

St Ippolyts Church Organ

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ORGANS IN ST. IPPOLYTS PARISH CHURCH

Introduction

It is not known whether an organ was installed prior to 1873. Certainly a harmonium was used as this is mentioned in the Herts Express 8 November 1873 as being "woefully inadequate" to support robust singing. We have not been able to find out, whether prior to the harmonium there may have been a barrel-organ or even a village band.

1873 Organ

The Revd. E T Carey, John Cook and Henry Taylor (churchwardens) were responsible for raising money in 1873 to provide a new organ.

They asked William Carling, organist of St. Mary's Hitchin to design and have built under his direction a six stop instrument. The following specification of this Great Organ has been researched from the collection owned by John Gatward.

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|---------------------|---|
| 1. Open Diapason | 8' 56 pipes (m) |
| 2. Stopped Diapason | 8' tone 56 pipes (w)
middle c - g open |
| 3. Dulciana | 8' 44 pipes (m) grooved
bass |
| 4. Principal | 4' 56 pipes (m) |
| 5. Flute | 4' tone 56 pipes (w)
stopped wood |
| 6. Fifteenth | 2' 56 pipes |

The organist was Mrs Cook, possibly the wife of the churchwarden John Cook.

The 1891 Organ

By 1890 Mr Carling's organ had outlived its usefulness and a professional organ builder was requested to design and build a new instrument. Alfred Oldknow built the 2 manual and pedals 15 stop tracker action organ in an organ chamber (doubling as the priest's vestry) on the north side of the chancel in 1891.

It was dedicated and used for the first time at the Harvest Festival on Thursday 8 October 1891 played by Miss Carey with Alfred Oldknow giving a short recital to demonstrate the resources of the instrument.

The opening recital was given by Mr. Henry W Weston, assistant organist of Crystal Palace, on Thursday 15 October 1891. The programme for this recital is not known. A further recital of choral and organ works was given on 18 November 1891 when items such as Largo, Lift up your heads (Messiah) by Handel and O Lord how manifold - Barnby were performed as reported in the Herts Express.

THE SPECIFICATION OF THE ORGAN 1891

Two manual and pedal tracker action, 15 speaking stops, 3 couplers and tremulant.

Two foot combination pedals to Great, two foot combination pedals to Swell

Concave and straight pedal board.
Trigger swell lever.

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Rance)

SWELL CC – g ³		
16' Bourdon	CC - E Flat w	56 pipes
16' Double Diapason	E - g ³ w/m	
8' Violin Diapason	m	56 pipes
8' Lieblich Gedact	w/m	56 pipes
8' Gamba	m	44 pipes
8' Vox Angelica	m	44 pipes
4' Principal	m	56 pipes
8' 2rk Mixture 12.15	m	112 pipes
8' Oboe	m	56 pipes
8' Cornopean	m	56 pipes
GREAT CC – g ³		
8' Open Diapason	m	56 pipes
8' Clarabella	w	56 pipes
8' Dulciana	m	56 pipes
4' Principal	m	56 pipes
4' Harmonic flute	m	56 pipes
PEDAL CCC – F		
16' Bourdon	w	30 pipes

The organ, of typically robust Victorian construction and positioned in a chamber on the north side of the chancel, has performed adequately with regular attention to cleaning and action renovation. The records show that the organ was overhauled in 1922 by the original builders. An electric blower was installed in 1942 whilst still keeping the original hand blowing feeders and handle. A major clean and overhaul was carried out in 1973 with addition of a balanced swell pedal in place of the trigger swell pedal originally installed by Hill, Norman & Beard, the total cost being £1,236. In the period from 1973, apart from regular tuning, the only work was to treat the 16' Swell Bourdon basses because of active woodworm.

Information about the 1873 and 1891 organs was researched by Daphne

The 1994 Organ

An appeal was launched in 1989 to raise £35,000 for repairs to the church which would include an amount set aside for the organ. It was not possible to consider major work until a generous bequest from the estate of Mary Frances Whiting (1912-1990) was given by her relatives. In late 1992, a specification was drawn up after consultation with Eric Pask, Diocesan Organ Advisor, and David Atkinson, organist of St. Mary's, Hitchin who was asked to act as consultant. This specification was sent to five organ builders to tender estimates and Peter Wood of Thaxted was chosen to carry out the work. The restoration was started on 10 January 1994 and completed on 23 April 1994.

In this restoration and enlargement, the following work was carried out.

- Restoration of Great and Swell actions
- Re-leathering of the bellows and removal of hand feeders
- Installation of a new Laukhuff blower
- Introduction of a 30 note radiating and concave pedal board together with a new 2 stop pedal chest located immediately behind the pedal board together with remodelled pedal coupling action
- Refurbished console together with signal lights from South door and Vestry
- Recasting of Swell mixture from 12.15 to 15.19
- Discarding the treble of the 8' Clarabella on the Great Organ and replacing with a new 8' Stopt Diapason treble

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- Adding 2' Fifteenth and 2rk Mixture 19.22 to the Great Organ
 - Adding 16' Salicional to the Pedal Organ (Haskelled bass on Father Willis spotted metal pipes – remainder open Hope Jones pipes)
- 1) Mixture recast from 12.15
 - 2) New pipes from C25, G56 remainder from 8' Clarabella
 - 3 & 4) New stops spotted metal (50% tin)
 - 5) Bottom C1-B12 Haskelled Father Willis pipes, C13-F30 Hope Jones Salicional

THE SPECIFICATION OF THE ORGAN 1994

- Two manual and pedal tracker action, 18 speaking stops and 3 couplers and tremulant.
- 2 foot pedal combination to Great, 2 foot pedal combination to Swell.
- Radiating and concave pedal board. Balanced swell pedal.

We now have in this restored and enlarged instrument an organ which is capable, not only of providing a wealth of accompanimental tone but also the sparkle and brightness needed for a wide range of organ repertoire. We are deeply indebted to Peter Wood and his team for their superb craftsmanship and professionalism.

SWELL (Left jam)

16' Bourdon	wm	56 pipes
16' Double Diapason		56 pipes
8' Violin Diapason	m	56 pipes
8' Lieblich Gedact	wm	56 pipes
8' Gamba	m	44 pipes
8' Vox Angelica	m	44 pipes
4' Principal	m	56 pipes
2 rk Mixture 15.19	m	112 pipes
8' Oboe	m	56 pipes
8' Cornopean	m	56 pipes

GREAT (Right jam)

8' Open Diapason	m	56 pipes
8' Stopt Diapason	w	56 pipes
8' Dulciana	m	44 pipes
4' Principal	m	56 pipes
4' Harmonic flute	m	56 pipes
2' Fifteenth	m	56 pipes
2' rk Mixture 19.22	m	112 pipes

PEDAL (Right jam)

16' Salicional	m	30 Pipes
16' Bourdon	w	30 pipes

w = wood m = metal
O = Oldknow

ORGANISTS OF ST. IPPOLYTS PARISH CHURCH

Miss Cooke	1872
Miss Carey	1891
Miss Scarborough	?
Gilbert Shrive	1935
Colin Moule	1935-1942
Cora Taylor	1942-1967
Wilfred Watkin	1967-1977
Derek Cann	1978-Present

Information supplied by
Derek Cann