

The Organs of Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church

Mayfield Parish Church

Mayfield Church was established in 1875 as a Free Church congregation in the developing suburbs of Newington to serve the rapid movement of the population to this area. The congregation met in a classroom at Clare Hall School before securing the present site on Mayfield Road/West Mayfield.



Church interior (c.1887)

When the church opened in 1879, it was neither embellished with stained-glass windows nor adorned with its famous spire; there was no electricity, and the church was lit by gas. It was not until the second ministry in the 1880s that attention turned to fully completing the church after the building debt had been cleared. Generous gifts from wealthy members were forthcoming, and the structure was soon completed with the spire, clock, and bell from Mr. Johnston Stewart in 1895. The organ, a two-

manual H.S. Vincent instrument with twenty-three speaking stops, was the gift of Mr. Harry W. Smith, who defrayed the £1,000 purchase. The organ was sited in the apse, with an off-set console beneath the pulpit, and proved a fashionable addition to the church in 1895.

The services of the precentor were retained after the installation of the pipe organ; Mr. William Geoghegan, who had led praise since the inception of the congregation in 1875 and received a salary of £40, subsequently raised to £52, became engaged as Choir Master. When he retired in 1910, either by coincidence or perhaps by the saving of his salary, the organ was rebuilt that year, with one additional stop, by Arthur E. Catlin.



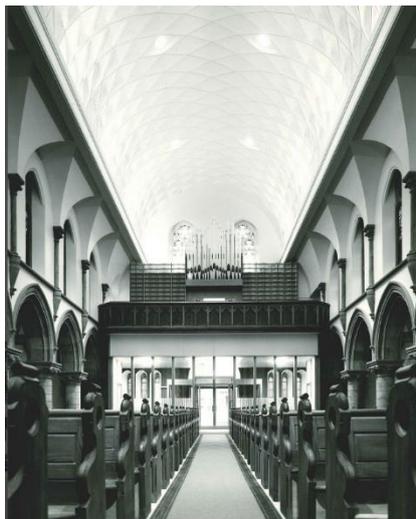
Original position of organ (c.1909)

There were other gifts that soon followed the organ, such as the installation of stained-glass windows in the apse in 1900, but it was thereafter determined that the position of the organ in the apse detracted from the inherent beauty of the building; however, the organ would remain in the apse until the 1930s, when the fourth minister, Mr. J.K. Thomson, promoted a

renovation of the church. He suggested that the organ be resited to provide an uninterrupted view of the apse and its stained-glass windows. The organ was rebuilt and moved by Arthur E. Ingram to a specially constructed chamber in the south transept in 1932. Ingram also provided a new console, which was sited beneath the Stuart Memorial, and thereby allowed the apse to be fully revealed. The focal point of the church had changed from one of proclamation and grandeur to that of peace and mediation.

In 1959, the nearby Fountainhall Road Parish Church closed: its congregation had never regained its former strength after losing the hinterland of its parish to the Reid Memorial Church, and the congregation duly amalgamated with Mayfield. As a profound act of this union, the best parts of the 1897 Eustace Ingram organ of Fountainhall Road Parish Church were dismantled and incorporated with the Mayfield organ to create a Choir (or third manual) in 1962. By all accounts, this work by Henry Hilsdon produced a fine instrument, and the Mayfield organ, now with thirty-four speaking stops over three manuals, greatly enhanced worship. Fountainhall Road Parish Church was demolished in 1975 to make way for the Newington Library.

Regrettably, the Hilsdon rebuild only gave ten years of service as a fire inflicted considerable destruction to the roof of Mayfield Parish Church in 1969. The actual fabric of the building escaped without serious damage, but many of the fine internal features, including the organ console, were inevitably lost.



The newly-refurbished church with Rushworth & Dreaper Organ (1970)

However, this meant some improvements could be secured as part of the reconstruction stratagem. One such considered improvement was the moving of the organ to the rear gallery. By doing this, not only could the transepts be opened up, but a prominent position in the gallery would better reveal the qualities of the organ, flooding the nave with sound rather than speaking across the congregation into the north transept. The organ was once again rebuilt and moved, this time by Rushworth & Dreaper, in 1970. Another new console was provided and placed in the gallery. With choir members also re-located to this celestial position, an angelic

effect of music and singing floating over the congregation was achieved whilst maintaining the apse as the focal point of the building; nevertheless, the gallery proved less popular with choir members, who felt divorced from proceedings, being able to neither see nor be seen.



Norman Shires at the console (c.1970)

Despite these good intentions, by 1994, the organ required a substantial overhaul. It was determined unwise to spend significant sums of money due to its quality and technical shortcomings: the work in the 1970s had left the organ underpowered and its appearance was not considered becoming of Mayfield Parish Church. The organ of the recently-closed Salisbury Parish Church was available, but the united Session decided against moving the Salisbury organ: although robust in design, and having survived in a largely unaltered state, its parts were all towards the end of their life, and considerable renewal would have been necessary.

In its place, a three-manual Allen electronic organ was installed in the south transept in 1996. This left the organ of Salisbury Parish Church at the fate of its new owner, who chose to scrap it. By the end of 1996, both organs had been broken up, albeit for different reasons and by different people.

Two mutation ranks from the Mayfield organ endure at Corstorphine St. Anne's Parish Church, having been added there by Ronald L. Smith in 1997.

After the removal of the pipe organ from Mayfield Parish Church, the gallery was restored to a spectator balcony, and both organist and choir returned to the front of the building. The choir is now happier to be back in the action.



Mayfield Church Office Bearers (1909)

Salisbury Parish Church

The story of the Salisbury Parish Church organ is far less adventurous: it was never moved from its original position and only received one major rebuild in its life, although some alterations to its casing in 1950s resulted in its unusual appearance.



Salisbury Parish Church (c.1960)

Newington United Presbyterian Church, as it was originally known, installed a three-manual Wadsworth organ with twenty-seven speaking stops in 1883.

The organ was soon rebuilt with two additional stops in 1904; pneumatic actions were fitted, and a new console, which incorporated the keyboards and drawstops from the old console, was also installed. The fixtures were provided by Blackett & Howden, but the work was subcontracted to Scovell & Lewis.

A survey of the organ in 1994 found that the Great Trumpet and Choir Cor Anglais were of a later date than the rest of the organ, and are thought to be the additions by Scovell & Lewis in 1904.

The organ was overhauled by Rushworth & Dreaper in 1958, when it was resolved to redesign the organ case to allow more light in from the window behind. A subsequent overhaul was discharged by Ronald L. Smith in 1972.

Due to high maintenance costs, Salisbury Parish Church closed in 1993. The congregation united with Mayfield Parish Church on February 7th, 1993 under the name Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church. The former Salisbury Parish Church was sold to a foam manufacturer, and latterly converted to a lighting showroom by Cotterell & Co.

The consideration to move the Salisbury organ, largely unaltered but for renewal and modernization of its parts, demonstrated its merit, and highlights the frequently overlooked value of maintaining the original design of an organ and preserving it from those who seek to make 'improvements'.

It is unfortunate that the Salisbury organ could not also be incorporated with the existing organ of Mayfield, perhaps even to create a four-manual instrument had the Mayfield organ been more worthwhile, or simply moved unaltered to Mayfield.



© Alan Buchan (1994)

Written by:
Calum N. Gubby
Organist, *Liberton Kirk*
February 2018

With the assistance of:
Alan Buchan
Curator, *Scottish Historic Organs Trust*
David Stewart
Author, *Organs in Edinburgh*

George McDougall
Former Member, *Salisbury Parish Church*
William Mearns
Church Manager, *Mayfield Salisbury Parish Church*

Wadsworth Organ Specification

Salisbury Parish Church (1979)

Pedal:

Principal	16
Sub Bass	16
Violoncello	8
Flute Bass	8

Great:

Lieblich Bourdon	16
Open Diapason	8
Hohl Flute	8
Gamba	8
Principal	4
Twelfth and Fifteenth	
Trumpet	8

Swell:

Lieblich Gedact	8
Geigen Diapason	8
Gamba	8
Rohr Flote	8
Celeste	8
Rohr Flote	4
Octave	4
Mixture	III
Horn	8
Oboe	8
Vox Humana	8

Choir:

Lieblich Gedact	8
Dulciana	8
Lieblich Gedact	8
Piccolo	2
Clarionet	8
Cor Anglais	8

Couplers:

Swell to Great
Swell to Choir
Great to Pedal
Swell to Pedal
Choir to Pedal
Swell Octave
Swell Suboctave

Accessories:

4, 3, 2 composition pedals
Great to Pedal toe piston

Details:

Console type: Detached
Stop type: Draw Stop
Action: Tracker Pneumatic
Blower: Electric

Rushworth & Dreaper Organ Specification

Mayfield Parish Church (1979)

Pedal:

Resultant Bass	32
Open Diapason	16
Violone	16
Bourdon	16
Lieblich Bourdon	16
Octave	8
Bass Flute	8
Trombone	16

Choir:

Lieblich Bourdon	16
Hohl Flute	8
Dulciana	8
Viol d'Orchestre	8
Lieblich Flute	4
Piccolo	2
Clarinet	8
<i>Tremulant</i>	

Great:

Lieblich Bourdon	16
Open Diapason	16
Large Open Diapason	8
Small Open Diapason	8
Clarabella	8
Harmonic Flute	4
Principal	4
Twelfth	$2\frac{2}{3}$
Fifteenth	2
Trumpet	8

Swell:

Violin Diapason	8
Lieblich Gedact	8
Viola de Gamba	8
Voix Celeste	8
Salicet	4
Mixture	III
Double Horn	16
Horn	8
Oboe	8
<i>Tremulant</i>	

Couplers:

Swell to Great
Swell to Choir
Swell Octave to Great
Great to Pedal
Swell to Pedal
Swell Octave
Swell Suboctave to Great
Swell Suboctave
Choir to Great
Choir to Pedal
Choir Octave
Choir Suboctave
Swell Octave to Pedal

Accessories:

<i>4 thumb pistons to Great</i>
<i>4 thumb pistons to Swell</i>
<i>3 thumb pistons to Choir</i>
<i>Thumb pistons for Sw-Pd, Gt-Pd, Sw-Gt</i>
<i>4 composition pedals to Pedal</i>
<i>4 additional composition pedals</i>
<i>Gt-Pd toe piston</i>

Details:

<i>Console type: Detached</i>
<i>Action: Electro-Pneumatic</i>
<i>Blower: Electric</i>
<i>Compass: 61/30</i>