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Welcome to the fourteenth Friends Newsletter.

August and September have seen significant developments at St Patrick's Church, Colebrook. Under the guidance of Lesley Gulson, landscape architect, the first planting of vegetation identified in the beautiful late nineteenth-century photographs of the church, namely, two apple trees and one pear tree, has been undertaken. August was an opportune time to plant them because they were bare-rooted and only available at this time of the year. The other


trees will not be planted until the perimeter fence has been reconstructed.

We are so fortunate to have Bruce Slade of Colebrook to plant and care for the trees and to construct protection from the sheep who wander happily all around the town and who love the church grounds. Bruce had already been caring for the cemetery grounds and cutting the grass around the church, so we are delighted that he is prepared to take responsibility for our program of reinstating the historic vegetation.

The scaffolding for the reconstruction of the bellcote has been erected, the nave east wall gable has been demolished down as far as the level of the springing of the bellcote and there is now a gaping hole into the church. It will be boarded up while the bellcote is constructed. What a dramatic change of appearance!



*Colebrook resident Bruce Slade, standing at left, plants an apple tree in St Patrick's grounds, assisted by John Miller and Lesley Gulson of Ferndene Studio (Photo: Brian Andrews).*



It is so exciting because this is the point now where the bellcote will start to rise and those of you who have donated stones will be able to see your stones go up. Thank you to all who have already donated. Your generosity is helping to make this reconstruction a reality. There remain the three bells and a number of stones available for your dedication.

All donations for the bellcote appeal are being receipted through the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and attract tax deduction

status. The dedication certificates will be sent to you in early November before the official first ringing of the bells.

We hope that you are enjoying the gentle warmth, perfume and colour of Spring.

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



*A view of the bellcote works. Your intrepid photographer was standing on the surface from which the bellcote will arise. At the lower left is the hole into the church exposed by the demolition of the upper part of the nave east wall gable (Photo: Brian Andrews).*



## Pugin's Designs

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

### *Lectern Pulpits (Part 4)*

On 6 and 7 September 1848 Pugin's little Church of St Osmund in Salisbury was consecrated and opened. A contemporary account noted approvingly that: 'This beautiful little structure is situated at the east end of 'Sarum's lovely pile' [Salisbury Cathedral]', and that: 'The exterior, from the nature of the material used, has a most quaint and pleasing appearance.'<sup>1</sup>

St Osmund's was one of a small group of late Pugin churches, including St Marie's, Rugby, and St Peter's, Marlow, with nave and a single aisle under gabled roofs. And like its kindred at Marlow it had a lectern style pulpit, a point not missed in the abovementioned account. It was noted that: 'At the north angle of the nave is the pulpit, in the form of a reading desk, the front being elaborately carved with the lamb and flag.'<sup>2</sup>

Its overall form bore a strong resemblance to the Marlow example but its carved work

was both more extensive and more elaborate. Occupying most of the front was a moulded panel with a double trefoil-arched head having foliated spandrels. Within this was carved a large Paschal Lamb with banner, standing upon a moulded bracket against a background of deeply undercut fruiting vines. Beneath the top edge of the book stand was a strong band of foliation. Truly a beautiful furnishing, and perfectly scaled for the modest interior.

Alas, the lectern was removed from the building in the latter half of the twentieth century and now stands in badly damaged condition, but still recognisable, amongst the headstones in the little cemetery adjacent to the south side of the church. Ironically, a prosaic wooden lectern now stands in exactly the same place in the re-ordered interior as did its superb predecessor.



*The lectern pulpit abandoned in the cemetery beside St Osmund's Church, 2004 (Photo: Brian Andrews).*

*The St Osmund's, Salisbury, lectern pulpit in its original location (Source: St Osmund's and Catholic Salisbury: A short history, Salisbury, 1997).*



<sup>1</sup> *The Tablet*, vol. IX, no. 439, 30 September 1848, p. 628, c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, c. 3.



## 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 conclude our consideration of his Church of St Michael the Archangel, Gorey.

### *St Michael the Archangel's, Gorey (Part 3)*

#### *Construction*

The foundation stone of St Michael's was laid on 12 August 1839. <sup>1</sup> The clerk of works was the Wexford builder Richard Pierce who would be involved in the construction of a number of Pugin's Irish buildings and who was already at work on St Peter's College Chapel, Wexford. <sup>2</sup>

Pierce was in receipt of working drawings for the church, which had been despatched by Pugin on 22 June 1839. <sup>3</sup> The drawings were accompanied by a letter which sheds much interesting light on the provenance of the building's design repertoire and its construction. <sup>4</sup> The sort of detailed instruction given to Pierce was not necessary in England, for there Pugin had already found in George Myers a builder who could implement both the letter and the spirit of his designs. Myers would prove to be his favoured builder. Because the content is so revealing, the relevant parts are reproduced below (with Pugin's spelling):

*'as the roof over nave is precisely the same in framing and scantling as one which I Last sent you I have not drawn it out to a Large scale.*

*the pillars and arches are also the same as Father Barden's church of which you have the working drawings for This church.*

*The arches jambs splayed jambs of windows & pillars &c. are all brick.*

*The capitals bases external jambs of windows & doors are of cut stone as also the weathering of the 2 buttresses at the west end & Coping & cross of gable.*

[Here, Pugin inserts a thumbnail sketch of the required window external jambs treatment] *The doors are to be put together Like those of St Peter's Wexford. The steps of sanctuary may be wood—also the pillars supporting ribs of groining.*

*all the woodwork of roofs to be dressed excepting over sanctuary where there is a plaister ceiling.*

*The cross on the west gable is the same as that I have drawn for Father Bardens church.*

*The whole church will be plaistered inside & joints struck to imitate stone ...'*

A number of important conclusions can be drawn from this. Firstly, by this stage Pugin had already designed another large aisled Romanesque church for an Irish client, the execution of which he had placed in Pierce's hands. These plans were both detailed and complete.

Secondly, the plans—never used except for details at Gorey—were for a church at Tintern, where at that time Fr Andrew Barden was parish priest. <sup>5</sup>

Thirdly, details from the Wexford chapel were also to be followed, showing again that Pugin was prepared to replicate details from his other Irish church plans, a practice not resorted to in his English work. This is a significant *modus operandi* which can explain, for example, why the roof trusses, wall posts and corbels in St James', Ramsgrange, are the same as those in St Peter's College Chapel, Wexford.

Fourthly, Pugin was here resorting to 'untruthful' practices—a plaster ceiling in the apse in imitation of stone vaulting and joints struck in plaster 'to imitate stone'—that would be condemned in his later writings:

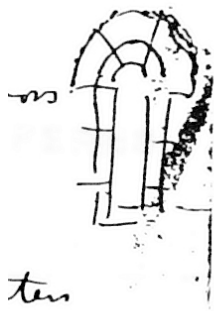
*'We should never make a building erected to God appear better than it really is by artificial means. These are showy worldly expedients, adapted only for those who live by splendid deception, such as theatricals, mountebanks, quacks, and the like. Nothing can be more execrable than making a church appear rich and beautiful in the eyes of men, but full of trick and falsehood, which cannot escape the*



*St Michael's interior looking east, showing the plaster vaulted apse (Photo: Brian Andrews).*

*all-searching eye of God, to whom all churches should be built, and not to man.'*<sup>6</sup>

His window sketch is also useful in showing how his intentions were not always followed in Ireland by Pierce the way they were in England by Myers. The sketch showed the arch made up of several stones, and the stones making up the vertical faces keyed back into the surrounding wall. In fact, this was only followed for the belfry lights, all others having a single stone for the arch and no keying into the surrounding random rubble walling.



*Pugin's thumbnail sketch in his June 1839 letter to builder Richard Pierce detailing how he wanted the window stonework to be constructed.*



*A clerestory window in St Michael's, Gorey (Photo: Brian Andrews).*



The church walls were constructed from random rubble stone quarried thereabouts at Clonsilla, Gorey Hill and Ballyscartan, while the granite for the nave columns was quarried in County Wicklow.<sup>7</sup> St Michael's Church was dedicated on 1 May 1843. Pugin's diary records a visit to Gorey on 11 June 1842, apparently the only time he saw the building under construction.<sup>8</sup>

Little remains by way of Pugin furnishings, but a splendid baptismal font does, even if it has apparently spent around a century and a half out of doors alongside the sacristy. Its strong simple interpenetrating geometric forms bring to mind the font he designed for St Mary's, Brewood, Staffordshire, c.1844. This font was replaced by one purchased in Belgium by St Michael's benefactor Stephen Ram, probably in 1858.<sup>9</sup> In turn it too was ousted and it now stands in the grounds of the Gorey presbytery.





*Pugin's  
baptismal  
font outside  
the sacristy  
(Photo: Brian  
Andrews).*

<sup>1</sup> Walter Forde, *St. Michael's Church, Gorey, 1839–1989*, Gorey, 1989, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> See Roderick O'Donnell, 'The Pugins in Ireland', in Paul Atterbury (ed.), *A.W.N. Pugin, Master of Gothic Revival*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1995, pp. 137–159.

<sup>3</sup> Pugin's diary for 1839, National Art Library, Victorian and Albert Museum, Pressmark 86 MM 58, L5160 1969.

<sup>4</sup> The letter is reproduced in facsimile in Forde, op. cit., pp. 76–7.

<sup>5</sup> He was so listed in contemporary directories according to Margaret Belcher, *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin*, volume 1 1830–1842, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> A. Welby Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, John Weale, London, 1841, pp. 52–3.

<sup>7</sup> Forde, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Pugin's diary for 1842, National Art Library, Victorian and Albert Museum, Pressmark 86 MM 61, L5163 1969

<sup>9</sup> Forde, op.cit., p. 12.

## *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, in view of the imminent reinstatement of its triple bellcote, we commence our examination of St Patrick's, Colebrook.

### *St Patrick's, Colebrook (Part 1) Introduction*

St Patrick's Church, Colebrook, is a building whose stylistic and planning roots can be traced to the ideals and impact of the

Englishman Robert William Willson, first Catholic Bishop of Hobart Town, and of the great early-Victorian English architect Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin.

Bishop Robert William Willson (1794–1866) brought to Van Diemen's Land in 1844 a passionately held belief in the moral and spiritual efficacy of that nineteenth-century movement, known as the Gothic Revival, which brought about a return to the building style and technology of the High Middle Ages. His father was a Lincoln builder and his architect elder brother Edward had been deeply involved in the writing of text for a series of pattern books.<sup>1</sup> Amongst the

*St Patrick's Church in the early 1890s  
(Archdiocese of Hobart Archives).*



most important and influential of such pattern books were those for which Edward Willson had provided the text. They were by the emigré French artist and architectural illustrator Augustus Charles Pugin (1769–1832), some of the plates for which were prepared by his precocious only child Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812–52).

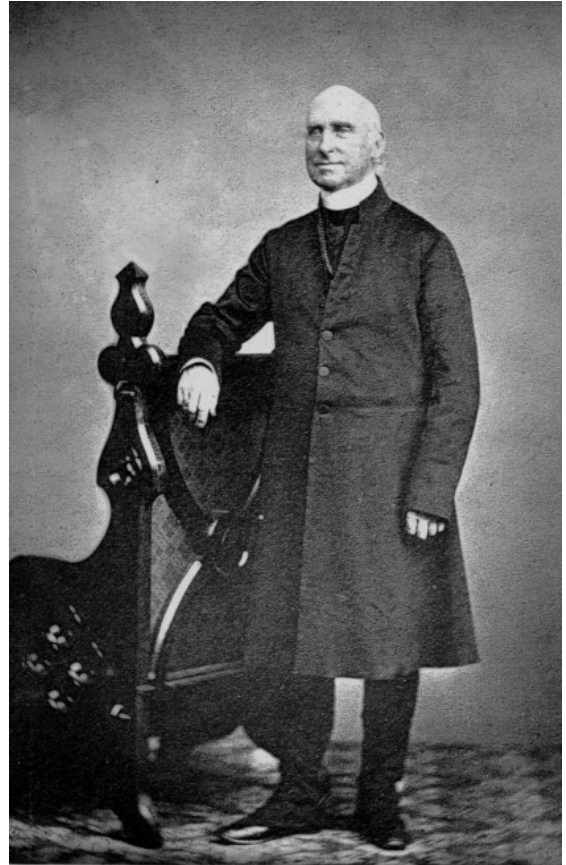
<sup>2</sup> Through this family connection, Father (later Bishop) Willson came to become a very close friend of the younger Pugin and, indeed, when as priest in charge of the Nottingham mission he decided to build a new church, it was his friend Pugin who provided the design for St Barnabas' Church (later Cathedral) which, when opened in 1844, was the largest Catholic church built in England since the Reformation.

Pugin passionately believed that there was a strong correlation between the perfection of style and religious faith; restore the architecture, with its concomitant liturgical plan forms and furnishings, and you will help rekindle that faith with which it was once associated. The underpinning vision for his works was a religious—and hence social—not an aesthetic one:

*Architecture is the barometer of faith; it is not the arch, the pinnacle, the pillar, that profiteth, but the spirit which produces them; and the revival or decline of true Ecclesiastical architecture is commensurate with that of the true faith. It is for these reasons that we labour for its restoration and not as a mere abstract question of art.* <sup>3</sup>

That vision encompassed nothing less than the full revivification of the religious, social and architectural fabric of medieval English society. It followed that if Pugin's beliefs were to be translated into reality he must revive all the medieval crafts. For in order to revive the full liturgical, sacramental and theological life of the medieval church, the design and manufacture of vestments, liturgical metalwork, tombstones, memorial brasses, stained glass, book illustrations and so on, were just as essential to his vision as was the design of churches themselves.


Bishop Willson fully shared these views with Pugin. Indeed, of all the clergy with



*Bishop Willson, early 1860s  
(Archdiocese of Hobart Archives).*

whom Pugin collaborated, Willson was the one who most comprehensively subscribed to the Pugin vision and endeavoured to make it a reality. Pugin had spelled out that vision in great detail with regard to Catholic church architecture, liturgical planning and furnishing in two articles that appeared during 1841 and 1842 in the *Dublin Review*. In the first of them he set out what he 'regarded as forming a complete Catholic parish church for the due celebration of the divine office and administration of the sacraments, both as regards architectural arrangement and furniture.' <sup>4</sup> Bishop Willson brought this key text to Hobart in 1844.

When Willson was nominated as first Bishop of Hobart Town in 1842, his friend Pugin designed for him—at no cost—everything he would need to set up a new diocese, including episcopal regalia, vestments, altar vessels, three churches plus exemplar stonework for them, church furnishings and even tombstones. These were manufactured by key



Pugin collaborators in England—principally the Birmingham firm of John Hardman & Co. and the builder George Myers—and brought out to Van Diemen's Land by Willson on the *Bella Marina* in 1844, the only coherent collection of Pugin designs outside Britain and Ireland.<sup>5</sup> In the case of the three church designs, they were produced by Myers' men as detailed models for replication, evidently because of a notion that the skills would not be available in Van Diemen's Land for constructing buildings from conventional architectural drawings.<sup>6</sup>

The advent of Willson at the antipodes therefore saw the most explicit, detailed and accurate implantation of Pugin's architectural and religious ideals to occur in Australian history by one who passionately and comprehensively agreed with and propagated them.

<sup>1</sup> Pattern books were publications containing large-scale, accurate, measured drawings of medieval buildings and their various details. They made available for the first time a substantial and comprehensive resource upon which practising architects could draw in designing accurate and convincing structures based on a particular medieval period.

<sup>2</sup> A. Pugin and A.W. Pugin, *Examples of Gothic Architecture*, 3 vols, Henry G. Bohn, London, 1838–40.

<sup>3</sup> A. Welby Pugin, 'Catholic Church Architecture', letter to *The Tablet*, vol. IX, no. 435, 2 September 1848, p. 563.

<sup>4</sup> [A. Welby Pugin], 'On the Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England', *Dublin Review*, vol. X, May 1841, p. 312.

## *New Friends of Pugin*

We welcome:

Bruce Slade

*Colebrook, Tasmania*