

John Avery

Founded/Born

1738 - 1808

Closed/Death

Still active?

no

Description

John Avery (c. 1738–1808) was a prominent English organ builder during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Based primarily in London, Avery was known for his work on significant organs, including those at King's College, Cambridge, and Winchester Cathedral. Despite his professional achievements, Avery had a colorful and tumultuous personal life. He was declared bankrupt in 1775 and again in 1801, and he was known for his excessive drinking. Avery also appeared as a witness in two trials at the Old Bailey in 1797, involving theft of his handkerchief and tools.

Although little of Avery's work survives today, notable examples include an organ at Ponsonby Baptist Church in New Zealand and another in the Finchcocks collection in Goudhurst, Kent. One of his apprentices, Alexander Buckingham, went on to collaborate with Thomas Elliot before establishing his own career as an independent organ builder. Avery's life ended in Giltspur Street Compter, highlighting the contrast between his professional accomplishments and personal struggles.

Sources

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Avery_\(organ_builder\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Avery_(organ_builder))

Auckland, Ponsonby Baptist Church

Jervois Road 43, 1011 Auckland, New Zealand



Builder	J. Avery
Year	1779
Period/Style	Classical
Stops	9
Keyboards	1
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical

Description

Auckland's Ponsonby Baptist Church houses New Zealand's oldest pipe organ, built in 1779 by John Avery, a prominent 18th-century English organ builder. Known for his colorful personality and significant contributions to organ construction, Avery's works include those at Winchester Cathedral, King's College Chapel in Cambridge, and Carlisle Cathedral. The organ at Ponsonby Baptist Church is the best-preserved example of his craftsmanship.

Originally likely used in a private mansion or smaller chapel, the organ was acquired in 1859 by George Selwyn, Bishop of Auckland, for installation in old St. Paul's Church, Auckland. It was restored and shipped to New Zealand under the supervision of George Job Elvey, organist of St. George's Chapel in Windsor. In 1897, the organ was bought by Ponsonby Baptist Church. A significant restoration by Goetze & Gwynn organ company between 2004 and 2005 returned the instrument to its original condition after 20th-century alterations. This restoration reestablished the organ as a fully playable historical gem, considered the oldest pipe organ in New Zealand and the Australasian continent where the maker's name is identifiable.

The manual compass is GG,C,AA,D-e3 with 54 notes, featuring a "Shifting Movement" pedal and a rebuilt Hautboy enclosed in a swell box. The temperament is unequal, enhancing its historical authenticity and unique sound.

Stoplist/Disposition

Manual

[Stop]Pd Diapason (8 ft, split to Bass/Treble)

Op[en] Diapason (8 ft, from c)

Dulciana (8 ft, from c1)

Principal (4 ft)

Twelfth (2 2/3 ft)

Fifteenth (2 ft)

Sesquialt[era] Bass

Cornet Treble (from c1)

Hautboy (8 ft, from c1)

Additional: "Shifting Movement" pedal, Hautboy swell pedal

Sources

<https://riccardo-gnudi.blogspot.com/2024/04/auckland.html>