sup>3</sup> St Winefride's, one of the simplest and least expensive of all Pugin's churches, was closed in the 1920s in favour of a larger replacement in Shepshed. It remains structurally intact and in sympathetic private hands.

<sup>4</sup> In these Pugin separately expressed the chancel internally by the use of a rood screen and parclose screens.

<sup>5</sup> A. Welby Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, John Weale, London, 1841, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> And hence easier and cheaper to construct in colonial conditions.

<sup>7</sup> The Australian exceptions are St Francis Xavier's, Berrima/St Augustine of Hippo's, Balmain, which design is entirely Early English, and St Patrick's

<sup>8</sup> Other Pugin trussed rafter roofs are to be found at St Peter's, Marlow (1845); St Marie's, Rugby (1845); and St Osmund's, Salisbury (1847).