

The Organs at Derby Cathedral

Derby Cathedral is home to three organs; the 100-stop, 4-manual John Compton organ of 1939, a 3-manual Viscount Digital organ (used to accompany the choir) and a 4-stop chamber organ by Robin Jennings.

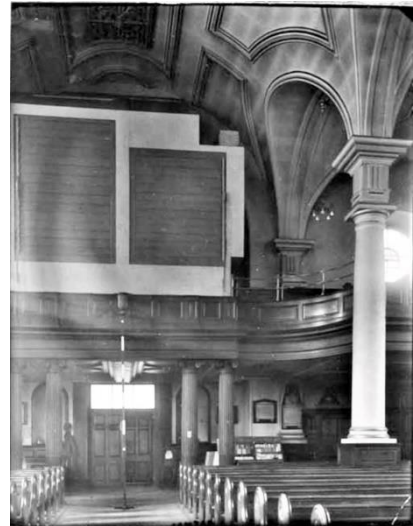


The eighteenth-century organ case

The first organ in the present building was installed in the west gallery in the early 1740s. Little is known about it, except that by the end of the century it was worn out. In 1808 Thomas Elliot provided a new instrument of three manuals, housed in the old eighteenth-century case. This was rebuilt in 1879 by John Stringer, who retained much of Elliot's pipework and again made use of the old case.

When the parish church of All Saints became a Cathedral in 1927, there were new musical demands to which the Stringer organ was no longer equal. Not only was it in serious disrepair, but the position of its console on the west gallery was not ideal for choral accompaniment.

The time was ripe for a rebuild and this work was undertaken by The John Compton Organ Company in 1939. Keeping about 1500 pipes from the Stringer organ, and making much use of extension (particularly on the Great, Choir and Pedal divisions), he built a four-manual instrument playable from a detached console with illuminated stops, positioned on the north side of the chancel. Due to budgetary constraints the old case was never adjusted as planned to accommodate the wider instrument, and languished away in storage leaving the bare expression chambers visible. In the 1960s, Sebastian Comper designed the new case of dummy pipes as part of his work to extend the Cathedral. In 1992, Rushworth and Dreaper effected some repairs, made some tonal modifications, and replaced the old transmission system enabling the console to become mobile.



The caseless Compton Organ in 1941



The Cousans organ

As part of Comper's work to extend the Cathedral eastwards in the late 1960s, choir stalls were positioned at the East end of the Cathedral in the new Retrochoir. The Compton Organ – now on the opposite side of the Cathedral to the choir – was no longer suitable for choral accompaniment, and a modest 2-manual swallow's-nest organ by Cousans of Lincoln was placed above the new Retrochoir stalls. As a result of the age of some of the components

in this instrument (much of which was second-hand when it was constructed in 1973), and the extra pressure placed on it during the Coronavirus pandemic of 2019, this organ became unplayable in 2021, and has been replaced in the short-term with a Viscount Digital organ.

Thirty years after the last renovations, the Compton organ again finds itself in a rather delicate state, with much of the electronics and underactions failing (despite the sterling efforts of Harrison and Harrison to keep it playable). Conversations are currently ongoing to establish the next chapter for the organs at Derby, and how we can best resource the Cathedral of today.

Compton Organ Specification

(All divisions enclosed unless marked †)

Pedal

- 1 Sub Bass 32
- 2 Open Wood 16†
- 3 Diaphone 16
- 4 Contra Bass 16
- 5 Bourdon 16
- 6 Echo Bourdon 16
- 7 Dulciana 16
- 8 Octave Wood 8†
- 9 Flute 8
- 10 Dulciana 8
- 11 Super Octave Wood 4†
- 12 Octave Flute 4
- 13 Fourniture IV 12.15.19.22
- 14 Acuta II 26.29
- 15 Contra Trombone 32
- 16 Trombone 16
- 17 Posaune 16
- 18 Fagotto 16
- 19 Clarinet 16 (Tenor C)
- 20 Tromba 8
- 21 Clarion 4

Choir

- 22 Gemshorn 8
- 23 Vox Angelica 8
- 24 Lieblich Gedeckt 8
- 25 Stopped Flute 4
- 26 Nazard $2\frac{2}{3}$
- 27 Flautino 2
- 28 Tierce $1\frac{3}{5}$
- 29 Contra Dulciana 16
- 30 Third Diapason 8
- 31 Hohlflote 8
- 32 Dulciana 8
- 33 Principal 4
- 34 Open Flute 4
- 35 Octave 2
- 36 Quint $1\frac{1}{3}$
- 37 Octavin I
- 38 Double Clarinet 16 (Tenor C)
- 39 Clarinet 8
- 40 Orchestral Oboe 8
- 41 Tremulant

Bombarde (Playable from the Choir)

- 42 Diapason 8
- 43 Octave 4
- 44 Plein Jeu III 15.19.22
- 45 Cymbale IV 22.26.29.33
- 46 Contra Posaune 16
- 47 Posaune 8
- 48 Tromba 8
- 49 Clarion 4
- 50 Tuba 8

Great

- 51 Double Diapason 16
- 52 First Diapason 8
- 53 Second Diapason 8
- 54 Third Diapason 8
- 55 Hohlflote 8
- 56 Dulciana 8
- 57 First Octave 4
- 58 Second Octave 4
- 59 Open Flute 4
- 60 Twelfth $2\frac{2}{3}$
- 61 Quint Flute $2\frac{2}{3}$
- 62 First Fifteenth 2
- 63 Second Fifteenth 2
- 64 Octave Flute 2
- 65 Plein Jeu III 19.22.26
- 66 Cymbale II 26.29
- 67 Contra Posaune 16
- 68 Posaune 8
- 69 Clarion 4
- 70 Tromba 8

Swell

- 71 Bourdon 16
- 72 Open Diapason 8
- 73 Salicional 8
- 74 Voix Célestes 8 (Tenor C)
- 75 Stopped Diapason 8
- 76 Principal 4
- 77 Waldflöte 4
- 78 Fifteenth 2
- 79 Cymbale IV 22.26.29.33
- 80 Contra Fagotto 16
- 81 Trumpet 8
- 82 Fagotto 8
- 83 Hautboy 8
- 84 Clarion 4
- 85 Tremulant

Solo

- 86 Viole d'Orchestre 8
- 87 Violes Célestes 8 (Tenor G)
- 88 Viola 4
- 89 Violes Célestes 4
- 90 Viol Fifteenth 2
- 91 Concert Flute 8
- 92 Harmonic Flute 4
- 93 Harmonic Piccolo 2
- 94 Cornet V 1.8.12.15.17 (in Swell box)
- 95 Bassoon 16 (Tenor C)
- 96 Clarinet 8
- 97 Orchestral Oboe 8
- 98 Vox Humana 8
- 99 Tuba 8
- 100 Tuba Clarion 4
- 101 Tremulant

Couplers

- Swell to Pedal
- Swell to Great
- Swell to Choir
- Swell octave
- Swell suboctave
- Swell unison off
- Choir to Pedal
- Choir octave
- Choir suboctave
- Choir unison off
- Great to Pedal
- Solo to Pedal
- Solo octave to Pedal
- Solo to Great
- Solo to Swell
- Solo to Choir
- Great to Choir

Accessories

- 3 expression pedals with mechanical indicators:
 - (1) Great, Choir & Pedal
 - (2) Swell
 - (3) Solo
- Crescendo pedal (60 stages, 4 levels) with illuminated bar graph
- 8 general thumb pistons
- 8 thumb pistons to each manual (with double touch pedal combinations)
- Reversible thumb piston to each Pedal coupler
- Reversible piston for Swell to Great
- Tremulants off thumb piston
- 8 toe pistons to Pedal
- 4 toe pistons each to Great and Swell
- Reversible toe piston for Great to Pedal
- General Cancel
- Lockable setter
- SSL digital control panel for 8-level capture system.
- Sustainers to Choir and Solo

The Stow Memorial Organ

In 2020, the Derby and District Organists' Association commissioned Robin Jennings to build a brand new four-stop chamber organ in memory of Edmund Stow, who was a much-respected local musician and organ builder. Although still the property of the Association, this fine instrument resides at the Cathedral and is used regularly to accompany services and concerts.



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