

March 2007

Number 9

Included in this edition:

The Renaissance of St Patrick's, Colebrook (continued)

Pugin's Designs – Churchyard Crosses (Part 8)

Pugin's Australian Built Heritage – St Stephen's, Brisbane (Part 1)

Welcome to the ninth Friends Newsletter.

This month we highlight the very exciting *Landscape Conservation Management Plan* coming to completion by Lesley Gulson and John Miller. The recounting of this will continue into Newsletter 10. We look forward to bringing you video footage of what this *Landscape Conservation Management Plan* means for St Patrick's, Colebrook.

The dressing of the purchased stone for the bellcote is almost ready. In Newsletter 5, November 2006, we advised you that the bellcote would be completed by Easter 2007. A delay has occurred as Robert Whitney, our stonemason, has had a knee reconstruction operation and he will not be able to commence the bellcote construction until the end of May. This delay has proved fortunate for us. Brian and I will be going to London to further research Pugin's crucifix figures and then to County Wexford to visit Pugin's Irish

buildings. We really want to be in Colebrook to witness, document and video this reinstatement and now the delay has made it possible. Expect to see video footage in July on our upgraded website.



Landscape architect Lesley Gulson of Ferndene Studio in discussions with, from left, Brian Andrews, Damian Mackey and colleague Leon McGuinness of Southern Midlands Council on 15 August 2006. (Photo: John Miller)

The reconstruction of our website is well under way. This week we received a wonderful CD of images of the 150th celebrations of St Patrick's, Colebrook, from Friend Lynette Munnings, which we will include in the new image gallery. We have the most splendid images for our website. Executive Officer Brian Andrews has an extensive research collection. Board member Nick Callinan has given us many superb images that he took on a Pugin tour in the UK in 2004 with his wife Libby, Friend and Board member Allan Myers and his wife Maria, also a Friend of Pugin. And we have access to a great historic collection from the Catholic Archives in Tasmania. Friends send us many photos too, which we are always delighted to receive.

The Pugin Foundation has received a grant this month of \$10,000 from Heritage Tasmania towards the conservation of the glass in St Patrick's, Colebrook.

It is a great joy that we welcome the President of the Pugin Society in the UK, Mrs Sarah Houle, as a Friend of Pugin. We also welcome the Board of the Pugin Society, through Catriona Blaker, as Friends of Pugin. Lady Alexandra Wedgwood is their Patron and has been a Friend of Pugin from the early days of our Friends organisation.

We hope that you enjoy reading about the churchyard crosses in Oatlands, Tasmania, and part one of St Stephen's, Brisbane, in this issue.

With kind regards,
Jude Andrews
Administrative Officer



The Renaissance of St Patrick's, Colebrook

Continuing our news of conservation activities, we present the first of a two-part report on the landscape architecture consultancy currently nearing completion. This exhaustive investigation has been carried out by Lesley Gulson and John Miller of Ferndene Studio near Hobart, and its results, to be presented as a *Landscape Conservation Management Plan* (LCMP), will form a significant addendum to the main *St Patrick's Church, Colebrook, Conservation Management Plan* (CMP), 2005. Just as the CMP policies are informing and guiding the conservation works on St Patrick's fabric, so will the policies in the LCMP be the basis for the recovery and reinstatement of the church's historic environs and for the sensitive and appropriate development of the site, including signage and possibly on-site parking, toilet facilities and extension of the cemetery. The following material is drawn from the draft LCMP. We salute the fine detective skills and attention to detail of Lesley and John.

In May 1854, as a result of a request from Bishop Willson, three parcels of Crown Land were reserved for the use of the Jerusalem (now Colebrook) Catholic community. One was in the main street and the other two fronted Maconochie Street on either side of Arthur Street. Lot 3, the larger of these two

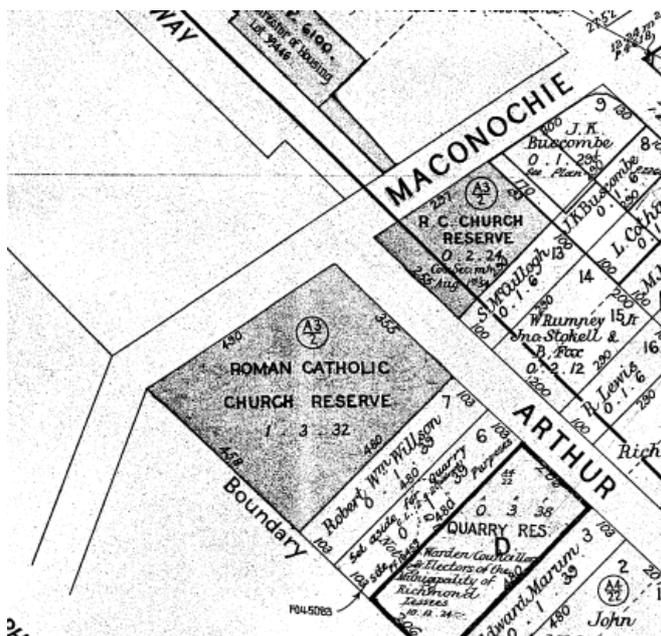
latter, was intended for a church and burial ground. Shortly after this, Bishop Willson himself purchased a narrow strip of land fronting Arthur Street adjacent to the larger Lot. The extent of this combined land has effectively—and fortunately—precluded unsympathetic development close to the church and cemetery over the past 150 years.

Construction of the church was commenced in early 1855. By May 1855 the foundations were in place and are recorded in detail in the surveyor's notebook of Private John Ashplant R.S.M. who surveyed the village between the sixth and the eighth of that month. Just over a year later in August 1856, before the church was complete, the first burial in the new cemetery was recorded. This was not, however, the first burial on church land. In

June 1856 Judith Dowling was buried near the Arthur Street edge of Lot 2, just across the road from the church and cemetery land.



Judith Dowling's headstone on Lot 2 opposite St Patrick's Church. (Photo: John Miller)



A detail from the 1888 Colebrook Grant Chart showing the Catholic Church land grants and Bishop Willson's adjacent lot. (Land Titles Office)

One can only speculate why she was not buried in the cemetery proper, but perhaps the inscription on her headstone may offer a possible explanation. Rather than a typical Catholic entreaty of the period like 'Of your charity pray for the repose of the soul of ...', her inscription ended with: 'The Lord have mercy on her soul. Amen.' This sounds rather like the traditional expression used by a judge in pronouncing the death sentence. Not that this would have been the case here, for if the poor soul had been hanged she would have been buried in an unmarked grave. Perhaps she committed suicide and was buried on church land, but not in the consecrated ground of the cemetery. When the railway came to



Colebrook the tracks were laid parallel to Arthur Street just inside Lot 2, isolating Judith Dowling's grave between the tracks and the Arthur Street boundary, where it remains, almost covered with Eglantine rose bushes.

There is a local tradition that Lot 2 is also the site of a number of unmarked graves of convicts. Be that as it may, the presence of Judith Dowling's grave on the land means that if it is heritage-listed as a cemetery site, under Tasmanian legislation it can neither be sold nor built upon. This would be greatly to the advantage of the church's setting because the Lot is directly in the line of sight to the church from the main approach route up Maconochie Street.

As abovementioned, the church and cemetery were established on a Crown Land grant. When we came to make formal application to the Southern Midlands Council and to Heritage Tasmania for the re-erection of the triple bellcote it was necessary to include details of the land title. To our surprise we discovered that the original grant had never been converted to a title owned by the Catholic Church Trustees. As it turns out this is not all that uncommon, and there are many historic grants in Tasmania that are still legally Crown Land. So, because St Patrick's Church and cemetery are still on Crown Land we had to apply to Crown Land Services for permission to undertake the conservation work. This was granted, of course, and we can proceed. Once the conservation works are complete the Church Trustees will apply to have the title converted to their name.

The superb 1890s views of St Patrick's that we published on the last page of Newsletter 8 show that the church and cemetery were enclosed by a split picket fence with metal pedestrian and vehicle gates, and that the churchyard had by then a mature landscape with many exotic and native trees therein, making for an altogether very attractive setting. The size and maturity of the exotic trees—including poplars, fruit trees and an elm—is evidence that they had been planted at around the time the church was completed. Such planting and enclosure is uncommon with Tasmanian Catholic churches. If the presence of a churchyard cross along with a pair of pencil pines marking the entrance to the cemetery within the churchyard—presumably the best available substitute for the traditional yew tree—is also taken into account, the totality of the setting would seem to indicate the hand of Bishop Willson and a conscious effort to follow Pugin's writings on churchyards. We know that Willson had access to the relevant material in his copy of Pugin's May 1841 *Dublin Review* article, 'On the Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England'.

Through the twentieth century the exotic trees gradually died out and were not replaced. The split picket fence was replaced by a wire fence with wooden rails and uprights, it too in turn being lost, perhaps in the disastrous 1967 bushfires which destroyed much of the village and burnt to the very door of the church. By the 1990s the original setting had entirely disappeared and the church stood on bare unfenced land. In the 1980s the cemetery



St Patrick's Church on its denuded site, February 2007.

had been enclosed with a particularly unsympathetic cyclone wire fence, probably to keep wandering stock out, thereby severing its integration with the church. The original vehicle gate was re-hung between steel uprights next to the church in the new fence line. **To be continued.**



The 1980s perimeter fence to the cemetery with the original vehicle gate inserted.

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 8)

In Part 7 of this series we described the churchyard cross erected in the Catholic cemetery on the outskirts of Oatlands, Tasmania. Another—doubtless slightly earlier—churchyard cross was erected in Oatlands beside the Pugin-designed St Paul's



*The original churchyard cross, St Paul's Church, Oatlands.
(Photo: E. Graeme Robertson)*

Church, presumably in expectation of the Catholic cemetery being established in the churchyard. But this was not to be.

Unlike the cemetery cross which, as described in Part 7, was a rather crude local copy of an existing one, the Oatlands churchyard cross was a well executed accurate copy of an English exemplar brought out by Bishop Willson in 1844. It would have dated from c.1851, the year of the opening of St

Paul's Church. The cross proper had foliated ends with cusped bracing between the arms, being a slightly simpler variant of one Pugin had designed for St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle upon Tyne. Its tapered octagonal shaft had a moulded octagonal capital and a stop-chamfered transition to a square lower end. The octagonal base had a chamfered upper edge and quatrefoils sunk in the cardinal faces, with a further stop-chamfered transition to a square lower edge. A two-step plinth over a square concrete foundation supported the cross.



*Pugin's gable cross design for St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle upon Tyne.
(Courtesy Myers Family Trust)*

It will be observed that the cross was incorrectly oriented north-south, something that had raised Pugin's ire in relation to the cross at Kenilworth (see Newsletter 2). Regrettably it was demolished by a reversing motor vehicle a few decades ago, leading in due course to the erection in late 2002 on the original concrete foundation slab of what is thus Oatlands' third churchyard cross. Properly oriented, its cross proper is a simplified version of that at Colebrook and its base, also simplified for ease of carving—and hence lower cost—is like the Oatlands original but without the sunk quatrefoils.



The present churchyard cross, St Paul's Church, Oatlands

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 Stephen's, Brisbane.

St Stephen's, Brisbane (Part 1)

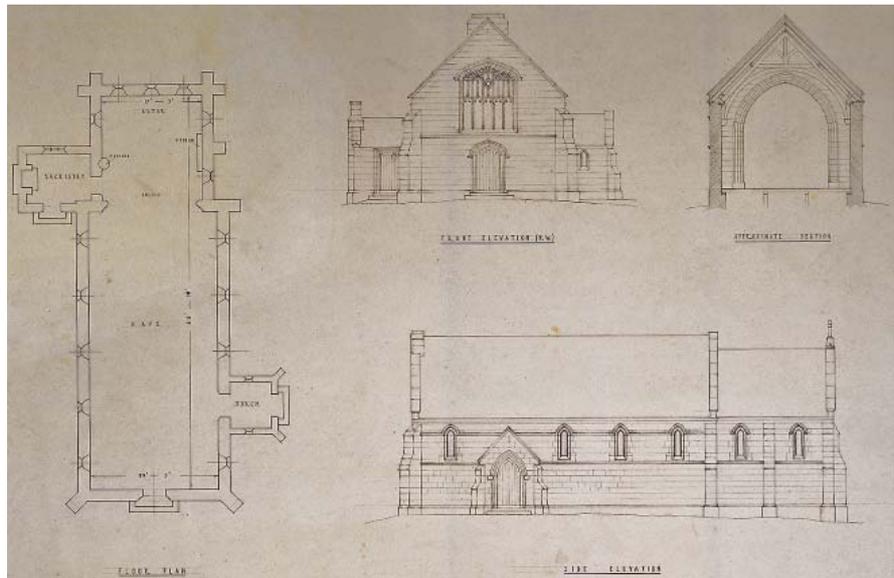
Introduction

In Newsletter 2 we briefly described the package of Pugin plans delivered to Archbishop John Bede Polding OSB of Sydney in 1843. It included drawings for three small churches with western bellcotes, two of which—St Francis Xavier's, Berrima,¹ and St Charles Borromeo's, Ryde—have already been discussed in detail in our Newsletters.² The third design would be used to construct St Stephen's Church in the infant settlement of Moreton Bay (now the City of Brisbane), one of Polding's most remote missions, 1,000 kilometres north of Sydney.

The Design

The St Stephen's plans were for a small two-compartment church, a building type that was by far Pugin's most widely employed, numbering at least fifteen in a range of styles and proportions, designed over the period from 1837 to 1845 for clients in England, Ireland and Australia.³ Most had bellcotes, generally standing on the nave west gable.⁴

The design used for St Stephen's consisted of a five-bay nave with south porch, a relatively deep two-bay separately expressed chancel with a rood screen across the chancel arch,⁵ and a sacristy tucked into the north-east angle between the nave and chancel. The



Walter Kerrison's 1926 measured drawings of St Stephen's, Brisbane, comprising the plan, west and south elevations and section through the nave looking east. (Private collection, courtesy Russell Kerrison)

accompanying plans are reproduced from part of a set of measured drawings of the building done in 1926 by Walter Kerrison, a final year architectural student at the then Brisbane Technical College.⁶

Generally Pugin's designs were mirror-reversed for the antipodes, the congregational entrance porch being on the north side of the nave. There is no compelling reason to believe that the Brisbane church plans were so configured because the building was constructed on a site with clear space to its north and south and there would have been no practical need to reverse the entrance. As always in Pugin's churches there was a western entrance for solemn occasions such as the visit of a bishop and for processions, and the chancel was equipped with sedilia and a piscina in the chancel south wall.

St Stephen's was not much larger than the Berrima design, mainly differing in having a five-bay rather than a four-bay nave, which gave it roughly nineteen percent more capacity. Apart from this, the key dimensions of the two churches were identical, or almost so, as the accompanying table demonstrates.

Key Dimensions of St Francis Xavier's, Berrima, and St Stephen's, Brisbane

Dimensions are given in feet and inches. They are the nominal values and are measured inside the buildings.

Building	Nave Area (sq. ft)	Nave Length	Nave Width	Nave Bay Length	Chancel Length	Chancel Width
Berrima	880	40' 0"	22' 0"	10' 0"	20' 0"	17' 0"
Brisbane	1045	47' 6"	22' 0"	9' 6"	18' 0"	17' 0"



Despite their similarity in size the Berrima and Brisbane designs were quite different in character. While St Francis Xavier's was a pure essay in the Early English idiom of around the mid thirteenth century, St Stephen's was an amalgam of Early English and Perpendicular. This admixture of stylistic periods was occasionally used by Pugin in England, particularly near the start of his architectural career. Thus in 1839 he designed a Norman crypt for St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, with the detail elements of the building proper being in the Geometrical Decorated idiom. Here, the suggestion was of organic growth over many centuries. One might interpret this as part of a more widely expressed Pugin claim—expressed through his design genius—for the re-appropriation of the whole of English medieval history for a resurgent English Catholicism newly freed from centuries of persecution and legal disability.⁷

Likewise his 1838 designs for St Marie's on the Sands, Southport, St Anne's, Keighley, and St Augustine's, Solihull, used two styles; an earlier and visually simpler style for the nave and a later and more complex one for the chancel.⁸ Whilst this too might be suggestive of organic growth it was also a powerful visual means of expressing one of Pugin's key theories, namely, that of propriety, whereby 'the external and internal appearance of an edifice

should be illustrative of, and in accordance with, the purpose for which it is designed'.⁹ In Pugin's view, therefore, the chancel should have a greater degree of decorative and structural elaboration because it was the more solemn or sacred part of the edifice. It is also worth bearing in mind in this regard Pugin's dictum on the first page of his most influential work, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, that: 'In pure architecture the smallest detail should *have a meaning or serve a purpose*'.¹⁰

Such a stylistic arrangement—earlier nave with later chancel—was the norm for half of Pugin's Australian church designs for Archbishop Polding of Sydney and Bishop Willson of Hobart Town, namely, those used for Ryde, Parramatta and Broadway in New South Wales, and for Oatlands and extensions to Richmond in Tasmania. All had Early English naves and Decorated chancels. St Stephen's, Brisbane, also a hybrid, cannot have been thus to express propriety because it was all Early English except for the façade which was Perpendicular. Pugin had such an unrivalled command of the grammar and vocabulary of Gothic that such use of stylistic diversity could never be a question of ignorance. No, even at the antipodes, the long pedigree of English Catholicism would find concrete expression in the forms of its churches. **To be continued.**

New Friends of Pugin

We welcome:

Mr Dominic Cudmore

Mrs Barbara Flynn

Mrs Sarah Houle

The Board of the Pugin Society

Hunters Hill, New South Wales

Florey, Australian Capital Territory

Kidderminster, England

Ramsgate, England

Donations

Our thanks to Mr Dominic Cudmore for his kind donation.

¹ The Berrima plans were also used for St Augustine of Hippo's, Balmain, an inner Sydney suburb. This building will be described and analysed in future issues of the Newsletter.

² See Newsletters 1 through 7.

³ Roughly in chronological order of design they included: St James', Reading; St Marie's on the Sands, Southport; St Anne's, Keighley; The Assumption, Bree; St Hilda's, Whitby; Holy Trinity, Radford; St John's Hospital Chapel, Alton; Our Lady & St Wilfrid's, Warwick Bridge; St Augustine of England's, Kenilworth; Jesus Chapel, Ackworth Grange, Pontefract; St Francis Xavier's, Berrima (same plans as St Augustine of Hippo's, Balmain); St Stephen's, Brisbane; St Anne's Chapel, Stone; St Paul's, Oatlands; St Lawrence's, Tubney.

⁴ But that for St Anne's, Keighley, stood on the nave east gable.

⁵ The existence of the screen is confirmed by the building contractor Alexander Goold's account dated 1 July 1851, which includes 'Roodscreen £9 - 10 - 0'. (Account appended to Bishop Davis to Colonial Secretary, 9 July 1851.)

⁶ The absence of the bellcote from these drawings will be explained in the next Newsletter.

⁷ This is dealt with in an analysis of the architecture of Pugin's Mount St Bernard Abbey, Leicestershire, in Brian Andrews, 'The Significance of Architectural Style at Mount St Bernard Abbey', *True Principles: The voice of the Pugin Society*, Vol. 2, No. 5, Summer 2003, pp. 38–40.

⁸ Southport and Keighley had an Early English nave with a Decorated chancel. Solihull had an Early English nave with a Perpendicular chancel.

⁹ A. Welby Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, John Weale, London, 1841, p. 50.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 1.