

HISTORY OF THE ORGANS OF THE PARISH OF ST LAWRENCE ALTON

THE BRYCESON ORGAN OF 1830

The earliest record of an organ at St Lawrence is in 1829 when at a vestry meeting on 27th Feb 1829 "it was resolved that a barrel organ be erected in the church. Provided that the cost of the organ and every expense incurred by its erection be paid for by subscription". The organ was purchased from the builders Bryceson, stood in a gallery at the west end of the church (obscuring the west window) and had the following specification:

Open Diapason	8'
Stopped Diapason	8'
Clarabel Flute	8' (was possibly a 4' stop)
Principal	4'
Twelfth	2B'
Fifteenth	2'

THE SPEECHLY ORGAN OF 1866

In 1866 the Vicar and Churchwardens inaugurated a vast plan of restoration which included the purchase of a new organ. Meanwhile, the Bryceson organ was moved to the Town Hall where the parishioners worshipped for almost a year whilst the church underwent restoration.

The "New Organ" by Henry Speechly and Sons possessed 33 speaking stops, 1,960 pipes, 3 manuals and pedals. It was built at a cost of £850 provided by Mr Montague Burnett whose family had raised and given much of the money. The new organ was opened 3rd Oct 1868 and at this time the church was establishing a musical tradition, under the direction of the then organist, Mr Newman, with the formation of a choir of 8 trebles, 3 altos (boys), 4 tenors and 4 basses. This organ must have been the largest in any southern Parish church at that time. In 1893 the organ was restored by Henry Speechly and Sons of the Camden Organ Factory at a cost of £850. Dr WG Alcock, assistant at Westminster Abbey, reopened the organ on 11th Dec 1895.

TWENTIETH CENTURY REFURBISHMENTS

Two further overhauls were undertaken by Speechly in 1907 and 1939. By 1965 the action was not functioning adequately and a thorough overhaul was desperately required. Following tender action, Wood, Wordsworth & Co of Leeds were invited to undertake the work of rebuilding. The specification was prepared by the firm in close consultation with Cyril Diplock, the present organist. The overriding consideration was that there should be no major alteration to the existing tonal characteristics to the existing of the Speechly organ - which makes this organ such a wonderful instrument popular with visiting distinguished national and international organists of repute.

MARTIN CROSS RESTORATION OF 1993

By 1993 the electric action had become unreliable so Martin Cross of Essex was entrusted with the latest restoration and continue to tune and maintain the instrument. Again, no tonal changes were made or desired as part of this scheme assuring that the Church of St Lawrence can again be proud that it's organ has been restored to its traditional position as one of the finest parish church instruments in the South. It is also why the Parish Church of St Lawrence Organ Society has established such a high standard of Organ Concerts for the past 32 years. Over 250 top class organists have visited Alton to demonstrate both their skills and the organ's sound qualities to give countless members of the public the benefit of professional concerts of the highest standard.

ST LAWRENCE'S CHURCH, ALTON - THE ORGAN SPECIFICATION

PEDAL ORGAN

1	Harmonic Bass	(from No 3)	32'
2	Open Diapason	Sp	16'
3	Bourdon	Sp	16'
4	Dulciana	(from Choir)	16'
5	Principal	Sp	8'
6	Bass Flute	(from No 3)	8'
7	Dulcet	(from Choir)	8'
8	Fifteenth	(from No 5)	4'
9	Flute	(from No 3)	4'
10	Dulcetina	(from Choir)	4'
11	Octave Flute	(from No 3)	2'
12	Mixture 19/22/26	W.W.	3 ranks
13	Trombone	Sp	16'
14	Trumpet	(from Great)	8'
15	Clarion	(from Great)	4'
16	Swell to Pedal		
17	Great to Pedal		
18	Choir to Pedal		

GREAT ORGAN

19	Double Diapason	Sp	16'
20	Open Diapason No 1	Sp	8'
21	Open Diapason No 2	Sp	8'
22	Stopped Diapason	Sp	8'
23	Dulciana (part from old Hill pipes)	from Choir	8'
24	Principal	Sp	4'
25	Flute Harmonique	Sp	4'
26	Twelfth	Sp	2 2/3'
27	Fifteenth	Sp	2'
28	Mixture 19/22/26	Sp	3 ranks
29	Sesquialtra 12/17 (Reverting to old Sp Spec of 1866)	W.W.	2 ranks
30	Trumpet	Sp	8'
31	Clarion	Sp	4'
32	Swell to Great		
33	Choir to Great		
34	Great to Pedal Combs Coupled		

SWELL ORGAN

35	Open Diapason	Sp	8'
36	Stopped Diapason	Sp	8'
37	Salicional	Sp	8'
38	Voix Celeste T.C.	Sp (old Voix Celeste went down to CC)	8'
39	Principal	Sp	4'
40	Stopped Flute	part Sp (From Sp Double Open Diapason + 24 new pipes)	4'
41	Fifteenth	Sp	2'
42	Mixture 19/22	Sp	2 ranks
43	Contra Fagotto	Sp	16'
44	Cornopean	Sp	8'
45	Hautboy	Sp Oboe	8'
46	Clarion	Sp	4'
47	Tremulant		
48	Swell Super Octave		
49	Swell Sub Octave		
50	Swell Unison Off		

CHOIR ORGAN

51	Contra Dulciana	(from No 55)	16'
52	Open Diapason	Sp	8'
53	Leiblich Gedackt	Sp	8'
54	Viol d'Amour	Sp	8'
55	Dulciana	(part from old Hill pipes)	8'
56	Spitz Flute	W.W.	4'
57	Wald Flute	Sp	4'
58	Dulcet	(from No 55) W.W.	4'
59	Gemshorn	W.W.	2'
60	Dulcetina	(from No 55) W.W.	2'
61	Tierce T.C.	(from No 55) W.W.	1 3/5'
62	Larigot	W.W.	1 1/3'
63	Siffloite	(from No 55) W.W.	1'
64	Sharf 2/26/29	W.W.	3 ranks
65	Corno di Bassetto	Sp	8'
66	Trumpet (from Great)	Sp	8'
67	Clarion (from Great)	Sp	4'
68	Tremulant		
69	Choir Super Octave		
70	Choir Sub Octave		
71	Swell to Choir		