

The extended 1889 Bevington Organ at



St Peter & St John Church Clifton Road Rugby

For Coventry & Warwickshire Organists Association
June 2008



St Peter & St John Church Rugby History & development of the Organ

Old photographs in the 'Tin Church' before 1908 show a 'Positive' type organ similar to the one that was in St John's Church Cambridge Street. (one manual 6 split stops treadle blower [later electrified]). This organ was referred to in the report of the 1909 opening & the Hill Norman and Beard contract is in the church records.

Old PCC meeting minutes show money being raised for 'A suitable Organ' and in the records there is a contract with Hill Norman and Beard for a 2 Manual pipe organ. In **1912** records show that there was an organ as the the Organist, Mr. Sudworth was paid £19-2s-6d per annum and the Organ Blower was paid £6-2s-6d.

It is highly probable that the instrument installed at about that time was a 2 manual Conacher instrument purchased from St James Milnrow in Rochdale because in a letter dated 18th July 1961 from Hill Norman and Beard to Mr. Derek Reynolds the organist at that time they said "we were interested to renew our acquaintanceship with this old Conacher instrument which we assembled in the church in the early part of this century" The BIOS entry suggests it could have been a Wadsworth instrument but based on the letter mentioned above this is probably the Conacher instrument.

According to BIOS the specification was a Tracker action instrument

Pedal: Open Diapason 16'; Bourdon 16' (Low C to Middle F)

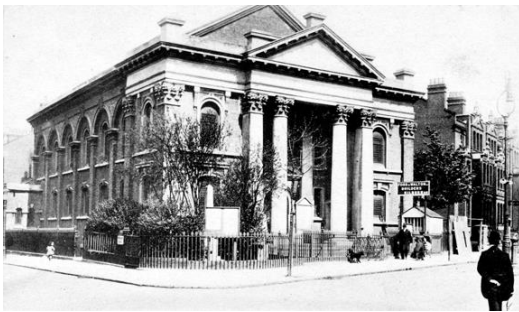
Great: Small Open Diapason 8'; Stopped Diapason 8'; Keraulophon 8'; Flute 4'; Fifteenth 2'; Cremona 8' (Low C to high g)

Swell: Teneroon 16'; Open Diapason 8'; Stopped Diapason 8' Voix Celeste 8'; Principal 4'; Fifteenth 2'; Mixture 3 rank; Oboe 8'; Cornopean 8'



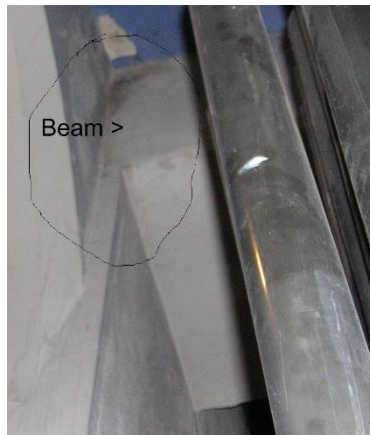
This tracker action instrument was originally on the floor of the church in the centre of the back wall. This means it was placed at original floor level towards the 'East Window' end of the existing Sanctuary. It was in this position when it came into the new church from Milnrow up until **1933** when the Vestry, Organ Loft and Sanctuary extension were built.

F W Burns and Co from Nuneaton were selected to clean, refurbish and reinstall the Conacher instrument in the new organ loft. A new electric blower was purchased (perhaps hand blowing continued until 1933?). The blower was a Watkins and Watson unit with a BTH motor and cost £56 – 15s – 0d. The Conacher instrument gave good service but by **1961** was beginning to wear out again and was ready for a fresh clean and refurbishment. At that time, St Peter's was a very prosperous church with a very strong congregation, a large choir (predominantly female) and a big Sunday School with children being 'bussed in'! – So an Organ renewal project was developed and after four quotations an agreement was reached with Kingsgate Davidson & Co. In exchange for the Conacher Organ, and a covering balance a restored 1889 tracker action Bevington Instrument (originally 22 speaking Stops) would be installed from the redundant **Quex Road Methodist Church London**, now a block of flats.



This organ was supplied and fitted in **1962** in the existing organ loft with a draw stop console – but there was a **BIG** problem. In measuring up the organ chamber the organ builders had checked the overall dimensions and had confirmed that the instrument would fit **BUT** they forgot the big concrete roof support beam going across the back of the chamber. When the organ was installed the original tracker system for the Swell had to be 'cut down to get it in' this made the swell pallets **LOWER** than the Great. The result

was disastrous and although the instrument was possible to play uncoupled, it was virtually impossible when Swell to Gt was drawn, much, much heavier than other local Victorian tracker instruments of similar size – St Peter's Grandborough and St Mark's Bilton.



PROBLEM



This situation was unacceptable and 'detailed negotiations' were held with Kingsgate Davidson. Eventually, a price was agreed where Kingsgate Davidsons would install a complete Electro Pneumatic action, provide a new 'Trumpet/Trombone' reed rank, extra extension units for more Pedal stops and provide a brand new 3 manual Tab stop detached electric console. Draw stops were considered, but the organ builders wanted to take 3 or 4 ranks out to do this so the church decided to stick with tabs and keep the pipes. This was all done in **1965**.

Kingsgate Davidson maintained the organ here from **1962** and restored and refurbished Rugby Baptist Church 3 manual Nicholson & Lord Instrument shortly after. They ceased trading in 1966 and their tuning was taken over by the Liverpool firm of Rushworth and Dreaper until **1977** when Roy Young was appointed to look after the Instrument.

The current organ specification is as follows: (June 2008)

+GREAT+		+Swell+	
16'	Double Diapason	8'	Open Diapason
8'	Large Open Diapason	8'	Gedact
8'	Small Open Diapason	8'	Gamba
8'	Clarabella	8'	Celeste
8'	Dulciana	4'	Principal
4'	Principal	2'	Fifteenth
4'	Flute	3rk	Mixture
2 rk	Rausch Quint (12 th & 15 th)	8'	Cornopean
3rk	Mixture	4'	Clarion
8'	Trumpet (Separate Chest) [Ex Rugby School Walker]	16'	Krummhorn
CHOIR		+Pedal+	
8'	Stopped Diapason	32'	Resultant Bass
4'	Principal (Tenor C)	16'	Open Wood
4'	Stopped Flute	16'	Bourdon
2'	Piccolo	8'	Bass Flute
8'	Clarinet (Tenor C)	8'	Principal
8'	Trumpet (From Gt)	4'	Fifteenth
		8'	Trumpet (From Great)
		16'	Trombone (Separate Chest)

(+ 1965 * 1978/9)

Action: Great, Swell, Pedal and Reed Chests – Electro pneumatic; Choir - Direct Electric

Couplers:

Gt to Ped Sw to Gt

Sw to Ped Sw to Ped/4 Sw Sub Octave Sw Octave Sw Unison Off (Not operational)

Sw to Ch Ch Octave (Not operational)

Pistons: 4 Gt 4Sw 4Ch 8 Ped

Reversers: Sw to Ped Gt to Ped

Blower: Single Stage B.O.B. Co 1.4Kw 415V, 3Ph Sleeve bearing Induction Motor with DOL Starter

Pressure:(WGP Water Gauge Pressure) 8" Trumpet & Trombone: 5" Swell 3" Great & Choir

Action PSU: 30A 18V supplied via Contactor from DOL 3Ph Starter: **Sw Control:** 12 stage whiffle Box

Maintenance & Development History:

1962 – 1965 Kingsgate Davidson un-couplable tracker then 1965 3 Manual Detached Electric Console with complete action electrification for the 2 Manuals of the Bevington Tracker instrument

1966 – 1977 Rushworth and Dreaper Dismissed due to regular wrong tuning visit days (no heat!)

1979 – 1980 Peter Lock & Gerald King etc Acquisition of Holy Trinity 6 rank Choir Organ, with Clarinet & Dulciana ranks, Manufacture of support framework, design, wiring and installation of direct electric action with Stero vertical pull magnets & Slide Drivers, console to Choir wiring looms.

1977 – 2002 Roy Young, then Richard Young. Choir control logic with choir keyboard contacts and wiring (1980) & Rugby School Trumpet (2002)

2003 - 2012 Peter Spencer Choir Tabs and Combinations fitted (2009) Swell Slide driver repairs

2012 → Richard Young Full Great Slide driver Engine Power section re-leathered (2014)

The Choir Organ Project

In 1977 it became apparent that the redundant unlisted 1855 Gilbert Scott Holy Trinity Church at the end of Church Street would be demolished to make way for sheltered flats.

This church contained an old 3 manual Forster and Andrews Tracker action organ.

BIOS reference: <http://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=D02765>

After some negotiations the Holy Trinity instrument was split 3 ways. Some of the casework and Pipes went to All Saints Leamington, Roy Young and Co acquired many pipes from Gt and Swell for the new instrument his firm designed & constructed at St Georges Church Rugby in 1980, St Peter's were kindly allowed to have the Choir Organ, Clarinet and Dulciana Pipes.

The project was planned in stages and was accomplished mainly during the summer of 1977 in the following sequence:

Removal and packing of Pipes from Holy Trinity

Removal of the Choir Chest to St Peters (brought in the back of an old Morris Minor Traveler)

Some of the pedal pipe extension units were rearranged

Provision of 'Solid State' Driver and coupler units wired to Choir Keyboard which had key contacts fitted, this part of the work was done by Roy Young and Co – most of the money for this coming from Mrs K. Holgate in memory of her husband Alan Holgate – for many years a member of St Peter's Choir.

With other friends and supporters we accurately measured up the Chest and Mr Gerald King – an expert carpenter and chorister made a strong support frame for chest, slide drivers and action board.

With contacts in the Marine Propulsion Projects section of GEC via Peter Urry the leading Bass Soloist in the choir we were able to acquire about 60m of 48 core multi-strand insulated cable and using 2 runs lay this in the heating duct to cross the church thus providing connection to Action Board and the 'Solid State' driver unit.



An action board was originally designed using Kimber Allen direct acting Lever Magnets and a quotation request letter sent off. This was rebuffed with a VERY stern letter telling us that we were not approved purchasers of their equipment and all work on church organs must be carried out by fully qualified and registered organ builders!



After contacts with Stero, (R A Williams) in Birmingham – provided we paid cash – they agreed to supply their equipment so the action board was redesigned. With very careful measurements a direct pull solenoid action board was built with 56 magnet driver power transistors, kindly acquired from 'Radio Rentals' – whose Rugby Manager Harold Ayscough was Church Warden. A wind supply was arranged from the Great Wind Reservoir.

After arranging various pipe swaps and purchasing other ranks we were able to commission the unit with the Clarinet, an 8' Stopped Diapason and the 4' flute and no slide drivers as these were quite expensive. Initial trials were disastrous!! Whilst the action would work and the notes sound more or less immediately, there was a significant delay in magnet release making it impossible to play anything other than 'Adagio' hymn tunes.



Peter Urry an Electronics Control Engineer and choir member brought his oscilloscope and measured circuit voltages and waveforms in action. The magnet power drivers had been built with simple single diode transistor back emf protection.

This works well for any intermittently operating solenoid however it will not work for rapid repeated operation. Diode/Zener Diode arrangements are needed to reduce the field flux collapse time so 47V Zener diodes were fitted on advice from Peter and magnet release time reduced to virtually the same as the other manuals, 'Allegro' playing was now possible – problem solved.

Over the next 2 years Stereo Slide drivers were purchased and the console slots lengthened to take Tabs, however old Windscreen Wiper switches were fitted on a temporary basis – these were replaced by Tabs in 2009. Other than the occasional loose magnet the action has worked reasonably reliably for nearly 32 years.



Choir Organ Pipes

1896 Forster & Andrews Clarinet at the front

Latest updates 2010 – 2018 by Peter Lock – Associate Organist

Due to maintenance problems with the flat roof above the organ in the period from 2000 to about 2011 there were a number of major roof leaks into the instrument. Just after Easter 2012 there was a Major plaster fall in the chamber. This caused significant damage including some bent pipework. Roof repairs were carried out and after all Great Pipes were removed and the table boarded chamber plaster repairs were done and the new plaster painted. Pipes were replaced and tuned. Paul Daly from Leicester carried out all the organ work. After the pipe reinstallation major problems with Great Slide drivers developed. In 2014 the Great Slide driver unit had the power section completely refurbished, however this did not completely solve the problems and the North Side Great upper board has warped and jammed the 3 rank mixture slide, this has been repaired (July 2015). The Swell Gedact and Salicional Slide drivers failed in October 2015. These have now been jammed on, so far the others are still working OK except the Voix Celeste which is getting slow (July 2017). Correct lubrication to the Blower bearings was restored in March 2018 but the extended 'heat wave' caused a number of unforeseen problems with the Great Mixture slide sticking and a high pressure wind section intermittent cypher

Information & research by Peter Lock

Organist & Choirmaster 1976 -1990 then Organist 2010 – 2017

Organists & Choirmasters - Directors of Music

St Peter's Church
(From 1992, St Peter & St John Church)
Clifton Road Rugby

W. Sudworth	1902
A. J. Trivett	1911
Derek A. Reynolds	1959
Roger Fifield	1967
Charles P. Cashmore	1968
Peter Lock	1976
Roy Young	1990
Kevin Downham	1995
Roy Young	1999
John Merrigan	2002
Peter Lock Organist Yvonne Rollins Choir Director	2010
John Merrigan Organist Yvonne Rollins Choir Director	2017
<small>From October 2018: Musician Team</small> Organist; John Merrigan Junior Choir Leader; Caroline Tavinor Associate Organist; Peter Lock ARSM . Musicians; Helen Merrigan Guitar & Gail Richmond	2019