

WELSEY ORGAN REFURBISHMENT 2023



THE WESLEY ORGAN

The organ in Wesley Methodist Church has a long history, and has undergone a number of major and minor improvements and rebuilding.

A brief history –

- 1876 Organist -Jonathan Plumridge
- 1866 Chapel opened on the current site
- 1885 Organ purchased from Ossett (Yorks.) Methodist Church for £120; Rev'd Clement S Reader gave the opening recital.
- 1896 Organist – B Woodbridge
- 1907 Organist – W E Crook
- 1922 Organ rebuilt. Plaque reads:
"This organ was erected to the Glory of God and in memory of those who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918.
George J Ball Arthur J Bass
Frederick J Coombes Frank W Elliott
Henry Eccles Clifford J P Goodearl
Joseph B Eccles Rupert V Goodearl
William C Harman Eric Hodgkinson
Stanley W Powell C Frederick Rose
Walter J Smith F Harry Turner
Joseph H Varney George W Venables"
- 1942 Organist -Kenneth T Fox
- 1948 and 1965 Organ improved.
- 1978 Organ rebuilt and added to (ten stops of original instrument retained); the cost was borne by Mr W. O. Haines as a memorial to his wife. The plaque reads:
"In gratitude to God for the life of ETHEL ROSE HAINES this organ was restored in 1978. Born in this town. schoolteacher, Christian leader of women, a Mayoress of the Borough, closely connected with the chair trade, in life she was serene and gentle, yet a most determined person. She died 4th May 1976, aged 74, and at death was sorely missed by her husband, two daughters, their families and an exceptional company of friends."

- 1985 Organist - David G Cambridge
- 1989 The Church was completely refurbished, and divided horizontally with two floors. The organ was removed from the front and rebuilt by Peter Collins at the rear of the new worship area on the first floor using pipes from the original organ.

Other Wesley organists since 1989 include Ralph Ing, Beryl Peatey, Denys Hood Francis Dunstan, Anne and Alan Bolton.

Several other organists also use the organ for practice purposes, including Jennifer Bruce Mitford, Edward Thompson and Alastair Ross.

(The above history was extracted from 250 Years of Chiltern Methodism, and expanded to include more recent details.)

Now, in 2023, the organ is again in need of a significant overhaul as a number of the 60 or more metal rods activating the valves are wearing and need to be replaced.

The initial estimate was around £2,500 but it is likely that the total sum required will be higher and a target of £5,000 has been set.

What follows is a number of photographs and documents illustrating the life of the organ.

Harvest Festival – Date Unknown



A photograph of the commemorative plaque erected in 1922.



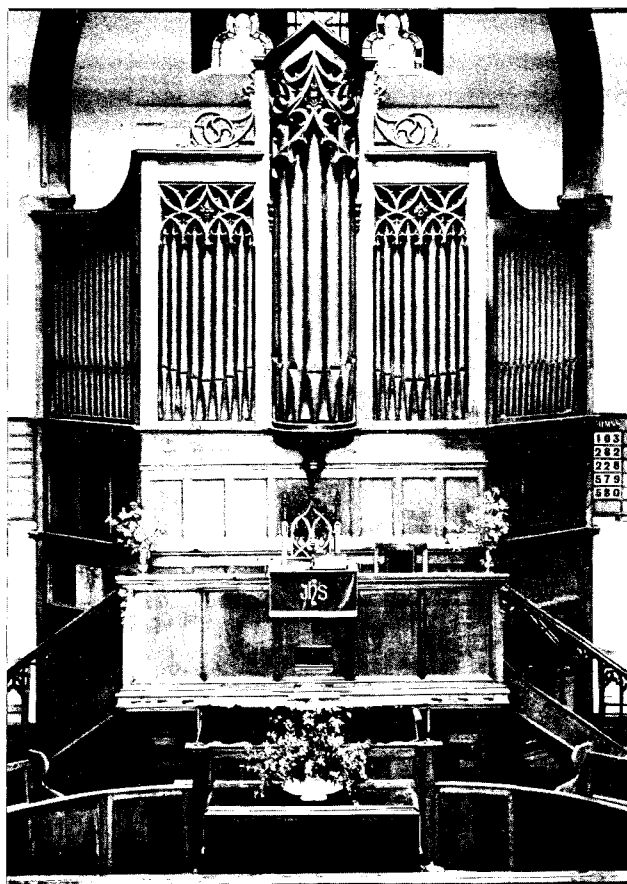
And another plaque erected following the second world war.



The next three pages were produced in 1978 when the organ was rebuilt.

WESLEY CHURCH

Priory Road, High Wycombe



Wesley Organ 1978

WESLEY ORGAN was purchased from the Methodist Church, Ossett, Yorks, and installed in the West Gallery in 1885. In 1922 it was rebuilt by R. Spurden Rutt & Co. Ltd. in its present position as a War Memorial, and further improvements were made by F. Rothwell & Sons (Harrow) Ltd. in 1948.

During the past ten years, the damage to the pneumatic action, caused by overheating has severely curtailed the proper functioning of the organ. All the organ builders consulted agreed that the only satisfactory remedy was to electrify the action, and Mr. Arthur Noterman, a London organ builder of long experience, undertook to do this. We are very grateful for all the thought and care he has devoted to this project.

The Church acknowledges with gratitude the generosity of Mr. W. O. Haines who offered to bear the cost of restoring the organ in memory of his wife Mrs. Ethel Haines.

Electrification opened up new possibilities in the resources of the instrument. As the Tromba and Lieblich Bourdon stops were on separate soundboards, it has been possible to operate them on a separate Choir Organ. Furthermore the Lieblich Bourdon rank has been extended to provide four additional stops on the Choir Organ.

Specification 1978:

GREAT ORGAN

*Lieblich Bourdon	...	...	...	...	...	ft.
Open Diapason No. 1	...	...	...	...	...	8
*Open Diapason No. 2	...	...	...	...	...	8
*Clarabella	...	...	...	...	...	8
Lieblich Gedacht	...	...	...	...	...	8
Dulciana	...	...	...	...	...	8
*Principal	...	...	...	...	...	4
*Flute	...	...	...	...	...	4
*Fifteenth	...	...	...	...	...	2
Mixture 2 ranks	...	...	...	...	...
Tromba	...	...	...	...	...	8

SWELL ORGAN

*Open Diapason	...	...	...	...	...	8
Rohr Flute	...	...	...	...	...	8
Echo Gamba	...	...	...	...	...	8
Voix Celestes	...	...	...	...	...	8
*Principal	...	...	...	...	...	4
*Mixture 3 ranks	...	...	...	...	...
Contra Oboe	...	...	...	...	...	16
Cornopean	...	...	...	...	...	8
Clarinet	...	...	...	...	...	8
Tromba (6in. wind unenclosed)	...	...	...	...	...	8
Tremulant	...	...	...	...	...

CHOIR ORGAN

Lieblich Bourdon	...	...	...	...	...	16
†Flute	...	...	...	...	...	8
†Lieblich Flute	...	...	...	...	...	4
†Nazard	...	...	...	...	...	2 $\frac{2}{3}$
†Piccolo	...	...	...	...	...	2
Tromba	...	...	...	...	...	8

PEDAL ORGAN

Harmonic Bass	...	...	...	...	...	32
*Open Diapason	...	...	...	...	...	16
Bourdon	...	...	...	...	...	16
Lieblich Bourdon	...	...	...	...	...	16
Bass Flute	...	...	...	...	...	8
Contra Oboe	...	...	...	...	...	16

COUPLERS

Swell Octave
 Swell Sub-Octave
 Swell Unison off
 Swell to Great
 Choir to Great
 Swell to Choir
 Swell to Pedal
 Great to Pedal
 Choir to Pedal

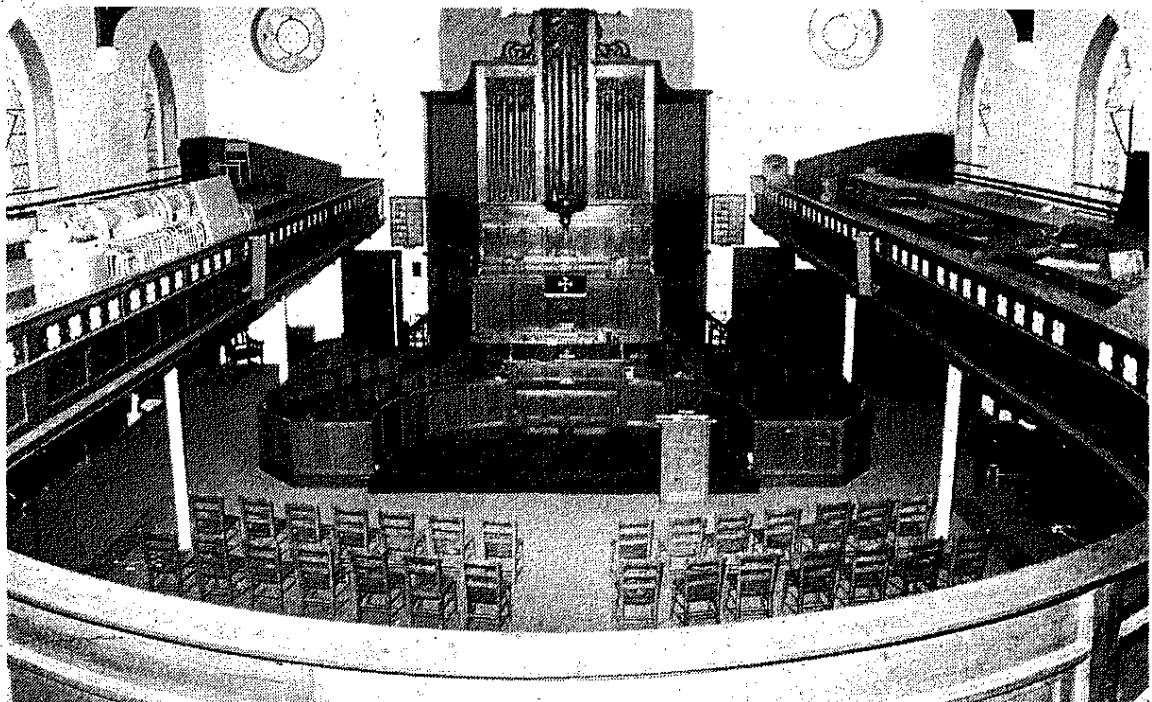
* from 1885 organ
 † additional 1978

Beryl Peatey playing the organ in the 1980s.



An interior photo from a newspaper just before the refurbishment in the late 1980s.

Only the soul will remain the same



Inside the Wesley Methodist Church

Refurbishment is underway. This is the upper part of where the organ was.



Peter Collins working on the organ.



A view of the whole organ.



And finally, a tribute to the organ from Philip Wayne - Headmaster at the Royal Grammar School, who is currently acting organist at All Saints.

"It is the best instrument in the area, in my view....."