



26 January 2023

Dear Mr. Winstanley

St Laurence's Parish Church Chorley

Further to your request for advice on the organ, Gordon Blackledge examined the instrument; and we report as follows:

Wind System

As you probably appreciate, the original Forster & Andrews large double-rise bellows was replaced during the Rushworth work of 1953 by five small single-rise reservoirs, the leatherwork of which is now at the end of its useful life. Single-rise reservoirs are less expensive but not wholly satisfactory as replacements in later nineteenth century organs with large wind requirements as the wind pressure in a single riser is not constant on demand, and there is a tendency to unsteadiness that is most noticeable when later upper work, such as the Choir mutations, and octave couplers are involved. The matter is not improved when the wind is raised by weights rather than by springs, and when the wind is conveyed about the organ in flexible trunking.

The wind pressures have, since 1953, always been on the edge of failure. The Swell reservoir collapses on full demand, indicating either that it is too small or there is a restriction in the supply to the wind control. The manner in which the reservoirs have been supplied, and by which they in turn supply the departments they serve, need to be rationalized, especially as there is now some redundant material following the replacement of the 1953 electric system.

Merely releathering the reservoirs will not therefore produce the best results. The work should include springing the reservoirs and treatment of the trunking not only against leaks, but also undersized and indirect supplies. Happily, the trunking has to be dismantled for the removal of the reservoirs so that there no great added complication.

Key actions

The key actions to all three manual soundboards are integral and are constructed to a tried and tested design commonly used by Rushworth & Dreaper of that period, making good use of the materials generally available throughout our industry following the second world war. This is a four-stage electro-pneumatic system comprising electro-magnet, internal primary pneumatic movement, internal secondary pneumatic movement and internal powermotor. All the internal actions are covered in very fine sheepskin leather and depending on use and environment would normally be replaced every forty to fifty years.

The present leatherwork is desiccated, almost beyond remedial/patching repairs, and much of it is inaccessible without adequate and time consuming dismantling. The advancement in magnet design would allow for modifications to the key actions thus reducing the amount of perishable materials and future ongoing maintenance. We therefore propose that a rolling program of staged work be considered in order of priority:

Swell main key action
Great main key action
Swell Reed key action

The only other matter that concerns us immediately is the condition of the pedal Bourdon chest. The pallets are leaking and giving rise to murmurs due to shrinkage of the pallet coverings and splits in the bar coverings allowing false wind into the chambers. The condition of the chest is such that remaking will be the best solution.

Eventually all the remaining internal key action leatherwork will require replacement, such as the Pedal Open Wood, Great Reed, Great bass-note chests and Choir main actions, even though currently reasonably reliable, all are in excess of seventy years old!

Our specification of work and estimate for the re-leathering of the wind reservoirs and either Swell or Great main key action is attached. We trust that it is quite clear, but if you have the slightest query, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

David Wells

Perforated corners on the Reed heavy pressure reservoir.



Patched corner!



View of the Swell key action showing chest magnet primary and secondary motors.



Internal primary and powermotors.

