

St. Mary's Church Organ

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

15415 North Eldridge Parkway, Cypress, TX 77429

The organ at St. Mary's Church was originally built by Bates and Co. and first installed in the Somerset Street Methodist Chapel in Abertillery, Wales in 1886. Research on the history of the organ is still ongoing. At approximately 135 years old, it is likely the oldest pipe organ in this part of the country.

The organ found its way to Houston, being sold by the original owners after being salvaged when the Chapel was demolished. It was given to St. Mary's by Jim and Suzanne Kelly in 1986. At that time, St. Mary's was meeting in a nearby public school without even a preliminary drawing of the current sanctuary, and the organ was in pieces. It was restored by Roy Redman over two years and installed at St. Mary's in 1992.

The organ has a tracker action that is a series of levers mechanically connecting the three keyboards and 18 stops to the 22 ranks of pipes. The swell has louvers that open and close to control the volume. Originally, the organ bellows were hand pumped by teenage boys. During the organ's restoration for St. Mary's, a high-speed plowed motor was installed on the wind chest. The only power used in the organ is the blower for the wind chest and the lights on the console. Everything else is mechanical.

Painted pipes were apparently only used for about 30 years during the late 1800s. Recently however, there is an interest in making new organs with painted pipes. The pipes on St. Mary's organ had three different coats of paint on top of one another. Sharon Redman, wife of organ rebuilder Roy Redman, scraped through the old paint, traced the original version, matched the original colors and re-stenciled the pipes. Mr. Redman still maintains the organ.

The St. Mary's organ is listed with the Organ Historical Society www.organsociety.org and is played every Sunday.

Stop List for the restored organ

An organ stop can mean one of three things:

- the control on an organ console that selects a particular sound
- the row of organ pipes, used to create a particular sound, more appropriately known as a rank
- the sound itself

Countless stops have been designed over the centuries, and individual organs may have stops, or names of stops, used nowhere else.

Great:

- 8' Open Diapason
- 8' Stopped Diapason
- 4' Principal
- 4' Wald Flute
- 2' Fifteenth
- *1 1/3 Mixture IV (244 pipes)
- *8 Trumpet

Swell:

- 8' Open Diapason
- 8' Lieblich Gedeckt
- 8' Gamba
- 4' Gemshorn
- Tremulant

Pedal:

- 16' Bourdon
- 8' Bass Flute
- *4' Principal
- 16' Bassoon

* Added during 1992 restoration