



## ***New Zealand Organ Preservation Trust Inc.***

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## **Newsletter (February 2008)**

### **Significant United States organ finds new home in Wellington**

On 18 October 2007, in the National War Memorial in Wellington, a pipe organ built in 1850 by the New York builder, Henry Erben, was dedicated and then formally handed over to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. Before its move and installation in Wellington, it was in St Dunstan's Episcopal Church in Ellsworth, Maine U.S.A.

Henry Erben (1800-1884) is considered by many to be the leading US organ builder in the middle of the nineteenth century. He built over 100 instruments in New York alone. "In quality of materials and workmanship he was seldom approached and never surpassed" (Ogasapian, in Bush & Kassel, *The Organ—An encyclopedia*, 2006).

The organ was given by the Order of Saint Lazarus in New Zealand for installation in the National War Memorial, to coincide with its seventy-fifth anniversary. As it was dedicated to the memory of medical and dental personnel who had served in the New Zealand Forces, it was particularly appropriate that it be dedicated on the day of the observance of St Luke, the Patron Saint of the medical profession.

A member of the Order of Saint Lazarus, Timothy Hurd, also National Carillonist, sourced, dismantled and reassembled the organ in a gallery over the entry door to the Memorial's Hall of Remembrance.

Not long before it was acquired for Wellington it had been completely restored and is completely original, with only a new silent blower being fitted. The original hand pumping system is still operational, with all reservoir feeders intact.



Although the organ has only six ranks – three eight-foot, two four-foot and a two foot – it has plenty of tone colour and its use to accompany the large numbers present in the highly resonant Hall of Remembrance showed that it is well able to meet the demands that will be placed on it in its new home.

*John Scott*

### **NZOPT seminar at Congress**

NZOPT members have hardly ever met as a group except at our annual AGM. An AGM is inevitably constrained. So this year, we're having a chance to meet and learn together immediately after the Auckland Congress.

So don't book your flight back straight after lunch. Keep time from 3pm to 5pm for our seminars at Knox Presbyterian Church in Parnell. The seminar topics include a discussion of the tonal architecture of the late Victorian organ, and an understanding of the technology of the pneumatic playing actions of the organ builder George Croft. The organ of Knox is a well preserved 2 manual and pedal George Croft instrument of 24 speaking stops situated in a splendid historic church. Among the instrument's features is an interesting palette of 8' reed stops. It is hoped to conclude proceedings with dinner. The Auckland Congress will feature a number of significant historic organs, including instruments at the beginning and end of the Organ Reform Movement.

### **Gazetteer updates**

Thanks to Ross Wards for answering two of our three questions in the last newsletter. We asked whether the St John's College (Auckland) was by Laukoff or Laukhuff, and the answer was that it was Pels! [The website](#) of this Dutch company also lists a second instrument supplied to New Zealand (to the Wellington City Mission in 1956).

Ross also reminded us that Wellington Seamen's Mission instrument is the Casson Positive that was at St Anne's Anglican in Porirua from 1965.

By the late 1990s the instrument fell into a decrepit state and the parish neither wished to restore or even retain the instrument. Upon seeking advice from Michael Cox, the parish decided to seek a faculty from the diocese to pass the organ into NZOPT ownership with the provision that the organ either be restored or preserved in storage. Subsequently, Bruce Thompson and Michael Cox carefully dismantled the instrument for transportation to Auckland. Ownership was passed from the Trust to Bruce Thompson as reported at our 2002 AGM a few years ago. Bruce has undertaken some significant work on the instrument and it is the intention to place it in a historic church north of Auckland. This is a pleasing result for an organ which was somewhat neglected. The instrument is a fine and rare example of its manufacturer and is further enhanced by the quality of the architectural case.

No one told us of the builder or current whereabouts of a 3 manual instrument once recorded for Residence Bradnaught, Wellington. So we're still keen to hear if anyone knows.

Questions of the month:

1. Who can improve on this Auckland listing in the Gazetteer?
  - **Baptist Newton** Unknown builder. Exact specification not known.
2. Does anyone know where this 1887-88 Sandford organ was for the first 40 years of its life? The Gazetteer first notes it was installed in 1929 in the Methodist church Lincoln Road by Jenkins; and moved from there to Sunnyside/Hillmorton hospital in 1977. It is currently stored and awaiting restoration at Ferrymead.
  - **Historic Park Ferrymead** Sandford 1887-8, rem. 2007 from Hospital Sunnyside (Hillmorton) II. 1m., 4 sp.st., tr. Gt: 8,8,8,4. Ped: perm coupled.

Please send answers (and other improvements to the Gazetteer) to John Dodgshun, 10 Devonport Lane, Christchurch 8014 ([Dodgshun@es.co.nz](mailto:Dodgshun@es.co.nz)). Remember the current version of the Gazetteer is always available for you on our web site [www.nzopt.org.nz](http://www.nzopt.org.nz).

### **A new approach to voicing display pipes in Wellington??**

Paul Rosoman, the Wellington Councillor, arranged for two of us to visit several local instruments recently. This was useful in lots of ways apart from extending our knowledge of local instruments: clarifying details for the Gazetteer, demonstrating interest in the instruments to the current custodians, getting clearer on which organs might be at risk, making maintenance suggestions, getting invited to add the organ to some local music-making...

The photo here is a bit blurred because we couldn't get close enough, but it shows a mouse making its own novel contribution to organ maintenance. I've heard a vox humana or two before, but never one of these.



*Charles Sullivan*

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Last saved: 26-Feb-08