



A 'little cathedral' is restored

Category:

**AUSTRALIAN STONE
Best Restoration Project**

Architect: **Linda Babic, Heritas
Architecture, Newcastle NSW**

Designer: **John Colvin**

Builder/developer: **The Anglican
Parish of Muswellbrook NSW**

Stone Supplier: **Wollombi
Sandstone and Gosford
Quarries**

Installer: **Albert Kraan trading as
Wollombi Sandstone**

Stone used:

**Cross: Wollombi sandstone,
915 x 610 x 152 mm, carved.
Cornice and String Course
indents: Acrogem, Donnybrook
WA, 3.5 cubic metres, sawn and
profiled.**

St Alban's Church in Muswellbrook, NSW was designed by British architect Sir George Gilbert Scott, who never visited the site. The church was built in 1869 under the supervision of Edmund Blacket and John Horbury Hunt. Construction was carried out by James Black & Sons. The project took five years to complete, during which time James was said to have placed his hand on just about every stone in the building. As a result the church became known as his 'little cathedral'.

In 2013, stonemason Albert Kraan of Wollombi Sandstone was contracted to carry out repairs which were completed in two stages. The first stage involved the restoration and re-installation of the salvaged cross on the eastern elevation. Albert replicated the cross by cutting it from Wollombi sandstone and installing it on a new base on the apex. The original wrought iron dowels were replaced with 304 stainless steel dowels. It is evident that the original dowels rusted and expanded, causing the stone to crack and bow out.

The second phase involved replacement of sections of the string course and the entire cornice. The original Antienne sandstone was unavailable so Albert sourced Acrogem sandstone from Donnybrook, Western Australia, via Gosford Quarries. The stone exhibits similar colouring, fine graining and hardness. The mouldings were profiled and installed by Wollombi sandstone, working 16.5 metres above the ground. 

