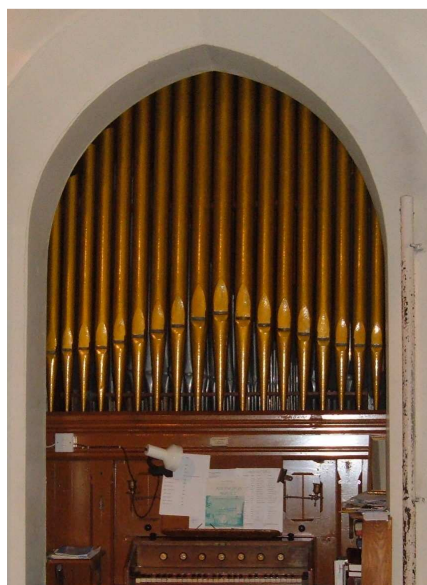


# Pipe Organs of the Diocese



The Samuel Green Organ at St Mary's Carden Place Aberdeen presented by Mrs Disney Leith



The Holditch organ installed at St Olaf's Episcopal Church Kirkwall



The 'straight' pedal board of the Holditch Organ in St Olaf's Episcopal Church Kirkwall

It has been brought to my notice on numerous occasions the amount of very fine pipe organs we have in the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney. In this article I am illustrating in two of the pictures, chamber organs that are subsidiary to the main organ in their respective church; and two, which are fine examples of early instruments used week by week in the worship of the churches concerned. It is a testament to the stewardship of the various congregations that these instruments are still in very good working order and considered to be amongst the best examples of their individual makers. There is no doubt that the glorious sound of the pipe organ fills a church with atmosphere and it is said that a skilful player can prepare the congregation for worship by sensitive choice of pieces, progressing one to the other pervading a frame of mind conducive to worship. There is also no doubt that although the cost of maintaining these instruments runs into the hundreds of pounds annually, the cost of restoration as seen in some of these illustrated instruments may run into many thousands.

St Mary's is very proud of its Samuel Green organ. It is regularly used in worship by the organist, Kyle McCallum. The organ, recently awarded a Grade I certificate by the British Institute of Organ Studies as a historic and outstanding instrument, dates from 1778. It was presented to St Mary's by Mrs Disney Leith of Hallhead to use whilst the church was being rebuilt after the direct hit by a German bomb in 1943.

The organ pipes on the right belong to a later instrument which David Welch, organ historian, thinks was built about 1850. This organ, installed in St James' Episcopal Church Cruden Bay, was gifted by its patron, William George Hay, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Erroll. A story recalled to Gerald Stranraer-Mull by Lady Diana, Countess of Erroll claimed the organ was of Italian descent. Research is still in the process of being carried out, so there is a good chance that its Italian history may be finally revealed. More anon . . .

In two pictures at bottom left, is viewed the small but very effective organ installed in St Olaf's Episcopal Church in Kirkwall. Catriona Robertson, St Olaf's Organist, sent these pictures when I asked her for some more information. It would appear that the instrument is an original Holditch, which was rebuilt by our organ builder friend and doyen of many organ-rebuilds, Sandy Edmonstone. The instrument, in common with the St James' organ, has a 'straight' pedal board, which at once suggests to the aficionado that this is an early example. St Olaf's organ dates from the building of the church in 1881. Catriona tells me that even if there is a power cut, there is a handle at the left hand side which can be 'pumped to 'blow' the organ provided someone with strong arms and muscles can be found! This used to be the universal way to 'power' the organ, and the 'organ blower boy' at St Andrews' Chapel in Longacre got 10/- a year for his services! [50p to the youngsters]

The last instrument on this page is the chamber organ which is housed in the Suther Chapel of St Andrew's Cathedral. This instrument is the 'baby' of this group and was built in 1983 by E. J. Jonson & Sons of Cambridge. A very fine instrument, it continues the traditions of past instruments and provides an excellent vehicle for both solo work and choir accompaniments. But of course, you will note, no pedal board. I have included a small photo of the 'at Kirkwall. In modern times the pedal board is arranged in a radius making it much easier to find the notes without looking! I hear the straight pedal board might make a come-back!

I have to admit, I'm an aficionado myself!

*Stuart Donald*



The organ of St James' Episcopal Church Cruden Bay which has been attributed to the maker, John Raiment Rust of Chelmsford



The Jonson Chamber Organ viewed in the Suther Chapel of St Andrew's Cathedral Aberdeen