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Number 13

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Welcome to the thirteenth Friends Newsletter.

The Bellcote Appeal for St Patrick's Church, Colebrook, commences its second month, and we are most heartened by the generous spirit which has been shown in the first month of the Appeal. All donations over \$2.00 to the Foundation, the Friends and this Appeal are tax deductible and are receipted to you from The National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

The three French brass bells fitted with their headstocks are safely in Oatlands with Robert Whitney our stonemason, awaiting the construction of the bellcote which should commence next month. The bells are still in their transit case and will be unpacked under the supervision of Hervey Bagot of Adelaide when he comes to install them in the completed bellcote.



The bell which will hang in the top opening of the triple bellcote is the smallest of the three and is named *Ave Maria*. It will sound the Angelus each day at noon. In the lower two openings will be *Patrick* and *William*. *Patrick* is of course named after the church, and *William* after both Fr William Dunne who built the church and Bishop Robert William Willson who supplied the Pugin model from which it was constructed.

We are videoing and photographing each stage of the bellcote's construction. The first video clip showing Robert Whitney dressing the stonework can now be downloaded from our website.

What a privilege to be part of the reinstatement of the bellcote over 150 years after it was originally constructed. Thankyou to all who have dedicated a component thus far.

Keep watching our website for regular updates on this exciting project.

With kind regards,  
Jude Andrews  
Administrative Officer

*Oatlands stonemason Robert Whitney dressing a stone for the Colebrook bellcote (Photo: Brian Andrews).*

## *Pugin's Designs*

In this series we are looking in detail at Pugin's designs for buildings, furnishings and objects. We continue an examination of his lectern style pulpits in this issue.

### *Lectern Pulpits (Part 3)*

In 1847 Pugin designed a new church for Fulham, a little to the south-west of Central London. Designated St Thomas of Canterbury's, it was to be an attractive triple-gabled building in the Flowing Decorated style, with a commanding north-west steeple, and the entire cost was to be borne by Mrs Elizabeth Bowden in memory of her husband.<sup>1</sup> As with all Pugin's churches his design included a rood screen, and in this case a lectern pulpit related closely to it, as we have seen in Kirkham and Marlow.<sup>2</sup>

From the outset Mrs Bowden had told Pugin that her church was not to have a rood screen. Despite this 'he began putting up the screen without her leave. The lower part was actually made and fixed. This was taken down on Mrs

Bowden's orders, and communion rails were installed.'<sup>3</sup> A furious Pugin declined to attend the opening of the church on 30 May 1848.

The Caen stone lectern pulpit was constructed, but lacked its related rood screen as a result of Mrs Bowden's stance. It was set diagonally in the north-east corner of the nave near a pier with neither capital nor base, a pair of which marked the position of the rood screen in Pugin's design (all the other nave and chancel piers had capitals and bases).<sup>4</sup> In 1969 it was moved one bay eastwards into the chancel—reduced at that time by one bay—and set square to the nave as an ambo as part of a re-ordering of the interior in the wake of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>5</sup> Then in 2006 during the extensive restoration works on the church it was moved to the south-west corner of the shortened chancel.

Carved by George Myers' men in the Flowing Decorated idiom of the church itself, the lectern has strong rib mouldings articulating its form, much floriated ornament and four standing angels holding scrolls, the figures set in diagonal niches at each corner.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Denis Evinson, *St Thomas's Church, Fulham: A History of the Church and Mission*, London, 1998, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> See *Friends of Pugin Newsletter* 11 and 12.

<sup>3</sup> Evinson, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> These lectern pulpits of Pugin's were set diagonally to face them towards the centre of gravity of the nave. See *Newsletter* 12 for this orientation of the Marlow pulpit.

<sup>5</sup> Evinson, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Myers was Pugin's favoured builder.

*The lectern pulpit in St Thomas of Canterbury's, Fulham (Photo: Brian Andrews).*



## Pugin's Irish Works

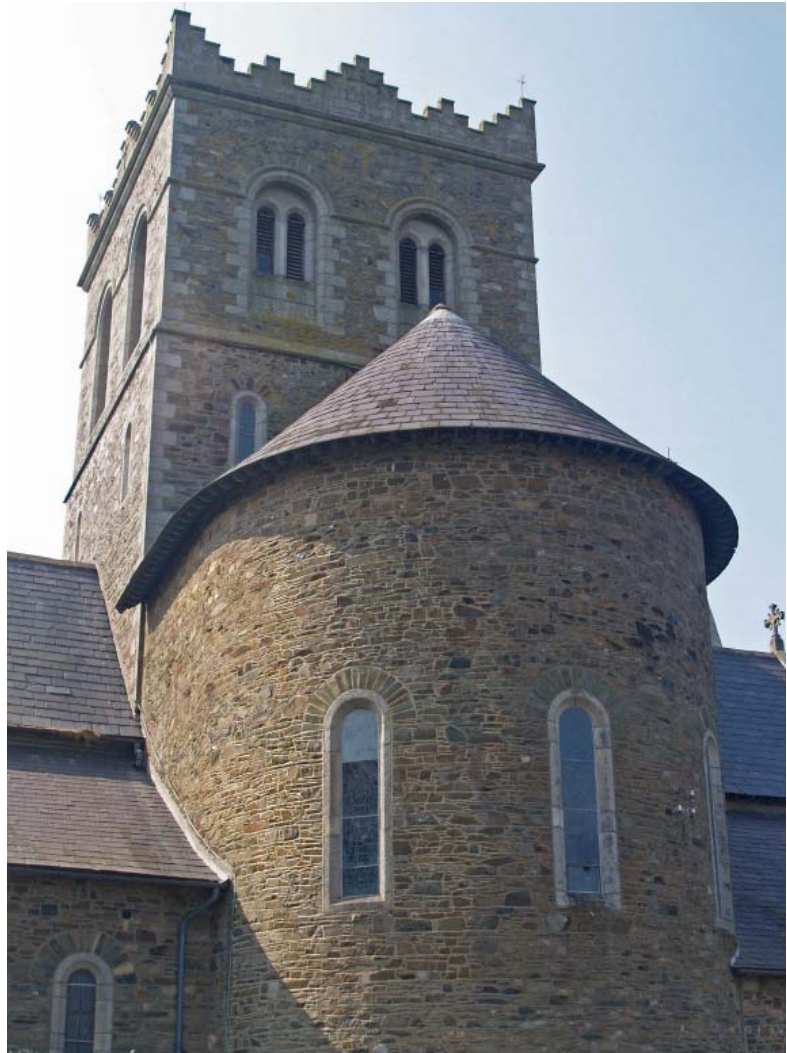
Pugin's Australian works are best understood in the context of his many designs for buildings in England and Ireland. To this end we are running an occasional series, initially, on his Irish buildings in south-east Ireland. We continue with his Church of St Michael the Archangel, Gorey.

### *St Michael the Archangel's, Gorey (Part 2)*

#### *The Design (continued)*

St Michael's was a big building by comparison with actual Irish medieval Romanesque churches. These were very small compared with their English counterparts, measuring typically a mere eighteen metres or so in overall length.<sup>1</sup> Pugin's design was closer in size to the transitional Romanesque/Gothic monastic churches of the first Irish Cistercian foundations.<sup>2</sup> It had a seven-bay aisled and clerestoried nave, two-bay transepts and an apsidal chancel. In this latter regard it was more aligned with English Romanesque precedent, Irish examples typically having square east ends. (Pugin's only other Romanesque essays—St James, Reading, and the crypt of St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham—also had apsidal chancels.)

The sturdy crossing tower was crowned with stepped battlements, a distinctive characteristic of later medieval Irish churches. It was claimed during the sermon at St Michael's blessing and dedication in May 1843 that Pugin had been considerably influenced by the ruins of Dunbrody Abbey near New Ross.<sup>3</sup> While this is certainly possible, even given the limited extent of Pugin's travels in Ireland prior to mid 1839, it seems perhaps more likely that some of Pugin's Gorey inspiration may have come from the ruins



of another medieval Cistercian foundation, Tintern Abbey,

County Wexford. We shall see later that Pugin had a reason to have been in the vicinity of Tintern, and the form of the stepped battlements on Gorey's tower was certainly much closer to those on the Tintern crossing tower. With his then minimal experience of Irish medieval architecture, Pugin could not have known that stepped battlements had only been introduced into Ireland in the fourteenth century, long after the cessation of Romanesque construction.<sup>4</sup>

The other distinctively Irish feature of the Gorey church was a round tower with conical roof at the north-west corner of the north transept, forming part of the most innovative and appealing aspect of Pugin's overall design, namely, the access way to the crossing tower top stage. Stairs within the round tower led

*St Michael's apsidal chancel  
(Photo: Brian Andrews).*

up to a walkway along the western edge of the north transept roof. The walkway was protected by a parapet sitting on a run of massive corbels and it connected with an attractive corbelled round turret clasping the crossing tower's north-west corner. Stairs within this latter reached to the tower's belfry stage. Pugin's round tower was cylindrical rather than tapered like early Irish round towers, and its elegant roof

with concave sides was perhaps more reminiscent of such details on the churches he would have seen during his 1838 travels in Central Europe than of the straight tapers of Irish towers.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it added significantly to the Irishness of the composition.

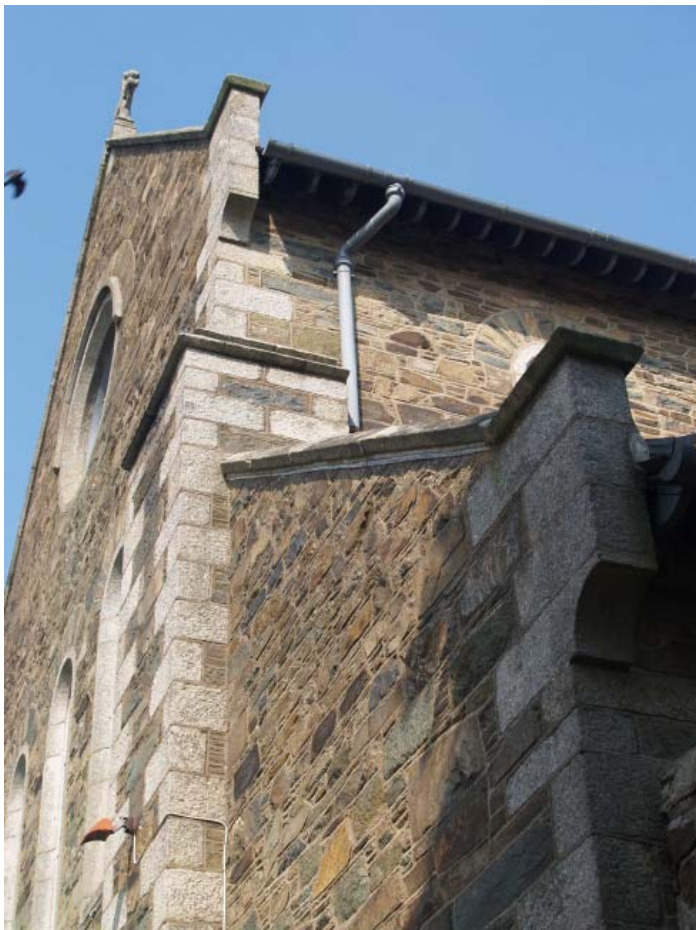
The windows and doorways had plain splays, the façade doors and oculus window as well



as the tower belfry stage openings having simple dripstone mouldings.

In the case of the nave west door and the belfry openings the mouldings were continued as a string course; for the principal door as far as the pilaster-like clasping buttresses at the corners of the nave west front, and for the belfry lights encircling the tower.

*A detail of the access way to the tower belfry stage (Photo: Brian Andrews).*



One other design detail of the exterior is worthy of comment, namely the form of the gable copings and their kneelers. Here, the coping stones had a curved upper face and the lowest section of the coping kicked out horizontally where it formed part of the kneeler. The supporting corbel was several courses below this. This form would appear to place Gorey—despite its 1839 design date—firmly amongst Pugin's first group of church designs, a detail which it shares with his designs for Bree, Ramsgrange and St Peter's College, Wexford, as well as for Reading, Keighley, Solihull, Dudley, Macclesfield and Uttoxeter, all designed in 1837–8.<sup>6</sup> We will deal with Gorey's pedigree in due course. His mature—and more

*Coping stone, kneeler and corbel detail on the façade of St Michael's (Photo: Brian Andrews).*



sophisticated—treatment of this detail had flat-topped coping stones often terminating in a gablet, with the corbel generally directly below the kneeler.<sup>7</sup>

**To be continued.**

<sup>1</sup> Harold G. Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, (3 vols), vol. I: The First Phases and the Romanesque, Dundalgan Press, Dundalk, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> Leask, op. cit., vol. II: Gothic Architecture to A.D. 1400.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Forde (ed.), *St Michael's Church, Gorey, 1839–1989*, St Michael's Parish, Gorey, 1989, p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> Indeed, this was only definitely established in the mid twentieth century. See Leask, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 134–5.

<sup>5</sup> Pugin's diary for 1838, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, Pressmark 86 MM 57, L5159 1969.

<sup>6</sup> The lower ends of the gable copings at Bree and Uttoxeter do not kick out horizontally, but are in other respects the same as the rest of the group.

<sup>7</sup> Pugin must have been aware of the superior nature of the later treatment because—interestingly—in illustrating the Southport and Keighley churches in his May 1841 *Dublin Review* article 'On the Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England', he drew them with the later coping treatment rather than the earlier type that had actually been used on the buildings.



*Coping stone, kneeler and corbel detail on the south porch of St Mary's, Tagoat (Photo: Brian Andrews).*

## Pugin's Australian Built Heritage

### *St Augustine of Hippo's, Balmain (Part 2)*

#### *The impact of Pugin's drawings*

In Newsletter 12 we noted that St Augustine's and St Francis Xavier's Church, Berrima, are of particular interest in the history of Pugin's church design implementations for, alone amongst his richly diverse oeuvre, they were constructed from the same set of plans. As such they can shed light on the impact that his way of detailing—or not detailing—his working drawings had on the finished product.

*(Left) A detail from Pugin's design for a figurative headstone (Courtesy Myers Family Trust). (Right) A detail of the figurative headstone carved from Pugin's design (Photo: Brian Andrews).*



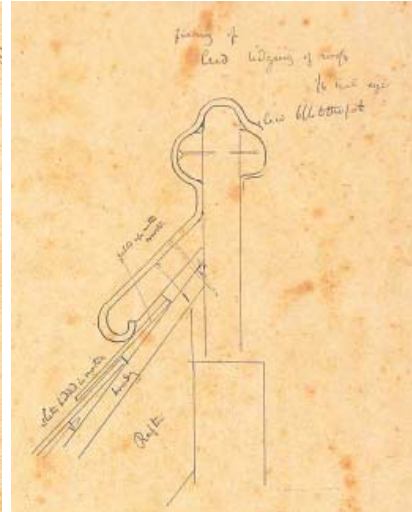
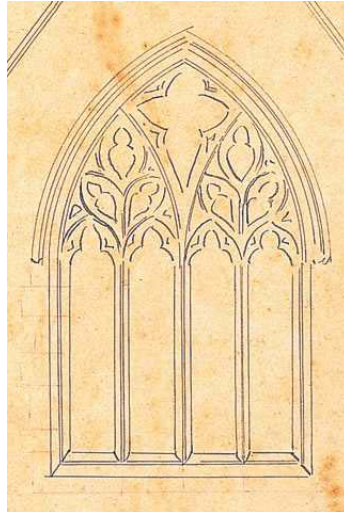
We know that Pugin dashed off his designs for buildings, stained glass, metalwork and so on, with extraordinary speed. And these design drawings—often little more than rough sketches—resulted in the exquisite results we so admire, with their beautifully proportioned composition and scholarly detail.<sup>1</sup> He was able to do this because he had built up a group of industrial collaborators to execute his designs, supplying their craftsmen with fragments of medieval works to inform their understanding of what he wanted, and supervising their growth in the execution of his designs in the way that he desired, so that they could in time—with little, if any, intervention—produce results that fully met both the letter and spirit of his intentions.

Of these collaborators, the key person for the bulk of his English ecclesiastical buildings was George Myers, his favoured builder.<sup>2</sup> That Myers' men could turn a Pugin sketch into a perfect neo-medieval product is without dispute. An illuminating example of such capability is a splendid 1847 headstone in Tasmania, Pugin's design for which has

survived in the Myers Family Trust collection.<sup>3</sup> Note how a mere diagonal stroke in the drawing has become a sword in St Henry II, Holy Roman Emperor's hand. In a certain sense one can say that Pugin's works, particularly the details, are not entirely his, but rather the result of an extraordinary symbiosis between a creative genius and the remarkable craftsmen in whom he had such huge trust.

Because of this relationship with Myers and his men, Pugin's architectural drawings were generally light on detail for elements such as moulding profiles, statue niches, crocketing and so on. He would typically include a large scale detail where it was sufficiently different to warrant providing more accurate information, often accompanied by adjacent notes. A good example is the complete set of 1845 drawings on four sheets for the (unexecuted) design of a Catholic church at St Peter Port, Guernsey.<sup>4</sup> The traceried windows have no moulding profile details but a quarter full-size cross-section, complete with notes, is given for fixing the lead to the roof ridge. It has been remarked by some writers that Pugin's architectural drawings appear to be a strange mix of the general and the detailed, but the reason is perfectly logical and—most importantly—entirely consistent with his *modus operandi*, as has been outlined above.

As a further safeguard in achieving what he wanted for his English buildings Pugin supervised their construction, visiting each site on a number of occasions, as his

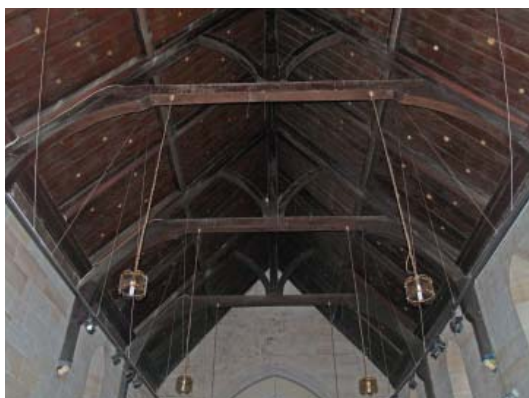


(Left) The nave west window, from Pugin's design drawings for a church at Guernsey. (Right) A detail showing the method of fixing the roof ridge, from Pugin's design drawings for a church at Guernsey.

diaries show. Such was not possible with his Australian designs. The interpretation of the drawings was in the hands of men with little if any understanding of the grammar and vocabulary of English medieval architecture upon which Pugin's work was so firmly, yet originally, based. In the case of the Balmain and Berrima churches no supervising architect was involved and the respective builders were left to their own devices in 'reading' the plans. That the plans consisted of the usual Pugin mélange of eighth-scale elevations and sections plus a few details will become evident as we consider how differently the details on the two churches turned out.<sup>5</sup>

The proportions and principal dimensions of the buildings generally correspond—they would have been accurately derived from the main elevations and sections on the drawings. Yet even here, small variations occur. For example, the nave roof trusses are the same, but the treatment of the ceiling boarding

(Left) The Balmain nave roof trusses (Photo: Brian Andrews). (Right) The Berrima nave roof trusses (Photo: Ian Stapleton).



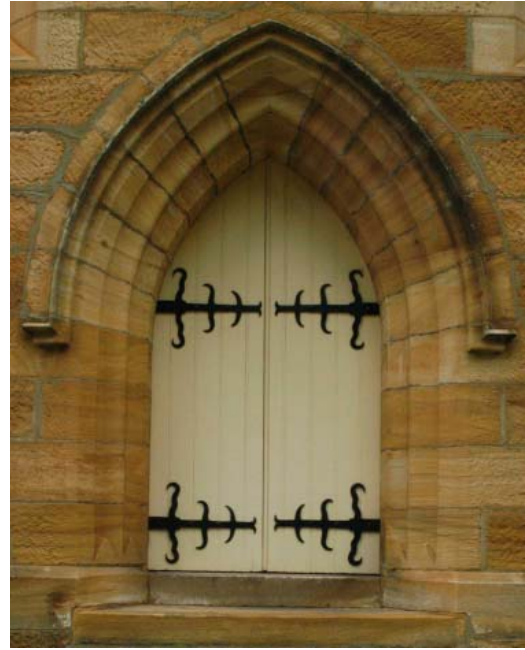


differs—in Balmain below the rafters, in Berrima above them—and Balmain has an intermediate principal rafter at the centre of each bay.

Beyond this there is little identical detail; certainly not in the mouldings to doors and windows. This is glaringly evident in the west doors. Berrima has *sui generis* wave mouldings, certainly not correct for the Early English style of Pugin's design.<sup>6</sup> Yet this is, aesthetically speaking, greatly in advance of the clumsy Balmain mouldings, which look like a handful of spaghetti.

A comparison of the statue niches on the facades also reveals very differing interpretations of the moulding profiles, particularly to the corbelled base. Again, the Berrima result is more pleasing, although not faithful to the Early English idiom.

Undoubtedly the widest divergence in the builders' understanding and interpretation



(Left) The Balmain west door mouldings (Photo: Brian Andrews).  
(Right) The Berrima west door (Photo: Ian Stapleton).

of Pugin's plans can be seen in the sedilia. It is difficult to believe that they arose from the same drawing, a pointer to how very sketchy the detail must have been.

What general conclusions can we draw from this comparison of Pugin's little churches at Balmain and Berrima?

Firstly, because of the characteristic content of Pugin's architectural drawings, it confirms that the successful realisation of his creative vision was critically dependant upon the collaboration of builders and craftsmen who



(Left) The Balmain statue niche (Photo: Brian Andrews).

(Right) The Berrima statue niche (Photo: Brian Andrews).



(Left) *The Balmain sedilia* (Photo: Brian Andrews). (Right) *The Berrima sedilia* (Photo: Ian Stapleton).

fully understood the Gothic idiom. Such was not the case with his designs for Archbishop Polding. This is perhaps underscored by what resulted from his Tasmanian designs for Bishop Willson. Here, the builders and local architect were no more literate in the Gothic, but they were working from accurate scale models of the churches made by Myers' men, supplemented by full-size exemplar stonework—also by Myers' men—for important details, rather than from Pugin drawings. It is fair to say that the buildings so constructed are, accordingly, closer to the Pugin intentions than those in New South Wales and Queensland.

Secondly, where we quite properly designate Polding's group of buildings as designed by Pugin, we need to qualify this by recognising

that their Pugin traits encompass the overall plan form, composition and measurements, but by no means all of the details as implemented.

<sup>1</sup> The roughness of his drawings and the consequent speed of their execution, containing the essential germ of each creative act, are surely the principal reason why he was able to complete such a huge volume of designs in such a short life.

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent biography of Myers, readers are referred to Patricia Spencer-Silver, *Pugin's Builder: The Life and Work of George Myers*, The University of Hull Press, Hull, 1993. Patricia, a Friend of Pugin, is currently completing a second edition of this work, to be published by Gracewing.

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted to Patricia Spencer-Silver for arranging access to the Myers Family Trust collection.

<sup>4</sup> See Brian Andrews, *Creating a Gothic Paradise: Pugin at the Antipodes*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 2002, exhibition catalogue, exhibit F.27, pp. 183–5.

<sup>5</sup> Traditionally, the principal elevations and cross-sections on architectural plans were drawn 'eighth scale', that is, one eighth of an inch to the foot (slightly larger than 1:100).

<sup>6</sup> Wave mouldings are typical of the Decorated style, thus later than the Early English.

## *New Friends of Pugin*

We welcome:

Mr Simon and Mrs Anna Greener

Master Aidan Greener

Master Bede Greener

*Allens Rivulet, Tasmania*

*Allens Rivulet, Tasmania*

*Allens Rivulet, Tasmania*

Donations

Our thanks to [The Greener family](#) for their kind donation