

Wesley Church

Wesley Church was built on the corner of Hay and William Street, Perth, in 1867 in an etoliated Gothic style to the design of Richard Roach Jewell. Additions and alterations were made in 1895 to the design of Sir J J Talbot Hobbs. The building is in brick with stucco dressings and incorporates a fine tower and spire to the left of the main façade. It would be the oldest Perth City church in its original form still being used as a place of worship, although the nave (now demolished in readiness for new construction) at St Mary's Cathedral would have predated it by four years.

Wesley Church is built of load bearing brick laid in Flemish bond in the Victorian academic gothic style and features a landmark spire, steeply pitched roofs, parapeted gables, label (hood) moulds and wall buttressing. The church has a strong verticality of form emphasised by tall lancet windows with plate tracery to the east facade. Angle buttresses divide the nave wall into five bays and the major windows have stucco label moulds above them. The bricks of the building, fired at uncertain temperatures in wood burning kilns, show a range of mellow tones and, laid in Flemish bond, create a chequerboard effect on the walls, which provides a decorative element to the walls of the building. The spire is 35 metres high with a weathercock at its point. The spire is surrounded by four smaller spires at its base which are capped by metal finials. The north-east tower replicates these smaller spires above the gable. The



roof structure is made of hand sawn timber and the roof covering was originally shingles but, at some point the Church was re-roofed in clay tiles.

First Organ

The first pipe organ to be installed in Western Australia was the 1875 Bishop & Son, London and Ipswich, for Wesley Church, Perth. This two manual organ served the church for over 30 years in its original location. In 1908 the organ was moved next door to Queens Hall, William Street, Perth (later Metro Theatre), to make way for the new organ.

In 1926 this organ was relocated by W L Roberts Ltd, Adelaide, to Wesley Methodist Church, Claremont (job no 96). It is at this point a reliable specification of the instrument can be obtained. At the time of the move, the organ was of two manuals and 15 speaking stops, has three couplers and utilised tracker action. The

stop list was: Gt: 8.8.8.4.2-2/3.2.III. Sw: 8.8.4.4.2.8. Ped: 16.16.

In 1955 the organ was rebuilt by J.E. Dodd & Sons Gunstar Organ Works, Adelaide. At this time the action was changed to electro-pneumatic, a new console was fitted, the Swell organ received a Cornopean and the Dulciana was extended to Pedal 16'.

Hale School Assembly Hall, Hale Road, Wembley Downs, was the organ's next and current home. It was installed there in 1984 by F.J. Lerner & Co. with tonal alterations. A third manual was prepared for but the organ essentially remained a two manual instrument, although now of 22 speaking stops and 7 couplers. Internally the organ was converted from electro-magnetic to slider chests. The stop list is: Gt: 8.8.4.2-2/3.2.1-3/5.IV. Sw: 8.8.4.4.2.III.8. Ped: 16.16.8.8.4.16.4.

Present Organ

The organ, placed in an elevated loft in the left transept, was built in 1908 by J.E. Dodd of Adelaide as a two manual instrument of 24 speaking stops, utilising tubular pneumatic action. The Choir Organ was added by W.L. Roberts Ltd., Adelaide, in 1926 (job no. 81) at a cost of £840.0.0. The instrument was partially electrified in 1933 by Joe Dean of Claremont using magnets from Cousins, Perth.

In 1954 there was a refurbishment and enlargement of the organ by J.E. Dodd & Sons Gunstar Organ Works, Adelaide. A new electro-pneumatic action was provided at this time, along with an extended Tuba rank at 16, 8 and 4 ft., a Twelfth 2-2/3 (as a memorial to the organist E.S. Craft's

son Colin who had been killed in action during World War II), a second Open Diapason on the Great and a 16 ft extension to the Great Dulciana on the Pedal. The Clarionet, originally on the Great was transferred to a new unenclosed chest on the Choir Organ. The second Open Diapason was added to reinforce the power of the organ in hymn accompaniment. It used pipes of large scale and plain metal and was called Phonon Diapason. In sound it was almost indistinguishable from the Dodd Open Diapason. In 1995 it was decided to increase the wind pressure of the Phonon Diapason. On 7" wind it became a blast of sound that had almost no musical worth whatever.

In 1964 the case was lowered and new electric underactions provided. A new Jarrah console with Oak inlay, ivory stop heads and ivory keys was fitted in 1968. This console is of three 61 note manuals and 30 note pedal and has 61 drawstops from 35 ranks. The console was relocated to the nave in 1972.



Chancel Façade, Wesley Church
1908 J E Dodd organ

In the period 1994-1996 the organ was rebuilt and enlarged by F.J. Lerner & Co., Perth. Visually the organ retains its distinctive three-tower Dodd case of dark Western Red Cedar, with its carved corbels, bands and transom rails. Graham Devenish (church Organist and later Pipe Organs WA Pty Ltd) enlivened the pipe display with discrete coloured banding and gilding in 1996.

A rank of Diapason pipework of smaller scale by Dodd became available through John Lerner (F.J. Lerner & Co.), and this was installed in 2000 to replace the Phonon Diapason. This was named Melodic Diapason, following Dodd's practice in his larger organs (e.g. Paterson Street Methodist Church, Launceston, St Carthage's Cathedral, Lismore) and gave the Great Principal Chorus a unison foundation of classical scale to match the new chorus work of 1995.

In 2007 Pipe Organs WA Pty Ltd effected a major cleaning of the organ, revoicing the Swell Hohlfloete and improving the Swell Mixture III

and Pedal Principal 8. Refinements were made to the Melodic Diapason on the Great and overhaul of the top (3) note chest for the Great. Currently the organ has a 40 stage memory, 6 divisional pistons, 10 general pistons, a reversible coupler and pistons, crescendo pedal, adjustable bench, clock, swell / choir pedal, position indicator.

The Great Clarabel was revoiced by Pipe Organs WA Pty Ltd in 2008.

To commemorate the anniversary of the opening of the organ a Gala Centenary Recital will be given by Joseph Nolan, Organist at St. George's Cathedral, Perth. The recital will be on Thursday December 4th, starting at 8.00 pm.

Bruce Duncan

With special thanks for detail from Bob Elms, John Maidment, John Beaverstock and Graham Devenish, photo of Wesley Church by Dan Arndt, photo of Wesley Church organ by Graham Devenish and stop list supplied from the Pipe Organs WA Pty Ltd web site.

<u>GREAT</u>	<u>SWELL</u>	<u>CHOIR</u>	<u>PEDAL</u>
Contra Dulciana 16'	Lieblich Gedact 16'	Rohr Flute 8'	Harmonic Bass 32'
Open Diapason 8'	Geigen Diapason 8'	Viol d'Ochestra 8'	Open Diapason 16'
Melodic Diapason 8'	Hohlfloete 8'	Unda Maris 8'	Sub bass 16'
Lieblich Gedact 8'	Viole d'Orchestre 8'	Suabe Flute 4'	Bourdon 16'
Dulciana 8'	Celeste II 8'	Harmonic Piccolo 2'	Dulciana 16'
Clarabel 8'	Flute 4'	Sesquialtera II	Principal 8'
Principal 4'	Octave 4'	Orchestral Oboe 8'	Flute 8'
Flute 4'	Mixture III	Clarinet 8'	Dulciana 8'
Twelfth 2 2/3	Oboe 8'	Tuba 8'	Principal 4'
Fifteenth 2	Horn 8'	Choir Super	Twelfth 5 1/3
Tierce 1 3/5	Vox Humana 8'	Choir Sub	Trumpet 8'
Furniture IV	Swell Super	Unison Off	Trombone 16'
Trumpet 8'	Swell Sub		
	Unison Off		
	Tremulant		