

THE 1903 HARRISON & HARRISON ORGAN

A BRIEF HISTORY AND APPRECIATION OF ST JOSEPH'S HISTORIC INSTRUMENT

INTRODUCTION

On 9 August 1903, the streets of Rome were bustling with throngs of people making their way to the great Square in front of St Peter's Basilica. The recently-elected new pope, having taken the name Pius X, was to be crowned in front of some 70,000 people. On that day of days, it would have been impossible to think of any grander ceremony, filled as it was with spectacle and spontaneous emotion. On the same day, however, almost 1500 miles away as the crow flies, another humbler event was taking place, no less filled with a sense of joyous celebration and heartfelt community pride. To partake of this other event, any interested observer would have had to alight in the bustling town of Kilmarnock, in the county of Ayrshire, Scotland, and made their way to the church dedicated to St Joseph, spiritual home of the town's Catholic community. They would have noted a steady procession of people arriving at the doors of the church and, little-by-little, filling the pews to capacity. The sense of occasion, mixed with the smell of incense and the flickering light of candles, no doubt diverted minds from thoughts of the uncharacteristically wet and cool August weather. Gradually, there descended a respectful hush, palpably filled with both curiosity and excitement. It was then that, for the first time in a public setting, a long-anticipated sound filled the hallowed space of the community's cherished church as their new pipe organ drew breath and gave resonant voice to its noble timbre.

1. ORIGINS AND A TRADITION OF MUSIC

The beginnings of this story reach much further back than 1903. Towards the end of the first half of the 19th century, an embryonic Catholic community in Kilmarnock had the courage to break ground, establish foundations and build a church. It is difficult now to evoke just how challenging life was for so many in that community which was predominantly Irish, often itinerant, and included many navvies engaged in railway construction (such as the viaduct which still to this day remains such a feature in the centre of the town). Dedicated to St Joseph, the newly constructed building, opened by Bishop John Murdoch on 13 June 1847, provided not only a place for that first generation to gather in worship but also presented a symbol of stability and permanence in what was an oftentimes unpredictable world. Catholics in Kilmarnock, priests and people, took great pride in their church, embellishing its interior and its fabric over ensuing decades.

It is fortunate that the Second Edition of Archibald McKay's *History of Kilmarnock* has a frontispiece with an artist's impression of Kilmarnock - Dean Castle in the foreground. St Joseph's Church can clearly be seen on its promontory [<https://archive.org/details/historykilmarnoomkagoog/page/n8/mode/1up>]. This Second Edition of McKay's *History* was published in 1858, only 11 years after the opening of the church, but the drawing itself can be dated earlier still for we know that the artist, William Macready, died in 1854, aged 46. So the drawing in McKay's volume provides the earliest representation of St Joseph's against a Kilmarnock townscape, at most only six or seven years after its

opening. The drawing lets us appreciate what commentators often pointed out at the time, namely that St Joseph's had been built on Kilmarnock's highest point and could be viewed from all areas of the town. This remained true until the building of Kilmarnock Infirmary in 1867-68.

From its very beginnings, music played a key role in the liturgical and social life of St Joseph's community. A choir from St Andrew's in Glasgow (now the cathedral in Clyde Street) sang at the opening of the church in 1847 and it was recorded in newspaper reports that an 'organ' had been purchased by the community. Indeed, another contemporary source described the instrument as 'small but very powerful'. This organ had been obtained by the Reverend Thomas Wallace, originally from County Limerick and the first priest-in-charge of St Joseph's (1844-53) who supervised the building of the church and, in 1849, travelled as far afield as London in search of funds to help eliminate the debts incurred in the church's construction.

What type of organ would a 19th-century visitor to St Joseph's have found? There can presently be no certainty about this. In the Fourth Edition (1880) of his *History of Kilmarnock*, Archibald McKay was at pains to list the organs in various Kilmarnock churches, including information about builders and cost. Given the previous level of detail, it is frustrating that McKay ends his account with a single sentence which states merely that 'there is also one in the Roman Catholic Chapel in Hill Street' (page 313). The organ in St Joseph's could have been a small, single-manual pipe organ or, perhaps, a reed-organ (or harmonium) - we simply do not know, though the weight of available evidence (such as it is) would seem to *suggest* it was the former. What we do know with greater certainty is that there was a succession of dedicated organists throughout these early decades, including Miss Brennan and Miss Kitson in the 1880s and 1890s.

It is also clear that a choral tradition was established in St Joseph's from its earliest years. Music sung by the choir would have been typical of the period, with the influence of opera and oratorio particularly marked. As the Victorian era entered its twilight in 1898, St Joseph's Choir sang one such piece at the Christmas Midnight Mass, the *Paschal Mass* by the Belgian Jesuit composer, Louis Lambillotte SJ. This setting of the Latin Mass required accompaniment by other instruments, besides the organ, including trumpets, horns, clarinet, oboe, flutes, cello and violins.

It may, therefore, not be mere coincidence that in 1899, in the immediate aftermath of the singing of the *Paschal Mass*, the organ, such as it was at that time, was deemed to be a serious cause for concern. The fact that this assessment was arrived at so soon after the performance of Lambillotte's music would appear to provide a clue as to a developing mindset. Clearly, the musicians and choir-members of those years were motivated by remarkable ambition in seeking to take their music-making (and hence the enhancement of the various liturgies) to 'the next level'. Given such aspirations, it is very probable that the then organ was found wanting in terms of providing appropriate accompaniment. Reading between the lines, that original instrument was simply not robust enough or capable of sufficient variety of tone. The first response to the matter was one of remedial action. In April 1899, the organ was cleaned, tuned and fitted with a new keyboard - but it clearly was still not satisfactory. Consequently, at some point, probably in 1900 or early 1901, a *St Joseph's Organ Fund Committee* was set up, charged with exploring options for a new instrument which might more readily meet and fulfil the aspirations of the community.

2. THE ORGAN FUND COMMITTEE AND THE CARNEGIE GRANT

The *Organ Fund Committee* met under the auspices of the Parish Priest (or, strictly speaking in this period, Missionary Rector), Canon John Woods. He had arrived in Kilmarnock in 1898 and would leave in late 1903 to take up the post of Rector of the Royal Scots College in Valladolid, Spain. The Secretary of the *Committee* was Mr John Mair, a confectioner with premises in Cheapside Street. He was an accomplished singer and member of St Joseph's Choir. Indeed, Mair was one of the soloists in Lambillotte's *Paschal Mass* at Christmas 1898. The names of other members on the *Committee* remain stubbornly anonymous and there is no record of how many persons attended its meetings. In any event, the *Committee* was certainly to prove adequate for purpose.

It cannot be stressed enough how big a step was taken by St Joseph's community in beginning the process towards the purchase of a new pipe organ. Pipe organs for churches did not come cheap; nor were they mass-produced to a constantly replicated template. Each organ was generally bespoke to its own place of worship. While it is true that St Joseph's did not require a huge instrument such as might be found in a cathedral - the size of St Joseph's asking for a more moderately-sized instrument - it would equally have been a false economy to commission an instrument which might prove too small for the task of providing adequate musical accompaniment. In short, a considerable sum of money had to be found to pay for the new instrument.

The *Organ Fund Committee* must have become aware of Andrew Carnegie's willingness to part-fund new organs in churches and civic and concert halls all over the world. Carnegie, the American multi-millionaire industrialist and philanthropist whose roots lay in Scotland, had established a Committee in New York which assessed applications and awarded grants, under the watchful eye of Carnegie's Secretary, Mr James Bertram, another Scot. The *Register* of the Carnegie Committee for 1901 (now in the archives of the *Carnegie Corporation of New York*) records that on 22 October a sum of £153 had been granted towards the purchase of an organ for St Joseph's Church in Kilmarnock, Scotland. Most noticeably, the entry in the Carnegie *Register* also makes it clear that the £153 represented *half of what was still required to make up the total cost of a new organ* - not half of the total cost itself.

The notification of the award of monies from Carnegie was signed by James Bertram and sent to John Mair in his capacity as Secretary of St Joseph's *Organ Committee*. Dated 22 October 1901, it reads (in part):

'Dear Sir, Responding Organ Communication. Mr Carnegie will be glad to provide half of the three-hundred and six pounds needed to complete the price of an organ for your church, when the balance has been collected.'

The cheque for £153 from the Carnegie Committee was finally dispatched to Kilmarnock on 14 February 1902. On 25 February, John Mair wrote a letter of thanks, noticeably addressed not to Bertram, the Secretary, but to Andrew Carnegie himself:

'Your letter received with cheque for 153 pounds enclosed to our Organ Fund which we the members of St Joseph's R.C. Organ Fund Committee in *[sic]* behalf

of congregation return our most sincere and heartfelt thank you for your ~~kindness~~ kind and generous gift to us.'

There is a certain poignancy in noting Mair's scoring out of the word 'kindness' as he clearly sought to get just the right words to convey the authentic sentiments of both himself and the community he represented.

3. HARRISON & HARRISON AND THE COMMISSIONING OF THE NEW ORGAN

In the absence of any other evidence, it can only be assumed that the monies required to make up the balance of the cost of a new organ had been successfully collected by St Joseph's community in the interim between notification of the Carnegie grant in October 1901 and its eventual receipt in February 1902. No record has been left to us relating to the total final sum which St Joseph's *Organ Committee* sought to raise; nor do we have any specific information about how the money was raised though one can presume that door-to-door collections and possibly a parish bazaar or fayre played a part. What is evident - and to some extent puzzling - is the fact that the grant from Carnegie was received by Canon John Woods before any organ-builder had been contracted. However, it would seem reasonable to assume that estimates had been sought from various firms (though this is merely an educated guess). On 12 July 1902, Canon Woods wrote to one firm in particular, namely Harrison & Harrison of Durham, enquiring as to what might be the earliest date by which an organ could be supplied to St Joseph's were they to secure the contract. (This enquiry of Canon Woods of 12 July 1902 is the earliest document relating to St Joseph's, Kilmarnock, still to be found in the extensive archives of Harrison & Harrison.)

The builders to whom Canon Woods had written - Harrison & Harrison - had been established originally in Rochdale in 1861 but had moved to Durham in 1872 (where the firm remains to the present day). It is somewhat difficult now to convey just how competitive the organ-building industry was in the latter half of the 19th century in the face of extraordinary demand for new instruments throughout Britain (see especially pages 257ff in Stephen Bicknell's magisterial *The History of the English Organ*, first published in 1996). Hill, Gray & Davison, Bishop, Willis, Lewis, Kirtland & Jardine, Forster & Andrews, Brindley: these are but a few of the manufacturers' names of the period which still inspire veneration amongst pipe organ *aficionados* of the present day. Given this intense competition in the trade of organ-building and the range of options (including Scottish-based) which could have been presented to Canon Woods and his committee, why ultimately was the firm of Harrison & Harrison selected for the commissioning of St Joseph's new organ? While, once again, there can be no certainty in answer to this most intriguing of questions, three further details provide some tantalising context which may have been of significance in reaching a final decision relating to the choice of organ builder.

First, two other churches in Kilmarnock had already purchased Harrison & Harrison organs in the firm's early years - the Laigh Kirk in 1877 (only five years after the firm's re-location to Durham) and Riccarton Parish Church in 1884. It would seem incredulous that Canon Woods and his Committee would not have been aware of this local state-of-affairs and one would imagine that, in some form and by some well-meaning agency, word-of-mouth recommendations had reached St Joseph's.

Second, a report in the *Glasgow Observer* newspaper of 4 March 1899 informed its Catholic readership in matter-of-fact style that various members of St Joseph's Choir had sung in the chorus of the Kilmarnock Choral Society which had recently performed Handel's *Messiah*. Moreover, the accompanist on the organ on this occasion had been none other than a Mrs McIlroy, identified by the *Observer* as St Joseph's current organist. Such a concert was precisely the sort of environment where conversations about local organs could have taken place.

Third and finally, it would appear that Canon Woods (and presumably his Committee) had met with Harrison & Harrison's Scottish agent at least three times before making a final decision. A letter of 14 August 1902 from the agent to his Durham paymaster, Harry Harrison, indicated that 'the folks' at St Joseph's had 'been a long time making up their minds'. This certainly infers that the Committee had been looking at a range of options and keeping their cards close to their chests. At the same time, it also suggests that Harrison & Harrison's Scottish agent had been persistent.

Given all the above, therefore, it is probably not too fanciful to speculate that awareness of Harrison & Harrison amongst St Joseph's *Organ Committee* was initially awakened by a now impossible-to-identify local recommendation. The final firm decision, however, was the end-result of the happy coincidence of St Joseph's pipe organ aspirations gestating at a most auspicious moment in time when the Durham firm was proactively seeking business in Scotland as part of a broader goal of expansion into new markets. If such were, indeed, the case, then such a coincidence can justly be considered providential. The final decision of Canon Woods and his committee with regard to the choice of Harrison & Harrison was to prove extraordinarily prescient.

4. CANON JOHN WOODS COMMISSIONS THE NEW ORGAN

In fact, the letter of 14 August 1902 (mentioned above) from Harrison & Harrison's Scottish agent was, first and foremost, his acknowledgement of news recently forwarded to him by Harry Harrison in Durham: namely that St Joseph's, Kilmarnock, had confirmed the commissioning of an organ from the firm. The agent asserted that 'this little bit of success will stimulate me to try and get more work for you'.

Canon Woods' original letter, putting in the order for the organ, remains in the Harrison & Harrison archive - a genuinely priceless item in the history of St Joseph's, Kilmarnock. Writing on 6 August 1902, Canon Woods wrote as follows:

'I beg to state that, considering the very favourable reports received of your work and the promise you make to send such an organ as shall be a lasting pleasure and pride to me, etc., etc., I have no hesitation in giving you the order for the organ for St Joseph's Church, Kilmarnock.'

These are moving words for the parishioner of St Joseph's, given the role which the Harrison & Harrison pipe organ has gone on to play in the liturgical and devotional lives of the community over the ensuing decades to the present day. 'Lasting pleasure and pride', indeed.

5. BUILDING AND INSTALLATION OF THE NEW ORGAN: THE CORRESPONDENCE

In his letter commissioning the new organ, Canon John Woods had expressed the hope that the organ would be installed in time for Easter Sunday 1903 (12 April). This was to prove an unrealistic date. In the meantime, a series of letters flowed between Kilmarnock and Durham over the coming months. In September 1902, Canon Woods informed Harrison & Harrison that he was preparing to have alterations made to the gallery in the church in pre-emptive anticipation of the great weight of the organ about to be placed on it. The gallery was to be brought forward a few feet and extended to reach the walls of the church on either side. By March of the following year, however, the work on the organ gallery was nowhere near completion and Canon Woods found himself with no choice but to inform Harrison & Harrison that the idea of installing the organ in advance of Easter 1903 would have to be given up.

As 1903 progressed, Canon Woods' letters to Harrison & Harrison took on an increasing tone of anxiety in stressing the need for greater progress on the organ-build. Writing on 28 May, he now proposed 14 June as a possible date for inaugurating the organ – another date which would prove impossible to meet. Symptomatic of his increasingly stressed state of mind is another letter, dated 1 June, forewarning Harrison & Harrison that he was soon to leave Scotland to move abroad. This was true as he had recently been appointed to the Rectorship of the Royal Scots College in Valladolid, Spain. Due to take up this new post later in the same year, he was probably right to foresee potential challenges in a new organ arriving at a time of transition from one Parish Priest to another. This was a potentially problematic state-of-affairs which really did need to be avoided. Again, on 15 June, Canon Woods wrote to the firm on a technical matter regarding the placement of the organ's blower which would supply the wind necessary to produce sound from the pipes. What with the changes being made to the gallery and the on-going correspondence with Durham, it is easy to be sympathetic to the pressures Canon Woods must have felt. Indeed, the pressure must have been doubly acute as he was also, at the same time, responsible for oversight of the building of the new Catholic school in Elmbank Drive (latterly St Columba's Primary School).

At the end of June 1903, Harrison & Harrison sought information from a Railway Traffic Agent in Newcastle-upon-Tyne as to the best arrangements for transporting the new organ to Kilmarnock. The pace of activity and preparations in the Durham workshops had clearly been increased and, indeed, there is good reason to believe that at some point there was a decision by the firm's management to stop other work and throw all resources of men and labour at the Kilmarnock instrument in an effort to get it finally constructed, crated and sent off to Ayrshire. In any case, whatever the means by which the construction of the instrument was finally brought to completion, the fact is that Canon Woods, in a letter of 9 July, acknowledged notice of the proposed dispatch of the organ to Kilmarnock on 16 July. He also stated his clear intention to have an 'opening ceremony' of some sort once the organ had been installed in the church.

Events now began to move apace. On 15 July, Canon Woods sent the sum of £263 as part payment for the organ which was clearly being paid for in a series of instalments (a practice still prevalent in the purchase of instruments today). That same day - 15 July - the first organ materials arrived at Kilmarnock Railway Station. One can only imagine the excitement and anticipation that would have filled Canon Woods, the Organ Committee and other dedicated

members of St Joseph's community as horse-and-carts transported pipes and other materials the short distance from the Railway Station to the church.

Great skill is required in the installation of an organ and every organ stands as a tribute to the dedication and expertise of all involved in its creation, at every stage of its evolution from the drawing-board to the finished instrument in all its three-dimensional complexity. Such accomplished skill-sets were probably appreciated by any witnesses to the work taking place in St Joseph's in July and early August 1903. Certainly, by 23 July, Canon Woods must have been pleased with the progress of the team working on the installation of the organ as he wrote that day to Harrison & Harrison informing them of his proposed date for the inauguration of the new organ.

Thus it was that, as proposed by Canon Woods in his letter of 23 July, St Joseph's new Harrison & Harrison organ was duly inaugurated on **Sunday 9 August 1903**. The date of inauguration is mentioned in passing in the course of a brief report on the new instrument's stop-list (or specification) in the August 1903 edition of the monthly London publication, *The Organist and Choirmaster*. Beyond corroboration of the date, however, no detailed report of the inaugural event itself has so far been found. All that can be affirmed is that in this period more generally, new organs in Catholic churches might be inaugurated simply through first public use during a liturgy, Mass or Benediction, with perhaps a special blessing for the instrument. It was also, however, quite possible to have some sort of organ recital, not necessarily made up entirely of solo organ music but with the new organ providing accompaniment for other instruments and solo or choral singing. The organist at inauguration might be local (the church's own organist in many cases) or even perhaps a distinguished invitee from further-afield. Sadly, for St Joseph's Harrison & Harrison organ at least, the details of its 1903 inauguration seem to be destined to remain lost in the mists of time.

With Canon Woods' letter of 23 July, the correspondence with Harrison & Harrison relevant to the early history of St Joseph's organ falls silent. Nevertheless, looking to the future, there is every good reason to celebrate 9 August annually as the anniversary-date of the inauguration of St Joseph's 1903 Harrison & Harrison – the organ's 'birthday', as it were.

6. A GENEROUS LEGACY FROM THE PAST

Though they would not have known it at the time, what Canon Woods and St Joseph's community had done in 1903 was to claim a part in the success story of Harrison & Harrison as an organ builder and restorer, particularly throughout the 20th century and onwards to the present day. The catalogue of their organs is truly impressive, including the Royal Festival Hall in London, and many of the great cathedrals of the British Isles. Most recently, the firm has worked on the organs of Kings College, Cambridge, and York Minster. (Further information about the history and work of Harrison and Harrison can be found in an informative booklet at <https://www.harrisonorgans.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Full-Brochure-2020.pdf>.)

Significantly, the organ in St Joseph's, Kilmarnock, is the only Harrison & Harrison in a Catholic church in Scotland, still in the space and acoustic for which it was originally designed and built. St Joseph's is no grand cathedral yet having a pipe organ of quality was important to its priest and people and, in commissioning Harrison & Harrison in 1902, that generation

of parishioners demonstrated just how important looking to the future was for them. Truly, the present generation of parishioners is the recipient of a most generous-hearted legacy from their direct parochial ancestors.

The sense of gratitude extended through time to the generation of 1903 for their gift of the Harrison & Harrison organ was abundantly reinforced in 2019 when the instrument was awarded a *Certificate of Historic Listing* by the *British Institute of Organ Studies* (commonly known as BIOS). The certificate, which now hangs next to the organ's console, has the following citation:

'The organ in St Joseph's RC Church, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, has been awarded a certificate Grade II. An organ of 1903 by Harrison & Harrison as they began to become nationally known, and one of the few unaltered instruments in a town whose organ heritage has been reduced in recent years. It is therefore listed in the Institute's *Register of Historic Pipe Organs* as being an instrument of historic importance to the national heritage and one deserving careful preservation for the benefit of future generations.'

The reference to 'unaltered instruments' in the BIOS citation is a reminder that it is the largely unchanged condition of St Joseph's organ which gives it particular historical significance – and the fact that it has survived at all. Two important points are worth stating here.

First, despite what might be argued to be their inherent value to the national artistic and cultural heritage - products as they were (and are) of skills and crafts long in the mastering amongst the apprentices and veteran workforce of firms like Harrison & Harrison - many organs throughout the UK now find themselves abandoned, facing an uncertain future where they have not already fallen into irrecoverable states of disrepair or been lost in their entirety. This is the sad fate awaiting historic instruments which do not otherwise become the focus of efforts to restore them or (another option) to have them removed and reinstalled elsewhere across the globe where they might be needed and cherished by new communities.

Second, many organs which have managed to survive are no longer in their original state, having had additional stops added or even, in some cases, additional manuals (keyboards). This is not the case in St Joseph's. Any organist seated at the console of the 1903 Harrison & Harrison renews acquaintance with what is, in effect, a time-capsule. The organ's specification – its list of stops and the sounds they emit – is as it was when it was first constructed.

The only major change was a much-needed one: the installation of an electric blower to provide the air for the pipes to speak, ensuring the sustenance of an even rate of air-pressure. Before this innovation in 1940, air was delivered by means of a hand-pump which can still be seen today at the rear of the organ. It seems that, for the first 37 years of the organ's existence, a team of indomitable volunteers had responsibility for bringing the organ to life, courtesy of their physical efforts.

There can be genuine pride, therefore, in acknowledging the fact that St Joseph's is home to an instrument of such historic importance and significance, now formally recognised by the national accrediting body in the field. Indeed, it was only natural that there was genuine emotion in the air during a special Mass on Sunday 28 April 2019 when the *Certificate of Historic Listing* was formally presented to St Joseph's parish by the BIOS representative, Mr

Matthew Hynes, in the presence of Councillor Jim Todd, Provost (Scottish equivalent of Mayor) of East Ayrshire Council, and a packed church of parishioners, including the members of St Joseph's Choir. It was another memorable occasion in the almost 175-year-long odyssey of St Joseph's Church and Parish – 'one for the history books', as people say.

7. A PRECIOUS GIFT FOR THE FUTURE: THE ORGAN RESTORATION PROJECT

Over the decades since 1903, the organ has continued to be at the heart of the congregation's worship and devotion, in no small measure providing a significant soundtrack to so many people's lives. It has accompanied countless liturgies, offered consolation at funerals, exultation and joy at weddings. St Joseph's choral tradition continues, with a four-part (SATB) choir singing at Christmas, Holy Week and Easter (a norm only interrupted recently due to COVID-19 restrictions). The sound of the Harrison & Harrison has nobly accompanied that music-making in praise of God, providing a bedrock of organ-sound which has become so familiar to congregants over the decades. It has proven an instrument of great adaptability, from sympathetic harmonisation of the plainsong of the past to providing accompaniment for modern hymns and Mass settings in the years since the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Such an instrument remains one rich in promise for years to come.

Although still playable almost twelve decades after its installation in St Joseph's, the organ now requires complete restoration in order to ensure that it can be preserved and maintained for future generations. Recognising the urgency of this requirement as responsible custodians of such a historic instrument, the *St Joseph's Church Organ Restoration Project* was launched in 2019. Restoration will involve the taking-down and removal of the organ – all its pipes and other complex workings - to the premises of the contracted firm for the specialist attentions of their skilled workforce. There will then follow a rigorous process of meticulously identifying and remedying any deterioration in fabric or materials, alongside attending to issues of pitch, balance and voicing. The firm contracted to take on the prospective restoration is the organ's original builders, Harrison & Harrison, and thus the histories of St Joseph's organ and the famous Durham firm will continue to intertwine. Such are the cycles of history.

Such highly specialised attentions come at a cost, part of which will be offset by a series of grants - the modern equivalents of the monies received from the Carnegie Committee all those decades ago in 1902. At the same time, it is anticipated that many individuals will wish to make their own contribution, large or small, to the *Organ Restoration Project*. One possible means of contributing is through the *Sponsor a Pipe* initiative which allows for the recording of a name (perhaps *in memoriam*) against notes chosen from any of the seventeen speaking stops, divided between the Swell and Great manuals and the Pedalboard. A record will be kept of the list of sponsors – a record for future times of the extent to which the parish generation of 2021-22 picked up the baton of the organ's custodianship from past generations and, in particular, from the far-sighted generation of 1903.

The *Organ Restoration Project* also seeks to promote knowledge of St Joseph's Harrison & Harrison organ beyond parish boundaries with a view to it continuing on its 21st-century journey not just as a liturgical instrument (though that will remain its principal duty) but as a historic musical instrument *per se* which will attract the attentions of other organists, as well as scholars of cultural and social history. For almost 12 decades, the 1903 Harrison & Harrison has been St Joseph's 'hidden jewel'. With restoration, that 'jewel' will be burnished

in readiness for what it is hoped will be increasing recognition of its importance and value amongst the wider pipe organ community in Scotland, the rest of the UK and, indeed, beyond. The route towards this enhanced public profile for the instrument begins with a series of organ recitals over the course of late 2021 and early 2022, featuring a feast of highly talented and accomplished musicians. The 1903 Harrison & Harrison - St Joseph's 'precious gift' - awaits them.

With great faith and hope, therefore, let us look forward to that wonderful day sometime in the not-too-distant future when St Joseph's community of parishioners, friends, and patrons will have the opportunity to come together, in joyful celebration, to welcome 'home' and inaugurate a newly restored Harrison & Harrison organ, speaking once again with all the clarity and brilliance with which it was first heard by a similarly grateful and expectant congregation on that ninth day of August in 1903.

The text above is based on a presentation delivered by Dr Raymond McCluskey to the parish community on the evening of Monday 9 August 2021 - the 118th anniversary of the inauguration of the Harrison & Harrison organ.