

St.Mary's, Port St. Mary



Gt: 8,8,8,4,4,2, Sw: 8,8,4,2,8, Ped: 16,8.

The original organ bore no maker's name, but internally it shows every sign of being by H.W.Hewitt of Leicester, in the 1880s. As such, it was of unorthodox design, unreliable mechanical action (pneumatic to the pedals)



and not of the best construction, so it is perhaps fortunate that it has now been altered out of all recognition, over the years.

It is an instrument which confounds commonly-held preconceptions. Crammed into a narrow, deep chamber at the front of the building, its sounds project very well into the body of the church. Its Pedal Bourdon stop is of a ridiculously small scale, yet sounds perfectly normal.

Provided with an indifferent pine case by Hewitt, it has, at some stage, acquired a fine oak case, presumably to match the rest of the woodwork in the chancel and sanctuary. The display pipes were tastefully patterned and gilded in the early 1900s. (These pipes include 4 wooden dummies on the east-facing case side, made to simulate metal pipes.) The original console, key and stop mechanism (both of poor design and appearance) were replaced in major work done by Peter Jones in

recent years, giving the organ a modern mechanical key and stop action, with electro-pneumatic pedals.

Originally hand-blown, the 1880s instrument was later equipped with a second set of bellows, sited above it in the tower. These were filled by the efforts of a water engine in the organ chamber, which operated a long steel rod running through the ceiling to the feeders above. The resulting wind supply was then trunked through the ceiling again into the original bellows on the floor below. Even when fitted with an electric blower (also mounted in the tower) the wind supply was unsteady, to say the least. Thanks to the generosity and enthusiasm of the late Joan Collins, a former organist, work carried out by Peter Jones in the 1980s included a new electric blower, fitted within the chamber, and two additional stops to the Great. The bellows and earlier blower were abandoned in the tower, as no way could be found to remove them.



Having repelled a misguided attempt to replace it with an electronic substitute, further improvements are planned to this very charming and effective little organ, which now bears only a passing resemblance to the instrument supplied by Hewitt over 120 years ago.

