

The organ

St John's Cathedral has been served by a variety of organs including a barrel type. It is believed that the first organ was a small hand-pumped pipe organ, known as a Positif owned by the second Rector Rev. Henry Bobart (the son-in-law of the first Rector Samuel Marsden).

The present organ is an instrument of national significance being a fine J. W. Walker instrument which was brought from England in 1862 and installed in 1863 in the western gallery (which was rebuilt for the purpose). At the time it was the largest organ in Australia and remains as one of the finest examples of J. W. Walker organs of the period.

The purchase price was £359, and with amounts incidental to packing, freight, insurance, installation and tuning, the ultimate cost was £415.



Some additional pipes were added in 1880 – 1881 and in about 1903 some minor modifications were made to the specification of the instrument and it was moved to the north transept for reasons that are not known (possibly acoustics). Here it stands in a frame with a minimum of casework but with a massive frontal screen of cedar, designed in the character of the other woodwork of the church, preserving the round Norman arch.

Over the years wind for the bellows has been provided by hand-pumping, hydraulics, gas and finally electricity.

In 1966 the organ was again restored again by Mr. Ronald Sharp (who also built the Sydney Opera House Organ) and Mr. M.G. Fisher. Mr. Sharp comes to tune and maintain the instrument regularly.

Details of the history of the organ and full technical specifications can be found at;

<http://www.ohta.org.au/confs/Sydney/StJohnsPro.html>