

Sacred Heart Catholic Church Timaru

The first church of the Sacred Heart was opened on 25 October 1874.¹ It was designed by the first parish priest, Fr Chataigner, Gothic in style and cruciform in plan, and built by Mr J. Derby.² The design was of a timber building with three foot high blue stone foundations, a 60 foot steeple, stained glass windows and equipped with a harmonium. It was enlarged in 1876 to the design of B.W. Mountfort,³ and reopened by Bishop Redwood on 24 June 1877.⁴ The enlarged building had a rose window placed in the sanctuary, the ceiling was painted sky blue with bright gilt stars; there were also choir stalls placed each side of the sanctuary.

In 1893 funds were raised for purchase of a pipe organ, and one was purchased from St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Sydney. Miss Eliza McGuinness, who had presided at the harmonium for the previous nine months, travelled to Sydney for two months to receive lessons from Mons. Wiegand on playing the pipe organ. The organ was duly shipped to Timaru and erected in the south transept. The inaugural recital was given by Miss McGuinness on 28 February 1894.⁵

By the end of 1903, moves were well underway to fund raise for a larger place of worship. The existing building was upgraded, and in December 1907 had electric lighting used for the first time.⁶ In the early hours of 7 September 1908 a fire broke out in the Sacristy, and the building was only saved by the quick turnout of the fire brigade. All the vestments were lost and "the church organ was somewhat damaged, but chiefly through water."⁷ The sacristy's contents were valued at £300, with another £100 damage to the building.



SACRED HEART BASILICA, TIMARU (C.T. TEMPLETON 2016)

While the building was being repaired, a new church was being designed by the architect

Francis Petre in a large cruciform basilica design, with Ionic portico, two cupola towers flanking the entrance, and a central dome. Most reports and indeed local histories and a thesis on Petre mention that the parish priest at the time (Father Tubman) on learning the cost of the building as designed, insisted on design changes that Petre was so upset about that he sold the plans to Tubman and withdrew from the project altogether.

However, Seán Brosnahan in his excellent 2011 book on the Parish (chapter eight) - using sources including the original plans held in the South Canterbury Museum - shows that Petre was quite willing to cost out and plan the construction in two stages, and it was the insistence of Bishop Grimes to Father Tubman that had the building constructed in one stage to the final plans. It would seem that Tubman's plan 'B' on saving expenses was to take over the role of project manager - a role that Petre would usually have taken (and been paid for). With Petre being sidelined (and probably the basis of the future reports about Petre's bitterness towards the project), Tubman used Bart Moriarty, a building surveyor as his day-to-day clerk of works (who later designed a number of churches in Melbourne and Sydney).

Tenders were called in November 1909 and the foundation stone unveiled on 6 February 1910. It was intended that the original church be still used until the Basilica was built, and then used as the parish hall, but on 6 April 1910 the wooden church was burnt to the ground. The newspaper report the following day mentions "amongst other things that have been wholly destroyed or hopelessly ruined are part of the old organ".⁸ It will be seen later that the organ was in the process of being reinstalled after repair from the previous fire, as the majority of the pipework was not in the building.

With the congregation using the schoolrooms as their place of worship, volunteer and day labour on the new church building enabled the cost to be kept low and the new Church of the Sacred Heart was opened on 1 October 1911 with all four New Zealand Bishops present. One person who wasn't present was Petre, indeed he hardly received a mention in the proceedings - even though Fr Tubman vainly tried acknowledging him. With Fr Tubman also being made a Dean, Petre was overlooked in all the celebrations. The final cost of the building was £23,000.

The marble altar was installed in 1912 at a cost of over £1,000. Marble altar rails and brass gate were added in 1936 for the church silver jubilee. A fire in the boy's sacristy on 16 August 1934 had the potential to repeat history, but fortunately it was 1908 all over again and not 1910.

Liturgical changes after the Second Vatican Council saw the changes to the sanctuary that were opened on 19 February 1982, after a fortnight's closure. The sanctuary steps were projected in a semi-circle, entailing the removal of some pews and the rails and gate. Some of the altar rails and the gate were reused at the baptistery, and the sections that were not used are stored under the extended section of the steps - so that the changes made could be reversed.⁹

In 1993 fundraising was started on a major project of restoration of the building and windows. Exterior paint that was applied in the 1960s was stripped off, and the windows and lead were repaired and waterproofed. The work was finished in April 1997.¹⁰

For those of you from Sydney and are familiar with the churches in the suburb of Paddington - you may be experiencing some *déjà vu*. The Church of St. Francis of Assisi was commissioned from Lush & Moriarty Architects in 1915. The same Moriarty who five years before was the clerk of works at Sacred Heart, Timaru. In the end, only the sanctuary, transepts, and sacristies were built on to the nave of the 1889 St Francis building.

The first organ was built by Gray & Davison for St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Sydney in 1847¹¹ and installed in St. Patrick's and used for the first time for a Solemn High Mass on Sunday 21 January 1849.¹²

The specification of the instrument was:

GREAT			SWELL from TC		
Open Diapason	8		Open Diapason	8	
Stopped Diapason Bass	8	1-12	Stopped Diapason	8	
Dulciana	8	common bass	Principal	4	
Clarionet Flute	8	TC	Fifteenth	2	
Principal	4		Cornopean	8	
Twelfth	2 $\frac{2}{3}$				
Fifteenth	2		PEDAL		
Sesquialtra	3 ranks		Grand Open Diapason 16		
Trumpet	8		COUPLERS		
			Great to Pedal		
			Swell to Great		
Compass: 54/42/27					
Mechanical action					

In 1892 the new organist Auguste Wiegand had the instrument renovated and tonally modified. The work was done by William Wood, at a cost of £160. The Great was enclosed, additions and alterations included a Vox Celeste 8, Bombarde 16, Vox Humana 8, Trumpet 8, two Piccolos 2, Swell tremulant, new pedal mechanism. The additional reed ranks were by Fincham, the voicer at the time being Arthur Hobday.^{13, 14, 15}

GREAT - under expression			SWELL - from TC		
Open Diapason	8		Open Diapason	8	
Stopped Diapason Bass	8	1-12	Stopped Diapason	8	
Dulciana	8	common bass	Vox Celeste	8	*
Clarionet Flute	8	TC	Principal	4	
Principal	4		Piccolo	2	*
Twelfth	2 $\frac{2}{3}$		Bombarde	16	*
Piccolo	2	*	Cornopean	8	
Sesquialtra	3 ranks		Vox Humana	8	*
Trumpet	8	*	Tremulant		
PEDAL - CCC - D			COUPLERS		
Grand Open Diapason 16			Great to Pedal		
			Swell to Great		

Compass: 56? / 44? / 30?

Action: Mechanical

*Wood additions (or revoicing).

Less than a year later a new organ was ordered from Chas. Annessens et Fils of Belgium, and the Gray & Davison was sold to Sacred Heart, Timaru.¹⁶ The organ was erected in the south transept of Sacred Heart, and opened on 28 February 1894.

On 7 September 1908, the organ was water damaged from a fire in the sacristy, and so inspected for damage by Alfred H. Hathaway (a local organbuilder).¹⁷ The instrument must have been removed for repairs as when the fire of 6 April 1910 destroyed the building to the ground, it was stated that "Among the things that have been wholly destroyed or hopelessly ruined are part of the old organ."

A new organ was designed and constructed by Arthur Hobday [& Sons] of Wellington. This instrument incorporated the pipework that had not been installed in the destroyed building.

The organ is a two manual and pedal with tubular-pneumatic action and with a choir manual prepared for on the detached console (although where the choir division was going to be built is a mystery given the lack of space in the instrument!). The casework is walnut and the console of English quartered oak. The front pipes have an aluminium finish which slightly obscures an inscription at the back of the Open Diapason bottom C pipe which has the date of either 1846 or 1840.¹⁸ This makes the pipework the oldest in the South Island.¹⁹ The original blowing mechanism was a Fritz hydraulic motor, reservoir, and feeders, installed in a blower house beside the Baptistry Tower.

Arthur A. Hobday, son of Arthur Hobday installed the organ, voicing the ranks on a small voicing chest that was brought down from Wellington. The 33 tons of organ was shipped on the SS Corinna, which made a special trip with the cargo, arriving on 4 October 1912, and the erection was started on 7 October, under the supervision of Arthur A. Hobday. Arthur Hobday (snr) sadly died by his own hand on 11 October, two months after the death of his wife (who passed away after a long illness).²⁰

A newspaper article in the *Timaru Post*²¹ has the most fantastic description of the instrument that I have ever come across, in that it gives the specifications and also what the origin of the ranks were and what were done to them. The old pipes were described as being made "Of thin and poor metal, had to be brought up to the heavy and sonorous tones of the new and heavy pipes."

GREAT

Gedackt	16	(old, transposed and revoiced, lowest octaves new)
Open Diapason 1	8	(new)
Open Diapason 2	8	(old pipes revoiced)
Hohl Flute	8	(new)
Dulciana	8	(old pipes revoiced, 12 new ones added)
Octave	4	(partly new)
Flute	4	(revoiced and transposed)
Quint	2 $\frac{2}{3}$	(part new, old part transposed and revoiced)
Fifteenth	2	(new)
Posaune	8	(new)
Clarion	4	(old, transposed and revoiced - made from the old Trumpet)

SWELL

Double Diapason	16	(prepared for)
Open Diapason	8	(old, transposed and new bass added)
Stopped Diapason	8	(old, revoiced)
Viole de Gamba	8	(new)
Voix Celeste	8	(new) TC
Principal	4	(old, revoiced, and transposed)
Flautina	2	(part new, part made out of old Fifteenth and revoiced)
Horn	8	(new)
Oboe	8	(new)
Vox Humana	8	(old, revoiced)
Tremulant		

PEDAL

Grand Open Diapason	16	(new)
Bourdon	16	(new) A
Bass Flute	8	(new) A

COUPLERS

Swell to Great
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal
Swell to Great Sub-Octave
Swell to Great Super-Octave
Choir to Pedal (prepared for)

In 1986 the South Island Organ Company restored the instrument (with the addition of three stops, two couplers and springs fitted to some of the action valves to improve the action response).

GREAT

Gedackt	16	G&D, H
Open Diapason 1	8	P
Open Diapason 2	8	G&D
Hohl Flute	8	H
Dulciana	8	G&D, P
Octave	4	G&D, P
Flute	4	G&D
Quint	2 $\frac{2}{3}$	G&D, P
Fifteenth	2	P
Mixture	III	SIOC
Posaune	8	P
Clarion	4	F

SWELL

Open Diapason	8	G&D
Stopped Diapason	8	G&D
Viola da Gamba	8	P
Voix Celeste	8	TC P
Principal	4	G&D
Flautina	2	G&D, P
Mixture	III	SIOC
Horn	8	P
Oboe	8	P
Vox Humana	8	F
Tremulant		

PEDAL

Grand Open Diapason	16		H
Bourdon	16	A	H
Bass Flute	8	A	H
Trombone	16		SIOC

COUPLERS

Swell to Great
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal
Swell to Great Sub-Octave
Swell to Great Super Octave
Choir to Pedal (prepared for)

3 Swell composition pedals

3 Great & Pedal composition pedals

Balanced Swell pedal

Three Great thumb pistons

Three Swell thumb pistons

Pipe sources:

F - Fincham

G&D - Gray & Davison

H - Hobday

P - Palmer

SIOC - South Island Organ Company Ltd



SACRED HEART BASILICA, TIMARU (C. T. TEMPLETON 2016)

- 1 *Timaru Herald*, 20 Nov. 1874
- 2 Brosnahan, Seán., *Thinking about heaven, a history of Sacred Heart parish, Timaru.* (Timaru: The Sacred Heart Basilica Centenary Book Committee, 2011), p. 23
- 3 Lochhead, Ian, *A Dream of Spires: Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic Revival* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1999), p. 319
- 4 Harper, Barbara., *The Harvest; History of the Catholic Church in Timaru 1869 - 1969* (Timaru: The Centennial Committee, 1969), p.38
- 5 *Timaru Herald*, 24 February 1894
- 6 Harper, op.cit., p.74
- 7 *Timaru Post*, 7 September 1908
- 8 *Timaru Herald*, 7 April 1910, p.7
- 9 Brosnahan, op.cit., p.295
- 10 Ibid., p.308
- 11 Birmingham University Special Collection - British Organ Archive - Gray & Davison Shop Book 3, p.19
- 12 *Trove - Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January 1849, p.3

- 13 Ibid., 8 August 1892, p.7
- 14 Rushworth, Graeme D., *Historic Organs of New South Wales*, (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1989), p.253
- 15 Fincham Letterbooks VIII, p.147 [as quoted in Newton, R. G. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A Documentation of Cultural Context* (doctoral thesis - University of Canterbury, 1996), p.1190] have the following being ordered by Wiegand: Double Trumpet 16ft 44 pipes, Cornopean 8ft 44 pipes, Vox Humana 8ft 44 pipes. This would indicate that the Swell Compass is still Tenor C but has had two notes added to bring the compass up to g56.
- 16 Rushworth, op.cit., p.254
- 17 *Timaru Herald*, 8 September 1908, p.5
- 18 C.T. Templeton - personal observation
- 19 That is - if the 1840 Otakou Marae barrel organ doesn't turn up somewhere.
The 10 oldest instruments / pipework in New Zealand are:
 - 1) 1712 Harris? or 1769 Snetzler?, St Mark's Church, Te Aroha
 - 2) 1779 Avery, Ponsonby Baptist Church
 - 3) 1799 Fuzelli barrel organ, Devonport Museum
 - 4) 1829 Buckingham, Wanganui Museum
 - 5) c.1834 Bates barrel organ, Napier
 - 6) 1847 Gray & Davison pipework, Sacred Heart Church, Timaru
 - 7) c.1847 Bishop & Starr, storage - Wellington Anglican Cathedral of St. Paul's
 - 8) 1850 Banfield, storage - Timaru
 - 9) 1850 Bryceson barrel organ, Toitu Otago Settlers Museum
 - 10) 1845-50 Webster, Auckland War Memorial Museum
- 20 *Timaru Herald*, 12 October 1912, p.5
- 21 *Timaru Post*, 25 November 1912