

Redundant Pipe Organ

M0138

John Laycock 1871

Birkenshaw Methodist Chapel
Bradford Rd Birkenshaw Bradford W Yorks BD11
2AQ UK

NPOR Index N06053
2 manuals and pedals

20 speaking stops

Key action: Pneumatic
Stop action: Mechanical (Great and Swell)

Compass 30/56

Dimensions:

Width 4m

Depth 3.6m

Height 4.8m

The organ was installed in 1871 probably by John Laycock. Some of the pipework is thought to be from an older instrument.

It was rebuilt in the 1930's by Laycock & Bannister (of Cross Hills, Keighley) with pneumatic key action and a new console and pedal board. The original tonal scheme and much of the original pipework were retained.

It was overhauled in 1971.

It has been regularly maintained by Laycock & Bannister and then by Nicholson's of Worcester.

Swell:

Tremulant

Oboe 8

Horn 8

Fifteenth 2

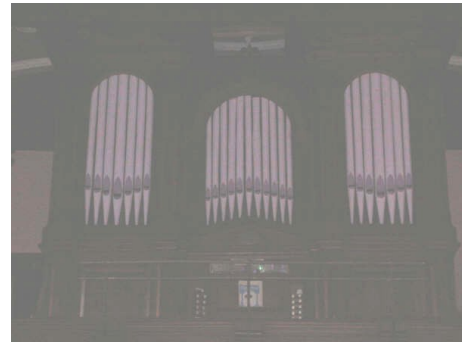
Spitz Flute 4

Voix Celeste 8

Keraulophon 8

Stop Diapason 8

Open Diapason 8



Great:

Clarinet 8
Mixture 4rks
Fifteenth 2
Flute 4
Principal 4
Dulciana 8
Viol D' Gamba 8
Clarabella 8
Open Diapason 8
Bourdon 16

Pedal:

Open Diapason 16
Bourdon 16

Couplers:

Gt to Ped
Sw to Ped
Sw to Gt
Pedal Octave

Balanced swell pedal

4 mechanical combination pedals

Organ inspection is limited because the electricity supply to the chapel has been cut off. The organ is unplayable, but has the reputation of being a fine instrument, regularly tuned by Nicholson.

The organist said the organ is not prone to ciphers, runs, or other kinds of extraneous sounds; the tubular transmission appears to be in good order; and there is always a very adequate supply of wind.

The pipework appears to be in reasonable condition. Tuning slides have been fitted to the relevant ranks and there appears to be no damage from previous cone tuning on a sample of pipes.

The drawstops are easy to manipulate. The pedal board is in good condition. The only playing aids are the four mechanical composition pedals.

The impressive organ case is in a classical style to fit the ambience of the building and 1871 is a very plausible date for it. It features round headed flats and very attractive decorative carving and is immensely solid with very heavy panels. Stylistically it is in keeping with Laycock's contemporary work. It is an outstanding example and the photograph does not do justice to it.

The tonal scheme bears a close relationship to surviving John Laycock organs. For example the Great compares well with St Nicholas in Sabden, especially the Clarinet as the Great reed and the tierce Mixture as the counterpart of the Sesquialtera at Sabden. The Swell compares with St James at Altham, a short distance from Sabden. This has a Keraulophon to beat with the Celeste and it also incorporates a Pedal Octave coupler. I am impressed by the fact that both the tonal scheme and the specific stop names (except perhaps the Spitz Flute) are comparable with John Laycock's work. By contrast, for new builds at least, L&B would normally have employed fewer upper harmonics and more string tone. They would also have shown a (superficial) preference for French and

German nouns and adjectives.¹ So far as I can tell from the albeit rather limited photographic evidence which I have from the dismantling of the John Laycock organ at Carleton, near Skipton, the pipework there had a strong similarity, visually, with what I saw at Birkenshaw.

In summary I feel that this organ is in reasonable condition, features a very fine mid to late nineteenth century case, and retains a tonal scheme from the same period. It is unfortunate that rebuilding (rather than restoration) was carried out in the 1930s but I suspect that this has not damaged the musical integrity of the instrument and I regret that I did not have the opportunity of finding out.

- Notes by Kenneth Jackson.

¹ I elaborated on the differences between John Laycock and L&B organs in K C Jackson, 'John Laycock of West Closes: A Country Organ Builder', *Organists' Review*, 87, 4, (2001), pp. 305-314 and 373.

Offers for the organ are invited (Contact below).

Buyer makes all arrangements for dismantling, packing and transport.

Church Contact:

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