

ST WILFRID'S R.C.CHURCH, YORK

The church stands opposite the west end of York Minster. The organ was built in 1867 by Forster & Andrews of Hull, with two manuals and 24 speaking stops. It was restored by H&H during 1998, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The original structure survives intact, as does most of the pipework. Nevertheless, much detective work has been needed in our attempts to establish the organ's historical development and restore it more closely to its original form.

PIPEWORK. It was not until the organ was fully dismantled that we were able to establish the nineteenth-century specification with a reasonable degree of probability. The reeds were altered in the organ's earlier years, probably by Forster & Andrews: they still fit in well, and have been accepted as part of the organ's history. Other changes were made by J.W. Walker in 1973, and these required some careful decisions. The Great Organ has now regained its wooden Double Diapason (part of which was found lying under the bellows) and the fourth rank of its Mixture, with the original composition deduced from internal evidence, to thrilling effect; and the Viol d'Amour (an early change) has migrated to the Swell, making way for a Twelfth. The 1973 Larigot has been replaced by a Céleste on the Swell; we now think the original stop was a tenor C Salicional, but the Céleste is a useful variant. New pipework has been made by our pipemakers to suitable scales, using matched materials. In addition, all the usual work of meticulous restoration has been required.

One of the 1973 changes has been accepted. The Swell Blockflute 2ft, which replaced the original Open Diapason, has been renamed "Flageolet" in the Forster & Andrews manner - a sensible compromise described by the consultant as "the invention of tradition"!

FRONT PIPES. The organ presented an extraordinarily severe appearance, with naked front pipes painted silver and cut to a horizontal line at the top. At first we felt that this must have been a later alteration, but it turned out to be an original feature. Originally diapered, the pipes had been repainted twice - first in light green, and more recently in silver. Traces of the original decoration were found when the old paint was stripped off: we copied these on to a full-size paper replica in full colour, from which the pipes have now been gloriously repainted by W.H. Bonney of York.

ACTIONS. The manual rollerboards had been re-made in 1970, using modern components. We have had special metal brackets made, to match surviving examples, and traditional leather bushing has been reinstated.

CONSOLE. As so often elsewhere, the original 27-note flat pedalboard had been replaced in 1970 by a radiating and concave pedalboard of 30 notes: the compass of the couplers, but not of the Pedal stops, had been suitably extended. At the same time, a balanced Swell pedal had been fitted, and the composition pedals rearranged. Decisions here proved remarkably difficult. In the end it was decided to retain the existing pedalboard, with its longer compass, but to reinstate the lever Swell pedal. The original position of the composition pedals was readily established, because the old kneeboard had been re-used behind a veneer.

Other changes to the console have been reversed, and with its sloping jambs it is now a handsome example of Forster & Andrews' work of the period.

A COMPLEX PROJECT. The restoration of an organ is seldom a straightforward matter. This project has presented a series of fascinating problems which could only be worked out as it progressed. The solutions were not always obvious, and some degree of constructive compromise has been necessary in order to come to terms with the organ's historical development. It has been very helpful to talk these matters through with the adviser, Dr Nicholas Thistlethwaite, acting on behalf of the Heritage Lottery Fund. We hope we have done justice to the fine work of Forster & Andrews.

HARRISON & HARRISON

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Organ by Forster & Andrews 1867

Restored by Harrison & Harrison 1998

PEDAL ORGAN

Open Diapason (wood)	16
Bourdon	16
Bass Flute	8

CHOIR ORGAN

Dulciana	8
Gedact	8
Harmonic Flute	4
Clarionet (tenor c)	8

GREAT ORGAN

Double Diapason (tenor c)	16	Reinstated; part new (wood)
Open Diapason	8	
Violon Diapason	8	
Stopt Diapason	8	
Principal	4	
Wald Flute	4	
Twelfth	2 $\frac{2}{3}$	New, to replace Viol d'Amour
Fifteenth	2	
Mixture	4 ranks	Composition reinstated
Trumpet	8	

SWELL ORGAN

Gedact	8	
Viol d'Amour	8	Previously on Great; replaces 20th-century Violoncello
Céleste (tenor c)	8	New; replaces 1973 Larigot
Spitzflöte	4	
Flageolet	2	1973 (originally Open Diapason)
Cornocean	8	
Oboe	8	

COUPLERS

Swell to Great

Swell to Pedals

Choir to Great Sub Octaves

Great to Pedals

Choir to Pedals

Four composition pedals to the Great Organ
Lever swell pedal.a

The action is mechanical throughout.

The manual compass is 58 notes; the pedalboard has 30 notes for the couplers,
but the pedal stops have 27 notes only.