

The Organ of St Andrew's & Mary's Church, Maidenhead

by Paul Hale (Consultant) and Jonathan Wallace (of Henry Groves & Son)

Paul Hale sets the scene:

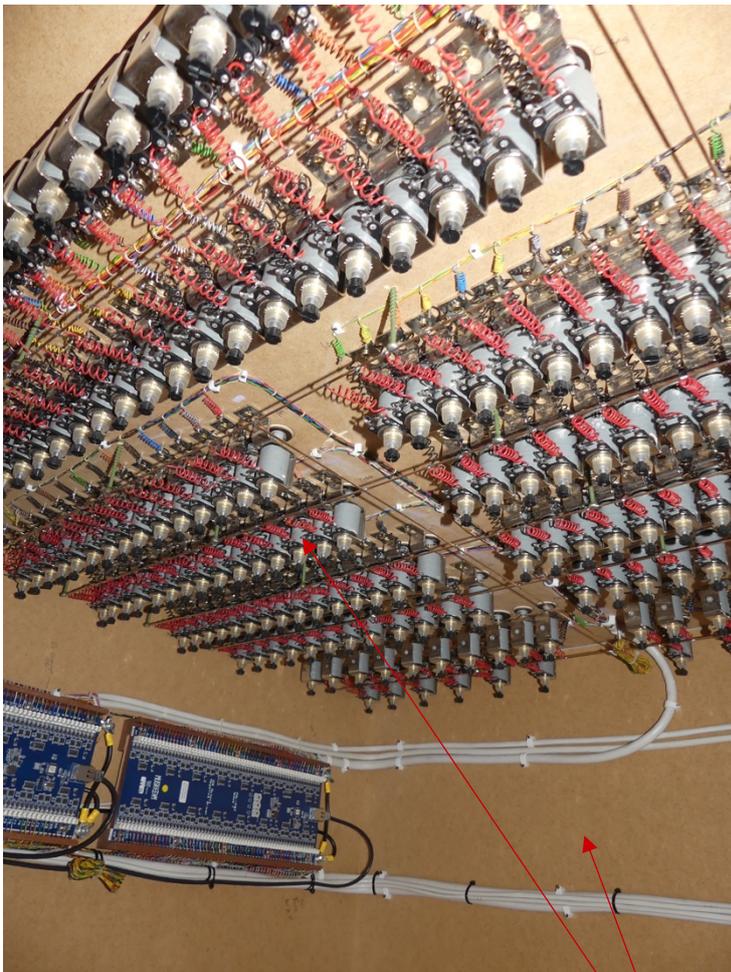
The new Henry Groves & Son (Nottingham) organ at St Andrew's & St Mary's church in Maidenhead replaces a much rebuilt and enlarged instrument which began life in 1877 when Henry Jones built it for the previous building. Moved to the new church by Kingsgate Davidson & Co during 1964-65, where it was enlarged to 3/41 (and written up in *Musical Opinion*, July 1967) it received its final rebuild by J. H. Males (Eastbourne) in 1986. It was situated in tall shallow spaces flanking the sanctuary, the pipework facing north and south. When I inspected it during 2011 it was not in very good condition, partly due to overheating, partly due to piecemeal electrical work, but mainly due to a mismatch of a conglomeration of pipe ranks of multiple ages and voicing styles.

When the church community decided to reconfigure the inside of the building completely, a new space had to be found for the organ, so it was decided to make a fresh start. The new instrument has been situated – unusually for an Anglican church – at the liturgical east end, with the altar table placed in front of its overhanging 'impost'.



Very few ranks from the old organ were considered worthy of inclusion in the musically integrated tonal scheme that was developed by the church's director of music, Matthew O'Donovan, Jonathan Wallace (of Groves) and Paul Hale (the consultant).

The scheme has been based around the pipework from two fine redundant organs: the 1932 J. W. Walker formerly in Wyggeston Grammar School for Boys, Leicester and the 1933 Rushworth & Dreaper extension organ formerly in St Margaret's church, Aspley, Nottingham. The quality and voicing of this pipework are superb: 'late romantic' in style. An excellent Clarinet rank was bought at the Peter Collins factory sale.



The layout places the Great and Choir on the top level, arranged so that the high-level small 'rose window' in the east wall can still be seen from the nave, with the 16ft and 8ft bass octaves as prospect pipes standing at the lower impost level. On this lower level is situated the Swell box, which all but fills it; the Pedal Bourdon and Trombone are also situated at this level. The longest four pipes of the 16ft metal Open Diapason stand at floor level at the back of the organ and speak through the perforated panels that enclose this level. On this level are also situated the blower and the loudspeakers for the digital bass stops.

Groves make their own design of extremely compact wind regulators, thus minimising the space that a wind system occupies. Wind trunks are mainly of stout rigid Polypipe; flexible

conveyancing is not used. Their direct-electric chests are inspired by the Austin 'Universal Air Chest' to the extent that they can be crawled into and closed with the wind on, in order to make fine adjustments to the electro-magnetic pipe valves, all of which are Kimber-Allen 'AD' vertical pallet magnets. The firm has found these entirely reliable for two decades, since they were re-engineered, and has them supplied with slightly thicker leather on the pallet discs (to ensure they 'bed-in' perfectly), which has now become the standard.

Space was tight at Maidenhead, so the Choir Organ was based on two of the extended ranks from the Rushworth & Dreaper organ, plus three additional ranks. The Great and Swell pipes are almost entirely the Walker Great and Swell from Wyggeston, the three Mixtures being the former Maidenhead Mixtures re-cast and re-voiced. The Pedal uses both Walker and R&D ranks, augmented digitally with an Open Wood and two 32ft stops, to add gravitas and sonority in an acoustic that tends to absorb bass, owing to the large amount of glass in the church. There was no room for these bass stops to be made of pipes.

The casework consists of the bass octaves of the Great and Pedal 16ft and 8ft Diapason ranks and the Great Violone 16ft, both of Walker and R&D pipes, arranged artistically and non-symmetrically, painted a blue hue of the architect's choice. A large and elegant wooden cross dominates the centre of the case and all is atmospherically lit at night. The low-level console, contemporary in style, was made by Renatus and incorporates design elements present also in the church and in the organ case. The control systems and digital stops are by Musicom.

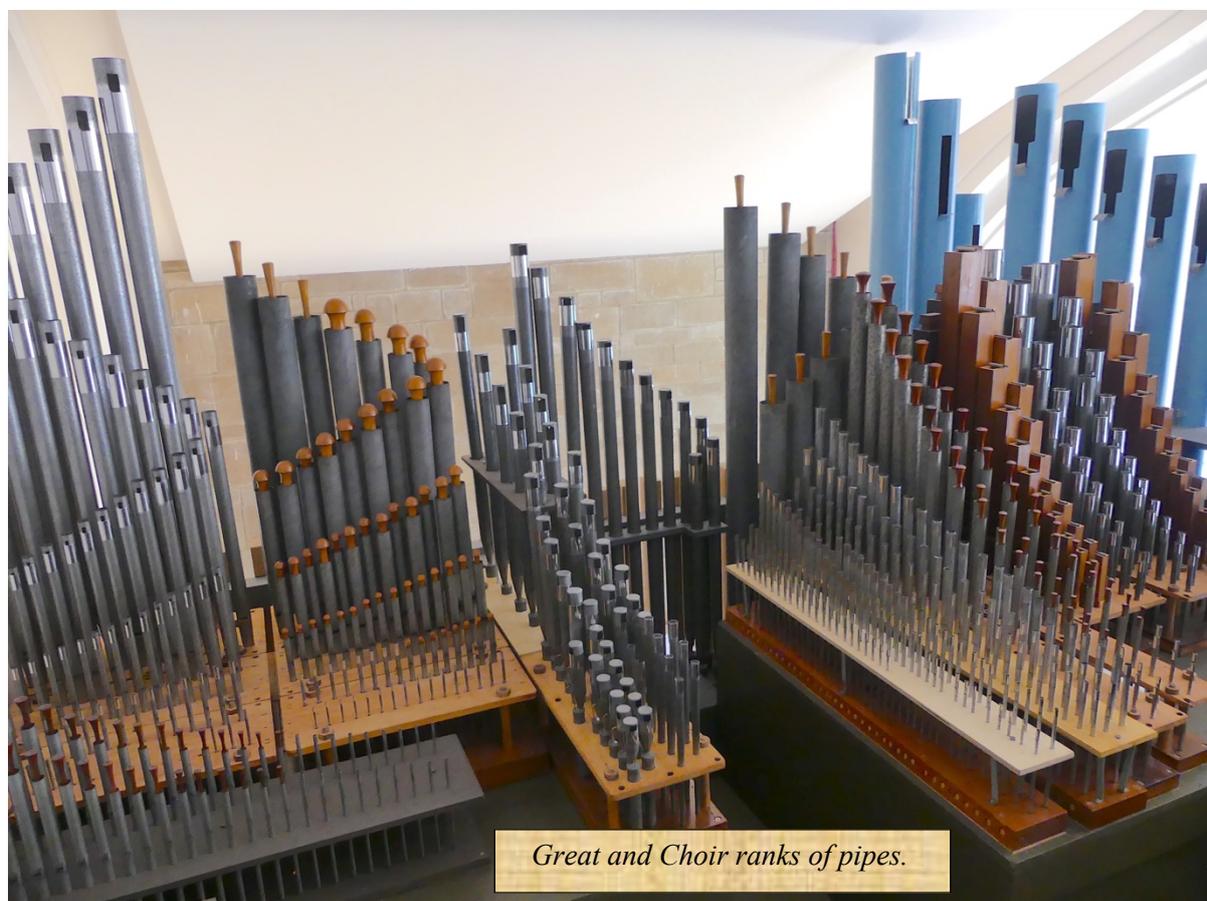
David Goode, of Eton College, gave a wonderful Opening Recital to a packed and enthusiastic audience on 27th October 2018. The specification is on the next page.

W = J.W.Walker pipework, R&D = Rushworth & Dreaper pipework, M = Maidenhead pipework

Great	1	Violone	16ft	rank B	W
	2	Open Diapason No.1	8	K	W
	3	Open Diapason No.2	8	D	W
	4	Wald Flute	8		W
	5	Principal	4		W
	6	Stopped Flute	4	C	W
	7	Twelfth	2 ^{2/3}		W
	8	Fifteenth	2		W
	9	Mixture 19.22.26.29	IV		M (22 nd from rank L)
	10	Tromba	8	E	R&D
		i. Swell to Great			
		ii. Choir to Great			
Swell	11	Geigen Diapason	8		W
	12	Stopped Diapason	8		W
	13	Viola da Gamba	8		W
	14	Voix Celeste (ten.C)	8		W
	15	Geigen Principal	4		W
	16	Fifteenth	2		W
	17	Mixture 15.19.22	III		M
	18	Contra Fagotto	16	F	W
	19	Trumpet	8	I	W
	20	Oboe	8	F	W
	21	Clarion	4	I	W
		iii. Tremulant			
		iv. Octave			
		v. Unison Off			
		vi. Sub Octave			
Choir	22	Lieblich Gedeckt	8	G	R&D
	23	Salicional	8	H	R&D
	24	Lieblich Flöte	4	G	R&D
	25	Salicet	4	H	R&D
	26	Nazard	2 ^{2/3}	G	R&D
	27	Fifteenth	2	L	M
	28	Lieblich Piccolo	2	C	W
	29	Tierce	1 ^{3/5}		W
	30	Clarinet			Groves
		vii. Tremulant			
	31	Tromba	8	E	R&D
	32	Clarion	4	E	R&D
		viii. Sub Octave			
		ix. Great to Choir			
		x. Swell to Choir			
Pedal	33	Subbass	32		digital
	34	Open Diapason (wood)	16		digital
	35	Open Diapason (metal)	16	A	R&D (1-12)
	36	Violone	16	B	W
	37	Bourdon	16	G/C	R&D (1-24 G, 25-30 C)
	38	Principal	8	K	R&D
	39	Bass Flute	8	G/C	R&D (1-12 G, 13-30 C)
	40	Fifteenth	4	D	W
	41	Mixture 19.22.26.29	IV		M (29 th from L)
	42	Contra Trombone	32		digital
	43	Ophicleide	16	E	R&D
	44	Fagotto	16	F	W
	45	Tromba	8	E	R&D
		xi. Swell to Pedal			
		xii. Great to Pedal			
		xiii. Choir to Pedal			
		xiv. Great & Pedal Combinations Coupled			

Usual accessories including Stepper, plus MIDI, a memory device and a transposer.

Wind pressures are those on which the Walker and Rushworth & Dreaper pipes were originally voiced – quite high: Great flues and Pedal Mixture 4ins; Swell 5ins; Choir 5ins; Pedal and Tromba/Trombone 5.6ins.



Jonathan Wallace, of Henry Groves & Son, describes the construction process:

The order was placed and work had to be planned with the major re-ordering of the church, which first involved the removal of the old organ. The only three ranks to be retained from this instrument were the new Mixtures installed in the 1986 rebuild, as Paul has mentioned.

The organ is mounted on a rather substantial, freestanding, steel structure – let's just say it won't fall down, though the over-engineering caused some unexpected issues and complications to overcome.

Like most organ builders, I'm not keen on building an organ on a construction site, but needs must, and the help with off-loading the modular soundboards, from our Genie lift, onto the upper level was much appreciated. The ex-crane operator had absolutely no fear of heights whatsoever (to be expected I suppose) and it proved to be the best £20 I've ever spent.

Once in place the upper-level soundboards were secured in position. The advantage of the Groves modular soundboards is that they come on site completely wired up and tested, so the only connection is the RJ45 cable. The lower level houses the large swell box (9ft wide x 8ft deep x 10ft high) with the upper level floor forming the roof. The thick shutter front from the Aspley R&D organ was re-used as the size was spot-on, offering a 9ft x 8ft opening.

The excellent top-outlet, BOB Stevenson X8B blower from Aspley, was restored by Steve Lemmings and installed at ground floor level. A lined HP wooden wind trunk runs up from here to the top of the organ, with outlets to the six wind regulators supplying Great flues, Pedal flues and Trombone bass, Choir, Tromba, Swell 1 (stops 15,16,17,19,21) and Swell 2 (stops 11,12,13,14,18,20 plus Tremulant).

The architect, Alex Coppock of Communion Design, had no previous experience of organ case design, however his enthusiasm and skill produced an interesting, yet subtle design that has proven to be appreciated by all at St. Mary's (though, as all the pipes are speaking, a nice flat front would have been welcome!).

As with all major church building work, delays are to be expected, but I wasn't expecting a six-month one... an organ builder's lot is not always a happy one!

