

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Port Chalmers



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, PORT CHALMERS (PETER STOCKWELL 2016)

Holy Trinity Church was designed by R. A. Lawson and the foundation stone laid by Bishop Nevill on 7 June 1871.¹ The building, of Early Gothic design, is made of local Port Chalmers breccia. It was originally intended to have Oamaru limestone facings, however the 800ft of stone failed to arrive on time, and the contract was eventually cancelled.² The work was supervised by N.Y.A. Wales, and the building finally opened (after financial constraints) on 2 May 1874³ with a congregation of 300 filling the building. The plans were added to during construction, with a higher chancel arch and organ chamber proposed and agreed to in 1873. The internal stone walls were plastered until recent times when the plaster was removed. In the early 1900s the shingle roof was replaced with Marseilles tiles⁴ which were themselves replaced with long-run steel in 1987. The church was consecrated on 7 October 1907 when the debt on the building was paid off.⁵

The first musical instrument in the church was a harmonium, which was recognized as inadequate early on. The offer of an American organ was accepted, but less than a year later the seller was asked to remove it as it was not what it was represented to be, with the vestry having to face a series of repair bills.⁶ The old harmonium was put back into playing order and placed in the church. In 1882 the church appointed William Michael Angelo Jones as organist. The harmonium seems to have been having some problems, as in the divorce case bought by his wife in 1886 on the grounds of adultery, desertion, and cruelty - part of the testimony was "The day before he left he told her he was going to Port Chalmers to do some repairs to the church organ and also intended to play at a concert and ball there in the evening. He went away to Port Chalmers and did not return", having left the country, his wife, and his children for Melbourne in late 1882 or January 1883.⁷

In 1883 it would seem that a pipe organ was purchased for the church.⁸ In one church history book it is stated as being a one-manual instrument, however, a for sale notice in 1916 stated it is

a two-manual pipe organ.⁹ Further details are unknown. In 1884 the former church treasurer was taken to court over the proceeds of a concert for the organ fund, which he had banked and claimed to hold in his role as an organ fund trustee, rather than as the [former] treasurer.¹⁰



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In 1913 the church ordered a two-manual instrument from Jardine & Co., of Manchester - to be built under the supervision of F.J. Livesey, organist of St. Bees Priory, Cumberland.¹¹ The casework to be of fumed oak, French polished and the front pipes to be zinc - silvered in aluminium. The final cost was £531 13s 9d, and the organ was opus number 342. The organ was installed in 1916 by Chas. Begg & Co. and dedicated on 24 May 1916.¹² It wasn't until the end of February 1918 that F.J. Livesey received his commission of £23 from Jardine & Co.¹³ In 1951 an electric blower was installed, replacing the water engine, and also the centre aisle was created.¹⁴

In the early 1960s a rank of pipes was stolen from the organ. This was happening to a number of instruments throughout the South Island. From further comments in various correspondence to the South Island Organ Company it would seem that the rank that was stolen was the Contra Posaune. The police eventually recovered most of these.¹⁵ Edward Alden looked after the instrument until his death in 1961, when it was then looked after by Bert Hayman.¹⁶ There is

some mention of a parishioner recollecting seeing Alden doing some major work on the instrument and being impressed with the amount of material coming out of the organ.¹⁶

During the 1960s an organbuilder Van Delden got a contract to dismantle the organ and rebuild it on the west wall. Owing to unsatisfactory and slow work on the instrument, an appeal to the Vestry by local organ enthusiasts Les. Kennedy and Fred. Gillies on the unsuitability of the organ being placed on an extremely damp west wall, and a report to the vestry meeting of 27 August 1967 that the organbuilder was “out of circulation” - the contract was cancelled.^{17, 18, 19}

When the Revd Frank Glass arrived in the parish on 29 February 1968, there were pieces of the instrument lying throughout the church, vestry, and the former church hall. These were assembled in the hall and a new contract drawn up with Van Delden (including a penalty clause if the work was not completed satisfactorily or on time). Most of the work was done by the enthusiasts Messrs Kennedy and Gillies. In 1969 Van Delden left the district, later sending a sum of money to settle the contract. Before Mr Gillies retired to Waimate, both he and Kennedy had managed to reinstate the Great and Swell to working condition. The damaged pipework was sent to Jim Ewans of Nelson for repair, and he also replaced the three missing pipes.^{20, 21}

In 1981, the new vicar of the church the Revd A.G. Hughes applied for and received a grant from the McMillan Trust of Dunedin which covered the cost of the Pedal Bourdon chest and ventil being overhauled by the SIOC. Mark Hughes²² (son of the incumbent) also assisted in putting parts of the organ together. This including the installing and adjustment of the Swell box front and mechanism, repairing and installing the tremulant, and repairing the ventil and tubing of the Pedal Open Diapason chest.²³ By 1993 the rubberised canvas cloth covering the pneumatic motors on the Swell action were hardening and causing the action to become sluggish, but it was not until 2014 that work was done to replace them. During this work it was found that the steel parts of the organ especially were corroding from the damp environment, and the leather work was deteriorating at an advanced rate.

GREAT		COUPLERS
Contra Salicional	16	Swell to Great
Open Diapason	8	Swell Super Octave
Stopped Diapason	8	Swell to Pedal
Principal	4	Great to Pedal
Fifteenth	2	
SWELL		Two composition pedals to Great
Clarabella	8	Two composition pedals to Swell
Viola	8	Balanced Swell Pedal
Lieblich Flute	4	
Dulciana Mixture 15.19.22 III		
Contra Posaune	16	Compass: 61/30
PEDAL		Great action – mechanical;
Open Diapason	16	Swell - pneumatic lever;
Bourdon	16	Pedal – tubular-pneumatic

The organ is the only Jardine organ in New Zealand and only one of four listed on the BIOS National Pipe Organ Register as being exported.²⁴ The terms agreed to for the payment were “very unusual” and were agreed to as a personal courtesy to Livesey, and in hope of other work coming from New Zealand.²⁵ The terms being £100 with the order and the rest to be paid in instalments within two years on 5% interest.

It is the only New Zealand organ mentioned in Cecil Clutton and George Dixon’s work *The*

Organ; Its Tonal Structure and Registration and William Leslie Sumner's book *The Organ, Its Evolution, Principles of Construction and Use*, where the specification is given in an appendix of examples of tonal design.²⁶

- 1 Church, Ian, *What Mean These Stones; the story of the Port Chalmers Quarries and Building Stones*. (Port Chalmers: Port Chalmers Early Settlers and Historical Society in conjunction with the Port Chalmers and District Lion Club, 2001), p.12
- 2 Lloyd, Evelyn E., *Safe Harbour; Holy Trinity Church 1874 - 1994*. (Dunedin: Evelyn E. Lloyd & Holy Trinity Church Port Chalmers, 1994), p.7
- 3 Knight, Hardwicke, *Church Buildings in Otago*. (Dunedin: University of Otago, 1993), p.238
- 4 Lloyd, op.cit., p.15
- 5 Hamilton, Derek & Judith, *Early Churches in and around Dunedin*. (Christchurch: Judith and Derek Hamilton, 2009), p.65
- 6 Lloyd, op. cit., p.12
- 7 *Papers Past - Evening Post*, 8 May 1886. For the whole sordid story of an organist gone bad see Templeton, C. T. 'A poem with a tale', *New Zealand Organ News*, vol. 51, no. 1, pp.41-3
- 8 A big thank you to Robert McLintock for pointing out this first pipe organ and his notes on the church and instruments in general
- 9 *Papers Past - Otago Daily Times*, 11 March 1916, p.10
- 10 Ibid., 26 February 1884, p.4
- 11 Ibid., 16 April 1913, p.2
- 12 *Papers Past - Evening Star*, 25 May 1916
- 13 Birmingham University, Special Collection - British Organ Archives, Jardine contracts, box 463
- 14 Lloyd, op.cit., p.26
- 15 Ibid., p.29
- 16 SIOC Archives: Holy Trinity Port Chalmers, correspondence L.J. Kennedy to SIOC, 5 March 1986.
- 17 Lloyd, op. cit., p.29
- 18 McLintock, Robert, personal notes 2016
- 19 Templeton, C. T. , personal recollection. When tuning the instrument in the late 1990s the organ chamber was lined with transparent plastic building film that showed moisture running down the outside of the plastic.
- 20 Lloyd, op. cit., p.32
- 21 Jim Ewans was a semi-retired pipe maker who had emigrated from the UK and had trained with Hill, Norman & Beard
- 22 Now current president of the Otago Southland Organists' Association
- 22 SIOC Archives, Holy Trinity Port Chalmers, correspondence, Rev. G. Hughes to SIOC, 8 December 1982
- 24 According to the British Organ Archives search engines, the other three instruments were: Loretto Convent, Bray, Ireland 1901 #190; St. Mark's, Vancouver, Canada 1915 #305; Colonial Church, Lagos, Nigeria 1929 #901, and exported pipework to Ireland and South Africa for use by local firms in 1950 - 52 In Australia there is a Kirtland & Jardine organ of 1864 now at St Luke's Anglican Church, Deakin, ACT and another thought to be from this firm at Our Lady of Mt Carmel, Wentworthville, that came from a Baptist Church in Gorton, Manchester.
- 25 Birmingham University, Special Collection - British Organ Archives, Jardine Contracts, box 463 Correspondence 24 January 1913 & 27 January 1913
- 26 Although the authors wrongly place the organ in Wellington, not Port Chalmers, and has used an earlier proposed specification which was slightly altered for the final contract