Organ Works

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

The Organ of St Mary's Church, Moseley, Birmingham

No – not that one.

More and more organists know but one organ in Moseley: the Brindley & Foster in St Anne's church. Why do they know it? Well, it's the free sample set which comes with the all-conquering Hauptwerk system, the digital organ of choice for organists practising at home.

PAUL HALE



1 The new chancel case – burnished vintage front pipes sourced to match



It's a decent enough organ (and I know this from first playing the real thing as a teenager, back in the late 1960s) but it can't hold a candle to the recently rebuilt instrument in St Mary's – Moseley's historic parish church. Historically and musically, St Mary's is well worthy of its place in this column, not least because it was made (in 1885) by one of those solid London organ-builders who rarely finds a mention in print: Henry Jones & Son of Fulham.

Henry Jones was born in Folkestone, Kent on 19th May 1822, one of five children born to Pilcher Jones, a cabinet maker, and his wife, Mary Hall.

By the age of 16, Henry had moved to London and was apprenticed to the organ builder Joseph W. Walker at his Francis Street Works, off Tottenham Court Road. In 1845 he set up in business on his own account in Brompton, at 10 Pond Place. Much of his early work consisted of rebuilding older instruments, but by 1849 Jones had married Susannah Spain, begun a family and taken on an apprentice, one William Davis. The indenture for this apprenticeship is still in the Kensington Library archive.

During the 1850s, we have records of a few small organs being built by Jones, but the breakthrough came in 1861 with the contract for the large instrument at St Matthew's Church, Bethnal Green (destroyed in the Blitz) and the instrument built for the International Exhibition of 1862. This latter instrument has been altered much over the years but still exists,



2 The Jones organ in use during the 1886 National Art Treasures Exhibition in Folkestone.

"Henry Jones (1822-1900) and his two sons made about 450 organs over a 50 year period". We learn that from an excellent unpublished 2002 account of their work by Chris Kearl, the result of countless hours of research, as all the firm's documentation was lost in the second world war. One of their most significant organs was made for the 1885 International Inventions Exhibition, and the following year formed the centrepiece of the National Art Treasures Exhibition in Folkestone – the town of Jones' birth.

although in a currently unplayable state, at Christ Church, Reading. It won special commendation at the exhibition for 'Power and Tone'.

Other contracts followed, and Jones moved his expanding business and expanding family to 136 Fulham Road, Brompton, with a new Works established a few yards further east in an old 'floor cloth manufactory'. From these larger premises came a steady stream of one- and two-manual organs, with the occasional larger showpiece. Among these were instruments for St Matthias, Earl's Court (1872, destroyed in the Blitz), for the International Exhibition of 1872 (broken up in 1912), the Grand Organ for the Royal Aquarium (1876, broken up in 1909) and a large organ for the Servite Priory in Fulham Road, which survived until 1967.

In 1881 the firm produced a catalogue which listed 306 organs, of which 106 were in London, 184 in the provinces and 17 had been shipped abroad. During the 1880s, much of the business was taken over by the eldest son, Henry Spain Jones, while the older Henry, now in his sixties, began to concentrate on individual instruments.

Jones continued to work until well into his seventies. The last organ to receive his personal attention was at the Benchers' Chapel, Gray's Inn, in 1894 (another Jones organ sadly destroyed in the Blitz). He died on 18th May 1900, and is buried in the family grave in the Brompton Cemetery, London.

Exhibition organs needed to be sold and re-homed following the closure of the Exhibition. Many were split up by their makers and the parts and pipes used in subsequent organs. Jones was more fortunate here because a new home became available: St Mary's Church, Moseley.

At St Mary's, fund-raising for a new organ started well before any thought was given to what organ would replace the old Bossward instrument, which was eventually sold to the Vicar of Stockton-

on-Tees for £130. The initial contribution was the proceeds of a concert in December 1884: the princely sum of £11. Thereafter, work on extending the organ chamber took place at a cost of £409, again before knowing what was going to be acquired.

It is not clear who first had the idea of choosing the Henry Jones organ, but it was inspected by Frederick Bell and other experts at the Jones workshops in London, the organ-builder having been highly recommended by Sir Arthur Sullivan and Dr John Stainer. The verdict was that the organ was "...exactly what we want for Moseley Church". Mention was made of the handsome, carved, solid oak case, with three manuals each of 61 notes and a pedal organ of 30 notes. It had 39 stops and 1,798 pipes. Wind pressure was three inches throughout, regulated by two double-rise reservoirs. The purchase price was £820.

A 16ft Open Metal was added for Moseley (from which was derived a Quint $10^2/_3$ft). The total cost with some decoration of pipes, heating apparatus and architect's commission was just short of £1,303, which is equivalent to about £219,000 in today's prices. The funds were raised within six months after the opening service on 6th December 1887, for which the organ was played by Revd C. H. Hylton-Stewart, Precentor of Chester Cathedral. The service of shortened Evensong included the anthem *Hear my prayer / O for the wings of a dove* by Mendelssohn, the hymn *Angel voices ever singing* and the *Hallelujah Chorus* from Handel's oratorio *Messiah* after the Offertory. There followed an organ recital with pieces by Spohr, Batiste, Sterndale Bennett, Bach and Gounod.

Here is the specification of the instrument as installed in St Mary's during 1887:

Great Organ	
Double Open Diapason	16
Open Diapason	8
Hohl Flute	8
Gamba	8
Principal	4
Harmonic Flute	4
Fifteenth	2
Mixture 15.19.22 / 8.12.15	III
Trumpet	8
Clarion	4
Swell to Great	
Choir to Great	
Swell Organ	
Open Diapason	8
Stopped Diapason	8
Salicional	8
Voix Céleste (ten.C)	8
Gemshorn	4
Harmonic Piccolo	2
Cornopean	8
Hautboy	8
Clarion	4
Tremulant	
Sub Octave	
Choir Organ (enclosed)	
Double Diapason (ten.C)	16
Open Diapason	8
Lieblich Gedact	8
Dulciana	8
Flute	4
Flageolet	2
Corno di Bassetto	8
Swell to Choir	
Pedal Organ	
Open Diapason	16
Open Diapason	16
Bourdon	16
Gross Quint	$10^2/_3$
Violoncello	8
Bass Flute	8
Great to Pedal	
Swell to Pedal	
Choir to Pedal	
Accessories	
3 composition pedals to Great	
2 composition pedals to Swell	
2 adjustable composition pedals to the entire organ (not to the added metal Pedal Open Diapason or Gross Quint), adjusted by the oval stop-heads through 90° and brought into use by depressing one of the two pedals.	
Reversible pedal for Great to Pedal	
Trigger Swell pedal	
Trigger Choir pedal	

The Jones organ faced south across the choir stalls and played reliably for nearly eighty years. To a classically-inspired scheme drawn up by noted local harpsichordist and organist, Dr Norman Dyson, who was Organist & Choirmaster of St Mary's from 1964 until 1971, Nicholson & Co Ltd completely rebuilt the organ in 1965, turning the building frame around so the instrument faced the north nave aisle, removing the Choir organ from its position buried under the Swell to a new unenclosed position speaking across the chancel (with a then-popular 'functional display') over the head of the organist.



3 The Choir Organ it its 1965 position above the console

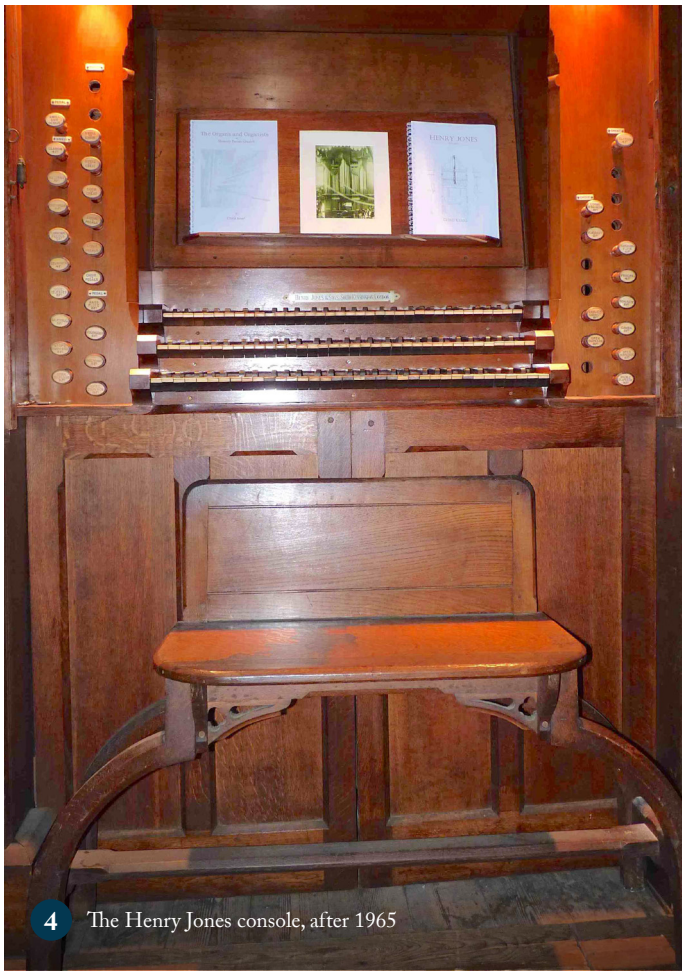
The soundboards were fitted with electro-pneumatic actions, the wind system was modernised, and a new detached all-electric console was installed. There were several new ranks of flues made by Stinkens of Zeist (a firm which has sadly ceased trading since its factory burnt down earlier this year), and four powerful new reed stops – three in the Swell and the Pedal Trombone rank 16/8ft. A replacement blower was installed.

Here is the 1966 Dyson / Nicholson specification:

Great Organ		
Double Open Diapason	16	stopped wooden bass octave
Open Diapason No. 1	8	
Open Diapason No. 2	8	Gamba revoiced
Hohl Flute	8	
Principal	4	
Harmonic Flute	4	bass from Principal
Twelfth	$2^2/_3$	Nicholson [Stinkens pipes]
Fifteenth	2	
Mixture	III	
Trumpet	8	A revoiced on Nicholson unit chest
Clarion	4	B revoiced on Nicholson unit chest
Wind pressures: flues $3^1/_4$ ins, reeds $3^1/_2$ ins		
Swell to Great		
Choir to Great		
Swell Organ		
Open Diapason	8	
Stopped Diapason	8	Nicholson stock, t.c. up
Salicional	8	
Voix Céleste (ten.C)	8	also draws Salicional
Principal	4	
Flute	4	Nicholson stock
Harmonic Piccolo	2	
Mixture 19.22.26	III	Nicholson [Stinkens pipes]
Tremulant		
Contra Fagotto	16	C Nicholson [Palmer pipes]
Cornopean	8	Nicholson [Palmer pipes]
Clarion	4	Nicholson [Palmer pipes]
Wind pressures: flues 3ins, reeds $4^1/_2$ins		
Octave		
Unison Off		
Sub-Octave		
Choir Organ		
Double Diapason	16	Hill bass added by Nicholson
Open Diapason	8	bass from rank D
Lieblich Gedeckt	8	
Gemshorn	4	Nicholson [Stinkens pipes]
Flute	4	wood, open
Nazard	$2^2/_3$	Nicholson [Stinkens pipes]
Flageolet	2	wood, open, with metal trebles
Tierce	$1^3/_5$	Nicholson [Stinkens pipes]
Krummhorn	8	revoiced Corno di Bassetto
Tremulant		
Wind pressure: $3^1/_4$ ins		
Trumpet	8	A
Clarion	4	B
Octave		
Unison Off		
Sub-Octave		
Swell to Choir		

Pedal Organ		
Open Wood	16	
Violone	16	D Open Metal revoiced and moved to north side
Bourdon	16	E
Dulciana	16	F old Choir, with Nicholson Haskelled bass
Quint	$10^2/_3$	D
Violoncello	8	D
Bass Flute	8	E
Dulcet	8	F
Fifteenth	4	D Nicholson stock trebles
Flute	4	E Nicholson stock trebles
Trombone	16	G Nicholson [Palmer pipes]
Fagotto	16	C Nicholson [Palmer pipes]
Trumpet	8	G Nicholson [Palmer pipes]
Wind pressures: flues $3^1/_4$–6ins; reeds 7ins		
Great to Pedal		
Swell to Pedal		
Swell Octave to Pedal		
Choir to Pedal		
Great Pistons to Pedal Pistons		
Usual pistons		

The Jones console remained, now on the west side of the organ, and over years some of its unique oval stop-knobs were stolen. Here it is in my 2004 photograph:



4 The Henry Jones console, after 1965

The next chapter in the story is rather complex – too complex to unravel here. Suffice it to say that worthy attempts were made to 're-Jones' the organ, some of which were effective, but in the 1990s problems and faults with all areas of the instrument developed. It took many years to decide what to do, and even more time for the parish to raise the funds, but by the end of 2023 permissions had been granted and the funds raised for a complete re-think. Clevedon Organs won the tendering process and their very comprehensive work took over a year, finishing in the Autumn on 2025. Anthony Hall, Managing Director of Clevedon, designed the execution of the entire project. The tonal scheme and console fittings were developed by Mr Hall, with the consultant (the current writer) and the long-serving Director of Music (Michael Perrier). There were numerous improvements to the layout, chamber floor, wind supply, tonal scheme, pipework, console, electrical components, access for maintenance, swell box, front pipes, Henry Jones case & console and the organ's appearance from the chancel. All this work can be expressed in brief thus:

- New Solo department, chest & winding, as part of the Choir Organ.
- New Pedal 16ft Open Diapason chest for notes 1–15.
- New Great off-note chest, to eliminate untidy Kopex conveyancing.
- New Swell Contra Fagotto bass / Clarion top notes chest.
- New Swell 4ft Flute and chest.
- New Pedal 4ft Fifteenth bass chest and rationalising of Pedal trebles chests.
- New Chancel case with burnished front pipes; new Chancel façade chests.
- Great and Swell slider soundboards partially overhauled, the Choir soundboard undergoing a complete restoration due to shrinkage. Electro-pneumatic slider machines replaced with slider solenoids.
- Additional new chests for Great 16ft and 8ft Harmonic Flute basses.
- Pedal Mixture IVrks and chest added.
- Pedal winding improved.
- Restored and relocated Swell and Choir concussions.
- Wind compensators and reservoir restored and releathered.
- Choir Tremulant reinstated and Swell Tremulant overhauled.
- Console completely restored, proportions improved; many more controls added.
- Entirely new electrical systems, much new wiring and many new electromagnets.
- Swell shutter opening increased, to maximise tonal output.
- Sound reflector panels behind Great reeds, to project their tone outwards.
- Great tone cabinet roof added, also acting as the platform for the Solo ranks.
- Extensive additional internal passage-boards and ladders, in mahogany.
- Extensive internal lighting added.
- Front pipes burnished and the oak casework restored.
- Case access panels repaired and improved.
- Henry Jones console conserved; replacement stop-knobs made for those missing.
- Many tonal improvements, as shown in the specification (see the following page).

The result is an organ which Henry Jones would recognise, on which Norman Dyson would still be able to play his favourite baroque repertoire, yet romantic and liturgical music sounds wonderful on it. Its tone reaches down the nave far better than ever before, and the tonal scheme is both colourful on paper, and has been excellently blended and balanced voicer Warren Marsh. The enhanced Nicholson console (the work carried out by Renatus) is a joy to play, and the south-facing prospect is now an astonishing improvement on the previous dreary view of the Choir organ. David Briggs, Andrew Lumsden and the fine church choir at St Mary's – under the ever-cheerful Mick Perrier – put on a memorably splendid weekend of opening events in March this year.

So, no – it's not that one – but I think it would be brilliant for those who record organs for Hauptwerk to revisit Moseley and sample the rebuilt organ at St Mary's. I'm sure Hauptwerk users would buy the sample set – and I'd be at the front of the queue.

Great Organ		
Double Diapason	16	J 1–12 Nicholson, 13–16 Jones front pipes, 17–24 open wood pipes from Clevedon stock, 25–61 existing Jones
Open Diapason No. 1	8	Jones, revoiced
Open Diapason No. 2	8	1–10 Jones front pipes, 11–61 spotted metal. Vintage pipes from Clevedon stock
Hohl Flute	8	Jones
Violoncello	8	1–12 Jones Dulciana (Chancel case) pipes, 13–61 Clevedon stock; on former 4ft flute slide
Principal	4	Jones, revoiced
Harmonic Flute	4	E Jones, bass octave added, moved to Solo chest and revoiced on higher wind pressure
Twelfth	$2^2/_3$	Nicholson (Stinkens pipes), revoiced
Fifteenth	2	Jones, revoiced
Mixture 15.19.22.26	IV	new, spotted metal
Trumpet	8	A Jones, revoiced
Clarion	4	Jones, revoiced
Swell to Great		
Choir to Great		
Choir / Great Manuals Invert		

Swell Organ		
Open Diapason	8	Jones, revoiced
Stopped Diapason	8	Jones (from Sevenoaks), revoiced
Salicional	8	Jones, revoiced
Voix Céleste (ten.C)	8	Jones, revoiced; draws Salicional as well
Principal	4	Jones (Great Gamba), revoiced
Flute	4	1–12 Great Flute pipes; remainder from Clevedon stock; new unit chest
Fifteenth	2	Jones, revoiced
Mixture 12.19.22	III	Jones, recomposed & revoiced
Hautboy	8	Jones (from Sevenoaks), revoiced
Tremulant		
Contra Fagotto	16	C Nicholson, reinstated
Cornopean	8	C Nicholson, reinstated and renamed
Harmonic Trumpet	8	D Nicholson
Clarion	4	D Nicholson
Octave		8ft reeds have additional top octaves
Sub-Octave		All stops have derived additional octaves, carried down/up to 16ft & 4ft for octave couplers.
Choir Corno di Bassetto on Swell		
Etoile		Zimbelstern above Chancel case; speed adjustable

Choir Organ		
Open Diapason	8	Jones, revoiced; 1879 Brindley & Foster front pipes
Lieblich Gedeckt	8	Jones, revoiced
Gemshorn	4	Jones, revoiced
Wald Flute	4	Jones, revoiced and renamed
Nazard	$2^2/_3$	Nicholson (Stinkens) revoiced; on Dulciana slide
Flageolet	2	Jones, revoiced
Tierce	$1^3/_5$	Nicholson (Stinkens) revoiced; on Nazard slide
Larigot	$1^1/_3$	Nicholson (Stinkens) revoiced
Mixture 19.22	II	Tipple 1996, plus new spotted metal pipes
Tremulant		
Harmonic Flute	8	E in Solo section, elevated in front of the Swell
Corno di Bassetto	8	B unit chest in the Swell box; Jones, revoiced
Trumpet	8	A
Tromba Michaelis	8	F Nicholson Clarion revoiced, in Solo section
Octave		All stops have derived additional top and bottom Sub-Octave octaves for use with the octave couplers
Sub-Octave		
Unison Off		
Swell to Choir		

Pedal Organ		
Open Wood	16	I Jones
Open Diapason	16	G Jones/Halmshaw, revoiced
Bourdon	16	H Jones
Stopped Diapason	16	J Nicholson 1–12; remainder Jones
Quint	$10^2/_3$	J/H rank varies according to registration
Principal	8	G Jones
Bass Flute	8	H Jones
Fifteenth	4	G Jones, plus Nicholson stock trebles
Flute	4	H Jones, plus Nicholson stock trebles
Mixture 19.22.26.29	IV	Nicholson pipes/chest from Bridlington Priory
Acoustic Trombone	32	I/F/H five-rank synthetic 32ft reed
Trombone	16	F Nicholson (Palmer pipes)
Fagotto	16	C
Trumpet	8	A
Shawm	4	B
Great to Pedal		
Swell to Pedal		
Choir to Pedal		
Great & Pedal Combinations Uncoupled		
Generals on Swell Toe Pistons		

Wind Pressures
Great: flues 100mm, reeds 130mm.
Swell: flues & Hautboy 85mm, chorus reeds and Corno di Bassetto 130mm.
Choir: flues 90mm, Flute and Tromba 200mm.
Pedal: Open Wood and Bourdon 105mm, Open Metal 130mm, Fifteenth treble and Mixture 105mm; Trombone 200mm.

Accessories
Pedal divide – adjustable note, with rotary knob and displays (settable on general pistons)
Pedal divide Super Octave by illuminating button (settable on general pistons)
Pedal divide Super Super Octave by illuminating button (settable on general pistons)
Pedal divide Unison Off by illuminating button (settable on general pistons)
Sostenuti for Great, Swell and Choir (settable on general pistons)
Pizzicato coupler for Ch/Gt, Ch/Ped, Gt/Ped (settable on general pistons)
7 thumb pistons to Great Organ
7 thumb pistons to Swell Organ
7 thumb pistons to Choir Organ
7 General thumb pistons and 1 adjustable Tutti piston
Reversible thumb pistons for Great to Pedal, Swell to Pedal, Choir to Pedal, Swell to Great, Choir to Great, Swell to Choir
General cancel piston
Setter piston
4 Stepper Advance pistons (one for registrant) and 2 Stepper Retard pistons (one for registrant)
7 toe pistons to Pedal Organ
7 toe pistons to Swell Organ (duplicating thumb pistons)
Reversible toe pistons for Great to Pedal, Choir to Great, 32ft and 16ft Trombones
1 Stepper Advance toe piston and 1 Stepper Retard toe piston
99 levels of memory for divisional pistons; 256 for general pistons
2 Balanced expression pedals: to Swell Nave and Swell Chancel
Record / Playback MIDI interface
MIDI keyboard (Bluetooth) with functions including Auto Pedal



5 The refurbished and re-equipped Nicholson console (photo: © Mick Perrier)



6 The organ seen from the head of the nave

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Paul Hale is a professional organ consultant, recitalist and choral conductor.

Whilst Organ Scholar of New College Oxford (1971–4), Paul Hale began to write about the organ – his first published piece was in *Organists' Review*, of which he was later to become Reviews Editor and then Editor (1990–2005). A noted recitalist, lecturer and choir trainer, Paul is well-known in the UK, in Europe and in the USA.

As well as being an Organ Adviser for the Dioceses of Southwell and Lincoln, Paul is an accredited member of the AIOA and has designed many new and restored organs throughout the UK.

He has been a diploma examiner for the RCO, and has been awarded honorary fellowships by the GCM and the RSCM, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth 'Thomas Cranmer Award' for his contribution to church music.

More information is available at **www.paulhale.org**