

Latest information

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of one of our organ advisors at the end of last year. Catherine Ennis, previous President of the Royal College of Organists, was a leading concert organist and a highly respected teacher as well as a very experienced organist at the church of St Lawrence Jewry in the City of London. Her loss has come at a critical moment in the project.

We had commissioned the firms Klais and Flentrop to build us a two console organ that would enable the Snetzler pipes to be played both from a console close to Snetzler's original and from a modern console on the north side with access to additional pipes and modern playing aids. A key element of the design was that the action of both consoles would be mechanical. It was agreed that the details of the design would be finalised on the basis of the organ builders' research into the other surviving Snetzler instruments and any evidence brought to light when dismantling the organ. A finalised design would be submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Committee for approval before work would start.

When the organ builders dismantled the organ they discovered that, contrary to expectations, Snetzler had positioned the wedge bellows inside the case on the north side, not outside as was more frequently the custom. Following this discovery, it was decided to move the modern console to the south side so that the traces of the bellows identified on the northern side of the organ case would not be obscured. The research into the other existing large Snetzler organs further revealed that Snetzler always used balanced key action, not suspended keys. Unfortunately, balanced key action takes up significantly more room than suspended key action and despite the organ builders' best endeavours it has proved impossible to fit two sets of mechanical action into the space available if in one or both of them the keys are balanced rather than suspended.

We are currently exploring a number of options and Catherine Ennis's contribution to our discussions as a highly respected teacher as well as an experienced organist is sorely missed. The planned work on the fabric of the Chapel has suffered some delays due to the pandemic thereby delaying the return of the organ so we have decided to take this time to reconsider the composition of our Organ Advisory Committee with a view to appointing another advisor to the project who is sympathetic to our aims and ambitions and who can bring a similar range of experience to the discussions. The organ builders are currently working on various options and we hope to appoint a new organ advisor shortly so that our final deliberations can take advantage of their experience. We will then submit a finalised design to the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

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