

THE 1880 HELE ORGAN



The Scott casing over the south side of the Sanctuary

at
The Church of St. Mary Magdalene
Higher Union Street
Upton, TORQUAY

History of the organs at St. Mary Magdalene

The first organ in the church of St. Mary Magdalene was built by H. P. Dicker of Exeter and stood at the west end, above the west door, with the choir seated on a bridge connecting the two sections. It was a three-manual instrument and was reputed to be "of very good tone". Thirty years after the opening of the church, an ambitious scheme was instigated whereby Temple Moore would transform what was a rather bare chancel into a very ornate one. The choir was moved from the west end and provision in the work was made for the organ to occupy the south chapel. The original organ was not considered to be worthy of this new scheme and was sold to the parish of Swanmore, Ryde, on the Isle-of- Wight where it was rebuilt and installed in 1910 and still gives good service.

The [new] organ was designed and built for the church of St. Mary Magdalene by Hele of Plymouth in 1880 but was exhibited in St. Andrew's Hall, Plymouth before installation here. The organ was completely assembled in the hall in February 1880 and numerous well-known organists of the day gave recitals, including St. Mary Magdalene's Mr. T. Craddock, who had drawn up the specification for the new organ, and W.T. Best. It was advertised at the time as being the largest organ west of Bristol, pre-dating Truro Cathedral, the Buckfast Abbey enhancements by Ralph Downes in the early 1930s and St. Andrew's Plymouth (1957). It boasted four manuals and pedals, forty-three speaking stops and an ornate carved casing designed by Gilbert Scott. Four of the solo organ stops, and the Swell 8' Hautboy, were supplied by the noteworthy French organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll. The console was in the organ casing at the south side of the choir, from where it was rather difficult to hear the effect of the organ.

The instrument was rebuilt and enhanced by Hele & Co. in 1910, 1925 and 1949, after which rebuild it was at its peak with fifty-five speaking stops. The Solo organ had six stops, following the addition of the Tuba Major, which was the only unenclosed solo rank. There was also a four-stop Chancel organ, played from the Choir. There were nineteen couplers and two tremulants, (Swell and Chancel). At that rebuild, the Solo Tuba Major and the Pedal Bombarde and Tuba Major had finally arrived, having been prepared for in the rebuild of 1910.

The present detached 3 manual console, with electric action throughout, was built and fitted during a rebuild in 1979 by Greaves of Plymouth and is at the East end of the North Aisle. Unfortunately, this resulted in the removal of some stops and the omission of the Solo manual, the Solo department from then onwards being played from the Choir manual. None of the present Solo department is enclosed. There are electric slider solenoids on all stops except the Swell department and the Clarinet and Orchestral Oboe on the Solo department, which are still electro-pneumatic. The organ is featured on the BIOS website at location D05207. There are similar Hele & Co. organs, but of slightly lower specification at Dartmouth Royal Naval College chapel, (1890s) and Abbotsbury, Newton Abbot, (1910).

Michael Farley Organ Builders of Budleigh Salterton currently tune and maintain the organ.

Last century, there were virtually only two organists during the first 75 years, the first being William Wykeham Trotman from 1902 to 1945 and the second being Deryck J. Seymour from 1945 to 1975. Deryck Seymour is still alive and is the first person to have had bestowed on him a life membership of the Torbay and District Organists' Association. Deryck Seymour wrote an article on the organ at St. Mary Magdalene for "The Organ". It appeared in Vol. 141 at P.137.

ORGAN SPECIFICATIONS

GREAT ORGAN

1.	Double Open Diapason	16 *
2.	Large Open Diapason	8 *
3.	Small Open Diapason	8
4.	Stopped Diapason	8
5.	Hohl Flute	8
6.	Principal	4
7.	Harmonic Flute	4
8.	Twelfth	2+2/3
9.	Fifteenth	2
10.	Tierce	1+3/5
11.	Mixture	IV Rks
12.	Posaune	8

- I Swell to Great*
II Swell to Great Octave
III Swell to Great Sub-Octave
IV Choir to Great
(Also couples Solo to Great)

SWELL ORGAN

13.	Double Diapason	16#
14.	Open Diapason	8
15.	Gedact	8
16.	Vox Angelica	8 (Tenor C)
17.	Salicional	8
18.	Principal	4
19.	Wald Flute	4
20.	Piccolo	2
21.	Mixture	V Rks
22.	Contra Fagotto	16
23.	Horn	8
24.	Hautboy	8
25.	Clarion	

- Tremulant*
v Swell Octave
vi Swell Sub-Octave
vii Swell Unison Off

* Supplied from No. 2 blower (Tenor B downwards)
 # Fully supplied from No. 2 blower
 Remaining ranks supplied from No. 1 blower

CHOIR ORGAN

26.	Geigen	8	
27.	Stopped Flute	8	
28.	Prestant	4	
29.	Nazard	2+2/3	From 27
30.	Piccolo	2	
31.	Tierce	1+3/5	
32.	Mixture	II Rks	
<i>vii</i>	<i>Octave</i>		
<i>ix</i>	<i>Unison Off</i>		
<i>xi</i>	<i>Swell to Choir</i>		
<i>xii</i>	<i>Swell Octave to Choir</i>		

SOLO ORGAN

33.	Clarinet	8	
34.	Orchestral Oboe	8	
35.	Tuba Major	8	

The choir organ couplers also operate on these stops

PEDAL ORGAN

36.	Sub-Bass	32	39 Quint below GGG
37.	Open Diapason	16#	
38.	Violone	16	From 1
39.	Bourdon	16#	
40.	Echo Bourdon	16#	
41.	Bass Flute	8	From 39
42.	Echo Flute	8	From 40
43.	Violoncello	8	From 1
44.	Octave	8	From 37
45.	Octave Flute	4	From 42
46.	Bombarde	16	From 35
47.	Tuba Major	8	From 35
		4	

- xII Swell to Pedal*
xlii Great to Pedal
xiv Choir to Pedal (Also couples Solo stops)
xv Great & Pedal combinations coupled

Compass of Manuals 56 notes CC-G
 Compass of Pedals 30 notes CCC-F
 Radiating & concave

ACCESSORIES - THUMB and TOE PISTONS

5 Adjustable Thumb Pistons to Great
 Great to Pedal - Reversible
 Swell to Great

5 Adjustable Thumb Pistons to Swell
 Swell to Pedal - Reversible

5 Adjustable Thumb Pistons to Choir and/or Solo
 5 Adjustable Toe pistons to Swell, same settings as Thumb Pistons
 5 Adjustable Toe pistons to Pedal (and Great if combinations coupled)
 1 Toe piston for full organ. (Equivalent to pressing No. 5 piston on all departments)
 Electric 8-stage Swell box engine to enclosed Swell department

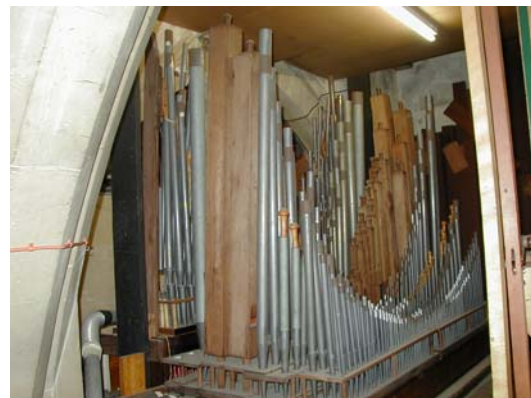
The pistons are all set by means of switches under the music desk, facilitating Add, Cancel and "Do Nothing" positions.

The detached console of 1979



The Great Organ and bottom 12 pipes of the Pedal Bombarde, with the bottom 5 notes of the pedal Sub-Bass are housed in the south-facing case at the east end of the South Aisle

The Solo organ Clarinet and Oboe pipework. (The Solo Tuba is housed in the Scott casing over the chancel)



The Pedal Organ pipework, with the exception of the bottom 12 notes of the Bombarde and the bottom 5 notes of the Sub-Bass are along the north and west sides of the organ enclosure. This view is of the west side and shows the Great 16ft Open Diapason, which is also the Pedal 16ft Violone.