



Replacement Pillar arrives and workmen begin to bring it into the Cathedral via the Crypt.



The replacement pillar is wheeled into the Crypt of the Cathedral manually.



One final push sees the Pillar in!



Pillar foundation stone being measured as workmen begin the process of setting it in place.



According to workmen the method used in the 1840-92s was not much different to how they worked in 2011.

# Trial Pillar Replacement

FRAN McNULTY

"Nobody has done this before" says Christy Hynes of Kelly Brothers Builders. The investigative works contract which he has been involved in has yielded a "fountain of knowledge". One of the familiar limestone columns has been removed, a replacement column has been installed. A quarry near Ballinasloe was selected as the location for the stone to be used, it was carved by stone masons in County Clare. The investigative work is critical and provides important information on how to proceed with restoring the Cathedral.

The new column is an exact replica. The investigative work revealed the true scale of the damage done to the pillars; the intense heat of the Christmas morning fire has badly damaged the stone and it is crumbling. All of the pillars will have to be replaced, that process alone will take over a year. Project Manager Niall Meagher says the work undertaken by Kelly Bros in the lead up to Christmas has been vital, "it has taught us the condition of the stone, how to remove the columns and more importantly how to install the new ones". Mr. Meagher says "we've learned a huge amount from the investigative works, they also provide a timeframe for the project, we now know that it will take up to fourteen months to replace the columns". Christy Hynes has been on site at the Cathedral throughout the investigative works, "the method used in the 1840's are not much different to what we've been doing for the past few weeks". The replacement column was wheeled into the crypt of the Cathedral manually and hoisted up using



The final piece is put in place as the Ionic Capital stone is lowered and secured.

a manual pulley system. It takes around thirteen weeks, for each pillar, from the time the stone is quarried to the point at which it is installed. The scale of that part of the project alone is breathtaking.

The 28 columns in St. Mel's Cathedral form a vital part of the building, not only in architectural terms, but also practically. They support the vast roof and also give the Cathedral its beautiful, renowned classical colonade.



Picture shows the replica pillar in place alongside fire damaged pillar.