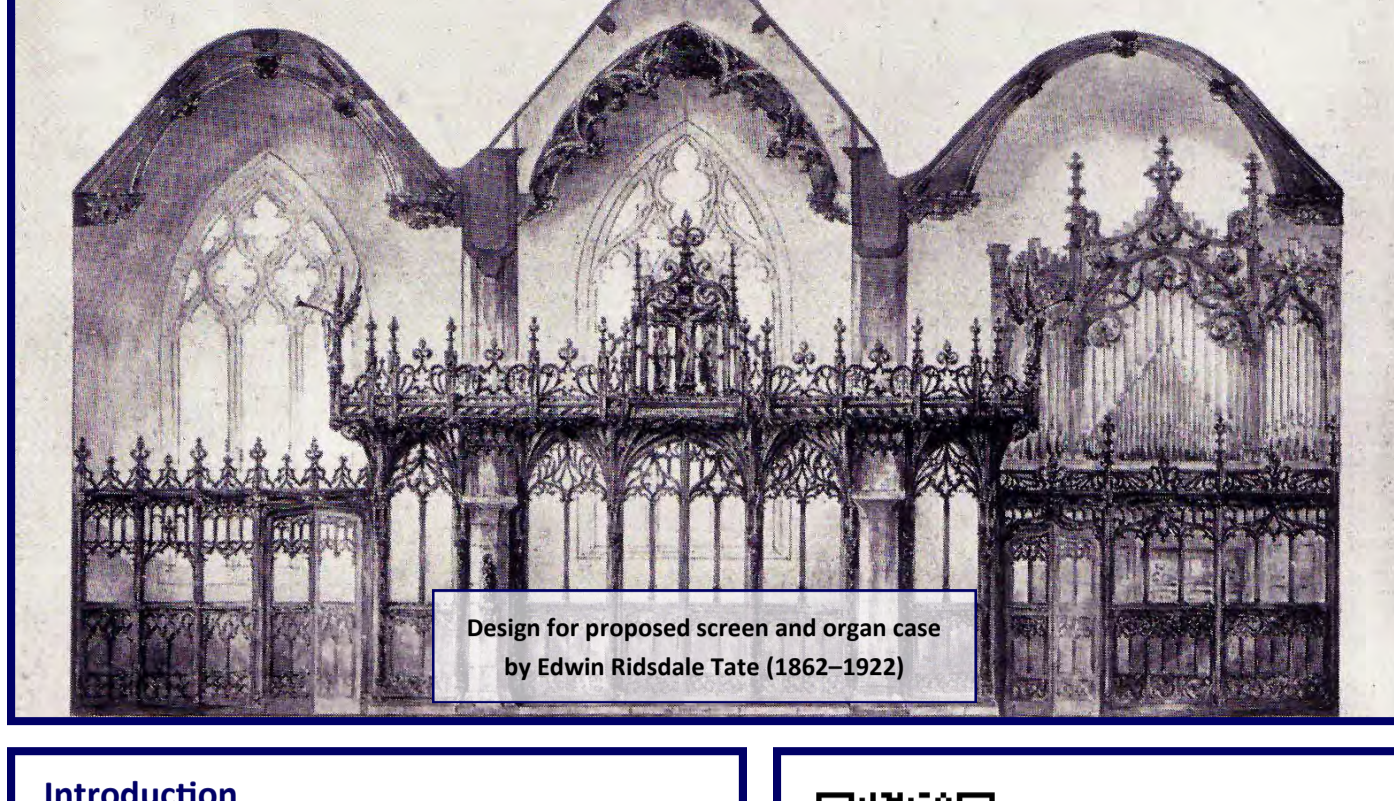


# + All Saints' Church, North Street, York

## Organ History

by Dr Maximilian Elliott



Design for proposed screen and organ case  
by Edwin Ridsdale Tate (1862-1922)

### Introduction

We know that All Saints' Church possessed a harmonium during the early-1850s, but there is little information about other instruments used here before the nineteenth century.

### 1856 Henry Whitehead

Henry Whitehead of York built an organ for All Saints' Church in 1856. On Saturday 19 January 1856, *The York Herald* and *Yorkshire Gazette* published interesting reviews of this instrument. You can read both accounts by scanning the QR code opposite. If you would like to find out more about Henry Whitehead, please visit [yorkorganhistory.co.uk](http://yorkorganhistory.co.uk)

The organ was used for just over ten years before being advertised for sale. A short notice duly appeared in the *Yorkshire Gazette* every week from 29 September 1866 until 23 March 1867 inclusive:

CHURCH ORGAN FOR SALE, now standing in ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, North Street, York, containing Two Rows of Keys, 14 Stops and Pedal. For further Particulars apply to Mr. TESSEYMAN, Railway Street; or Mr. HOPKINS [\*], Organ Builder, Jewbury Terrace, York.

The later history of this organ is not known.

\* T. Hopkins & Son of York built over sixty organs between 1862 and 1921. For more information about the business, plus biographical information about Thomas Hopkins and his son Walter Hopkins, please visit [yorkorganhistory.co.uk](http://yorkorganhistory.co.uk)



Link to newspaper articles about the 1856 Henry Whitehead organ at All Saints' Church, North Street, York.

### Specification

Great	Open Diapason	8
	Stop Diapason	8
	Harmonica	8
	Principal	4
	Fifteenth	2
	Sesquialtera	
Swell	Open Diapason	8
	Stop Diapason	8
	Flute	8
	Dulciana	8
	Principal	4
Pedal	Double Diapason	16

### 1867 Forster & Andrews

On Wednesday 15 May 1867, All Saints' Church was re-opened, having undergone a thorough restoration. A new organ had been erected during this restoration by Forster & Andrews of Hull at a cost of £200. The following reviews of this instrument were published on Saturday 18 May 1867:

...The number of sittings before the restoration was 314, but accommodation is now provided for 456, being an addition of 142. The cost of the restoration and the new organ amounted to about £1,500. The expenditure in connection with the organ, which cost £200, was provided for by the proceeds of a bazaar held in the De Grey Rooms. The funds to meet the expenses connected with the restoration of the church have not been sufficient for that purpose, and previous to the re-opening, a debt remained of between £200 and £300. The amount then raised has been subscribed by friends, with the exception of £175 which had been received from the York Diocesan Church Building and Endowment Aid Society. The organ, which is a fine toned instrument, was supplied by Messrs. Forster and Andrews, of Hull...

...An organ, which was one of a mediocre description, and which stood underneath the tower and blocked up the west window, has been taken down and disposed of...A new and fine toned organ of considerable power, by Messrs. Forster and Andrews, of Hull, has been erected in the south aisle of the chancel. It is in a polished deal case, and the wood work is stained and varnished in the same style as the sittings. The front pipes exposed to view are decorated and gilded in a chaste and artistic style...

Additional photographs of the Forster & Andrews organ can be accessed via the following QR code:

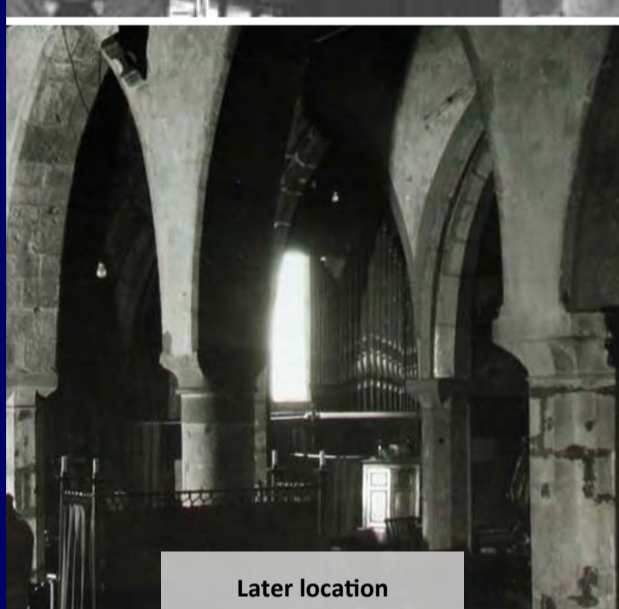


### Specification

Choir	Open Diapason	8
	Lieblich Gedact	8
	Dulciana	8
	Flauto Traverso	4
Swell	Lieblich Bourdon	16
	Open Diapason	8
	Stopt Diapason Bass	8
	Stopt Diapason Treble	8
	Salicional	8
	Octave	4
	Horn	8
Oboe	8	
Pedal	Bourdon	16
Accessories	Swell to Choir, Choir to Pedal, Swell to Pedal.	
	Sloping stop jambs. Ratchet Swell Pedal.	
	3 Composition Pedals.	



Original location



Later location



Shortly before removal

### 1996 Principal Pipe Organs

The current organ at All Saints' Church was built in 1996 by Principal Pipe Organs of York. Geoffrey Coffin (Managing Director of PPO) designed a versatile new instrument utilising the best material from three nineteenth-century organs. The building frame, soundboards, swell box, console, mechanical actions and some pipework came from an organ built by W. Denman & Son of York in 1889. Originally constructed for St Stephen's Church in the Holy suburb of Acomb, this instrument was moved to the York Redeemer [old building], Boroughbridge Road, Acomb in 1951. Local architect George Pace designed a new case for the instrument before it was transferred in January 1965 to Holy Redeemer [new building]. The organ remained there until 1993 when it was removed by Principal Pipe Organs. For more information about W. Denman & Son, please visit [yorkorganhistory.co.uk](http://yorkorganhistory.co.uk)

Principal Pipe Organs combined the 1889 W. Denman & Son organ with pipework from two instruments built by Forster & Andrews of Hull in 1867 (Swell pipework from the old organ of All Saints' Church, North Street and further pipework from the organ formerly residing at All Saints' Church, Pocklington). PPO also acquired some new pipework, including the Mixture III (with Fifteenth 2' that can be drawn separately). A new case (including redecorated façade pipes from the 1867 F&A organ) was designed by the team at PPO in conjunction with architect Peter Marshall. The instrument cost £27,870 and was first used at High Mass on All Saints' Day (1 November) 1996.

Nigel Holdsworth (former Assistant Organist of All Saints' Church, North Street) glued leather discs onto the stoppers of the Swell Lieblich Gedact 8' and removed the slots of the Swell Gemshorn 4' in 2003. In the spring of 2004, Nigel replaced the Swell Voix Celeste 8' with a Nineteenth 1½' created by combining pipework from one Laycock & Bannister/Nicholson organ (treble) and another Harrison & Harrison organ (bass). Nigel also replaced the Great Gamba 8' with a Sesquialtera II created by combining a Brindley & Foster Twelfth 2½' with a Forster & Andrews Fifteenth 2'. At the same time, a bequest of £1,500 enabled Nigel to purchase a Cymbelstern and two tremulants.

Christopher Cotton (Parish Architect) supervised the repainting of our organ in 2024 and Harrison & Harrison of Durham undertook the following work in 2025: reversal of the 2004 tonal changes, repairs to the Swell Horn 8' pipes, extensions to the Swell Gemshorn 4' pipes, adjustment and resetting of the key actions, adjustment and balancing of the swell shutter mechanism, and a review of the tonal balances with attention to pipe speech and regulation. All of the above was carried out in memory of John Morley (1948-2023), a faithful worshipper and server at All Saints for many years. Generous grants from the John Pilling Trust and ON Organ Fund enabled this work to proceed.

The organ can be heard weekly at our 17:30 Sung Mass and during our annual recital series (launched in 2013).

### Specification

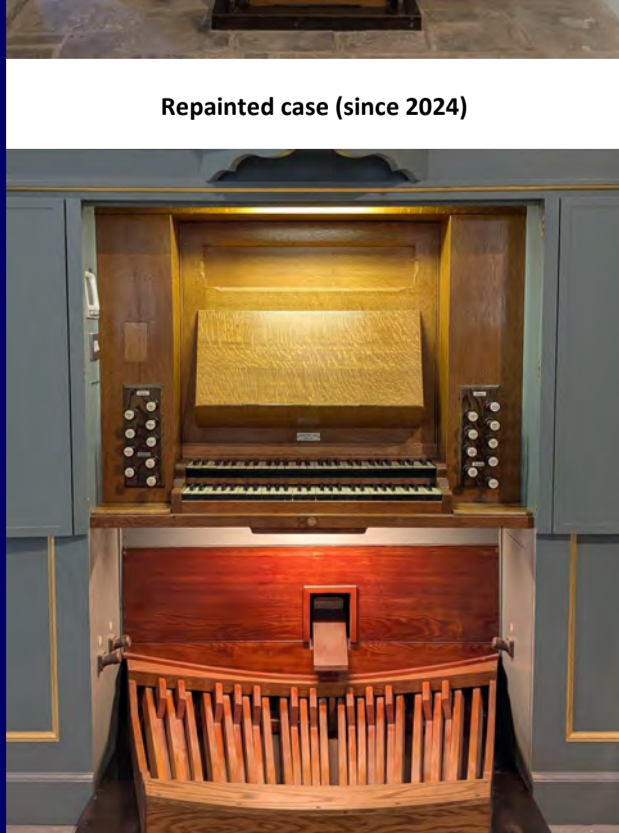
Great	Open Diapason	8
	Stopped Diapason	8
	Gamba	8 TC
	Principal	4
	Claribel Flute	4
	Fifteenth	2
	Mixture	III (15.19.22)
Swell	Lieblich Gedact	8
	Salicional	8
	Voix Celeste	8 TC
	Gemshorn	4
	Flageolet	2
	Horn	8
Pedal	Bourdon	16
	Bass Flute	8
Accessories	Swell to Great, Great to Pedal, Swell to Pedal	
	Swell Tremulant, Great Tremulant.	
	Cymbelstern. CCTV Monitor.	



Original case design (1996 - 2024)



Repainted case (since 2024)



Console