



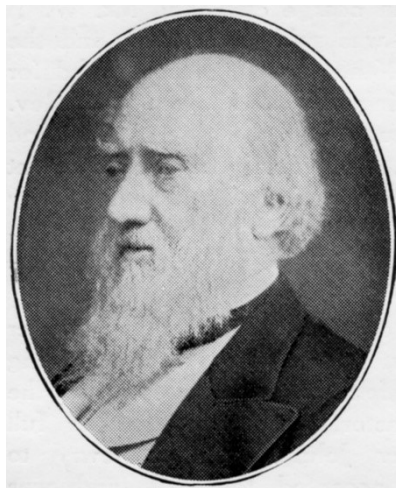
Belmont Presbyterian Church

My thanks to Alan Rintoul who kindly sent me the photo on Page 3. The other photographs below and most of the information is from *Belmont Presbyterian Church – Its Growth and Development. 75 Years of Congregational History, 1862-1937*, published to mark the church's diamond jubilee.

The foreword by Rev Robert Hyndman is dated November 1936 (the actual anniversary was 26 January 1937); the lists of organisations and 'officials' (viz. pastor, elders, committee, secretary, treasurer, pew letting, repairs, church officer and organist) are for the year 1935.

1862 Following a donation of the site and £1,600 for a church, manse and school from Thomas McClure (1806-1893) of Belmont House, the new church opened on 26 January 1862.

McClure served as Belfast's MP 1868-1874 and MP for Co Londonderry 1878-1885. He became Sir Thomas McClure in 1874.

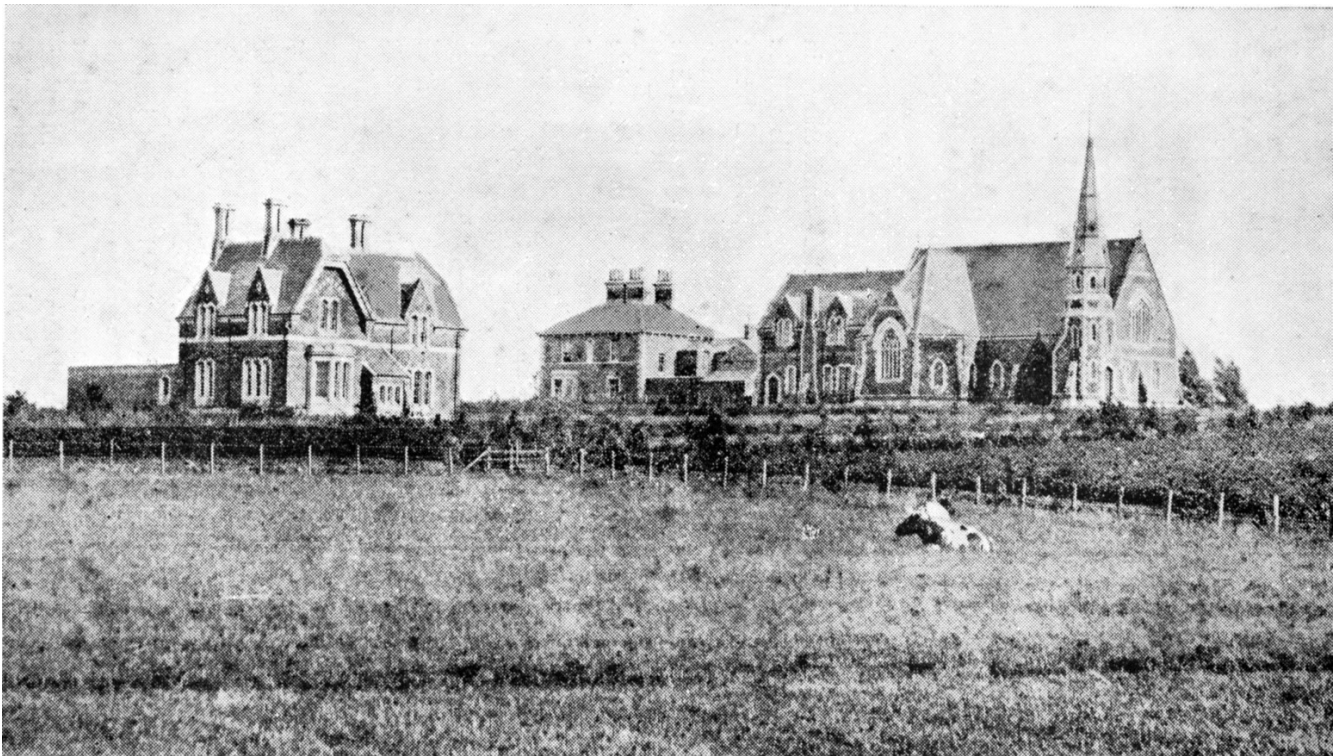


Sir Thomas McClure

The new church was designed by Newry-born architect W.J. Barre (1830-1867). Barre's architectural work in Belfast included the Ulster Hall (1859-1862), University Road Methodist Church (1864), Bryson House, Bedford Street (1865-1867) and the Albert Clock (1865-1870).

1873 Church enlarged by the addition of the south transept and south aisle. The original south wall was replaced by arches. The architect was Anthony Thomas Jackson whose buildings include Riddel's Warehouse (1867) in Ann Street and Belfast's Town Hall (1869) in Victoria Street. He was the son of the better-known architect, Thomas Jackson.

1887 Church enlarged once again with the addition of the north aisle. The architects this time were Young and Mackenzie.



The manse (left), a neighbouring house (centre, belonging to H C Craig) and the church (right) following the 1887 enlargement.

1889 Robert Ferguson erected the Ferguson Memorial Schools (later Belmont Primary School) and 'gave sufficient money to defray the ground rent for ever'. 'Sir Thomas McClure wiped out by deed the ground rent on the manse.'

1898 The Henderson family of Norwood Tower offered to provide an organ for the church and this was accepted to coincide with the 1900 enlargement. James Alexander Henderson (1823-1883) was one of the original founders of Belmont Church and the organ was in memory of his widow Agnes, née Mackay. James Alexander Henderson and Agnes's father Alexander Mackay, jun., were joint proprietors of the *Belfast Newsletter*. J.A. Henderson served as Belfast's mayor, 1873-1874.

When the organ was installed, its console was directly under the pipes and behind the pulpit. Alan Rintoul kindly provided the photograph of the early sanctuary (see page 3) and supplied the following quotation from 'our 75 year anniversary booklet':

'In 1899 the Henderson family of Norwood Tower presented an Organ in memory of their mother, a devoted member of the church. The dedication of this instrument was marked by a visit from Mr Alfred Hollins, the famous blind organist of Free St. George's Church, Edinburgh.'

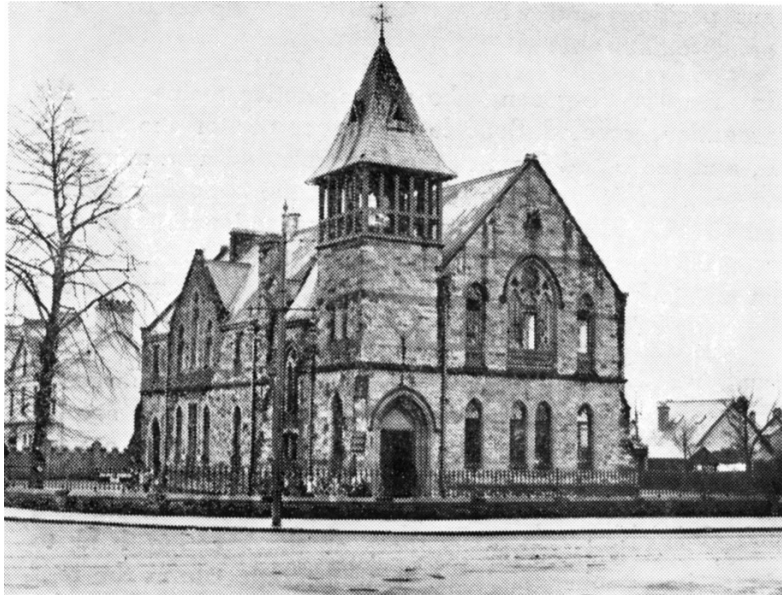
1900 A further enlargement added length to the building, removed the original small spire at the north side, added the tower and a new gallery to replace the old one. The architect was Vincent Craig (1869-1925). Born at Craigavon, Strandtown, Belfast, he was one of the seven sons of James Craig, J.P., of Craigavon and Tyrella, Co. Down, and a younger brother of James Craig, later Lord Craigavon, first premier of Northern Ireland.



This early photograph of the sanctuary may date from pre-1907 as the lighting appears to be by oil lamps.
Note the console within the body of the organ.

1907 Incandescent gas lighting was installed in the church.

1909 Upper storey added to the Ferguson Schools by the congregation.



Ferguson Memorial Schools, later Belmont Primary School, more recently Belmont Tower.
 'The Gothic-styled late Victorian listed building was beautifully restored by The Old Belmont School Preservation Trust and today it is a hive of activity offering classes, conference facilities, a coffee shop and CS Lewis exhibition.' (National Trust)

- 1925 The organ console was moved out into the front of the nave, facing the pulpit, with heavy velvet curtains to conceal the organist. The organ was 'overhauled and remodelled' and the pulpit also altered. Total cost: £610.



Henderson Memorial Organ (1898), pulpit (1908) and choir (1925)
 Photo probably c.1935.

1929 Electric lighting was installed in the church.

1935 The organist was Dr G S Fitzsimons.

George H. Fitzsimons, Mus. Doc., (T.C.D.) was head of Campbell College's music department 1940-1947.

E. Norman Hay, Mus. Doc. (Oxon) was the College's head of music in 1922-1923.

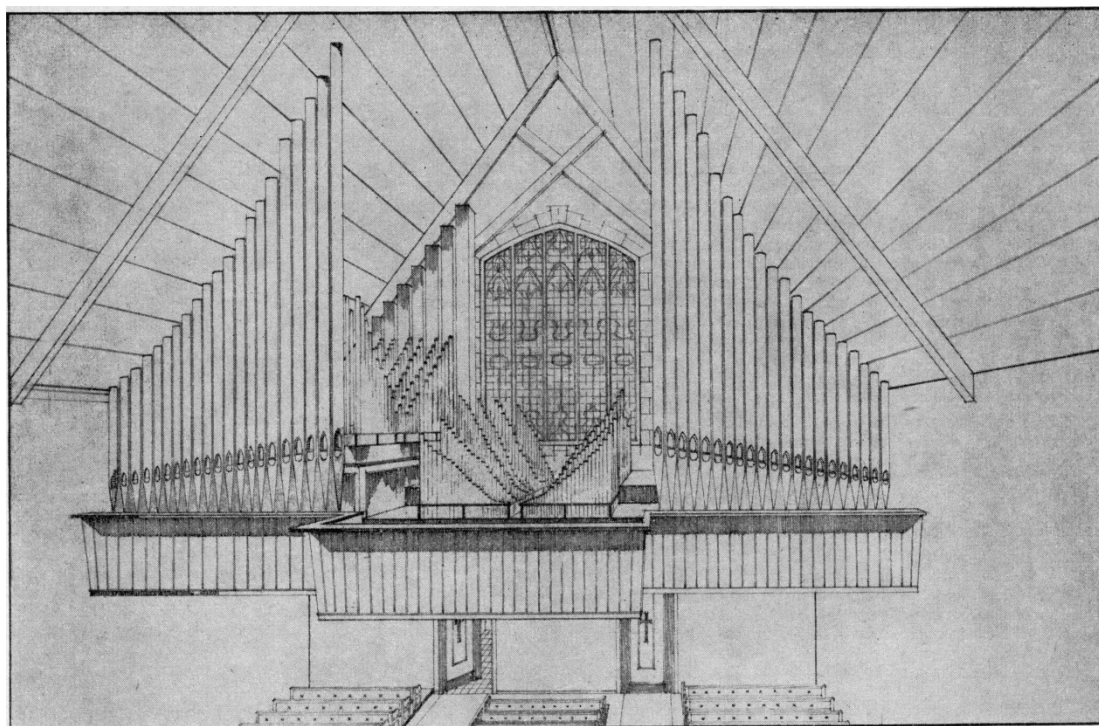
He too was organist at Belmont, presumably sometime during the 1920s (to be confirmed).



Belmont Church, Lecture Halls [Hyndman Hall] and gate lodge, c.1935

1964 The front of the church was remodelled, placing the pulpit to the north side of the newly opened-up apse which now featured a large wooden cross. The organ pipes were removed to the west end gallery (very 1960s with no casework and all (or many) of the pipes on display) and the new detached console was moved into the south side of the apse, sunken and hidden from congregational view. The choir area was also remodelled with a retaining wooden rail which was also very 1960s in appearance.

On page 6 is the drawing of the organ from the builders, Peter Conacher, Huddersfield. The long-serving organist who oversaw this dramatic change, adding a third manual, a Positive, was R A Megraw.



Belmont Church organ, 1964, rebuilt, remodelled, moved to the west end gallery and enlarged.

This was the new specification:

New Organ, Belmont Presbyterian Church, Belfast									
Compass of Manuals CC to C, 61 Notes									
Compass of Pedals CCC to F, 30 Notes									
GREAT ORGAN					POSITIVE ORGAN				
1. Harmonic Clarion	..	..	4 Feet	61 Notes from No. 2	31. Trumpet	..	..	8 Feet	61 Notes from Great Organ
2. Harmonic Trumpet	..	..	8 "	73 Pipes	32. Trompette	..	..	8 "	61 Pipes
3. Mixture (17th, 19th, 22nd)	..	..	3 ranks	183 "	33. Cymbel (29th, 33rd, 36th)	..	..	3 ranks	183 "
4. Fifteenth	..	..	2 Feet	61 "	34. Larigot	..	..	1 1/2 Feet	61 "
5. Harmonic Flute	..	..	4 "	61 "	35. Tierce	..	..	1 1/2 "	61 "
6. Principal	..	..	4 "	61 "	36. Block Flute	..	..	2 "	61 "
7. Hohl Flute	..	..	8 "	61 "	37. Nazard	..	..	2 3/4 "	61 "
8. Stopped Diapason	..	..	8 "	61 "	38. Wald Flute	..	..	4 "	61 "
9. Small Open Diapason	..	..	8 "	61 "	39. Octave	..	..	4 "	61 "
10. Large Open Diapason	..	..	8 "	61 "	40. Rohr Flute	..	..	8 "	61 "
11. Sub Bass	..	..	16 "	61 "	41. Principal	..	..	8 "	61 "
12. Swell to Great	..	..	..	..	42. Swell to Positive	..	..	..	..
13. Swell Octave to Great	..	..	..	..	
14. Swell Sub Octave to Great	..	..	..	..	
15. Positive to Great	..	..	..	..	
SWELL ORGAN					PEDAL ORGAN				
16. Harmonic Clarion	..	..	4 Feet	61 Pipes	43. Trumpet	..	..	8 Feet	30 Notes from No. 45
17. Oboe	..	..	8 "	61 "	44. Contra Fagotto	..	..	16 "	30 " from Swell Organ
18. Harmonic Cornopean	..	..	8 "	61 "	45. Trombone	..	..	16 "	12 Pipes Rest from Great
19. Contra Fagotto	..	..	16 "	61 "	46. Fifteenth	..	..	4 "	30 Notes from No. 53
20. Mixture (19th, 22nd, 26th)	..	..	3 ranks	183 "	47. Flute	..	..	8 "	30 " " No. 51
21. Fifteenth	..	..	2 Feet	61 "	48. Bass Flute	..	..	8 "	30 " " No. 52
22. Wald Flute	..	..	4 "	61 "	49. Principal	..	..	8 "	30 " " No. 53
23. Salicet	..	..	4 "	61 "	50. Octave	..	..	8 "	30 " " No. 54
24. Voix Celeste T.C.	..	..	8 "	49 "	51. Echo Bourdon	..	..	16 "	42 " " Great Organ
25. Viol D'Orchestre	..	..	8 "	61 "	52. Bourdon	..	..	16 "	42 Pipes
26. Lieblich Gedact	..	..	8 "	61 "	53. Open Diapason Metal	..	..	16 "	54 "
27. Geigen Diapason	..	..	8 "	61 "	54. Open Diapason Wood	..	..	16 "	42 "
28. Swell Octave	..	..	..	..	55. Acoustic Bass	..	..	32 "	30 Notes from No. 52
29. Swell Sub Octave	..	..	..	..	56. Swell to Pedal	..	..	..	..
30. Tremulant	..	..	..	..	57. Great to Pedal	..	..	..	..
					58. Positive to Pedal	..	..	..	..
ACCESSORIES									
Five Double Touch Thumb Pistons to Great Organ adding suitable Pedal on second touch									
Five Double Touch Thumb Pistons to Swell Organ adding suitable Pedal on second touch									
Five Single Touch Thumb Pistons to Positive Organ									
Five Toe Pistons to Great and Pedal Organs } six settings on Piston Board									
Five Toe Pistons to Swell and Pedal Organs }									
Reversible Thumb and Toe Pistons to Great to Pedal Coupler									
Reversible Thumb and Toe Pistons to Swell to Great Coupler									
Duplicate Reversible Toe Pistons for Swell to Great and Great to Pedal Couplers at both sides of Console									
Conveniently placed switchboards for changing piston settings at the Console									
Canceller Name Plates to the stops of each section—Swell, Great, Positive & Pedal									
Detached Drawstop Console with balanced Swell Pedal in centre of knee-board									
Our latest design Console Stop-key Lighting for Couplers only									
Signal light for Blower—Green									
Signal light for Minister, Weddings, etc.—Red									
'Discus' Electric Blowing Plant and Rectifier Equipment									

SPRINGWOOD ORGAN WORKS, HUDDERSFIELD
established 1854

On the next page is a picture of the new organ console. These illustrations are from an advertising feature in the June 1964 issue of *Musical Opinion*.



Console of the organ at Belmont Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

CONACHER ORGANS

ACCESSORIES

Five Double Touch Thumb Pistons to Great Organ adding suitable Pedal on second touch
 Five Double Touch Thumb Pistons to Swell Organ adding suitable Pedal on second touch
 Five Single Touch Thumb Pistons to Positive Organ
 Five Toe Pistons to Great and Pedal } six settings
 Organs } on Piston Board
 Five Toe Pistons to Swell and Pedal }
 Organs }
 Reversible Thumb and Toe Pistons to Great to Pedal Coupler
 Reversible Thumb and Toe Pistons to Swell to Great Coupler
 Duplicate Reversible Toe Pistons for Swell to Great and Great to Pedal Couplers at both sides of Console
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SPRINGWOOD ORGAN WORKS, HUDDERSFIELD

Telephone Huddersfield 30053

established 1854

Telegrams: Conacher, Huddersfield

Branches: BELFAST, SWANSEA, DUBLIN & CORK

Since 1964, in recent times (date?), the console has been moved into the nave, at the front of the south side row of pews. Sadly, the robed choir, created in 1974 with funding for the robes from the Armour and Boucher families (if memory serves me correctly), has been disbanded (2014). The robes and extensive library of choral music have all been sold off.