

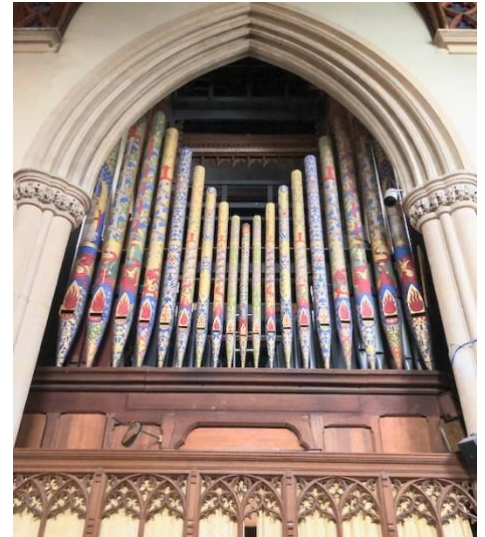
St Michael's Church, Tenbury Wells.

October 2020.

Dear Friends of St. Michael's and former Scholars,

New Lungs for the Father Willis.

Please join us in helping to raise funds for new Blowers for the famous Father Willis Organ!



Our parish and community here at St Michaels, Tenbury Wells, is in desperate need of financial help. This is for a project that we believe is as close to your hearts as it is to ours.

It involves the College's Collegiate Church, a mini Cathedral you all know only too well with its beautiful Nave and superb acoustics. It is a classic example of Victorian Gothic architecture, a favourite of John Betjeman.

The Church proudly houses a Father Henry Willis Organ still sounding as glorious as it did as far back as 1873. It is now recognised as being of historical importance by The British Institute of Organ Studies.

Since the College closed, we have maintained its Heritage by mounting an annual Music Programme alongside the work of the Church. This has been helped with bi-annual support from the Ouseley Trust.

The Church has attracted visiting choirs on a regular basis including well-known names like Quindici and Ex Cathedra. The celebrated organ has attracted many of the finest players in the UK and further afield, including Louis Vierne, Francis Jackson, Thomas Trotter, Wayne Marshall, David Briggs, Andrew Lumsden and Carlo Curley, to name but a few. We have also hosted large orchestral concerts, theatrical events and extensive exhibitions.

So where lies the problem? Quite simply, we do not have facilities which are suitable to welcome visitors to all these events, let alone Churchgoers.

We have a detailed project to correct the situation. It has approval of the Diocese and Chancellor in the form of a 'Faculty' which runs until August 2021.

The project protects the organ with a humidifier and new blowers, it replaces ancient heating and improves facilities with a ramp giving wheelchair access, a proper water supply, toilet and kitchen, and an updated electrical installation to give safe power and lighting in the Nave for events and recordings.

To make the project achievable, we are tackling it in small steps as funds allow. The Chancellor has agreed to this approach.

As a move to show our determination to see this through we have attracted grants and used reserves spending £23,000 on replacing the old boiler with an up-to-date system.



In June we replaced the organ humidifier, which dated back to 1975. We were awarded a £5,000 grant and raised a further £1,500. This was an essential factor for the protection of the internal leather workings of the Willis organ and, indeed, its survival!

We sincerely hope that you can now help us with the next step.

This is to replace the organ blower.



The current unit is very old and draws air in from the outside. We have a plan ready to go to install a pair of modern twin blower units inside the building which are whisper quiet, housed partly within the organ chamber.

This gives a huge gain. The Father Willis will have a strong voice, and no longer will the blowers be blasting cold air into the church. Former members of the choir will know what this means!

This can become a reality in a matter of months with your help.

Nicholsons, who tune the organ, have provided the quote and specification for installing the new blowers. We have obtained a second quote and are satisfied that Nicholsons are the right choice for this important project.

The target sum we need to raise to put this in action is £25,000.

We already have £3,000 to start the ball rolling. It will be a huge step forward if you can contribute to this phase.

My thanks to you for reading about our proposals. I do hope they have your approval and that you can make a donation to support.

Yours very sincerely,

Tony.

Anthony W. Penn

Vice Chairman St. Michael's PCC.

To support the new blowers for the Willis organ, you can donate by:

Bank transfer or Cheque

So that we can let you have the Bank Details, please **email** Tim Coles: tim-coles 'at' hotmail.co.uk (using the '@' symbol)

Or if donating by **Cheque**, please make payable to:

"PCC St Michaels Tenbury 1989 Organ AP"

Send your cheque and Gift Aid form to:

Tim Coles, Secretary, St Michael's College Society, 25 Church Street, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire, WR15 8BP

If you are a UK Taxpayer and can Gift Aid your donation, an extra 25p can be claimed for every £1 donated.

See separate form for Gift Aid