

St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Maheno

The present Arts and Crafts style church building is the second one dedicated to St. Andrew on the site. The first wooden building required replacing after the white pine linings had been infested with borer. One of the congregation, Colonel Joseph Cowie Nichols (who owned the Kuriheka estate) had lost two of his three surviving sons, a brother and a nephew in the first World War. He had been setting aside wool surplus money since the War with the aim of a new church in mind, but the project was spurred on by two things. The first was St. Paul's Anglican Church, Tai Tapu (south of Christchurch), built in 1930, commissioned by his friend Sir Robert Heaton Rhodes in memory of his wife Lady Jessie Rhodes. The second was ongoing encouragement and a £2,000 cheque from his youngest brother Cyril Nichols.¹



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, MAHENO (C. T. TEMPLETON 2015)

The same architect was used at Maheno as for the Tai Tapu church - Cecil Walter Wood (1878 - 1947) - best known for his design of St. Paul's Cathedral, Wellington. The specification cites Richard Strachan de Renzy Harman (1896 - 1953) as 'associated architect', and it was Harman who was "to be solely in charge during the course of the erection".² Harman's first full church project was Church of the Good Shepherd in Tekapo, and his last church and only Cathedral was the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Napier (completed posthumously by the Napier firm of Malcolm & Sweet).³ Harman & Woods were both trained in the arts and crafts school of architecture (and had briefly been in partnership).

The builder of the church was the Dunedin firm of W. McLellan & Co, with William McLellan having recently finished the Cathedral of St. Paul's in Dunedin (which also has an early Nichol family connection - both the pulpit and two stained glass windows being donated by the family).⁴ The foundation stone was laid on 30 April 1938 "In honour of those who having served now rest in God's keeping".



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, MAHENO – CONSOLE TO THE RIGHT (C. T. TEMPLETON 2016)

The carving inside the church was by Frederick Gurnsey (1868 - 1953) whose work can be found in churches around New Zealand, (Church of the Good Shepherd, Tekapo, St. Paul's, Tai Tapu, St. Mary's Timaru, Christ Church Cathedral Christchurch. The building work cost £5,868, with the Colonel being responsible for delivery of all materials to the site, and supplying the stained glass windows, organ, bell, and all extras unspecified in the contract. This would include the architects' fee and Gurnsey's carving also - some suggest that it was as much as the building price itself.⁵

The organ, placed in a chamber in the tower, was based on the Hill, Norman & Beard (Australia) instrument in St. Paul's, Tai Tapu and was built by Herbert Brett of Christchurch. Brett had a

family connection in that Colonel Nichols' remaining son Arthur Cowie Nichols was building a instrument in his house on the family estate and had engaged Brett to build a Swell and Choir soundboard for him. The St. Andrew's oak console was made in Germany - according to the recent church history⁶ - and as Arthur Nichols had used August Laukhuff to supply his console and carillon it may be that the console is from that supplier. However, given the amount of Gurnsey's work on the console, it may be that the claim is erroneous as the carving implies that work at least was done in New Zealand.



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, MAHENO - CONSOLE (C. T. TEMPLETON 2015)

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----|--|----|
| GREAT | | PEDAL | |
| Melodic Bass | 16 | Lieblich Bourdon | 16 |
| Spare ventil | * | Bass Flute | 8 |
| Open Diapason | 8 | | |
| Hohl Flute | 8 | COUPLERS | |
| Dulciana | 8 | Sub Octave 8 ft | |
| Lieblich Flute | 4 | Sup Octave 4 ft | |
| | | Great to Pedal | |
| Compass: 61/30 | | Three thumb pistons | |
| Electro-pneumatic action | | Balanced electro-pneumatic Swell Pedal | |

* The spare ventil now has a Principal 4 rank installed by the New Zealand Organ Manufactory.⁷

The organ was installed in time for the consecration of the building on 16 December 1939.⁸ The original wooden church was moved after the second world War to the Kurehika estate to be used as a saw mill.

The action was overhauled by the New Zealand Organ Manufactory in 2000 following a short circuit in the console which burnt out some of the cabling.

- 1 McKenzie, Dorothy & Smyth, Ferne, *St. Andrew's Church; The story of St. Andrew's Church, Maheno, North Otago* (Maheno: St Andrew's Church, 2014)
- 2 School of Fine Arts Gallery, University of Canterbury, *Arts and Crafts Churches of Canterbury*, (Christchurch, 1996), p.4
- 3 Grant, S. W., *The Resurrection and the Life; A Centennial History of the Cathedrals of St John the Evangelist 1886–1986 Diocese of Waiapu, Napier, New Zealand*. (Napier: The Dean and Vestry of the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, 1986), p. 24
- 4 McKenzie & Smyth, op.cit, p.11
- 5 Ibid., p.17
- 6 Ibid, p.31
- 7 Personal comment, Dr. R. Newton, 30 September 2016
- 8 Knight, Hardwicke, *Church Buildings in Otago* (Dunedin: the author, 1993)