Our medieval research has shown that evidence often lies unseen or rather 'hidden in plain sight'. We don't see the evidence since we often we don't understand the real nature of what we are looking at, or because we are looking at it through the dark glass of received opinion. Today I'd like to give received opinion another nudge, this time in the matter of the place in the history of British organs **not** made for churches. Look at the usual history of the organ in this country and you see mostly descriptions of large organs made for our larger churches and cathedrals. Perhaps this is because these have been written about most – usually when they have been rebuilt yet again, so that their history needs to be up-dated. Meanwhile, those organs that go on surviving with little or no alteration in our churches receive far less attention. Anyway, I'm going right now to give them some attention, and I hope that by sharing a bit of understanding of their real nature with you today you will find them as interesting as I do.

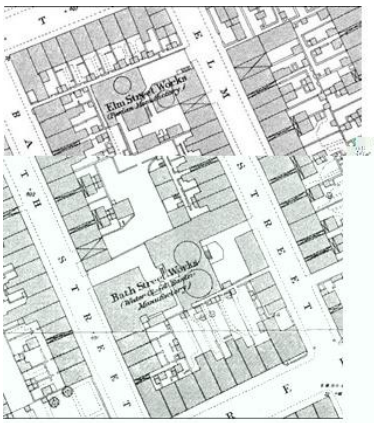
Organs that sit around in churches from decade to decade without giving trouble (in a sense, surviving in plain sight) include many that were not made for churches in the first place. These non-church organs often survive most frequently in original condition because they were well made in the first place and because they were made for houses do not take up too much room in churches. They are also very often more visually attractive than the average visually pared-down church organ produced in C19 workshop-factories. They are also often more attractive musically and technically too, because they cost more than their church counterparts, and were often made for knowledgeable clients who had ideas of their own or who allowed their makers to show their expertise in new mechanical or tonal arrangements and inventions. All of the organs I'm going to talk about today fall into these categories,

They are usually called 'chamber organs'. But I think this term belittles them. It implies that they are small and insignificant, good only for the bedrooms of boudoirs of the rich and lazy. In fact, house organs – the term I prefer to use – are manifestly far from unimportant and unworthy. Just look at John Marsh's house organ, the subject of the BIOS study-day at Bleasby in Nottinghamshire in July 2017. You could hardly think of a more imaginative and innovatory C18 organ than this one. Or think of the various techniques and accessories that were pioneered in house organs: highly-refined key actions, more stable winding systems and finer voicing – all these were more in line with the expectations of players of harpsichords and early pianos (as we heard from David Shuker just now). These innovations were introduced later into church organs and scarcely ever pioneered there. Church organs were and mostly are essentially very conservative – as witness the extremely slow, even reluctant, changes made to church and cathedral organs throughout the whole of the C18.

The organs I want to introduce to you today are all made by the same firm, one in my opinion very underrated by organ historians, perhaps precisely because they were not makers of cathedral organs (with a couple of rather obscure Irish exceptions). But the Soho firm of Bevington was enterprising enough to exhibit their organs in London and Paris and gained awards by doing so. With an uninterrupted activity period of more than 150 years I

think they are probably the longest-surviving organ making firm under family control in British organ-making history.

By the early C17, people with the surname Bevington, named after a remote hamlet in southern Gloucestershire near the river Severn, were living in the Shipston-on-Stour area of Warwickshire, about ten miles south of Stratford upon Avon. They were Quakers and - like other Quakers familiar from their enterprises here in Birmingham - they were embued with a spirit of what we would now call equitable enterprise.



Samuel Bevington 1808-1863
Established the Swan Works in
m Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

The Potter Bevingtons
Stoke-on-Trent

Thomas Bevington b1845
Burton Works, Hanley

John Bevington 1835-1892
Elm Street Works until 1870

One branch of the family went to Stoke on Trent where they worked in and managed ten different factories over two generations, making and painting ceramics. One of this family lives near us in London as a retired judge and was active in the Unwanted Organs conference in September 2017.

Bevington & Sons, leather manufacturers
Neckinger Mills, Bermondsey, London

Col Samuel Bourne Bevington 1832-1907
Head of Bevington & Sons
leather manufacturers, grandson of
Samuel Bevington
the firm's founder

Another set of Bevingtons went to set up what became the Neckinger Mills warehouse for leather products of all kinds, on the Neckinger river near the site of Bermondsey abbey, in south-east London. I used to go there to buy leather in the later 1960s and during the 1970s and these substantial buildings are still in use, though for other purposes. No doubt this branch of the family prospered very well indeed, since they founded their business at the start of the Napoleonic Wars - and if a cavalry-based army needs anything as much as it needs men and food, it needs a lot of leather. Their successors still supply leather to organ makers, though now from a base in Leicester.

The branch that concerns us today was the result of one Henry Bevington's being apprenticed to Ohrmann and Nutt.

Henry Bevington's Apprenticeship

Jonathan Ohrman (born c1747) was apprenticed to **James Jones** for seven years on 16 May 1777.

John [sic] Ohrman & John Nutt organ builders insured property at 16 Denmark Street in Dwelling House of Jupp, Frame Maker, 28 April 1786.

Ohrman & Nutt were in partnership in Rose Street, Soho in 1794, when they made a submission to the authorities at St Anne's, Soho, where vestry minutes record in 1795 that 'these Gentleman had Removed from the Parish to a distant Part of the Kingdom'.

They were at 3 South-Gate, St Mary's, Manchester in 1797.

By 1799 they were back in London at Tottenham Court, New Road 1799.

Henry Bevington was apprenticed to Ohrman & Nutt, being indentured for seven years 'from 12 August last,' on ***10 September 1792***. This would allow Bevington to be born about 1778 if he was apprenticed at fourteen.

c.1799 Bevington married Elizabeth Ling at St George's, Hanover Square on 30 May 1812, and appears in the register of deaths for the second quarter of 1839.

Elizabeth Bevington lived until 1850, when she was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery on the 12 February, aged 65, from 48 Greek Street.

Information kindly supplied by Paul Tindall

Miniature c1816 Henry Bevington c 1778-1839

By kind permission of Anthony Bevington

Ohrmann was himself the apprentice of James Jones, Snetzler's business partner towards the end of his time in London in the 1770s. Therefore, much more than Hill (or later, Hill, Norman and Beard) Henry Bevington could claim in that sense to be Snetzler's successor, in fact. All the more so, since his workshops were in the same premises, in Dean Street and its surroundings in Soho, as some of those that Snetzler used. One of the first mentions of his work that Paul Tindall has found is this, and I wonder what this 'Machine' might have been …

Times, Friday 29 April 1808:

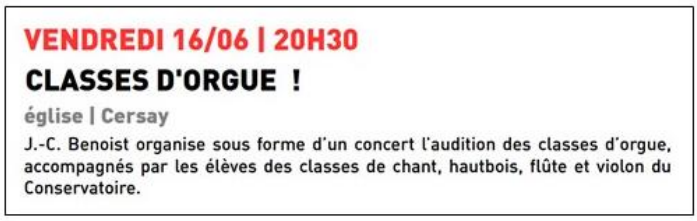
'PATENT CHAMBER ORGANS – BEVINGTON and GOYER, Organ-builders, 42 Newman-street, Oxford-street, most respectfully inform the Nobility and gentry, that, being long aware of the trouble of blowing with foot in Chamber Organs, they have invented and added to that Instrument a MACHINE to blow the Bellows, so as that noble Instrument may be played with as much ease as a Piano-forte.

Instruments for inspection.

Henry Bevington's appeal to his client base, the nobility and gentry, with an invention that made playing their organs more easy is significant. One should not forget that an appeal to such a 'secular' base was vital to the future success of a new enterprise for selling organs of all kinds. The management of many churches, especially town and estate churches, was dominated by the upper classes. They would automatically turn for church orders to makers who had come to their notice through house organs that might have been made for them or their family or for other personal or business acquaintances.

The first organ I want to mention today is now at a church in the deux-Sèvres department in France, in an area – south of Saumur - which now has about a dozen English organs in its churches and houses.

Bevington, 1829 Cersay, deux-Sèvres, France



This organ was made by Henry Bevington I in 1829 for a private house near Wingrave in north Buckinghamshire and given by the then owners of that house to the Congregational or Independent church there in 1928. At this time they also paid for it to be rebuilt by the Bevington firm for its new home, and that's a remarkable time-span: of a century from first making to remaking by the same firm. The original home for the organ was clearly substantial, since the organ is quite large. The case is tall though now only half of its original depth, going back only as far as needed to accommodate the 1928 Great soundboard. The original GG compass organ had a larger Great chorus, with a divided mixture and possibly a reed. There was a Swell of some kind, and presumably at least a coupled pedal-board. Any reeds on the Great and Swell would have disappeared in 1928 due to the change in pitch from English Classical pitch of A=425 to one that was slightly higher than 440, till I lowered it to its present 440.

The church at Wingrave closed in 2005 and I removed the organ in November that year to the parish church of Cersay. This is one of five churches in a group there for which I had been asked to find organs a couple of years before. I completely restored it mechanically to its 1928 condition and made one tonal alteration, to make the Great Flautina into a Fifteenth – more suitable for a much larger church with only moderately good acoustics. I did this by lowering the mouths and revoicing but without changing the scaling, since this rank was one of the five Great ranks that had been reused wholly in 1928, though considerably revoiced and re-regulated then. The Swell and all the soundboards and actions had all been made new in 1928. As found, the case – as so often – was coated with a thick layer of oak-coloured scumble, and the front pipes had been painted with the usual dreadfully dull grey 'aluminium' finish. Under the oak scumble was fine carved mahogany and under the dross of aluminium, like lucky alchemists, we found traces of gold leaf.

This organ is much used for teaching and practice; the restored 1928 action is very smooth and almost piano-like. I replaced rather nasty-looking large zinc Open Diapason 1928 basses to the side of the case with plain metal basses from another Bevington organ with their characteristic Bevington decoration - you can just see these in the photo of the oboe-player. Why I had these pipes is another long Bevington story we haven't time for here, involving an organ made for Great Yarmouth parish church that is now in a church in Normandy. I also replaced an exhaust pneumatic system for the pedal stop with a more reliable charge system, using a Harrison and Harrison chest but of course using the mostly 1928 Bevington pedal pipes. The only comment I'd make about Bevington's work in 1928 is that they were obviously still thinking about improvements. This organ has a quite clever Swell octave coupler system and though it was quite complicated to set up, it has been completely reliable since. The firm also used cardboard tubes with leather elbows for smaller wind-trunks and these have the real advantages of being far quieter than zinc ones and of being definitely easier to adjust on site.

Bevington, c1835

Next in chronological date to this is the first of the two previously almost unknown organs I want to mention today. It is tonally and perhaps mechanically a smaller version of what must have been the original set-up of the organ once in the house near Wingrave. It has another fine case, this time made in oak, somewhat tinted red with what I imagine must be dragon's blood. (This is not a mythical colour, unlike Brexit unicorn powder… but the long-established name for a resin-based deep-red pigment.) As you see it is rather Puginesque in design and has original gold-leaf on its front pipes. One should not forget that Augustus Welby Pugin's first career was as a furniture designer and maker who worked in the Soho area, so I am not using his name as a totally vague reference. He had a life-time connection with Bevington's firm, but that again is another story. Other early Bevington organs have cases of this Puginesque kind.

This organ has been dated to around 1835 and has apparently always been connected with a school. This was a re-foundation in 1833 as successor to the school that, in her novel 'Jane Eyre', Charlotte Bronte called 'Lowood'. (It was definitely low in any humanitarian qualities). 'Lowood' has been identified with the clergy daughters' school at Cowan Bridge near Kirkby Lonsdale on the border of Lancashire and Cumberland, and Charlotte and her sisters, Elizabeth, Emily and Maria, attended it in the mid 1820s. It is perhaps unlikely that this organ was at the previous school, but it may have been at its successor school from as early as 1833, ordered as part of the furnishings of the new establishment. It was almost certainly not made for any chapel the school may have had – it seems that they anyway worshipped in the nearby parish church, as the preparatory school pupils there now still do.

Its casework is not in a conventional church style for that date – the gothic ogees on it were not yet common currency in church design and the oak decoration of the frieze is completely pagan.

However, in a further sign of the times and of the present-day lowering of the demands that schools seem to wish to make on their pupils in anything as complicated as music, the school has decided to sell their organ. It is very nearly in completely-original condition, with all its original pipework, the only essential changes being that some of the wooden pipework has been cut up a bit – a change not at all difficult to reverse – together with a quite recent revoicing of its reed stop and a new blower. As an example of the sort of organs Bevington was making for houses, it is also very valuable evidence for this fairly early period of the firm's work. The stop-list of this organ is at the end of this talk (along with the other organs' stop-lists) and you will see that it uses its modest resources extremely skilfully. It is always worth studying especially 'unconventional' stop-lists and compasses carefully and critically to see what they tell us about the playing styles and expectations of their time.

Bevington 1864

The next organ I'd like to bring to your attention is one made in 1864. For whom it was made is not known at all, but it has been in its present church since 1884, twenty years later, when its inauguration was recorded in the local press. Since discussions over its future restoration are at a somewhat delicate stage I am going to repress my normal 'mission to tell all' and will not tell you where it is. Except that this organ is in a church built in the 1860s which possesses many remarkable, high-quality and unusual and – most important of all – complete furnishings and fittings from that period. I have to confess that I have known this church, passing by it quite regularly since at least the early 1980s and even knowing from a brief visit some time then that it had a Bevington organ. But I had never actually looked inside the church properly until when passing by in the autumn of 2017 I saw someone mowing the grass, so I stopped and asked if I might have a look at what I thought was going to be a small Bevington chancel organ that had dropped to pieces through damp and neglect under the mossy roof of its organ chamber.

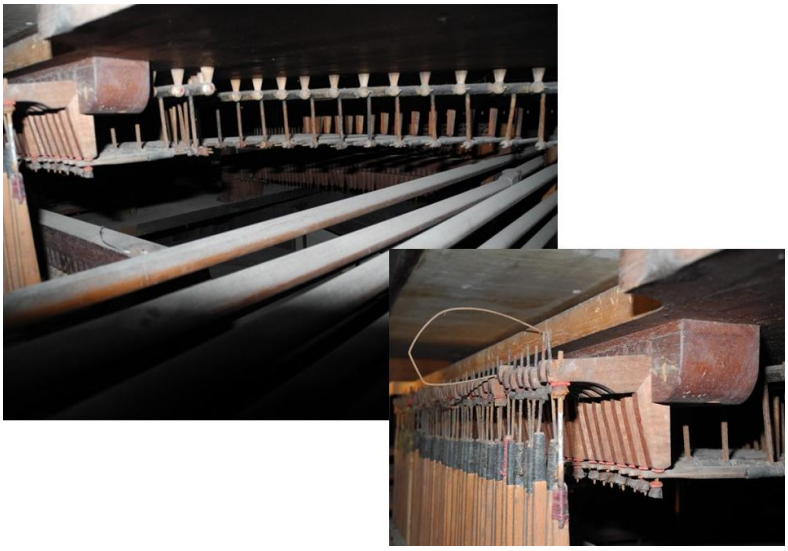
What I found was indeed damp and neglected, but as you can see, this is not a small organ at all. It takes up the whole of the space originally designed for a small organ (now in a neighbouring church) and a vestry (now in a nave aisle.) Nor is this organ dropping to pieces, fortunately, though neither has it been played in living memory. Hungry mice have eaten all accessible leather and there never has been an electric blower, even though there is a somewhat rudimentary electricity supply to this rural church.

The origins of this organ were clearly in a house; its casework is large but low, with the 8-foot basses of the Great Open and Dulciana originally set at low level, just as in the other organs to be considered this morning. It is numbered 606 and a Swell pallet seems to be dated 1864. But it possesses numerous unusual features, not all of which are in the stop-list summary.

The most obvious facet of the stop-list is that this organ includes all of the latest tonal features of Bevington organs. It is practically a catalogue of all their specialities, with flute, reed and strings ranks of their latest style.

The manual compasses are of 56 notes, not the usual compass for Bevington's chancel organs of 54 notes; the flat pedal board actually radiates for its 30 notes, again a wider compass than the 25 notes of a normal small chancel organ's parallel pedal-board. However, it is quite possible that when the organ was installed in 1884 this was not done by the Bevington firm. There are some planks that have been very clumsily-added to increase the thickness of the swell-box, but in contrast there is beautifully-executed and imaginative later casework, which we will come to in a moment. It is obvious that there are some other relatively minor alterations to the original 1864 organ as well, whose chronology and authorship are not yet clear.

Windows in Swell Faceboard



Key action squares – unusual connections to their horizontal trackers

Two unusual features of the organ's construction, which otherwise is of the firm's later typical low-built house organ style, are very evident. One is that there are glass windows set into the faceboards – do these suggest that the organ was built as an exhibition model? The other is in my experience a unique way of connecting the key action squares to their respective horizontal trackers. What is the reason for this? Here are some suggestions – perhaps you will have others?

View through centre of 'M' layout of great soundboard

First, a large low-built organ, like this one, must have large roller-boards. This is because its large sound-boards have 'M' layouts with the smallest pipes of the natural and sharp sides in their centres.

This layout allows a passage over the Great trebles to gain access to the Swell beyond. An 'M' layout in a low-built house organ can only sensibly be achieved with horizontal roller-boards with their 56 rollers. But horizontal roller-boards or even horizontal trackers were not by then very frequently used in English organs except in very large instruments where there were two pallets on one soundboard. So did the Bevingtons pick up some sort of problem in large church organs that were in daily use (as for instance those organs they built for St Martin's in the Fields or at the Foundling Hospital) and did they discuss these in Paris when exhibiting there in the 1850s and early 1860s? They would certainly have met Parisian organ builders there, and surely among these was the Englishman from Bath, Charles Barker, who was well accustomed to building large organs with complex actions, including long horizontal runs to Positifs de Dos (anglice: choir organs).

Was it to alleviate wear in horizontal runs that these squares were made with a tapped wire fixed into – tapped into them perhaps? - the bottom of their vertical arms. This captures the end of a round horizontal tracker which has been planed flatter at one end and pierced with a hole there, holding the tracker up with a baize washer and a leather button. It is a neat idea, and I'm surprised not to have seen it anywhere else. The time cost of doing the work this way is no more than the conventional one of whipping a tapped wire to the end of a tracker and passing it

through a drilled and burnt hole in the arm of the square. This system also means that there is only one adjustment point on each horizontal tracker instead of the all-too-frequent and time-consuming two adjustment points, one at each end of the tracker, that one finds. However, this system does present a problem, posing a question of what to do when this organ is restored, because the squares are made from mahogany and the tapped wires are of iron, these latter now very rusty and therefore likely to burst the mahogany if removed so as to be replaced with new copies. I wonder what if any disadvantages this idea proved to have that prevented its being used more?

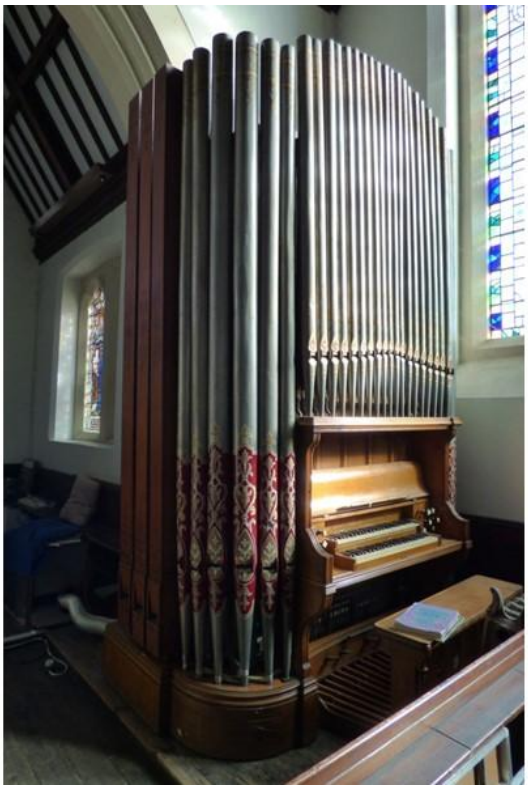
Among other unusual aspects of this organ are the use of fine spotted metal for its front pipes instead of the usual Bevington ribbed plain metal that was cast on an iron bed. These spotted metal fronts were originally gilded, but the aluminium fairy has cast its spell here, even spoiling the flower patterns on the lips of the pipes in the process. Presumably some time after the organ's inauguration in the church (the local press does not mention any special casework), the present casework was designed and created ; it seems that it was carved in local workshops.

The four flats of Open and Dulciana basses were raised over the north choir stalls and fed from the Great soundboard's upper-boards with long wooden conveyances. This casework matches other woodwork in the church, including a fine spire-type font cover, unusually elegant surroundings for the ten commandments and a

rood screen with an early example of a crucifix in a post-reformation Church of England building. (There's another crucifix on the altar retable, also apparently carved and decorated at this period.)

There are many other features of great interest in this building, all of which now need to be conserved and restored. A lottery funding application will soon be made, so for the moment I will say no more until it seems judicious to publicise the project as a whole. I am just very pleased that an organ – especially such an important and very well conserved Bevington organ – will be considered as integral to the later C19 development of this remarkable church.

Errdig House **ex-Derby**



Next in date come two organs that are quite similar in overall conception but were made at very different dates. The earlier one is in Erddig House and has been restored by Dominic's team quite recently. I haven't seen it myself, so I will just say that it is numbered 654 and was made in 1864, the same year as the organ we have just been considering, which is their number 606. By this time, judging from the job numbers and known dates written on printed and written labels inside their soundboards of other organs, the Bevington workshops were making about an organ a week. War damage and previous fires at various times have destroyed almost all the firm's archives, so the only way of reconstituting their work will be a long one of cataloguing and dating their work from the organs themselves. Although this is much more instructive than working purely from paper, there are certainly going to be documentary losses which we will not be able to recover.

Mansfield Road chapel **to** **St Saviour's Chalk Farm**

The other smaller house organ was made for an unknown presumably midlands house (presumably in the Nottingham/Derby area) in 1878, which is the date on a Swell pallet. It bears the works number 1205. I rescued it in February 2018 from a dark and cold small Methodist church in the north-centre of Derby whose water and electricity had been cut off. It was Richard Brice of Belper who had alerted me to the existence of the organ and the danger posed to it by the closure of the church, and he and Peter Horne from Nottingham kindly helped to dismantle and wrap it up for transport. It is now on loan to St Saviour's church, Eton Road, near Chalk Farm in NW London. Here Paul Nicholson the professional harpischordist and conductor is priest in charge, and the organ is used there for practice and services. It joins a small Italian organ made by Dominic, which is also used for concerts.

Both the former Derby and the Erddig organs have carefully-made polished oak consoles. The main casework at Erddig is more conventional, with front pipes in compartments with posts between and some low and high level ornamentation. The other larger 1864 organ I have just been discussing has a simpler softwood case with 20 low-level basses and the former Derby organ has a curved sweep of 12 low-level basses with oak posts and a minimum of ornamentation. The largest eight pedal pipes are arranged along the sides of the case and the others are along the back of the organ. Both organs have extensively-painted front pipes: the paintwork of the organ from Derby has been quite expertly renewed in recent times.

Overlength on front pipes

Radiating pedalboard

All the ex-Derby pipes are practically the same length, which means that the smaller front pipes have overlengths at least as long again as their real speaking length. The ex-Derby organ has a radiating and flat pedalboard but this time of 25 notes and not 30; its manual compass is 56 notes.

The organ from Derby is now in its third church, having been moved presumably from its original home to Little Eaton Methodist church in 1945 and then to Derby in 1982. Along the way it suffered the loss of its Great tenor C Cremona, and a very poor Fifteenth, made from cut-down Dulcianas from another organ had been installed in its place, but otherwise it is in as original condition as one could wish.

There are two design aspects of the ex-Derby organ which are of particlular interest. The first is that the Swell sub-octave coupler consists mechanically of a secondary set of parallel backfalls from the Swell keyboard and a roller-board to widen and divert these to pick up the wires leading from the normal unison backfalls to the pallet-pulls. I have never seen this system in any other organ – it may be an answer to a late request by the client for an octave coupler that could not be satisfied in any other way in what is already a tightly-packed organ. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely it is an answer to the problem that a conventional sub-octave backfall system would involve having unmanageably short backfalls set at extreme angles.

Ex-Derby organ on rollers to pull out for tuning

Rohr flute, Great

The second aspect is another result of this tight compactness : four substantial wooden rollers are built into the main frame to allow the whole organ to be pulled out of a recess or away from wall so as to gain access to the Swell-box for tuning and to be able to get to the Swell actions and soundboard. One finds such rollers in numerous organs in the C18, but I haven't seen it in any other organ as late as this one. The third is the so-called Rohr Flute. It is made from metal from tenor C up, but what you can't see in the photo, though you might deduce it from the solid tops of the pipes, is that the whole rank is tuned by large ears – for which ears there is not much space on the soundboard, and they are certainly difficult to get at, being buried inside a mass of other pipework. This was presumably the choice of the client, as one can't imagine an organ maker in the late 1870s thinking of making such a rank. Presumably no-one was too worried by the absence of the chimneys that originally gave the stop its name.

While on the subject of St Saviour's church, both this and its neighbouring church of St Peter Belsize Park were equipped with Bevington organs when first built, in 1855-6 and 1858-9 respectively. Both organs were subsequently rebuilt, that at St Saviour's with extreme brutality, and both with pneumatic actions that don't function any more.

High quality painting of pipes on 3-manual, 1855-6 Bevington organ St Saviours Chalk Farm

But the painting on the chancel front pipes at St Saviour's is as you can see of very high quality indeed; they appear to be arranged for the layout of wooden casework that was not carried out. Incidentally, when will we have a book on the subject of the painting of front pipes in British organs from the earliest times to the present day?

Unusually, the ex-Derby organ's console does have the usual console labels recording the prizes and medals won at the London and Paris exhibitions, whereas all the other house organs considered today do not. One might think that these would be inappropriate in private houses - as well as less useful for publicity, of course.

The final organ has a 'clean' console too, without advertisements, but it has been more altered, or perhaps more correctly more extended, than the others in today's survey. This house organ is built on quite a large scale, with 18 low-level basses to the sides of the console and a Derby-like central flat over the console.

It is now in the proprietary chapel of St John, Downshire Hill in Hampstead, which was opened in 1823 with an organ by Tayler of Kensington, an organ which our old friend John Marsh was not enchanted with. (He had visited it to see what the opposition to his son's proprietary chapel up in the old part of the town was, so he was not perhaps altogether a dispassionate witness ...) In 1880 a 15-stop organ was installed here, made by Bevington and Sons. But this may not have been a brand-new organ.

St John's Downshire Hill, Hampstead

'1045' and 'Chamber/Gt'

Hele Choir keyboard with 4 stop-knobs set in the Choir manual key-slip

Hele Choir soundboard, between Bevington Swell to the left and Bevington Great to the right

Height being restricted between the western parts of the gallery and ceiling where the organ is placed, a low case was vital, though even then it was possible for some extra height to be gained behind the organ, beyond a sort of false west wall which closes off the gallery.

The organ seems to have been revoiced (or voiced louder) on arrival – or perhaps in 1895 when Hele of Plymouth inserted a third keyboard below the other two. This controlled a small unenclosed Choir division placed on the main frame between the two original soundboards. It has a mechanical key action but a pneumatic stop action actuated by four small stop-knobs very unusually set in the Choir manual key-slip; there are no couplers to this manual. Perhaps at this time the organ was loudened and perhaps also the ceiling in the organ chamber behind, as it had now become, was raised using a stout steel joist. The Great tonal scheme was modified a bit and the original Fifteenth replaced by a 2' Piccolo.

In the 1970s, again in the spirit of the taste of the time, a Fifteenth was returned to the Great and a few other smaller tonal changes made, but also with the addition of a direct-electric action Pedal division of four new stops on a soundboard set behind the Swell, this work being done by Hill, Norman and Beard. The organ's console is, despite all this, still a larger version of the polished oak house organ style of the one formerly at Derby. An organist here twenty years ago was Andrew McCrea and one of his pupils is standing next to me now …

Again in the spirit of the times, our own times this time, this organ is not being used and is being cooked by overheating in the church. It is also 'adorned' internally with loud-speakers. When we went to see the organ at the end of a Sunday morning service, the musicians present had never even been up to the gallery to try it out and

the present minister had been told it did not work. So there was fairly general surprise that when we went up and switched it on, we were able to play it despite a couple of minor ciphers, which we dealt with on a later visit.

Perhaps somewhat ironically, this is the only organ in my present survey to have an Historical Organ certificate, though it is by far the most altered from its original Bevington state. But let us hope that the Certificate might in some way help it against any consequences of its present period of neglect. More will be found on this organ in the latest of our series of articles on the historical and actual organs in Hampstead parish – all 45 or so of them – to be published in May in the Heath and Hampstead Society journal/newsletter. These will also be published in book form in due course.

One last thing (as they say on the net): one very obvious peculiarity of very many Bevington church organs made in the 1860s and 1870s is that the Great stop-knobs were placed on the left and the Swell on the right. However, this is not the case with either the former Derby organ nor the large 1864 one ... but it is the case at Downshire Hill! Why? Both Martin and the younger Henry Bevington, who ran the firm at this time were organists, and they must have had their reasons – one can imagine that perhaps one was that a good pedalling organist could more easily release his left hand than his right and thus change the Great stops – but there are nearly always composition pedals for this division. Have you any suggestions for reasons for and against such a layout?

I hope that as well as acknowledging the quality of the tonal interest of Bevington's organs, which are I think very much in line of descent with those made by Snetzler, we can now admit their technical interest as well. They are remarkably adaptable instruments too, as those I have taken to France has shown.

Thanks to their being fully-scaled and usually boldly voiced, another three Bevington chancel organs that I have taken to France sound and work very well in their new churches. These organs, which were quite reticent when in dog-kennel holes in English chancels, have sprung to musical life when placed in an open area in a large resonant building.

Bevington chancel organs in France

Pléhédel, N Brittany, made in 1867 work no 799 for Aisthorpe, Lincs (viewed from the back)

St Martin l'Aiguillon, Normandy, made for Great Yarmouth PC, in a case of c1850

Bevington chancel organ, (1870 work no. 959), in a fine English mahogany case of c1850. Plounez, north Brittany. An organ given to teach on.

The same organ, without its case, as made for Cogenhoe, Northants.

It would be a shame if we left it to other countries to enjoy Bevington's work while we neglected it here. Only recently another Bevington organ left Surrey for a new home in Germany, while by contrast perhaps the floor under the Bevington organ in Mary Sumner's church next door to the Winchester diocesan offices is still in danger of collapsing. Whatever merits Bevington's organs might have, or however important they may be in the history of the organ in this country, it is still down to us to preserve them actively.

BEVINGTON HOUSE ORGAN STOP-LISTS, for Barber Institute BIOS Conference, Birmingham, 23 February 2019

1. House organ made 1829, from Wingrave, Bucks, now at Cersay, deux-Sèvres, France

Great (pipework 1829, revoiced 1928), 58 notes:
Open Diapason; basses now from Gt Yarmouth PC Bevington organ
Stopped Diapason (wood)
Dulciana (bass from Stopped)
Principal
Flautino/Fifteenth
Swell to Great

Swell (1928), 58 notes:
Open Diapason (bass from Gedeckt)
Gedeckt (wood)
Gamba (stopped bass)
Gemshorn
Trumpet
Octave coupler

Pedal (1928), 30 notes:
Bourdon (wood)
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal

Balanced swell pedal, 2 compositions to Great, electric blower

2. House organ of c1833-5 in a carved oak case

Great, GG (no GG#) to top F, 58 keys:
Open Diapason from tenor C up
Stop Diapason Bass, up to bass B natural
Claribel treble, from tenor C up
Principal Bass, up to bass B natural
Principal treble, tenor C up
Fifteenth throughout
Clarionet, tenor G up
Choir to Great coupler

Choir, GG (no GG#) to top F, 58 keys, the lowest octave and a half linked to the Great keys:
Dulciana, from tenor C up
Flute (4', wood), from tenor C up
Pedals : 29 pedal pull downs to Great, CC to e', working at the octave below from bass G upwards
Stops arranged over upper manual; pitch now c440 ; was probably lower
All enclosed in a swell-box, with lever pedal; later stool; small recent Discus blower

3. A large house organ, made 1864, now in a church; work number 606

Great organ, 56 notes:
Pipework in order of placing on soundboard, from front to back:
Open Diapason, 10 basses in upper case
Dulciana (CC), 10 basses in upper case
Stopt Diapason (wood); open 'Claribel' pipes from middle C up
Viol de Gamba, conical, with flared 'bell' tops ; bass from Stopt Diapason
Suabe Flute (wood), stopped bass, open trebles
Principal
Cremona, tenor C
Mixture, two ranks in the bass (12th and 15th); from middle C sharp upwards there are three ranks: 4', 12th and 15th, of which the 31 pipes of the 15th rank are missing.
Swell to Great

Swell organ, 56 notes:
Pipework in order of placing on soundboard, from back to front:
Double Diapason, bass octave of stopped wooden pipes, placed behind the box and conveyed from the Swell soundboard.
+?'Teneroon', wood tenor octave, then open metal pipes from middle C upwards
Open Diapason, with its own stopped wood bass pipes
Stopt Diapason (wood)
Principal
Piccolo, tenor C
Oboe, tenor C
Horn, CC
'Tremblant' (later addition)

Pedal organ, 30 notes, flat and radiating:
Open Diapason, 30 open wooden pipes ; eight basses placed at the extreme east end of the north aisle, worked through a pneumatic system using c ½" zinc tubes and a grooved board
Octave Pedal; this is a coupler, but how it worked is not (yet) obvious ; nor do there seem to be the extra 12 Open Diapason pipes needed to take this coupler through the whole pedal compass.
Pedals to Swell
+Pedals to Great
+the stop-knobs to these ranks do not have their ivory labels in place, so their original names are not yet known; some other stop labels are clearly in the wrong places

The pitch of the organ appears to be below A=440 Hz at 16 degrees C, and possibly as low as 435 Hz. No blower; feeders under reservoir.

4a. Erddig, house organ made in 1864; work number 654

Great, 54 notes:
Open Diapason from bass G, bass from Stopt
Stopt Diapason (wood, top notes open)
Dulciana, bass from Stopt
Principal
Fifteenth, top octave breaking to 4'
Bourdon 16', 13 bass notes
Swell coupler
Swell organ, 54 notes:
Stopt Diapason (wood), bass from Great Stopt
Gamba, from tenor D up (2 notes from Sw Stopt, bass from Gt Stopt)

Flute (4'), stopped wood
Pedals, 20 notes:
Pull-downs to Great

Three composition pedals to Great; lever swell-box pedal, hand or foot blowing
Stops arranged over upper manual; pitch A=435

This organ seems to be the lineal descendant of organ 2. above; the next is a later-Victorian conception, more influenced by small two-manual church organs of the type typically made by Bevington in the 1860s and 1870s.

4b. Organ dated 1878 formerly in Mansfield Road Methodist church, north-centre Derby, now on loan to Saviour's church, Chalk Farm, London NW3); work number 1205
Great organ, 56 notes:
Open Diapason
Rohr Flute [sic] (wood bass, rest of metal, with soldered tops, tuned by large ears ; no chimneys …)
Dulciana (bass from Rohr Flute)
Principal
Clarinet/Fifteenth (tenor C)
Swell to Great
Swell organ, 56 notes:
Bell Gamba (bass from L Gedact)
Lieblich Gedact (stopped wood)
Flute Harmonic (4', full compass)
Swell suboctave
Pedals, 25 notes, flat and radiating
Bourdon (wood)
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal

Two composition pedals to Great, lever swell-box pedal ; electric blower
Pitch now 440 but found at c445

5. St John, Downshire Hill, London NW3: work number 654 (c1879)
Great organ, 56 notes (stops on left):
Open Diapason
Claribel
Principal
Flute
Twelfth (? 1972, on 1895 Gamba slider)
Fifteenth (1972, on presumably Bevington Mixture slider, replacing 1895 Piccolo)
Swell to Great

Swell organ, 56 notes (stops on right):
Stop'd Diapason
Bell Gamba
Principal (?1972, ?on ?Bevington Double Diapason slide)
Gemshorn 2' (replacing ?Bevington Harmonic Flute)
Mixture (19-22, ?1895 recomposed Bevington Great Mixture ?)
Trumpet (revoiced and renamed Cornopean, 1972)
Shalmey (4', transposed and revoiced Oboe, 1972)
[no Swell Octave coupler]

Choir organ, 56 notes: (basically by Hele, 1895, with pneumatic stop action and a long horizontal tracker key action)
Flauto Traverso 8
Lieblich Flute 4

Piccolo 2 (1895 Hele rank, moved from Great 1972, replacing an 1895 Dulciana)
Larigot 1⅓ (1972, replacing an 1895 Clarionet)
Filled-in stop-knob hole [for Tremulant ?]

Pedal organ, 30 notes (1972 pedalboard) [29 notes before 1972] *(stops on left)*:
On new direct-electric chest on the site of a former Open Diapason 16'
Bourdon 16 (Bevington)
Octave 8 (1972)
Choral Bass 4(1972)
Posaune 16 (1972)
Swell to Pedals
Great to Pedals

2 composition pedals each for Great and Swell
1972 balanced swell-box pedal, electric blower