

The ORGAN

ORGANISTS

1846 - 1873:	Unknown
1873 - 1926:	R. Froude Coules
Jul. 1929 - Jan. 1938 (IR):	A. Taylor
Aug 1939 - Jul. 1946 (IR):	W. E. Lawton
May 1947 - July 1951 (IR/CL):	F. Ainscough
Sept. 1951 - (CL)	Leslie Fox
Aug. 1965: Position blank. Assistant was W. Ferrario	
Nov. 1966 to Oct. 1967 (TB):	P. R. Holt
Nov. 1969 - Aug. 1973 (TB/PSGC):	Albert Hadcroft
Apr. 1973 - 2000:	Samuel M. Gee
2000 - present day	Jeff Ramsdale

These dates are not precise because the names have been found in random copies of extant parish magazines. These do not in any way form a complete set.

The INSTRUMENT

1. The first organ was a barrel organ.
2. A small manual and pedal organ.
3. **1881** A 3-manual organ by A. Young of Manchester .
4. **1884** Organ moved to the north side of the Chancel and expanded.
5. **1952** Compton organ installed in the Ellesmere Chapel.
6. **2005** A 3-manual Alexander Young organ 1905 installed in its earlier position

Stage 1.

Music (in the early was provided) by a barrel organ with a limited repertoire of hymns that had previously been used for services in the Worsley school. Such instruments, as distinct from the types used for playing street music, were extensively used in village churches during the late 18th and mid-19th centuries. (Milliken p.11)

Stage 2.

The Manchester Courier - Saturday 8 May 1858

Opening of the New Organ in St. Mark's Church, Worsley. — On Sunday last, the new organ presented by the Earl of Ellesmere to St. Mark's Church, Worsley, was opened for the first time since its completion, with great success, by Mr David W. Banks, the well-known organist and conductor at the Free Trade Hall. In external appearance, the organ is one of the most beautiful and unique we have ever seen. The case is made entirely of old oak panels, purchased by the late Earl, we believe, abroad, of ecclesiastical character, to correspond with the much-admired pulpit and desk. The design, which is that of an antique cabinet approaching to gothic, is said to owe its originality and beauty to the taste of the Countess of Ellesmere. It has been executed entirely under the direction of Mr. Adams, the house carpenter at the hall, and is really a specimen of beautiful workmanship. It has one large centre and two smaller lateral arches, which are filled with pipes most skillfully

gilded and diapered by our townsman, Mr. Dobson, from designs in Peterborough and Ely Cathedrals. The instrument itself, though by no means a large organ, is amply sufficient for the church, and possesses an unusually sweet tone and many useful appliances, by which the compass is much increased and readily varied. There are three rows of keys of full compass, for the great, choir, and swell organs, with two octaves and half of pedals, which act upon a bourdon (8 feet) of remarkably fine and full quality, and can be coupled to the bass of the great and choir. In the great organ, there are only three stops – harmonic flute, open diapason, and principal; but an octave coupler adds a fifteenth and doubles all, whilst couplers to the choir and swell produce a combination of great power. In the choir organ there are only three stops—stopped diapason, dulciana, and clarionet; but both the dulciana and open diapason are carried through to 8 feet in metal, the combined bass being exceedingly rich. In the swell there are six stops—stopped and open diapason, principal, twelfth, fifteenth, and oboe, with a tremulando. The object has been to secure at moderate cost a few very good and readily combined stops, rather than the great variety which is, we think, somewhat too generally considered necessary. The ground work of the instrument was originally made for the private use of an eminent organist, and is consequently of very superior workmanship; but all the metal stops, the general arrangements, and the entire swell organ, have been made in a first-rate manner, by Mr. Tarr of this city, who is justly celebrated for the superior voicing of his pipes. On Sunday, Mr. Banks certainly brought out the beauties of the instrument in a very pleasing manner. The services were Jackson's, in F, and were sweetly and devotionally sung by the choir, which is entirely composed of amateurs, assisted on this occasion by one or two gentlemen in the bass and alto. Sermons were preached in the morning by the Rev. S. Vincent Beechey, the Incumbent, and in the afternoon by the Rev. T. R. Bently, of St. Matthew's, after which collections were made in behalf of the Clergy, Widow, and Orphan Charity, at Warrington, which amounted to upwards of £20. None of Lord Ellesmere's family, we believe, were present. We heartily congratulate the people of Worsley upon this admirable addition to their all but perfect church, for which they ought to feel fresh debt of gratitude to the present Earl, who is already treading so liberally in the steps of his lamented father.

Stage 3.

The Earl of Mulgrave brought with him to the church, [in 1872] as organist and choirmaster, a talented young musician, Reginald Froude Coules [died 1926], who was a former pupil of the famous Sir John Stainer of St. Paul's Cathedral. Coules had at first to content himself with a small manual and pedal organ that had replaced to original barrel organ in the church. (Milliken p.21)

As might have been expected, with the new vicar's interest in the choral worship of the church, and the new organist's undoubted musical qualifications, it was not long before the question of a new organ arose. ... There was now a call to replace the instrument, now considered inadequate for its enhanced importance in the services. ... Seven years later, when the Organ Fund had reached a total of £350 in cash or promises, a special meeting was called at which the Organ Committee was instructed to obtain without further delay a new three manual organ from Messrs. Alexander Young & Son at a cost of £685. The organ case was designed by Scott's firm: like the pulpit, it incorporated a collage of older panels.

When the new organ arrived, it was placed in a new position at the south-east end of the nave with the console and one set of pipes occupying the last arch on the south side. Another set of pipes occupied the arch leading into the chapel from the south side. (Milliken p. 22). [See the photo below]

Hyde and Glossop Weekly News – Saturday 17 September 1881

SERIOUS FIRE AT AN ORGAN FACTORY. On Monday night a fire broke out on the premises of Messrs. Alexander Young and Sons, organ builders, 27 and 29, Eldon-street, Chorlton-on-Medlock. The works were closed at six p.m and the fire was discovered by a man passing along the street. The burning had originated on the ground floor in the flue connected with the beating apparatus, which is in the basement. An alarm was given, and Mr. Superintendent Tozer, with the whole of the brigade from the central fire station, reached the works about twenty minutes to nine. The flames were got under by about ten o'clock. Serious damage was done, the roof and upper floor being destroyed, and considerable injury being done to the second storey. An organ in course of construction for **Worsley Church** and four or five second-hand instruments were consumed, together with a large quantity of valuable timber. The damage is estimated at between 1,300 and 2,000.

The Bolton Evening News – Tuesday 11 October 1881

The Earl of Ellesmere is giving a new and handsome oak case of Gothic design for the new organ which is being built by Messrs. Young and Co. for **Worsley parish church**. The instrument is expected to be ready in November, and will cost about £800.

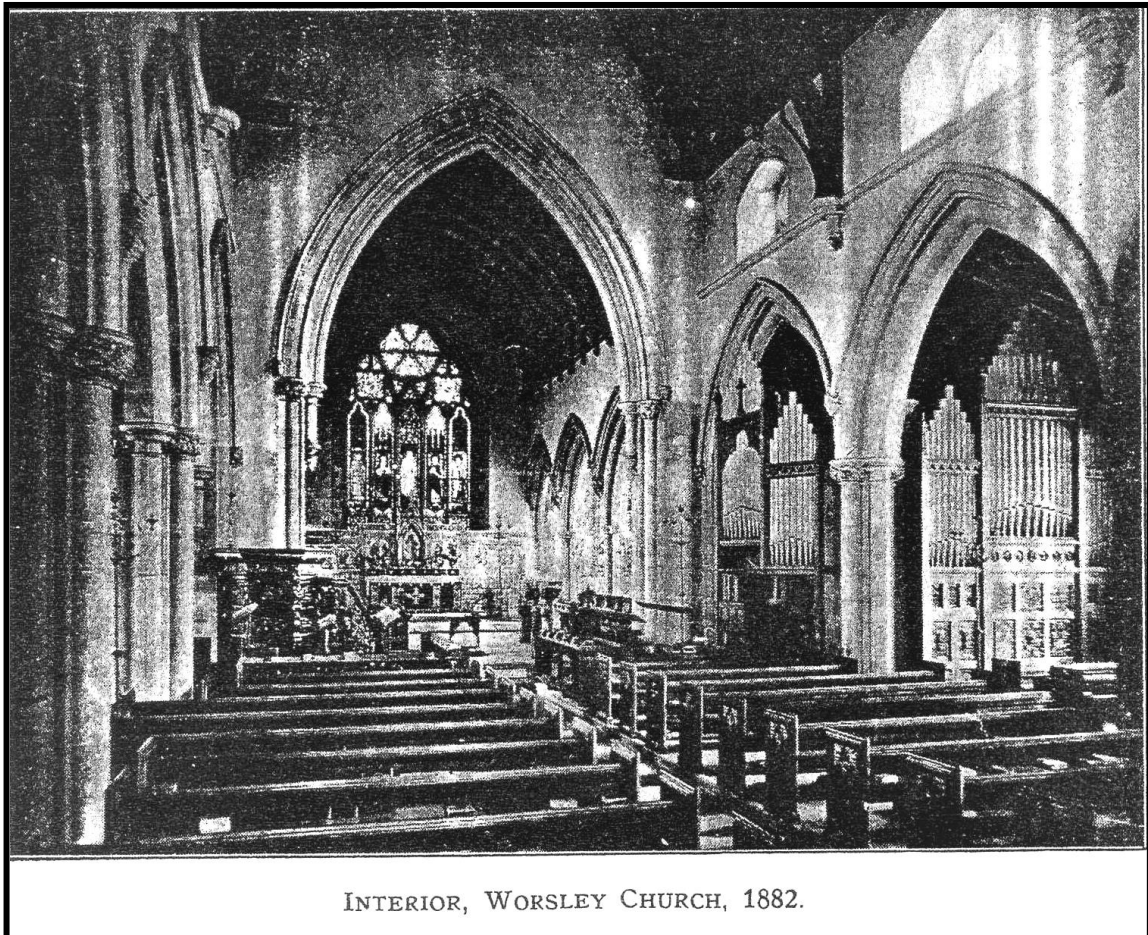
The Manchester Courier - Monday 21 November 1881

OPENING OF NEW ORGAN WORSLEY CHURCH. Yesterday the new organ built for this church was dedicated to service of God by the vicar, the Rev. the **Earl of Mulgrave**, and was immediately afterwards used for the first time to accompany the service. Builders of this splendid instrument (Messrs. A. Young and Sons, of this city) are to be congratulated on having supplied the parishioners of Worsley with as fine an organ as any village church can ever wish to own. The organ is one of exquisite purity, mellowness of tone, delicacy of touch, and possesses also remarkable fullness of harmony. The organist of the church, Mr. R. F. Coules, Fellow of the College of Organists, has long been desirous of possessing an organ of greater purity and expression than the one just removed, and we understand he has taken unusual interest in the work as it approached completion. The parishioners have provided nearly sufficient funds for defraying the cost of the new organ, the Earl of Ellesmere bearing the cost of the case. The entire cost of the organ is £635. Its position is exactly opposite to that of the old organ, and presents an imposing view towards the north and south as it fills up the chancel end of the south aisle. It is well known that the eminent organ builders acquire a name for certain peculiarities of tone in their respective instruments, a mannerism which organists are accustomed to recognise immediately they hear any instrument played upon. This feature is likely to appear in the Worsley organ in a marked degree. At morning prayer yesterday morning there was a crowded congregation. As the choir advanced from the robing-room at the western entrances to their stalls they paused for few minutes in the middle of the nave while the vicar offered the form of dedication of the organ for the service of God, the whole the clergy, choir, and congregation standing all the time. The form of dedication commenced by the vicar saying "In name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." The dedication prayer was then offered, and the first sound of the organ was in accompanying the choir to the "Amen," which was done with nearly the full power of the organ, and produced marked effect on the listeners. The 150th psalm was then chanted with full effect, the varied accompaniment to the jubilant expressions of this fine Psalm on the organ had a good effect, and the volume of sound seemed to fill every part of the church. There was a full choral rendering of the service, this mode being now much followed in many churches as best fitted for festivals of the church or on any occasion of special thanksgiving. The Vicar intoned the prayers, the Rev. W. H. Baynes, the curate, read the lessons; and the Rev.

Canon Beechey, M.A., vicar of Hilgav in Norfolk, and for many years vicar of Worsley, preached. The text he chose was Genesis 4, 21, "And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." At the close of the service Mr. Coules played the "Hallelujah Chorus" in which the power of the organ was fully displayed.

1882.

The photo below, dated 1882, shows the position of the organ prior to the alterations about to be started. Notice in particular the oak panelling and the gilded organ pipes. The **Reredos** (q.v.) to the Countess Harriett (died 1866) is clearly visible by this time.



INTERIOR, WORSLEY CHURCH, 1882.

Stage 4.

In 1884, a faculty was obtained to find accommodation for both the choir and organ in the chancel. [See the sketch below].

The British Architect - 23 May 1884

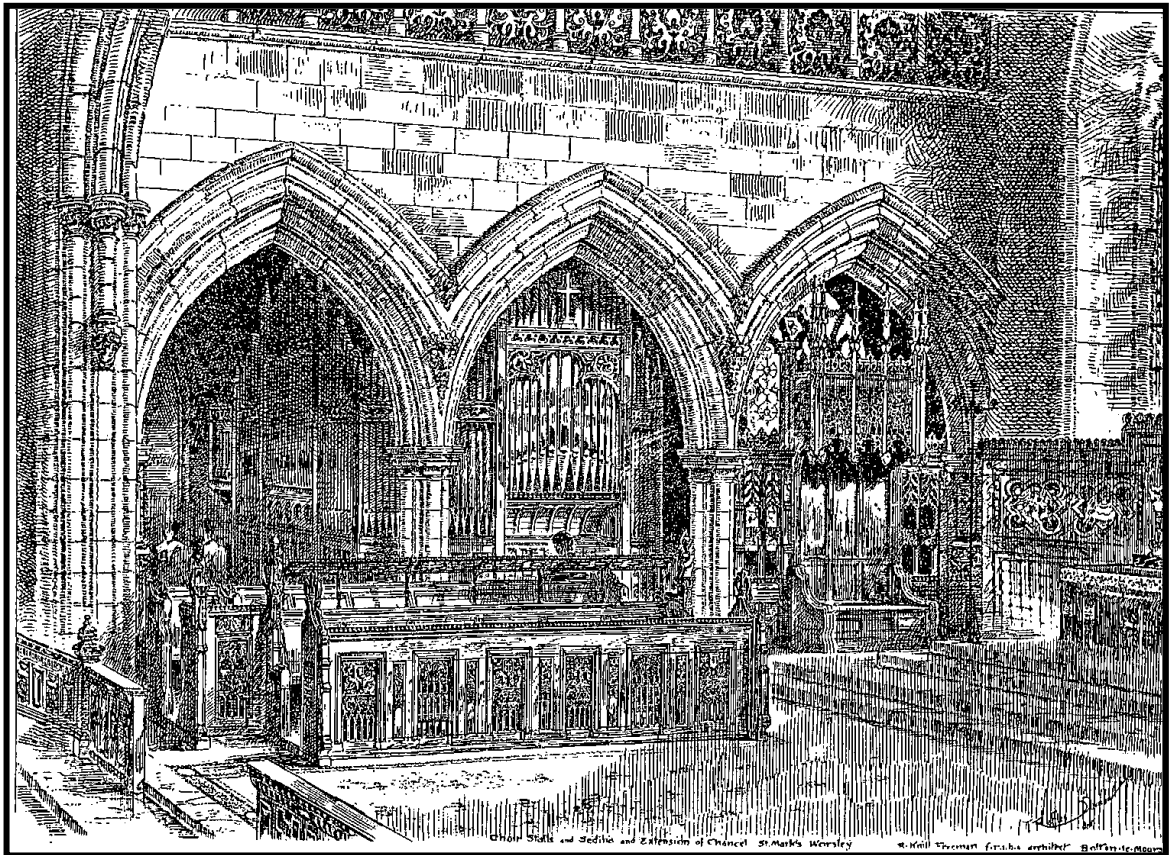
CHANCEL AISLE, ORGAN CHAMBER, &c., ST. MARK'S CHURCH, WORSLEY, FOR THE REV. THE EARL OF MULGRAVE

These works, now approaching completion, have been undertaken with a view to obtaining better accommodation both for the choir and the congregation. The new aisle corresponds in detail and general treatment with the Ellesmere Chapel, on the south side of the chancel. It will be used as an organ chamber and choir vestry, and will also give a number of additional sittings. The removal of the organ from its present position at the end of the south aisle, and taking the choir into the chancel, will also add considerably to the

accommodation.

[To complete the article] ...

The whole of the woodwork is in oak, the screen sedilia and choir stalls being elaborately carved (the latter were exhibited at the Building Trades Exhibition held in Manchester last year. The floor of the chancel is of ceramic mosaic of appropriate character, the sacrarium having the pelican. Lion, and other ecclesiastical emblems introduced. The contractors for the whole of the works are Messrs. Statham and Sons, Pendleton, the carving being executed by Messrs. Earp and Hobbs, of London and Manchester ; the mosaic floors by Mr. Ludwig Oppenheimer, of Manchester ; and the stonework by Mr. Darbyshire, of Worsley. All the works are from the designs of Mr. R. Knill Freeman, FRIBA, of Bolton-le-Moors. The cost of the extension is about £2,000.



ST. MARK'S, WORSLEY.—Several important alterations are being carried out at the handsome church of St. Mark, Worsley, near Manchester, of which the Earl of Mulgrave is the vicar. The improvements embrace the laying down of a new floor in the chancel and sacristy, the removal of the organ, the provision of new carved oak choir stalls, the erection of a new organ chapel, &c., which will entail an expenditure of about £2,100. Towards this sum the Earl of Ellesmere has contributed £200, and the Hon. Algernon F. Egerton, M.P. (who is one of the churchwardens), £50, the residents of the locality subscribing the balance. A local committee (consisting of Lord Mulgrave, the Hon. A. Egerton, Mr. Wm. Wilson, and Mr. Robert J. Wood) has been formed for the carrying out of the necessary arrangements; Mr. R. Knill Freeman, of Bolton, being the architect employed.

The Manchester Courier - Friday 22 August 1884

ST. MARK'S CHURCH, Worsley.—OPENING of NEW ORGAN CHAPEL, Sunday, August 21th, St. Bartholomew's Day. Celebrations Holy Communion at 7 and 8 o'clock. Preacher morning and evening the Rev. Canon HOLE.

The Manchester Courier - Saturday 23 August 1884

Alterations at St. Mark's Church, Worsley.

These works, now completed, were undertaken with a view of providing better accommodation both for choir and congregation. A new aisle has been introduced, corresponding in detail and general treatment with the Ellesmere Chapel on the south side of the chancel. It will used as organ chamber and choir vestry, and will also give a number of additional sittings. The removal of the organ from its position at the end the south aisle, and of the choir stalls into the chancel has likewise resulted an appreciable improvement both as regards accommodation and appearance. The whole of the woodwork is in oak, the screen, sedilia and choir stalls being elaborately carved, and bearing emblems the Passion and other ecclesiastical devices. It may be mentioned that the choir stalls were exhibited at the Building Trades Exhibition, held in Manchester last year. The floor of the chancel is of ceramic Mosaic of appropriate character. Messrs. Statham and Sons, of Pendleton, were the contractors for the whole of the work, of which the cost is about £2,000. The carving was executed Messrs. Earp and Hobbs, of London and Manchester; the Mosaic flooring by Mr. Ludwig Oppenheimer, Manchester; and the stone work by Mr. Darbyshire, of Worsley. The designs were supplied by Mr. R. K. Freeman, architect, Bolton-le-Moors, who also superintended the carrying out of the extensions. The church will be re-opened to-morrow, when Canon Hole is announced to preach in the morning and evening.

Stage 5.

The 1950s witnessed extensive and essential repairs and restoration to the church and its fabric. Funds and donations towards a restoration fund poured in. Over half of the total amount raised came from a thousand local individuals, testament to the generosity and involvement of people across the parish. In 1952, the Church Council proposed to replace the 1881 organ. The 'new' organ was simply an extension of the existing one. *'Its powers were limited, and it was intended as a stop-gap. The makers (Comptons of London) undertook to take it back at almost the original price of £1,800 if a new, full sized organ, costing £4,500, was bought within 3½ years.'* The Organ Committee, no doubt attracted by the fact that it was electric ('new' technology) decided to accept the offer, aided by the offer of a loan from the diocese of £1,000 and the remaining £600 in the Coules Memorial fund, set up on his death in 1921. The detached console was to be sited in the Ellesmere Chapel. In order for the choir to see the organist more easily, it was raised higher on a platform and was placed on the top step leading into the chapel.

Stage 6.

This organ remained in use for another 50 years. Following the death of Samuel Meredith Gee in 2000, a fund was established to clean and overhaul it; but it had gone beyond that stage, and so the search began to find a suitable replacement. For two years, the rector, Michael Ainsworth and organist Jeff Ramsdale, toured all parts of the country to find a fine and worthwhile replacement in churches that were closing down. Eventually, an instrument was found at Tottington Methodist Church in Bury. It was ideal in that it had a mechanical action, which was the preference, and would fit into the organ chamber. Strangely, it was made by Alexander Young, in about 1903, with a specification that was similar to the organ which had served the church from 1881 to 1952. Sixsmiths, who had maintained it in Bury and still do, successfully relocated it. The console was positioned in its original position, surrounded by Scott's oak panelling.

