

A photograph of the interior of St Mary's Church, Portsea. The image shows a large, ornate wooden organ on the left side, with multiple tiers of pipes. To the right, there is a large, arched stained glass window with intricate designs. The architecture features high vaulted ceilings and stone pillars. The lighting is warm, highlighting the wood and stone.

St Mary's Church, Portsea

Thursday 8th June 2017

7.30pm

Organ Recital by Stephen Crookes

£5 entry with a glass of wine
in aid of The Organ Project
www.theorganproject.org



The Organ of St Mary's

"...a unique survival, certainly of very considerable national importance, and a treasure that will increasingly be prized as time goes by."

"...Tonally, I regard this organ as the final achievement of 19th century British organ building.. this organ at Portsea is without question exciting."

J.W. Walker and Sons began their association with the parish in 1879 when they loaned a one manual organ "for a reasonable time gratuitously" on the understanding that they would be given the order for "the building of the New & permanent inst."

Discussions with Dr. (later Sir) George Martin, organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, began in 1888. It was always the intention that the new organ should have four manuals, making it truly of cathedral proportions and of a class that was normally exclusive to the very richest town churches. A specification and estimate was sent on 31st July 1888, but this does not survive.

A two manual portion of the instrument was available for use at the consecration of the new church on 10th October 1889. Stops were added to complete the scheme in its present three manual form and the organ itself was consecrated on 31st October 1892, with an opening recital by George Martin in November. It is by no means clear to what extent mechanical preparation was made for the proposed Solo Organ, but old photographs show that the space for the fourth row of keys was used by successive organists as a makeshift bookshelf. It is not obvious that there was ever enough room in the organ chamber for an additional department.

The organ cost £2573 in total. Blomfield's beautiful case was added in 1901 as a memorial to men killed in the Boer War and cost a further £1000; it was made by Thompson of Peterborough. Further expenditure on blowing equipment will have brought the total cost to nearly £4000.

The appearance of the organ was also as we know it today, standing on the north side of the broad chancel in its lofty purpose-built chamber.

A simple cleaning and overhaul was undertaken in 1939, and thus the instrument into the post-war period in its original state, again with no immediate prospect of renovation while Portsmouth and Southampton got back on their feet after the damage caused by war-time raids.

It was not until the 1960s that long-awaited work could take place. At that time a Portsmouth parish could no longer consider replacement or restoration on quite the scale envisaged by the Victorians. If there had been unlimited funds, they would almost certainly have been spent on 'improvements' to the pipework that we would now find entirely regrettable. It is only a small mercy that no changes were made to the 1892 stop list.

In 1981, cleaning and a general overhaul of the organ was undertaken by a local company; George Martin.

The organ as it stands today is an instrument of 2,600 speaking pipes, still of fundamentally Victorian structure and character, rebuilt with new key and stop action and console in 1965.

The general condition of the organ is as would be expected with a 'machine' that has been utilised, and enjoyed by many beyond the console; but without any significant maintenance for over 35 years. There are individual failings and over the next ten years these are expected to become more frequent and ultimately acute.

We have a fund raising target of £650,000 to restore and extend the now limited lifespan of this unique treasure in the heart of Portsmouth. Although our target may appear daunting, it is certainly achievable and our plans are very much underway to this effect. Any donations will be gratefully received, please do also follow our project progress here: www.theorganproject.org.

Organ Specification

Great Organ

1. Double Open Diapason	16
2. Open Diapason No.1	8
3. Open Diapason No.2	8
4. Open Diapason No.3	8
5. Wald Flute	8
6. Principal	4
7. Harmonic Flute	4
8. Twelfth	2 ^{2/3}
9. Fifteenth	2
10. Mixture 15.19.22	III
11. Clarion Mixture 22.26.29	III
12. Double Trumpet	16
13. Trumpet	8

I Swell to Great II Choir to Great
III Great and Pedal Combinations Coupled

Pedal Organ

14. Sub Bass	32
15. Open Wood	16
16. Violone	16
17. Bourdon	16
18. Trombone	16

I Choir to Pedal II Great to Pedal III Swell
to Pedal IV Pedal Octave

Swell Organ

19. Double Diapason	16
20. Open Diapason	8
21. Dulciana	8
22. Echo Gamba	8
23. Principal	4
24. Flute	4
25. Mixture 15.19.22.26	IV
26. Mixture 22.26.29	III
27. Contra Fagotto	16
28. Horn	8
29. Oboe	8

I Swell Octave II Swell Sub Octave III
Swell Unison Off IV Tremulant

Choir Organ

30. Violin Diapason	8
31. Lieblich Gedeckt	8
32. Dulciana Principal	4
33. Lieblich Flute	4
34. Harmonic Piccolo	2
35. Clarinet	8

I Swell to Choir

Programme

Fanfare for St Boniface (from 'Two Short Pieces')	Richard Pantcheff (1959-)
Toccata in d minor 'Dorian' BWV 538	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
O Mensch, beweine dein' Sünde groß BWV 622	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Herzlich tut mich erfreuen, Op. 122 from Eleven Chorale Preludes	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Three pieces from 'Messe a l'usage des Couvents' - Premier Kyrie - Christe, Recit de Chromhorne - 5de Couplet, Kyrie	François Couperin (1668-1733)
Piece d'Orgue	Huw Watkins (1976-)
Le jardin suspendu, JA 71	Jehan Alain (1911-1940)
Toccata from 'Suite Gothique', Op.25	Léon Boëllmann (1862-1897)

Recitalist

South African, Stephen Crookes is currently a Lay Clerk in the Portsmouth Cathedral Choir. In addition to this, he serves as the choir's librarian and co-ordinates the Cathedral's Lunchtime Live! recital series. Stephen currently studies the organ with Oliver Hancock, the Cathedral's Sub-Organist, having previously studied with Cameron Upchurch in Johannesburg. Stephen obtained an Associate diploma from Trinity College London in organ performance in 2016. Stephen sang in the choir of St George's Cathedral, Cape Town, and was subsequently Organ Scholar at St Mary's Cathedral, Johannesburg. In September 2017, Stephen will take up a post as Organ Scholar at Blackburn Cathedral.

Stephen holds a Bachelor in Business Science from the University of Cape Town, as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting, and is a qualified Chartered Accountant. Prior to moving to the UK in August 2016, he was a Senior Associate at PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc., specialising in the banking industry across Africa.