The Organs of Blackburn Cathedral

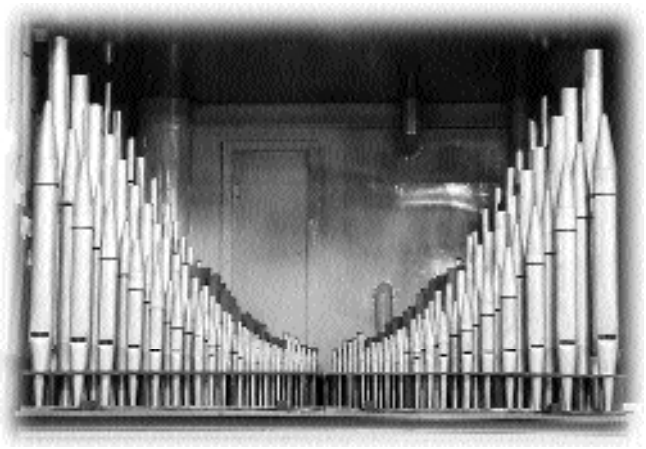
John Bertalot and Richard Tanner

The Organs from 1826–1982
John Bertalot

For nearly two centuries three remarkably fine organs have proclaimed the praises of God in Blackburn Parish Church and Cathedral. They helped to put Blackburn on the musical map of England, and overseas, and attracted a distinguished succession of organists, from the renowned Henry Smart (1832–38) to Charles Hylton Stewart (1914–16) and beyond.

A church has stood on the site of the present cathedral since A.D. 596. This has, therefore, been the site of Christian worship for over 1,400 years. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Tudor church was found to be unsafe and it was replaced by a fine gothic revival church in 1826. The ground plan of the previous church may still be seen to the Northwest of the cathedral – outlined by low hedges.

There has been a church on the site of the present cathedral since A.D. 596.



The Positive Organ, with new Cromorne at the back

Two years before the consecration of the new church, John Gray, who in 1838 went into partnership with Frederick Davison, submitted a scheme for an organ to be placed in the west gallery. The organ was opened on Thursday, 28th February, 1828 with a concert which included extracts from *Messiah*, *Israel in Egypt* and with a performance of Handel's *Occasional Overture* played by Joseph John Harris, the newly appointed organist.

The organ was opened on Thursday, 28th February, 1828

This organ was a remarkable instrument for its time, not least for the inclusion of 18 pedal pipes, the largest of which was 21 feet in length and 24 inches by 22 inches in width and depth. The following was Gray's specification:

Manual compass: long octaves from GG to F in alt.

GREAT

1. Double Diapason
2. Large Open Diapason
3. Open Diapason
4. Stop Diapason
5. Principal
6. Twelfth
7. Fifteenth
8. Sesquialtera Bass
9. Sesquialtera Treble
10. Mixture
11. Trumpet
12. Clarion
13. Pedal Coupler. (Eighteen pedal pipes)

SWELL

14. Double Diapason
15. Open Diapason
16. Stop Diapason
17. Principal
18. Fifteenth or Cornet
19. Trumpet
20. Hautboy

CHOIR
(enclosed in a Venetian swell and placed in front of the main organ)

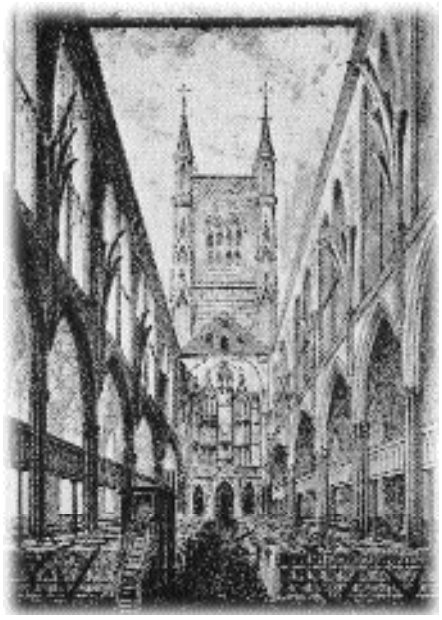
21. Dulciana to Gamut G
22. Stop Diapason
23. Principal
24. Flute
25. Fifteenth
26. Clarionet

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

It was the largest organ that Gray had built at that time. It weighed six tons, eight hundredweights, and cost 810 guineas, and was later valued at 1200 guineas.

Its construction in Gray's works in Fitzroy Square, London, and the appointment of various organists (often with Mr. Gray's help) are the subject of a fascinating collection of correspondence covering the first half of the nineteenth century. These were collated by Mr. Thomas L. Duerden, cathedral organist, 1939–64, and they now reside in Preston Public Records Office. These records include letters from Vincent Novello, founder of Novello's music publishing house, Henry Smart, who began his distinguished career here, and Samuel Sebastian Wesley, whose application for the post of organist in 1826 was unsuccessful. He was only 17 and the Vicar, Dr. John Whittaker, felt that he could not 'exercise great control over grown up singers who had to be cured of many bad habits'! Details of the building of the 1826 church and its organ, as well as accounts of 'goings on', musical and otherwise, can be found in these records.



After the 1831 fire

In 1831 the church was severely damaged by fire caused by a faulty flue in the church's heating system. The roof was completely destroyed and the organ suffered badly. John Gray was engaged to rebuild the instrument and restore it to its former excellence for 350 guineas. A penny rate was imposed upon the parishioners to pay for the cost of restoring the church; this caused severe political ructions which took many years to die down. The rebuilt organ was opened by J. J. Harris (who was then organist of Manchester Parish Church, later to become Manchester Cathedral) on Ascension Day, 1832.

After fifty years of continuous use, the ravages of time and the damage done to the organ by the smoke-laden air of this northern indus-trial town, led the church authorities to replace the old organ. Sir William Coddington, Bart., Mayor of Blackburn, who later became M. P., was a churchwarden, and gave £2,500 to build this organ to mark his Mayoral year. Coddington's influential political connections saw to it that Aristide Cavaillé-Coll of Paris was to be the builder. This organ was also placed in the west gallery of the church but Cavaillé-Coll's problem was to fit his organ, which had large scale pipework, into the Gray organ case. He did it by omitting some stops which he would otherwise have included, such as a third 8ft. rank on the Grand Orgue. The organ was opened on Thursday, 16th December, 1875, by W. T. Best, organ virtuoso from St. George's Hall, Liverpool.

Manual Compass CC-G (56 notes) Pedal compass CCC-F (30 notes).

GRAND ORGUE

1	Montre	16
2	Diapason	8
3	Flûte-Harmonique	8
4	Prestant	4
5	Doublette	2
6	Plein-Jeu	VII
7	Trompette	8
8	Clairon	4

RECIT EXPRESSIF

9	Bourdon	16
10	Diapason	8
11	Flûte-Traversiere	8
12	Viole de Gambe	8
13	Voix Céleste (CC)	8
14	Flûte-Octaviante	4
15	Plein Jeu	V
16	Basson	16
17	Trompette	8
18	Basson-Hautbois	8
19	Voix-Humaine	8
20	Clairon	4

POSITIF

21	Salicional	8
22	Cor-de-Nuit	8
23	Unda Maris	8
24	Dulciana	4
25	Flute-Douce	4
26	Doublette	2
27	Clarinette	8

PEDAL

28	Soubasse	32*
29	Contre-Basse	16
30	Soubasse	16
31	Flute	8
32	Bombarde	16

*The 32 ft was, in fact a 10 2/3 Quint. as was usual for Cavaillé-Coll

There were 17 combination pedals to control the stops and couplers, including an 'Effect d'Orage' which caused a number of the largest flue pipes to sound together to give the 'effect of a storm'.

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

Father Henry Willis had hoped to be given the order for the parish church instrument, for in 1868 he had built a new 3-manual organ in St. Peter's Church, (a quarter of a mile due west of the cathedral) with a real 32ft., and added a fourth manual in 1873. This superb organ was in its original state when the writer (JB) first came to Blackburn in 1964. Unfortunately the church became redundant and was pulled down in the early 1970s. The organ was saved and rebuilt in a barn by an organ connoisseur, but the barn suffered serious damage and so that outstanding instrument is no more. A superb 1865 Father Willis organ may still be heard in St. George's Church, Preston.

the organ was saved and rebuilt

The organist of the Blackburn Parish Church at that time, W. Handel Thorley, who was a renowned recitalist both in England and France, gave many recitals on the new organ and it was also played several times by Alexandre Guilmant. Cavaillé-Coll built two other organs in England in the 1870s – in Manchester Town Hall, and the Parr Hall, Warrington.

On November 30th, 1914 the firm of T. C. Lewis began work on restoring the 1875 instrument. The old mechanism was replaced with tubular pneumatic, and some pistons were added. There were a few tonal additions: the Great 16ft. Montre was borrowed for use on the Pedal, and a 16ft. Open Wood added. A large 8ft. Diapason was added to the Great, and the 4ft. Flûte on the Swell was changed to a 4ft. Principal to add more brightness. Also the Positive organ (except the Salicional front pipes) was enclosed in a Swell box. A new Watkins and Watson discus blower completed the work, and the organ was opened in time for Easter, April, 1915. Charles Hylton Stewart, organist of the church at the time, wrote a booklet about the organ – a copy is in Blackburn Public Library.

In 1926 the church was re-consecrated as a cathedral and ambitious plans were drawn up to extend the building. But the second World War interrupted the building work and costs rose so that the plans to complete the cruciform cathedral with an imposing central tower and long East end were never fully realised. When the large transepts were completed in 1953

Henry Willis III was commissioned to moved the organ to a bridge at the East end of the Nave (above the present choir stalls). However, the girders supporting this organ proved unsafe and Mr. Duerden, who was appointed organist in 1939, found that he had to strap himself onto a harness when playing the organ!

Provost Kay, who had done a Herculean job in completing so much of the cathedral through difficult times, found himself continually short of funds. And so when it was decided to move the console and Positive organs onto floor level in 1960, the lowest tender was accepted. They were placed in the first small archways on the East side of the central tower, under the present chancel organ platforms. When JB was appointed cathedral organist in September, 1964, this organ was in a sorry condition. The Cavaillé-Coll pipework had been cut up to increase the volume to fill the larger building, but the swell box could not open fully due to the placing of some pipes too near it, and the illuminated coupler pistons over the top manual tended to scorch the tips of the organist's fingers when playing on the Swell. The leaking of the roof directly over the main organ didn't improve the instrument's reliability.

September, 1964

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

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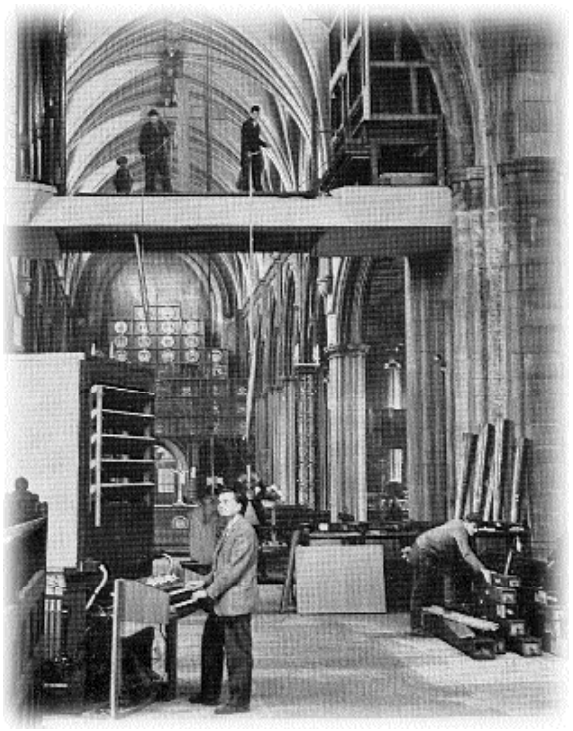
Laurence King had just been appointed cathedral architect and he drew up imaginative plans to restore the interior of the cathedral – including a marble floor, painting the ceilings with bright mediaeval colours, remodelling the crypt under the nave and constructing a central lantern tower and spire. In November, 1964, JB was instructed to have the old organ removed so that a temporary wall could be built to divide the nave from the transepts and east end, to enable work to begin on restoring the nave, whilst the remainder of the cathedral could used for worship. Messrs. J. W. Walker and Sons, from Ruislip, were asked to dismantle the organ and to store all the pipework safely in crates in the crypt. They were gracious enough to do this before any decision had been made as to who would rebuild the instrument.

imaginative plans

Walker's lent us a four-rank totally enclosed extension organ, which served us very well for the next five years.

	GREAT	*SWELL*	*PEDAL*
Diapason	8, 4	8	4
Gedeckt	8,	4, 2 2/3, 2	16, 8, 4
Dulciana	8, 2 2/3, 2	8, 4	
2-octave repeating	Mixture III		

Great to Pedal. Tremulant.



The remnant of the West end gallery on which the two previous organs had been placed, the dismantling of the old organ, and JB standing next to the temporary Walker Positif organ in 1964.

There were strong feelings in influential clerical circles in the diocese, backed by W. L. Sumner, that the old organ should be retained in its original state, (a) because it had been built by a distinguished French builder, and (b) because Guilmant had played it. However, the writer consulted four equally distinguished British organ builders, three of whom agreed with him that the old pipework had been so mutilated by the latest over-economical rebuild, that none of the pipework could be saved.

Princess Margaret at the Rehallowing of the Nave in 1965

Work on transforming the Nave and crypt took just one year – the amazing changes made to the cathedral by Laurence King could be compared to the difference between a chrysalis and a butterfly. Princess Margaret attended the re-hallowing of the Nave by Bishop Claxton on 6th October (although she was an hour late in arriving), and the next day JB was invited to address the cathedral council to enable them to make a decision as to which builder should be entrusted to build our new organ. Thanks to careful preparation, and backed by the written opinions of a number of distinguished organists, the council agreed with JB's recommendation that Messrs. J. W. Walker and Sons, Ltd., should be entrusted with this task, and that Dr. Francis Jackson, organist of York Minster, should be our advisor.

Princess Margaret attended the rehallowing

JB remembers sitting in the deserted south transept with Dr. Jackson and Mr. Bert Collop, Walker's managing director, to discuss the specification. 'Of course you must have

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

a 32ft Contra Trombone,' said Dr. Jackson. 'No,' I replied. 'You've got a 32ft. Sackbut at York – I'd like a 32ft Serpent!' During the next few months we consulted other organ experts, including Peter Hurford (St. Alban's Abbey) who suggested that the organ should be designed on the *werk* principal. i.e. 16ft principal pitch on the Pedal, 8ft on the Great, 4ft on the Swell and 2ft on the Positive. Brian Runnett (Norwich Cathedral) recommended that our Great 8ft Principal should be three pipes larger than Walker's normal scale, and Cecil Clutton suggested that we should have a *Cornet Separée* on the Great. JB suggested that the organ should be placed in a similar position to the organ in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and that the Pedal Serpent should look like its namesake.

And so we had our specification, but we had no money to pay for it. William Thompson, a benefactor from Burnley, had generously given £50,000 to pay for the restoration of the Nave, and a further £25,000 to build the Lantern Tower and Spire. JB had taken a series of before-and-after transparency photographs during the restoration process, culminating in the completion of the Lantern Spire. These photos, with taped music and commentary, were shown around the diocese to help raise more money for the cathedral's restoration. Provost Robinson suggested that we might take this slide show to Mr. Thompson and his sister, Sarah, so that they could to see what their munificence had created. We were invited to tea and the Thompsons were delighted with what they saw. Heavy hints were dropped as to the urgent need for a cathedral organ, but there was no response.

A few days later Canon Desmond Carroll said to JB, 'If I were a millionaire I wouldn't take any notice of hints, but I might respond if I were asked outright for the money.' JB therefore drafted a carefully worded letter in which he asked for a miracle – £30,000 to build the organ. He showed it to

Provost Robinson, who said, 'I think that will do it!' He blessed it and it was posted.

Three days later, on 20th March, 1968, a letter arrived at St. Mary's House in the Cathedral Close, where JB lived. It was in Mr. Thompson's handwriting. JB held it up to the light and saw that there was only one piece of paper inside. He opened it and out fell a cheque for 30,000 guineas (£31,500) made out to JB, non transferable! He phoned the Provost who was delighted, and also Bert Collop, who was still in bed, and then took it to the bank to pay it into his account. Half an hour later Edgar Walker, the Chapter Clerk, summoned JB to his office and told him to make out a cheque to the cathedral for £31,500. It was nice to be rich, even for only 30 minutes!

And so we had our organ. The metal pipes of the 1875 organ, which had a high tin content, were used for some of the Principal ranks on the new organ. It was voiced by Walter Goodey and Dennis Thurlow with French reeds to give them an incisive tone. John Hayward, who designed Christ the Worker, the Corona over the central altar and the South transept window, consulted with Walker's to produce four stunning highly coloured organ cases, including swell boxes which would be in full view, and a doubly mitred Serpent, coloured green to gold. The organ's completion happily coincided with the culmination of the restoration work in the Transepts and East end.

And so on the 20th December, 1969, Bishop Claxton consecrated the central altar at the morning Eucharist, and in the evening dedicated the new organ before a packed congregation. So great was the demand for tickets that 300 people had to be turned away. Miss Sarah Thompson sat in the front row (Mr. Thompson was unfortunately unwell) and was joined by the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, the Mayoress of Blackburn, Dr. Jackson and representatives of musical and

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

educational bodies throughout the country. The first piece to be played on the new organ by JB during that service was Bach's *St. Anne* fugue. Ronald Frost, senior organ professor at the Royal Northern College of Music, who had recently been appointed sub organist, and Fred. Dewhurst, assistant organist, also played during the service. JB gave a short recital afterwards starting with Henry Coleman's arrangement of Handel's *Occasional Overture* – which was played at the opening of the 1828 organ. (Coleman was a former organist of Blackburn Parish Church.) He ended with Dupré's *Variations sur un Noel* – Dupré having opened the organ in King George's Hall 40 years earlier.

(See the specification of the 1969 organ below)

Francis Jackson following the organ's 30th Anniversary Recital

Opening recitals were given by Dr. Francis Jackson, (who composed his first organ sonata for the occasion), Dr. Harold Darke and Flor Peeters, and a regular series of Saturday lunchtime recitals attracted large audiences and distinguished performers. One of the recitalists was 14-year old David Briggs who played his entire programme from memory. That was his very first recital.

The configuration of the East end of the cathedral at that time was different from what it is today. There were no screens, the bishop's throne and the choir were where the Jesus Chapel now is, and the clergy sat where the choir is now placed. The console was directly under the South Chancel organ case, and it was easily movable to an incomparable position before the high altar for recitals. It was only after several years, due to complaints from the congregation that they couldn't hear or even see the choir, that the positioning of the console, choir and clergy was changed.

Mr. Bert Collop, Bishop Claxton, the Mayoress and JB inspecting the console after the organ's dedication

A few months after the organ had been installed an enclosed Cymbelstern was added and first used during a Stanford Sanctus for the Sunday morning Eucharist. A Canon, who used to say a long prayer of dismissal for the choir (in one breath) commented, 'I hear we are now selling ice cream!'

Parish Church Organists

1827 Joseph John Harris (to Manchester Parish Church – later Cathedral)

1828 Gray organ installed

1832 R. Nimmo (temporary appointment)

1832 Henry Smart (to London, eminent com

1838 John Bishop (from St. Paul's Church, Cheltenham)

1840 William Robinson

1848 Joseph Roiley (from St. George's Church, Bolton)

1858 Charles Greenwood

1863 James H. Robinson

1870 Thomas S. Hayward

1875 Cavaillé-Coll organ installed

1882 Walter Handel Thorley (distinguished recitalist. Representative organist of Great Britain at the Paris Exhibition of 1889)

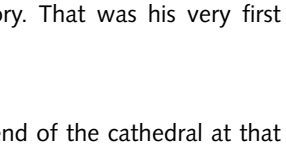
1888 James H. Rooks

1900 Christie Green (to Coventry Parish Church, later Cathedral)

1912 Henry Coleman (to Peterborough Cathedral)

1914 Charles Hylton Stewart (to Rochester and Chester Cathedrals, and St. George's Chapel, Windsor)

1914 T. C. Lewis rebuild and enlarged the 1875 organ



Henry Smart (1832–38)

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

Cathedral Organists

1916 Herman Brearley (Conductor of the Hallé Choir. Tutor, Royal Manchester College of Music)

1926 Herman Brearley

1939 Thomas L. Duerden (from St. John's Church, Blackburn whose choir, under his direction, won the Welsh National Eisteddfod Blue Ribands in 1923, '25 and '27)

Herman Brearley (1916–39)

Cathedral Song School refounded in 1940. Simple daily choral services begun.

Director of Music, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Blackburn.

Mr. Duerden's outstanding work as a choirtrainer was recognized by the RSCM who awarded him its honorary

Thomas L. Duerden (1939–64) at the Lewis console

Fellowship.

1951 and **1960** The organ was placed on a bridge at the East end of the Nave and then rebuilt once more.

1964 John Bertalot (from St. Matthew's Church, Northampton, To Trinity Church, Princeton, NJ, USA)

Senior Lecturer, RNCM.

Cathedral concerts begun. Young People's Choir formed under sub organist Ronald Frost. Teenage girls introduced to the YPC by sub organist Keith Bond.

Blackburn Bach Choir founded, and judged by the BBC, for two years in succession, as the best amateur mixed voice

John Bertalot (1964–82)

choir in Great Britain.

1969 New Walker organ installed

1983 David Cooper (from Sub Organist, Wells Cathedral.

David Cooper (1983–95)

Gordon Stewart (1995–98)

To Norwich Cathedral)

1995 Gordon Stewart (from Manchester Cathedral). Organ virtuoso.

President of the Incorporated Association of Organists.

Sometime senior organ professor, RNCM

Music Director, BBC daily services and TV Songs of Praise.

Organist of Huddersfield Town Hall.

1998 Richard Tanner (from All Saints' Church, Northampton)

Richard Tanner (1998–)

Music Director and organist, BBC daily services.

Cathedral Girls' choir formed. Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music formed.

Assistant Directors of Music, Timothy Cooke and Greg Morris.

2002 Reconstructed and enlarged organ by Wood of Huddersfield.

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

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1983–2002

There is no doubt that the organ of Blackburn Cathedral is one of the finest in Britain. Even in its worst state of repair, in 2001, the superb quality of its tone was evident to all.

Serious problems were becoming increasingly apparent before the organ was dismantled in July, 2001. Much of the initial impetus for rebuilding the organ came from David Cooper. The first estimate for restoring the organ was submitted in 1983 by John Corkhill, who was at the time responsible for the maintenance of the instrument. He submitted further estimates in 1988, 1989 and 1993. An inspection of the organ in 1985 by the then Cathedral Architect, Gordon Thorne, found that the instrument was suffering from progressive deteriora-tion, partly due to water damage in 1983/4, but also due to wear and tear on the Walker wind system and action. He found the soundboards and pipe-work "choked with paint and plaster debris".

David Wood and Jim Beaver removing a pedal 16' Principal Pipe

At the same time it was realised that there were also serious problems with the Lantern Tower and that major rebuilding was required. It was clearly not a good idea to restore the organ before carrying out this major task. The dust and debris that this building work would create would have made cleaning the organ pointless. In the meanwhile, visits by the organ tuner to repair faults became increasingly frequent.

In 1994, shortly after Gordon Stewart's appointment as Director of Music at the Cathedral, David Wood took over the care of the organ. Some of the more serious winding problems needed immediate attention, and as a stop-gap measure David Wood fitted new schwimmers to the Positive division. A new capture system, by A.J. & L. Taylor of Ramsbottom, Lancashire, incorporating a stepper, was also fitted in order to rectify many of the console's shortcomings and to enable greater versatility.

In 1997 Ian Bell, one of this country's leading advisers on organ building matters, was approached to report on the state of the organ. His report highlighted the need to consider the health and safety implications. Maintaining the organ was clearly an uncomfortable and hazardous business. In addition, he reported that the low-voltage switching (or transmission) was living on borrowed time. The concern for the winding system, in particular the failings of the compensator-regulators, was again noted.

By the time I arrived in Blackburn in 1998, there was complete agreement, after fifteen years of discussion, that the organ required a major overhaul. By chance, within months of my arrival, John Bertalot moved back to Blackburn from the USA, giving us an exciting opportunity to develop plans for the organ with the help of the person who was responsible for its creation in 1969. However, we still needed to wait for the completion of the rebuilding of the Lantern Tower in 1999, and there was the challenge of raising the money for what was, by now, a very expensive project.

It seemed sensible to use the opportunity of restoring the organ to consider enhancing the tonal capability of the original specification, which was limited by cost in 1969. Various suggestions were made and thoroughly addressed, including the idea of additional divisions, separate from the main body of the instrument (either at the West End of the Cathedral or as an accompanimental division above the choir stalls).

Various discussions ensued, based on the idea of utilising the fine three manual console, but replacing various stops with different colours, in order to provide a more versatile accompanimental instrument and also to enhance the French characteristic of the organ, for which it had gained an enviable reputation. Many organists had played the organ regularly over the years and I was keen to consult with some of them regarding the development of the instrument. I was particularly struck by a conversation that I had with David Cooper, who had played the organ regularly over a ten-year period. He said that he would not wish to get rid of anything. I soon came

Michael Leadbeater removing Positive pipes for cleaning

to the conclusion that, no matter what we did, we ought not to lose any of the characteristics of the 1969 instrument. At the same time, I also agreed with others that there were a number of essential additional colours from which the organ would greatly benefit.

The additional tonal features that many people seemed to agree as desirable were: a Fifteenth on the Great and a Swell Hautbois. The provision of a reed at 8' pitch on the Positive, to complement the 16' Holzregal, and a Voix Humaine were also much needed. I also felt that the organ, with its reputation for interpreting French organ music, would greatly benefit from additional 8' foundation tone on the Great. Furthermore the instrument lacked weight in the pedal department. Apart from cost, the major problem that we faced was the lack of space.

A space was eventually identified at the top of the North Transept platform, which was just big enough to house a new Solo division. This seemed to provide the ideal solution to many of our concerns. It meant that we could retain all of the 1969 stops and supplement them with the additional colours that we thought were desirable. The position of the proposed Solo division (above the Great division) meant that we could, through coupling the divisions, add convincingly much needed 8' foundation tone to the Great, with the provision of two new 8' stops – Flûte Harmonique and Viola. It also meant that, by moving the old swell Cromorne (renamed Clarinette – a name considered more in keeping with the tone of this stop) to the Solo, we would have room for an Hautbois on the Swell. There was also room for a Voix Humaine, Viola Céleste and Flûte Octaviante. Sufficient space was also found to add a Fifteenth to the Great and a Cliquot style Cromorne to the Positive.

David Briggs at the old console

David Briggs, who had been appointed our organ consultant in 1999, proposed two ways to enhance the fluework of the Pedal division. Firstly to add some Pedal Mutations (Grosse Quinte 10 2/3 and Grosse Tierce 6 2/5), as he had recently done at Gloucester Cathedral, with great success. These pipes were to be carefully scaled to match the existing Pedal division. Secondly, he proposed that we commission the Walker Technical Company from Pennsylvania, USA, to provide digital 32' and 16' basses, working at five different levels of output. These ranks grow in volume and change in character by drawing the following stops: Principal 16, Mixture IV, Posaune 16 and Pedal Forte.

Three leading organ builders were duly invited to submit proposals for rebuilding the organ, all of which turned out to be excellent and highly imaginative. When I arrived at Blackburn there seemed to be a sense of inevitability that David Wood should restore the organ. I, however, had never met him and was keen to be independently convinced that his was the right firm for our work. David quickly impressed me in all sorts of ways; nothing seemed to be too much trouble and he clearly had a great understanding of the instrument, its problems, and what we required. Wood of Huddersfield was duly awarded the contract.

One major problem we were faced with was how to play all the additional features that we had decided upon from the 1969 Console. There was a great deal of nostalgia surrounding the console; it was a beautiful piece of furniture, incredibly comfortable to play and had only recently undergone modernisation. However, it eventually became clear to us all that it simply was not fair or wise to adapt it to fit an array of extra stops for which there was no room. It also became clear that we would need four manuals to play the instrument properly – a floating division would be too complicated to manage. Once the decision to commission a new console was taken, we were then in a position to add even more stops! This, together with the proposed re-wiring of the whole organ, made it possible to add a number of sub-octave and octave couplers in order to enhance further the accompanying versatility of the instrument. For example, for services with trebles only, it would be possible to create "full swell" type sounds at lower volume levels by drawing stops on the Swell-to-Hautbois with octave couplers. Above all, it was thought that the new console would act as a highly visible and lasting tribute to David Wood and his fellow craftsmen who completed the work in 2002.

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

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In October 2000 an Appeal for £200,000 was launched. The response by the local and wider community was overwhelming. In just six months £370,000 had been raised. The tremendous success of the appeal is largely attributable to the skill, dedication and enthusiasm of Canon Andrew Hindley. A number of recitals were given to raise the profile of the project. We are grateful to the following organists for their generosity in this respect: Francis Jackson (who played his Sonata, written for this organ in 1970), David Briggs, Gordon Stewart, Simon Lindley, Andrew Lumsden and Christopher Stokes.

The organ scaffolded during the re-installation

It was decided that the opportunity to raise funds for the organ was also a good time to raise some extra money to purchase two, much needed, additional instruments. In May 2001 the Cathedral took delivery of a superb Yamaha C7 Concert Grand Piano, which was inaugurated at a thrilling recital by Martin Roscoe on 5th May, 2001. In December 2001 we acquired a brand new four-stop continuo organ by Kenneth Tickell. This has already proved extremely valuable both liturgically and also in concerts, as a solo and a continuo instrument.

On July 8th 2001 the organ was heard at Evensong for the last time, the voluntary was J.S. Bach's Fantasia in g minor, BWV 542, played, at my request, by John Bertalot. It was then dismantled and restoration began. At about the same time, we took delivery of a temporary digital instrument by Rodgers, which served us well for nearly a year.

A new soundboard being positioned by Derek Monkhouse and Jim Beaver with Canon Andrew Hindley

The Health and Safety features were some of the first visible signs of progress, with two new doorways into the organ chambers, approached by a Genie lift, and a number of safety ladders and fall arrest systems being installed around the organ.

We had hoped that the old soundboards could be retained. However, we were dismayed to discover that they were in a terrible state and that there was no alternative but to follow further advice from Ian Bell and commission new ones. In the short term, this meant an appreciable delay to the schedule as well as considerable extra cost. However in the long term, we knew that new sound boards would result in assured reliability for many years to come and they also provided the opportunity to create the most desirable positioning for the new ranks on the Great and Positive.

It has been wonderful to witness the re-birth of this outstanding instrument. We have been delighted and inspired by the professional skills of the small team of dedicated organ builders. Their task was not helped by the fact that the instrument sits on four platforms high above the ground. It has been quite an eye-opener for me to discover the range of intricate skills that are involved, incorporating, on the one hand, ancient mechanical principles coupled with superb craftsmanship and, on the other, state of the art computer technology, all executed with such precision.

On the last page of the order of service to dedicate the original organ on Saturday, 20th December 1969, it was stated that the organ would need cleaning after fifteen years of use. Despite moves to do this over the past twenty years, it has taken 33 years to achieve. I firmly believe that the long wait has been for the good of the instrument. It has meant that we have been left in a position to develop this fine organ in an extremely exciting and forward-looking manner, much in the spirit of the 1969 build undertaken so magnificently by John Bertalot, Francis Jackson and Bert Collop.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have made the project possible. There have been many very generous donors, including the Pilling Trust and Dr. John Bertalot, whose contribution matches the equivalent of the amount he found in the envelope on 20th March 1968. It would not have been possible without those who pushed for action in the 1980s and 1990s, nor without the support and enthusiasm of the Chapter, under the leadership of Dean David Frayne, who retired in 2001. The instrument in Blackburn Cathedral is

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

A summary
of the work carried out by
Wood of Huddersfield
between July 2001 and June 2002

- The entire instrument has been cleaned and overhauled.
- New soundboards have been made for each division of the organ.
- The 1969 Walker schwimmers have been replaced with Pantagraph sprung bottomboard schwimmers.
- New Tremulant Pans, adjustable at the console, have been fitted to all Soundboards.
- New soundboards have eased the provision of a new Fifteenth to the Great and a Cromorne to the Positive.
- A new Solo Soundboard and expression box has been positioned above the Great. New stops provided are Flûte Harmonique 8, Viola 8, Viola Céleste 8, Flûte Octaviante 4 and Voix Humaine.
- The Scharf Mixture has been moved from the Transept Swell to the Chancel Swell to facilitate tuning, the Cromorne has been removed from the Chancel Swell to the Solo (and renamed "Clarinette"), a new Hautbois has been placed in the Transept Swell.
- Two new ranks of pipes have been made available on the pedal. A 6 2/5 Grosse Tierce (metal) and 10 2/3 Grosse Quint (stopped wood).
- Two new digital ranks, by the Walker Technical Company from Pennsylvania, USA, have been made available on the pedal.
- Pipework has been re-coloured to the original specification.
- All Walker electro-pneumatic drawstop machines have been replaced with slider solenoids.
- All the reeds have been re-voiced using original tongues and put back to original wind pressures.
- The worn out ladder switches and contact relays have been replaced by a new transmission system by A.J. and L. Taylor of Ramsbottom, Lancashire.
- The old wiffle-tree swell engines have been replaced with new, programmable, Peterson multi-stage swell engine drivers.
- A Cymbelstern consisting of 6 tuned bells has been positioned inside the Transept Swell box and is adjustable for speed at the console. An independent motor rotates a newly carved star, positioned below the Transept Swell.
- The blowers have been overhauled.
- A new 4-manual console has been built in Wood's organ works. The capture system, made in 1994, has been upgraded and incorporated. The console can now be plugged in at three different positions in the Cathedral.
- A wealth of octave and sub-octave couplers has been provided.
- Safety features have been upgraded for ongoing tuning and maintenance. They include the provision of a Genie lift, safety ladders, fall arrest systems and new access doors to the organ chambers.

The new Solo soundboard and box, high on the south transept platform

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

1969		2002	
Pedal		**Pedal**	
		Sub Principal	32 (digital)
Contra Bass	32	Contra Bass	32
Principal	16	Principal	16
		Flûte Ouverte	16 (digital)
Sub Bass	16	Sub Bass	16
Quintaton (Gt)	16	Quintaton (Gt)	16
		Grosse Quinte	10 2/3
Octave	8	Octave	8
Nachthorn	8	Nachthorn	8
		Grosse Tierce	6 2/5
Fifteenth	4	Fifteenth	4
Recorder	4	Recorder	4
Spitzflöte	2	Spitzflöte	2
Mixture 19-(22)-26-29	IV	Mixture 19-(22)-26-29	IV
Serpent	32	Serpent	32
Posaune	16	Posaune	16
Bombarde	8	Bombarde	8
Schalmei	4	Schalmei	4
		Solo to Pedal	
Swell to Pedal		*Swell to Pedal*	
Great to Pedal		*Great to Pedal*	
Positive to Pedal		*Positive to Pedal*	
		Pedal Forte 16, 32 (digital crescendo)	
		Transept Swell on Pedal	
Gt & Ped Combs coupled		*Gt & Ped Combs coupled*	
		Generals on Swell Toe Pistons	
Swell (T = transept box)		**Swell** (T = transept box)	
Rohrflöte	8	Rohrflöte	8
Viola da Gamba T	8	Viola da Gamba T	8
Céleste (GG) T	8	Céleste (GG) T	8
Principal	4	Principal	4
Nasonflöte	4	Nasonflöte	4
Nazard	2 2/3	Nazard	2 2/3
Gemshorn	2	Gemshorn	2
Octavin	1	Octavin	1
Mixture 12-19-22	III	Mixture 12-19-22	III
Cymbale 29-33-36 T	III	Cymbale 29-33-36	III
Fagot T	16	Fagot T	16
Trompette T	8	Trompette T	8
Cromorne	8	Hautbois T	8
Clairon T	4	Clairon T	4
Cymbelstern (added in 1970)		Cymbelstern T (new)	
Chancel Swell Tremulant		*Chancel Swell Tremulant*	
Transept Swell Tremulant T		*Transept Swell Tremulant T*	
		Transept Swell Octave T	
		Transept Swell Unison off T	
		Transept Swell Sub Octave T	
		Chancel Swell Sub Octave	
		Solo to Swell	
Positive		**Positive**	
Bourdon	8	Bourdon	8
Prestant	4	Prestant	4
Koppelflöte	4	Koppelflöte	4
Principal	2	Principal	2
Sesquialtera 12-17	II	Sesquialtera 12-17	II
Larigot	1 1/3	Larigot	1 1/3
Scharf 26-29-33	III	Scharf 26-29-33	III
Holzregal	16	Holzregal	16
Imperial Trumpet	8	Cromorne	8
Positive Tremulant		*Positive Tremulant*	
		Solo to Positive	
Swell to Positive		*Swell to Positive*	
Transept Swell on Positive		*Transept Swell on Positive*	

1969		2002	
Great		**Great**	
Quintaton	16	Quintaton	16
Principal	8	Principal	8
Stopped Diapason	8	Stopped Diapason	8
Octave	4	Octave	4
Rohrflöte	4	Rohrflöte	4
Nazard	2 2/3	Nazard	2 2/3
		Fifteenth	2
Blockflöte	2	Blockflöte	2
Tierce	1 3/5	Tierce	1 3/5
Fourniture 15-19-22	III	Fourniture 15-19-22	III
Plein Jeu 22-26-29	III	Plein Jeu 22-26-29	III
Trumpet	8	Trumpet	8
		Great Tremulant	
		Great Sub Octave	
		Solo to Great	
Swell to Great		*Swell to Great*	
Positive to Great		*Positive to Great*	
		Solo (Enclosed)	
		Flûte Harmonique	8
		Viola	8
		Viola Céleste (AA)	8
		Flûte Octaviante	4
		Clarinette (formerly Sw Cromorne)	8
		Voix Humaine	8
		Imperial Trumpet (en chamade, transferred from Positive)	8
		Solo Tremulant	
		Solo Octave	
		Solo Unison off	
		Solo Sub Octave	
		Transept Swell on Solo	
6 thumb pistons to Positive			
7 thumb pistons to Great			
8 thumb and toe pistons to Swell			
8 pistons to all divisions		*8 thumb pistons to all divisions*	
8 toe pistons for Pedal		*8 toe pistons for Pedal*	
4 General thumb pistons		*8 General thumb pistons, duplicated by 8 toe pistons (for Sw/Generals)*	
Two Swell Pedals:		*Three Swell Pedals:*	
L = Trans. Sw. on Pos		*L = Trans. Sw. on Pos*	
		Centre = Swell	
R = Swell.		*R = Solo*	
Tremulants variable speed		*Tremulants variable speed*	
		128 memory levels for general pistons	
		16 memory levels for divisional pistons	
		Stepper	

1994 developments to console

8 thumb pistons to all divisions
8 toe pistons to pedal
8 toe pistons to Swell
8 general thumb pistons

128 memory levels for general pistons

THE ORGANS OF BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL

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