

St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Dunedin



ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH, DUNEDIN (PETER STOCKWELL 2016)

The parish of St. Matthew's (originally to be called St. Thomas's) was proposed in a meeting by the newly installed first ¹ Bishop of Dunedin, Dr Samuel Tarratt Nevill (1837 - 1921)² on 24 December 1872.³ With the development of Dunedin to the south, two sites were considered, one on land near the market reserve, and the present site.⁴ After six months, a foundation stone was laid with full Masonic ceremony at the personal request of the Bishop on 11 July 1873, (complete with batons, drawn swords and wands), accompanied by the choristers of St. Paul's and All Saints'.⁵ The building was designed by William Mason (1810-1897) of the firm Mason & Wales.⁶ This was one of Mason's last buildings before he retired in September 1874.⁷ The building contractor was James Gore,⁸ and the final cost of the building and land was £4, 854 4s 3d.⁹

It is an adapted Gothic design, cruciform in plan with side aisles, and a broach tower at the south-west end of the nave with an entrance porch underneath.¹⁰ The building is of grey hardstone, with Port Chalmers stone quoins and Oamaru stone drip stones, clerestory windows and corbel table.¹¹ The church was formally opened on 3 December 1874. The design of the building was quite grandiose and the cost a real burden for the fledgling parish for the next 25 years. Given the events at the 1883 Synod, it may be that Bishop Nevill had conceived the building as his Cathedral, as the vicar of St Paul's and other churchmen were uninterested or opposed to the provision of a Cathedral at that time. ¹² St. Matthew's was without a vicar at the time of the 1883 synod where the Bishop proposed paying off the £5,600 debts of St. Matthew's and using the building as the Dunedin Anglican Cathedral. It would seem that he had not communicated his plans with the vestry or congregation of St. Paul's, whose opposition and resistance led to the Bishop backing down by the next Synod.¹²

In 1897 the south transept was made into the Victoria Chapel in memory of Queen Victoria's reign. It was dedicated on 20 June, with a memorial screen added in memory of Mrs Annie

Curzon-Siggers in 1916.¹³ A peal of tubular bells (Harrington's Patent) was erected in 1906, four donated by Mr John Stephenson, eight by the parishioners and the tenor bell (which is used for tolling) was presented by the Vicar, the Revd W.A. Curzon-Siggers. The dedication was on Trinity Sunday, 11 June 1906 and the first funeral peal was rung the following day on the news of the death of the Premier, Right Hon Richard Seddon. In 1906 the Choir Rooms and Vestry were erected on the north-east corner of the church.¹⁴

The north transept was converted into an ANZAC Memorial Chapel in 1921. In 1969 the interior of the church was plastered and the exterior sealed, and alterations made to the interior space. The Victoria Chapel was discontinued in the south transept, the font shifted from the west door to the nave, the choir moved from the chancel into the nave, and the altar and rails moved forward.¹⁵ Two decades ago, further radical alterations were made to the liturgical space of the building.

The first pipe organ was installed in time for the opening of the building and was used for the next six years; this was a small pipe organ lent to St. Matthew's by Colonel Cargill. ^{16, 17} It was previously loaned to All Saints', Dunedin.¹⁸ The specification and current location of this instrument are unknown at this stage. The present pipe organ was built by Bevington & Sons, ordered in late 1878 and shipped out in 1880. The divided organ was planned by the organist of the church, Mr James Richardson, in consultation with Mr P.C. Plaisted, a Melbourne organist, who suggested enclosing the Choir Organ and having the coupler knobs placed above the manuals.¹⁹ The instrument was given a certificate of completion by Edward J. Hopkins, Organist of the Temple Church, London, before being shipped out.²⁰ The organ was erected by E. H. Jenkins and formally opened on 22 October 1880.²¹ The organ is divided with the Choir, Great and console on the left side of the chancel and the Swell and Pedal on the right. The organ was originally mechanical, with trackers running four feet below the chancel floor, the longest action length being some 55 feet from the console to the windchest. The underfloor preparations were carried out by Mr Boyd of the congregation. The bellows are in the former choir vestry and was originally blown by a small hydraulic engine, but with the provision for hand blowing if required.

GREAT			SWELL		
Double Diapason	16		Open Diapason	8	
Open Diapason	8		Stopped Diapason	8	
Claribel	8		Vox Angelica	8	TC
Principal	4		Gemshorn	4	
Mixture	III		Mixture	II	
Trumpet	8	prepared for *	Cornopean	8	
			Hautboy	8	
CHOIR			PEDAL		
Lieblich Gedacht	8		Grand Open Diapason	16	
Bell Gamba	8	gvd.bass	Bourdon	16	
Flute	4		Violincello	8	
Piccolo	2				
Clarionet	8	TC			
			COUPLERS		
			Swell to Great		
			Great to Pedal		
			Swell to Pedal		
			Pedal Octave		
Compass: 56 / 30					
Mechanical action					

*added 1899



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The instrument had some revoicing work carried out by E.H. Jenkins in 1898, with the organ being reopened on 2 October 1898.²² The Trumpet stop was added in 1899 by E.H. Jenkins, as a memorial to the late Archdeacon Fenton and dedicated on 5 May 1899.²³ The stop was installed and formally handed over on 15 April and first used the next evening at the memorial service to Captain Boyd.²⁴ The newspaper account has the stop being 'specially ordered from England', however in his book on St. Matthew's Meiklejohn states that the Trumpet stop was second hand from the organ of First [Presbyterian] Church, Dunedin built by Halmshaw & Halmshaw in 1879.²⁵ There was also a move at that time to raise funds for a Vox Celeste, which was duly installed.

By 1967 the organ was requiring urgent repairs. A special meeting of parishioners was scheduled for 13 March 1967 to vote on a motion to purchase a Hammond electric organ to replace the pipe organ. On 9 March, the vestry was informed that a bequest from a former choirmaster - Mr Alan English - for just under \$5,000 was specified for organ rebuilding.²⁶ The contract was let to the South Island Organ Company Ltd, (its fifth contract) and reopened on 26 July 1970. The action was electrified, and a new console and tremulants added.

GREAT			PEDAL		
Double Diapason	16		Resultant Bass	32	A/B
Open Diapason	8		Grand Open Diapason	16	A
Claribel	8		Bourdon	16	B
Principal	4		Octave	8	A
Mixture 12.15.22	III		Violincello	8	
Trumpet	8		COUPLERS		
SWELL			Swell Octave		
Open Diapason	8		Swell Sub Octave		
Stopped Diapason	8		Swell Unison Off		
Gamba	8		Swell to Choir		
Vox Celeste	8	TC	Swell to Great		
Gemshorn	4		Choir to Great		
Mixture 12.15	II		Great to Pedal		
Cornopean	8		Swell to Pedal		
Hautboy	8		Great to Pedal		
Tremulant			Four thumb pistons to Swell		
CHOIR			Four thumb pistons to Great		
Lieblich Gedacht	8		Four thumb pistons to Choir		
Bell Gamba	8	gvd.bass	Two reversible thumb pistons: Swell to		
Flute	4		Great, Great to Pedal		
Piccolo	2		Two reversible toe pistons: Swell to Great,		
Clarionet	8	TC	Great to Pedal		
Tremulant			General cancel thumb piston		
Compass: 56 / 30			Four Pedal toe pistons		
Action: Electro-mechanical			Four Swell toe pistons		
			Balanced Choir pedal		
			Balanced Swell pedal		

- 1 Henry Lascelles Jenner was consecrated the first Bishop of Dunedin by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1866 (before such a See existed, and outside of the provisions of the newly ratified New Zealand Church Law). Upon learning of his Anglo-Catholic leanings, and lack of adequate financial endowment, the NZ General Synod of 1868 called on Jenner to withdraw, and in April 1869 the Dunedin Synod refused to accept Jenner as their Bishop. Jenner resigned his See in 1871 'for the sake of the Church's peace,' never having been accepted by the Dunedin Synod as their bishop. So Bishop Nevill was consecrated as the 'first' Bishop of Otago on 4 June 1871.
- 2 Ken Booth, 'Nevill, Samuel Tarratt', from the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (Te Ara: the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 4 December 2013)
- 3 Curzon-Siggers, Ven. Arch. *Parish of St. Matthew Dunedin Jubilee Record 1874 - 1924*, p. 4
- 4 Meiklejohn, John. B., *A Centennial History of St. Matthew's Anglican Church Dunedin 1874 - 1974*, p. 4
- 5 *Evening Star*, 12 July 1873, p. 2. The ceremony seems more of a publicity and recruitment drive for the Craft, with the one of the prayers even hoping that "when completed, may it be the means of strengthening our Order".
- 6 Stacpoole, John, *William Mason: the first New Zealand Architect*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1971), p. 107
- 7 Ibid., p.24. Mason was New Zealand's first architect, arriving on 17 March 1840 - having been appointed by Governor Hobson. Before that he had spent two years in New South Wales
- 8 Meiklejohn, op.cit., p. 8
- 9 Curzon-Sigger, op.cit., p. 10
- 10 Stacpoole, op.cit., p. 108
- 11 Knight, Hardwick, *Church Buildings in Otago*, (Dunedin: University of Otago, 1993), p. 74
- 12 Meiklejohn, op.cit., pp. 6-7
- 13 Curzon-Sigger, op.cit., p. 12
- 14 Meiklejohn, op.cit., p. 12
- 15 Ibid., p. 20
- 16 *Papers Past-Otago Daily Times*, 5 December 1874, p. 5
- 17 Curzon-Sigger, op.cit., p. 20
- 18 *Papers Past-Evening Star*, 3 November 1915
- 19 *Papers Past —Otago Daily Times*, 7 October 1880, p. 2
- 20 Ibid., 26 June 1880, p. 2
- 21 Ibid., 23 October 1880
- 22 *Papers Past-Evening Star*, 3 October 1898
- 23 Ibid., 6 May 1899, p. 3
- 24 *Papers Past-Otago Daily Times*, 18 April 1899
- 25 Meiklejohn, op.cit., p. 10 Examination of the pipework would confirm which account is correct, Halmshaw pipework from First Church having a makers stamp on the bottom C pipes.
- 26 Ibid., pp. 19-20