

THE ORGAN in the ALBERT HALL, TOWN HALL, BOLTON

The organ was built by Messrs. Gray & Davison of London, to a specification drawn up by Mr. W. T. Best. Organist of St. George's Hall, Liverpool, who presided at the instrument by giving two recitals in the afternoon and evening, at the inauguration on Wednesday, 21st October, 1874.

The organ contained four manuals and an independent pedal organ, with 48 speaking stops and 12 couplers. The manual action was the Barker lever type, with the builder's patent tubular pneumatic action to the Pedal organ.

For changes in tone colour, the stops were not operated by composition pedals, but by a system of Ventilators, which admitted wind to the various sections, without affecting the stop handles in any way, and these were brought into operation by fixing down a series of small pedals. Of these, the Great and Pedal organs were provided with four, and the Swell organ with three. Contrary to usual practice, the Solo organ manual was placed between the Great and the Swell instead of above the latter. The following is a summary of the stops as then :

Pedal Organ :	8
Choir ..	8
Great ..	11
Swell ..	14
Solo ..	7

The total force at the command of the player consisted of one flue stop of 32 feet, six of 16 feet, fourteen of 8 feet, five of four feet, two of 2 feet, and five compound and mutation stops; in the reed work were two stops of 16 feet, ten of 8 feet, and two of 4 feet.

Every stop, without exception, extended throughout the entire compass of the instrument.

The technical details of the instrument are :—height: 36 feet; width: 32 feet 9 inches; depth: 25 feet 7 inches. The wind was supplied through six double vertical feeders by three hydraulic engines which were placed in the basement of the Hall. The centre engine supplied the heavy pressure wind for the Solo Organ and the Pneumatic action, the other two supplying the rest. The feeders in their turn supplied four horizontal bellows, by which the wind was sent into fourteen reservoirs, on different pressures of wind, supplying thirty-three sound boards on which the pipes were placed. The entire weight of the instrument was about forty tons.

The case of the Organ is of carved oak, appropriate in style to the Hall, and was designed by Messrs. Wm. Hill, of Leeds, and George Woodhouse, of Bolton, the Architects of the Town Hall. It has a panelled base and sub-base, the central portion being highly enriched with carvings in the panels, rich coupled trusses, segment moulded cornice with tympanum decorated with carved work of the Roman period. Crowning the segmental cornice is a female figure seated upon a pedestal supported on each side by figures recumbent and striking musical chords. The upper and central portion of the Organ pipes are bounded by panelled pilasters with rose-cut carvings, capitals, and semi-circle archivols. This is further encircled by a broad band of richly carved ornamental work, and on each side are angle projecting towers formed of massive pipes with gilded caps and supported by Caryatide figures. Each side is splayed in octagonal form, having external pilasters and capitals, upon which rest Angels having out-stretched wings and represented as blowing trumpets. The woodwork is of fine Dantzic oak.

The cost of Organ and Case with accessories was about £4,000.

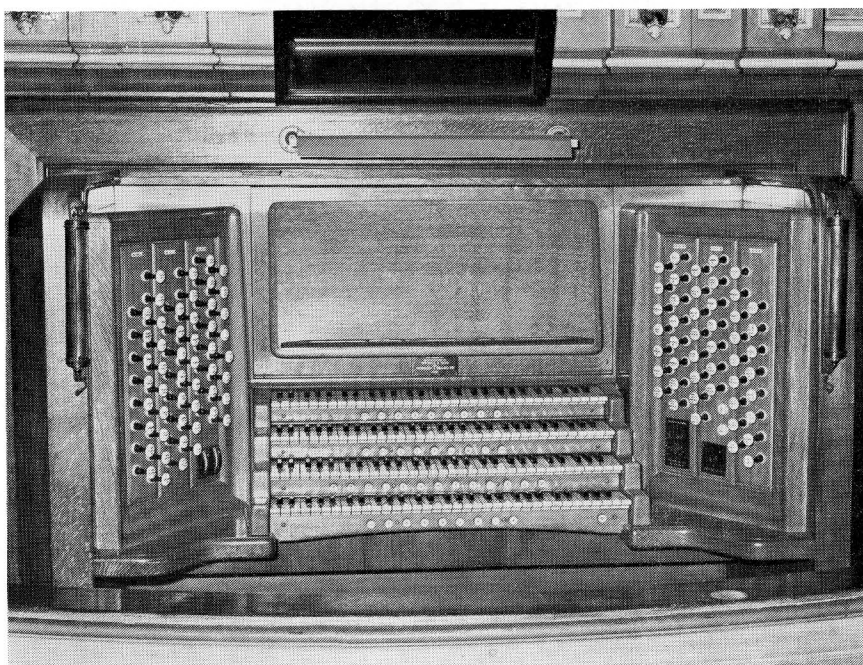
In 1906 it was decided to replace the old Barker lever action by tubular pneumatic action, and to discard the obsolete ventil system by having thumb pistons between the manuals, and composition pedals placed over the pedal board. Four new stops were added, a large Open Diapason, Twelfth, and Fifteenth to the Great organ, and a Contra Fagotta reed to the Swell organ.

The re-opening took place on January 23rd, 1907, when a recital was given by the celebrated blind organist, Dr. Alfred Hollins of Edinburgh.

During World War 1 the Albert Hall was used by the recruiting Authorities, and the heating in the Hall unfortunately damaged about 500 pneumatic motors, whilst several of the large wood pedal pipes were split from top to bottom. At the end of the war, Messrs. Nicholson & Co. of Worcester repaired the damage and provided a new Great organ reed and Solo organ Clarinet. The old type of hydraulic blowing was discarded in favour of a modern electric blower by Kinetic, and against the cost of the whole work H.M. Office of Works contributed the sum of £1,000.

In 1927 further work was done by replacement of the old action by tubular pneumatic on the latest principle. This was money well spent for it placed the organ amongst the best instruments in the country, and at the re-opening by Mr. A. E. Jones, F.R.C.O., Borough Organist, every available seat in the hall was occupied.

For the next ten years the organ was used extensively for the usual periodic recitals, the numerous civic occasions, etc., but in the Spring of 1937, the Borough Organist had to report that owing to leakages in the numerous reservoirs and wind trunks, and splits in the soundboards, together with shrinkages, worn-out felt and leather valves having become lifeless through the extremely dirty condition of the instrument, it had become almost impossible for him to continue the recitals. The report was investigated and confirmed by experts in organ construction, and it was then decided to have the organ thoroughly renovated, and brought up-to-date. In consultation with Mr. Jones, a scheme was carried out by Messrs. Wm. Hill & Son and Norman & Beard Ltd., of London, the well-known firm of organ builders, responsible for many of the finest Cathedral and Concert organs in the country, and when completed, the organ was one of which Bolton could be justly proud. There are 74 speaking stops, 4 tremulants, and 20 couplers, a total of 98 drawstops, with 40 thumb pistons, 19 toe pistons, three expression pedals, and, behind the music desk, 695 electric switches for manipulating the combination pistons. The number of pipes is between 4,000 and 5,000, and the action is the latest electro-pneumatic, with a 15v. D.C. generator for action current, which gives instantaneous response from both manuals and pedals. The console is worthy of note, and is a magnificent example of workmanship.



SPECIFICATION OF THE ORGAN

GREAT ORGAN

1. Double Open Diapason	16 feet
2. Open Diapason No. 1	8 "
3. Open Diapason No. 2	8 "
4. Open Diapason No. 3	8 "
5. Claribel Flute	8 "
6. Wald Flute	4 "
7. Principal	4 "
8. Octave Diapason	4 "
9. Twelfth	2 ^{2/3} "
10. Fifteenth	2 "
11. Mixture, 5 ranks	
12. Double Trumpet	16 "
13. Trumpet	8 "
14. Clarion	4 "

- I. Swell to Great.
- II. Solo to Great.
- III. Choir to Great.
- IV. Great Compositions to Pedal Pistons.

SWELL ORGAN

15. Bourdon	16 feet
16. Open Diapason	8 "
17. Rohr Gedeckt	8 "
18. Voix Celestes	8 "
19. Echo Gamba	8 "
20. Gemshorn	4 "
21. Twelfth	2 ^{2/3} "
22. Fifteenth	2 "
23. Mixture, 3 ranks	
24. Oboe	8 "
25. Corni Di Bassetto	8 "
26. Vox Humana	8 "
27. Contra Fagotto	16 "
28. Trumpet	8 "
29. Clarion	4 "

- V. Tremulant to Reeds.
- VI. Tremulant to Flues.
- VII. Swell Octave.
- VIII. Swell Sub-Octave.
- IX. Swell Unison off.
- X. Solo to Swell.

CHOIR ORGAN

30. Double Dulciana	16 feet
31. Dulciana	8 "
32. Open Diapason	8 "
33. Viol d' Gamba	8 "
34. Vox Angelica	8 "
35. Lieblich Gedeckt	8 "
36. Dulcet	4 "
37. Flauto Traverso	4 "
38. Dulcet Twelfth	2 ^{2/3} "
39. Piccolo	2 "
40. Dulcetina	2 "
41. Dulcet Tierce	1 ^{3/5} "
42. Dulciana Mixture, 5 ranks	
43. Trumpet	8 "
44. Chrysoglot	

- XI. Tremulant.
- XII. Choir Octave.
- XIII. Choir Sub-Octave.
- XIV. Choir Unison off.
- XV. Swell to Choir.
- XVI. Solo to Choir.

SOLO ORGAN

45. Open Diapason	8 feet
46. Viola	8 "
47. Viole Di Orchestre	8 "
48. Viole Celestes	8 "
49. Hohl Flute	8 "
50. Concert Flute	4 "
51. Orchestral Oboe	8 "
52. Clarinet	8 "
53. Cor Anglais	8 "
54. Tuba	8 "
55. Vibraphone	
56. Chrysoglot	
57. Carillon	
58. Chimes	
59. Muted Chimes	

- XVII. Tremulant.
- XVIII. Solo Octave.
- XIX. Solo Sub-Octave.
- XX. Solo Unison off.

PEDAL ORGAN

60. Double Open Diapason	32 feet
61. Open Diapason (Wood)	16 "
62. Open Diapason (Metal)	16 "
63. Violone	16 "
64. Bourdon	16 "
65. Echo Bourdon	16 "
66. Dulciana	16 "
67. Quint	10 ^{2/3} "
68. Octave	8 "
69. Bass Flute	8 "
70. Violoncello	8 "
71. Fifteenth	4 "
72. Trombone	16 "
73. Trumpet	8 "
74. Tuba	8 "

- XXI. Great to Pedal.
- XXII. Swell to Pedal.
- XXIII. Choir to Pedal.
- XXIV. Solo to Pedal.

ACCESSORIES

8 manual Pistons to Great Organ	
8 " " " Swell Organ	
8 " " " Choir Organ	
8 " " " Solo Organ	
8 Pedal " " Pedal Organ	
8 " " " Swell Organ	
1 " " 'Great to Pedal' Coupler reversible	
1 " " 'Solo to Great' " "	
1 " " 'Full Organ' " "	
1 manual " 'Great to Pedal' " "	
1 " " 'Swell to Great' " "	
1 " " 'Solo to Great' " "	
1 " " 'Swell to Pedal' " "	
1 " " 'Choir to Pedal' " "	
1 " " 'Solo to Pedal' " "	
1 " " 'Full Organ' " "	
1 " " 'Octaves Cancel' " "	
1 Rocking Tablet 'Doubles Off' " "	