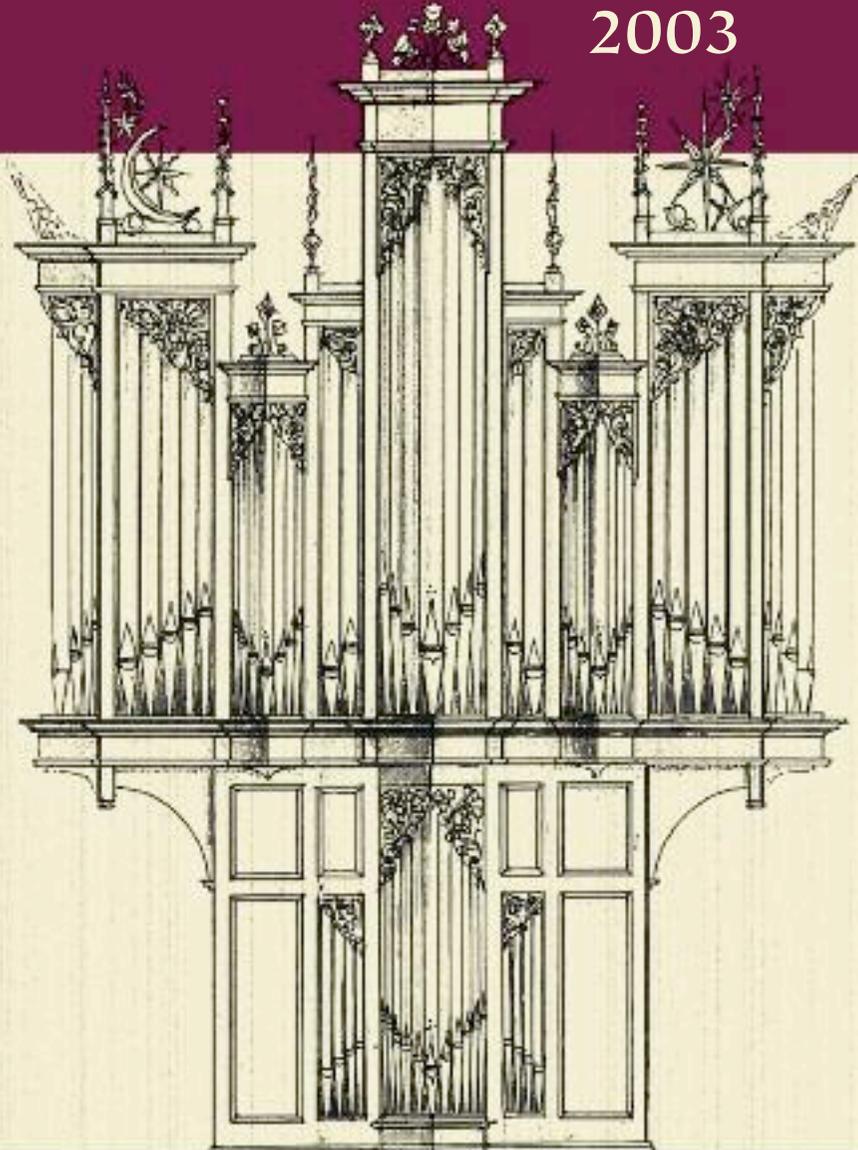


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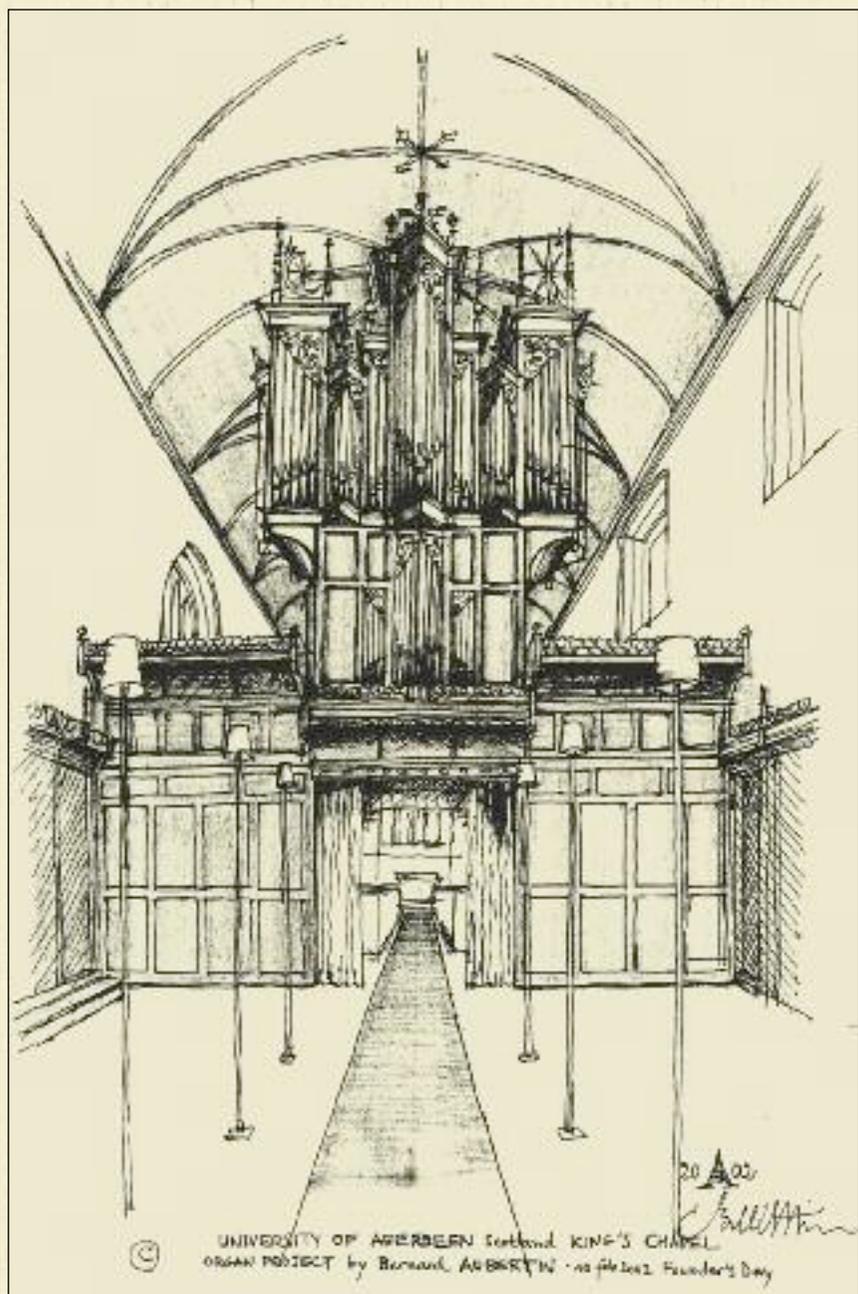


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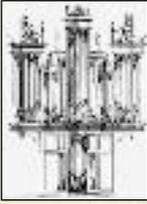


• NEW ORGAN FOR KING'S COLLEGE •



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UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN Scotland KING'S CHAPEL
ORGAN PROJECT by Bernard ALBERTIN - 20 Feb 2002 Founder's Day



Success ! ! !

The King's College Chapel Organ Replacement Appeal has now come to a close. The total amount raised - £275,000, including £65,000 from the Lillie Bequest, has exceeded all expectations. The University of Aberdeen can now announce that due to the generosity of those who contributed towards the new Organ, King's College Chapel will now be the proud owner of a three-manual, Aubertin original.

The inauguration of the new King's College Chapel Organ will be marked by a series of concerts and Organ recitals in the Spring of 2004. A letter will be sent out nearer that time informing you of the precise dates, times and programme of events.

The phenomenal success of the University of Aberdeen King's College Chapel Organ Replacement Appeal has been due to the enormous generosity of the many University graduates and friends of King's College Chapel.

The newly acquired King's College Chapel Organ plays a vital part in a history spanning generations of Organ building tradition. The story, having now gone full circle, started some years ago when our current Organ Builder, Monsieur Bernard Aubertin was invited to restore an organ at a small place near Rouen called Boscherville.

The Organ, he discovered, was one which had been built in 1630 by William Leslie from Aberdeenshire. Though the organ had suffered serious neglect he was able to restore the instrument to its former glory. He had found this task particularly interesting as the old Aberdeenshire build and design was quite unlike French contemporary organs.

Today, by building an organ for us at the University of Aberdeen, Bernard feels he is completing an interesting circle of Aberdeen to France and now back to Aberdeen. Indeed, one of the stops on our Grand organ is based on what he found on the old Leslie Organ he previously restored.

Visit to Monsieur Aubertin's Workshop: July 2002

by Mrs Jane Hellmann

The first report of the progress on the new King's College Chapel was completed in July 2002 by one of our staunch supporters of the Organ Replacement Appeal. Mrs Jane Hellmann was lucky enough to accompany parishioners of a French village when they visited Bernard Aubertin with a view to acquiring a new organ for their own church. She enjoyed her visit and after some sleuthing, managed to see at first hand the remarkable progress on the Aberdeen Organ.

"The conducted tour moved into the converted Abbey at Courtefontaine which is Bernard's workshop, and there, unmistakably, was the buffet of the University of Aberdeen Organ constructed from Oak from a forest in Burgundy – beautiful wood, beautifully worked! In another room the two halves of the cornice (chapel and ante-chapel sides) were complete, though still in clamps. Upstairs, in the metal-work department, spread out on a table, were two rows of tiny pipes labelled 'Tierce Aberdeen', and in an open-fronted cupboard, were standing several 2ft. pipes, also labelled 'Aberdeen'."

Visit to Monsieur Aubertin's Workshop: January 2003

by Dr Roger B Williams, Director of Music & Organist to the University



Figure 1.0 Top of the New Organ Without the Pipes

To see the drawings and design of the organ now realised is a great thrill and the result was most striking. Good progress has been made on the instrument and Bernard is well ahead of schedule. The keyboards and pedals on the Chapel side are complete and the pipes of the wooden Buzène are situated just inside the case on the Ante-chapel side.



Figure 1.2 Pipes on the New Organ Just in the Ante-Chapel Side of the Case

The handsome case presents a uniform vision and although the pipes are not yet in position it is clear where they will go. The eye is led naturally from the linen-fold panels at the player's level to the towers at the top of the instrument. The oak from Burgundy grown in sandy ground, is light in colour, but those parts that have already been completed for some time are beginning to darken. The finished result will be delightful and will complement the King's College Chapel beautifully.



Figure 1.3 View of Chapel-Side of the New Organ

Two small blowers are sited in a wooden case just in front of the player. Although the soundboards are not yet in place a photograph taken earlier depicted where they will be positioned. The case will be well filled and the use of space will be maximised. Access to the organ will be by two doors on either side, at the front of the instrument and not at the back as originally envisaged. This will enable tuning and other maintenance to be done from inside the instrument.



Figure 1.4 Door into the New Organ Showing the Blowing Mechanism, Just in front of the Player

The soundboards for the Recit and Positiv will be placed on either side of the organ with ranks alternating between the two manuals. The soundboard for the Great organ will be centrally placed, in front of and above the player's head.



Figure 1.5 Sound Board for the Recit-Positiv

The majority of the pipes have now been made and only the Quinte, and the Cornet of the Positiv, the Mixtures of the Great, and the Mixture and Cromhorne of the Recit still have to be made. One particularly impressive piece of workmanship I witnessed was the pipe maker rolling the 16' Principal pipes for the pedal division.

The Octave 4' of the Great was on the voicing machine, and I heard one note of the 16' Portunal and the 8' Montre. I also heard one note of the Gambe 8' on the Great. The sounds I heard were excellent and well characterised. The Gambe was particularly impressive not only because its attack was so well differentiated from the other ranks, but also because the sustained tone of the pipe being blown gave a 'grainy' effect with a very pleasing transparent quality to the sound.

I played for an hour on a smaller instrument that is destined for Japan and was once again impressed with the responsiveness of the touch and the flexibility of the various combinations of sounds that were possible. The organ for Aberdeen is larger and more varied than this instrument and I feel confident that the variety available will more than answer our needs. There is a physical excitement about these organs, with their lively response and living sound-scape. With pipes on all four sides, it will be necessary to listen carefully to the balance of the organ in the Chapel, not only within the organ itself but also to ensure effective leading of congregational singing and sensitive accompanying of the choir.

Ten Facts of Interest

Fact 1 - Case and frame in fine oak is finished and only needs exterior, facing pipes are still to be completed.



Figure 1.6 Ante-Chapel Side of the Organ Case

Fact 2 - The case is decorated with linen-fold panels (reflecting the chancel of the Chapel) on either side of and above the player and at similar levels on the reverse side of the instrument. In the central panel, facing and a little above the player, is a little sculpture '1495/BA/2004' and on the left upper panel is a little carved ladybird.



Figure 1.7 Case work on the Chapel Side – Organist's View Above the Keyboards

Fact 3 - The windchests for the three manuals are complete - one for the Great organ, and two for the Recit/Positiv, with pipes alternating between the manuals on each, following a traditional design of C and C sharp on opposite sides but with one manual reversed.



Figure 1.8 Other Side of the Sound Board and Pallettes at the Back Right of the New Organ

Fact 4 - The blowers are inside the instrument - 2 blowers to produce a quieter sound than one. They are in a case behind the action, just in front of the player.

Fact 5 - The three manuals are made from white bone from the femur of a male ox for the naturals, and ebony for the sharps, mounted on chestnut.



Figure 1.9 The Three Keyboards

Fact 6 - The Pedal board of oak is complete.

Fact 7 - The coupling mechanisms will be extended with a reversible I/II : II/I to give greatest possible flexibility.

Fact 8 - Pipework:

- (a) I have seen most of the ranks of the Positiv, including the wooden Bourdon (a gift from Bernard).
- (b) All is complete for the Recit, with the exception of the Mixture and Cromhorne (formerly Basson) which still remains to be made.
- (c) On the Great Organ only the Mixture still has to be made. I heard the Portunal 16' which is light in tone and Bernard voiced middle C on the two pipes making up the Montre 8' which seemed strong and of very fine tone. The Octave 4' was on the voicing machine which, though heavier in timbre, was very clear. The Portunal, Montre and Octave sounded well and I anticipate will 'sing' well in the Chapel, being situated high in the Great organ, close to the ceiling. I heard the bottom B of the Gambe. It is a quiet, highly characteristic sound and with speech slightly slower than the principal work. I saw the Double Tierce (a new thought by Bernard after the fashion of a 16' Sesquialtera, with a narrow scale and a high cut-up, as in the Boscherville organ built by Leslie in 1630).
- (d) I saw the metal for the 16' Pedal Principal on the table being cut, polished and then rolled into pipes. The Octave 8' and the Principal 4' were finished with the exception of gilding the facing pipes. The 16' Buzène was in the case and it looked a most impressive sight ranged along just inside the back of the case. The Pedal Mixture has still to be made.

Fact 9 - The wind trunks to the Positiv and Recit and the top part of the Pedals are finished.

Fact 10 - Various carvings are being cut out at present to go on the upper part of the case.



Figure 1.10 Preliminary Models of the Carvings for the Top of the New Organ

Several roller boards are now in the instrument. I was given a guide to the arrangement of ranks of the Great organ. The constrictions of space have been considerable and Bernard discussed with me the difficulties he had met

in trying to get everything in order so that access for tuning and maintenance was practical. The stops at the console will be arranged in the same order as the manuals with Recit at the top, Great organ and Positiv in the middle and the Pedal stops at the bottom - all on both sides. All 8' ranks will be on the left except the Bourdon on the Positiv. The stop knobs will be differently coloured, either in pearwood or boxwood. Pedals 16' Principal and 8' Octave will be on left, with Prestant 4', Mixture and Buzene 16' on right. Coupler I/Ped and Tremblant will be at bottom on left with couplers I/II(reversible), II/III and III/II on right hand side.



Figure 1.11 Chapel Side of the New Organ

Vote of Thanks!

"I found my visit to Aubertin's workshop very exciting. After all the planning which has gone into the Organ project, to see the Organ taking shape was a most thrilling experience. I am very much looking forward to sharing the sense of excitement and achievement with everyone in Aberdeen and beyond next February, when the Organ will be heard for the first time!"

Dr Roger B Williams

"I was recently reading a translation of Bishop Elphinstone's foundation document of September 1505 and noticed that in it he specified the appointment in his College of 'eight Prebendaries... accomplished in singing...from among whom the Chancellor must appoint one who is a proficient on the organ.' It is wonderful to reflect that the support of so many graduates and friends has enabled us to maintain one of our founder's original intentions."

Dr J Graeme Roberts

"Having seen a succession of drawings over the past two years, it was exciting to see the early stages of the real thing!"

Jane Hellmann

"It has been a most exciting funding project to have undertaken, the response from friends of the University has been overwhelming. I have loved being a part of it all!"

Judith Rea

THANK YOU!



King's College Chapel Organ Replacement Appeal Report 2003

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