

Residence of David Burchell, Mt Cargill Rebuilt Positive organ

*This instrument started life as Positive Organ Company opus no 1022 of 1922, and was formerly used at Dundas Street Primitive Methodist Chapel in Dunedin where it was dedicated in 1929. After closure of this church in 1975, the organ was moved to Broad Bay Methodist Church, on Otago Peninsula, which in turn closed in 2014. David Burchell obtained it in February 2015 and has modified it to create a movable instrument for continuo use.

The original specification was:

MANUAL

[Bourdon]	16	CC - B extension of Stopped Diapason [stop-label is missing]
Open Diapason	8	TF, gvd.bass
Stopped Diapason	8	Common stopped wooden bass C - e
Viol	8	TF
Melodic Viol	8	c' - a''' derived
Octave coupler		
Tremulant		

Compass: C - a'''

Transposing keyboard, a semitone either way.

Stopped Diapason treble and Viol in swell box

Blowing by foot pedals (harmonium-style)

An electric blower was later added, and the ends of the case removed.

The kernel of this instrument was a three-stop mechanical slider chest. The trebles of the Stopped and Open Diapasons, and c' - e' of the stopped bass, received their wind direct. The other stops had an ingenious pneumatic action driven from the pallet-grooves; the Viol was mounted above the main chest at the back, but the bottom two octaves of stopped pipes stood on a separate chest on the floor behind. On the Bourdon, only the lowest note being played sounded; conversely, with the Melodic Viol drawn, the highest note was soloed out, the remaining notes sounding only on either or both Diapasons. The Viol could also be used in conventional fashion with all notes sounding. The octave coupler operated through a miniature roller-board which lay directly beneath the keyboard.

Whilst ingenious, this was physically a rather cumbersome arrangement. In order to make the instrument suitable for its new use it has been stripped back to a basic three-stop mechanical-action instrument.

The blowing-pedals have been removed, though the feeder bellows are still in place. The electric blower now sits under the centre of the reservoir, and is detachable. The wind-control box was remodelled to fit within the dimensions of the case. The internal frame has been cut horizontally in two, and the pipe-chest and key action form one section which lifts off the lower portion consisting of reservoir and wind-control. The keyboard was already removable. The case-front has been modified so as to be readily dismantled, and fabric screens made to enclose the ends of the instrument, and to fill the triangular panel above the display pipes, which had lost its infill.

The swell box and tremulant were dispensed with, as was the Viol and its associated action, as it was of a rather edgy character, inappropriate for the repertoire which the instrument was now likely to be used for. The bottom octave of the Bourdon was also removed, and the chest and

action associated with it. The 8ft octave is now fed directly from the main chest. New sliders, upperboards and rackboards were made and the Stopped Diapason moved to the slider previously used for the Viol. At the time of writing the organ awaits the installation of a 4ft Principal rank on the empty slider.

Both Stopped and Open Diapason were re-regulated for a fuller tone in the middle range and a brighter treble. The octave coupler was removed, being incompatible with the revised voicing character.

The specification now is:

MANUAL

Open Diapason	8	TF
Stopped Diapason	8	TF
Stopped Bass	8	C-e
Principal	4	prepared for

C – a''' transposing keyboard, a semitone either way

With the keyboard at A=440, the Stopped Bass pipes may be re-planted to give a renaissance-style 'short octave' C D E F G A Bb B, with C played from the 'E' key, D from the 'F#' and E from the 'G#'.

For use at A=415, the BB pipe of the Bourdon has been retained and is substituted for the C; as this then plays from the C# key and the C key is silent, a link is attached to join the C and C# keys; no C# is available. Packing-cases have been made for the pipework which stack on top of the bellows module for transport.

- Article by David Burchell