



The Parish Church of  
St Augustine of Canterbury  
Even Swindon



## HISTORY AND SPECIFICATIONS OF THE CHURCH ORGANS

## THE HELE ORGAN

The Parish Church of St Augustine of Canterbury, Even Swindon was built to serve the large numbers of people moving to Swindon because of the Great Western Railway Works.

St Augustine's Church has not always had a pipe organ, although one was originally planned when the church was first built in 1907-1908. Until 1911, a harmonium was used.

The pipe organ was built by Hele of Plymouth, and was originally a one manual instrument with pneumatic action.

The first part of the organ was opened on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1911 by Hubert Hunt, who was then organist of Bristol Cathedral.

The second manual – the swell – was added in 1912.



Fully completed, the organ consisted of two manuals and pedals, with 14 speaking stops. The higher pitched stops on the great were extensions of the 8ft Dulciana. There are two combination pedals to both great and swell. Although the organ was suitable for accompanying a choir, the lack of brighter stops meant that it was ineffective at leading a large congregation.

It was the job of Ernie Gerrin, an alto in the church choir, to manually pump up the organ bellows for services. Eventually money was later raised and an electric blower costing £300 was purchased to do this job.

Although tuned regularly - a necessary action due to the variations in weather on the instrument's performance, the organ was known to cipher at the most inconvenient times - much to the annoyance of the resident and visiting organists.



## SPECIFICATION OF THE HELE PIPE ORGAN

PEDAL	GREAT	SWELL
Open Diapason 16'	Large Open Diapason 8'	Open Diapason 8'
Bourdon 16'	Small Open Diapason 8'	Gamba 8'
	Dulciana 8'	Lieblich Gedacht 8'
	Wald Flute 8'	Flute 4'
	Principal 4'	Horn 8'
	Twelfth 2 2/3'	
	Fifteenth 2'	

COUPLERS	ACCESSORIES
Swell to Great	2 Combination pedals to Great
Great to Pedal	2 Combination pedals to Swell
Swell to Pedal	Tremulant rocker tab above swell manual



*The Swell and coupler stops of the Hele Organ (left) and the Great and Pedal (right)*

## THE 'COVENTRY' ORGAN

In 2003, following many years of very little maintenance, the end of the pipe organ's life was evident, and got to the point of needing many thousands of pounds of repairs.

It would have been a huge burden on the congregation to try and find this amount of money.

A plea was placed in the Swindon Evening Advertiser. The plea was seen by Ann Coventry, wife of the late Macdonald Coventry, a former local organist. Ann, kindly donated his practice instrument from home to the church.

The new organ consists of two manuals and pedals, with 33 speaking stops and many playing aids. It is far superior to the old pipe organ and is extremely versatile - and is capable accommodating most musical styles, as well as accompanying large congregations.

It was dedicated to Mr Coventry's memory on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2005, and the first recital on the new organ was given by Professor Dr Ian Tracey, Organist Titulaire of Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral.

He has since returned three times (in 2007, 2009 and 2011) to give recitals at the church.

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*"It is always a joy to play the little giant at St. Augustine's; it is so resourceful and flexible for such a small instrument, and tackles music of all schools equally well. In my four visits, I have played music from five centuries of organ literature and it has coped admirably with all of it. The new speakers have made a tremendous difference to the bass response of the Pedal organ, but also to the overall tonal quality of the other registers; it positively sparkles!"*

**Professor Dr Ian Tracey,**

**Liverpool Cathedral**

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*The console of the 'Coventry' Organ*

## SPECIFICATION OF THE 'COVENTRY' ORGAN

### GREAT

Double Diapason 16'  
 Open Diapason 8'  
 Stopped Diapason 8'  
 Dulciana 8'  
 Principal 4'  
 Flute 4'  
 Twelfth 2 2/3'  
 Fifteenth 2'  
 Harmonic Piccolo 2'  
 Mixture IV  
 Sharp Mixture III  
 Trumpet 8'  
 \*Clarinet 8'  
 Tremulant

### SWELL

Open Diapason 8'  
 Chimney Flute 8'  
 Echo Gamba 8'  
 Voix Celeste 8'  
 Principal 4'  
 Rohr Flute 4'  
 Fifteenth 2'  
 Larigot 1 1/3'  
 Mixture III  
 Contra Fagotto 16'  
 Cornopean 8'  
 Clarion 4'  
 \*Oboe 8'  
 Tremulant

### PEDAL

Violone 16'  
 Sub Bass 16'  
 Bourdon 16'  
 Octave 8'  
 Bass Flute 8'  
 Choral Bass 4'  
 Fagotto 16'

\*These stops are alterable - and a library of 24 extra stops is available

### COUPLERS

Swell to Great  
 Swell to Pedal  
 Great to Pedal  
 Pedal to Great  
 Great and Pedal Pistons combined  
 Swell to Great  
 Great to Pedal

### ACCESSORIES

8 Thumb Pistons to Great  
 8 Thumb Pistons to Swell  
 8 General Pistons  
 Set Piston  
 Memory +  
 Memory -  
 Continental Mode  
 General Cancel  
 Advance  
 Swell Pedals to Great and Swell  
 16 Piston Memories

