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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the seventh Friends Newsletter. We wish you all the best for 2007 and we trust that the Friends will continue to strengthen in membership.

December and January have been very busy and most rewarding for the Pugin Foundation. On 14 December the conserved rood screen was reinstalled, along with the new forward altar, in St Patrick's Church, Colebrook. You can read the account in this Newsletter and also see the gallery of images on our main website, together with before and after images of the screen.



Friend of Pugin Fr Don Richardson celebrates Mass at the new Colebrook forward altar on Sunday 17 December 2006.

Friend Fr Don Richardson, Parish Priest of Dulwich Hill in Sydney, celebrated the first Mass with the reinstated rood screen and new forward altar on 17 December, Laetare Sunday. Many of the Colebrook community were present and Friend Capt. Dick Burgess came down from Devonport for the occasion.

Fr Terry Rush, Parish Priest of Richmond and Colebrook, and Friend of Pugin, formally blessed the new forward altar prior to the 150th anniversary celebrations of the opening of St Patrick's Church.

Early in January we were pleased to welcome a visit to southern Tasmania from Friends Ann Knight and Daniel Drew from Victoria. It was a special time to share with them Pugin's Tasmanian churches, stained glass and headstones. Our thanks to Friend Nell Espie for opening up St Paul's, Oatlands, for their tour. Ann and Daniel came back for the day for the 150th celebrations in Colebrook!

Over 200 people from around Tasmania and the eastern states of Australia celebrated the 150th anniversary of the opening of St Patrick's Church, Colebrook, on Sunday 21 January. This day proved to be a wonderful occasion for the local community, the Richmond Catholic Parish and the Pugin Foundation. Full coverage of the preparations, the ceremonies and the luncheon—with so many Friends of Pugin, the Foundation's Board members and two of our Patrons in attendance—will be given in the next Newsletter, including a picture gallery of this very special event.

It is with much joy that we welcome our many new members this month. All Friends are very special ambassadors of the Foundation.

With kind regards,
Jude Andrews
Administrative Officer



The Renaissance of St Patrick's, Colebrook

Continuing our news of conservation activities, we report on the re-installation of the rood screen and the sealing of the perimeter doors.

From March until November of this year the screen underwent painstaking conservation, including the reconstruction of missing elements, by historic furniture conservator Tony Colman. This work was undertaken in accordance with the principles of the *Burra Charter*, the universally acknowledged 'bible' that informs the conservation of historic places in Australia. Two examples of this approach follow.

Tony has only lightly cleaned the woodwork, preserving its patina as well as several abrasions on the screen's eastern face caused by falling debris at the time of the collapse of the triple bellcote in 1895. The *Charter* advocates a cautious approach to conservation, noting that the 'traces of additions, alterations and earlier treatments to the fabric of a place are evidence of its history and uses which may be part of its significance. Conservation action should assist and not impede their understanding.' With regard to reconstruction the *Charter* states that it is 'appropriate only where a place is incomplete through damage or alteration and only where there is sufficient evidence to reproduce an earlier state of the fabric. Reconstruction should be identifiable on close inspection or through additional interpretation.' To this end we have affixed a laser-engraved stainless steel plate to the top surface of the screen's top beam with the text opposite:

This rood screen was, like the church itself, designed by A.W.N. Pugin in 1843. It was constructed from Australian Red Cedar (Toona australis) in 1856 by Patrick Lynch, builder of the church. Its crucifix figure was designed by Pugin c.1847 and carved by men in the employ of George Myers, his favoured builder, at his Ordnance Wharf, Lambeth, workshops. It is of White Pine (Pinus strobus) and polychromed. Some time during the decade after 1967 the screen was moved to the west end of the nave. Its crucifix was cut free and suspended from behind the chancel arch. In this process the triangular carved base of the cross, the end sections of its curved braces and the screen top beam were disposed of. The screen remnant was later returned to its original position. In 2006 the screen was restored by Tony Colman with funds provided through the Pugin Foundation. The profile and dimensions of the top beam and crucifix base were recovered from two September 1967 wedding photographs and from evidence on the chancel arch inner face. The reconstructed elements were made from plantation grown Australian Red Cedar sourced from south-east Asia, the top beam being laminated from planks because a solid baulk was unobtainable. The metal brace on the back face of the cross, made by Paul Monk of Rhyndaston, was added because the original structural integrity had been compromised when the crucifix was cut from the top beam. The screen door hinges on the south door were cast from an original on the north door. The candlesticks are replicas of a Pugin-designed exemplar from St Mary's, Franklin, and were fabricated by F.J. Rocca, silversmith, Carlton.
Brian Andrews, Heritage Officer,
Archdiocese of Hobart 2006

In this way, there should be no doubting in a century's time exactly what the history of the rood screen is.

On Thursday 14 December the screen components were transported from Tony Colman's furniture conservation workshop in the northern Hobart suburb of Moonah to Colebrook. Ian Cunningham and Wil King from Williams Builders had already put up scaffolding in the chancel in readiness for the screen's re-erection. The main sections of the screen were returned to their position beneath the chancel arch and lashed to the scaffolding. Then the new top beam was lifted into place and clamped to the screen. Much to Tony Colman's relief the whole assembly fitted together correctly and the top of the beam was perfectly horizontal. This was expected but not guaranteed as he had been obliged to hand fit the new beam in his workshop with the whole screen lying flat on the floor rather than in the vertical position. Tony then secured the screen with forged iron spikes driven into the walls and bolted to the top surface of each end of the top beam.



Ian Cunningham (left) and Wil King lift the top beam into position under the watchful eyes of Richard Kowaluk from the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and, at right, Tony Colman.





With the main structure fully secured the crucifix was hauled into place, slotted into the top beam, checked for verticality and then had its back face bolted to a forged iron brace. The restored wooden rood braces were then re-attached. Finally, four rood candlesticks were affixed to the top of the beam. Although replicas of a Pugin-designed original they had been fabricated in such a way that they could be screwed into place via a threaded central spigot so as to ensure their stability, an important safety consideration. On the same day that the screen was reinstalled another task, small but important, was completed, namely, the sealing of the perimeter doors. For whatever reason, these doors have never been sealed, the gap between door and wall being up to two centimetres in places. Thus, for a century and a half, wind, dust, noise and sundry crawling and flying insects have readily penetrated the interior. In November we examined the problem on site with Senior Heritage Advisor Graeme Corney from Heritage Tasmania and heritage builder Bob Voss. They came up with a solution that would provide an effective seal without compromising the building's heritage values. Bob fabricated the component parts in his workshop and then installed them, assisted by workmate Robbie Nicholson, on 14 December. The result was instant and dramatic. Not only was the building properly sealed for the first time but there was a major improvement in the acoustic dynamics of the interior.



Bob Voss installs the new sealing components for the west door, St Patrick's, Colebrook.





The Colebrook Rood Screen

We are proud to present this image of the beautiful reinstated rood screen, the first major milestone in the Pugin Foundation's comprehensive conservation program for St Patrick's, Colebrook. Notice too, the new painted and gilded forward altar, a gift from the estate of the late Archbishop Eric d'Arcy.





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 7)

In the last Newsletter we looked at the Colebrook churchyard cross. Two further Tasmanian copies were made from the same exemplar stonework, but far more crudely. They are to be found in the Catholic cemetery in Oatlands and in the Catholic section of the Campbell Town cemetery.

A churchyard cross was erected adjacent to Pugin's Church of St Paul, Oatlands—it will be described in the next Newsletter—but no cemetery was laid out around it. For whatever reason, the Catholic cemetery was established 1400 metres away on the southern outskirts of the village by the shore of Lake Dulverton. Here, a second churchyard cross, differing in design from that alongside the church, was erected.



The churchyard cross in the Catholic cemetery, Oatlands, Tasmania.

By and large it follows the Colebrook example, although the upper part of its plinth takes the form of a truncated pyramid. The cross proper is, however, much more coarsely executed, the foliated detail to the arms being stiff, somewhat two-dimensional and out of proportion. Still and all it serves as a reminder of Bishop Willson's comprehensive embrace of Pugin's ideals.

The Campbell Town example is even cruder, its cross proper looking like a cardboard cut-out.



The churchyard cross in the Catholic section of the Campbell Town, Tasmania, cemetery.

The stone mason evidently knew his limitations, for he avoided the complications of the carved detail on the exemplar base, adding *sui generis* detail to the lower part of the octagonal shaft and substituting a simple cubical base with chamfered upper edge, as it happens, just like that on the Handsworth Convent churchyard cross illustrated in Newsletter 5.





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 conclude our examination of St Charles Borromeo's, Ryde

St Charles Borromeo's, Ryde (Part 3) Furnishings

None of the original furnishings survive in the present enlarged church, but photographic evidence suggests that at least two of the elements in the Pugin church as constructed were most probably derived from detail in the 1842 working drawings. These were the main altar and a pair of bracket pedestals with statues on either side of the chancel east window.

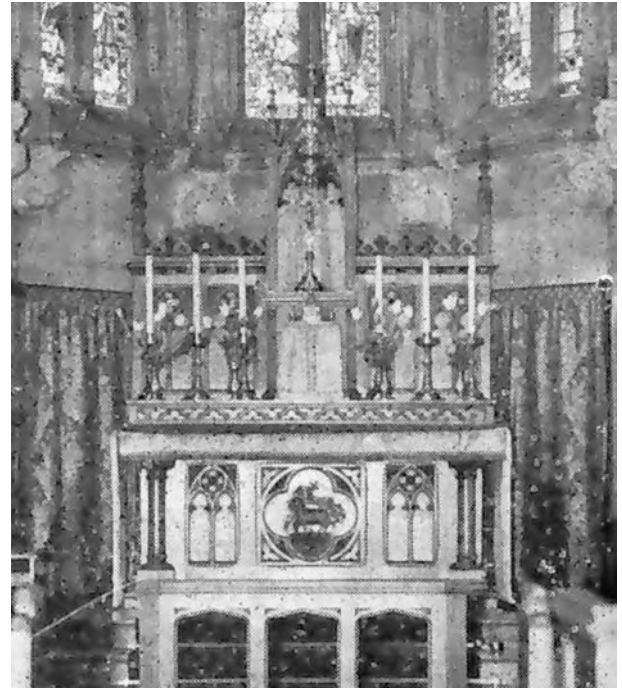
Mention was made in Newsletter 4 of the likely provenance of the original altar in St Francis Xavier's, Berrima, as having been derived from typical Pugin sketchy details contained in the working drawings, and this seems also to have been the case at Ryde. A c.1912 photograph of the interior reveals an altar with two particular details that I want to relate to another Pugin work.



A detail of the altar in St Charles Borromeo's, Ryde, c.1912 (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Hazelwood Collection, ON165/147).

At the top of the reredos is a cresting consisting of fleurs de lis alternating large and small in size. A more singular detail is the front face of the gradine in the form of a zig-zag trail of blind triangular trefoils.

Interestingly, both details were to be found on the old altar in Pugin's Alton Castle chapel.



The altar, Alton Castle chapel, Staffs., (after an illustration in an undated booklet, St John's Preparatory School, Alton Castle, circa early 1960s).

The form of the gradine cresting is rare but that of the gradine is particularly so, the Alton and Ryde examples being the only ones I have ever identified. The probability of unrelated authorship seems therefore to be most unlikely.

The same argument must surely also apply to the statues on their brackets. In several of Pugin's chancel illustrations in his May 1841 and February 1842 *Dublin Review* articles 'On the Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England' (vol. X, pp. 301–48 and vol. XII, pp. 80–183), statues in niches flank the east window in precisely the same position as the Ryde bracketed statues. He illustrated them for St Giles', Cheadle, St John's Hospital Chapel, Alton, St Alban's, Macclesfield, and St George's Cathedral, Southwark, although they were only constructed at Cheadle and Alton. The statues on simple wooden brackets at Ryde would have been an affordable approximation to the detail on the drawings.





It is worth mentioning that such a positioning of statues niches/brackets on chancel east walls is practically non-existent in other Australian Catholic churches, with one telling exception. The noble Decorated Church of St John the Baptist, Clifton Hill, in Melbourne's inner north-east has such statue niches. It was designed c.1876 by John Bun Denny (1810–92), Pugin's one-time clerk of works for the erection of St Giles', Cheadle. As the *Morning Post* had put it in 1846:

It may be added, in completing a notice of this building [St Giles'], that the designs of Mr. Pugin were ably seconded by the skill of Mr. Denny, resident master of works at Alton Towers, whose admiration of the Gothic style of architecture, and acquaintance with its minutest details, has made the erection of this building a labour of love. The smith and carpenters' work connected with it were also executed by the resident artisans of the village, under his superintendence; it being the wish of the Earl of Shrewsbury that all of his dependents should as much as possible be benefited by the efforts of his munificence.

Small wonder that Denny added such details to his singularly Puginesque church.



The interior, looking east, St John the Baptist's, Clifton Hill, by John Bun Denny.

New Friends of Pugin

We welcome:

Mr Peter Bennison

Mr Stephen Kerin

Mr John, Mrs Pauline & Miss Rebecca Munnings

Mrs Dominique & Mr Alan Oberhauser

Ms Anne Rushton

Mrs Alice Stilwell

Mrs Margaret Sykes

Mrs Elizabeth Vincent

West Hobart, Tasmania

Bulimba, Queensland

Taroona, Tasmania

Richmond, Tasmania

Mt Nelson, Tasmania

Sandy Bay, Tasmania

Snug, Tasmania

Sandy Bay, Tasmania

Donations

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Mr Stephen Kerin

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