

ST. LAURENCE PARISH CHURCH  
STROUD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

organ  
upfront

16-2-93



"THE NEW ORGAN."  
Photo by Mr Alfred T Ford 1906

An  
Organ  
Worth Restoring

### The town of Stroud and the Parish

Stroud is a lively industrial town of some 12,000 people situated in the Cotswolds. The Parish Church of St. Laurence is in the centre: the actual population of the parish being about 2,000. A small chapel existed on the site of the present church before 1304, and at that time it was part of the parish of Bisley. It was enlarged over the years and became a separate benefice in 1730. In the middle of the nineteenth century the old church was pulled down, and the present church built to seat 1,200 people.

### The Parish Church

In addition to all the usual services of the Church of England, the Parish Church is used for many other purposes. Concerts are held there and also musical and dramatic events in connection with the Stroud District Arts Festival, an annual event. It is also used on civic occasions and whenever a large church is needed.

In the course of time, as in many other towns, the population living in the centre has decreased, and with it the regular congregation of the church. Although the present congregation is very active and caring, it is not large.

### The Organ

The first organ installed after the rebuilding of the church proved to be inadequate, and the present organ was built by Norman & Beard in 1906. Basically it is an excellent instrument with three manuals and thirty-one stops. The organ has been regularly and properly maintained over the years, but the time has now come for a more extensive overhaul. The expert advice of the Diocesan Organ Adviser has been sought as to the best means of guaranteeing the satisfactory life of the organ for many years to come. The following are his assessment and proposals.

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### Technical Details

The magnificent sound of a pipe organ is produced by the pressure of wind passing into the pipes. The St. Laurence Church organ has a pneumatic action: this type of action is fitted with hundreds of small leather bellows, called motors, which control the flow of wind, under pressure from the windchest, to each pipe. A motor is inflated when the player depresses a key on the manual (keyboard), letting wind into the pipe. Motors are fitted with high quality leather, and when new, the leather is supple. As it ages the leather hardens and perishes, slowing up the action, and in time it fails altogether.

Some leathers in the St. Laurence organ have, over the years, needed replacement: more will need replacement at increasing cost unless long-term action is taken.

Since the St. Laurence organ was built the electro-pneumatic action has been developed, which is both instantaneous and reliable. It is proposed to install this type of action when the organ is rebuilt: the problem of wholesale replacement of leather motors will not then recur.

### **The Proposed Work**

It is proposed

- a) to convert the pneumatic action to electro-pneumatic.
- b) to retain the existing high quality pipework.
- c) to refurbish the console with new manuals and drawstops in place of tabstops.

Conversion to two manuals, using existing pipework, would cost about £25,000. If conversion were made retaining the three manuals the cost would be higher, in the order of £35,000.

### **The Appeal**

This organ is a very fine instrument. It is a part of the heritage of St. Laurence Church, and as it has been bequeathed to the present generation, so it is hoped to pass it on to future generations for the glory of God and the enjoyment of all those who play on it and listen to it.

We commend the Parishioners in this praiseworthy effort, and we are very pleased to support this appeal. We hope you will give generously.

The Rt. Revd. Peter Ball C.G.A.  
Bishop of Gloucester

Dr. John Sanders  
Organist and Master of the Choristers at Gloucester Cathedral

Mr. Michael Peterson  
Organ Advisor to the Diocese of Gloucester

Mr. Roger Knapman  
Member of Parliament for Stroud

Mrs. Sybil M. Bruce  
Chairman Stroud District Council

Mrs. Jill Ingham  
Mayor of Stroud

THE PARISH OF SAINT LAURENCE, STROUD

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Vicar:  
The Revd. Barry Coker

Stroud: (0453) 764555

The Vicarage,  
Church Street,  
Stroud,  
Gloucestershire,  
GL5 1JL

Dear Friends,

The Church has a rich inheritance, not least in the beauty of its buildings and their contents. Of these few are so well regarded as the Organ.

At Saint Laurence we have inherited a very fine Organ. Today we are its custodians and have a responsibility to hand it on in good order to future generations. That is an expensive task.

However, it would prove more costly to be constantly patching up the Organ than to undertake a major overall. The work we intend to undertake, under the guidance of the Diocesan Organ Advisor, is to enable the Organ to be enjoyed today and in the years to come, in a way which safeguards and enhances the instrument in the most cost effective fashion.

This additional expense to that of maintaining the buildings and ministry of the Parish is a heavy burden. Those costs are some £2,500 a month and fall largely on the regular congregation. Which is why we are making this special appeal and, in particular, seeking the support of those beyond the regular congregation. I know there are many in the wider community who would like to see a fine organ and high standards of music maintained in Stroud Parish Church.

I commend this Appeal to you and ask for your support. We can be proud of the organ we have received as our musical legacy. I ask you to play your part in ensuring we can be proud as we enjoy it today and prepare to hand it on to tomorrow.

With every blessing,

*Donny Cole*

Donations should be sent to:-

Miss D. M. Milnes  
Flat 3 The Castle  
Castle Street  
Stroud, Glos. GL5 2HR

*← Donations to Organ.*

Cheques should be made payable to St. Laurence, Stroud, P.C.C.