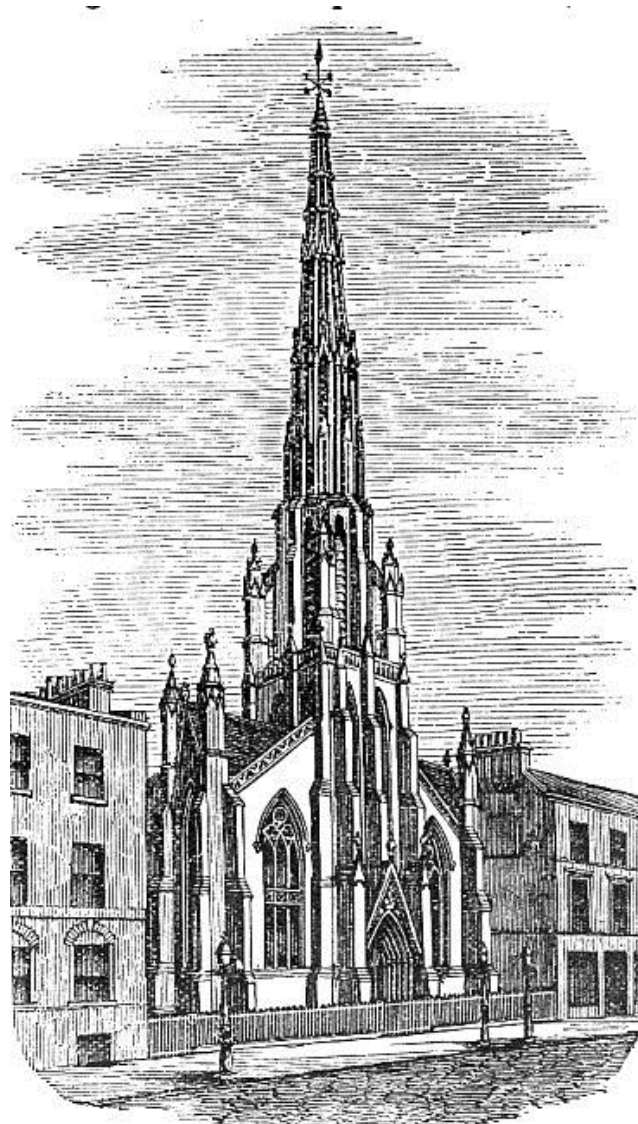


The Lewis Organ at Community Central Hall 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow



FREE ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.

The 3-manual Lewis organ at Community Central Hall (CCH) merited a Grade II* Historic Organ Certificate by the British Institute of Organ Studies in June 2010. This fine pipe organ originated at Free St John's Church (later St John's United Free Church) where it was built in 1889. A bazaar organised by the Ladies of the Church raised £1,300, and the organ cost £1,120 (Lewis Job No. 502 - 26 speaking stops). When the church closed for worship in 1923, the organ was moved to the newly-completed Methodist Central Hall in Maryhill Road and re-installed by Henry Hilsdon. In 1969 a fire caused smoke damage, necessitating professional cleaning by organ builder James Mackenzie.

During the late 1970's the building ceased to be a Methodist Church and became the property of Strathclyde Regional Council (latterly, Glasgow City Council). After undergoing interior

alterations, the building began to fulfil a new role as Community Central Hall, which, as a charitable trust, has served the community for over 40 years. The building is Grade C listed.



Significant trauma was experienced by this fine old instrument during the early 1990s, when the organ fell into disuse following vandalism and theft, which removed most of its 2-rank Mixture on the Great and much of the original lead pneumatic tubing for the Pedal Organ. Around twenty pipes were damaged, many from the Swell, causing gaps in the range of some stops.

CCH Organ Custodian John Power took up an interest in organs and organ-playing in April 1996 and soon discovered the charms of the Lewis organ at this venue. After finding out that an earlier fund-raising effort had run out of steam, John decided to take up the reins. Since then he has campaigned continuously for its restoration. Successful fund raising led to complete replacement of the wiring and associated switchgear for the blower. This has made the organ partially playable. However, much work needs done for it to realise its full potential. When fully restored, the organ should provide a useful resource for teaching, training, practice, entertainment and religious services, possibly even weddings, as well as being a fully-working monument to the best in Victorian craftsmanship. The organ was played during a Memorial Service held in late June 2004 for the victims of the Stockline Disaster. This serves to demonstrate the organ's role as a valuable and irreplaceable asset to the community.

Recent work on the organ includes re-establishing the pneumatic tubing to two of the pedal stops (Sub Bass and Flute Bass). This was carried out by organ-builder Paul Miller. More work needs done on the pneumatic mechanism. In 2009 the blower was inspected and given routine maintenance by a visiting engineer from Watkins & Watson of London.

Some Biographical Notes on Thomas Christopher Lewis (1833-1915)

English organ builder, who initially practised as an architect.

1860/1 Began organ re-building with John Whitaker and John Tunstall. Lewis also carried out bell founding and manufacture of pianos

1863 First brand-new organs built.

1866 Lewis moved into a new factory at Ferndale Road, Brixton, in London.

1877 Won the contract for a large 4-manual concert organ in the New Public Halls (later, the St Andrew's Halls) in Glasgow.

1884 Trading as a limited company - Lewis & Co. Ltd. Some time later John Michel Courage appointed technical director.

1897 A large organ, built for St Saviour's Collegiate Church (now Southwark Cathedral), London, as a memorial to John Michel Courage's father, Robert Courage.

1901 Lewis had left the company, which continued as Lewis & Co. Ltd. T.C. Lewis continued in organ building for several years.

1915 Death of T.C. Lewis

1919 Lewis & Co. Ltd merged with Henry Willis and Son, who traded from the Brixton works, as Henry Willis & Son and Lewis & Company.

1925 Lewis name dropped. .

T.C. Lewis was influenced by German and French organ-builders, such as Schulze and Cavaille-Coll and provided high quality reed and flute stops along with a bold and invigorating diapason chorus, using spotted metal (approx 50% lead and 50% tin). Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow, houses an excellent 3-manual and pedal organ (48 speaking stops) which is in daily use. Built initially for the International Exhibition of 1901, in a temporary concert hall, it was moved to a dedicated space in the main gallery in 1902.

Lewis & Co. Ltd., 1889 Community Central Hall, Maryhill Road. From St John's United Free Church. Transferred to present location during 1923 by **Henry Hilsdon**, who added a Super Octave coupler to the Swell Organ (and possibly Swell to Choir).

Swell	Choir	Great
Lieblich Gedact	16	Lieblich Gedact
Geigen Principal	8	Salicional
Stop Diapason	8	Dulciana
Viol de Gamba	8	Flauto Traverso
Voix Celestes	8	Piccolo Harmonique
Principal	4	
Flautina	2	
	Couplers	
		8 Bourdon
		8 Open Diapason
		8 Lieblich Gedact
		4 Octave
		2 Super Octave
		Mixture 1 1/2 *
		16
		8
		8
		4
		2
		II

Horn	8	Swell Super Octave	Pedal	
Oboe	8	Swell to Great	Open Bass	16
Clarionet	8	Swell to Choir	Sub Bass	16
Tremulant		Swell to Pedal	Flute Bass	8
		Great to Pedal		
		Choir to Pedal		

* mostly missing. At least 18 pipes, many from the Swell organ, were damaged by vandals. In addition, the Pedal Organ is inoperative due to theft of pneumatic tubing. However, for the purposes of practice, the three manuals can be coupled to the pedal-board.

Accessories: Toe pistons; Gt to Ped (reversible) 3 acting on Swell, 3 acting on Great & Pedal. Blower – British Organ Blowers, Derby

Stop list drawn up by John Power in 1996. See end of article for original specification.



A view inside the Swell box showing the high-quality spotted metal used in Lewis organ pipes.



New pneumatic tubing fitted to the Pedal Organ in 2007.



View of console showing left drawstop jamb for Swell Organ and Couplers.



Right Stop Jamb



Choir – Piccolo Harmonique

Lewis Shop Book 1 p. 102-104

(Film 80)

Job No 502.

Free St John, Glasgow.

Great. (58 notes C-a3)

Bourdon	16
Open Diapason	8
Flute Harmonique	8
Octave	4
Super Octave	2
Mixture 19.22	II
Trumpet	8
Swell to Great	

Choir. (58 notes C-a3)

Lieblich Gedact	8
Salicional (gamut G-grooved bass)	8
Dulciana	8
Flauto Traverso	4
Piccolo Harmonique	2

3 peds of com. to Swell (*sic*)
3 peds of com. to Great (*sic*)
Pedal to act on Great to Pedal
on/off

Swell. (58 notes C-a3)

Lieblich Bourdon	16
Rohr Flote	8
Geigen Principal (gamut G- grooved bass)	8
Viol de Gambe	8
Voix Celestes TC	8
Geigen Principal	4
Flautina	2
Horn	8
Oboe	8
Clarinet	8

Pedal. (30 notes C to f1)

Open Bass	16
Sub Bass	16
Flute Bass	8
Swell to Pedal	
Great to Pedal	
Choir to Pedal	

The author is grateful to Chris Kearn (British Institute of Organ Studies) for providing this specification.

To contribute to, or become involved in fund-raising for the CCH organ, or if you would like to be shown round the instrument, please contact John Power at Community Central Hall to arrange an appointment.