

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, ADEL

I visited this church, at the request of the PCC secretary, on Monday 15 June, 2015.

This small Norman church is of great antiquity, and great historical importance, and there is a current plan for re-ordering the chancel space, and the choir stalls. The Makin 2-manual electronic organ occupies a prominent place in the chancel. It dates back to 1985, since when the technology has changed vastly, and the church is now in a position where the organ can no longer be serviced and maintained by Makin, because parts are not available, neither have they people who can deal with the old electronic systems involved. The organ currently works well, but could fail at any time, and the proposal is to find a replacement organ while the re-ordering is taking place, so that both jobs may be done together.

The probability is that the console would be moved into the nave, at the east end of the south side, where room could be made by the removal of a radiator, and the loss of one pew (four seats). This all seems perfectly sensible, and is more of an aesthetic and practical question, rather than a musical one. We discussed various possibilities with regard to a new electronic organ, including the exploration of the new Hauptwerk recording technology, which can be played through electronic organs via the MIDI facility.

The old pipe organ has long been in disuse, certainly since the 1980's, though the pipes are still in their position in the chancel roof (somewhat improbably), and the main bellows in the vestry. It does not seem either feasible or appropriate to try and revive that instrument, and I would have thought it best to remove it now, and open up the chancel roof space, as it would have been previously.

I would recommend that the proposal to replace the electronic instrument be approved, with consideration given as to precisely where the new instrument would best be placed, in the restricted area of the church.

Tim Gray
(Diocesan Organ Adviser)

17 June 2015