

# The Organs of St Mary's Church Standon

The Church Guide records that the church is built of uncut flints, originally arranged in a chessboard pattern, but altered when the church was restored in 1864 and re-arranged without any pattern. The tower did not then join the church; a square plot of grass bounded by two walls being between the church and the tower, until this was filled in and used as an organ chamber for an organ installed in 1865. The older organ and the singers' gallery above the west door were then cleared away. (1)

It is almost certain that this organ was built by George Maydwell Holdich. In his 1871 leaflet George listed Standon - but not the name of the church - as his organ No.457. Some of the remaining pipes are thought to be by Bevington. It is known that GMH shared premises - 12 Greek Street, Soho - with Bevington from 1842-1848 so it could well be that they 'helped one another out' at times and, in fact, some of their organs are very similar. Fire destroyed the building in 1854 and George moved to Judd Place East, which in 1858 was re-named Euston Road and here he stayed until 1866. (2)

We would like to know if any parts of the west gallery organ were used in the 1865 instrument and what was the stoplist for the Holdich organ.

About 1900 the organ was rebuilt by Bedwell of Cambridge. Four of the Holdich stops (marked \* below) were retained and the original G-compass Great soundboard and the painted softwood case were re-used.

## **Bedwell and Sons (1890-1946)**

G.C. Bedwell Ltd., as the firm was also known, was established by George Champion Bedwell in 1874 at Cecilia House, Hills Road, Cambridge as pianoforte and musical instrument sellers. George was born in 1845 and died in 1934. With his wife Louisa, he had several sons and daughters: Lilly, George, Harry, Frank, May, Bertie, Nellie and Douglas.

The Bedwells later became builders of small pipe organs and harmoniums and continued in this after moving to 74 Walsworth Road, Hitchin in 1906 and later to 173 Knighton Lane, Leicester. The firm of G.C. Bedwell was sold at public auction in July 1931. The sons Harry (b.1874) and and George (1862-1953) carried on as organ

builders until 1946.

The stoplist of the Bedwell organ (see Appendix copy of Bedwell's own leaflet supplied by Eric Pask (3) was:

## **Swell compass Cc to G (56 notes)**

*Open Diapason	8	metal & wood
Rohr Gedact	8	metal
Gamba	8	metal grooved bottom octave
Gemshorn	4	metal
Wald Flute	4	wood
Fifteenth	2	metal
Oboe	8	metal

## **Great compass Cc to G (56 notes)**

Open Diapason	8	metal & wood
Dulciana	8	metal grooved bottom octave
*Clarabella	8	wood
Principal	4	metal
*Flute	4	wood

§Spare slide

*Swell to Great*

*Swell Octave to Great*

## **Pedal compass Cc to F (30 notes)**

*Bourdon	16	wood
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*Swell to Pedal*

*Great to Pedal*

## **Accessories**

lever pedal; 2 combination pedals Great, 2 Swell

\* denotes old stops revoiced or partly new

windpressure 3"

pitch C 530 Standard

*§ Saxon Aldred used the existing soundboard so there must have been 2 spare slides as we have 7 stops on it. Saxon thinks that the original Holdich stoplist included a 15th and a 2-rank mixture and that Bedwell removed these. Saxon also thinks Bedwell replaced the original great open with a new one as big as he could fit on the soundboard.*

An electric blower was installed in 1948 and a new pedalboard fitted in 1969. Beyond this and general tuning and maintenance no further work was done on the organ until it was rebuilt by Saxon Aldred.

Alfie Tew – village road sweeper Mon-Sat, organ blower Sunday  
Choir pay 7s6d  
2s extra for weddings

### **Saxon Aldred 2000**

In 1998 the church architect reported that the floor beneath the organ was rotting. This provided the incentive for a massive and very successful fund-raising effort throughout the village. By good fortune the new Klais organ at Haileybury College Chapel made their old Norman&Beard / Rushworth&Dreaper organ available in whole or in part. Many churches benefitted from pipes and chests and Standon in particular with several ranks and the 3-manual console.

The 'new' organ retains all of the old pipework, though some has moved from one department to another. Most of the additional stops come from the Haileybury organ. Saxon wrote an article for the Organ Builder 2002 (4) describing the new organ from the builder's viewpoint. The second part of the article is by the organ's first resident 'keeper' Kevin Bowyer enthusing about the organ's flexibility and its wide range of colour and dynamic. Saxon ends his section with the numbers: all 678 pipes of the old organ were re-used and 922 pipes were added from Haileybury and elsewhere making a total of 1600 pipes.

The swell has gained a 4-rank Plein Jeu (made up from pipes from Haileybury swell and great mixtures), a 16' octave for the Oboe and a new Trumpet unit from the Haileybury swell. The old great Dulciana has become the swell Celeste from tenor C and its bottom octave now provides the bass of the Gamba.

The great has gained a Fifteenth, Sesquialtera 12-17 and the two reeds. The 4-rank Furniture comes from the old organ at St Augustine's Tooting which Saxon removed to replace with a 'classic' redundant 1860s Lewis. Both 8' and 4' flutes are from the old organ, revoiced as necessary.

The pedal now has a metal unit at 16, 8, 4 & II (from the Haileybury great double and swell Gemshorn) and a 16' reed (formerly the Haileybury great 16).

There was no money left for much of a choir division so a unit made up of the old Standon swell 4 Flute with a top octave from odd Haileybury pipes and the bottom octave from the great Stopped Diapason provides the flute stops at 8, 4, 2.2/3 and 2 pitches and the pedal open metal unit the 8 and 4 geigens. Saxon Aldred's clever switching makes the swell Oboe available on the choir, the swell Trumpet as a 16 (with the bottom octave from the Bassoon) and the great reeds transposed by an octave - adding even more 'clatter' when coupled to full great! Perhaps at some point in the near future we will be able to make a genuine choir section to really complete this wonderful instrument.

Saxon did all the work on the flue pipes, actions and framing, his wife Bryony designed and made the case and the display pipes are by Kevin Rutterford (those on the north side are dummies). The reeds were all revoiced by David Frostick - all but the oboe were fitted with new tongues.

Saxon has 'retired' from organ building and The Village Workshop has taken over the tuning and maintenance. Their first task during the summer of 2006 was to renovate the great and pedal reeds chests. Andrew Ray resolved the long-term problem with the swell shutter mechanism. Keith Banks has worked on the great mixture to even out the 'breaks' and he, David Stalley and Andrew Stevens have spent a good number of hours regulating the big reeds, great flutes, principal and 15th. In the last year Andrew has 'opened' the swell Oboe and revised the trunking for the Trumpet. The organ is in 'fine' voice and serves the church very well as an instrument to accompany the choir and congregation and as an instrument on which to play almost the whole organ repertoire.

The stop list (with our latest account of the sources and derivations of stops is)

### **III Swell (compass 56 notes but reeds are 61)**

Open Diapason	8	-	bottom octave open wood
Rohr Flute	8	-	metal and wood (bottom octave)
Echo Gamba	8	-	bottom octave ??
Celestes TC	8	-	ex great Dulciana
Gemshorn	4		
Fifteenth	2		
Plein Jeu 19.22.26.29	IV	-	ex Haileybury
Bassoon	16	A	bottom octave - ex Haileybury
Trumpet	8	B	- ex Haileybury
Oboe	8	A	
Clarion	4	B	

*tremulant*  
*octave*  
*suboctave*  
*unison off*

### **II Great (compass 56 notes but reeds are 61)**

Bourdon	16	C (bottom 12 from E)
Open Diapason	8	
Stopped Diapason	8	(bottom 12 from C) old Clarabella
Principal	4	
Flute Couverte	4	old flute 4'
Fifteenth	2	ex Haileybury
Sesquialtera 12.17	II	ex Haileybury
Fourniture 9(sic!).22.26.29IV		ex St Augustine's Tooting
Posaune	8	ex Haileybury
Clarion	4	ex Haileybury

*swell to great*  
*choir to great*  
*bass on great*  
*tremulant - doesn't*

### **I Choir (compass 61 notes)**

Geigen	8	D some of these pipes are stamped swell gemshorn
Suabe Flute	8	C ex swell 4' Wald Flute + bottom 12 of great Stopped D
Giegen (sic!) Octave	4	D
Flute Ouverte	4	C
Nazard	2.2/3	C
Flageolet	2	C
Double Trumpet	16	A + B
Oboe	8	A
Trompette	8	gt 4
Octave Posaune	4	gt 8

*swell to choir*

### **Pedal (compass CCC - G 32 notes)**

Open Metal	16	D ex great Double Open from Haileybury
Bourdon	16	E
Principal	8	D
Flute	8	E top octave - ex Haileybury

Fifteenth	4	D
Octave Flute	4	C
Mixture 19.22	II	D
Ophicleide	16	ex great 16' reed from Haileybury
Posaune	8	gt
Clarion	4	B

*swell to pedal*  
*great to pedal*  
*choir to pedal*

*great & pedal pistons*  
*generals on swell toe pistons*

pitch A=440  
wind pressures  
flues & oboe 3 1/2"  
other reeds 4"

Notes provided by Saxon Aldred:

- Swell mixture assembled from the pipes of both Haileybury 4rank mixtures – they were very small scale/dulciana mixtures and not big enough for Standon.
- Great mixture from St Augustine's Tooting
- 16 swell reed octave from Haileybury swell 16 reed
- 8 trumpet from Haileybury swell and 4' top octave from Haileybury clarion
- Flute Couvert is old great 4' revoiced
- 15th from Haileybury - again small scale – we are getting as much out of this and the principal as possible
- Choir 8' flute is old swell 4 flute with the bottom octave from the great Stopped Diapason. This is the original Clarabella (open from mid c) - cut down and fitted with new stoppers
- Top octave of pedal bass flute octave from Haileybury
- Bourdon - some pipes are over length with stoppers quite far down pipe. Was this because they were re-scaled at some point or maybe they were case pipes which needed to be longer than pitch required?

## References

- (1) Church Guide
- (2) Marie Higginbottom (The Holdich Family History Society)
- (3) Eric Pask
- (4) Organ Builder 2002 pages 58-60

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