

Bank Street Wesleyan Methodist Church, Timaru



BANK STREET WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH, TIMARU (C.T. TEMPLETON 2009)

Methodist services in Timaru started in 1863 with the first minister being appointed in 1865. A wooden church was soon started on 10 August 1865 on a Bank Street section donated by the Rhodes Brothers. It was opened in October 1866, and enlarged two years later. By 1874, a newer larger building was needed and the foundation stone for this building was laid on 28 October 1874 and opened on the 21 March 1875. The gothic style building is constructed of Timaru bluestone (basalt) with cement dressings, and was designed by F. J. Wilson and the builder Mr S. Harding.¹ Even then, the new building proved too small and in 1890 was enlarged further from seating 300 people to 440.² In 1930, the tower and choir vestries were built. For the centenary in 1965, the building was renovated and the seating re-arranged to provide one central aisle, rather than two separate aisles. In 1992, the Bank Street congregation amalgamated with the Woodlands Road congregation and the building was sold to the South Canterbury Funeral Services, with one of the vestries being converted into an embalming room.

The first pipe organ installed in the Wesleyan Church was built by a local organbuilder Alfred Henry Hathaway. This was used for the first time in a service on 17 November 1901.³ It is unclear if this was Hathaway's first or second instrument as there is mention of an organ he made with paper pipes being on display in the Begg & Co music saloon in 1890.⁴ The Bank Street organ specification was:

MANUAL		PEDAL	
Open Diapason	8	Bourdon	16
Lieblich Gedact	8	(prepared for at opening, added later)	
Salicional	8		
Octave	4	Pedal pulldowns	

Tubular-pneumatic action, high pressure reservoir built inside the main reservoir.

The Hathaway instrument was moved in 1913 to the Woodlands Road Methodist church and in 1925 went to the Nicholls residence in Kurihika.



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In 1913, a new instrument was erected in the building. This was installed by Nicholas Thomas Pearce although it would appear that most of the instrument was built by the Walsall firm of

Nicholson & Lord, job number 746. The *Timaru Herald* article⁵ states that the action, soundboards, wind ducts, and pipework came from England. However, since the Swell reed stay has the Nicholson & Lord job number inked on it, that would show that the organ was erected in the factory to the extent that the Oboe pipes could have their stay hooks soldered on them in position. And with the front pipe blocks having pneumatic action, this indicates that the oak casework is most probably made by Nicholson & Lord also. The only things that can be conclusively identified as being Pearce's are the bellows weights and the zinc trunking for the tremulant.

The specification is:

GREAT		SWELL	
Open Diapason	8	Viol Diapason	8
Claribel Flute	8	Rohr Flute	8
Dulciana	8	Gamba	8
Principal	4	Voix Celeste	8
prepared for - probably a Wald Flute 4		Suabe Flute	4
		Oboe	8
		Tremulant	
COUPLERS		PEDAL	
Swell to Great		Bourdon Major	16
Swell to Pedal		Bourdon Dolce	16
Great to Pedal			

Compass: 58/30

Two composition pedals to Great

Two composition pedals to Swell

It would seem that the instrument has remained untouched without any major work since the time it was installed.

- 1 *Timaru Herald*, 24 March 1875, p.3
- 2 Morley, Rev. William, *The History of Methodism in New Zealand* (Wellington: McKee and Co, 1900), p.449-450
- 3 *Timaru Herald*, 18 November 1901, p.2
- 4 *Ibid.*, 15 June 1890, p.2
- 5 *Ibid.*, 15 May 1913, p.5