

Brighton Unitarian Church Kirkland Organ

A history and description of the Kirkland Organ at Brighton Unitarian Church

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This edition edited by Paul Taylor (August 2012).



The organ was built for Essex Unitarian Church, Palace Gardens Terrace, Kensington, W8 in 1887 by the firm of Alfred Kirkland and was a gift of Miss J.Durning-Smith. This firm was established in Wakefield in 1874 and had opened a London branch in 1885 and another in Nottingham in 1891. Alfred Kirkland was born in 1857 and was apprenticed to the firm of F.W.Jardine and later worked for J.C.Bishop & Son before setting up his own business. Both were reputable organ-building firms and their traditional workmanship and use of high quality materials were adopted by Kirkland in his instruments. Alfred Kirkland died in 1927, his business having been taken over by Hill, Norman & Beard in 1923. There are 178 organs known to have been built or rebuilt by Alfred Kirkland of which a high percentage are instruments for the Unitarian, Methodist and Baptist churches.

The original organ had a finely carved case which was too large to fit in the present building. The present casework is from an earlier organ built for this church by the Brighton firm of Morgan & Smith. The Essex Church organ had mechanical key and drawstop action with tubular-pneumatic action for the pedal pipes.

In 1965 the organ was rebuilt by the firm of Kingsgate - Davidson who carried out similar work throughout the south of England. The provision of the new remote console necessitated the electrification of the stop and key action which is currently of the electro-magnetic type.

The rebuild was made possible by the generous donation of Miss Theodore Durning-Smith.

When the Essex Church was demolished in the summer of 1973 the organ was moved to its present position in the Brighton Unitarian Church by Mr.Geoffrey Ramsden and four helpers. The pipes were not cleaned at this time and the only recorded attention that the organ has since received is the re-leathering of some of the pneumatic action motors.

The 1887 Specification

The 1887 specification :					
Compass: Manuals - CC - g''' 56 notes Pedals: CCC - F 30 notes					
GREAT ORGAN		SWELL ORGAN		PEDAL ORGAN	
1	Open diapason 1	8'	10	Stopped diapason	8'
2	Gamba	8'	11	Salicional	8'
3	Wald flute	8'	12	Vox Angelica t.c.	8'
4	Dulciana	8'	13	Principal 4'	4'
5	Principal	4'	14	Mixture III (Sesquialtera)	22
6	Harmonic flute	4'	15	Cornopean 8'	8'
7	Fifteenth (i) swell to great	2'	16	Oboe 8'	8'
8	Bourdon	16'	17	Tremulant	
9	Open diapason	8'			
					18
					19
					20
					21
					22
					(ii) swell to pedal
					(iii) great to pedal
					16'
					16'
					8'
					4'

The 1965 rebuild included a new remote console, the installation of electro-pneumatic and direct electric key and stop actions as well as major alterations to the tonal design. The Swell Bourdon rank was removed to the pedal division and extended to provide Gedackt stops on the Great at 16', 8' and 4' pitches. Two new ranks, a Fifteenth 2' and Grave Mixture III rank were fitted in place of the Bourdon at the rear of the Swell-box. The 1965 Mixture was of curious composition:

C1 15 - 19 - 22

C13 8 - 12 - 15

C49 12 - 15 - 3 1/5

A second hand fifteenth rank was fitted as a Swell Nazard 2 2/3' without a bottom octave. The Swell Salicional was juxtaposed with the Great Dulciana and the Great Gamba was revoiced as Open diapason II. The Swell-box was extended at the front to provide space for the new unit Clarinet chest. New harmonic resonators were fitted to the treble octave of the Cornopean and new reed tongues of copper were fitted to the bass octaves of the Cornopean and Clarinet stops. Whilst a new large organ blower was installed, little was done to re-design the wind supply system to accommodate the Swell octave and sub-octave couplers.

The 1965 Specification

1965 SPECIFICATION:

Compass: Manuals - CC - c'''' 61 notes Pedals: CCC - F 30 notes

GREAT ORGAN		SWELL ORGAN		PEDAL ORGAN	
1	Lieblich Bourdon 16' 61 pipes	13	Stopped diapason 8' 61 pipes	24	Resultant Bass 32' No.26 & 27
2	Open diapason I 18' 61 pipes	14	Salicional 8' 61 pipes		Open wood 16' 30 pipes
3	Open diapason II 8' 61 pipes	15	Viole 8' 49 pipes	26	Subbass 16' 30 pipes
			Celeste (t.c)		
4	Claribel flute 8' 61 pipes	16	Principal 4' 61 pipes	27	Lieblich Bourdon 16' No.1
5	Gedact 8' No.1 & 12 pipes	17	Nazard 2 2/3' 61 pipes *	28	Principal 8' 12 pipes and No.25
6	Dulciana 8' No.4 & 49 pipes	18	Fifteenth 2' 61 pipes	29	Bass flute 8' 12 pipes and No.26
7	Principal 4' 61 pipes	19	Mixture III 1 1/3' 183 pipes	30	Octave flute 4' 12 pipes and No.29
8	Stopped flute 4' No.5 & 12 pipes	20	Double Clarinet 16' 73 pipes	31	Clarinet 8' from No.20
9	Twelfth 2 2/3' 61 pipes	21	Cornocean 8' 61 pipes	32	Clarinet 16' from No.20
10	Fifteenth 2' 61 pipes	22	Oboe 8' 61 pipes		(v) Swell to Pedal
11	Clarinet 8' from No.20	23	Tremulant (i) Swell to Great		(vi) Swell octave to Pedal
12	Open diapason 8' 61 pipes (wood bass)		(ii) Swell Super-octave		(vii) Great to Pedal
			(iii) Swell Unison off		(viii) Great and Pedal combinations coupled
			(iv) Swell Sub-octave		

Accessories

5 thumb pistons to Swell combinations
 5 thumb pistons to Great combinations
 5 toe pistons to Pedal combinations
 5 toe pistons duplicating swell pistons
 Reversible thumb & toe pistons: Swell to great / Great to Pedal

Balanced swell pedal.
 Pilot lights: Organ blower / Signal

* The Swell Nazard pipes which were mounted on the original Sesquialtera slide have been used in restoring the 2 rank Sesquialtera (12 - 17) to provide a useful stop for French organ music.

Work carried out during 1999 by Bellsham Pipe Organs of Uckfield

The organ has recently undergone thorough cleaning and numerous pipe repairs. Most of the pipework required adjustments to achieve correct speech. The blower was re-located at gallery floor level and new PVC delivery trunking has been fitted. To overcome unsteadiness in the wind supply, a separate wind regulator has been fitted to the pedal division and the display pipes have their wind taken directly from the double rise bellows instead of the Great wind chest.

The Swell mixture has been reconstituted (intended to be drawn with the Fifteenth rank) is as follows:

C1 19 - 22 - 26

G20 12 - 19 - 22

C#50 8 - 12 - 15

A58 5 1/3 - 8 — 12

The wind pressure has been reduced from 4 _" to the original pressure of 3 _" and it is now possible once more to hear this very fine instrument which represents the better aspects of British tonal architecture belonging to earlier part of the 19th Century. This style was adopted by Alfred Kirkland for his instruments in spite of the trends and unfortunate excesses so characteristic of organ building in the late 19th.Century.