

## Another John Larner organ



### **Christ Church Anglican Church North Road, Ormond**

On Sunday 12 July 1937, the first section of the new Christ Church, Ormond, designed by Louis R. Williams, was dedicated. It was subsequently reported:

*The first thanksgiving service in the new section of the Christ Church of England, Ormond, was conducted yesterday by the vicar (the Rev. W. Perry Martin). The building, which consists of two vestries, a sanctuary, and an organ chamber, cost £1,600, but when the new brick church is completed the total cost will be £4,000.*

The building was completed in the 1950s through the extension of the nave and erection of a tall tower with flanking porches, again to the design of Louis R. Williams.

The organ was the first built in Victoria by George Fincham. It was completed in 1863 and sold to the Congregational Church, Victoria Parade, East

Melbourne where the opening of the organ took place on 10 August 1865. The following day, a report of the events was published:

*In celebration of the opening of the organ just erected in the East Melbourne Congregational Church, a concert of sacred music was given at that building last evening.*

*The performers mainly consisted of Miss Mortley, the ladies and gentlemen of the choir, and a few amateurs as volunteers. Mr. G.F. South presided at the organ.*

*The programme was composed of sacred music, which was very fairly performed, Miss Mortley particularly distinguishing herself. Miss Fanny Beeves was to have sung, but was prevented from attending.*

*During the evening, Mr. South performed two solos on the organ, which appears to be an excellent instrument. Its tone is rich and full, its swell effective, and its upper notes clear and sound. It has ten stops altogether, and about 500 pipes.*

*Its cost was £180, and it was built by Mr. George Fincham, of Bridge road, Richmond. The Rev. J. Beer, pastor of the church, presided as chairman during the evening, and addressed the audience.*

This organ incorporated a fairly complete manual chorus and a Gothic-style case, which appears to have been modelled upon the architectural style of the East Melbourne church.



The 1864 George Fincham organ  
 Photo: John Maidment (early 1970s)

When the Congregational Church closed in the late 1930s, the organ was bought by Christ Church, Ormond where it was installed by C.W. Andrewartha c.1939 without alteration and it remained in this state until 1978.

This organ was rebuilt and enlarged in 1978 by Perth organbuilder John Lerner (F.J. Lerner and Co., Bayswater, Perth.) in association with the church organist Julie Dunlop. A second manual division was added, and the action and console replaced. The original pipework and windchest remained to form the Great Organ and the Fincham casework was retained. The stoplist of the John Lerner rebuild is shown below.

In this rebuild the Great Diapason was given a new metal bass, CC-BB. The Swell Clarabella was surplus from a tonal revision of the Winthrop Hall organ in Crawley, Perth, built by J W Walker and Sons Ltd., where it had been the Stopped Diapason in the Positive division. The Sesquialtera was from Tenor C. The Oboe was the original by George Fincham and was given a new bass. The Bourdon and

**MANUAL (enclosed)**

Open Diapason	8
Stopped Diapason	8
Dulciana	8
Principal	4
Flute	4
Twelfth	2 2/3
Fifteenth	2
Oboe	8
Great to Pedal	

**PEDAL**

Bourdon	16
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The Diapason had an open wood bass and the Dulciana a grooved bass. The Oboe was a tenor register from G. The organ had a compass of 56/29 and had mechanical key and stop action. There were two composition pedals and a lever swell pedal

GREAT		SWELL		PEDAL	
Open Diapason	8	Clarabella	8	Bourdon	16
Stopped Diapason	8	Viola da Gamba	8	Flute	8
Dulciana	8	Gemshorn	4	Fifteenth	4
Principal	4	Flageolet	2	Bassoon	16
Flute	4	Sesquialtera	12.17 II	Spare slide for reed	4
Twelfth	2 2/3	Quint	1 1/3		
Fifteenth	2	Mixture	22.26 II	Great to Pedal	
Mixture	19.22 II	Cornopean	8	Swell to Pedal	
		Oboe	8		
		Tremulant			



Above: The organ following the rebuild by John Lerner  
 Photo: John Maidment (1978)

Right: The rebuild by George Fincham & Sons Pty Ltd  
 Photo: John Maidment (1983)

Flute in the Pedal were a unit rank. The Great Mixture and the Pedal Fifteenth were new pipes.

In 1983 this organ had become unsatisfactory and was rebuilt in that year by George Fincham & Sons Pty Ltd. The pipework was revoiced by Michel Alcouffe, a new console installed, new pedal and stop action

incorporated, a Pedal 4ft reed inserted, and new upper case installed, the original Fincham case being mounted on one of the walls of the porch.

This is a sad outcome for the first organ built by George Fincham, and one which could have been avoided had the church, in spite of strong representations, been supportive of preserving such a rare and valuable instrument.

*John Maidment, OAM*





Christ Church Ormond has undergone extensive modernisation and expansion to meet a more contemporary style of worship. The design and these photographs are by Atelier Wagner Architects.

