

St. Mary's Organ



The instrument in St. Mary's Church is considered by experts to be early eighteenth century and was brought to Chipping from Stonyhurst in the late nineteenth century. A former parishioner Bob Dewhurst, could recall his father's account of seeing the organ parts, including its ornate wooden case, being transported by horse and cart along Green Lane to its new site in St. Mary's. It appears to have been cleaned, tuned, repaired and restored on a number of occasions during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and to some extent, and at increasing expense, during the first half of the twentieth century.

A report in Preston Guardian, on August 8th 1896 described special services on the occasion of the re-opening of the organ. Mass was held, there was a special choir, and in the afternoon an organ recital by the college organist of Stonyhurst. We then read in Preston Guardian two years later, on September 2nd 1898, that a Bazaar had been held in St. Mary's school the object of which was to pay off a large debt incurred two years earlier by the building of the new organ and decorations. Another report states "...the amount required to cover the cost was £85 and the sale resulted in a net gain of £210." The Bazaar was "successful beyond the most sanguine hope."

All these events took place during the incumbency of Fr. Isadore de Gryce who had at this time been parish priest for thirty years.

Fr. de Gryce died in 1913 and his successor, Fr. Thomas Callaway, had the organ cleaned and tuned in 1915 and 1925. Then two years later it was again cleaned and tuned, the 650 pipes were taken out and the sounding board and reeds renovated at a cost of £30. The present organist remembers when he was a boy, that Mr Bart Marsden would work the hand blowers which required considerable

output of energy. Miss Dorothy Price became the regular organist after she became headmistress in 1938, to be joined later by the present organist, Mr. Jack Moon who, when he was 14 played the organ once a month. After National Service he returned to play and yet another change - Fr. Higham, the incumbent at that time, had an electric blower installed and in 1952 the instrument was completely renovated at a cost of £200. Mr Bart Marsden could retire! During this work an inscription was discovered inscribed "... Henry Ainscough finished this organ rebuilding..."

The blower was paid for by Fr. Higham's cousin who was himself a fine organist. One Bill Curly was heard to remark with obvious pleasure he "could play n organ yon mon".

Jack Moon continues in his post which he has occupied for almost half a century, half the time of the organ's presence in St. Mary's.

It is a fine instrument, in a magnificent wooden case, and when it is being played by him and, on occasion, by guest organists in recital, the small chapel is filled with the most beautiful sound.



Mr Jack Moon at the organ