

N.T. or not N.T. - that is the Question.

A reassessment and evaluation of the work of Nicholas Thomas Pearce.

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Nicholas Thomas Pearce was born in December 1852¹ in Cornwall and in his early teens was apprenticed to the London organ building firm of Eustice Ingram². The 1871 Census has him living with his older brother William Pearce in London³. He worked at Ingram's until he left with his wife and young daughter for New Zealand on the 5th December 1879⁴. Once in New Zealand, he settled in Invercargill and worked as foreman at the joinery works of Broad Small Limited. With only one pipe organ in Invercargill⁵, and the instrument debate in full fury in Presbyterian congregations, the opportunity for making a living building pipe organs might have seemed too difficult.

However by 1887 he is advertising in the Southland Times as a Practical Pianoforte and Organ Repairer and Tuner.⁶ In 1888 he was in Dunedin erecting the Halmshaw organ in First Church⁷. About this time he started building a pipe organ in his house which he eventually sold to St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Invercargill in 1901 after twelve years work.

So at the age of 49, he completed and sold his first pipe organ. Three years later he won the contract to erect the new Norman & Beard organ⁸ in St. John's Anglican Invercargill⁹, followed later in the 1904 with an organ built for St. Paul's Methodist Church Invercargill. During the course of 29 years he built 20 organs and erected eight others. In late 1905 and early 1906 he had moved to Christchurch where he lived and worked there the rest of his life¹⁰. A year later from the 8th April 1907 to the 8th April 1908 he opened five new organs and installed 2 others. By the beginning of April 1909 that total rose another two new organs, another installation and a rebuild. (Not to mention tuning as well)

However as we shall see, he had help - a lot of help.

Eustace Ingram was born in 1839¹¹ and at the age of 14 was apprenticed to the organbuilder Robert Snell of Stoke Newington¹². In 1860 at the age of 21 he was articled to Henry Willis to learn the art of reed voicing¹³. In 1867 with a young family (Eustace jnr. the eldest only three years old and two of his siblings younger still) he started out in business on his own and for a time went into partnership with Harry (Henry) Speechly (that according to some sources started out together or

¹ Pearce, S. G. *Organ News* June 1968 p. 8-9

² Ibid.

³ British Institute of Organ Studies web site Dec 2009

⁴ Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996), p. 558

⁵ St. John's Anglican Church. A 1872 Lewis organ

⁶ Southland Times 5 November 1887 p. 3

⁷ Timson, Jessie. *Organ Committee Scrapbook*, First Church of Otago, P19001 Session: Psalmology/ Organ Committee Scrapbook. Presbyterian Church Archives & Research Centre. p. 7

⁸ Norman & Beard, job no. 520. Three manual organ, incorporating Lewis pipework. £705

⁹ Southland Times, 31 October 1904, p. 2

¹⁰ Pearce, S. G. *Organ News* June 1968 p. 8-9

¹¹ www.npor.org.uk/cgi-bin/Esearch.cgi?Fn=Esearch&Firm=1161

¹² Ingram, Eustace jnr.. *Musical Opinion*, August 1941, p. 501

¹³ Ingram, Eustace jnr.. *Musical Opinion*, August 1941, p. 501.

within the first five years¹⁴¹⁵. Either way, it wasn't a long partnership and by the end of 1873 it had dissolved¹⁶. Three of his sons followed him into the trade¹⁷ and in (or before) 1894 Eustace jnr. and his brother Arthur had formed Ingrams & Co of Hereford and Edinburgh¹⁸¹⁹. After various theme and variations on the company name²⁰²¹, they later divided the business two companies²², one in Hereford, and the other in Edinburgh. Meanwhile Eustace Ingram senior had in 1894 at 55 years of age, bought out the business of the 78 year old George Maydwell Holdich²³, and for a while traded as Holdich & Ingram²⁴, before being bought out himself by Gray & Davison relatively soon afterwards. Sources differ as to whether it was just the Holdich part of the business bought out first²⁵²⁶²⁷²⁸, but by 1904 Eustace Ingram was managing the Gray & Davison London workshop.

For those of you taking notes and doing the mathematics, if Pearce was apprenticed in his early teens²⁹, it would put him at fourteen or fifteen in 1867 when Eustace Ingram first started his company, making Pearce one of his first employees and he stayed with the company for twelve years. So how does this provide Pearce with help to build fourteen manuals worth of organs in five years?

On the 2 November 1901 the Deacons Court of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Christchurch wrote to Gray & Davison Organbuilders, advising them that their tender for a new pipe organ was accepted³⁰. It was shipped out on the 1st April 1902 and erected by [Edgar Henry] Jenkins in September-October 1902. It was opened on the 4 November 1902, however some major faults in the design and construction of the organ were evident during erection and both Jenkins and Pearce were requested to submit reports on the problems. In the Deacon Court letters to Gray & Davison³¹ mention is made that Pearce was, "*recommended by*

¹⁴ Ingram, Eustace jnr.. *Musical Opinion*, August 1941, p. 501.

¹⁵ Thistlethwaite, Nicholas. *The making of the Victorian Organ*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 527

¹⁶ Elvin, Laurence, *Bishop and Son Organ Builders. The story of J.C. Bishop and his successors*. (Lincoln, Laurence Elvin, 1984), p. 334. "Ingram decided to join him [Speechly] and in 1869 the firm was known as Speechly and Ingram; it continued under that name until 9th September 1873 when the partnership was dissolved owing to 'clashes of temperament'."

¹⁷ Edmonds, Bernard, *Notes and Queries*, British Institute of Organ Studies Reporter IIII /4(1980), p. 11

Arthur Essex Ingram, Eustace Ingram (jnr.) & ? Ingram

¹⁸ www.npor.org.uk/cgi-bin/Esearch.cgi?Fn=Esearch&Firm=1163

¹⁹ Burgess-Winn, G. I., "*The Ingrams*", *Musical Opinion*, January 1965, p. 243

²⁰ Edmonds, Bernard, *Notes and Queries*, British Institute of Organ Studies Reporter IIII /4(1980), p. 11

²¹ Thompson, Michael.& McGuire, Larry,. *The Cinema organs of Ingram & Co. Ltd. Edinburgh*. (National Institute of Theatre Organ Studies. <http://www.nitos.org.uk/archive.htm>)

²² Bause, C. F., *Ingrams of Hereford*, *Musical Opinion*, June 1965, p. 573

²³ Higginbottom, Marie & Michael, G. M. *Holdich 1816-1896 Organ Builder* (Coal Aston, Holdich Family History Society, 2003), p. 21

²⁴ Paget, Gordon, *Musical Opinion* December 1964, p. 183 Organ in Hopton near Lowestoft.

²⁵ www.npor.org.uk/cgi-bin/Esearch.cgi?Fn=Esearch&Firm=1162

²⁶ Edmonds, op. cit.

²⁷ Burgess-Winn, op. cit.

²⁸ The nameplate on the organ of St. Mary's Castle Church, Stafford reads as being built by, 'Eustace Ingram, Liverpool Road London 1899'.

²⁹ Pearce, S. G. *Organ News* June 1968 p. 8-9

³⁰ British Organ Archives, Gray & Davison. Shop book 15 p. 083 1902 Job number 10750

³¹ Deacons Court to Gray & Davison 22 February 1903 as quoted in Dodgshun, John A *Centenary History of the 1902 Gray & Davison Organ in The Presbyterian Church of St. Andrew's at Rangitapu Christchurch*. Christchurch, 2002

*you as a builder in whom you have every confidence". and "Mr Pearce, whom you recommended to us in case of difficulty..."*³² This shows that there was very likely pre-existing contact between Pearce and Gray & Davison in order for them to know where Pearce was and enable him to be recommended in 1903.

As mentioned, 1904 saw Pearce erecting the new Norman & Beard organ in St. John's Anglican Invercargill, and later in the year erecting a two manual instrument into St. Paul's Methodist Church Invercargill being opened on the 7th December 1904. The Otago Witness of 23 January 1905 has a photograph of the new organ and the caption states, "*designed by Mr Pearce, and the parts unobtainable in the colony were made up from his drawings by Mr E. Ingram, London.*" The Southland Times³³ also mentions that some parts were made by the firm of Eustace Ingram. However Ingram had been bought out by Gray & Davison some time before, and as shown Gray & Davison were aware and recommending Pearce as a builder in whom they have every confidence. Their order book³⁴ job number 10759 is for "*Invercargill N.Z. per N.T. Pearce. Leet Street Methodist Church. Two Manual and Pedal Organ, Great of four stops plus prepared for Harmonic Flute 4', Swell of five stops plus prepared for Oboe 8', and Pedal of Two stops plus prepared for Open Diapason 16', three couplers, four composition pedals and Tremulant operated by push under desk*". So the parts that were unobtainable in the colony were: the pipework, keys, action, building frame, soundboards, action, pedal chests, pedalboard. That left Pearce with perhaps the Swell box, some casework and the bellows weights.

In 1905 Pearce use the old St. John's Invercargill organ and new Norman & Beard pipework³⁵ (the Lewis pipes being retained in the new organ in St. John's), as the basis for an organ in East Gore Presbyterian. That organ was opened on the 14th May³⁶ 1905. It was removed to St. Mark's Methodist Somerfield, then in 1969 to St. David's Co-operating Parish Leeston. It was then removed and broken up by the Rev. Langley and some pipework used in the St. Mark's organ. Also that year, he moved from Invercargill to Christchurch. According to family lore, "*a group of businessmen from Christchurch, representative of all denominations, called on him and intimated that there was a great need for an organ builder in that city. They made him an offer guaranteeing him ten years work if he would remove to Christchurch and set himself up in business there.*"³⁷

1906 was Pearce's first year in Christchurch, and the year he signed two more contracts for new organs, Trinity Methodist Wanganui and St. Alban's Methodist Christchurch. He was also establishing his tuning rounds as well as doing minor work in and around Christchurch - such as cleaning and repairing the organ in St. Peter's Akaroa in February and returning in August to install a hydraulic

³² Deacons Court to Gray & Davison 3rd November 1903 as quoted in Dodgshun, John A *Centenary History of the 1902 Gray & Davison Organ in The Presbyterian Church of St. Andrew's at Rangi Ruru Christchurch*. Christchurch, 2002

³³ Southland Times 22 November 1904 p. 2

³⁴ British Organ Archives, Gray & Davison Shop Book 15 p. 092 1904 Job Number 10759

³⁵ N&B small job number 8068

³⁶ Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996)

³⁷ Pearce, S. G. *Looking back - The Pearce Organ* Organ News June 1968

engine³⁸. He was also waging a paper war with the committee of Trinity Wanganui about the terms and conditions of the contract.³⁹

On Tuesday 15th January 1907 Pearce and his son⁴⁰ started installing an imported organ in All Saint's Anglican Foxton. This was a one manual, five stop organ by Nicholson & Lord of Walsall. On the Saturday they finished and made their way to Wanganui where they started work on 22nd January erecting a two manual and pedal organ. According to the contract, some parts had been made in the home country. These parts were imported in seven cases on the SS Matatua in late November 1906 and there was some expectation that they might have a pipe organ by Christmas.⁴¹ However, it would seem that Pearce spent until the end of March⁴² not only assembling the organ but making the pedal pipes, as indicated in an article in the Wanganui Chronicle of the 1st of March 1907. "*The large pedal pipes are being made at Mr. W. G. Bassett's⁴³ factory, and are of the very best, thoroughly seasoned kauri timber, and fit in like a lady's kid glove, perfectly.*" The seven cases came from Gray & Davison, job number 10772⁴⁴, and consisted of soundboards, console, keys and actions, bellows, pipework (excluding Pedal Bourdons) and some other items which are illegible in the shop book. The total cost being £320 worth. Which leaves Pearce with some casework, swell box, and bellows weights perhaps. (Maybe the building frame, but if the action was made in the factory it would be reasonable to presume that the trackers were made to actual measurements.)

There is some irony in that although there was the promise of ten years work in Christchurch, the first new organ was opened in Wanganui. Pearce was not in attendance at the opening on the 9th April, but returned on the 20 August to complete the final tuning. May found him again in the North Island installing a second hand organ into the new Congregational Church in Newtown Wellington. The building was opened on the 2nd June 1907⁴⁵, with Mr John Hayes presiding at the pipe organ. According to Newton⁴⁶ Hayes had been choirmaster at St. Paul's Methodist Invercargill when Pearce was organist and Trustee, until he resigned in 1897. The organ was imported from Wadsworth Brothers at a cost of £238, and came from the Anglican church of St. John the Evangelist in Ravenhead Lancashire.⁴⁷

Then he was back in Christchurch to put the organ into St. Alban's Methodist Church for its opening on the 9th August 1907⁴⁸. The church records are spartan and do not mention the specifications, and there is no known description of them in

³⁸ Inscription on faceboard.

³⁹ Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996) See chapter on Pearce for details and analysis of the dispute.

⁴⁰ Newton op. cit. p. 572

⁴¹ Wanganui Herald 3 December 1906 p. 7

⁴² Wanganui Herald 26 March 1907 p. 7

⁴³ Newton quoting the church minutes mentions a Mr Bassell as being one of the trustees. This could be a transcription error as there is no trace of a Bassell in the Wisers Directory for 1906 in or around Wanganui.

⁴⁴ British Organ Archives, Gray & Davison Shop Book Vol. 15, p. 103

⁴⁵ Evening Post 3 June 1907 p. 6

⁴⁶ Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996) p. 573

⁴⁷ <http://www.npor.org.uk/cgi-bin/BOASearch.cgi>

⁴⁸ The Outlook 7 September 1907 p. 35a

any press accounts.⁴⁹ This was Gray & Davison's job number 10774, and was "All work to be supplied except Pedal Pipes, Swell Box, Casework + Bellows Weights."⁵⁰ The shop book contains quite detailed instructions regarding the construction of this job, with references to previous orders and their construction, all for the price of £320. He also ordered four sets of aluminium squares and some other items that are illegible for £3 2s 6p. This organ was moved to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Levin in 1975.

Still in 1907, Pearce was in Dunedin installing an organ in St. Clair Congregational. The Outlook of 30th November 1907 states that "a new two-manual pipe organ, specially imported from England, and fitted up by Mr. T. N. Pearce [sic], of Christchurch." The John Stiller summary states that the Pedal Bourdon does bear a striking resemblance to Jenkin's pipework.⁵¹ According to an anonymous report in the Hocken Library, the soundboard is signed J. Smith London 1906.⁵² The organ was opened on the 17th November 1907.

This was followed two months later of the opening of the new organ in his home church of East Belt Methodist Church Christchurch on the 19th January 1908⁵³. This was another two manual and pedal. And can be found over the page from the last order from Gray & Davison. This organ is number 10775, and once again is more detailed in the shop book, than previous orders. It specifically mentions no pedal pipes to be made, but to send out the feet and hooks. It can be deduced that the swell box is not Gray & Davison, however some of the casework will be, as the case is specified to be covered out 18"⁵⁴. This organ remained in East Belt Methodist until it was moved in 1972 to St. Matthew's Catholic Church Bryndwr, where Strachan moved the Swell Violin Diapason to the Pedal, and removed the Celeste, adding a Block Flute 2' and a Mixture in their place on the swell.

Invercargill was the next building trip for Pearce in March, where he installed an organ in St. Peter's Primitive Methodist that came from St. John's Anglican Church Roslyn Dunedin. This organ was originally made for the Sims Brothers, and was used by Alfred Sims while he was organist and secretary of the Church of England in Rome. This was opened on the 19th March.⁵⁵

Still in Invercargill, he then installed an organ into the Teviot Street Wesley Methodist. Unfortunately this organ has been lost, along with the church records as the church was only opened from 1907 to 1920, when as a result of the Union between the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists in 1913 the Teviot Street congregation combined with St. Peter's. So it is unknown if the organ was his own work, a second hand organ or a new import that was opened on the 7th April 1908.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ See Appendix 1.

⁵⁰ B.O.A., Gray & Davison Shop Book Vol. 15, p. 104

⁵¹ Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996). p. 1136

⁵² The Organ at the Reformed Church 178 Forbury Rd. Dunedin. MS 1905/ 018 Otago and Southland Organist Association Inc.: Records, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.

⁵³ Christchurch Star 18 January 1908

⁵⁴ total cost £310

⁵⁵ Mitchell, Miss W. *Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards. Sixtieth Anniversary Publication of St. Paul's* 1947. p. 20

⁵⁶ *The Outlook* 9 May 1908 p. 38b

Then it was back to Christchurch to install an organ in Woolston Methodist in June / July where it was opened on the 30 July 1908⁵⁷. This was his fifth Gray & Davison, job number 10791⁵⁸. Once again the shop book contains more details as to construction, and furthermore contains a final page of a letter from Pearce giving instructions as to the height and depth of the organ. To quote the letter, "*Bourdon pipes [stopper handles, feet and hooks provided by Gray & Davison], Casework, Sw Box and Bellows weights only supplied by myself*". The swell box is excluding the Swell front of Horizontal Shutters, which are made by Gray & Davison. The casework as with the other organs would be the panels and the posts, the front pipe chests and off note blocks and bourdon chests being ready made. He adds an interesting comment in his letter. "*Please quote as reasonable as possible as I have had great opposition in getting this. Let your quotation be for freight, Insurance and all other charges paid at your end.*" With the organ costing £197 7s 6p delivered, and the contract being for £270, it was less of a margin than his other organs.⁵⁹ He ends the letter, "*Kind regards to all old chums, Yours faithfully N.T. Pearce*".

This organ was moved in 1981 to the chapel of Cathedral Grammar School Christchurch and later on the Harmonic Flute on the Great moved to the Swell and an Octave 4' substituted on the Great.

In about 1862, Maria Nicholson, the second wife of the late Richard Nicholson moved the family organ building business from Rochdale to Walsall in the West Midlands. With her went her son Charles Henry Nicholson. His brothers having scattered across the countryside forming their own dynasties of organ buildings.⁶⁰ Nicholson & Son flourished and in 1874 the foreman of twenty-five years, Edmund Lord was taken into partnership. The company was strong until the first world War, after which it slowly declined, becoming a limited company in 1919 Nicholson & Lord (Walsall) Ltd.⁶¹ It quit it's factory in the second World War, and what remained of the tuning and maintenance work was taken over about 1950.

According to Laurence Elvin in his book *Pipes and Actions*, "*early in the first decade of the present century they issued a brochure which listed instruments built county by county as well as overseas which totalled some 469 installations. Contracts abroad comprised 7 in France, 1 in the English Church, Moscow, 6 in Australia, 4 in New Zealand and 2 in South America*". In 1902 they had a branch at 748 Great George Street, Sydney, but for how long it was open is not known."⁶² However according to another source the undated brochure listing organs built by Nicholson & Lord is dated to about 1914.⁶³ It is this second date that we shall see is probably the more accurate.

⁵⁷ *The Outlook* 22 August 1908

⁵⁸ British Organ Archives, Gray & Davison Shop Book 15, p. 113.

⁵⁹ Appendix 2

⁶⁰ Elvin, Laurence. *Pipes and Action: Some organ builders in the midlands and beyond*. (Lincoln, Laurence Elvin, 1995) p. 192. John Nicholson - Bradford. Thomas Haigh Nicholson - Lincoln, James Nicholson - Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

⁶¹ "<http://www.npor.org.uk/cgi-bin/ESearch.cgi?Fn=Esearch&firm=1533>"

⁶² Elvin, Laurence. *Pipes and Action: Some organ builders in the midlands and beyond*. (Lincoln, Laurence Elvin, 1995) p. 194

⁶³ 'Walsall: Economic history', *A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 17: Offlow hundred (part)* (1976), pp. 180-208. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=36193> Date accessed: 01 September 2009.

In January 1907 Pearce and his son⁶⁴ Norman, installed a Nicholson & Lord organ in All Saint's Anglican Foxton, a small one manual, five stop organ, and it took them a week. In 1908, Pearce put in an organ in St. Stephen's Anglican Church, Lincoln, which was dedicated and opened by the Bishop of Christchurch on the 4th September 1908.⁶⁵ This is a one manual and pedal of eight stops, two of which - the Celeste and Fifteenth were only prepared for at the opening. This was one of the organs partially funded by Andrew Carnegie, (£75 out of the total of £200)⁶⁶ It would seem probable that this is the second Nicholson & Lord organ to be imported to New Zealand, as the pedalboard has an inscription Nicholson & Lord hidden under the felt,⁶⁷ and the inscription on the pipes are comparable with known Nicholson & Lord penmanship.

The next organ that Pearce was to install was one in Knox Presbyterian Church, Masterton. This was a new organ of £500, and was imported from the Wadsworth Brothers. This was opened on the 4th February 1909.⁶⁸

The next building work he had was enlarging the 1876 Jenkins organ in St. Bartholomew's Kaiapoi. There he added a Swell soundboard that is under expression. The pipework was imported⁶⁹ and the soundboard second-hand. This was a 1875 Christopher Farrell⁷⁰ soundboard of unknown origin. The organ was reopened on the 27th May 1909.

Then Pearce was adding the prepared for celeste and fifteenth to the organ in St. Paul's Methodist Church Invercargill at the end of May,⁷¹ thus completing the organ.

1910 was a quiet year for Pearce, with no organs being erected, but he had been given a contract for an organ for the Invercargill Baptist Church. This was a one manual organ of six stops and was pneumatic action. It was opened on the 21 July 1911 and burnt down four months short of its tenth birthday. According to the Southern Cross 5 August 1911 as quoted in Newton, "*All the work except keys and metal pipes (which were imported) has been manufactured by Messrs N. T. Pearce and Son, Christchurch,...*"⁷²

Before the opening of the Invercargill Baptist organ Pearce was in Devonport installing an organ in Devonport Methodist Church. This was a Wadsworth Organ that had previously been installed in [St. Paul's Coppenhall,] Crewe.⁷³ Once again this was under John Hayes⁷⁴ (ex Wellington and Invercargill).

November 1911 Pearce added the Fifteenth and Celeste to St. Stephen's Anglican Lincoln, thus completing the job.⁷⁵

⁶⁴ Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996) p. 572

⁶⁵ Saint Stephen's Church Lincoln. Historical Notes. Anglican Archives Christchurch.

⁶⁶ Saint Stephen's Church Lincoln. Historical Notes. Anglican Archives Christchurch

⁶⁷ Dodgshun, John. Personal Observation.

⁶⁸ Wairarapa Daily Times 15 Jan, 28 Jan, 2 Feb. 1909 / as quoted in Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996) p. 576

⁶⁹ Church News April 1909

⁷⁰ Newton p. 577

⁷¹ The Outlook 22 May 1909 p. 35

⁷² Southern Cross as quoted in Newton p. 497

⁷³ <http://www.npor.org.uk/cgi-bin/BOASearch.cgi> -->

⁷⁴ Newton p. 578

⁷⁵ New Zealand Church News December 1911, p. 11

1912 found him with contracts for The Central Methodist Mission Dunedin and Bank Street Methodist Timaru. The Central Methodist Mission was a combined house of worship and movie theatre, (some would say another form of worship). The organ cost £750⁷⁶, and was first used for a memorial service for Robert Falcon Scott on the 17 February 1913. This organ was installed in Trinity Church a block away in 1966 when it became the permanent worship centre for all Mission Services and the Octagon Hall was no longer used for that purpose.⁷⁷ The organ was broken up in 1977, with parts going to Rev. Dr. Wards, John Dodgshun and Maurice Baker⁷⁸. The Otago Daily Times of 24th February 1913 states that the metal parts were manufactured by Nicholson & Lord of Walsall, England. An assessment of the surviving relics would seem to indicate that at least the soundboards and pipes (both metal and wooden) were Nicholson & Lord, if not the whole organ which would make it the third of the four organs mentioned in the Nicholson & Lord brochure. The job number for this organ was #727.

The fourth Nicholson & Lord organ is the one that Pearce installed in Bank Street Methodist Church, job number #746. The Timaru Herald of 15 May 1913 states in the article on that night's opening, "*The action work and pipes have been procured from England, and the material used in them is of the very best, the whole of the soundboards, wind ducts, being made of mahogany. All the remaining portions of the organ have been made and supplied by Pearce and Son organ builders, Christchurch, and the different portions of the work have come together well and without any trouble.*" At least the pipes, soundboards⁷⁹, action, swell box, console are Nicholson & Lord. In fact the only parts of the organ that can be definitely attributed to Pearce are his ubiquitous bellows weights.

He was working closer to home later in the year with work on Knox Presbyterian and Trinity Congregational in Christchurch. Knox Presbyterian Church Organ was built in 1903 by E. H. Jenkins as a two manual organ. The Swell Vox Humana was enclosed in a separate Swell box below the main Swell box. This location was used for a new Choir box and Soundboard and new action and three manual pneumatic console installed. Once again, the pipes, soundboards, action and console were made by Nicholson & Lords, job number #761. The Soundboard being made by T. W. Davenport, who also made the Great soundboard for Bank Street and the Swell Soundboard for the Central Methodist Mission.

His other work in Christchurch was at Trinity Congregational Church, where he converted the stop actions to pneumatic ones and added two stops.⁸⁰ Unfortunately the order books of Gray & Davison for this period are not as precise or preserved enough to be of anything but a frustration. There are two entries for New Zealand in the Shop Books, one job number #10930 and the other #10967. The first entry has faded to the extent of being unreadable, but the previous entry has a footnote in a different hand (and better ink) that reads, '*Delivered Nov. 14 - 13*'. The second is only a list of jobs with their numbers.

⁷⁶ Croot, Charles, *Dunedin Churches Past and Present* (Dunedin, Otago Settlers Association, 1999), 83. Half of the cost of the organ was gifted by Andrew Carnegie.

⁷⁷ Historical Notes. MS-3295/012 The Various Mission Pamphlets. Booklets, Newspapers and Papers. Methodist Church of Otago/ Southland: Records. Hocken Collection, Dunedin

⁷⁸ Rev. Dr. Ross Wards & John Dodgshun. Personal Recollection.

⁷⁹ Great soundboard inscribed T. W. Davenport Walsall Oct. 1912
Swell soundboard inscribed H. Stanton Walsall Oct 1912 England

⁸⁰ Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996) p. 582

Wesley Methodist Hastings were his next customers for a new pipe organ. This was opened on the 28th October 1913. Although the organ has been rebuilt by Lawton & Osborne and then George Croft & Son, the original soundboards and most of the pipework still remain. The soundboards have been altered when the action was changed from mechanical, so removing any builders autograph, it would seem as if the pallets are original. These are split pallets of a slightly different design to the other Gray & Davison Organs. The pipework markings on the Hohl Flute however at a cursory inspection are quite similar to the inscriptions on the Nicholson & Lord pipework. The newspaper report states that all the internal fittings are made of mahogany - even to the wind trunks,⁸¹ exactly the same statement is made of the Nicholson & Lord installed in Bank Street Methodist.⁸² With the wells of the soundboards replaced, any labels or signatures have gone, however a thorough examination of the pipework may yield more clues as to the origin of those parts of the organ. The casework was fine figured rimu,⁸³ which at least indicates that it was built by Pearce.

The next organ that was built by Pearce was the one in St. David's Presbyterian, North East Valley, Dunedin. This was opened on the 24th July 1914⁸⁴ This was a pneumatic action two manual and pedal, that has the action electrified in 1964 by Bert Hayman, and the console was removed from its central position in the church to its present location in the north apse.⁸⁵ This has not yet been examined by the author to determine the origin of the various components.

During the Great War the only organ he seems to have been building was one that he offered to St. James'-on-the-Cust. The Vestry of St. James' determined to do something for their Jubilee celebration.⁸⁶ At a vestry meeting in October 1916 the Vicar was asked to get information about a purchase a pipe organ as their Jubilee project for 1916.⁸⁷ This was an organ Pearce had been working on for some time as the Soundboard is dated at 5 May 1915. The metal pipes were imported at the beginning of 1917, no mean feat considering there was a war on you know. This has his label glued into the Soundboard

N.T. Pearce
Christchurch NZ
Organ Builder and Tuner
(10 years experience in London)
Organs kept in tune by the year or otherwise
Re-building and repairs in all
its branches
5th May 1915
Estimates free upon application

⁸¹ Hawkes Bay Tribune 29 October 1913 as quoted in Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996) p. 427

⁸² Timaru Herald 15 May 1913

⁸³ Hawkes Bay Tribune 29 October 1913 as quoted in Newton p. 427

⁸⁴ McLintock, Robert. *Some of our organs past and present* (Dunedin, 2005), p. 13

⁸⁵ *Presbyterians in North East Valley 1882-1982* (St. David's Presbyterian Church, Dunedin, 1982), p. 37

⁸⁶ St.-James-on-the-Cust, Vestry Minutes 10 December 1915. Anglican Archives Christchurch

⁸⁷ St.-James-on-the-Cust, Vestry Minutes 12 October 1916. Anglican Archives Christchurch

This organ was opened on the 23 September 1917. There would be almost a four year gap before the opening of his next organ which was in the Thames Methodist Church.

However in January 1917 Pearce moved an organ from the Langdon residence to the Kensington Methodist Church Timaru which had been donated as a memorial gift.⁸⁸ This organ was rather problematic and Pearce was called in at the beginning of 1919⁸⁹ He quoted to rebuild the organ for £325 at the beginning of 1923⁹⁰, but by the beginning of 1925 he had bought the organ off the Trustees for £65 when they had purchased an American Organ.⁹¹

Thames Methodist received an organ in 1921 which is a two manual and pedal that was opened on 16 July 1921⁹² Then the next Pearce organ was at the other end of the country, being installed in All Saint's Anglican Church in Gladstone Invercargill, and opened on the 9th February 1922. These two organ have yet to be examined and researched by the author.

The Tai Tapu Methodist organ was built over a period of two and a half years before it was opened on the 9th June 1922⁹³ The soundboard was made by Pearce, with his card glued to the soundboard well is dated October 1919⁹⁴ The Croft Letter Books as quoted by Newton show a letter from George Croft to Pearce dated 10 December 1921. It seems that Pearce sent an order to Croft for parts for the Tai Tapu organ as the letter book states, "*Your letter of Nov. 21st containing drawings etc. came duly to hand.*" Further reading of the letter makes mention of a man working on the Pedal Box, Croft being unable to set out the console until after the holidays. Also questions about what sort of action Pearce wants for the action box (double valves or single valves), and how does he want the stop action made.⁹⁵

So it would seem that although the reservoir and soundboard, building frame and swell box are by Pearce, the action work and console are Crofts. This organ was removed from the Tai Tapu Methodist Church to St. Mary's Anglican Halswell and reopened on the 19th August 1990⁹⁶ This work was done under the supervision of the late Bernard Bicknell, and the organ was reconfigured radically for it's new location.

Pearce's last two organs were both for Invercargill, a replacement for the one in Esk Street Baptist that was destroyed by fire in early March 1921. This organ was removed in 1976 and is currently in the possession of Dr. Newton of the New Zealand Organ Manufactory, who has observed that some of the second organ seems to be made up of salvaged parts from the first organ.⁹⁷ The other organ was installed in Knox Presbyterian Church and was opened on the 21 March 1928⁹⁸ (These organs have yet to be examined for traces of manufacture).

⁸⁸ Kensington Trustee Minutes 15 February 1917. Methodist Archives Christchurch

⁸⁹ Kensington Trustee Minute Book. 9 May 1919

⁹⁰ Kensington Trustee Minute Book 29 Jan 1923

⁹¹ Kensington Trustee Minute Book 4 Nov. 1924 & 10 March 1925

⁹² Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996) p. 1183

⁹³ Newton, p. 1153

⁹⁴ Author. Personal observation.

⁹⁵ Croft Letter Book III p. 653 as quoted in Newton op. cit. p. 1154

⁹⁶ Service of thanksgiving and dedication service sheet. 19 August 1990

⁹⁷ Newton, Dr. R. Personal comment to the author July 2009

⁹⁸ Southland Times 21 March 1928 p. 1

The other major building work after Invercargill Baptist according to Dr. Newton's thesis was for the Trinity Congregational in Christchurch. This consisted of changing the action from tracker to pneumatic. This was completed in September 1924⁹⁹ This organ was rebuilt and electrified in 1946 but still utilised the underactions that Pearce bought from Gray and Davison in October 1923, final payment being received on 20 February 1924.¹⁰⁰ This rebuild by Pearce is the only example that the author knows of where the nameplate reads Pearce & Son.

So of the twenty organs that Pearce put his name too, (it is not known to the author if the East Gore organ was under his nameplate) the following list can be formed.

St. Paul's Presbyterian, Invercargill	Pearce
St. Paul's Methodist, Invercargill	Gray & Davison / Pearce
Trinity Methodist, Wanganui	Gray & Davison / Pearce
St. Alban's Methodist, Christchurch	Gray & Davison / Pearce
St. Clair, Congregational	English
East Belt Methodist, Christchurch	Gray & Davison / Pearce
Teviot Street Wesley Methodist	unknown
Woolston Methodist	Gray & Davison / Pearce
St. Stephen's Anglican, Lincoln	Nicholson & Lord
Esk Street Baptist, Invercargill	Pearce?
Central Methodist Mission, Dunedin	Nicholson & Lord / Pearce?
Bank Street Methodist, Timaru	Nicholson & Lord / Pearce?
Wesley Methodist, Hastings	Nicholson & Lord??
St. David's Presbyterian, Dunedin	Pearce?
St. James'-on -the-Cust, Anglican	Pearce
Thames Methodist	?
All Saint's Anglican, Invercargill	Pearce?
Tai Tapu Methodist	Pearce / Croft
Esk Street Baptist, Invercargill	Pearce?
Knox Presbyterian, Invercargill	Pearce?

Of the thirteen assessed by the author, only two are fully Pearce's work, one a collaboration with George Croft, and five a majority of Gray & Davison's work and likewise three if not four Nicholson and Lord and one an unknown English builder.

The contemporary reports of the day attribute Pearce as the organs builder, sometimes acknowledging that the majority of the parts were imported. But can it be said that he was the builder? He planned the specifications for the organs, however that does not necessarily grant naming rights, as there are many organs with their specifications handed down from the expectant organist. In the newspaper article describing the organ in St. Paul's Methodist, Invercargill¹⁰¹ it states the organ was "*designed by Mr Pearce, and the parts unobtainable in the colony were made up from his drawings by Mr E. Ingram, London.*" That may have been the case with the first order to Gray & Davison, but in his orders for St. Alban's Christchurch he was just specifying the soundboard lengths and the footprint size. In the case of Woolston, his letter included a pencil sketch of the front

⁹⁹ Newton, Dr. R. *Organ Building in New Zealand 1895 - 1930: A documentation of cultural context*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Canterbury, 1996) p. 587

¹⁰⁰ British Organ Archives, Gray & Davison Account Ledger 12 p. 714

¹⁰¹ Otago Witness, 23 January 1905

pipe layout, as well as instructions that the '*organ size be about 10 ft frontage, 7 ft deep or less.*' Not exactly a manufacturing blueprint!

So, that leaves the question, can they be called Pearce organs if he was the one to voice the pipes, and so create the Pearce 'sound'.

Looking at the time it took him and his son to install the pipe organs, one week for the organ in Foxton to six or seven weeks in the case of St. David's North East Valley, it would seem that there is not enough hours in the day to not only erect the organ, connect the trackers or lay the pneumatic tubing, as well as cutting up the pipe mouths, putting them on speech, voicing, regulating and tuning them, using the original winding systems of hand blowing or hydraulic pump. In the case of the wooden pipes they would have been pre voiced as the caps are glued on. Furthermore, in the case of the Gray & Davison organs currently in Cathedral Grammar and St. Matthew's Bryndwr - the diapasons are comparable with the ones in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Christchurch, whereas there is a great difference between the voicing of those organs and the one in St. James'-on-the-Cust. (The same could be said of the organ in St. Mary's Halswell - however that organ had been moved and altered, and the pipework was so irregular in speech, that a week was spend working on the soundboard and pipework speech and regulation in 2008). So it could be argued that although Pearce may have regulated the pipework, he did not voiced them.

The organ is a musical instrument , the most complex and technical of the acoustic instruments. Would it be said that a violin was a Stradavari, if in fact at had been crafted in the workshop of Amati, using a Stradavari pattern, and only varnished by Stradavari himself? So too with the pipe organs of N. T. Pearce, it needs to be recognised that although his customers had no issue with him sub-contracting and importing parts in completion of his contracts it cannot be said that he built the instruments. With the current paradigm in pipe organ research based on tracing components back to their original makers (be they pipework, casework, soundboards or keyboards — used, new or recycled) it seems time to recognise that although Pearce completed the contracts for the various churches, New Zealand has at least three more Nicholson & Lord, and five more Grey & Davison pipe organs that previously acknowledged.

As a final aside, as this paper is given in the shadow of the Nicholson & Lord pipe organ here in the building that was the Bank Street Methodist Church I would like to end with the following extract. Laurence Elvin in his book Pipes and actions quotes correspondence from a Mr H. A. Benyon then a partner in W. Hawkins & Son 19 October 1976.." *'It is my humble opinion that Nicholson & Lord were one of the most under-rated firms in this country; their diapasons equal to the best that I have heard and their tracker and composition actions of impeccable design and construction... The pneumatic side of the business was not so successful except for a short period just before the first World War when a Mr Dunn was manager — some of whose work was first class'*.¹⁰²

After 97 years three weeks and two days since this organ was opened, and still being in original condition Mr Dunn's management has surely stood the test of time and climate.

¹⁰² Elvin, Laurence Pipes and Actions p. 195

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the following for help in this paper.

Jane Teal - Anglican Diocesan Archives

Betts Funeral Service

Christopher Kearn - British Organ Archives

John Dodgshun

Patrick Elms

Hocken Library

Colin van der Lecq

Jo Smith - Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives

Dr. Ron Newton

Jane Bloore, Donald Cochrane - Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Archives

Tony Ripon - South Canterbury Museum

Gerald Green, John Hargraves, Anne Hoskins - South Island Organ Company

Rev. Dr. Ross Wards

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