

The Organs at St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth

A History Little Known...



Preserving the future of our musical heritage in the
service of the community and the worship of God

The Early Years

Thomas Telford, (1757-1834) the Borough Surveyor for Shropshire was the architect of three churches built in Shropshire.¹ St Mary Magdalene was his first, largest and finest design. The foundation stone was laid in 1792. The records held in the Shrewsbury Record Office relating to the organs at St Mary, Magdalene date from 1843.² However there must have been an organ prior to this date³ as there is reference to...‘the organ being reopened on Sunday next, 5th November 1843 having been repaired tuned and improved’...collections made (at the reopening) will be, ‘for the benefit of the choir’. However, in the treasurers account dated November 5th 1869 this organ was sold for £50. In July 1868, when William Roberts was organist the Rector, The Revd S Bentley reported that,.... ‘for some

time past the Psalmody at St Mary’s has been in an unsatisfactory state...due to the condition of the organ’.⁴

Edward J Bossward⁵, an organ builder from Ladywood, Birmingham submitted a tender to the organist, William Roberts on 1st August 1868 with a specification for two organs, one for £200 and the other for £300.⁶ The larger specification was a two manual organ of 18 stops some of which would be new and the existing pipes would be revoiced and repaired. However, this tender was not considered and a new organ was built by ‘Mr Henry Jones of London from the specification of M.S Skeffington Esq., Hon Organist of St Barnabas’ Church, Kensington’.⁷ The specification drawn up was to include a Great, Swell and Pedal organ which was to be placed on the gallery at the North end of the church, consisting of the following stops.

Stop	Material	Pipes	Feet
Great Organ CC to G 56 notes			
Open diapason	Metal	56	8
Stopped diapason	Wood	56	8
Dulciana	Metal	56	8
Harmonic Flute	Wood & Metal	56	4
Principal	Metal	56	4
Twelfth	Metal	56	2 2/3
Fifteenth	Metal	56	2
Mixture	2 ranks	112	-
Swell Organ CC to G 56 notes			
Double stopped diapason	Wood	56	16
Open diapason	Metal	56	8
Lieblich Gedact	Metal	56	8
Keraulophon to Tenor C	Wood & Metal	44	8
Gemshorn	Metal	56	4
Twelfth	Metal	56	2 2/3
Fifteenth	Metal	56	2
Piccolo	Metal	56	2
Oboe to Tenor C	Metal	56	8
Horn	Metal	56	8
Pedal Organ CCC to E 29 notes			
Open diapason	Wood	29	16
Bourdon 1 octave (borrowed from Swell)	Wood	12	16

Couplers-Swell to great-Swell sub octave-Swell to pedal- Great to pedal-Tremulent to Swell-Composition pedals acting on Great Organ-Composition pedals acting on Swell Organ. In 1869 the sum of £420 was paid to Mr Jones for this new organ.⁸ The firm of Perry & Phillips (still extant in the town) made alterations to the gallery to accommodate the new organ at a

cost of £4. 18. 0.⁹ The money for the new organ was raised by subscription and collections during services.¹⁰ In 1892, Nicholson of Worcester¹¹ were paid £47.12.0 for cleaning and adding two new stops to the organ.¹² At this time there were proposals to raise the swell box in the organ chamber... ‘to make room for a new choir organ of four stops’¹³... at a cost of £208.10.0. However, this did not come to fruition and Henry Jones rebuilt and enlarged the organ in 1904.¹⁴ In a letter dated 23rd August 1904.¹⁵ M. S. Skeffington advised the organ builders (Jones & Son)...‘Do not forget that the instrument was designed to stand fully open (on the gallery) when every pipe could be heard and voiced differently...’ This letter refers to the organ being removed from the gallery and placed in the south east lobby when, The Revd Samuel Bentley commissioned Sir Arthur Blomfield (1876) to enlarge the chancel, thus enabling the choir and organ to be in close proximity. The 1904 organ had mechanical action to the Great organ and pneumatic to the Swell and Pedal organs.¹⁶

The Nicholson Organ

In 1932, Nicholson’s of Worcester wrote to the organist Rueben Stainer A.I.G.C.M, at 12 West Castle Street, Bridgnorth to say that the organ was...‘in a very bad state and worn out’... in their considered opinion it was ... ‘not worth the cost of restoring it’.¹⁷ The proposal was to provide... ‘an external blowing chamber’¹⁸, with ‘Discus’ blowing equipment; to reconstruct the organ with tubular pneumatic action with the addition of a choir organ of five or six stops; and to provide a more adequate pedal department for the sum of £1300 to £1400. The alternative was for a two manual organ with more pedal pipes at a lower figure of £900.

Nicholson wrote to the Rector The Revd J Stewart Jobling on 30th November 1932 to suggest converting the pedal Bourdon soundboard and nine notes of the Great Open Diapason of the organ to tubular pneumatic action at a cost of £35.¹⁹ The enlargement of the organ to a three manual instrument did not come to fruition as the church opted for the cheaper two manual organ. In 1975, Nicholson rebuilt the organ, electrifying the action, extending the pedal Bourdon and a Great Mixture (a Dennis Thurlow stop²⁰) took the place of the Gamba²¹.

The Father Willis Organ at Clifton College

Clifton College, Bristol, founded in 1862 remains a leading public school not least for its musical traditions. The school has produced some fine musicians and amongst them some notable organists including Sir David Willcocks²². In April 1868²³ the Choral Society gave a concert to open a fund for the provision of an organ in Big School. The Big School organ was an early Father Willis (1873) built at the height of Henry Willis genius and around the same time as the Willis organ in St Paul’s Cathedral (1872) and Truro a few years later. The organ in Big School stood in two cases on either side of a platform at the end of the hall.²⁴ The Father Willis organ was expected to be ready for use in 1872 but the opening recital was delayed until December 1873. Under the direction of Dr Douglas Fox, who despite losing his arm in action during the First World War²⁵ had great energy to spare and was responsible for restoring the organ, in 1938 to a lower pitch which made it possible to use the organ with the orchestra.



The Nicholson console before being removed from the organ chamber behind the choir stalls in the Chancel (April 2007)

A new, mobile detached Nave console, made in oak by Renatus, Devon will replace the Nicholson console

A celebratory recital in March 1938 by Dom Gregory Murray from Downside Abbey marked another milestone in the changing fortunes of Willis' unique masterpiece.²⁶ An article in the 1955 edition of, 'The Organ'²⁷ describes the organ as untouched²⁸ and a ... 'remarkable example of the organ builders' art.' The writer goes on to describe the 'diapason chorus as, 'simply wonderful' ... these stops are individually beautiful beyond words'... 'The pedal 16ft Violone deserves special mention since its bass notes have the most wonderful throbbing tone evoking most compellingly the sensation of bowed strings.'²⁹ Coincidentally, Willis was a double bass player and may have taken a particular interest in this stop! An old friend of Dr Fox, Lady Susi Jeans took great delight in playing the Big School organ.³⁰

In 1968, the Cathedral-like acoustic³¹ in Big School was lost when an additional floor was added to accommodate increased numbers of students in the dining hall, necessitating the removal of the organ. Winifred Fox, sister of Dr Douglas Fox³² commented ... 'the beautiful 'Father Willis' organ was dismantled and packed away in the chapel crypt-priceless but unsaleable.' John Pryer³³ (Old Cliftonian)

The Father Willis Organ at St Mary, Magdalene

In 2003, at St Mary' Magdalene in Bridgnorth the two manual Nicholson organ was becoming unreliable and needed urgent work to rectify some previous water damage, cracking of the swell soundboard and to address the very insecure wind pressure to the Great and Swell organ.

For some ten years the organ was always a disappointment when used to accompany the choirs from Hereford and Birmingham Cathedrals.³⁶ Not even the celebrated International Organist David Briggs,³⁷ could do anything with it! After consultation with Dr Roy Massey, Diocesan Organ Adviser, and a number of organ builders it was considered that the present organ would not justify high expenditure on repairs and in any case would require a complete rebuild.

The opportunity arose to purchase the Father Willis organ from Clifton College, which was in store at the Organ builders, Percy Daniel & Co in Somerset. Negotiations began between the Rector at St Mary's and Headmaster of Clifton College, Dr. Spurr.³⁸ Several schemes³⁹ were put forward as Clifton College were very reluctant to sell the instrument. However, finally it was agreed that St Mary's Restoration Trust would purchase the organ for £7,500 from Clifton.

The College understood that the cost of installing the organ in St Mary's Church would be in excess of £130,000 and therefore decided that at the very least the organ would be heard again and used regularly for church services, weddings, funerals and as a concert venue for recitals.

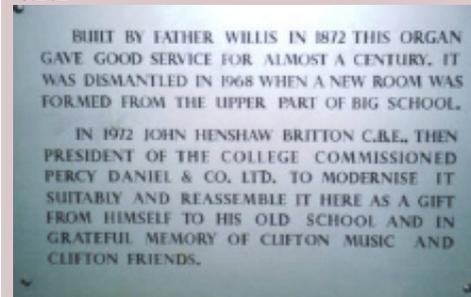
recalls his school days playing the Willis in Big School,... 'I devoted a lot of my spare schoolboy time looking after it and playing my set pieces...I did not have trouble from the kitchen staff unlike others, as I used to play their favourite hymns and items such as 'Moonlight and Roses' and 'The Dam Busters March'... which kept them very happy...and they used to sing along!'

In 1971 when the newly built floor was finished, Mr J. H Britton CBE an Old Cliftonian and President of the Council offered to pay for the Father Willis to be reinstalled in Big School at a cost of £10,000.

The work was carried out by the organ builders, Percy Daniel of Clevedon, Somerset. The restriction of space led to the consequent loss of the 16ft pedal Open Diapason (Wood) when the rebuild in Big School took place in 1972. The opening recital in January 1973 was given by an Old Cliftonian and former organ scholar of Kings College Cambridge, Richard Popplewell³⁴ who later became organist of St Michael's Cornhill³⁵. Christopher Robinson, Martin Neary,

Gaston Litaize and David Pettit also gave celebratory recitals in 1973.

Plaque fixed to the detached console in 1973 to recognise the generous gift of J. H. Britton (OC) C.B.E



Unfortunately the firm of Percy Daniel & Company (who had the Father Willis in store) ceased trading and the Restoration Trust had to find another organ builder. After extensive research and advice, Trevor G. Tipple, Organ builders in Worcester were awarded the contract to install the Father Willis in St Mary's when the money had been raised. The total project now stood at £137,000, the largest fund raising event ever undertaken by the Parish!

In 2004, the Restoration Trust set about fund raising locally through a 'sponsor a pipe scheme' and by seeking grant aid from major fund raising bodies. Some £90,000 has been raised locally over four years by the Organ Committee, a staggering amount in today's financial climate! The Foundation for Sport and the Arts along with the Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust and the Garfield Weston Foundation brought in the rest of the grant aid money. Work on the Father Willis organ commenced in January 2008. The Opening Gala Concert Recital will be given by a patron of the appeal, Dr Roy Massey on 25th April 2009. The specification of the Father Willis Organ from 1873 to 2009 will be found at the end of this brief history.

Known Organists & Choirmasters of St Mary Magdalene

1796-1868- No records extant
 1868-until? William Roberts
 1932-1939- Rueben Stainer AIGCM (Lived at 12, East Castle Street, Bridgnorth)
 1939-1972- Arnold C. Clarke (Boy Chorister at Lichfield Cathedral)
 1972-2002- Harold Cooper (Music teacher at St Mary's Blue Coat School, Bridgnorth)
 2002-2003 Interregnum-David Smith & Sylvia Baker
 2003- John Turnock PhD, (Choral Scholar, Chester Cathedral and Organ Scholar at UCC)

Patrons of the Father Willis Organ Appeal

Lord Hamilton of Dalzell, The Rt. Revd Michael Hooper, Dr Roy Massey MBE

St Mary Restoration Trust - Registered with the Charity Commissioners (500148)

Members- The Revd Prebendary A. A. Roberts, Rector and Rural Dean (Chairman), Mr D.G. Davies (secretary) Mrs E. E. Smallman, (Treasurer), Mr F.L Brown, Mrs C.A.S Cundy, Mrs C. O'Brien, Mr E.M.A. Thompson, Mrs H.M. Walters.

The Father Willis Organ Appeals Committee

Dr John Turnock (Chair), The Revd Prebendary A.A. Roberts (Rector & Rural Dean), Mr D.G. Davies, Mr F.L. Brown, Mr C Cundy, Mrs C. Cundy, Mr M. Blackburn, Mrs H.M. Walters, Mrs P. Hannah, Miss S. Royle, Mr Oliver Clarke, B.Mus (Assistant Organist) Mr Neil Smith.

Nicholson of Worcester 1975 specification at St Mary, Magdalene. Based on the Jones & Son Organ of the 1860's-New console with electric action. The pedal Bourdon was extended and a Great Mixture added taking the place of the Gamba.

Great Organ		Swell Organ		Pedal Organ	
Open Diapason 1	8ft	Double Open Diapason	16ft	Open Diapason Bourdon	16ft
Open Diapason 2	8ft	Open Diapason	8ft	Bass Flute	8ft
Rohr Flute	8ft	Lieblich Gedeckt	8ft	Octave Flute	4ft
Dulciana	8ft	Keraulophone	8ft		
Harmonic Flute	4ft	Voix Celeste	8ft		
Principal	4ft	Gemshorn	4ft		
Fifteenth	2ft	Piccolo	2ft		
Mixture	2 ranks	Oboe	8ft		
Clarinet	8ft	Horn	8ft		
		Tremulent Couplers		Great to pedal	
				Swell to pedal	
Accessories 4 thumb pistons on Great & Swell and toe pistons		Swell to great-Swell Octave-swell sub octave		Great and pedal Combination coupled	
9 stops		9 stops		4 stops	
22 speaking stops					

Father Willis, original specification in 1873 –The pitch was lowered from 530 in 1938 to enable the organ to be used with the orchestra. Until the advent of the Military band the orchestra at Clifton College consisted mostly of strings, who were curiously accustomed to tuning up to the nondescript pitch (530) adopted by Willis as being roughly midway between the old army pitch (540) and the ‘new philharmonic’ (522). Harrison & Harrison who looked after the instrument for 27 years addressed this in 1938 and revoiced the reed stops to the lower pitch without injuring the tone quality. *Cited by The Director of Music, Dr D.G.A. Fox, in The Cliftonian, page 199. (1938, February edition)*

Great Organ		Swell Organ		Pedal Organ	
Contra Gamba	16ft	Lieblich Bourdon	16ft	Open Diapason (w)	16ft
Open Diapason	8ft	Lieblich Gedeckt	8ft	Violone (m)	16ft
Open Diapason	8ft	Open Diapason	8ft	Bourdon	16ft
Viola	8ft	Gamba	8ft		
Salicional	8ft	Vox Angelica	8ft		
Clarabel	8ft	Gemshorn	4ft	Couplers	
Flûte harmonique	4ft	Mixture (19,22)	2 ranks	Swell to great	
Principal	4ft	Hautboy	8ft	Great to pedal	
Super octave	2ft	Corno pean	8ft	Swell to pedal	
Posaune	8ft				
Clarinet	8ft				
				Great and pedal Combination coupled	
11 stops		9 stops		3 stops	
23 speaking stops					

Father Willis specification in 1973-(Percy Daniel & Co Ltd) Detached Console. (Pedal Open Wood lost as unable to fit into the restricted space in dining hall)

Great Organ		Swell Organ		Pedal Organ	
Contra Gamba	16ft	Lieblich Bourdon	16ft	Violone (m)	16ft
Open Diapason	8ft	Lieblich Gedeckt	8ft	Contra Gamba	16ft
Open Diapason	8ft	Open Diapason	8ft	Bourdon	16ft
Salicional	8ft	Gamba	8ft	Principal	8ft
Clarabel	8ft	Vox Angelica	8ft	Bass Flute	8ft
Principal	4ft	Gemshorn	4ft	Fifteenth	4ft
Flûte harmonique	4ft	Mixture (19,22)	2 ranks	Octave Flute	4ft
Twelfth new	2 2/3	Hautboy	8ft	Twenty second	2ft
Super octave	2ft	Corno pean	8ft	Schalmei new	4ft
Mixture 19,22	new				
Posaune	8ft	Couplers		Great to pedal	
Clarinet	8ft	Swell to great		Swell to pedal	
Great and pedal Combination coupled		Accessories			
12 stops					
30 speaking stops		9 stops		9 stops	

Father Willis, specification in St Mary's Bridgnorth- 2008-2009 (Organ Builders-Trevor G. Tipple, Worcester) Cost in excess of £137,000. New 2 manual mobile detached console in the nave had build in oak by Renatus, Devon. Compass Manuel-56 notes Pedal-30 notes

Great Organ		Swell Organ		Pedal Organ	
Contra Gamba	16ft	Open Diapason	8ft	Open Wood	16ft 30 notes
56 notes separate chest				existing St Mary's stop	
Open Diapason I	8ft	Lieblich Gedeckt	8ft	Violone	16ft 42 notes
Open Diapason II	8ft	Gamba	8ft	Contra Gamba	16ft 56 notes
Salicional	8ft	Vox Angelica	8ft	Bourdon	16ft 54 notes
Clarabel	8ft	Tenor C		Principal	8ft 42 notes
Principal	4ft	Principal	4ft	Bass Flute	8ft 54 notes
Flûte harmonique	4ft	Fifteenth	2ft	Fifteenth	4ft 42 notes
Twelfth	2 2/3	Mixture 19, 22, 26	3 ranks	Octave Flute	4ft 54 notes
Super octave	2ft	new 26th		Twenty second	2ft 42 notes
Mixture 22, 26, 29	new	Contra Oboe	16ft	Trombone new	16ft 42 notes
29th	3 ranks	(lowest 12 separate chest)		Trumpet new	8ft 42 notes
Corno di Bassetto	8ft	Corno pean	8ft	Schalmei	4ft 30 notes
Posaune	8ft				
Swell to Great		Swell Octave		Swell to Pedal	
Great and pedal pistons coupled		Swell Unison off		Great to Pedal	
Generals to Swell toe pistons		6 general thumb pistons		6 thumb pistons to Great	
6 thumb pistons to Swell		6 toe pistons to Pedal/Great		6 toe pistons to Swell	
1 thumb and toe piston		reverser Swell to Great		thumb and toe piston	
1 reverser Great to Pedal to pedal		1 thumb piston reverser		1 general cancel piston	
12 stops		Swell		1 set piston	
33 speaking stops		9 stops		12 stops	

References relating to sources in the text

1. Telford Churches: St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth; St Michael's, Madeley; and St Leonard's, Malinslee
2. Shropshire Archives-Ecclesiastical-Royal Peculiar of Bridgnorth-Bridgnorth St Mary Magdalene Parish Records 1610-1981-organ ref P41/B/27/ pages 1-13
3. The National Pipe Organ Register refers to an organ by Benjamin Blythe who died in 1840 (W G. Smallman)
4. Ibid, 11 July 1868
5. Edward J. Bossward-representative for Hill, (Organ Builders) looked after the Town Hall Organ Birmingham
6. Martin Blackburn- letter from a descendant of the organist in 1860's-William Roberts
7. Shropshire Record Office P41/B/27/1
8. W.G. Smallman.-Thoughts on the Organ at St Mary Magdalene's 9th January 2004
9. Shropshire Record Office (SRO), Ibid P41/B/27/1
10. SRO, Ibid, The Treasurers account dated November 5th 1869 P41/B/27/1
11. SRO, Ibid P41/B/27/3
12. Gamba to replace the twelfth on the great organ and Clarinet to replace the mixture on the Great organ
13. SRO, Ibid P41/B/27/3
14. W. G. Smallman,(President of the Shropshire and District Organists and Choirmasters Association)
15. SRO, Shrewsbury P41/B/27/5
16. W.G. Smallman.- Thoughts on the Organ at St Mary Magdalene 9th January 2004
17. SRO, P41/B/27/6
18. SRO P41/B/27/910 1932
19. SROP41/B/27/9
20. Dennis Thurlow was Tonal Director (Voicer for Nicholson of Worcester)
21. W G. Smallman-notes 29th August 2008
22. John Pryer & Charles Beresford (OCs)- 2008, C.S Lang, Sir William McKie, Joseph Cooper, Boris Ord, Martin Neary et al played and practised on the Big School, Willis
23. Douglas Fox-'Music at Clifton' Extracts from the Centenary Essays, Clifton College 1962
24. The Organ, 1955 John Birley
25. Music at Clifton-OCS-History (www.cliftoncollegeuk.com)
26. Yngve Liddell (brother of BBC Newsreader Alvar Liddell)
27. The Organ, 1955-The Organs in Clifton College, John L Birley p35
28. Refer to Willis specifications; Clifton, 1955; 1973 & 2009 rebuild at St Mary's, Bridgnorth
29. The Organ, 1955-The Organs in Clifton College, John L Birley p35
30. Winifred Fox, Extracts from the book 'Douglas Fox , a Chronicle'
31. John Pryer (OC) Personal Letter 27th April 2006
32. Extracts from the book , 'Douglas Fox, a Chronicle'-by Winifred Fox
33. John Pryer, (OC), Chorister at Ely Cathedral, Organ Scholar, Keble College, Oxford
34. The Organ, 1974 edition 210
35. Graham Hooper, 1974, The Organ, Number 210
36. Dr Roy Massey, formerly Organist and Master of the Choristers Hereford Cathedral & Chair of the Royal College of Organist
37. John L. Birley, The Organ, 1955 edition-'The Organs of Clifton College' p36
38. John L. Turnock-Correspondence file 2004-2008
39. Clifton College Governors suggested a 25 year loan of the Organ to St Mary's but the installation costs were considered too high to be contemplated by the Restoration Trust

From The Bishop & Archdeacon of Ludlow, The Rt Revd Michael W Hooper

16th March 2006

Proposed new organ at St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth

St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth has a long musical tradition. There has been an excellent choir here for many years and it is sad to hear that the organ has reached the end of its useful life.

I am delighted to hear that a Father Willis Organ which became available has now been purchased and will have the additional advantage of a detached console.

The church has spent some considerable time considering re-ordering and how to conduct worship most effectively to engage the whole congregation and make sense of the insights of Common Worship. This has meant that the choir has been moved to the front of the nave and it would be very helpful if the person playing the organ and in charge of the music can be as near the choir as possible.

Quite suddenly there seems to be a huge opportunity to realise the potential for improving the standard of worship, which has always been high in this church, and to have an excellent organ with improved quality of music to enable the continuing of a first rate choir.

I am also pleased that when the funding has become available this organ will be installed which will be an asset when people come to the church for concerts. It is necessary to have a suitable organ for this unique church which is so well used and appreciated by the wider community of Bridgnorth.

I very much hope that the organ will soon be installed and giving pleasure to the many people who come to the church for all sorts of occasions.

✦ Michael Ludlow

From Paul Spicer, Birmingham Bach Choir

28 May 2007

Proposal for new organ at St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth

As the conductor of the Birmingham Bach Choir, I have taken the choir to sing at St Mary's Bridgnorth many times. It is a fine church, beautifully situated and with an excellent acoustic for music making. The one thing which has always let the church down is its poor organ and the fact that it is so difficult for the organist to be in proper visual contact with the choir and conductor. This new proposal for putting the Father Willis organ, formally at Clifton College, into the church with a new detached console is an ideal solution. I know this instrument and remember playing it in the hall at the school before it was removed. It is a fine organ and will be a distinguished instrument for its new home if funding can be found. To plan for a detached console as well is a perfect solution to the problems of the current instrument which has its console buried deeply within it. Not only will this new detached console answer the problems of visibility, but it will also mean that the organist can properly hear what he or she is playing.

A church organ is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Sadly, because of the specialised nature of the instrument and the fact that it is essentially hand-built, it is also very expensive. However, it seems to me that, taking the route which St Mary's is taking, by purchasing an historic instrument, they are going to end up with a fine instrument made by one of the world's most revered organ builders for a fraction of the price that such an organ would cost to build now. Thus, this decision is not only a practical answer to the church's musical problems, but an extremely pragmatic one, financially.

I hope very much that funding will be forthcoming to enable the church to improve the musical side of its regular worship, and that will also mean that it can maintain and improve its position as one of the leading musical venues in the area. I will certainly look forward to taking the Bach Choir to Bridgnorth again once it is installed.



From Dr Roy Massey MBE

15th March 2006

Proposed new organ at St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth

As Organist and Master of the Choristers at Hereford Cathedral for twenty seven years I came to know the Parish of St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth as one of the most enterprising in the Diocese of Hereford. Over the years the Cathedral Choir sang several times at St Mary's and we were always made most welcome by the clergy and the members of the large and supportive congregation.

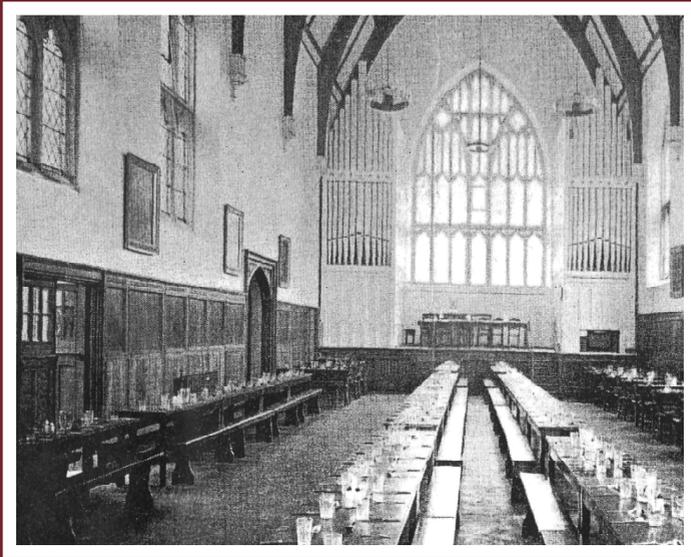
Unfortunately, the musical enjoyment of our visits was always sadly marred by the inadequate quality of the church's organ and I am not surprised to learn that it has now reached the end of its working life. I am also strongly of the opinion that the instrument is not worthy of any further expenditure as its basic quality was always less than distinguished, and therefore I am delighted to learn of the proposal to replace it with the Father Willis organ which formerly stood in Big School at Clifton College, Bristol.

Many years ago I had the pleasure and privilege of playing this instrument and can vouch for its outstanding quality. Willis was probably the greatest organ builder in this country during the Nineteenth century and it is a wonderful opportunity for St Mary's to acquire a finely built instrument of outstanding tonal quality by a legendary maker. Some years ago it was sympathetically rebuilt and modernised with a new action and detached console and this fact will make it particularly suitable for use in the re-ordered choir area of St Mary's at a significant period in the liturgical life of the church.

Such an instrument will enable Bridgnorth Parish Church to enhance its own liturgical, choral and musical provision and also help develop its potential as a recital venue and cultural centre for the town and county. The acquisition of this Willis organ is an exciting and visionary project for the Parish and I am delighted to give it my wholehearted support. I wish them well in their fund raising for such a worthwhile venture.

Dr Roy Massey MBE

Past President of the Royal College of Organists
Organ Adviser to the Diocese of Hereford



Clifton College, Bristol, Father Willis Organ in the Big School prepared for school meals

Acknowledgements

The Rt. Revd. Bishop John Oliver;

The Revd. Mike Kneen, Leominster Priory;

Mr. D .J. Pryer (Old Cliftonian);

Mr Charles Beresford, (Old Cliftonian);

Mr Chris Manners LRAM, CISOB- Managing Director (Percy Daniel & Co Ltd);

Mr W. G. Smallman-St Chad's, Shrewsbury;

Mr Paul Spicer (Birmingham Bach Choir)

Dr David Knight-Conservation Assistant-for Hereford DAC (Council for the Care of Churches)

Mr O.D.L. Delany-Secretary to the Council, Clifton College, Bristol;

Mr. A.D Moyes-Managing Director, Nicholson Pipe Organ Builders, Malvern;

Mr David Wyld, Managing Director, Henry Willis & Sons Organ Builders, Liverpool;

Mr Kenneth Tickell, BA, FRCO, Organ Builder Northampton;

Mr D.H. McElderry FISOB-Wells- Kennedy Organ Builders, N Ireland:

Mr Alan Webb-Historian ('A brief history of St Mary Magdalene' 2008)

Miss Maryanne Lineker Mobberley, typesetting, art & design for, A History Little Known;

The Foundation for Sports and the Arts; Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust;

The Garfield Weston Foundation.

Acknowledgement for permission to use Photographs; Colin Cundy, David Davies, Heather Walters and Clifton College

(permission is being sought for use of black and white picture of the Father Willis in Big School.)

Last but not least the many hundreds of donors in the Bridgnorth area and much further a field who gave so generously to the appeal, many anonymously in memory of a close family relative.