

The Organs of the Temple Church

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The magnificent, 4-manual Harrison & Harrison organ of the Temple Church has recently undergone an exhaustive, 18-month long restoration. The instrument was recently re-dedicated in the presence of HM The Queen, when a new anthem by Gabriel Jackson, commissioned for the occasion, was performed by the Temple Church Choir under the direction of James Vivian. The triumphant conclusion of this major work provides an appropriate opportunity to look back at the rather colourful history of instruments in the church.

The first reference we have to organs in the church is in an Inventory of the Temple carried out by the Sheriffs of London in November 1308, when they noted “two pairs of organs” in the Great Church, along with various chant books and vestments. However, only a few years later the Templars were suppressed, and their lands between Fleet Street and the River Thames were gradually colonised by London’s lawyers. In 1608, possession of the land by the two Inns of Inner and Middle Temple was formalised in a royal charter granted by King James I, on condition that “they will well and sufficiently maintain and keep up the aforesaid Church, Chancel and Belfry of the same...for the celebration of divine service”. They have done so with pride and generosity ever since.

The church was refurbished in the 1680s in the classical style under Christopher Wren, and the newly adorned interior demanded an organ of comparable splendour and beauty. This the two Inns could agree on – but they could not agree on which of the leading organ builders of the day, Renatus Harris and Father Smith (described by Roger North as “the best artists in Europe”), was best suited to building such an instrument. Inner Temple favoured Renatus Harris, Middle Temple were more inclined to select his rival. And so in February 1683, each Treasurer commissioned a new organ for the church, and both were installed in the church. The builders employed eminent organists to show off their instrument – Harris called on the services of the



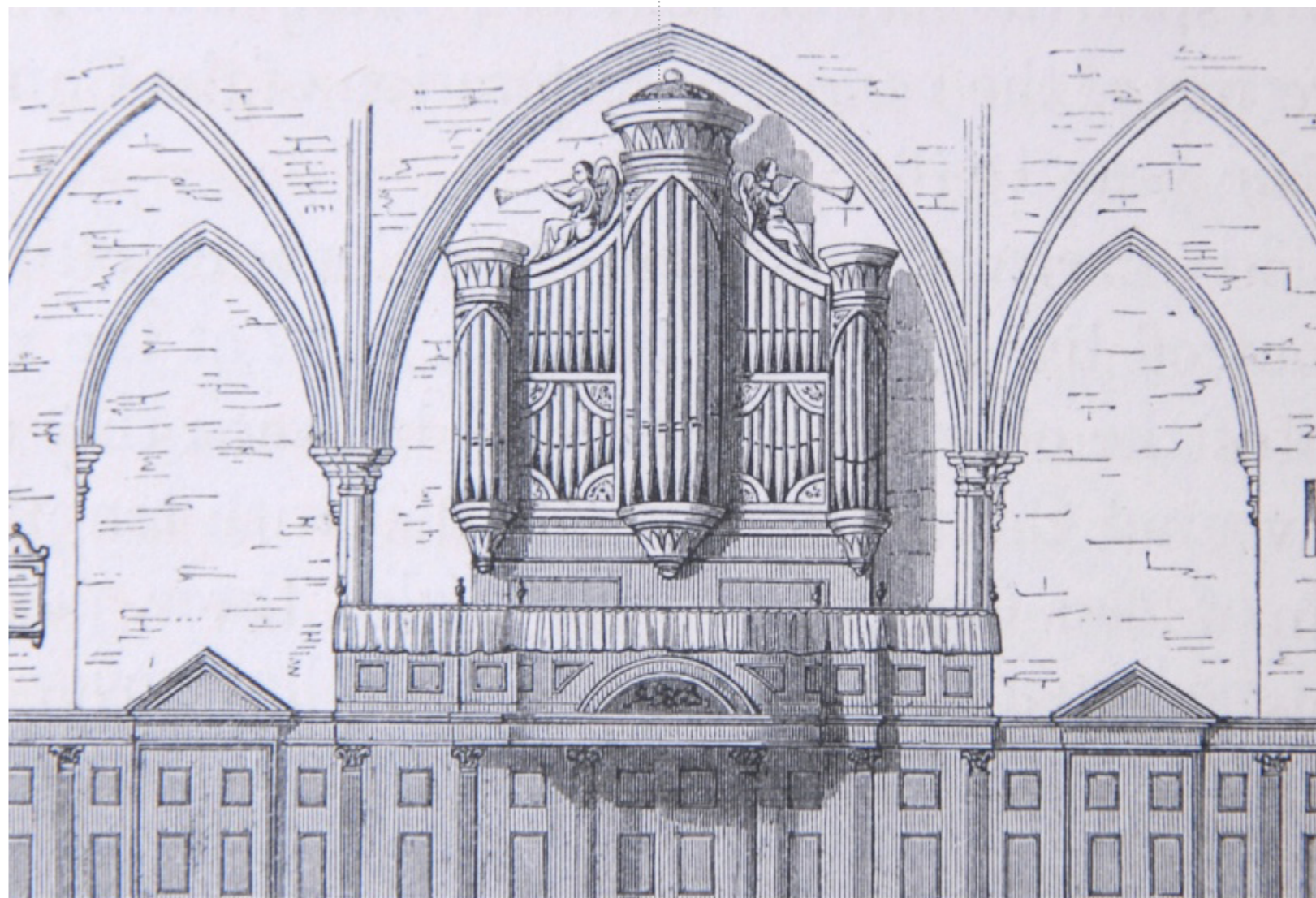
Italian G.B. Draghi, and John Blow and Henry Purcell performed for Smith. It was eventually Smith who prevailed, but not before a competition in which

“the partizans for each candidate in the fury of their zeal proceeded to the most mischievous and unwarrantable acts of hostility; ...in the night preceding the last trial of the reed stops, the friends of Harris cut the bellows of Smith’s organ in such a manner that when the time came for playing upon it no wind could be conveyed into the wind-chest.”

Specifications

Smith’s instrument was a fine one, and the first known example of a three-manual organ in England. Its specification was as follows:

Chair	foot	pipes	Great	foot	pipes
Gedackt of wainescott	12	61	Prestand	12	61
Hohlflute of mettle	6	61	Hohlflute wood & mettle	12	61
A Sadt of mettle	6	61	Principall of mettle	6	61
Spitts flute of mettle	3	61	Quinta of mettle	4	61
Violl and Violin	12	61	Super Octavo	3	61
Voice humaine of mettle	12	61	Cornett of mettle	2	112
Ecchos			Sesquialtera of mettle	3	183
Gedackt of wood	6	61	Gedackt of wainescott	12	61
Sup. Octavo of mettle	3	61	Mixture of mettle	3	226
Gedackt of wood (from c1)	12	29	Trumpette of mettle	12	61
Flute of mettle (from c1)	6	29			
Cornett of mettle (from c1)	III	87			
Sesquialtera (F-b?)	III	105			
Trumpett (from c1)	12	29			



Portrait of Henry Purcell, engraved by R. White after Clostermann, from the second edition of Orpheus Britannicus, London: William Pearson 1706



The Echos was the first such division in the country. It was later changed into a “swelling” organ by Christopher Schrider, Smith’s son-in-law. This was the organ played by John Stanley, blinded at the age of two, but one of the most formidable organists of his age. He was appointed to the Temple at the age of 21, stayed in post for more than 50 years, and we are told that many eminent organists, including a certain George Frideric Handel, would regularly come to the church to hear him play.

Over the years, the instrument was developed further according to the prevailing tastes of the time. It was moved during the church’s next refurbishment in the 1840s from the screen dividing the Round and Chancel to its present position on the North side of the church. Some of the most major work was undertaken in 1910,

when Frederick Rothwell added new pipework, and rebuilt the console with his patented stop-key action, which replaced the stop knobs. In the words of Henry Walford Davies, they enabled the player to glide from stop-key to stop-key while still playing, without the slightest break in the musical thought and without the slightest turn of the head or any irrelevant muscular effort.

The organ was destroyed in an air raid during the last night of the blitz, 10 May 1941. Dr George Thalben-Ball, who was then less than 20 years through his near 60-year stint as organist of the church, wrote: “The damage to the dear place is quite heart-breaking. That organ can never be replaced, but I hope that something lovely will eventually come in its stead.” More than 10 years later, a hugely generous gift ensured that this did indeed happen. Thalben-Ball was

one of the most distinguished organists of his day, and before the war had been invited by Lord Glentanar to play at his baronial home in Scotland, which housed a 4-manual Harrison organ in its Ballroom. After the war, the pair met by chance in Cambridge, and Thalben-Ball asked in passing about the state of the organ. Lord Glentanar regretted that it was no longer very much in use, and that if Thalben-Ball could suggest a suitable home for the instrument he would gladly offer it, as a gift, to a new owner. Well, Thalben-Ball replied, as it happens I can think of such a home... and the rest, as they say, is history.

The instrument’s own story begins with a letter from Lord Glentanar to Messrs Harrison & Harrison, dated 28 April 1923:

“Dear Sirs,

I have for some time past been contemplating building an organ here and am considering certain structural alterations to my ballroom for this purpose. Before definitely deciding on this I would like to have the opinion of a practical organ-builder as to whether my proposals would give correct and sufficient space for the type of organ I wish to install.

I would therefore be glad if you could arrange to send a representative of your firm to meet me here at an early date. I shall be in residence here until 9th May.

Yours faithfully

Glentanar”

When Arthur Harrison went up to Scotland to meet Lord Glentanar a few days later, he was presented with a plan for an organ of 43 stops of four manuals and pedals. Over the coming months, the plan was modified and enlarged, gaining all the characteristics of a typical Harrison organ of the period, and all achieved with the maximum of goodwill – an eloquent testimony to Arthur Harrison’s famed tact and diplomacy. However, Lord Glentanar had one overriding concern:

“13 October 1923

Dear Mr Harrison,

I have been thinking a lot about the specification of my organ recently. As you know, the one thing I want to be sure about is above all things

a grand and majestic ensemble, and when you are considering the scale of the pipes, if you are ever in any doubt as to whether it should be a little smaller or a little larger in scale, please choose the latter. I would much sooner have you err on the big side than on the other.

Yours very faithfully

Glentanar”

By the summer of 1926, the necessary structural changes had been made to the Ballroom, and work began on installing the organ. It was interrupted for a two-week period after Christmas, when the Ballroom was used for a production of Mozart’s *Il Seraglio*, performed largely by employees on the estate, but by mid-April all was finished. At Lord Glentanar’s request, Arthur Harrison arranged for the inaugural recital to be given on 3 September 1927 by the renowned French organist, Marcel Dupré. The event was quite an occasion, as may be gleaned from the following newspaper report:

“Lord Glentanar invited his neighbours on Saturday to assist in the opening of the new organ which he has

installed in Glen Tanar House. Lord Glentanar’s devotion to music and his taste and liberality where it is concerned are matters of common knowledge, and his guests on Saturday were no doubt prepared for something quite different from the usual inauguration recital. Nor were they disappointed.

The new organ stands in a chamber which has been specially built for it at the end of the Ballroom of Glen Tanar House, a spacious apartment with a lofty, antler-studded roof. Together with a power, greater perhaps than may be fully used with comfort to the listener, the organ has a remarkable range and variety of effect disclosed to the best advantage by the masterful playing of M. Marcel Dupré.

Lord Glentanar conducted the choir and orchestra in a Purcell chorus and in Die Meistersinger overture and showed himself no less expert in this as in other executive branches of the Art. He has a vigorous and vivid style.”

When the time came for Lord Glentanar to make his generous gift to the Temple Church, he made two conditions – that the organ be installed by Harrison & Harrison, and that it would not be altered without his permission. The only change to the original specification was the addition of an extra octave of pipes to create the 32’ Double Ophicleide. Over the years, various minor changes were made in the positioning of, for example, the Great reed stops, and in 2000 the console was fully renovated and a modern capture system installed. However, no major work was carried out – even when the organ was brought to the Temple, it was installed in something





of a hurry, and no restoration work was possible - which makes it all the more remarkable that the instrument lasted until 2011, 84 years after that quirky opening recital, before any major work was required.

The acoustic of the Ballroom was, in the words of Arthur Harrison "as dead as it well could be...very disappointing". The Temple Church's acoustic is rather more generous, meaning that, despite the instrument's illustrious pedigree and beautiful craftsmanship, it never sat particularly easily in the building. The opportunity which this rebuild offered to recalibrate the instrument has been taken with great skill and alacrity by Harrisons, however, and the newly re-voiced organ now sounds as though it has always been intended for the space.

Diapasons no longer push too hard, mixture work has been taken back, the solo strings are less biting, while the full organ sound is no longer overwhelming but still viscerally thrilling.

There have also been four additions to the Great. The new 4' Principal and 2' Fifteenth are both smaller scale than their existing counterparts. A new Mixture completes a secondary Great chorus based on the existing Geigen, and a 1 3/5' Seventeenth can be used either to colour the mixtures, or to create a Cornet alongside the existing 2 2/3' Quint. The entire Secondary chorus can be transferred to the Choir, particularly useful in the performance of Baroque music and the French symphonic repertoire. As an accompanying instrument, the organ is a delight to play, with a huge variety

of colours at the player's disposal, and boxes which are supremely effective - meaning for example that you can bring on full swell behind the solo strings almost imperceptibly.

Full credit must go to James Vivian, Director of Music at the Temple Church, for his vision for the organ, and to Andrew Scott and everybody from Harrisons for realising such an impressive restoration; and a huge vote of thanks must go to the many generous donors, as well as the Inns of Inner and Middle Temple, for their committed support of the project. As a result of these people's skill and generosity, the organ will continue to lead and colour the liturgy of the Temple Church for decades to come, and regale its listeners with the full range of its power and subtlety.

Specifications

The Organ of the Temple Church

Harrison & Harrison - (1923 1954 2013)

PEDAL ORGAN

1.	Double Open Wood	(from 3)	32
2.	Sub Bourdon	(from 29)	32
3.	Open Wood		16
4.	Open Diapason	(from 30)	16
5.	Geigen	(from 28)	16
6.	Bourdon	(from 29)	16
7.	Violone	(from 58)	16
8.	Dulciana	(from 17)	16
9.	Octave Wood	(from 3)	8
10.	Flute	(from 29)	8
11.	Octave Flute	(from 29)	4
12.	Double Ophicleide	(from 13)	32
13.	Ophicleide		16
14.	Orchestral Trumpet	(from 64)	16
15.	Bassoon	(from 25)	16
16.	Posaune	(from 13)	8

I.	Choir to Pedal	II.	Great to Pedal
III.	Swell to Pedal	IV.	Solo to Pedal

CHOIR ORGAN

17.	Contra Dulciana	16
18.	Claribel Flute	8
19.	Lieblich Gedeckt	8
20.	Dulciana	8
21.	Salicet	4
22.	Flauto Traverso	4
23.	Harmonic Piccolo	2
24.	Dulciana Mixture	III
25.	Cor Anglais	16
26.	Clarinet	8
27.	Tuba	(from 66) 8
V.	Choir on Swell	VI. Octave
VII.	Sub Octave	VIII. Unison Off
IX.	Swell to Choir	X. Solo to Choir

GREAT ORGAN

28.	Double Geigen	16
29.	Bourdon †	16
30.	Large Open Diapason	8
31.	Small Open Diapason	8
32.	Geigen †	8
33.	Hohl Flute	8
34.	Stopped Diapason †	8
35.	Octave	4
36.	Principal †	4
37.	Wald Flute †	4
38.	Octave Quint †	22/3
39.	Super Octave	2
40.	Fifteenth †	2
41.	Seventeenth †	13/5
42.	Mixture	IV
43.	Mixture †	II-III
44.	Tromba	8
45.	Octave Tromba	4

XI.	Great Second Division on Choir †	XII.	Reeds on Choir
XIII.	Reeds on Solo	XIV.	Choir to Great
XV.	Swell to Great	XVI.	Solo to Great

SWELL ORGAN

46.	Quintatön	16
47.	Open Diapason	8
48.	Stopped Diapason	8
49.	Echo Salicional	8
50.	Vox Angelica (to FF)	8
51.	Principal	4
52.	Fifteenth	2
53.	Mixture	V
54.	Oboe	8

XVII. Tremulant

55.	Double Trumpet	16
56.	Trumpet	8
57.	Clarion	4

XVIII.	Octave	XIX.	Sub Octave
XX.	Unison Off	XXI.	Solo to Swell

SOLO ORGAN (58 - 65 enclosed)

58.	Contra Viola	16
59.	Viole d'Orchestre	8
60.	Viole Céleste	8
61.	Harmonic Flute	8
62.	Concert Flute	4
63.	Orchestral Hautboy	8

XXII. Tremulant

64.	Double Orchestral Trumpet	16
65.	Horn	8
66.	Tuba	8

XXIII.	Octave	XXIV.	Sub Octave
XXV.	Unison Off		

ACCESSORIES

Eight foot pistons to the Pedal Organ
 Eight pistons to the Choir Organ
 Eight pistons to the Great Organ
 Eight pistons to the Swell Organ
 (duplicated by foot pistons)
 Eight pistons to the Solo Organ
 Eight general pistons and general cancel

Two general pistons for couplers
 Sequencer, operating general pistons.

Reversible pistons: I - IV, IX, X, XIV-XVI, XXI
 Reversible foot pistons: II, XV

Combination couplers:
 Pedal to Great pistons,
 Great to Pedal pistons,
 Pedal to Swell pistons,
 Generals on Swell foot pistons.

The pistons are adjustable by setter piston with 256 general and 16 divisional memories

Balanced expression pedals to Choir, Swell and Solo Organs

The actions are electro-pneumatic
 The manual compass is 61 notes; the pedal 32 notes

* New stops 2013
 † Great Second Division 2013