

St. Mary's Catholic Pro-Cathedral, Christchurch

The instrument in St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral predated the church building in which it was installed by five years, and during those five years was probably the most viewed instrument in New Zealand. It was constructed by E. H. Jenkins for A. J. White, who owned a furniture warehouse and was exhibited in the August 1885 Wellington Exhibition where it had the following specification: ¹

GREAT		SWELL		
Open Diapason	8	Open Diapason	8	TC
Claribel	8	Lieblisch Gedacht	8	[common bass]
Dulciana	8	Gamba	8	TC
Principal	4	Principal	4	
Wald Flute	4	Flute	4	
Fifteenth	2	Fifteenth	2	
		Hautbois	8	TC
PEDAL		COUPLERS		
Bourdon	16	Swell to Great		
		Swell to Pedals		
Compass: 56/30		Great to Pedals		
Action: Mechanical		Great Super Octave [prepared for Diocton		

Three extra stops were prepared for, and space left for three others, viz.: —

PEDAL		SWELL	
Open Diapason	16	Double Diapason	16
Principal	8	Cornopean	8
GREAT		Tremulant	
Twelfth	3		

The organ was described as follows:

It is made almost entirely from New Zealand wood. The front elevation is of the usual Gothic character, and is divided into three sections, each arched at the top, which is filled in with elaborate tracery. The principal arch is surmounted by a handsome carved cross and all the arches spring from buttresses terminating in crocketed pinnacles and ornate finials. The manuals are closed in by plate-glass sliding doors, through which the fittings, the keys, and the stops can be seen without the instrument itself being unlocked. All the wood work is varnished, in order to protect it from the influence of climatic changes, and all the bearings are bushed to ensure noiseless action. The woods used in the front are rimu and kauri, and these are alternated as much as possible, so as to give considerable artistic relief one to the other. As these woods are beautifully grained, and the grain is well brought out by French polishing, the whole is of a most pleasing character. For the very delicate portions of the woodwork, however, Sydney cedar has been used.¹

It was returned to Christchurch after the Exhibition and was erected in White's Warehouse, before being shifted to the Palace Skating Rink in December 1888 by Messrs Sandford & Parsons for use in a massed (if rather inauthentic) performance of the "Messiah" involving over 300 performers.^{2,3}

In 1889 it was removed and enlarged for A.J. White by Sandford & Parson to exhibit in the New Zealand Exhibition in Dunedin.^{4,5.}

GREAT		SWELL		
Open Diapason	8	Double Diapason	16	TC
Stopped Bass & Clarebella	8	Open Diapason	8	TC
Dulciana	8	Lieblich Gedacht	8	
Principal	4	Gamba	8	TC
Flute	4	Principal	4	
Twelfth	2 $\frac{2}{3}$	Flute	4	
Fifteenth	2	Fifteenth	2	
		Cornopean	8	
		Hautboys	8	
PEDAL		COUPLERS		
Open Diapason	16	Swell to Great		
Bourdon	16	Great to Pedals		
Principal	8	Swell to Pedals		
Compass: 56/30		Great Octave Couplers		
Mechanical Action				



ST. MARY'S PRO-CATHEDRAL, CHRISTCHURCH (C.T. TEMPLETON 2007)

It was returned back to Christchurch and installed in St. Mary's Catholic Church for the opening of the building on 17 August 1890.⁶ The church was designed by the Timaru architect Maurice de Harven Duval and the contractor was James Delaney, also of Timaru, and built at a cost of £1,540. It was substantially built of wood on a heavy concrete foundation. The exterior lacked external ornamentation, with the interior elaborately treated. There was a gilded high altar in Roman Renaissance style and two similar side altars dedicated to the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin. The pulpit was made by A. J. White, and the internal timbers of the building were rimu. There was also a choir and organ gallery, which did not extend right across the end

of the church, the remaining gap filled by an arch topped with a cross. The church was lit by 12 large semicircular and eight rose windows of tinted cathedral glass, and the building was to seat 150 people.^{7,8}

Despite being a 'temporary' building, the church lasted until 1956 when it was replaced with the current church. The foundation stone for was laid on 8 December 1957 by Bishop Joyce, superseding a previous foundation stone laid on 25 February 1941 (that project having to be abandoned as a result of the war). It was designed by the architect Mr Stewart and built by Messrs Chas. S. Luney Ltd, and started on the 26 June 1957; the cost was £70,000 with £10,000 for the furnishings. The narthex was added to the front of the church in 1995, ⁹ the architect being T. Hogan, and the builders Chas. S. Luney Ltd. The organ was installed in the new church for the opening, and rebuilt by James Strachan in 1963, with electro-pneumatic action, new oak case, and detached console. He also added a bottom octave to the Swell Bourdon 16. John Daglish of Christchurch also added some electronic stops to the Pedal division¹⁰ as the Open Diapason 16 was removed due to borer damage.

The organ was rebuilt in 1974-76 by the South Island Organ Company Ltd with the organ being reopened on 12 September 1976. The instrument was electrified with a KA solid state system with a new console with an increased compass to 61 notes, and the pitch lowered to 522 hz. There were also some tonal additions also as outlined below.

GREAT			COUPLERS	
Bourdon	16	B	Swell Octave	
Open Diapason	8		Swell Unison Off	
Claribel Flute	8		Swell Sub Octave	
Dulciana	8		Swell Octave to Great	
Principal	4		Swell to Great	
Wald Flute	4		Swell Sub Octave to Great	
Twelfth	2 $\frac{2}{3}$		Great to Pedal	
Fifteenth	2		Swell to Pedal	
Mixture	19.22.26	III	Swell Octave to Pedal	
Trumpet	8	D		
SWELL			Four thumb pistons to Great	
Open Diapason	8		Four thumb pistons to Swell	
Lieblich Gedackt	8		Two reversible thumb pistons:	
Gamba	8		Swell to Great,	
Gemshorn	4		Great to Pedal	
Suabe Flute	4		Two reversible toe pistons:	
Fifteenth	2		Swell to Great,	
Mixture	22.26.29	III	Great to Pedal	
Horn	8		Four toe pistons to Pedal	
Oboe	8		Swell and Pedal piston coupler	
			Great and Pedal piston coupler	
			General Cancel thumb piston	
			Balanced Swell Pedal	
PEDAL				
Open Wood	16	†		
Sub Bass	16	A		
Bourdon	16	B		
Octave	8	C	Compass: 61/30	
Bass Flute	8	A	Action: Electro-pneumatic	
Quint	5 $\frac{1}{3}$	B		
Fifteenth	4	C		
Stopped Flute	4	B	† Pedal Open Wood added in 1984 from the	
Trumpet	16	D	Wellington Christian Science – Lawton &	
Trumpet	8	D	Osborne ¹¹	

The September 2010 earthquake produced little damage to the organ - mainly confined to some wooden pipe feet. The February earthquake was far more damaging. A majority of the larger pipework had damaged feet, or had broken the rackboards and fallen. The building frame had moved and where chests and supports were fixed to the wall, these fixtures had pulled out. The organ was partially dismantled and the pipework taken to SIOC for repair. The supports and rails were re-fixed with extra supports and new stays were made for the larger pipework that had been damaged.

The building itself had little damage, with the tower requiring some minor repairs and repointing of the brickwork. The steps and ramp at the front and sides of the building respectively had sunk some five inches into the ground, necessitating new ramps and stairs. Becoming the Pro-Cathedral for the Diocese required a change in use for the instrument. Being required to perform with a full orchestra and choir, necessitated the addition of a Rogers 599 three manual digital console to provide a third division, and in February 2016 the Rodgers Infinity Series 484MV four manual was incorporated with the pipe organ, providing an extra 234 sampled stops with the 28 speaking stops.¹²



ST. MARY'S PRO-CATHEDRAL, CHRISTCHURCH (C.T. TEMPLETON 2016)

- 1 *Papers Past - Evening Post*, 3 August 1885
- 2 *Papers Past - Press*, 10 December 1888
- 3 *Papers Past - Star*, 20 December 1888 p.3
- 4 *Papers Past - Otago Daily Times*, 9 August 1889, p.2
- 5 *Papers Past - Otago Witness*, 28 November 1889, p.19
- 6 *Papers Past - Star*, 18 August 1890, p.4
- 7 *Papers Past - Press*, 16 August 1890, p.6
- 8 *Tablet*, 15 August 1890, as quoted in Hanrahan, M. J., *Built in Faith: Catholic Churches of the Christchurch Diocese Past and Present 1840 - 2010*, (Christchurch, 2012), pp.72-3
- 9 Foundation plaque.
- 10 SIOC Archives St. Mary's Manchester Street file / letter 28 February 1999
- 11 Personal comment - J. Hargraves 29 March 2016
- 12 Personal comment -Ralph Cullen, e-mail to C.T. Templeton 17 February 2016