

BAFPA Organ Appeal

The Background

The Battle Abbey School organ was commissioned and built in 1934 by the London firm of John Compton as a retirement present for John Raymond Sheehan-Dare, father of May Jacoby (née Sheehan-Dare) and Helen Sheehan-Dare, founders of Battle Abbey School. John had been a renowned organist for Lord Salisbury at Hatfield House in Hertfordshire for many years, and subsequently became the Director of Music at Battle Abbey School and the Battle Choral Society.

After the fire at Battle Abbey in 1931, which destroyed much of the Abbot's Hall, John wanted the school to have an organ "as befits an abbey" as part of the rebuild, despite personally being (in his words) "as poor as a church mouse". Undeterred, with a combination of fundraising efforts using his influential music contacts, school funds, and Jacoby family money, the organ was acquired and built in 1934. Sadly, John died shortly after the organ's installation, so his enjoyment of it was very brief.

The girls of Battle Abbey were more fortunate, and enjoyed playing and performing with the organ until the whole school was evacuated to Devon in 1940. Unfortunately, the organ fell silent after WW2, as it was badly damaged during soldiers' wartime occupation of the school site, but after another successful fundraising appeal to (the then) current and former pupils and their families, it was restored to full working order in 1954, and gave great enjoyment to many pupils and staff for fifty years or more.

Regrettably, time took its toll, and the organ has been out of regular use for a number of years, as some of the pipes wheeze and are damaged, the blower is noisy and overpowering, and a few of the notes stick on-and-off. Over and above the urgent need for cleaning, it also requires a complete overhaul and upgrade to complement the current School choirs, concert audiences, and school assembly participants, all of whom have trebled in numbers over the successive years.

The Future

The BAFPA (Battle Abbey Former Pupils' Association) Committee would like to set up an Organ Appeal, on behalf of the school, with a fundraising target of £20,000 to cover the costs to restore this wonderful and historical instrument to its former glory on the Minstrels' Gallery. As part of the restoration, an extra Trumpet Rank will also be added to enhance performance and improve the musical range of the instrument. In addition to these costs, a small surplus of funds will be retained for tuning and annual maintenance for the next five years, after which the school will support all on-going expenses.

Since the organ's original purchase in the early 1930s, the Battle Abbey Old Girls network has been inextricably linked to the life of the instrument, so it is a fitting tribute that the current BAFPA Committee (which reflects the co-educational structure of the School) wish to continue this association. In fact, former pupil, Alistair Curtis (St. Etheldreda's 1997-2002), an accredited organ restorer, will be undertaking the restoration work, having last cleaned it as part of a school extra-curricular activity whilst he was a pupil!

The organ is an important part of the school's musical history. This is an exciting opportunity for John Sheehan-Dare's legacy to be re-kindled and inspire future generations of Battle Abbey pupils with a passion for organ music. Restoring it will benefit not only the full Choir, and associated 'Ladies', 'Lads', and 'Chamber' Choirs, but will also open up opportunities for teaching additional music scholars and external music pupils. Few schools have such unique facilities. An investment now will be of huge benefit to the school and wider Battle Abbey community for many years to come.

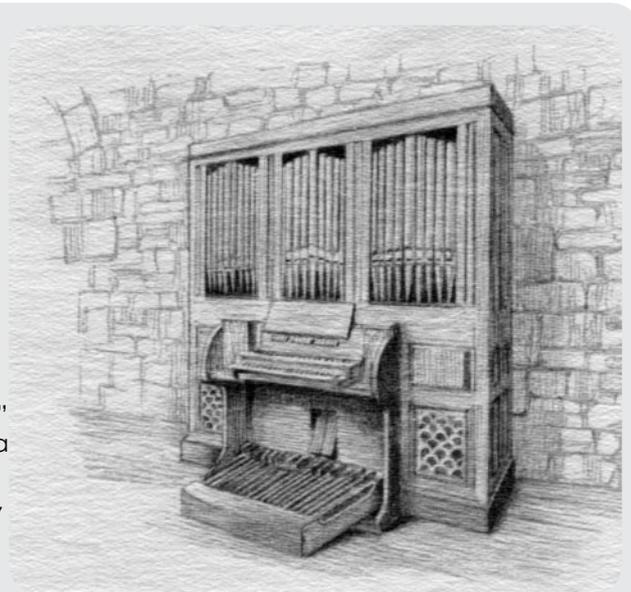
How to support the Organ Appeal

You can help BAFPA raise funds by making a gift to the Organ Appeal either as a one-off donation, or by sponsoring one or more of the 328 pipes from as little as £10 each. In return for sponsorship, we will give you a choice of pipe (a specific rank and note) and send you a certificate.

All donors and sponsors (with the exception of those who wish to remain anonymous) will have their names and years at Battle Abbey listed on a donor roll, which will be on display near to the organ. The amount donated or sponsored will not be visible.

Please see the form overleaf for information on how to make a donation or sponsor a pipe.

On behalf of the BAFPA Committee, we hope that you will support us with our vision to bring the organ back to life, and enrich the musical experience for Battle Abbey School pupils and the wider school community.



Organ Appeal Donation & Sponsorship Form

Name: _____ Email: _____
House Name/Number: _____
Town: _____
County: _____ Postcode: _____
Country (if not UK): _____ Telephone: _____



Send a one-off donation:

I would like to make a general donation to the organ appeal

Donation amount £ _____

Sponsor an organ pipe:

I would like to sponsor one or more of the 328 organ pipes

Do you have a preference for rank or note to sponsor? If not, don't worry, we can advise you or choose something for you! Each pipe is identified by its operating stop and the note sounded on the keyboard. Each note has a position on the keyboard and a pitch. Each stop has one pipe per note per stop.

- _____ pipe(s) @ £10 each (36 available in total = £360)
_____ pipe(s) @ £25 each (39 available in total = £975)
_____ pipe(s) @ £50 each (120 available in total = £6,000)
_____ pipe(s) @ £75 each (60 available in total = £4,500)
_____ Trumpet pipe(s) @ £100 each (73 available in total = £7,300)

Total Sponsorship amount £ _____

Payment Options (for donations & sponsorship):

Online bank transfer: I have made an online bank payment to the Organ Appeal for £_____.

[To pay via BACS: Account Number: 59696206 Sort Code: 60-02-07 – please use your 'SURNAME&ORGAN' as a reference, and contact us when you have made a payment.]

Debit or Credit card: I would like to make a single donation of £_____. Please call me to take my card details.

Cheque: I enclose a cheque for £_____ made payable to Battle Abbey School

Gift Aid:

Help us by giving in a tax-efficient manner and boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate by completing the following declaration.

"Please Gift Aid this donation, any donations I make in the future, and any donations I have made in the past four years. I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference."

Please notify us if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or if you no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____

I would like the following name to appear on the donor / sponsorship roll: _____

I would like to remain anonymous:



Please return this form via email to: bafpa@battleabbey.school or by post to:
Battle Abbey School, High Street, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 0AD

B.A.S. School Limited, Registered Charity Number: 306998

Information held by Battle Abbey School is held in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). If you do not wish to receive further information about the Organ Appeal from Battle Abbey School or BAFPA, please contact: joycej@battleabbey.school or call 01424 772385