

The image shows the interior of a Gothic Revival church. In the foreground, rows of wooden pews with red upholstered seats are visible. The architecture features tall, fluted columns supporting pointed arches. A large organ with numerous pipes is positioned on either side of a central organ loft. The altar area is visible at the far end, featuring a crucifix and a red cloth-covered altar. The lighting is warm, coming from several small chandeliers and recessed ceiling lights.

The Organs of

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin & All Saints, Potters Bar.

Dave Miller & Paul Hale

2020

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CHAPTER 1

Dave Miller

The first organ in St Mary the Virgin and All Saints, Potters Bar, was built in 1885 by Forster & Andrews of Hull, for the old St John the Baptist church. This was a tracker action (mechanical) instrument consisting of two manuals and pedals with a total of twelve speaking stops. The hand-written specification produced by the builders, dated 6 March 1885, is still in existence. It shows that the organ contained 622 pipes, with space being left for the addition of an 8-foot pedal stop at a later date. The specification is typical of its period in that no higher-pitched stops are included. One interesting feature is that the builders wanted to provide a concave, but not radiating, pedalboard. However, the organist at the time crossed this out and requested a straight pedalboard as had been common earlier in the nineteenth century, when pedals were first applied to British organs.

This organ was moved to St Mary's in 1915, at which time it was still hand-blown. PCC minutes show that plans for an electric blower did not begin until the 1930s.

Specification of 1885:

Great Organ

1	Open Diapason	metal	8
2	Stopped Diapason	wood	8
3	Dulciana (bass from no 2)	metal	8
4	Principal	metal	4
5	Flauto Traverso	metal	4
Swell to Great			

Swell Organ

6	Open Diapason	wood & metal	8
7	Gedact	wood	8
8	Salicional	metal	8
9	Voix Celestes (tenor C)	metal	8
10	Gemshorn	metal	4
11	Oboe	metal	8
Octave coupler			

Pedal Organ

12	Bourdon	wood	16
Great to Pedal			
Swell to Pedal			

By the early 1960s the organ was in a parlous state, so the firm of Hill, Norman & Beard was entrusted with the work of rebuilding it. They used all the original pipework and added a number of new stops, the Swell Open Diapason being moved to unit chest to provide pipes for the Great Geigen Diapason, Great Fifteenth and two Pedal stops. Electro-pneumatic action was installed, and a new compact detached console provided in the north aisle with stop-keys and retracting keyboards. The cost of the work was £4,500, the console being paid for by the Owen family in memory of departed relatives. The rebuilt organ was used for the first time at a special evening service on Sunday 20th October 1963.

The parish magazine for October 1963 records that: “In the new organ there are 900 pipes, 30,000 feet of copper wire, 1,000 contacts (pure silver), 200 electromagnets, 122 manual keys, 32 pedal keys, 27 stop-keys, 17 combination pistons, 1 swell pedal – and lots of other necessary gadgets”.

Some repair work was carried out on the pipework in 1984, and by 1991 the accumulation of dirt was such as to necessitate a complete cleaning. Once again, Hill, Norman & Beard was invited to carry out this work. Happily, the church was fortunate enough to receive a generous legacy from the estate of Miss Vivienne Hedley Baxter which allowed some additions to be made to the organ in her memory. These were the completion of the Great chorus by the addition of a three-rank Mixture and the introduction of a much firmer bass line by the addition of a 16-foot electronic Major Bass. The total cost of this rebuild was around £25,000.

In conjunction with this work, steps were taken to solve a number of problems in the organ gallery itself. The ceiling and walls were refurbished to prevent damp and dirt getting into the organ and the windows were specially treated to prevent sunlight overheating the Swell box and causing the organ to go out of tune. The renovated and extended organ was used for the first time at Evensong on Sunday 20th October 1991 – a happy coincidence with 1963!

Further changes were made in 2003, mainly the replacement of the 1963 console piston action with a new computerised action.

Final 2003 specification:

Great Organ

1	Open Diapason	metal	8
2	Geigen Diapason	wood & metal	8
3	Stopped Diapason	wood	8
4	Dulciana (bass from No.3)	metal	8
5	Principal	metal	4
6	Flute Ouverte	metal	4
7*	Twelfth	metal	2 ² / ₃
8*	Fifteenth (ext. No.2)	metal	2
9**	Mixture 22.26.29	metal	III

Swell to Great

Swell Organ

10	Lieblich Gedackt	wood	8
11	Salicional	metal	8
12	Voix Celestes (tenor C)	metal	8
13	Gemshorn	metal	4
14*	Quint Mixture 15.19.22	metal	III
15*	Contra Fagotto	metal	16
16*	Trumpet (ext. No.15)	metal	8
17	Oboe	metal	8

Octave

Sub Octave

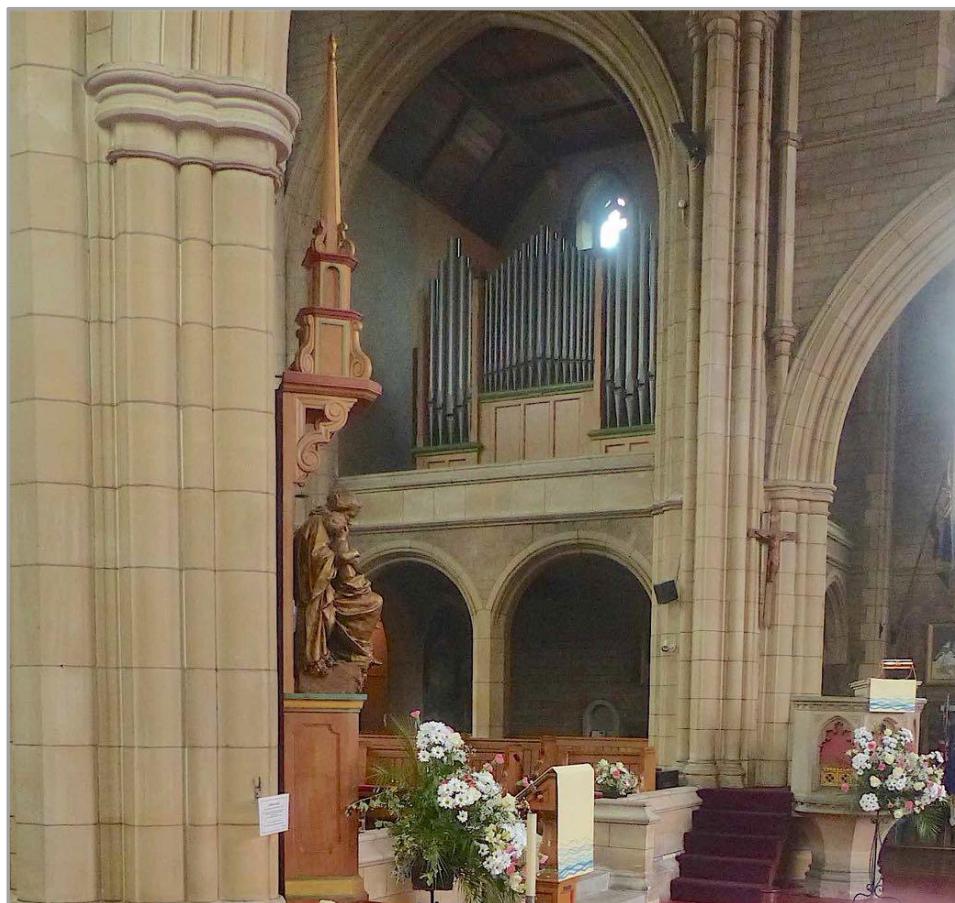
Pedal Organ

18**	Major Bass	electronic	16
19	Bourdon	wood	16
20*	Principal (fr. No.2)	metal	8
21	Bass Flute	wood	8
22*	Super Octave (fr. No.2)	metal	4
23*	Fagotto (fr. No.15)	metal	16

Great to Pedal

Swell to Pedal

* = new in 1963, ** = new in 1991



The organ, 1915-2019

CHAPTER 2

Paul Hale

By 2017 it was felt that the organ was generally inadequate for the size of the church and for the church's musical ambitions. A Report was commissioned from organ consultant Paul Hale, which led to thoughts of replacing the old and somewhat ailing instrument with a larger organ of high quality from elsewhere.

The story now moves to Derby, where in St Alkmund's church T.C. Lewis had installed a three-manual organ in 1888. St Alkmund's was replaced by a large modern building in 1972 and the Lewis organ was rebuilt and electrified for the new church by J.W. Walker & Sons, with many tonal changes and a new detached stop-key console. The St Alkmund's worship tradition soon developed away from using the organ as its primary musical instrument, and within a few years the organ became effectively redundant.

Another twenty-five years or so would pass before the church considered disposing of the organ. However, finding a home for such a large instrument with two full-length 16ft open metal façades was easier said than done, so several more years passed until Henry Groves & Son (who nominally had the maintenance of the organ) were called in at Potters Bar to consider what might be done, in response to Paul Hale's report. Jonathan Wallace, of Henry Groves & Son, considered the spacious organ gallery at Potters Bar, with its two wide 16ft-high arches, ideal for housing the Derby organ, so a proposal was made and accepted. Both dioceses gave permission and thus the project came to pass during 2019.

The Derby organ was reconfigured to fit the differently-shaped space, the building-frame being remade, to place the Great, Swell and small Pedal soundboards speaking down the south aisle of the nave, the Positive facing north across the chancel, the Trumpet speaking in both directions, the Pedal 16ft Violone Bass and Salicional bass pipes filling the two arches, the 16ft Sub Bass and Trombone placed against the south wall of the chamber and the console placed on a mobile plinth on the north side of the Crossing – where the 1963 console had stood.

The 1888 T.C. Lewis at St Alkmund's had a fairly standard stop-list for its period:

Great 16.8.8.8.4.4.2.II.8

Swell 16.8.8.8.8.4.III.8.8.8.4

Choir (enclosed) 8.8.8.4.2.8

Pedal 16.16.16.8

The building of a new St Alkmund's in Derby brought the opportunity for a complete reconstruction of the fine Lewis organ of 1888. Transformed, it now occupies a spacious bay adjacent to the sanctuary area of this large, elliptical church where it is equally well positioned for choral accompaniment and the support of full congregations. The completed church was consecrated by the Bishop of Derby on Saturday 18 March 1972.

Douglas Hawkridge, FRAM, FRCO, who was born and educated in Derby and is a freeman of the town, gave the inaugural recital in the month following.



SPECIFICATION

GREAT ORGAN

1 Contra Salicional	16ft 73 pipes
2 Open Diapason	8 61 ..
3 Lieblich Gedeckt	8 61 ..
4 Dulciana	8 61 ..
5 Octave	4 61 ..
6 Waldflöte	4 61 ..
7 Twelfth	2 61 ..
8 Super Octave	2 61 ..
9 Sesquialtra (12-17)	2 ranks 122 ..
10 Mixture (19-22)	2 ranks 122 ..
11 Trumpet	8 61 ..

SWELL ORGAN

12 Geigen Principal	8ft 61 pipes
13 Rohrflöte	8 61 ..
14 Viole de Gambe	8 61 ..
15 Voix Celeste T.C.	8 49 ..
16 Geigen Principal	4 61 ..
17 Flauto Traverso	4 61 ..
18 Nazard	2 61 ..
19 Piccolo	2 61 ..
20 Scharf (22-26-29)	3 ranks 183 ..
21 Contra Fagotto	16 85 ..
22 Horn from no.21	8 61 notes
23 Oboe	8 61 pipes
24 Clarion from no.21	4 61 notes
Tremulant	

POSITIVE ORGAN

25 Bourdon	8ft 61 pipes
26 Salicional from no.1	8 61 notes
27 Spitzflöte	4 61 pipes
28 Blockflöte	2 61 ..
29 Tierce	1 1/2 61 ..
30 Larigot	1 1/2 61 ..
31 Glocken Cymbal (26-29)	2 ranks 122 ..
32 Crumhorn	8 61 ..
Tremulant	
33 Trumpet from no.11	8 61 notes

PEDAL ORGAN

34 Violone Bass	16ft 32 pipes
35 Sub Bass	16 56 ..
36 Salicional from no.1	16 32 notes
37 Principal	8 44 pipes
38 Bass Flute from no.35	8 32 notes
39 Salicet from no.1	8 32 ..
40 Octave Quint from no.35	5 1/2 32 ..
41 Fifteenth from no.37	4 32 ..
42 Octave Flute from no.35	4 32 ..
43 Salicetina from no.1	4 32 ..
44 Recorder	2 32 pipes
45 Mixture (19-22)	2 ranks 64 ..
46 Trombone	16 32 notes
47 Fagotto from no.21	16 32 ..
48 Trumpet from no.11	8 32 ..
49 Horn from no.21	8 32 ..
50 Zink from no.11	4 32 ..

COUPLERS

51 Positive to Pedal	52 Great to Pedal
53 Swell to Pedal	54 Swell to Great
55 Swell to Positive	56 Positive to Great
57 Swell Octave	58 Swell Sub Octave
59 Swell Unison Off	60 Great and Pedal Combinations Coupled
61 Double Touch Canceller	

ACCESSORIES

Six thumb pistons to Positive	
Six thumb pistons to Great	
Six thumb pistons to Swell	
Six toe pistons to Swell (duplicating)	
Six toe pistons to Pedal	
One reversible thumb piston for Great to Pedal	
One reversible toe piston for Great to Pedal	
One reversible thumb piston for Swell to Great	
One reversible toe piston for Swell to Great	
One reversible thumb piston for Positive to Great	
Balanced swell pedal	
Detached stop-key console	

WALKER ORGANS

Registered Trade Mark

J. W. WALKER & SONS LTD, BRAINTREE ROAD, RUISLIP, MIDDX HA4 0EL 01-845 6501

Established 1828



In 1972 J. W. Walker altered this specification to embrace a new Positive (with a rather odd stop-list – see p.7), additional upperwork to Swell and Great and a greatly augmented Pedal, resulting in 50 speaking stops. It was decided that at Potters Bar a slightly revised stop-list would be appropriate, so the Swell Nazard was moved to the Positive in place of the Glocken Cymbal, which was added to the Great Mixture (in place of a Dulciana) to form a much needed four-rank Mixture for the Great. A vintage Vox Humana and Fifteenth replaced the Nazard and Piccolo on the Swell. The Lewis 16ft Open Wood pipes had – regrettably – been removed in 1972 by Walkers. However, as the Potters Bar building really needs this sort of sonorous bass tone generated by the organ, it was decided, as space was at a premium, to incorporate a digital 16ft Open Wood and use the digital system for two 32ft stops as well, for added gravitas. It was considered that this would be effective, because the old electronic Potters Bar Major Bass had proved a success.

The 1972 Walker console had received so little use that all it needed was a clean and polish. All its electrical equipment, and that within the organ, was replaced, a comprehensive piston system with general pistons was introduced. Eight stop-keys were re-engraved, the type-face matching imperceptibly that of 1972. Several wind regulators were re-leathered and new wind trunking fitted. Very little needed to be done to the voicing of the pipes, other than to warm slightly the tone of the rather dry Walker Positive 8ft and 4ft flutes.

The specification is now:

Great Organ	1	Contra Salicional	16	rank B
	2	Open Diapason	8	
	3	Lieblich Gedeckt	8	1885 Potters Bar Great 8ft Stopped Diapason
	4	Octave	4	
	5	Waldflöte	4	
	6	Twelfth	$2^{2/3}$	
	7	Super Octave	2	
	8	Sesquialtera 12.17	II	
	9	Mixture 19.22.26.29	IV	Great & Positive Mixtures combined / recast
	10	Trumpet	8	rank C
	i.	Swell to Great		
	ii.	Positive to Great		
Swell Organ	11	Geigen Principal	8	
	12	Rohrflöte	8	
	13	Viole de Gambe	8	
	14	Voix Celeste (tenor C)	8	
	15	Geigen Principal	4	
	16	Flauto Traverso	4	
	17	Fifteenth	2	replacing Piccolo
	18	Scharf 22.26.29	III	
	19	Contra Fagotto	16	rank A
	20	Horn	8	rank A
	21	Oboe	8	
	22	Vox Humana	8	replacing Nazard; uses Dulciana stop-key re-engraved
	23	Clarion	4	rank A

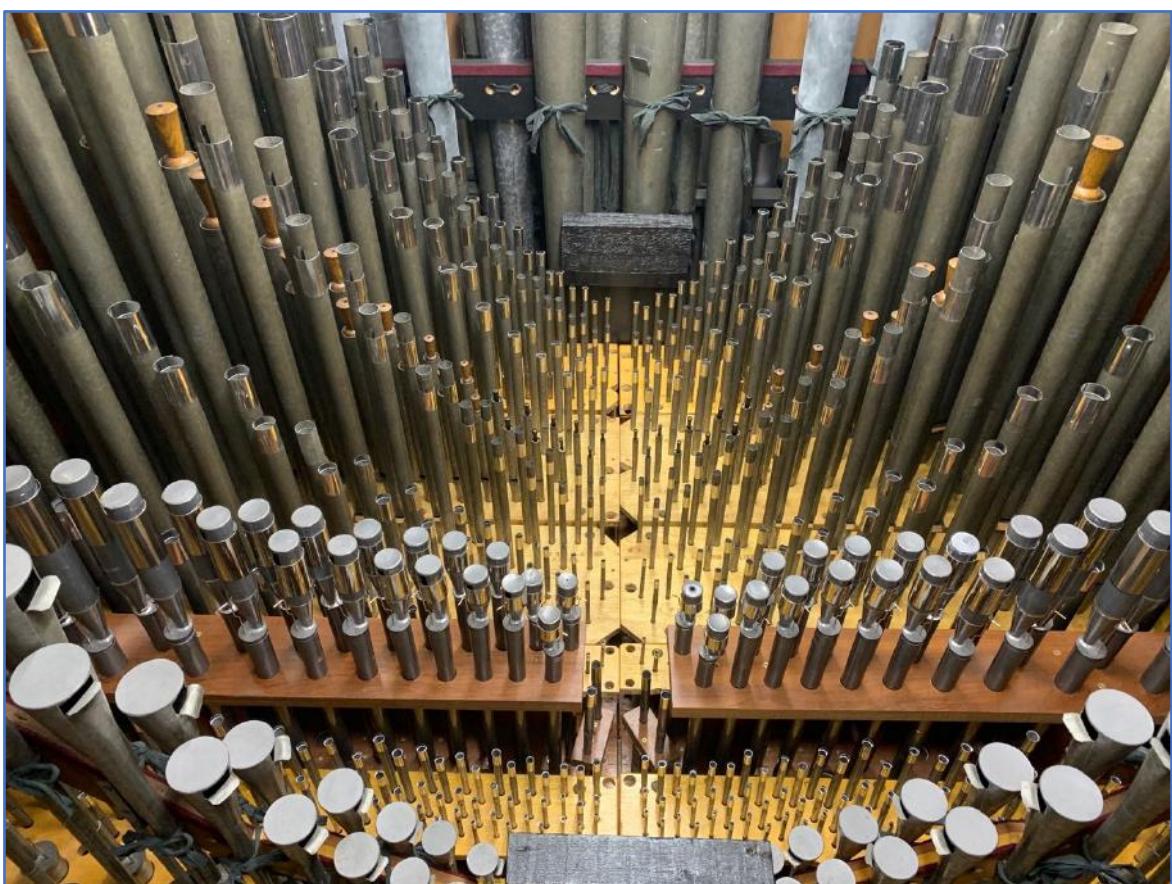
iii.	Tremulant		
iv.	Octave		
v.	Unison Off		
vi.	Sub Octave		
Positive Organ			
24	Bourdon	8	revoiced
25	Salicional	8	rank B
26	Spitzflöte	4	revoiced
27	Nazard	2 ^{2/3}	formerly Swell, replacing Glocken Cymbal
28	Blockflöte	2	
29	Tierce	1 ^{3/5}	
30	Larigot	1 ^{1/3}	
31	Crumhorn	8	
vii.	Tremulant		
32	Trumpet	8	rank C
viii.	Sub Octave		added; uses Glocken Cymbal stop-key re-engraved
ix.	Swell to Positive		
Pedal Organ			
33	Contra Bass	32	added [digital]; uses Oct. Quint stop-key re-engraved
34	Open Wood	16	added [digital]; uses Salicetina stop-key re-engraved
35	Violone Bass	16	independent
36	Sub Bass	16	rank D
37	Salicional	16	rank B
38	Principal	8	rank E
39	Bass Flute	8	rank D
40	Fifteenth	4	rank E
41	Octave Flute	4	rank D
42	Recorder	2	independent
43	Mixture 19.22	II	independent
44	Contra Trombone	32	added [digital]; uses Salicet stop-key re-engraved
45	Trombone	16	rank C
46	Fagotto	16	rank A
47	Trumpet	8	rank C
48	Horn	8	rank A
49	Zink	4	rank A
x.	Swell to Pedal		
xi.	Great to Pedal		
xii.	Positive to Pedal		
xiii.	Great & Ped. Combs Coupled		
xiv.	Generals on Swell Toes		added, replacing 'Double Touch Cancel'

There is a full complement of divisional, reversible and general pistons, with multiple memory levels and a Stepper. The compass is 61 notes (manuals), 32 notes (pedals).

The Inaugural Recital was given by Paul Hale on March 14th 2020, celebrating the fact that the church now has a splendid instrument, fully worthy of its surroundings and more than capable of fulfilling any demands made on it in future decades by the rich liturgical and musical life of St Mary the Virgin and All Saints.



Positive Organ pipe ranks



Swell Organ pipe ranks



