

PRESIDENT'S DAY (NO.1) ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, LOUND

SATURDAY 8TH JULY 2023

I was very grateful to Jim Laird for his suggestion that we go to Lound to visit the newly restored organ.

I was first alerted to the church and organ by Paul Hale's (the consultant for the restoration) article in *Organists' Review* (March 2023) entitled 'At Last - it works!' (I'm always keen to read the more technical articles first when I receive my copy.)

It was a lovely sunny day, perfect for a drive towards the coast, and a good number of like-minded NOA members also thought so. The

church authorities, in particular administrator Judith Hobbs and organist Kevin Turner were most accommodating and couldn't have been more helpful. A most delightful touch was the provision of refreshments at the back of the church when we arrived. I am most grateful to them for their time and trouble. We were given free access to the organ and members had as much time as they liked at the console.

The organ sits on the west wall of the church in a rather beautiful case (see front cover) designed by Sir Ninian Comper to match his rood screen and font cover (see below and opposite - *photos: David Shuker*).



The Comper screen at Lound



The front cover at Lound

As anyone who has visited the church will know that it is very difficult to take photographs of the organ because of its position and the position of other parts of the church that get in the way of an otherwise great view.

The organ was built by Harrison & Harrison in 1913. The organ console is situated below the organ case in the north west corner and, unusually in an English church, faces the high altar - apparently a stipulation of Comper, but this meant that the organ was given a most complicated action with an enormous distance to travel to the pipes above and behind. To quote Paul Hale, it was originally '*connected by pneumatic tubes which ran under the floor from the console into the tower wall, under the organ, up the back of the organ and then down again before diverging to the Great, Swell and Pedal Subbass action, all on the exhaust-pneumatic principle*'. This, combined with the complicated blower and two reservoirs made it a miracle that it ever worked, and certainly borne out by subsequent experience - it rarely worked properly. In the 1980s, Harrison's tuners were so frustrated with it, they declared there was no more they could do.

The recent work was carried out by W.A. Boggis during and after the COVID months with the electrification of much of the action, and has been entirely successful. Paul Hale notes that some may, and did, object to electrifying a vintage Harrison action, but the church now actually has a working, reliable instrument.

To play the instrument was a treat, lovely lush, rolling Harrison Flutes and Diapasons, but enough couplers and a Swell reed in a good box to be able to make the most of the tonal variety; the 16' on the Great being really quite useful, and the fact that the octave coupler comes through to the Gt if drawn. What I hadn't appreciated was quite how vivid and bold the organ was in the building compared with what the organist hears, clearly these few stops fill the church without any effort or strain!

Afterwards we were able to sit on the village green and enjoy lunch with fellow members in glorious sunshine - just before the Summer took a mis-timed break from Norfolk.

Adrian Richards

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1913 Harrison & Harrison organ at St John the Baptist, Lound

Specification

Great

Bordun 16

Open Diapason 8

Stopped Diapason 8

Claribel Flute 8

Octave 4

Harmonic Flute 4

Sw/Gt

Swell

Violin Diapason 8

Lieblich Gedeckt 8

Echo Salicional 8

Vox Angelica 8

Gemshorn 4

Cornopean 8

Sw Octave

Pedal

Sub Bass 16

Lieblich Bordun 16

Flute 8

Sw/Ped, Gt/Ped