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The George Pike England organ in the Church of Nossa Senhora do Monte, Island of Madeira

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THE consequences of the two trading treaties that were concluded between England and Portugal in the seventeenth century (Oliver Cromwell, 1654) and in the early eighteenth century (John Methuen, 1703) had become amply evident on the island of Madeira by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Contemporary accounts of this period suggest that the British had monopolised the trade and commerce of Madeira. The island had also become strategically important as a staging post for shipping between England and her colonies to the extent that it was twice occupied by the British army during the Napoleonic Wars, first in 1801, following Godoy's invasion of Portugal, and again between 1807 and 1814, after Buonaparte's Berlin declaration of 21 November 1806 closing all ports of the European continent to British shipping.

In 1826 an anonymous writer commented in a 'Diary of Residence on Madeira' that:

> The trade of the island is almost wholly with England, and in the hands of English merchants. Judging indeed, by the vessels that come into the harbour, it is difficult not to fancy oneself in an English sea-port, so seldom do you see the flag of any other nations, or even a Portuguese vessel...[1]

The same writer described the overtly English styles of dress and social manners amongst the Portuguese intelligencia of the island. Furthermore, with the rebuilding of Funchal after

1 *Rambles in Madeira and in Portugal in the early part of* MDCCCXXVI, London, C. & J. Rivington, 1827, p. 160.

the devastating floods on 13th October 1803, there was also an influx of English architecture and furnishings in the homes of the gentry:

> Funchal is the emporium of the Island; it contains about twenty thousand inhabitants... The old houses are ill built; but they have lately much improved in architecture, for the modern buildings are generally handsome and are invariably built in stone, plastered over and white-washed: most of the houses of the gentry are stuccoed inside, many of them are very very elegant and for the most part handsomely furnished in the English style.[2]

As for the early nineteenth century English inhabitants of Madeira, they numbered about one hundred, with some twenty family firms holding complete sway of the island's commercial life. They were seen through the eyes of the anonymous writer of 1819 as being 'too haughty, too jealous and too envious of each other to be very sociable'.[3]

If the writer of the 1826 account was somewhat dismissive and even slightly contemptuous of the religious and musical traditions of the Madeiran churches, then the author of the account published in 1819 gives a more generous and sympathetic view. The latter' s visit may have taken place around 1816 since there is mention of church ceremonies marking the death of Queen Maria I of Portugal and the proclamation of her son, who had been her Regent since 1799, as King John VI:

> The ceremonies of the Romish church possess the means of introducing all the splendour of which public worship is susceptible, whether it be in the more solemn masses for the soul of the dead monarch, or in the more splendid office of singing *Te Deum* on proclaiming his [*sic*] successor. Music forms the principal part of these ceremonies, whether it gives the effect to the solemnity of the funeral service, or quickens the exaltations of loyal hopes and patriotic affections on celebrating the commencement of a new reign. The choirs of the principal churches on the island are well arranged, and the music performed in a style of no common excellence. They have organs also, which are fine instruments.[4]

Documentary evidence and material survivals suggests that these 'fine instruments' were of English origin. Information on the export of English

2 *An Historical Sketch of the Island of Madeira,* London, printed for F. S. Hopkins, 1819, p. 16.
3 *Ibid.* p. 58.
4 *Ibid.* p. 111.

organs to Madeira is contained in a list of church organs manufactured by 'B. Flight & Son, Organ builders to her Majesty' which is appended to a booklet containing the tunes set for one of their barrel organs.[5] This undated list is retrospective, and includes many instruments built by their predecessors, Flight & Robson. Among them are five organs supplied to the Island of Madeira. These are simply listed as numbers one to five without giving their exact locations. Fieldwork by the present writer and David Knight has located three of these instruments.[6] They can be readily identified through their console name plates which read:

> Flight & Robson, Organ Builders to The Prince Regent,
> 101 St. Martins Lane

This would indicate that they were built during the period 1811 - 1820. Furthermore, it may not be unreasonable to suggest that they were supplied as part of the major refurnishings that were needed after the flood disaster of 1803. Two further instruments of early 19th century English origin have been located on the island, an anonymous organ in the church of S. Lucia, Funchal, and the G. P. England organ at Nossa Senhora do Monte, the subject of the present article.

NOSSA Senhora do Monte is three miles inland from Funchal and being at a height of 1,800 ft. it has a particularly cool and stable climate. The church building, dedicated to our Lady of the Mountain, dates from the end of the eighteenth century, but it was built on the site of a chapel erected in 1470 by Adão Gonçalves Ferreira. It is the resting place of the exiled Emperor Karl I of Austria, who was buried there in an iron tomb in 1922. The organ is situated on the north side of the west gallery with the façade of the case at right angles to the balustrade. A plaster cast in the ceiling beneath the west gallery is dated 'MCCMXIV' which may suggest that the organ was erected shortly afterwards. Nevertheless, it was certainly

5 A Selection of / PSALMS, HYMNS, &c. / as SET on an ORGAN, / The Gift of Field Marshall / The Duke of Wellington, / to the Parish Church of / Strathfield-Saye, HANTS. / The ORGAN, Built, by FLIGHT & SONS, 16 King William Street, Strand.[*c.*1841?] / London, printed by Willis & Co.Royal Musical Library, 17 Lower Grosvenor Street.

6 KNIGHT & CHAPLIN, 1995, unpublished fieldwork report. The present locations of the instruments from the firm of Flight & Robson are in the church of S. Pedro in Funchal, and in the churches at S. Vicente and Estreito de Câmara de Lobos. A two further unnamed organs but possibly by the same builders are in the churches at São Martinho, Funchal and at Câmara de Lobos.

there by the time of the visit by the author of the 1819 *Historical Sketch,* who noted:

> Three miles in the rear of the town, is a very pretty church called Nossa Senhora do Monte; it has a good organ and some tolerable paintings from scripture.[7]

It is not known whether any surviving records of the church contain further information concerning the history of the organ. Enquiries to this effect have so far proved fruitless.

The history of the England family in relation to organ building is quite complex. It began with George England who acquired the business of Richard Bridge (possibly his father-in-law) in 1758. On his retirement in 1766 he was succeeded by his brother John, who worked independently up to 1779, after which he entered a partnership with Hugh Russell. In the following year they were joined in a triumvirate by John Byfield (III) when they worked on the organ at St. Helen's Church Abingdon. George Pike England (*c.*1765-1816), the son of John England, was trained by his father with whom he traded as J. England & Son. He succeeded his father around 1790 or 1791 and worked independently until his death.[8] G. P. England is known to have exported organs to the U.S.A. and it cannot be coincidental that his employment at Nossa Senhora do Monte followed work for the Portuguese Embassy Chapel in London in 1808.[9]

In Great Britain some chamber organs by the England family have escaped major rebuilding but the same cannot be said of their church organs, although substantial amounts of G. P. England's pipework exist in several of the latter. These include the instruments at St. James,

7 *An Historical Sketch...*, p. 23.

8 David WICKENS, ed., *The Freeman Edmonds Dictionary of British Organ Builders,* BIOS, 1996. The business tree can be summarised thus:

George England (d. 1773)
|
John England (*fl.* 1776 - 1790)
|
John England - Hugh Russell - John Byfield III
(partnerhsip flourished 1768-*c.*1799)
|
George Pike England (*c.*1765-1816)

9 Andrew FREEMAN, Two Organ Builders of Note: the Englands' *The Organ,* vol. 21, no. 83, January 1942, p. 170.

Clerkenwell, London, 1792, (rebuilt by Gray & Davison in 1877 and renovated by Mander in 1978), Blandford Forum, 1794, (rebuilt by Thomas Hill in 1876, and renovated by Mander in 1970), and St. John, Chichester (1813). None of these has retained a comparable degree of integrity to Nossa Senhora do Monte. All the essential elements of this organ remain intact, viz., the soundboard, keyboard, action, reservoir and winding system as well as the majority of the pipework. Given that the date of the gallery is 1814 this instrument could have been one of G. P. England's last contracts. It is likely to have been built between the completion of a new organ for Islington Chapel of Ease, London in 1814, and the repairs and alterations to the organ of Durham Cathedral in 1815. George Pike England died during the course of this work which was then completed by his successor and son-in-law, William Nicholls.

The information in the following description stems from observations made during two visits in early January 1996. Since the organ is still in playing order it was not possible, nor desirable, to gain access to every part of its interior.

The case

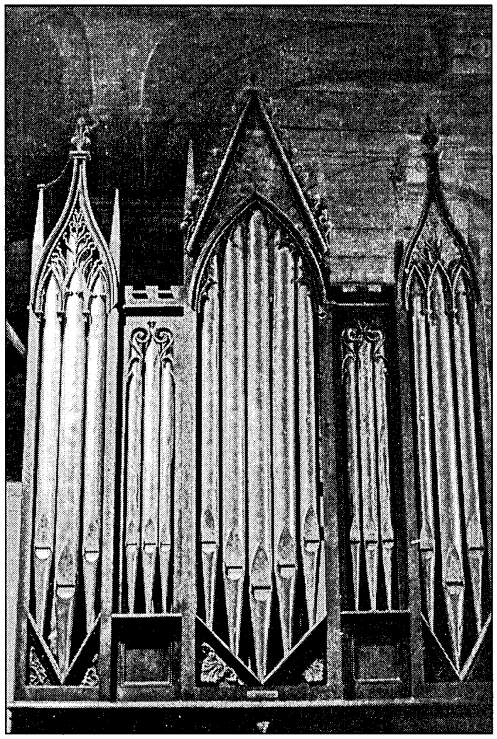
Of the thirty-five new organs built in the United Kingdom by G. P. England that were identified by Andrew Freeman, the cases of nineteen of them have survived without significant alterations. Although he noted some similarities in style, it is likely in view of their subtle variations, that many were the work of, or the result of collaboration with a furniture maker.[10] Seven of these survivors reflect the early nineteenth century Gothic style found at Nossa Senhora do Monte. Of these, the examples at Bishop's Cannings in Wiltshire (1809) and Shifnal in Shropshire (1811) bear the closest resemblances to Nossa Senhora do Monte.[11]

The case at Nossa Senhora do Monte reflects the English three tower pattern of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is a slender assemblage of yellow mahogany with Gothic decorations that lend it a restrained elegance (Figure 1). It measures 6'10 1/2" wide (2.0955 m), 2'11" deep (0.8890 m) and with a maximum height of approximately 13' 6" (4.1148 m). The outer towers are surmounted by ogee arches

10 *Ibid.* p. 173.
11 *Ibid.* p. 111.

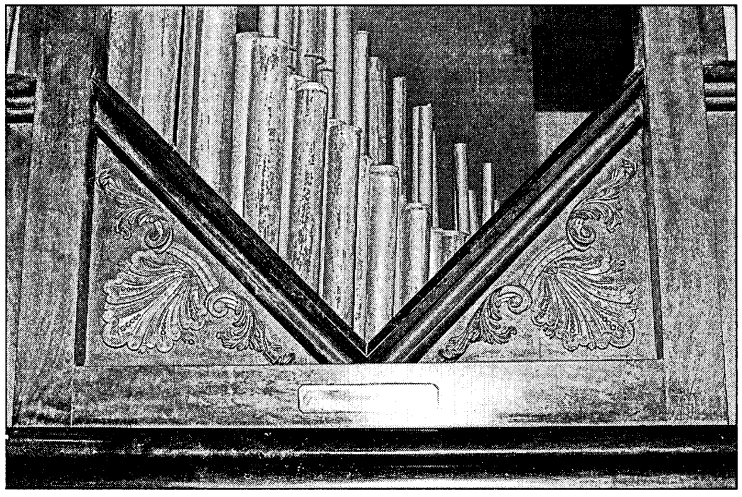
which terminate in Gothic finials flanked by undecorated pinnacles. Within the arches the pipe shades are formed from three cusped lights enclosing mouchette tracery. The central tower culminates in a Gothic arch, with cusps and sub-cusps beneath, and a substantial crocketted gable above.

Fig. 1



The case and façade pipes.

Fig. 2



The toe board and panel beneath the central tower of the case with the façade pipes removed. Within are the treble pipes of the Open Diapason (note their intact tops) and beyond are the spurious resonators of the Trumpet.

There are V- shaped toe boards at the feet of the towers, beneath which there are panels filled with neo-classical motifs not dissimilar to examples found in the work of Robert Adam.[12] Those beneath the outer towers resemble some of the designs based on the Acanthus and Calyx (Figure 2), and those at the base of the central tower are derived from the Patera. The toe boards of the flats are straight with unfilled square panels beneath. Directly above the impost and beneath the central tower is a brass plate with the legend: 'G. P. England London / Fecit' engraved in copper plate script. The sides are panelled above and below the impost rail and there are also simple panels beneath the outer towers on either side of the console opening. There is crenellation on the tops of the side panels and front flats and the whole case is roofed in deal. The speaking façade pipes are gilded and comprise the first 17 notes of the Open Diapason (G-b) and the two lowest pipes of the Principal (GG/AA). The display pipes in the flats and towers are backed with red fabric and are disposed as follows:

c *GG* d f# e g# B*♭* G# G A B a f *g* d# *AA* c#

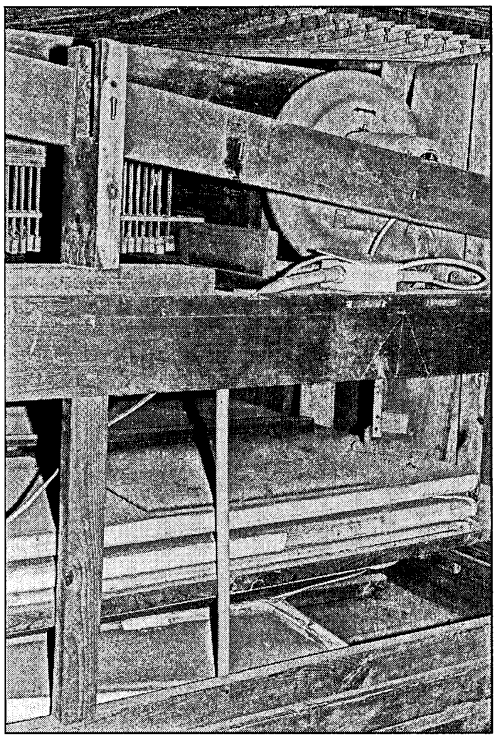


Fig. 3

The original winding system comprising a horizontal double rise reservoir with flat cast iron weights, with the feeder beneath. Above is an unenclosed electric blower which inducts air directly into the trunk.

12 Martha Blythe GERSON, 'A glossary of Robert Adam's neo-Classical ornament' *Architectural History*, 24, 1981, pp. 59-82.

The winding system

The winding system comprises a double-rise reservoir (5' 5 1/2" x 2' 81/2" = 1.663 x 0.6311 m), weighted with three large flat slabs of cast iron, and supplied by a single horizontal feeder. The hand blowing arm has been disconnected but retained in the gallery and an unenclosed electric fan blower has been attached to the building frame to supply wind directly into the wooden trunk at the bass end of the soundboard (Figure 3).

The action and keyboard

The mechanical action design follows the English tracker and backfall system. The components are almost entirely original with only three of the stickers showing signs of being replacements. There is a pine rollerboard with wrought iron roller arms.

The keyboard of English long octave compass (GG/AA-f^3) was originally retractable but it is now fixed. The frame is of mahogany with ivory covered naturals measuring 15.6 x 2.2 cm. The sharps are of ebony measuring 85 mm in length at the base and chamfered to 81 mm at the top; their widths are 11 mm at the base and narrow to 7 mm at the tops. The keys are exceptionally comfortable to play and have a shallow draft of only 3-4 mm. Figure 4 illustrates the key cheeks and stop jambs. The stop traces are also of mahogany and are sprung, with ridges cut on their undersides to enable them to be hitched to the jambs when drawn. The ivory faces are engraved in copperplate script and disposed in the jambs thus:

[Twelfth]	Trumpet [c^1-f^3]
Principal	Cornet [c^1-f^3]
Stopt Diapason	Sesquialtera [GG/AA-b]
Open Diapason	Fifteenth

There is a foot pedal which operates a shifting movement to take off all ranks except the Open and Stopped Diapasons. The console was originally enclosed by doors which have since been removed.

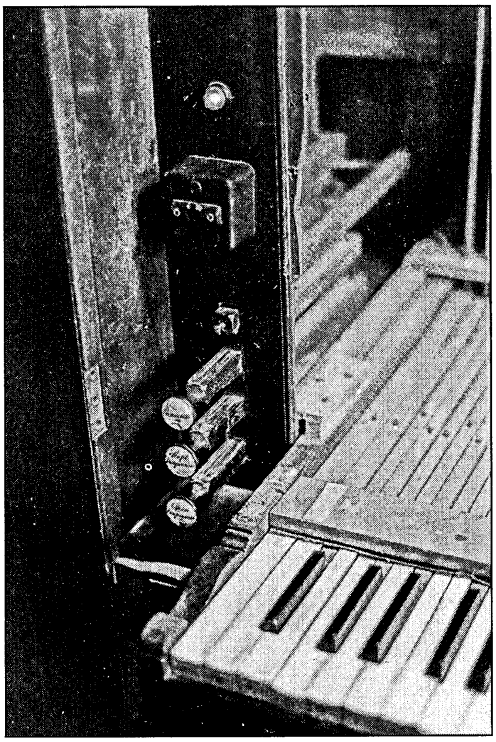


Fig. 4

Some details of the bass end of the console. Note the immobilised sliding keyboard, the recess for the hinge of the console door and the missing stop knob of the Twelfth.

The soundboard

The soundboard is set at impost level and is constructed entirely of oak including the two upper boards. The leather pallet linings and the now very frail pull-down wires are original, but the steel pallet spring wires appear to be largely replacements. As a whole it is badly in need of repair and refurbishment and the generous quantities of French chalk betray a recent history of cipherings (Figure 5). The builder's details are also recorded on a printed label at the back of the pallet box as follows (Figure 6):

G P England

Organ Builder

No. 9, Stephen Street

Tottenham Court Road

London

Fig. 5

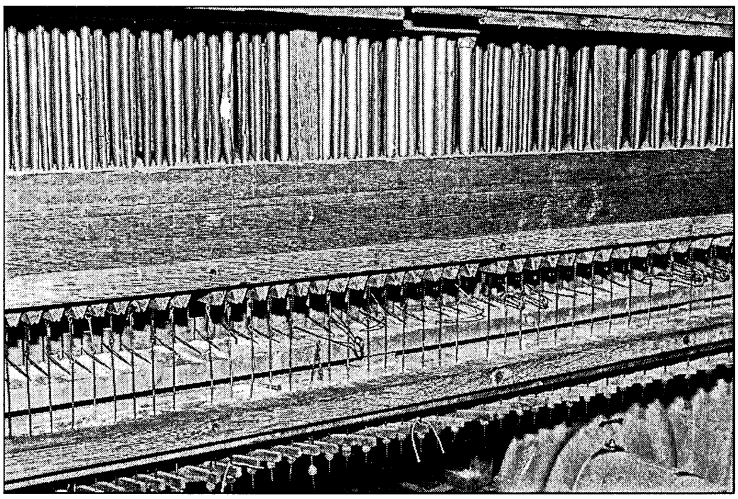
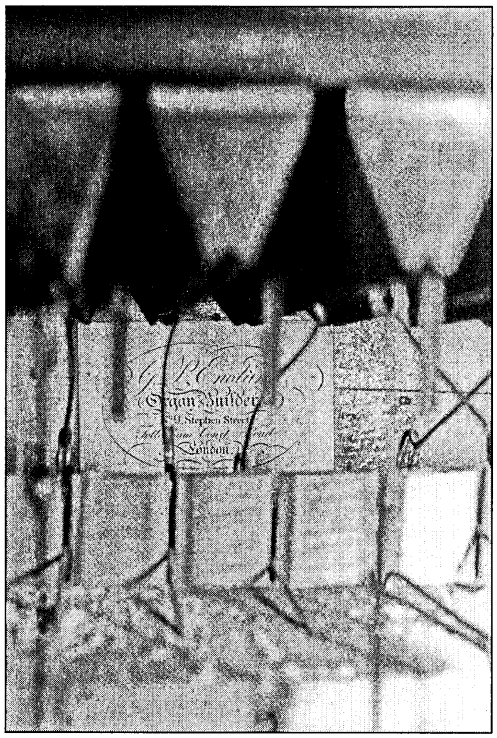


Fig. 5. The pallet box with the face board removed. The abundance of French chalk suggests a history of cipherings. Note the assortment of pallet springs, the broken pull-down wire (g#[1]), and the feet of the Sesquialtera and Cornet ranks above.

Fig. 6



G. P. England's label at the rear of the pallet box.

The bass and tenor registers of the Stopped Diapason, Principal, 12th and 15th ranks are divided diatonically on the chest with GG/BB-b on the bass side and A-f on the treble side, and their treble registers g-f[3] sit chromatically in the centre. The Sesquialtera is similarly divided so that

the Cornet can stand adjacent to the Trumpet rank in the centre. The schematic layout of pipes on the windchest is thus:

Ses: GG /BB - b		Cor: c^1 - f^3 a - BB/AA :Ses	
		Tr: c^1 - f^3	
15th:	GG - f#	g - f^3	f-AA :15th
12th:	GG - f#	g - f^3	f-AA :12th
Pr:	BB - f#	g - f^3	f-BB :Pr
		SD: g - f^3	

SD: GG BBb C D E F# G# Bb c d e f# f d# c# B A G F D# C# BB AA :SD

OD: b♭ - f^3

Façade: c GG d f # e g# B♭ G# G A B a f g d# *AA* c#

The lead conveyances are original and in good order.

The pipework

Much of the pipework is in very good physical condition and was finished to a high standard. The seams are very neatly soldered and although a little settling of the feet has taken place, tuning sliders have not been fitted, nor is there any indication that the cut-ups have been raised. Measurements are given of the 'designed parts' of representative pipes of the Open Diapason, Principal, Sesquialtera and Stopped Diapason ranks. The circumference measurements of the metal pipes were obtained using strips of tracing paper and those of the mouth widths and heights (cut-ups) by means of Vernier callipers.

1. Open Diapason

The first 17 pipes of this rank (G-f^3) are on the façade of the case and the pipes have ears as far as d^1.

G: Diameter 350 mm
Mouth width 82 mm
Cut-up height 19 mm
Height of bevel 12 mm
Foot hole diameter 8 mm
There are numerous close and very light nicks in the languid.

d: Diameter 252 mm
Mouth width 61 mm
Cut-up height 12 mm
Foot hole diameter 10 mm
No nicking.
The pipe is engraved '3' ie, signifying it to be the third pipe in the left tower.

g: Diameter 194.7 mm
Mouth width 44 mm
Foot hole diameter 8 mm
Languid very lightly nicked.

2. Principal (GG)

This rank is largely in superb physical condition with few visible signs of alterations to cut-ups or foot-holes.

Diameter 335 mm
Mouth width 83 mm
Cut-up height 19 mm
Foot hole diameter 13 mm
Languid lightly nicked.

3. Sesquialtera 17-19-22 & Cornet [12 -15- 17]

This divided stop has been seriously interfered with. Some of the pipes have been transplanted and their speech has been virtually silenced by attempts to immobilise the sliders.

GG

Rank I (= b) Diameter 137.8 mm
Mouth width 37 mm
Cut-up height 13 mm
Foot hole diameter 7 mm

Rank II (= d^1) Diameter 120.0 mm
Mouth width 27 mm
Cut-up height 5 mm
Foot hole diameter 5 mm (widened ?)

Rank III (= g^1) Diameter 86.3 mm
Mouth width 1.9 cm
Cut-up height 5 mm
Foot hole diameter 4 mm

4. Stopped Diapason

The pipes of this rank have bodies of fine quality straight-grained pine with caps and stoppers of oak. Measurements were taken using Vernier callipers. Nicking at the mouths is very light and very close. Plugs are present intermittently throughout the rank. The design of the stopper handles changes from a simple straight design to a rectangular pattern at a^1 (Figure 7).

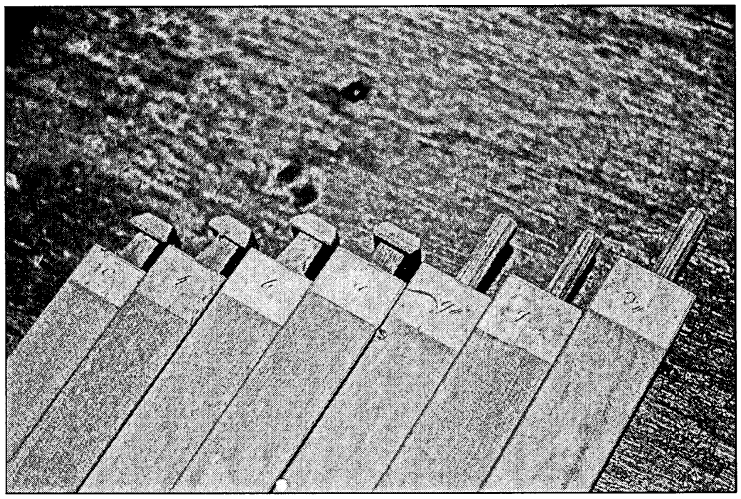
c^1 Body: 40 x 50 x 340 mm
Cap: 40 x 46 mm
Mouth width: 27 mm
Cut-up: 0.45 mm
Thickness of walls: 4 mm
Thickness of cap: 8 mm
Bevel of upper lip 25 mm long x 4 mm deep
7 nicks on inner block
Diameter of toe hole: 16 mm
The toe hole has one plug.

The tops of the bass pipes are taped with strips of parchment with English legal texts.

The following dimensions of the treble pipes are as follows:

	body	mouth width
g	470 x 560	435 mm
d^1	375 x 450	306 mm
g^1	320 x 380	245 mm
d^2	260 x 310	160 mm
g^2	220 x 265	140 mm
d^3	190 x 230	105 mm

Fig. 7

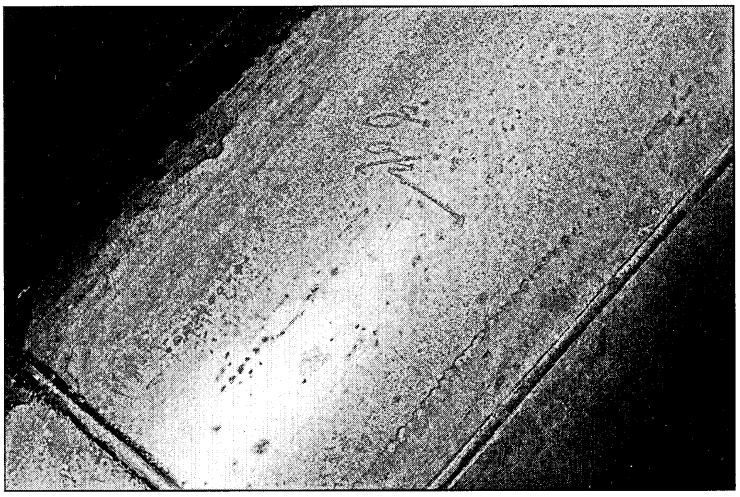


The tops of the Stopped Diapason. Note the change in the design of the stopper handles from a simple straight design to a rectangular pattern at a[1].

5. The Trumpet

The Trumpet rank has also been silenced by immobilising its slider with a screw. Unfortunately, the pipes are the least intact of the instrument. Some of the original boots survive, but throughout, they have been fitted with cylindrical resonators of thin zinc. The shallots appear to be original but they have received new tongues which are secured by crudely cut wedges of rough grained softwood.

Fig. 8



Pitch and rank engravings of the Open Diapason G in the centre tower of the façade. Note the finely soldered seams of the back and foot joints.

The pipe markings

The metals pipes carry engraved details of pitch and rank that are consistent and easily decipherable. They are located on the side of the pipe body (Figure 8) and also at the foot and in most cases they are in a matching style of handwriting. Some of the smaller ranks are marked in Indian ink above the upper lips as in the case of the Sesquialtera. A representative alphabet of pitch markings transcribed by hand from the Open Diapason is as follows:

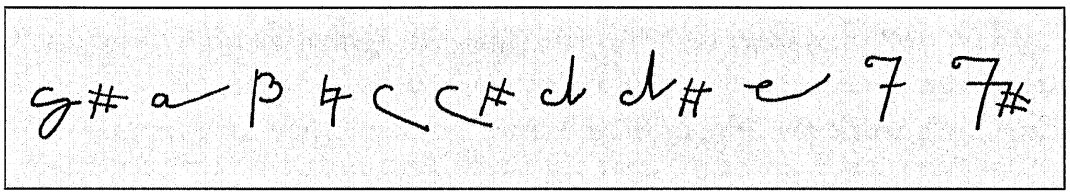


Fig. 9

The rank markings are abbreviated as follows:

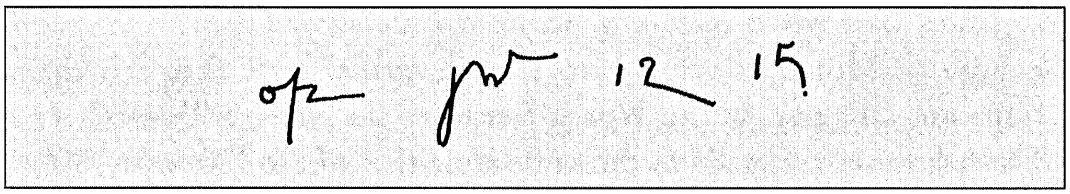


Fig. 10

In addition, there are also markings in Indian ink immediately beneath the mouth seams. A meaningful interpretation of these will not be possible until each rank of pipes can be fully examined when the organ is next dismantled. From the examples given below the consecutive numbers may refer to the pipes in rank order, whereas the '5' of the Principal and '2' of the Sesquialtera could represent scale marks. It is possible that the recurrence of 'Ce' (or 'Ge' ?) on different ranks may be a pipe maker's signature, a stock mark or a job code.[13] However, if 'Ce' is read as the initials 'Ge' they might reasonably be those of England himself.

For example:

Principal	d^1	$18\,^{5}_{}$ C e
	$d\#^1$	$19\,^{5}_{}$ C e
	e^1	$20\,^{5}_{}$ C e

13 Suggested to the writer by Stephen Bicknell in e-mail correspondance of 13.11.96.

12th	g	13 $^{h/4a}$ C e
	d^1	10$^{b/h}$ ^{e} C e
	d^3	4$^{h/hh}$ $_{c}$ e

Sesquialtera	rank I	GG 1.^{a} 2.^{a} C e
	rank II	GG 1.^{a} [?] C e
	rank III	markings badly blemished and obscured.

The overall scaling circumferences of the accessible metal flue pipes are given in Appendix 1. If compared to other examples of G. P. England's work the Nossa Senhora do Monte Open Diapason would appear to be to a scale a semitone narrower than at Blandford Form[14] (Appendix 2), yet the scales of the Fifteenths at Nossa Senhora do Monte and Blandford are identical (Appendix 3). In common with England's later work, including St. John Chichester (1813), the Nossa Senhora do Monte Principal is made to a smaller scale than the Open Diapason. Although the Nossa Senhora do Monte Twelfth and Fifteenth ranks are made to the same scale that of the Fifteenth differs from the Principal.

Although this organ has been retuned to equal temperament, its pitch may be little changed. On January 8th 1996 this stood slightly flat of a^1 440 (*c.* 432-5?). Although attempts to describe the tonal qualities of an organ are sometimes futile, it is sufficient to suggest of Nossa Senhora do Monte that its sounds are a just and eloquent reflection of the 'elegant simplicity' and suaveness that characterises the English instruments of the late Georgian and Regency periods. As a little compromised integrity of its age, it may be described in company with England's organ at Blandford Forum as 'a musician's instrument rather than an organist's'.[15] It awaits sensitive repair and restoration at the hands of the most suitably experienced and knowledgeable craftsmen.

14 David WICKENS, 'The G. P. England Organ at Blandford Forum' *Journal of the British Institute of Organ Studies*, 16, 1992, p. 88.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 89-91.

Appendix 1. Diapason chorus scalings at Nossa Senhora do Monte

	O.D.	Pr	12th	15th
GG	–	335	na	na
D	–	na	na	na
G	na	183.6	130.4	102.3
d	252.0	128.2	95.0	75.8
g	194.7	104.5	75.0	60.2
d^1	138.2	75.1	55.8	43.2
g^1	109.5	61.0	45.9	40.5
d^2	83.8	44.6	36.0	32.5
g^2	68.0	36.2	31.0	27.3
d^3	51.2	29.5	26.9	21.8

Appendix 2. Open Diapason scalings at Blandford Forum and Nossa Senhora do Monte

O.D.	Blandford	Nossa Senhora do Monte
d	261.9	252.0
d#	252.9	
g 2 2/3'	212.0	194.7
g#	192.8	
d^1	148.4	138.2
$d\#^1$	141.6	
g^1	118.7	109.5
$g\#^1$	112.3	
d^2	88.0	83.8
$d\#^2$	84.2	
g^2	–	68.0
$g\#^2$	69.2	
d^3	–	51.2

Appendix 3. Fifteenth g scalings at Blandford Forum and Nossa Senhora do Monte

Fifteenth	Blandford	Nossa Senhora do Monte
I 1/3'	102.0	102.3
2/3'	61.0	60.2
1/3'	–	43.2
1/6'	26.6	27.3