

SURVEY OF THE PIPE ORGAN IN ST. THOMAS'S NIPSWICH. (1967-8)
(April 1st 1968.)

We all appreciate the person who speaks frankly and truthfully. This is what I intend to do breathe and parish priest.

The only parts of the organ there that are of any value at all are the pipes and the soundchest on which the pipes stand.

The organ was built at least a hundred and fifty years ago in Manchester by R. Cole. It came out I believe second hand.

The metal pipes are battered and damaged by age, by corrosion collapse of the metal feet, by the broken frames supporting them, and also by the tuners years and years of knocking in and opening out to tune. (The modern way developed fifty years ago is to fit tuning slides of tin plate at the top of the pipes to move up or down thus never damaging the pipe.) The rector will show you one of the feet of the TRUMPET rank which has collapsed in this way.

The wood pipes, some three hundred, from ten feet in length to three eighths in length, are very bad... split, glue perished, the white sheep skin from the original now perished.... etc etc

Even if you sold the pipe work, which you will not... the buyer would have to spend many many hours of work on restoration.

I do not want to take up too much of your time in the technicalities... but my aim is to make a suggestion that I dearly plead with you to carry out.

You have a wonderful voice there in the pipes... these are truly beautiful and have not been heard in their full splendour I should say for 25 years at least because of the defects of age and my other remarks.

The important thing to note gentlemen is that the pipes and the organ can be restored. I advise you to get a price, and estimated cost of completely restoring the ACTION WORK... and THE PIPE WORK. Do not even mention the keys or stops... you will write to Whithouses and Jarrot and other Builders names I could give to you.

You would receive a letter to say the price would be approx... note approx... some \$3000. I know this may seem silly, but I would say even higher.

AN APPEAL. I think these still work provided you have a COMMITTEE A COMMITTEE COMMITTEE. It may be possible to launch a (General) RESTORATION APPEAL so that the church could have some restoration carried out as well as the organ. I would be happy to come and launch or preach for the appeal.

RIGHT... assuming that you will do this, you begin the work and this is by means of an overdraft. START the work at the same time as the appeal is launched. When THINGS ARE STARTED people are willing to give. But so many things are started by an appeal and we never see any action.

Now assuming you will do this, your restoration committee must be themselves committed and they will determine what is first to be done. You know all about this. I know very little but after two visits I could quickly see that there is important work to be done.

COMING NOW TO THE PART THAT CONCERNS ME...THE ORGAN.

In spite of what I said in the first part of my survey, I am going to tell you that the organ can be not only brought back to its original beauty as our dear departed friend the builder R. COLE saw and heard it so long ago....not only this, but this instrument can be made easier to play and greatly enhanced by re-building, re voicing and restoring the pipes, by new keys, new action throughout, new pedal organ and improved console facilities for the player including what is known as a balanced swell pedal instead of the present pedal controlling the shutters and sound. (This existing pedal went out 50 years ago and is known as the nags head ~~hitch~~ down swell pedal.)

(I was chief designer draftsman at Henry Willis London so I am qualified to say these things.)

Sheet two.

The work on the organ would be so great as to make it almost impossible for me to spend the time racing back and forward to Ipswich. To take a month's holiday would not even see the job completed.

Therefore, the whole restoration should on my opinion be carried out in stages...this is if you want me to do the work,

I would propose to remake new action from cedar for the swell organ...and the instrument would be in use during the change over and new work.

broadly speaking, this is what must be done;

(1) New Keyboard, a single keyboard from which the whole organ can be better managed by the organist.

Completely new action all round. The Pedal dept must be placed on pneumatic so that an eight foot stop can also be introduced with existing sixteen foot stop. Mechanical action to couple manual what is the keys to the pedals so that the organist can see the ~~keys~~ keys being depressed. New Pedal board Radiating and concave to suit better and easier playing. (Made from silver ash.)

A new super octave coupler to be placed on the swell organ ~~which~~ does double the power on that organ. New drawstops and new action from stops to chests.

I have to say that there are two sets of pipes missing in the swell chamber....these we do not seem to know where they went, but they certainly were there at one time. These are a total of 120 pipes and I would propose to move two sets from the great into this position on the swell. In the new scheme with the single manual there would be a greater number of stops, a greater variety of tone, and the organist would have a much better and easier command of the entire instrument. Actually the organ would be more powerful than it is now and there would have to be two sets of pipes taken out. I know that this sounds illogical but your organist will understand that by adding the octave coupler on the swell she will have double that sound all the upper octaves would come in with the keys pressed down.

We could restore and recoup some £50 for the pipes not wanted. I could take responsibility for this.

A new blower very suitable stands at Roma for sale....at about £100....I would very much recommend this. We could I suppose try moving the existing motor and blower but there would be no sure certainty that the noise would be reduced...but we could try it.

The case work would be left the same. The front pipes cleaned and re voiced on a new coundchest. (Pneumatic.)

The work could be undertaken by me and I could begin at once. It will take one year to complete the restoration. This will give you time to attend to the finance. The organ would be left playing but only one section while I dismantle the other section to re make the action and restore the pipes. All this must be carried out here where I have the space and the machinery and I can use what spare time I can to do it. I would propose to start on the swell/...the organist will realise that she will have only the great and the pedal depts. This is ample anyway. Next I would commence the new action. I should have to stay there for a few days doing this. then I would get on to the other work.

A few of the technical notes I have made I will include;
New pedal board. New Pedal soundboards, pneumatic. Relay chests etc.
16' Bourdon and 8' Flute on pedals.

Bellows to releather or reconstruct.

All pipes to be restored and revoiced.

Trumpet to be restored and new feet made from copper.

Swell louvres to be modified for balanced swell pedal.

Super octave coupler made for the swell.

New single keyboard obtained and action made to fit.

New draw stops about 26 stops in all on the new scheme.

Console to be completely repaired and designed. Glass door s.

Wood pipes to be reglued, leather to be replaced etc.

New great soundboard. Pneumatic.

Tuning slides to be made for all wood stops, and metal pipes
straightened and repaired etc.

If I can turn the new stops all we have to buy are the new
ivory inserts, but if it is not possible these alone will
have to come from U.K. or Germany like all the other bits
and pieces. I have detailed an estimated cost of the parts and
materials which I will type on the next sheet.

Sheet three.

Materials and parts not including a new blower or the cost of transporting the pipes and things up here and bringing them down there again. (That should be easily fixed with anyone with a utility.)

No time charged at all, and I would not do this and as near as I can say the materials will cost some £475. which with few words now...you will have a new and improved organ that will go on for another 100 years I would be happy to come down to service and tune for the cost of petrol only. If you want to have recommendation ring Father Reg Mills of Caloundra where I built them an organ six months ago. It is a joy.

I can carry on for quite a time at my own expense but I would want co operation with the transport and lifting of stuff down there.

We could get £50 for the pipes I would not use in the rebuild. This could come off the above estimate.

Sincerely in Christ.

John Hamer²Howorth.

DRAYTON

So for £400 all this can be accomplished. It must also be understood that the instrument is quite beyond being PATCHED UP. I would have done this on my last two visits if it were possible.