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**ST Colman’s Cathedral Cobh TELFORD PIPE ORGAN RESTORATION PROJECT**

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ST Colman’s Cathedral Cobh
TELFORD PIPE ORGAN
RESTORATION PROJECT

A national treasure
Undoubtedly one of Telford’s largest and most prestigious organs

A monumental instrument, built on a grand scale

Of enormous significance and heritage value …
The most important surviving Telford instrument and the least altered

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Piero Ruffatti and Bishop O’Can with Adrian Gelbracht, Cathedral Carillonneur & Organist, and Dominic Finn, Cathedral Choirmaster. DENIS HYLAND PHOTOGRAPHY

www.burnsdesign.ie
THE CROWNING WORK OF THE SACRED EDIFICE

The organ of St Colman’s Cathedral was first installed in 1905. Aptly described in The Cork Examiner newspaper of July 21 of that year as: ‘the crowning work in the interior equipment of the sacred edifice’. This magnificent instrument was built by Telford & Telford, the world-famous firm of organ builders founded in Dublin in 1830 by William Telford (1809–1885) and which was subsequently taken over by his sons. There are many examples of Telford’s work all over Ireland and as far distant as Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and the Falkland Islands, but sadly very few are in the original condition and many have been altered almost beyond recognition. The Telford firm ceased trading in 1929.

The organ is located in the west gallery. The Austrian oak case, modeled in gothic tracery, rises to a height of 45 feet (14 metres) on either side. Filling the openings are 77 highly polished and burnished decorative pipes of pure tin. The actual organ pipes (there are some 2,500 of them) are placed behind the casework, together with the bellows and other mechanism. The motor and blower are located in a special room in the cathedral tower. The action of the organ was originally tubular pneumatic, but this was changed to electro pneumatic during a major rebuild in the early 1970’s. The console has three manuals and a pedal-board; there are 46 speaking stops, as well as combination stops and pistons. A second, almost identical, console is located in the south transept.

The need for the restoration of this historic Telford organ has been evident for some time. The years have taken their toll on this old master to the point that wood, metal and leather are in urgent need of the professional restorers’ skills. Pipes are not sounding. Deep dust has worked its way into every part of the instrument. Wind, once described by the legendary German organist Michael Praetorius (1571–1621) ‘as the soul of the organ’, is escaping at an alarming rate. Electrical and computer systems need to be upgraded. Finally, in May 2015, Bishop Crean of Cloyne formally signed the contract for the restauration of the organ.

Cobh Cathedral Organ Restoration with the firm of Fratelli Ruffatti of Padua, world specialists in organ restoration and who have recently completed a similar project at St Patrick’s National Seminary in Maynooth and also built the new organ for St Mel’s Cathedral in Longford. Work is to be completed by autumn 2018 in good time for celebrations marking the centenary of the Consecration of St Colman’s, scheduled to take place on the 24 August 2019. The restoration of the organ is essential for maintaining the high standards in liturgical music for which St Colman’s Cathedral has long been renowned.

RESTORING AN OLD MASTER

Most Rev. William Crean, Bishop of Cloyne, and Piero Ruffatti sign the contract for the organ restoration.  DENIS HYLAND PHOTOGRAPHY

A section of the workshops of Fratelli Ruffatti in Padua (Italy).

A section of the pipe-work. Deep dust has worked its way into every part of the instrument.

One of the three bellows of the organ. Wind leakage from these, and throughout the organ, mechanism has become a major problem.