

# A Nineteenth-Century Album of English Organ Cases

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AMONG MATERIALS IN The Metropolitan Museum of Art relating to organ history and design is an early-nineteenth-century album of 114 pen-and-ink silhouettes of English organ cases. The album was purchased in 1966 from a London dealer; nothing is known of its provenance. The paper bears an 1818 watermark, except for the front and back fly leaves, which are marked 1829. Thus the series, begun no earlier than 1818, was probably completed and bound a little over ten years later.

The album is quite small, measuring 6 by  $7\frac{7}{8}$  inches. Only the recto sides of the folios are used. The drawings and the accompanying inked captions, which give the location of each organ, all display a single, consistent hand. The uniform paper, inking, and style, and the absence of corrections, suggest that the images were prepared over a relatively brief time, and that the artist worked from sketches rather than on site. Certain discrepancies indicate that the artist did not actually see each of the organs depicted, but relied, at least occasionally, on another's view. For example, the broken pediment atop Thomas Harris's 1667 case at St. Sepulchre's (fol. 5, Figure 4) has been transformed into flying buttresses, and the hemispheric caps added above its towers are out of proportion, judging from a more realistic depiction of the same instrument (Figure 5).<sup>1</sup>

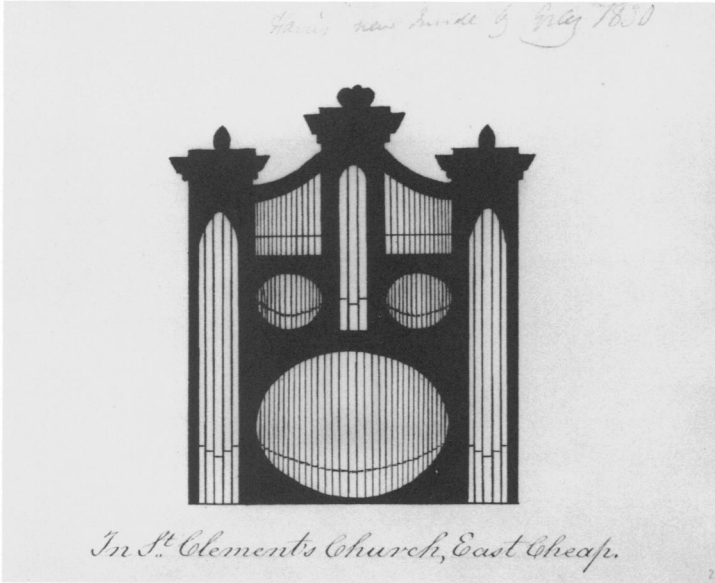
The simple black silhouettes, painstakingly drawn over pencil guidelines with the aid of a straightedge, represent only the case facades which appear above the impost moldings that presumably support them. Key desks and separately mounted chaire organs, such as those at St. Sepulchre's and St. Lawrence Jewry (fol. 10) are omitted in these drawings. Detail is lacking; for instance, pipe feet do not taper and

mouths are indicated by horizontal dashes. Ornaments such as miters and crowns surmounting towers (fols. 2, 18, Figures 1, 8) are indicated only schematically.

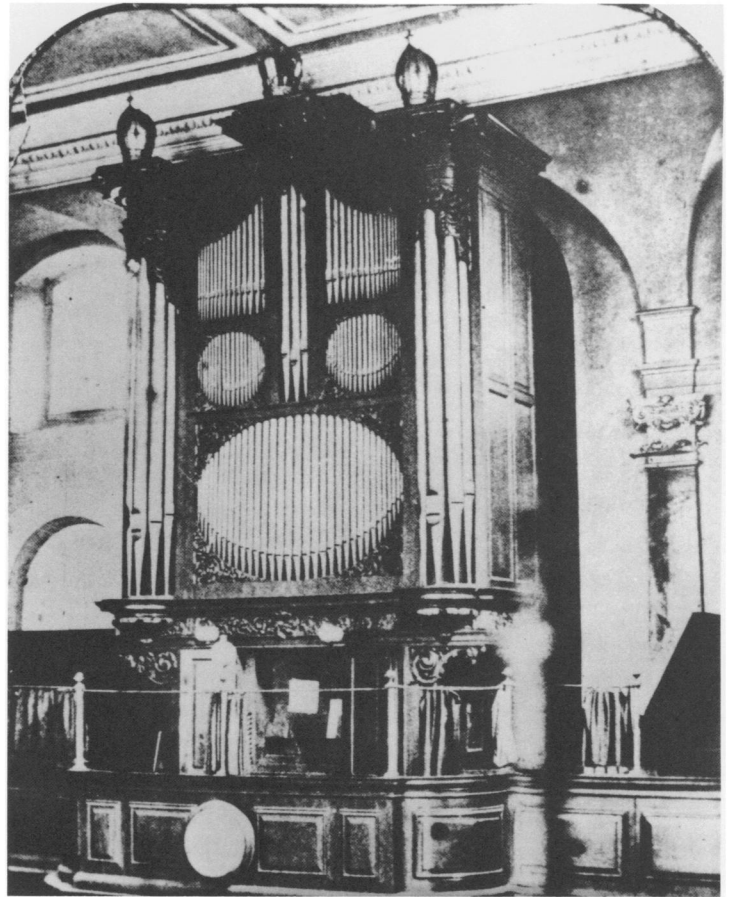
Were it not still in existence, the demure monkey-like facade of Renatus Harris's 1696 organ for St. Clement's, Eastcheap (fol. 2, Figures 1, 2), would be hard to believe. Although the drawings are not very descriptive and are occasionally inaccurate, some (for example, fols. 70, 113, 114, Figure 19) may be the sole extant depictions of organs now lost. Others represent the earliest-known view of an instrument (fol. 10) or provide rare images of cases before alteration (fols. 1, 4, Figure 3).

A later, less formal hand—possibly more than one—penciled notes identifying many of the builders of the organs and contributing other remarks of interest to organ historians. Calligraphic differences make it likely that these annotations were added over a period of years. The latest year cited by the annotator(s) is 1878 (see fol. 42, Figure 14). All other dates are 1840 or earlier, but many post-1840 events are mentioned, although not dated. For example, William(?) Allen's 1811 Bedford Chapel organ (fol. 56) was "replaced by one by Gray" in 1845. However, other presumably well-known instances of rebuilding or replacement are not noted; for example, William Hill's 1840 organ for St. Peter's on Cornhill (fol. 1), incorporating parts of the church's earlier Bernard Smith organ, was in turn rebuilt by Hill & Sons in 1867; Thomas Elliot's 1818 organ for St. Michael's (fol. 77) was enlarged in 1858 by George, James, and John Eagles. That these facts are not recorded in the album suggests that the annotations represent casual gleaning or hearsay rather than systematic research.

1, 3, 4, 6–19. Untitled album of pen-and-ink silhouettes of organ cases, English, ca. 1818–30. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mary Martin Fund, 1966, 66.538



1. In St. Clement's Church, East Cheap (folio 2)



2. Photograph taken of St. Clement's, Eastcheap, before 1872 (photo: courtesy of James Boeringer)

A few of the annotations reflect critical judgment: "the best Trumpet in the world" (fol. 5); "one of his early productions but not one of his best" (fol. 4). Occasional remarks illuminate the obscure origins of relocated organs, such as that at Fitzroy Chapel (fol. 83, Figure 18), "originally [Samuel] Green built for the Italian opera house & altered by [John] Lincoln." The only record of the disposition of the original organ at St. Mary's, Ealing (fol. 114), which occurs in this album, is frustratingly illegible. Several attributions are unique to this source; the organ at St. John's, Wapping (fol. 71), for example, given here to [Richard] Bridge, is otherwise anonymous, while only here is Abraham Pether named in connection with St. Mildred's, Bread Street (fol. 79), where Thomas Griffin was merely a broker.

Although many of the attributions and citations are confirmed by independent evidence, others seem to be inaccurate or may require reevaluation of previous information. For example, Griffin may be cited

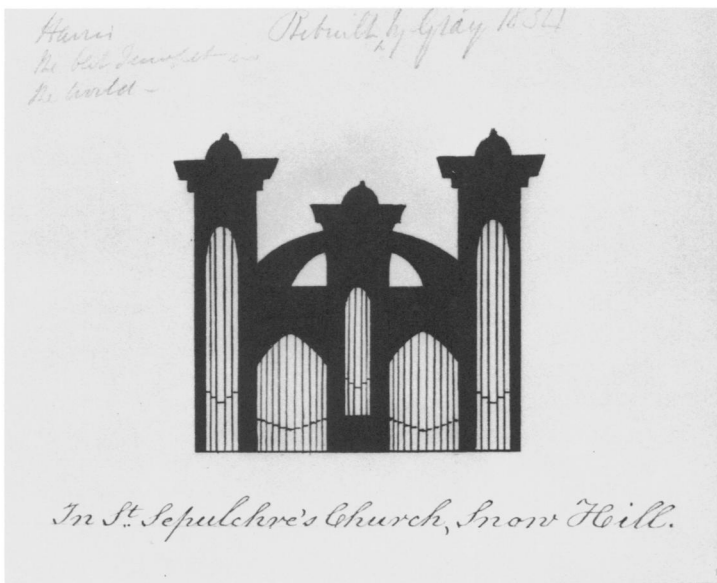
3. In Islington Church, Middlesex (folio 4)



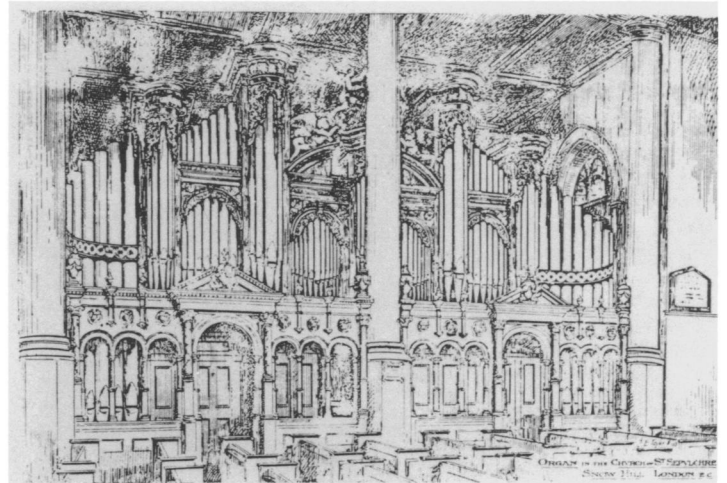
erroneously in connection with St. Nicholas's, Deptford (fol. 97), whose organ was in fact built by Bernard Smith in 1697; however, Griffin was involved with procuring an organ for another Deptford church, St. Paul's, in 1744.

Most of the churches are in greater London; Brighton, Cambridge, and Hertfordshire are among the other places mentioned in no particular geographical or alphabetical order. Indeed, no scheme of organization is evident (and no title page or index describes the contents), nor is any direct connection apparent to other nineteenth-century English manuscript collections of stop lists and historical remarks.<sup>2</sup> This work is the earlier of only two large assemblages on the subject that are fundamentally pictorial.<sup>3</sup> Such compilations seem to represent the fruits of a popular hobby, not of concerted research efforts. Cathedral organs are conspicuously absent from the album, as are examples from Oxford. The number of Cambridge organs included suggests special familiarity with that town on the part of the artist; however, with the exception of a reference to a document in the buttery of King's College (fol. 26, Figure 10), added annotations for the Cambridge organs are scanty. Was the album conceived by a Cambridge scholar, a devotee of the ecclesiological movement, an organist, or an enthusiastic amateur? Although

4. In St. Sepulchre's Church, Snow Hill (folio 5)



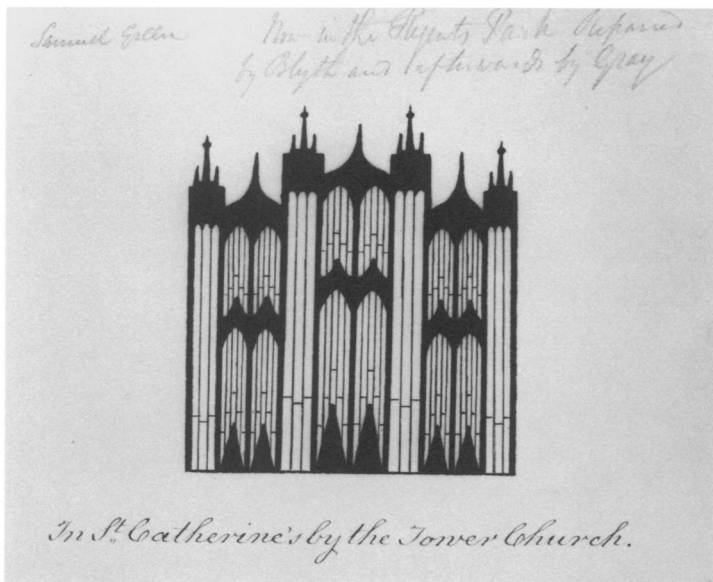
5. Sketch of St. Sepulchre's, Snow Hill (photo from *Choir* 15 [1924] p. 145)



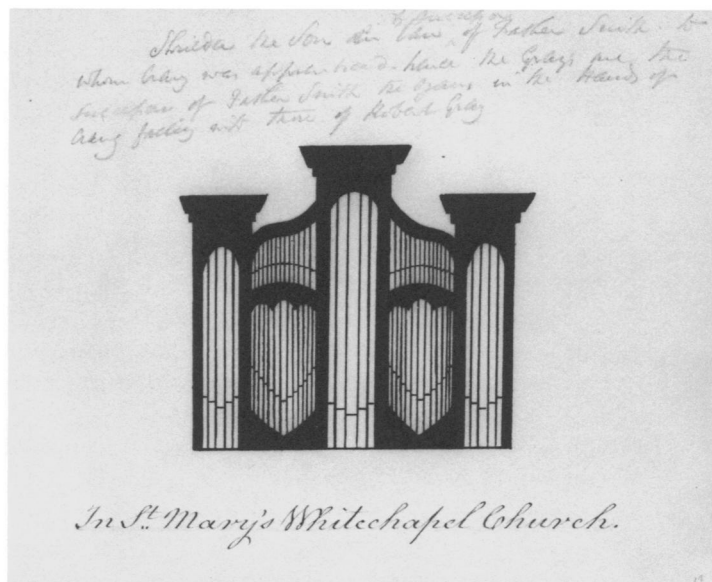
that question cannot now be answered, both the album's drawings and its remarks shed new light on English organ history, and no doubt they themselves will be elucidated in the future.

In the following transcriptions, the numbering corresponds to folio numbers penciled at the lower right corners. For each entry, the folio's inked title is transcribed first; subsequent lines give the penciled annotations, which generally occur at the tops of pages. Sparse punctuation and deviant spellings—Gloster for Gloucester (fol. 12), Shrieder for Schreider (fol. 14, Figure 7), Kirkam for Kirkham (fol. 34, Figure 13), Ohrmond for Ohrmann (fol. 48, Figure 15), Mayer for Mayor (fol. 107), Surry for Surrey—are less problematic than are indistinct words. Dots indicate illegible letters.

No attempt has been made to correct the annotations, but names of persons and churches have been given in more complete form whenever possible. A surname alone appears if the builder is otherwise unknown or is unidentifiable within a family of builders having the same surname. Editorial additions are bracketed.



6. In St. Catherine's by the Tower Church (folio 9)

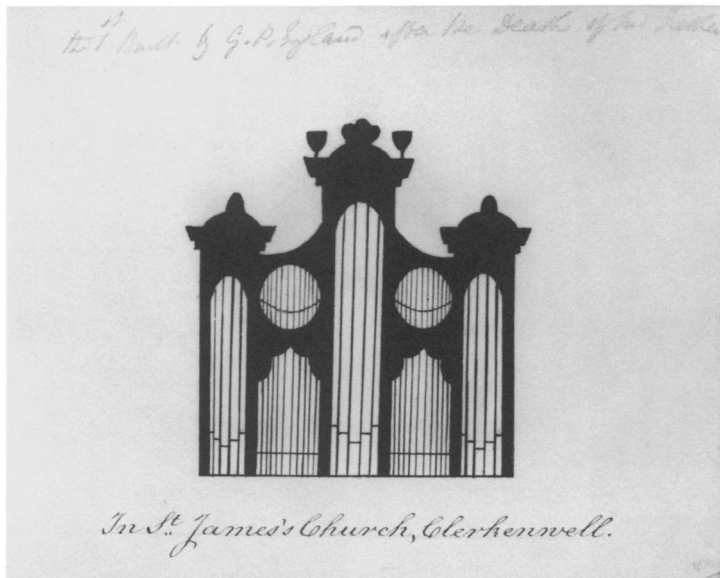


7. In St. Mary's Whitechapel Church (folio 14)

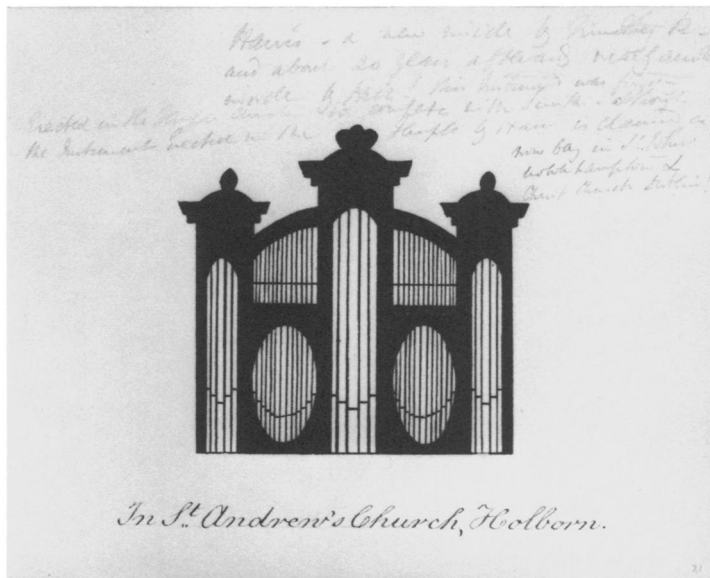
#### TITLES AND ANNOTATIONS TRANSCRIBED FROM THE FOLIOS

1. In St. Peter's Church, Cornhill.  
New organ built by [William] Hill old case with middle tower 1840
2. In St. Clement's Church, East Cheap.  
[Renus] Harris new inside by [John] Gray 1830
3. In Whitehall Chapel.  
Father [Bernard] Smyth—new inside by [Thomas] Elliot
4. In Islington [Parish of St. Mary] Church, Middlesex.  
The celebrated Samuel Green one of his early productions but not one of his best
5. In St. Sepulchre's Church, Snow Hill.  
[Thomas] Harris rebuilt and enlarged by [John] Gray 1834 the best Trumpet in the world
6. In St. George's Church, Hanover Square.  
[John] Snetzler
7. In St. Saviour's Church, Southwark.  
[John] Crang w[ith] whom Robert Gray was apprenticed
8. In St. Pancras's New Church.  
Built by [Robert and William] Gray 1818  
[Lightly penciled ornaments atop the case, including a central lyre, and some details of the

- pipe mouths and feet have been added to the inked drawing.]
9. In St. Catherine's by the Tower Church.  
Samuel Green Now [after 1824] in the Regent's Park [church]  
Repaired by [Benjamin] Blyth and afterwards by Gray
  10. In St. Lawrence Jewry Church, Guildhall.  
Father [Bernard] Smyth—a new inside by Timothy Russell son of the excellent workman Hugh Russell
  11. In Chelsea [Old] Church, Middlesex.  
Henry Bevington the 1st! originally a chamber organ built for [Edward] Howard the chemist
  12. In Quebec Chapel, Oxford Street.  
John Avery built for the last com[m]emoration of Handel, about the year 1795 when the performance took place in the Pantheon. Avery was brought up in the trade of a cooper in Gloster
  13. In St. Catherine Cree Church, Leadenhall Street.  
[Richard] Bridge apparently
  14. In St. Mary's Whitechapel Church.  
Shrieder [Christopher Schreider] the son in law & successor of Father Smith—to whom [John] Crang was apprenticed—hence the Gray's are the successors of Father Smith the organs in the hands of Crang falling with those of Robert Gray



8. In St. James's Church, Clerkenwell (folio 18)



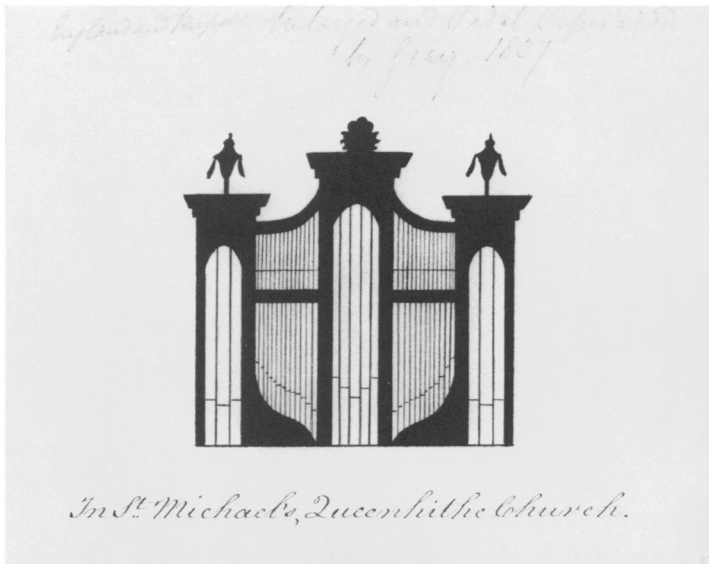
9. In St. Andrew's Church, Holborn (folio 21)

15. In St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row.  
Built by Lincoln [crossed out]/[John] Byfield—now in Blackheath Church Chapel—replaced by one by [Henry Cephias] Lincoln now.
16. In St. Giles's in the Fields Church.  
[Richard] Bridge
17. In St. George's [the Martyr] Church, Queen Square.  
[John and James] Hancock—Rebuilt and enlarged by Gray [& Davison?] 1838
18. In St. James's Church, Clerkenwell.  
The 1st built by G. P. [George Pike] England after the death of his father [John England]
19. In St. Margaret's Church, Westminster.  
John Avery
20. In St. Ann's Church, Westminster.  
Robert and Wm Gray 1795
21. In St. Andrew's Church, Holborn.  
[Renus] Harris—a new inside by Timothy R[ussell] and about 20 years afterwards ..... another inside by Hill! This instrument was first erected in the Temple Church to compete with [Bernard] Smith's—although the instrument erected in the Temple by Harris is claimed as now being in St. John's Wolverhampton & Christ Church Dublin!
22. In Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge.



10. In King's College Chapel, Cambridge (folio 26)

- Father Smith Rebuilt & enlarged by [John] Gray 1836
23. In Edmonton [Parish of All Saints?] Church, Middlesex.  
John England
24. In St. Ann's Chapel, Wandsworth, in Surry.  
Timothy Russell



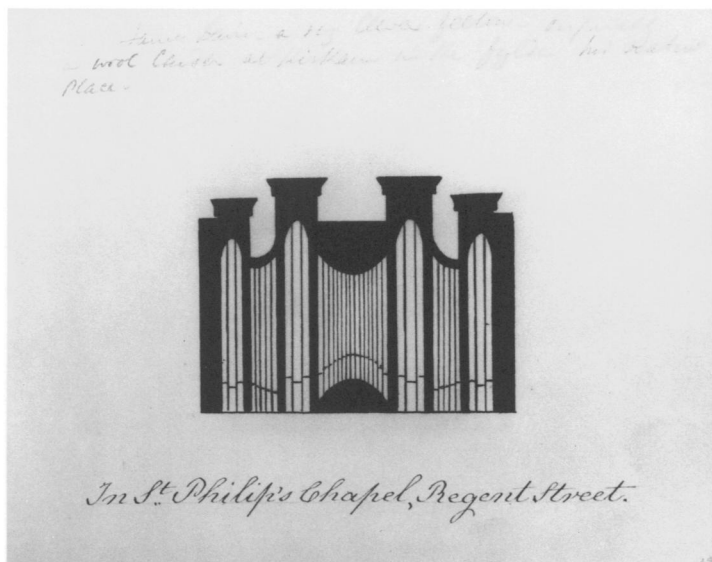
11. In St. Michael's Queenhithe Church (folio 27)



12. In St. Mary's Church, Bryanstone Square (folio 33)

- 25. In St. Mary Aldermary Church, Watling Street.  
[John] England and [Hugh] Russell
- 26. In King's College Chapel, Cambridge.  
John Avery new inside. He was upwards of a year in erecting this organ and there is a memorandum in the Buttery of the College of the quantity of ale supplied to himself & workmen during the progress of the work
- 27. In St. Michael's Queenhithe Church.  
[John] England and [Hugh] Russell enlarged and pedal pipes added by [John] Gray 1837
- 28. In St. Margaret's Church, Lothbury.  
G. P. England
- 29. In St. Bartholomew's by the Exchange Church.  
[Renus Harris and John] Byfield
- 30. In St. Mary Magdalen's Church, Bermondsey.  
probably [Renus] Harris—spoiled by a Prebender named F..... a Duetchman [sic]
- 31. In Stepney Church, Middlesex.  
[Renus] Harris
- 32. In St. James's Church, Piccadilly.  
[Renus] Harris
- 33. In St. Mary's Church, Bryanstone Square.  
[James C.] Bishop—designed by [Bernard] Smithe—and from the simplicity of the arrangement of the pipes in past has been likened to a Gilt Gridiron
- 34. In St. Philip's Chapel, Regent Street.

- James Davis—a very clever fellow—originally a wool carder at Kirk[h]am in the fylde his native place
- 35. In St. Stephen's, Walbrook Church.  
[George] England
- 36. In St. Mary at Hill Church, East Cheap.  
Father Smith, I believe
- 37. In the Temple Church.  
Father Smith—the one now in St. Andrews Holborn for the controversy respecting this work[?] see [Charles] Burney & [Sir John] Hawkin[s] [who published accounts of the notorious "battle of the organs"]
- 38. In Holloway Chapel [of Ease, St. Mary Magdalen], Islington.  
Built by G. P. England his last
- 39. In Trinity Church, Cambridge.
- 40. In St. Giles's, Cripple Gate Church. [moved from St. Luke's, Old Street]  
Bridge [& Jordon] enlarged by Gray 1820
- 41. In St. Clement Danes Church, in the Strand.  
Father Smith
- 42. In Allhallow's Barking Church.  
Erected 1677 Renatus Harris/Restored [Gerard Smith] 1720/[G. P. England] 1813/[John Bunting] 1878
- 43. In All Saints Church, Hertford.  
[Justinian Morse,] Replaced by new organ built



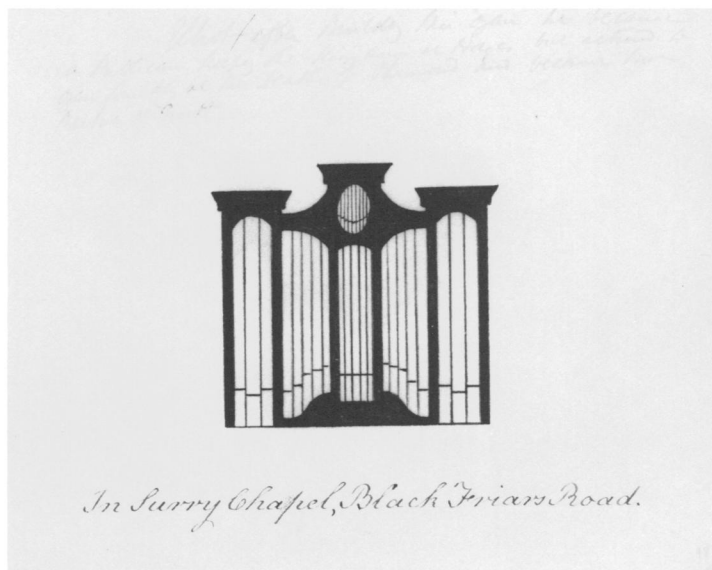
13. In St. Philip's Chapel, Regent Street (folio 34)

by Gray [& Davison] 1840

- 44. In Finchley [St. Mary's] Church, Middlesex.
- 45. In Peter House College Chapel, Cambridge.
- 46. In Pembroke College Chapel, Cambridge.
- 47. In Kensington Church, Middlesex.
- 48. In Surry Chapel, Black Friars Road.  
[Thomas] Elliot—after building this organ he became a publican keeping the Kings Arms at Hayes but returned to organ building at the death of Ohrmond [Jonathan Ohrmann] and became the partner of [John or W.] Nutt
- 49. In Hampstead [St. John's] Church, Middlesex.  
[David or James] Davis for [James] Longman whose name it bears
- 50. In Emanuel College Chapel, Cambridge.
- 51. In Cheshunt [St. Mary the Virgin] Church, Hertfordshire.  
[David or James] Davis for [James] Longman
- 52. In All Saints Church, Cambridge.  
New inside by Gray
- 53. In St. Botolph, Aldersgate Church.  
Samuel Green
- 54. In St. John's College Chapel, Cambridge.  
Replaced by new organ built by [William] Hill 1838
- 55. In St. George's Chapel, Albermarle Street.  
This is [James] Ball's organ—replaced by one supplied by Baker! which has since given place to



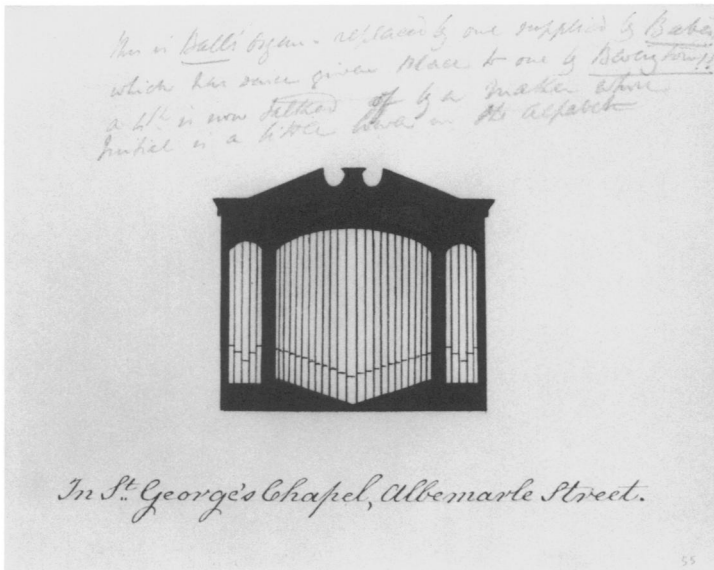
14. In Allhallow's Barking Church (folio 42)



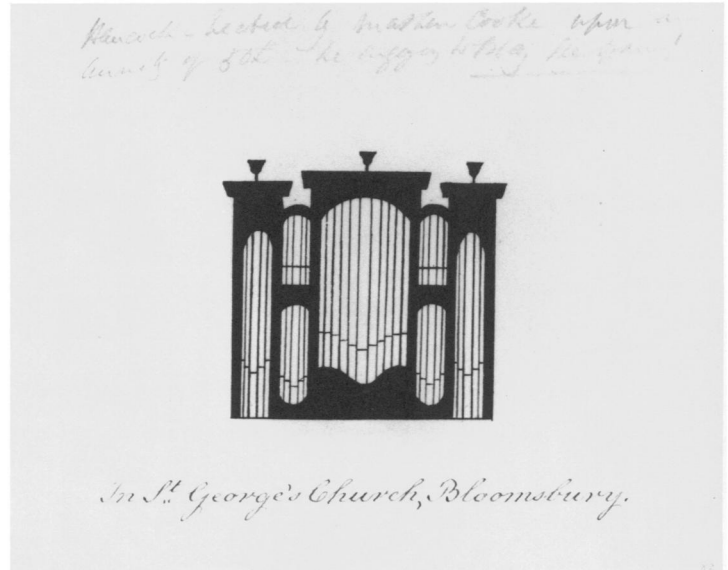
15. In Surry Chapel, Black Friars Road (folio 48)

one by [Henry and Martin] Bevington!! A 4th is now talked of by a maker whose initial is a little lower in the alp[h]abet

- 56. In Bedford Chapel, Bedford Square.  
This is [William?] Allen's organ—replaced by one by Gray [& Davison, 1845]
- 57. In St. Botolph, Bishopsgate Church.  
[John] Byfield



16. In St. George's Chapel, Albemarle Street (folio 55)



17. In St. George's Church, Bloomsbury (folio 82)

58. In Berwick Street Chapel, Soho.  
59. In Ware [St. Mary the Virgin] Church, Hertfordshire.  
[Edward or John] Pistor replaced by one of [James Chapman] Bishop's  
60. In Allhallow's Church, Bread Street.  
Father Smith  
61. In St. Matthew's Church, Bethnal Green.  
62. In Hanover Street Chapel, Long Acre.  
Father Smith—the old organ from St. James Chapel Royal  
63. In St. Olave's Old Jewry Church.  
... [?]  
64. In Baker Street Chapel, Portman Square.  
[James] Ball replaced by one by Gray now in Trinity Church Leicester  
65. In St. Peter's-le-Poor Church, Broad Street.  
Samuel Green  
66. In St. Margaret's Chapel, Westminster.  
I think this must be in St. Paul's Chapel Westminster  
[John] Snetzler  
67. In Ship Street Chapel, Brighton.  
68. In St. Mary Woolnoth Church, Lombard Street.  
Father Smith  
69. In Newington Church, Surry.  
England

70. In St. Antholin's Church, Watling Street.  
[Richard] Bridge  
71. In St. John, of Wapping Church.  
[Richard] Bridge  
72. In St. George's Church, Southwark.  
Rebuilt by [George, Henry, or Theodore] Buckwell 1840  
73. In St. James's Chapel, Brighton.  
74. In Union Chapel, Brighton.  
75. In West Hackney [St. Barnabas] Church, Middlesex.  
Tim Russell [preceding line crossed out]  
76. In Allhallow's Church, Lombard Street.  
[Renatus] Harris [preceding line crossed out]  
77. In St. Michael's Church, Wood Street.  
[Thomas] Elliot  
78. In St. Mary Abchurch, Abchurch Lane.  
[James Chapman] Bishop his first church organ in London—1822  
79. In St. Mildred's, Bread Street Church.  
[Thomas] Griffin a Barber—professor of music in Gresham College & the work (of the organ) was done by Abraham Pether  
80. In Lincoln's Inn Chapel.  
[Benjamin] Flight [Jr.] & [Joseph] Robson  
81. In St. Edmund the King's Church, [Lombard Street] London.





18. In Fitzroy Chapel, Fitzroy Square (folio 83)



19. In Ealing Church, Middlesex (folio 114)

- [John] Byfield—a new one by [James Chapman] Bishop
82. In St. George's Church, Bloomsbury.  
[John and James] Hancock—erected by Mather Cooke upon an annuity of 50£—he engages to play the organ!
83. In Fitzroy Chapel, Fitzroy Square.  
originally [Samuel] Green built for the Italian opera house & altered by [John] Lincoln
84. In Tavistock Chapel, Tavistock Square.  
Gray
85. In St. John's Chapel Mary-le-bone.  
[Robert and William] Gray
86. In St. Alban's Church, Wood Street.  
[Richard] Bridge
87. In St. James's Chapel, Hampstead Road.  
Gray
88. In St. John's Church, Clerkenwell.  
[Richard] Bridge
89. In Christ's Church, Black Friars Road.  
[Thomas] Elliot
90. In St. Michael's Bassishaw [*sic*] Church.  
Repaired by Gray [& Davison] 1839 [preceding name crossed out and illegible]
91. In Percy Chapel, Rathbone Place.  
Enlarged by [William?] Hill 1836 & 9 [preceding name crossed out and illegible]
92. In Long Acre Chapel.
93. In St. Vedast's Church, Foster Lane.  
[Richard] Bridge Repaired by [John and Robert] Gray 1838
94. In Camden Town Chapel, Middlesex.  
Built by [William] Gray 1824
95. In St. Mary Magdalen's Church, Old Fish Street.  
[Samuel Green]
96. In All Souls Church, Portland Place.  
Built by [James Chapman] Bishop
97. In St. Nicholas's Church, Deptford in Kent.  
[Thomas] Griffin
98. In Hanover Chapel, Regent Street.  
Built by [John Chapman] Bishop
99. In Christ's Church, Stafford Street, Mary-le-bon[e].  
[John Chapman] Bishop
100. In Fulham [All Saints] Church, Middlesex.  
[John] Byfield
101. In Holland Chapel, Brixton in Surry.  
T. [Timothy] Russell bought by [Theodore or William] Bates upon a consideration! by Messrs Gray & Walker
102. In Paddington Church, Middlesex.  
[Richard] Bridge altered by [James Chapman] Bishop
103. In Gate Street Chapel, Lincoln's Inn Fields.  
[John?] Lincoln Sen[io]r

- 104. In Stoke Newington Church, Middlesex.
- 105. In Putney Church, Surry.
- 106. In Kennington Lane Chapel, Surry.
- 107. In West Street Chapel, Seven Dials.  
[Thomas] Mayer [Mayor]
- 108. In Orange Street Chapel, Leicester Square.  
[John] Byfield—a new one by [Joseph William?] Walker
- 109. In the Chapel Royal, Brighton.  
England

- 110. In Trinity Chapel, Conduit Street.
- 111. In St. Andrew's Church, Hertford.
- 112. In St. Michael's Church, Cambridge.
- 113. In St. Andrew's Church, Cambridge.
- 114. In Ealing [St. Mary's Parish] Church, Middlesex.  
[Benjamin Blyth? successor to Samuel] Green now in ...sford Church—new one by [Joseph William] Walker [A grotesque figure has been added atop the case with the inscription "The Devil."]

## NOTES

1. Reproduced in James Boeringer, *Organa Britannica; Organs in Great Britain 1660–1860* (Lewisburg, Pa., 1986) II, p. 208.

2. These are discussed by Nicholas Thistlethwaite in "Source-materials from the Early 19th Century," *Journal of the British Institute of Organ Studies* 1 (1977) pp. 75–100.

3. The other major pictorial compilation is an extensive set of watercolors executed by John Norbury between 1867 and about 1905, described by Susi Jeans in "The Catalogue of the John

Norbury Collection of Organ Case Sketches at the Royal College of Organists," *Organ Yearbook* 12 (1981) pp. 120–159; *ibid.*, 13 (1982) pp. 107–117. Late in his life Norbury owned the six notebooks of organ specifications and drawings assembled in the mid-nineteenth century by Rev. John Hanson Sperling, formerly a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge. The Sperling notebooks are being edited by James Boeringer; see note 1 above.