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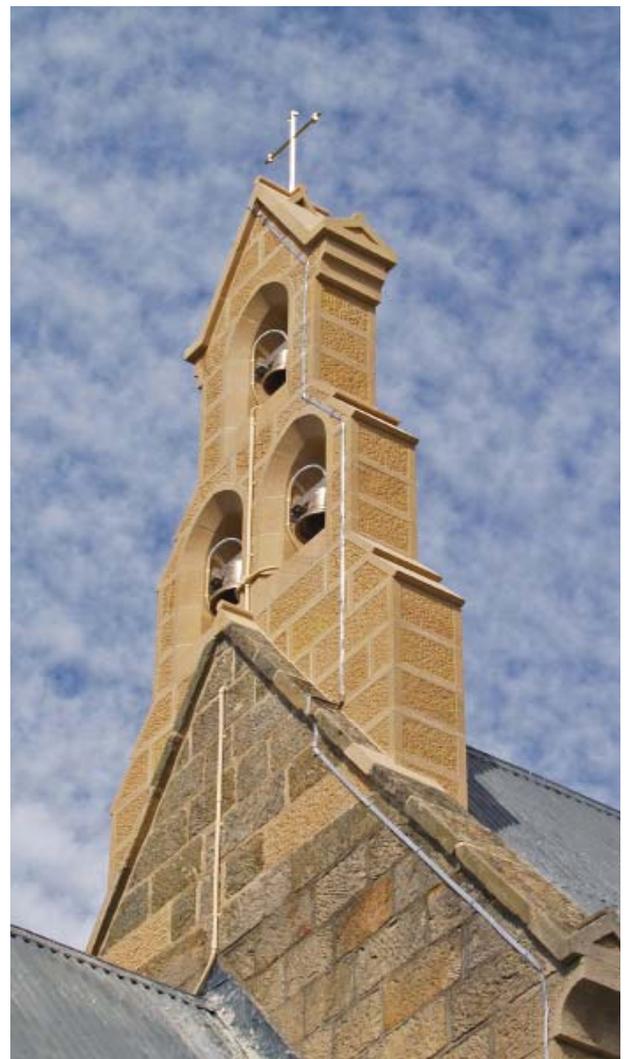
Welcome to the twentieth Friends Newsletter. The bell tolled at St Patrick's Church, Colebrook, before the funeral service and to farewell Bernard Hughes-Gage, Friend of Pugin, as he was carried up the hill to be buried earlier this month in St Patrick's cemetery. We are indebted to his wife Gale who has for many many years promoted, conducted tours, guided tourists, run the History Room and cared for this church. Vale Bernard.

Having said goodbye to Bernard, we are about to welcome new Friends of Pugin, Dr David Daintree, present Rector of St John's College, University of Sydney, and Mrs Elizabeth Daintree as residents of Colebrook. They have just purchased the commandant's cottage in the village. Welcome David and Elizabeth.

The next phase of major works on St Patrick's is to take place from June to August of this year. The floors will be strengthened to take the weight of the scaffolding to be erected inside the Church. Our project manager, structural engineer Peter Spratt, says that the Colebrook floor is the worst he has encountered in his long professional career. All strengthening will be done under the floor itself, so will be invisible from within the building.

In July and August two works will be undertaken. The church will be completely re-wired and the new indirect lighting system installed. This will be a great relief to us when complete, as the present wiring is a fire hazard and no lights have been able to be used for many months. Substantial structural strengthening will be undertaken. For this, external scaffolding as well as the internal scaffolding will be used for the access required.

A consequence of the strengthening works will be that we will have to put new roofs on the church and we will also install new guttering, downpipes and flashings, all to the correct historical profiles.



The bellcote, St Patrick's, Colebrook (Image: Brian Andrews).

When these works are all complete there will be a dramatic change for the better in both the external and internal appearance of the building.

We will be documenting this process and will keep you up-to-date with all progress.

Every best wish,
Jude Andrews
Administrative Officer

Metalwork Marvels

Each issue we bring you an exquisite example of Pugin's astonishing creativity in reviving the spirit of medieval metalwork.

Chalice: designed c.1848–49, made by John Hardman & Company, Birmingham, hallmarked JH&Co 1849–50; silver parcel-gilt, with champlevé enamel on the knot bosses and the foot; the knot, stem and foot decorated with semi-precious stones including turquoises, cabochon garnets and moonstones; 26.2cm high, 12.8cm diameter bowl, 18.4cm across the points of the complex sexfoil base.



Pugin's Designs

In this series we are looking in detail at Pugin's designs for buildings, furnishings and objects. In this issue we continue an examination of his baptismal fonts and his surviving rood screens.

Baptismal Fonts (Part 4)

Pugin's little two-compartment Church of Our Lady & St Wilfrid, Warwick Bridge (1840–41), in Cumbria was designed in a predominantly Early English idiom with several two-light nave windows in the Flowing Decorated style, suggestive of organic development of the building. This impression is reinforced by the font which is a simple massive furnishing of strong transitional Norman/Early English character. With its component parts echoing some English late twelfth-century fonts it is, however, no pastiche, being an entirely original design. The font is still situated in its original position just beyond the south porch door in the south-west corner of the nave.

Of a type known as a pillar or pedestal font, its bowl takes the form of a Norman capital, square in section with a chamfered top edge, the underside being scalloped as for the fonts at Molland, Devon, Westerleigh and Thornbury, Gloucs., and St Philip's Church, Bristol.¹ On the east face the Sacred Monogram IHS within a circle of stiff-leaf foliage is carved in relief. The supporting

Rood Screens (Part 4)

We turn to the Warwick Bridge church again for its painted and gilded wooden rood screen whose style is Geometrical Decorated, reinforcing the feeling for organic growth that Pugin had invested in his designs for the building and the font. It is one of three surviving screens for his small two-compartment churches. The others—which we have already examined—are in St Peter's, Marlow, and St Paul's, Oatlands. The screen



The Warwick Bridge baptismal font (Image: Brian Andrews).

shaft is cylindrical with mouldings to its top and bottom and stands on a moulded square base with volutes to the corners somewhat after those on the bowl of the font in Stanstead Church, Essex.² There is a square plinth with chamfered upper edge.

The wooden font cover is octagonal with chamfered upper edge and the usual Pugin set of foliated metal fittings. To the west of the font a contiguous rectangular stone platform for the officiating priest completes the ensemble.

consists of four narrow bays on either side of an arched central opening with trefoiled spandrels. Each bay has a traceried head consisting of a trefoiled arch surmounted by a trefoil. The moulded cornice has a run of pellet mouldings set into its concave face. At the base of the screen below the bays is an open arcade of trefoil-headed arches. The screen gates are similarly treated.

On the screen's top rail there is a Calvary group comprising a crucifix with carved and polychromed figure flanked by St Mary on the left and St John on the right, with three brass candlesticks on either side. Unusually, the crucifix has concave braces instead of Pugin's customary convex ones. The arms of the cross are terminated by blind quatrefoils, each containing a diagonally-set square within which is a quatrefoil enclosing the first letter in Latin of one of the four Evangelists (M, M, L & I).³ The slender carved and polychromed figures of St Mary and St John stand on columns with moulded capitals, cluster column shafts and moulded octagonal bases.



*The Warwick Bridge rood screen
(Image: Brian Andrews).*

Footnotes

¹ Francis Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, OUP, 1908, p. 49. A new facsimile edition with some colour plates published by Waterstone, London, 1985. See also F.A. Paley, *Illustrations of Baptismal Fonts*, John Van Voorst, London, 1844.

² *ibid.*, p. 50.

³ Matthæus, Marcus, Lucas, Ioannes.

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 continue our examination of St Benedict's, Broadway, on the outskirts of Sydney's central business district.

St Benedict's, Broadway (Part 3)

Construction

As early as 1838 the Catholic residents of Chippendale, 'a small and unpretentious area of the city',¹ were worshipping in a small brick temporary chapel which doubled as a school on weekdays. Located on land granted in 1836 on the corner of Parramatta Street and Abercrombie Street, it lay between Cooper's Brisbane Distillery and Tooth's Kent Brewery with, immediately to its east 'in narrow little

streets running back from Parramatta Street,'² 'cramped and mean' housing 'occupied by labourers and poor people unable to afford housing closer to town'.³ The area was 'largely inhabited by the families of men who worked at the brewery'.⁴ Tiny cottages in other narrow lanes round about were described at the time as 'in a most wretched condition, so far as ventilation and cleanliness are concerned'.⁵

From these miserable tenements came the predominantly Irish worshippers, numbering some 220 regular attendees in 1840.⁶ By 1845 4,000 Catholics were recorded in the parish, and the temporary chapel could not hold all the Mass-goers with as many as seventy people being obliged to kneel outside.⁷ In January of that year Archbishop Polding wrote to the recent convert William Leigh of Leamington Spa, Gloucestershire, on the condition of the Catholic Church in Sydney. Noting that there were only two churches, St Mary's Cathedral and St Patrick's, plus the overcrowded Abercrombie Street school-chapel, to serve a Catholic population of about 14,000, he went on: 'Owing to the sad reverses in the Colony within the last two years, our means are very much crippled. ... We must, however, strive to build another church.'⁸ A little over six months later on 21 July he laid the foundation stone of this much-needed house of worship 'dedicated to Almighty God, in honour of St

Benedict'.⁹ Tenders had been called for the erection of the church in stone or brick in December 1843, less than a year after Pugin's plans had arrived in Sydney, but the slow, if generous, stream of donations meant that works could only get under way in the second half of 1845 with John Morris as builder.¹⁰

Work proceeded very slowly by day labour, but was sufficiently progressed by February 1850 for Polding's fellow Benedictine coadjutor Bishop Charles Henry Davis OSB, writing to a member of his former Downside Priory, Somerset, community to observe: 'We have here in Sydney a very beautiful little church early English (and pretty correct) dedicated to St. Benedict.'¹¹ In the previous month a peal of six bells for St Benedict's had arrived from the Whitechapel Road, London, bell foundry of C. & G. Mears,¹² but had to be stored in the St Mary's Cathedral yard until the tower was complete. On 12 December 1850 Archbishop

View from the corner of Parramatta and Abercrombie Streets, last quarter c.19 (Courtesy: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).





Liturgical east elevation, last quarter c.19 (Courtesy: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).

Polding consecrated the bells in the company of his brethren from St Mary's Monastery, Sydney, and a 'numerous concourse of people', the bells being then hoisted into place 'in the tower, amidst the cheers of the spectators'.¹³ This still-operating peal is the oldest on mainland Australia.¹⁴

The spire surmounting the tower was not completed until 8 December 1856,¹⁵ that work being executed under the superintendence of Diocesan Architect William Munro.¹⁶ 'It was the grandest thing in Chippendale and stood in stark contrast to the cottages of its Irish-descended parishioners nearby.'¹⁷

The church received four splendid carved stone statues for its tower pinnacle niches from the hands of the French Benedictine monk sculptor Fr Jean Gourbeillon OSB, a member of the St Mary's Cathedral-monastery

community whom Pugin had met in Paris, probably in 1844.¹⁸ One of the first four monks professed at Solesmes, France, for the Benedictine Congregation founded by Dom Guéranger, Gourbeillon was sent in 1841 to the Parisian priory of Saint-Germain.¹⁹ He was authorised to work in the atelier of Louis-Eugène Bion, a specialist in religious sculpture, which he did until late 1847 despite the closure of the priory at the end of 1845.²⁰

It was there, early in 1847, that he met Polding who broached the possibility of missionary work in Australia,²¹ although one suspects that the motive might have been strongly influenced by the thought of gaining a first-rate sculptor for works on St Mary's Cathedral and St Benedict's.²² At the end of 1847 Gourbeillon sailed for Sydney with Polding.

Fr Gourbeillon evidently enjoyed carving the

statues for St Benedict's and appreciated the building itself, writing about it in an 1857 letter to his father: 'We have just completed a charming church, whose spire is certainly worthy of our fine French monuments. The Gothic tower is of considerable elegance and constructed of ashlar; at each angle is a pinnacle five and one half feet high. I assure you that it has been a sweet consolation to me to carve this Australian stone and to produce the statues of our saints under this beautiful sky.'²³

Gourbeillon seems to have been profoundly affected by the qualities of Australian light, frequently referring to it in his letters home. His letter continued: 'The church is dedicated to St. Benedict, patriarch of our order. The four statues are: St. Benedict, St. Patrick, St. Scholastica, and our venerable

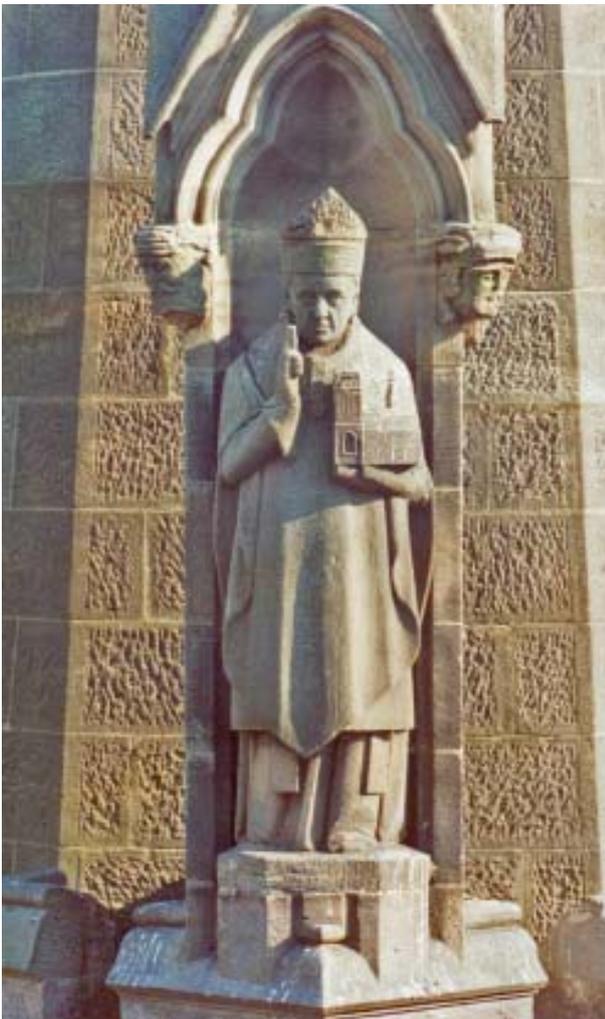


St Patrick by sculptor Fr Jean Gourbeillon OSB (Image: Chris Mc Guirk).

archbishop [Polding] in pontifical vestments, holding according to custom a small replica of the church itself. The church faces the finest and longest street in Sydney.'²⁴

Fr Gourbeillon's return to France in 1859 doubtless prevented St Patrick's eight other statue niches receiving figures, but he did carve a wonderful set of four symbols of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which surmount the principal pillars of the main entrance to the church in Abercrombie Street.

To be continued.



Archbishop Polding, holding a model of St Benedict's, by sculptor Fr Jean Gourbeillon OSB (Image: Chris Mc Guirk).



Gourbeillon's carved symbols of the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, on the Abercrombie Street gates (Image: Fr Don Richardson).

Footnotes

- ¹ Shirley Fitzgerald, *Chippendale: beneath the factory wall*, Hale & Iremonger Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1990, p. 9.
- ² *ibid.*, p. 25.
- ³ *ibid.*
- ⁴ *ibid.*, p. 28.
- ⁵ Evidence tendered to a select committee 'on the Condition of the Working Classes', 1859, p. 1315, quoted in Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
- ⁶ Source: www.stbenedicts.org.au/history/timeline.html.
- ⁷ *Morning Chronicle*, 27 May 1846, cited in www.stbenedicts.org.au/history/timeline.html.
- ⁸ Polding to Leigh, 7 January 1845, South Australian Catholic Archives.
- ⁹ *Dolman's Magazine*, January 1846, p. 98, quoted in Norbert Birt, *Benedictine Pioneers in Australia*, Herbert & Daniel, London, 1911, vol. II, p. 111.
- ¹⁰ 'When Catholics Build & Decorate: Historic St Benedict's, Sydney', *Catholic Freeman's Journal*, 3 October 1940, p. 4.
- ¹¹ Davis to Sweeney, 28 February 1850, Downside Abbey Archives, M.246. Davis had a discerning eye for correctness having obtained his episcopal metalwork and vestments from Hardmans and Lucy Powell (who made vestments to Pugin's designs) respectively.
- ¹² John D. Keating, *Bells in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, p. 78.
- ¹³ 'When Catholics Build', *op. cit.*, p. 5.
- ¹⁴ Keating, *loc. cit.*
- ¹⁵ 'When Catholics Build', *loc. cit.*
- ¹⁶ The builder to Pugin's plans of St Francis Xavier's, Berrima.
- ¹⁷ Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- ¹⁸ Edmund Moore's Journal, 1847–8, Downside Review, no. XXXII, December 1913, quoted in Terence J. Kavenagh, 'Polding and XIXth Century Monasticism', *Tjurunga: An Australasian Benedictine Review*, no. 8, December 1974, p. 178.
- ¹⁹ Roger Gazeau, 'Le Père Jehan de Solesmes, Bénédictin Français, Missionnaire en Australie', *Lettre de Ligugé*, no. 167, 1974–5, pp. 23–4.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 24.
- ²¹ *ibid.*, p. 25.
- ²² Polding hinted at such in a letter to Dom Guéranger dated 17 April 1847. See *The Letters of John Bede Polding OSB*, vol. 2: 1844–1860, Sisters of the Good Samaritan, Sydney, 1996, p. 83.
- ²³ Gazeau, *op. cit.*, p. 25 (Tr. Brian Andrews).
- ²⁴ *ibid.*

New Friends of Pugin

We welcome:

Mr Brian Doyle

Mrs Elizabeth and Dr David Daintree

Southbank, Victoria,

Camperdown, New South Wales

Our thanks to Cardinal George Pell and Mr Brian Doyle for their kind donations.