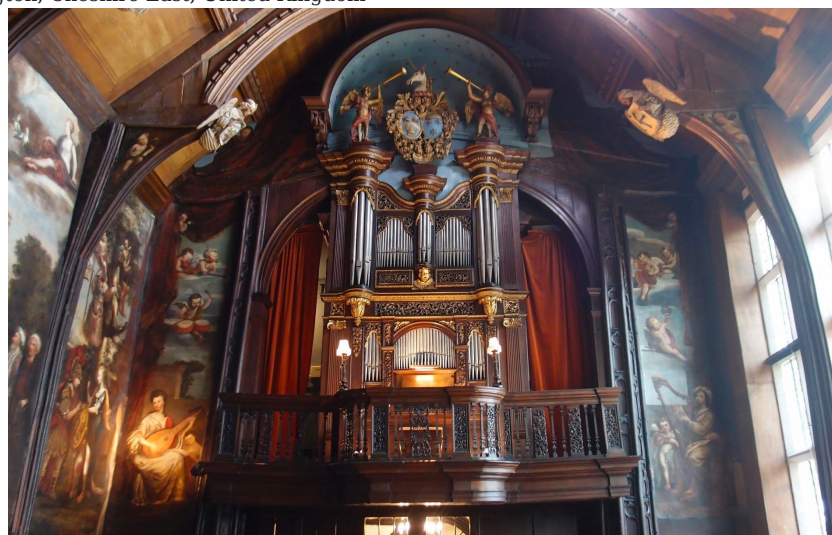


Adlington, Cheshire East, Adlington Hall

Mill Lane, SK10 4LF Adlington, Cheshire East, United Kingdom



Builder	Anonymous
Year	ca. 1693
Period/Style	Baroque
Stops	15
Keyboards	2
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical
Tuning	1/4 Comma Meantone
Sampleset	<u>Sonus Paradisi</u>

Description

It is England's most precious early instrument. With these words, John P. Mander introduced the Adlington Hall organ into the scholarly debate. The instrument is one of the earliest British organs surviving in near original condition. The instrument was attributed to "Father" Bernard Smith, but the authorship as well as the year of manufacture remain enigmatic. Mander convincingly argued for 1693, the year of the marriage of John Legh to Lady Isabella Robartes, because the pair's coat of arms is displayed above the organ. The monogram of John Legh also appears in the centre of the gallery.

Although some markings on the pipes, reed shallots, soundboard, and rollerboards resemble the script used by Bernard Smith, other elements show influence of another prominent English organ builder, Renatus Harris, including the organ case details, the use of "communication" to make the Stopped Diapason available on both manuals, and separate mutations on G.O. Taken together, the evidence suggests someone who was working in a style that combined elements from both the Smith and Harris traditions. Stephen Bicknell has suggested Christian or Gerard Smith as possible builders of the instrument.

By the time the organ was restored in 1958-59 by Noel Mander, it had probably been derelict for a century or more. Many of the pipes were squashed flat from people jumping down from a trap door above the pipework. However, with painstaking work, all but a handful were restored and every effort was made to preserve the historical aspects of the instrument. Further enhancements were made in 1975, again by Mander. Today, the organ is maintained by David Wells Organ Builders Ltd.

One of the top composers of the time, George Frederick Händel, used to be a guest of the Legh family, visiting them in their Adlington home and playing the organ. Händel composed a hunting song for Charles Legh in 1751, and the manuscript of the song is still preserved in Adlington Hall. Also, it is believed that Händel composed the Harmonius Blacksmith in Adlington.

Some technical details: all of the pipework stands on a single windchest, which is divided between G.O. and Chaire. The Stopped Diapason is shared on both manuals. Wind pressure is 79 mm. There are two sets of stop labels. The original paper labels on the stop jamb are barely legible and some are missing. The modern labels seem to be made of plastic and are attached directly to the draw knobs. We used these modern labels in the sample set, although on the photo-realistic screens of the sample set, both label sets are visible. The compass is typical for early English organs: GG, AA, C, D-d3, where GG occupies the contra-B key, and AA sits on the low C# key. There is a ruin of a pedalboard preserved, but it has been argued that it may never have been attached to the instrument due to an error in manufacture. Bricknell says that the pedal board was of a French type. For this reason, we attached a dummy French pedalboard to the organ in the sample set, pulling the low two octaves of the G.O.

J. P. Mander, on the Mander company forum, says that the organ was tuned to equal temperament when his father restored it in 1959. In the seventies, the organ was retuned to a modified meantone temperament.

Stoplist/Disposition

Great Organ	Chaire
Open Diapason 8'	Stopt Diapason 8'
Stopt Diapason 8'	Flute 4'
Principal 4'	Bassoon 8'
Twelfth 2 2/3'	
Fifteenth 2'	
Bl. Flute Bass 2'	
Bl. Flute Treble 2'	
Tierce 1 3/5'	
Nineteenth 1 1/3'	
Twenty Second 1'	
Trumpet 8'	
Vox Humana 8'	

Additional:

Sources

<https://www.sonusparadisi.cz/en/organs/england/adlington-hall-organ.html>