

St Margaret, Crick, Northamptonshire

1819 organ by Thomas Elliot
2008-9 restoration by Martin Goetze and Dominic Gwynn

Progress Report 3, May 2009

The Pedal Pipes

Most of the wood pipes were cleaned, repaired and measured at an earlier stage, but some work was left until the organ was assembled. The largest pedal pipes was one such part. With storage space limited, it was sensible to leave their restoration until it was possible to carry out work on them and then install them directly in their proper place.

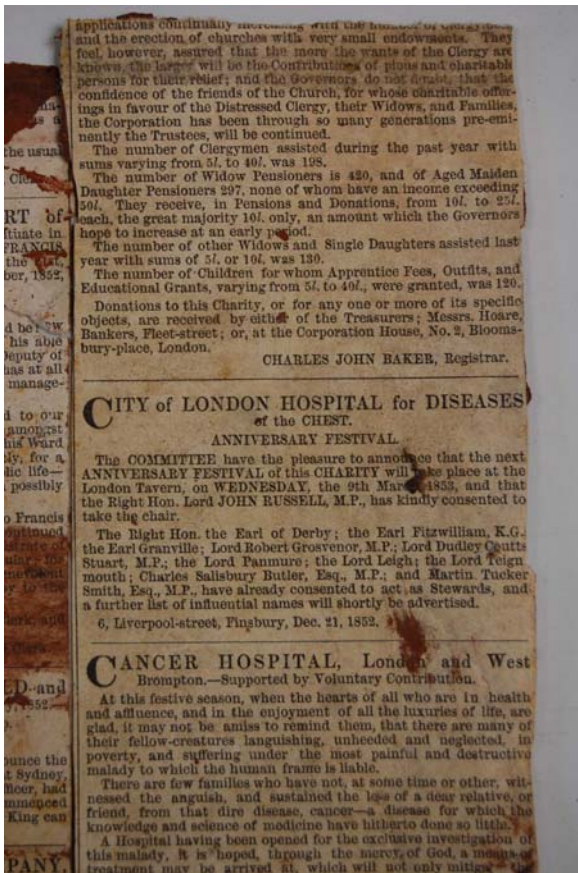


The largest pipe was also the in the poorest condition, as it had been lying on the ground in the sexton's hut in the churchyard. Apart from plenty of dirt, it suffered from woodworm damage, dry rot, failed glue joints, shrinkage, rusted screws, warped pipe walls etc.

After cleaning, it was necessary to produce an order of work so that one area of the pipe could be repaired before another, otherwise complete collapse would have resulted. While the insides were at their most accessible, paper and paint that had been used during manufacture were either carefully removed or stabilised with glue size.

Dates on some of the lining paper confirmed that the pipes and the Pedal soundboard were probably made at the same time. The inside corners were sealed with folded lengths of brown packing paper. After the walls were rebuilt, the four inside wall surfaces were lined with more paper. This was applied by rolling each of the four pieces up (having been cut to size), rolling thinned glue down the length of the pipe, and unrolling the paper followed by more size.





Paper used for lining the GG pipe, with a date of 1852

For two months we were joined by José Manuel Izquierdo, a musicology student from Chile. For the previous two years he has been involved in the restoration of the large and very important 1849 B. Flight and Son organ in Santiago cathedral. Since there is nobody with knowledge or skills in the restoration of such organs in Chile, the experience gained in working on a very similar instrument here has been invaluable.



José Manuel cleaning pallets of the Great soundboard

Stop action

The Swell stops have a length of vertical softwood whose weight would try to push the stop knobs out. A clumsy spring system was used to support the timber's weight. This was taken off and a balanced backfall system introduced.

The engraving of the stop knobs had become unclear in some cases. They were cleaned, repaired and the engraving filled with black engraving wax and polished.



The original stoplist was
Open Diapason
Stop Diapason
Principal
Trumpet
Hautboy

When the compass was extended down from tenor f to tenor c the Trumpet was replaced with a Piccolo (2ft), and another Piccolo (1ft) was added. The Trumpet which has been on the Great was found to be the original Swell one. The reed blocks are, unusually, marked with their number in the row, which eases identification. In this case, no. 8 is middle c, so although only resonators survive below this, this Trumpet is clearly from the Swell. A small veneer which had covered the original holes has been removed. The rackboard also has original Trumpet holes.

Reed pipes

Most of the lower resonators of the Great Trumpet survive, and also many of the blocks. The crumpled pipes have been carefully rounded and put into order.



A few resonators of narrower scale were found. After all the resonators were put into the correct order, the only place for these extra ones was in the five lowest places of the Swell Hautboy.

The dummy front pipes in the two round towers at the outside edges of the case front have original gilding. They have been cleaned but otherwise left in original condition. The metal front pipes have had an undercoat and gold paint applied on top of the original gilding. It was decided that recovering the original gilding was not a viable option in this instance. Stripping required Nitromors for the gold paint, but caustic soda for the other layers.



Casework

All the casework has been cleaned, repaired and colour matched. Some new parts are having a grained finish to match the original.



Wind

The bellows has been finished, and a new blower box and wind trunk made and fitted.

Positioning some of the extra pipes for the notes below bottom C has needed careful planning, as the organ is not central to the tower arch. A better route has been arranged for the supply of air to these pipes. It was evident that much alteration had taken place at an early date in order to accommodate the Pedal pipes. With these pipes in place, it is now not possible to gain access to the inside of the organ by the route formerly used. However, it was clear that the upper door in the case side had been an earlier form of access, and this has been arranged to work once again.