

Advice and grants for organs in England

by J. Sergio del Campo Olaso

1. Statutory organizations

The way to protect historic organs in England is very pluralistic. The Church of England uses its faculty through an agreement of self-regulation whereby diocesan organ advisers have the control of organs. Their advice has been beneficial to parish churches and has contributed to avoid the destruction of important instruments. Organs in Roman Catholic, Methodist, United reformed and Baptist Churches are under the control of their respective domains. On the other hand, organs located in secular buildings such as concert halls, town halls, universities or school chapels are controlled by local governments. Therefore the intervention on these instruments is not regulated unless they stand in buildings which are registered as historic.

The main statutory organization is *English Heritage* (EH), although sometimes their interest and grants have been more involved in organ cases than as working instruments. This situation has changed during the last years through EH's role as principal adviser to the *Heritage Lottery Fund* (HLF), which finances the restoration of historic instruments. However, the English Heritage does not have staff that specialises in organs.

Organs are only under protection when they belong to museums or some other institutions like the *National Trust* (NT). Therefore, the statutory organizations that have control of buildings and their fittings do not include organs, even when they are property of public organizations. In Churches, organs, like other furniture or decorative elements, are protected by the faculty jurisdiction.

2. Grant-giving organizations

The funds for organs have been made available from the profits of the *National Lottery* allocated to Arts and the heritage. The criteria of the grants differ to those of the *Church of England* parishes. For example, if the funds are applied for a new organ, it is usually a requirement to make the organ available to the wider use of the community, whereas, if the funds are for a restoration, the importance of the organ and the significance of the project are considered in terms of cultural heritage and not in those of the parish worship.

When funds for a new organ are sought, the *Lottery Fund* is administered by the *Arts Council*, being the Regional Arts Board and the National Arts Council the most important sources of information and advice. If the funds are for a restoration project, the recommendation and application are currently made through the *Joint Grant Scheme for Churches and Other Places of Worship*, administered together with the EH and HLF. The *Council for the Care of Churches* (CCC) administers the grants through its *Organs Committee*.

These funds are made available by a different number of modest but useful charity organizations such *Pilgrim Trust* and *Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust*. There are some other charity bodies which may offer advice and aid for organ restoration projects, although their contributions are limited to particular geographical areas. The funds are normally modest and they are administered independently by each organization and following their own criteria, which can be very strict.

Funding is a crucial obstacle related to restoration projects and selecting the correct course of action is of almost importance. In the last years, following the lead of the Lottery Funds, who has set up the advisory criteria, a significant development in the organ world has taken place where formal organizations for advisers and builders have been established.

The guidelines followed by organizations that award grant aid for the restoration of historic organs are basically the same, though each of them has its own rules. The criteria followed by the Organs Committee are usually applicable to all heritage organ restoration projects. No more than one estimate is submitted for consideration by the *Council for the Care of Churches* (CCC), though if the cost of the project is considerable, it would be advisable to get different estimates from a second or third organ builder. The estimate must include the most accurate possible description of the organ, the problems and the solutions, accompanied by a detailed photographic and documentary material, and a report from the *Diocesan Organ Adviser* (DOA).

Usually, the *Organ Committee* expect most of the funding from elsewhere, since its resources are always very limited. For that reason it is necessary to take into account some other resources available locally. This at the same time becomes an advantage to second the means of funding the project and to allow it to go ahead with enough encouragement. The work should be done within two years of the grant being awarded, but this could be extended if the work is under way. The grants from the *Organ Committee* are not awarded retrospectively, and the churches should have a clear idea of its plans before applying for a grant. The Committee do not fund any work which alters or adds to original work, or which raises doubts about the standard to which it will be done.

3. Advisers, organ builders and other organizations

3. 1. The *Council for the Care of Churches* and its committees

The *Organs Committee* of the *Council for the Care of Churches* (CCC) supports the *Diocesan Advisory Committee* (DAC), founded in 1954, and its *Diocesan Organ Adviser* (DOA), which provides control and Advice for organs in parish churches. The first step is always to get in touch with the *Diocesan Organ Adviser*. The task of the *Diocesan Organ Adviser* is to advise to the *Diocesan Advisory Committee* about organ matters, who at the same time advises the Chancellor whether a faculty should be granted for the work proposed. However, the *Diocesan Organ Adviser* very often provides free advice to the church as well; not only because the adviser has the time

and the experience to become more closely involved with a restoration project, but also because of the benefits that engaging a consultant with special knowledge brings to the projects. For special cases, a parish can also decide to appoint a consultant, since he or she has also a wide knowledge about the organ, its author and history, etc. Normally the consultant is paid either for the expenses or a fee that may be a portion of the cost of the project, an hourly rate or an agreed sum. Diocesan organ advisers, on the other hand, are unpaid, and they are not in charge of choosing which organ builder will work in a particular project, although some of them could advise churches informally about satisfactory or unsatisfactory builders. Normally they are musicians interested in organ building and design, so it is clear that a more professional advice is necessary.

3. 2. *The Association of Independent Organ Advisers*

The *Association of Independent Organ Advisers* (AIOA) was set up in 1997 in order to register a group of qualified consultants, considered as professional advisers. Since that time this Association puts owners in touch with a suitable adviser, who should have special knowledge of the musical, technical, acoustical and historical questions. Obviously, advisers should be also impartial and should be familiar with the most recent achievements of different builders and have updated information about their skills. Each member agrees to have one project examined by another associated member before accreditation. The advisers or consultants from the AIOA choose the organ builder who will work in a particular project. Some of them are experienced former organ builders who are no longer connected with their old companies; some other ones are musicians who have worked for an organ builder for some time, architects who formerly worked for the English Heritage, doctorates in the history of English organ building, etc.

A consultant or adviser may be involved either in restoration projects or in the building of a new organ. Very often, the general knowledge and experience of the adviser can help and guide the organ builder's idea. Advisers ought to be able to draw up an inventory of the parts, recognizing date and provenance, and set out the guidelines which will follow in the plan of restoration, detailing which parts will be kept and which restored, removed or replaced. They should be able to provide solutions to problems, find suitable models from which to replace missing parts, supervise the work progress, and finally check and approve the finished work.

3. 3. *The Institute of British Organ Building*

Normally the consultant or the *Diocesan Organ Adviser* advises on suitable organ builders, but sometimes there are circumstances in which the church aim is to carry out its own project, or to receive a second opinion. In 1996 the *Institute of*

British Organ Building (IBO) was set up as a professional association for the organ building trade. The members are registered and described in a list, available from the Secretary. In the case of historic organs, the grants are only awarded to projects involved with accredited organ builders for historic restorations. Logically there will be a favourable tendency towards some organ builders with a well known reputation and who are registered in the IBO (that is inevitable), although projects from unknown organ builders may be admitted provided that a study about their background and work methods have been presented. Failing to produce this information to back up the work ethic and quality of these less known organ builders, grants may be very easily denied.

3. 4. The *British Institute of Organ Studies*

On the other hand, the *British Institute of Organ Studies* (BIOS) tries to offer useful guidance in the area of historic organs by offering education and information. In the educational field, this organization has many publications which provide current researches, and organizes conferences showing the high value of historic organs and the music written for them. The *British Institute of Organ Studies* has contributed to the awareness of the importance of historic organs to their owners and custodians, especially to members that have revealed questionable proposals. The BIOS can provide reports that certify if organs are historically important. In this way, by awarding *Historic Organ Certificates* to important historic instruments, the BIOS intend to protect instruments and avoid wrong actions.

3. 5. The *National Pipe Organ Register and Redundant Organ Rehousing Company*

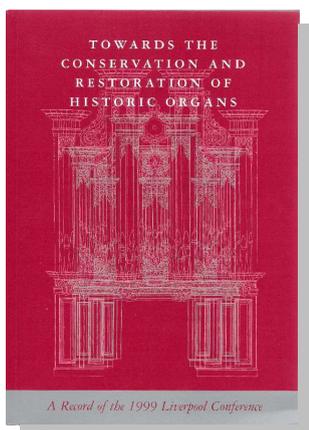
Every organ in the United Kingdom either in secular locations or in churches is included in a database (at the present details of 28.000 organs are registered, including 6.000 pictures, sound archives, etc.). This information is collected in the *National Pipe Organ Register* (NPOR) and in the *British Organ Archive*, which includes organ builder's records, photographic and organ reports from organ enthusiasts, and some other different material. Very often the information needed for an informed restoration project is available in both archives.

The British Organ Studies would like to preserve historic organs in their original buildings hoping for a good and favourable restoration. When churches and chapels are closed, the organs have to be dismantled in order to find a new location. In this aspect *Redundant Organ Rehousing Company Ltd.* offers this possibility, which means that an organ that would otherwise be lost may be dismantled and stored, in the hope that a future owner will appear. Most of the redundant organs in the UK now seem to be available through the IBO.

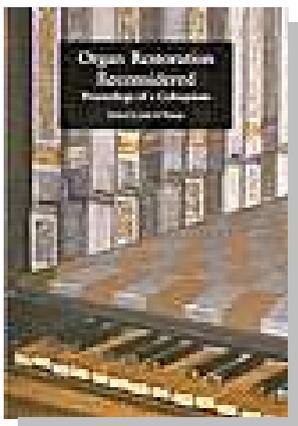
4. Recommended books



Historic Organ Conservation, by Dominic Gwynn. The Council for the Care of Churches, London, 2001. 98 pages; 24 cm. ISBN: 0-7151-7592.



Towards the Conservation and Restoration of Historic Organs. A record of the 1999 Liverpool Conference. The Council for the Care of Churches, London, 2000. 182 pages; 24 cm. ISBN: 0-7151-7586-6.



Organ Restoration Reconsidered. Edited by John R. Watson with different essays delivered at the colloquium *Historic Organs Reconsidered: Restoration and Conservation for a New Century*, held in 1999 in Smithfield, Virginia. Harmonie Park Press, 2005. 200 pages; 24 cm. ISBN: 0-89990-128-X.

5. Relevant organ organizations webs

- Council for the Care of Churches

<http://www.churchcare.co.uk>

http://www.churchcare.co.uk/atoz_organ.php

http://www.churchcare.co.uk/guidance_organbuilders.php

- Association of Independent organ Advisers

<http://www.aioa.org.uk>

- British Institute of Organ Studies

<http://www.bios.org.uk>

<http://www.ibo.co.uk/IBO2005/services/redundant>

- British Organ Archive

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk>

<http://npor.emma.cam.ac.uk/Reporter/boa.pdf>

- Institute of British Organ Building

<http://www.ibo.co.uk>

- National Pipe Organ Register

<http://npor.emma.cam.ac.uk>

- Redundant Organ Rehousing Company

<http://www.rorcl.co.uk>