

St. Saviour's at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Lyttelton



ST. SAVIOUR'S AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, LYTTELTON (C.T. TEMPLETON 2015)

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” is the opening phrase of Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities*. This is a tale of only one parish, but three names, three pipe organs, and a round trip journey of 300 kilometres. The parish dates its start from the arrival of the Canterbury Pilgrims in 1850, and there is some evidence that the first name of the parish was intended to be St. Thomas’s, as there is an early lectern size Book of Common Prayer (or Bible) in the Anglican Archives inscribed St. Thomas Lyttelton.¹ It was not until 1852, however, that the foundation stone was laid for the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, on 24 March. The building was designed by Benjamin W. Mountfort with the builder Isaac Luck.² The building was opened on the Feast of the Epiphany 6 January 1853. The fate of this building seemed to reflect that of the Canterbury Association (for whom their expectations and expenditure far exceeded their income - leading to its collapse). It was a combination of unseasoned timber and the limited knowledge of the power of the Canterbury winds which lead to the timber framed, brick noggin building being abandoned as unsafe early in 1854. It was dismantled in August 1857 by Isaac Luck and a stone building designed by George Mallinson opened on 10 April 1860.³ It was built of red porphyry, from the Sumner Road quarry, with quoins and window frames of Quail Island sandstone.

Purchasing an organ was first proposed at a church tea meeting on 15 April 1863⁴, and an organ from Gray & Davison was ordered and opened on 26 February 1865.⁵ This is a one manual and pedal instrument (job number 10189)⁶ and was installed in the north transept.

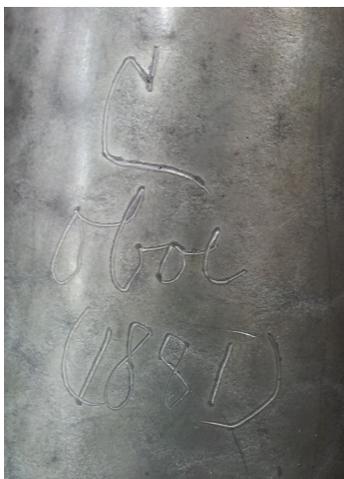
MANUAL			PEDAL	
Open Diapason	viii	TC	Bourdon	xvi
Stopped Diapason Bass	viii	CC-BB		
Clarinet Flute	viii	TC	Manual to Pedal	
Dulciana	viii	TC		
Principal	iv		Lever swell pedal	
Fifteenth	ii		Two composition pedals	

Compass: 54/25
Mechanical action

In 1883 there was a proposal to divide the parish and build a seafarers church in West Lyttelton.⁷ Plans were drawn up by Cyril J. Mountfort (son of B. W. Mountfort) in late 1883⁸ but it was not until June 1885 that tenders were called for the building of the new church. The tender of Messrs Sutton & Weastall, the local undertakers and builders was accepted on 5 August, and the building consecrated on 29 October 1885, with the name of St. Saviour's. The parish of West Lyttelton having been constituted as a separate parochial district a week earlier on 22 October.⁹ In 1887 St. Saviour's purchased a small one manual and pedal instrument from the Musical Wholesalers Milner & Thompson, who had commissioned the instrument from a local builder George Mace Sandford, and it was installed by his brother Frederick Sandford in July.¹⁰

MANUAL			PEDAL	
Open Diapason	8	TC	Bourdon	16 CCC-BBB
Stopped Bass	8	CC-BB		
Dulciana	8	TC	Mechanical action	
Principal	4	TC	Pedal permanently coupled	
Flute Bass	4	CC-BB	Enclosed except Open Diapason and Bourdon	

Back at Holy Trinity, things were ticking along. The Revd Canon Coates was vicar from 1891 until 1913. His previous occupation before taking the cloth was as an ecclesiastical architect, and he put his training to use in decorations and murals adorning the walls. He also designed the existing Holy Trinity altar and the memorial pulpit of St Saviour's for the 25th anniversary of the church. Holy Trinity was extensively renovated for the jubilee year in 1910.⁹ The organ was also worked on in 1912, with Herbert Brett of Christchurch adding an Oboe 8ft and a tremulant to the instrument. The case was also redecorated, being painted a dark brown and having the inscription repainted on the top case rail (in the singular rather than the plural!). As



FINCHAM OBOE (C.T. TEMPLETON 2014)

an aside, the Oboe used was second hand and from the marking on bottom C, it can be identified as of Fincham construction. The number 1881 may refer to a year, but an examination of the Fincham opus list yields no clues as to its provenance.

In 1920 a blower was donated by Mr and Mrs S. Tredennick for the instrument as a thank offering for the peace after the Great War.¹¹ This was installed in a pit behind the instrument. In 1938 it was agreed to re-unite the two parishes on a trial basis, and in 1946 the parish boundaries were divided again owing to changing demographics.

In 1964, the Diocese altered parish boundaries again, with East and West Lyttelton combined and the country churches amalgamating to form a separate parish.

A restoration programme for the Holy Trinity building was started at 120th anniversary in 1970 and completed in time for the 125th anniversary. With the amalgamation of the two parishes, the building of St. Saviour's was deemed redundant for the congregation, so on 5 October 1975 it was gifted to the Cathedral Grammar School in Christchurch.¹² It was dismantled into eight pieces and on the 22-23 January 1976 was taken over the Port Hills to be erected as the School Chapel on the corner of Park Terrace and Chester Street. There it was opened on 26 June 1976, with the seating in Collegiate style. The Sandford pipe organ went with it until 1981 when Cathedral Grammar was offered another instrument by the Cathedral Grammar School Old Boys' Association as a centennial gift. This instrument was a two-manual Gray & Davison / N.T. Pearce organ formerly in the Woolston Methodist Church. The Sandford was moved to the Church of the Epiphany in Hanmer.

Gray & Davison / N. T. Pearce – Gray & Davison job number 10791 ¹³

GREAT			PEDAL	
Open Diapason	8		Lieblich Bourdon	16
Hohl Flute	8			
Dulciana	8		COUPLERS	
Principal	4 *		Swell Octave	
			Swell to Great	
SWELL			Swell to Pedal	
Stopped Diapason & Clarabella	8		Great to Pedal	
Echo Gamba	8	TC		
Harmonic Flute	4	from Great*	Compass: 61/30	
Oboe	8		Mechanical action	

* Additions 1980 South Island Organ Company Ltd

In 1989, the Sandford organ that had been moved to Hanmer was purchased by the West Lyttelton Organ Preservation Trust, and loaned to the Lyttelton Museum, just a few kilometres from where it started its life.

The earthquakes of 2010-11 had a major effect on Holy Trinity (and the other two organs also). The building was damaged in the 4 September 2010 quakes with the transept wall behind the instrument requiring supporting bracing externally. The organ was covered with plastic sheeting (with the larger dummy front pipes taken down) in anticipation of work on the building creating a large amount of dust and debris. The 22 February 2011 quake further weakened the building, but it was still standing (as unauthorised entry by various members connected with the parish removed all portable fittings from the building into storage). The aftershocks of June 2011 destroyed the building, the red porphyry and mortar wall crumbling and the roof collapsing. The bracing at the north transept held up the roof sufficiently that the organ was damaged, but not squashed.

The organ was retrieved from the debris, with the roof being lifted off the case and it was found that the plastic sheeting had saved the organ from water damage over the previous months. There were some dislodged and damaged pipes on the soundboard, however the organ was found to be still playable. It was removed to Timaru, and restored by the South Island Organ Company Ltd, with the casework being taken back to its original timber and French polished. The 1912 inscription was carefully traced, then removed. The original 1864 inscription was still visible and a stencil was made of the inscription and it was then replicated. The two composition pedals that at some stage in the past had been removed were reconstructed.

However, there was still the problem in that there was no building in which the organ could be installed. Even before the earthquakes, the chapel at Cathedral Grammar was proving too small

for the increasing school roll. With the quakes, and foundational damage under the chapel, the school offered the Diocese of Christchurch the chapel for use elsewhere. The building was cut into 10 pieces and moved over the southern Gebbies Pass to Lyttelton in September 2013. The organ was removed into storage at SIOC, and is currently on the market.

The Cathedral Grammar building was placed on the old Holy Trinity location, the foundation stone being laid a month earlier by the Bishop of Christchurch on 18 August, and connected to the original Holy Trinity porch, the steeple and porch being the only parts of the second building to survive. The axis of the building was turned 180 degrees to make better use of the space liturgically. The building was consecrated on 7 June 2015, and taking the name St. Saviour's at Holy Trinity. With the reinstallation of the Gray & Davison to the parish, this makes the instrument the one with the longest continuous ownership and use in the South Island (if not New Zealand).



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After the February quakes, the Lyttelton Museum was badly damaged. The Sandford instrument was retrieved and spent some time in storage in the Wigram Museum before being removed to storage around Oamaru by the West Lyttelton Organ Preservation Trust.

- 1 Personal correspondence Jane Teal, Anglican Archivist, 9 February 2013
- 2 Lochhead, Ian, *A dream of spires; Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic Revival* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1999) pp. 68- 76
- 3 Cleaver, Captain John, *The story of a Pilgrim Parish; The Anglican Churches of Lyttelton 1850 - 1975* (1975) p. 19
- 4 *Papers Past - Lyttelton Times*, 18 April 1863, p.4
- 5 *Ibid.*, 28 February 1865, p. 4
- 6 Birmingham University, Special Collections - British Organ Archive, Gray & Davison shop book 07 p.086
- 7 Cleaver, *op.cit.*, p.20
- 8 Teal, Jane, 'Here, There, and back again', *Anglican Historical Society Newsletter*, 51, July 2013
- 9 Cleaver, *op.cit.*, p.21
- 10 *Press*, 27 July 1887, p.2
- 11 Cleaver, *op.cit.*, p.5
- 12 *Ibid.*, p.13
- 13 British Organ Archive, Gray & Davison Shop Book 15, p.115