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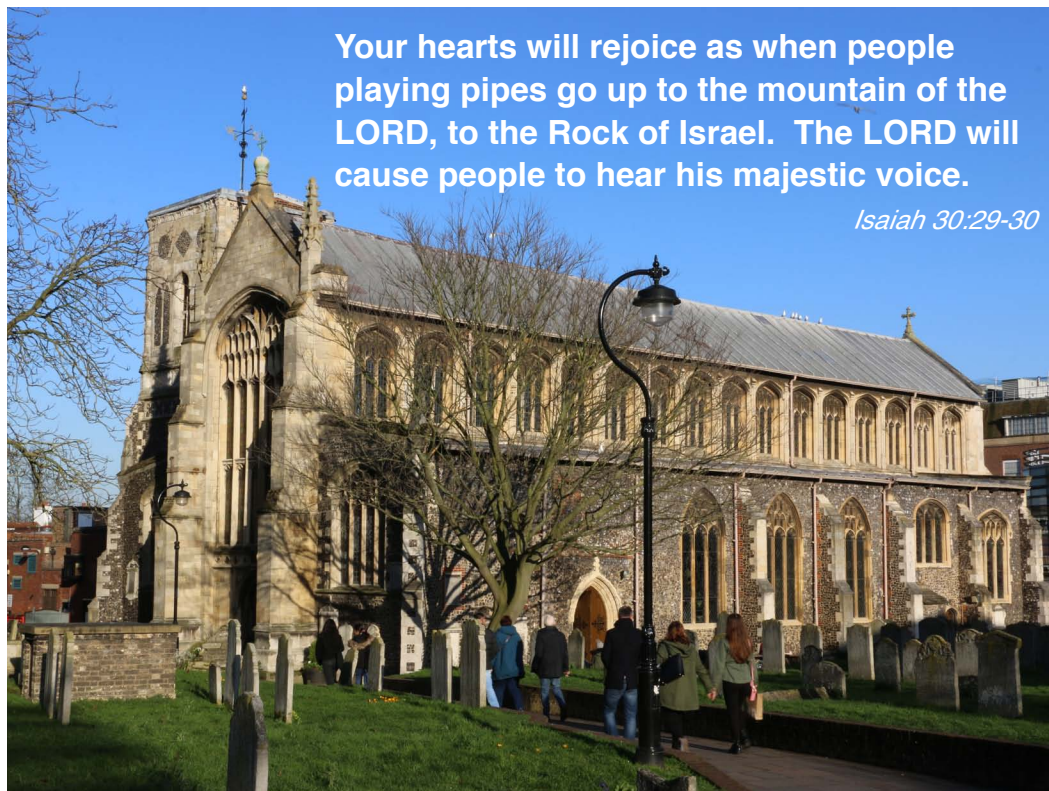
St Stephen's
Norwich

OPEN PIPES

Organ Restoration

Your hearts will rejoice as when people playing pipes go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel. The LORD will cause people to hear his majestic voice.

Isaiah 30:29-30



Reg. Charity: 1147706

St Stephen's Church

St Stephen's is a large church, occupying a prominent position in the city of Norwich

- First documented in the 12th century when royal endowments were bestowed upon the Benedictine Priory in Norwich Cathedral in return for a provision of a priest to serve the parish.
- The current building was restored and largely rebuilt in the 16th century.
- Norwich grew in prosperity, gaining Henry IV's new charter in 1405. St Stephen's fine proportions and elaborate memorials testify to the wealth and generosity of its parishioners, who included five sheriffs and three of the first five mayors.

Repairs & Restoration

In 2009 a water leak weakened our foundations, causing a crack in the chancel wall. This led to closure of the church for three years. The upheaval did, however, provide opportunity for complete renovation and improvement – a new stone floor, an office, and a kitchen to serve the café. Pews were replaced with chairs for greater flexibility.

It became clear, on resuming worship in St Stephen's, that the organ had become unreliable and was really no longer fit for purpose. Although a new electronic piano presently serves the worship adequately, it has always been our ambition that the organ should be restored.

Changes & Challenges

St Stephen's church has become accustomed to weathering change over its long history. It lost its windows in 1648 when a nearby Civil War gun-powder store exploded. It came close to total destruction in 1940 when a land mine dropped just outside... but, miraculously, did not explode.

In 2005 it was decided to allow public access though the refurbished churchyard to the new Chapelfield Shopping centre and car park. Glazed doors were installed to encourage the many passers-by to come in.

History of The Organ

St Stephen's prosperous Victorian restoration included a new organ. The previous instrument had originally been in the west gallery and then moved to the north transept. It had served the church since 1814. The prominent London firm TC Lewis was commissioned to build a new, larger, three manual instrument. It was opened in 1869 at a service, with an especially composed anthem sung by a large choir.

From 1861 the church's organist had been Charles Noverre, a member of the musical family of Swiss origin. Like the other 'Strangers' before them, they found a welcome in the city for their talents. Charles' elder brother was a violinist with an extensive teaching practice who, alongside another brother, ran a dance academy associated with the nearby Assembly House. As well as being prominent members of St Stephen's, the family were also very active in the musical life of the whole city.

In 1887 the organist, Walter Lain, reported the need for an overhaul. It was decided to move the organ from the transept to a position against the east wall of the north aisle, previously the Brasyer family chapel.

In 1935 a few tonal alterations were added to the organ, with a new console and an electric blower. The only later tonal alteration was the substitution of the clarionet stop (war damaged) for a nazard.



TC Lewis, Organ Builder

TC Lewis, the maker of our organ, was an organ-builder steeped in the German romantic organ building school of Schulze, whose origins can be traced back to the time of Bach. The German romantic style of our Lewis organ coupled with the German neo-baroque Collins organ in our sister church of St Peter Mancroft makes for a wonderful lineage – something unique in our community here in Norwich, and in the UK.

A ‘voice’ is any sound that resembles or reminds us of the human voice. The finest organ builders throughout history, from the French 17th century builder Dom Bédos de Celles to Schulze and Lewis, held this principle in every organ pipe they made. Beauty and clarity in the colour and speech of every stop in our Lewis organ allows for a high level of artistry in performance and sensitivity in playing, to support prayer and worship. The low wind pressure and German principles of pipe speech possessed by our Lewis organ achieve this. Our organ is a 'living, breathing' instrument full of organic wonder that can transport the listener and inspire new audiences. These excellent qualities will provide St Stephen's Church and the city of Norwich with a first class instrument that will encourage the next generation of organists.

The Southwark Cathedral organ serves as the finest example of Lewis's organ building. With relatively few large examples in the rest of the UK of his work, we have a wonderful opportunity to add to that list, and become a new destination point for people from across the UK and internationally.



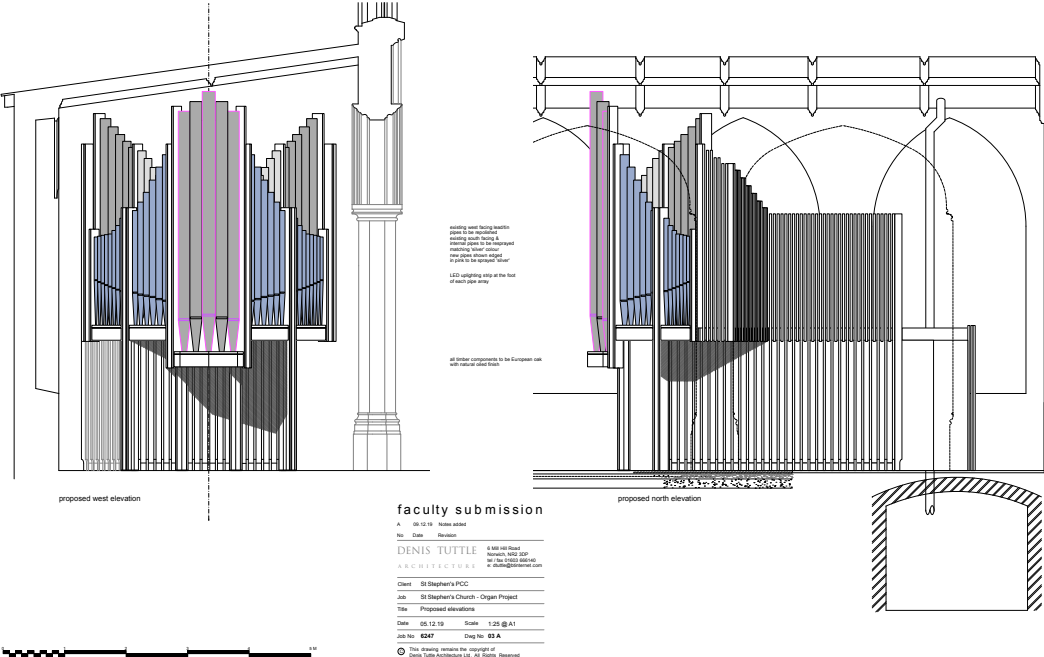
Proposed Work

The present tubular pneumatic key and stop action has become outdated, so it is proposed to replace it with an electropneumatic action with a multiplex note switching system. This will improve the promptness of speech. This modern technology will save space, and allow the pipes to be displayed in a rather more attractive and contemporary way, replacing the somewhat plain organ case.

Whilst the original Lewis stops will be preserved it is proposed to include a small number of additional stops, making the organ more accessible and versatile, whilst preserving the organ's original design authenticity.

A new console will feature many cost-effective playing aids, such as a record / playback facility, useful for practice and teaching. The console will be small enough to be mounted on a moveable platform, giving a choice of location for services, concerts and other events.

This state-of-the-art renovation and slight expansion will re-establish St Stephen's TC Lewis organ as Southwark Cathedral's little sister, in an appropriate and stunning new look / design.



New Organ Casing

The restored organ will be in the same position in the church, at the east end of the north aisle, but will be brought further forward, projecting sound into the body of the church.

The relocation will create a very useful space behind the organ for the church. It will also allow the memorials in the Lady Chapel to be viewed.

The repositioned organ will be away from the heat rising from the boiler room, currently immediately below.

A new natural unstained oak casing for the organ will match the framing of the meeting room at the east end of the south aisle.

Visible pipework will be of polished metal, bringing brightness to the overall appearance



An Organ at the Heart of Church Life



The church café is now open Monday to Saturday

Open Doors, Open Hands, Open Heart

Our doors are open to all in the city, our hands open to those around us – a community open to one another from the heart.

Increasing daily visitors use the coffee shop alongside other community activities and assistance St Stephen's provides, including a community worker. Recently increased accessibility means that St Stephen's, with its spacious proportions and favourable acoustics, is becoming increasingly favoured as a concert venue. We so hope that our fine Lewis organ will again find its voice in enhancing our contribution to worship, music, and community life in the city.



Sunday worship in St Stephen's

Cost of Restoration Project

Full cost of the restoration project: £175,000

Would you consider being part of the restoration project?

Any contribution is very welcome, however small or large.

Please speak to the church office for bank details.

Cash or cheques, payable to: 'St Stephen's Church PCC', in envelopes marked 'organ restoration' will be gratefully received by church staff or in the donations churn at the back of the church.

Gift Aiding your donation can increase your gift by 25%.

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There are a range of sponsorship options

You can sponsor one of the 1,200 pipes, ranging from small pipes at £15 to the largest ones at £1,500.

Scan to give by card:



For more information & updates on fundraising visit:
LewisPipeOrgan.org

May the pipes of St Stephen's wonderful TC Lewis organ sing again in beauty and clarity for all to hear and we will rejoice.