

ORGAN:

There was an organ in All Saints Church in 1541 as the churchwardens' accounts list 'glew (glue) for the beleys' (bellows) costing one penny and for the blacksmith to 'mend the bellys' – ii d. Then in 1550, during the reign of Edward VI, mention is made of the sale of the 'pypys' (organ pipes). This raised the church 6s 8d, a considerable sum in those days.

In about 1750¹, a gallery was erected at the west end of the church. The groove for part of the fixture can still be seen above the West door. It is also shown on the plan of the church, drawn up for the Powell-Cotton family in a survey that was made in 1834. It is quite possible that this gallery was used by the minstrels and even a choir, though there is no documentation to prove this as yet. The gallery was eventually removed in the massive restoration undertaken in 1863.

Once the debt on the restoration was cleared, soon after the arrival of the Rev. John Alcock, it was decided to buy a 'new church organ'. This rather implies that there was an old one already in use, but this may be reading more into the words than was intended. The organ fund had been started by the late Vicar of Monkton, who, until 1871, was also vicar of Birchington. The fund contained £37 at this point. The balance was soon obtained during 1871-2, with the largest subscribers being Henry Powell-Cotton (£30) and Thomas Gray of Birchington Hall (£20). The new organ was bought from Gray and Davidson and cost £255 (not including its erection)

In November 1909, the vicar, the Rev. H. A. Serres, wrote,

"In the last magazine, mention was made of an estimate of £50 for re-adapting the organ so as to utilise the space it now occupies for enlarging the church. We now find that this scheme will not be suitable, as it would still further smother the sound of the organ. Mr Browne of Canterbury has sent in another scheme, in which he proposes to place the whole organ over the door leading from the new Clergy Vestry into the Chapel, the bellows being placed underneath in a cemented pit. This scheme would involve a console and the whole of the pipes being connected with pneumatic action. The estimate is £150. The scheme is by far the best we have had, for it will leave all the arches perfectly free and all the space can be used for additional sittings, while the sound of the organ will be greatly improved."

He goes on to say, "The scheme will not only improve the power and scope of the organ, but will considerably increase the accommodation and embellishment of the Church. The view (along the south aisle) will be unimpeded from the font right up to the window in the Chapel."

Whatever the result of these discussions and estimates was, they eventually decided not to go ahead with the plans. Perhaps the Diocese of Canterbury would not grant a faculty for such a scheme? In the end, a new organ was

¹ Barrett, p. 188, gives this date.

purchased from Messrs T. Hopkins of York in 1911 and officially opened on February 9th of that year.

Prior to the arrival of the 1911 organ, the area under the tower had been blocked off and used as a lumber-room. It contained the greater part of the mechanism of the Gray and Davidson organ, the clock weights and the ringers' ladder that gave access to the belfry. The remaining space, mainly near its east window, was used as a vicar's vestry. The building of the new vestries in 1910, in memory of Bishop Ellicott (of Gloucester), was the trigger for making better use of the old lumber-room.

In 1935, electricity was brought into the church for its lighting and at that point the 1911 organ was fitted with an electric discus and thoroughly repaired. Its next major date was 1961, when it was cleaned and overhauled once again. By 1981, it was in need of further attention and at that date it was completely rebuilt.

Organists:	c. 1948 to c. 1961	Arthur Nixey
	c. 1961 to 1967 }	Peter Jezard for Matins, and Evensong
		} Michael Graham for the 9.30 Eucharist
	1968 to 1976	Geoffrey Whipple
	1976 to 2002	Peter Russell
	2002	Paul Winter