



The organ at the west end of the church, June 2022

Back in the summer of 2018, I wrote an article for this very publication explaining the need to urgently explore solutions to our ever-more fragile and unreliable Hill pipe organ.

One of the most striking features that seems to draw the eye of the many visitors to our church is the striking organ, high up in the West End gallery. It is often the subject of interest. Even more magical for many is that today, the organist plays from a remote console at the East end of the nave.

When first installed in 1843 the organ and organist were housed in a gallery at the west end of the church. It was moved to floor level in 1866, and then enlarged and moved again in 1887 to the east end of the nave. In 1971, it was dismantled and reduced again, before being housed in its current position in 1975. At this point, digital electronics were installed to link the console to the pipe organ itself, these

being upgraded in 1995. This configuration allows the organist to be close to the choir, though results in an time delay for the organist. Whilst much of the 1843 Hill pipework was retained, most of the original Hill organ was discarded in favour of some reworked parts from other organs. As such, it is no longer classed as an historic organ.

In 2004, I was cautioned by our organ technicians that we would soon be facing a major overhaul. The organ chamber is so overcrowded that it is impossible to allow for safe access much of the organ for maintenance and tuning. (Tuning involves two people – one to sit at the console and play the notes, whilst the tuner climbs inside the organ, tuning the approx. 2000 pipes, one at a time).

The digital link is also failing at an alarming rate. The organ has served us well for 180 years but is sadly well beyond repair. Exhaustive research has been done by an Organ Group to identify a solution. All options were explored. Several organ builders suggested rehoming a fine redundant Pipe Organ of good pedigree.

One such was identified, built by J. J. Binns of Leeds, dated 1902. Mr. Binns had a fine reputation of building good quality, robust organs that stand the test of time. They are affectionately known in the organ world as ‘battleship Binns’.

This organ was built for Kinning Park Town Hall in Glasgow at the time of Binns ‘golden period’ of pipe organ building. It was moved to Mosspark Church in Glasgow where it now resides.

The church is now owned by Harvest Church and the organ is no longer used. The proposal by the Organ Group to procure this organ was presented to a public meeting in Dedham Church in 2021, where it received overwhelming support by those who attended, following a robust debate.

Our chosen organ builder is

Nicholson & Co of Malvern,
Worcestershire.

The challenging task of raising the funds required has begun to secure, refurbish, update and install the Binns organ in Dedham Church. At a recent concert given by the Kelvedon Singers to kick-start the fundraising, an anonymous donor generously pledged the incredible sum of £100,000, which has prompted further generous donations, most of which are eligible for Gift Aid relief.

A fundraising committee is exploring events, grants and other sources of funding. It will be wonderful to bring this exciting project to fruition, so that the 'new' organ can fully serve the needs of our parish for generations to come, not only for Sunday services but also for festivals (Christmas, Remembrance, Easter, Harvest etc) weddings, Christenings, funerals, as well as for concerts, recitals and events. We also hope to be able to support future organists in their study of this fine instrument.

We hope you will want to support this fund raising to ensure that the church can continue its fine musical traditions and maintain the integrity of the building which is Grade 1 listed. We are two thirds of the way to reaching our target and with continuing support we hope to have the organ installed towards the end of 2024.

Antony Watson

Donations to the Organ Appeal can be made in two ways.

1. By Cheque, payable to Dedham PCC, and on the back of the cheque, write "Organ Appeal".

2. By Online Banking to Dedham PCC, Sort Code 20-22-67, Account No. 00297879 and importantly, using a Reference "Organ"

Cheques can be posted to, or left in

the Parish Office letter box at the High Steet, Assembly Rooms. Postcode CO7 6HJ, or personally handed to a Churchwarden.

If you are a UK Taxpayer, Gift Aid will add 25% to your donation, but you must complete the Church Gift Aid form, available at the back of the Church, or request one online at stmarydafinance@gmail.com. Gift Aid forms should accompany your cheque, or if paying online, sent to the Parish Office as above. Any questions should be directed to Sara Marshall at the above e mail address, or to the Treasurer, John Reed at johnreed10@yahoo.com

KELVEDON SINGERS' CONCERT

On Sunday 3rd July the Kelvedon Singers very kindly came to Dedham Parish Church to give a Concert in aid of the replacement Organ Fund.

The Concert was called "Just a Song at Twilight..." and the programme ranged from Madrigals, based on some beautiful poems, to music written by Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Stephen Sondheim and Lennon & McCartney.

Just over 100 people enjoyed a really excellent selection of music sung beautifully by the Choir under the expert direction of Christopher Phelps, accompanied by David Mitchell and our own Antony Watson.

Tea and cakes were available before the Concert, with wine during the interval, and just under £2,000 was raised for the Fund for a replacement pipe organ. At the end of the evening, it was announced that an anonymous donor had pledged a very significant sum during the interval and our very grateful thanks to that individual.

Our thanks also to Christopher Phelps and all the very talented singers

who gave so freely of their time and talents. A memorable evening in so many ways.

David Druitt.

FROM THE ARCHIVES.

Essex Standard – Friday 6th May 1842.

**The British
NEWSPAPER
Archive**

The Queen has been graciously pleased to contribute 10 guineas towards funds for the erection of a new organ at Dedham Church.

Essex Herald - Tuesday 26 September 1843.

**The British
NEWSPAPER
Archive**

On Wednesday, fine-toned new organ was opened in Dedham Church, and sermon was preached on the occasion by the Rev. W. H. Whitworth. A collection was made amounting to £40. The organ was built by Mr. Hill, of London

The Ipswich Journal - Saturday 04 November 1843.

**The British
NEWSPAPER
Archive**

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST. The MUSIC of the SANCTUARY; A SERMON Preached at the OPENING of the NEW ORGAN in DEDHAM CHURCH, BY WM. HENRY WHITWORTH, M.A., Master of the Dedham Grammar School. R. DECK, Ipswich. T. KNIBB, Colchester Price 1s

The 1843 organ was restored in 1868.

The Ipswich Journal - Saturday 24 October 1868.

**The British
NEWSPAPER
Archive**

(Extract)
OPENING OF A NEW ORGAN AT DEDHAM CHURCH - YESTERDAY (Friday).

The old organ used to stand quite up in the belfry, upon a gallery erected for

the purpose, the height of which cannot be less than some 15 or 20 feet. This is evidently a very inconvenient place for the organ, and accordingly it is now placed upon the floor at the West end of the Church.

By removing the organ from its lofty situation, the fine peal of eight bells can now be got at, and have been rung during the past few weeks for the first time for seven years. The organ opened yesterday is not altogether a new one, but is the old one restored at a cost of £400, raised by voluntary contribution. It is now a fine organ and is in a most beautiful case of stained pine, with ornamental pipes in front.

The new organ was opened yesterday (Friday) by Divine service at the Church at 12 o'clock. The morning was very wet, rain falling heavily, notwithstanding which a large number of visitors attended, and the Church was almost full.

The prayers and lessons were read by the rector the Rev. Geo. Murray, M.A. A most eloquent and impressive sermon was preached by the Rev. Wm. Harrison, M.A., rector of Birch, Essex, who took for his text Revelations 14 chap. and 3rd verse "And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."

The organ had been erected by Messrs. Hill and son of Euston Road, London, and was presided at yesterday by Mr. Edwin Mens, the excellent and much esteemed organist of the Parish in his usual style. A second service was held in the evening. Collections were made after both services for the fund.

Note: Today - 10 Guineas = £1,480,
£40 = £5,650, £400 = £50,275