

JOHN BARON AND NELSON HALL OF UPTON SCUDAMORE. THE RISE OF THE PIPE RACK AND THE UNIVERSAL VILLAGE ORGAN

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The Reverend John Baron, D.D. was born in Brill, Bucks. in 1817, where his father, John Samuel Baron (1788-1866) was Vicar. Baron senior appears to have been the child of John Gillon (d. 1809), an immensely rich Dominica landowner, and a local woman, 'Mademoiselle Charlotte Baron.' Gillon's Will enabled John Samuel Baron to matriculate at The Queen's College, Oxford in 1810, and purchase a living yielding 'not less than £400 a year,' which was considerable.¹ The younger John Baron proceeded in turn to The Queen's College in 1834, so he would have been around the intellectual ferment of the Oxford Movement, though its architectural expression came a little later. After being Vicar of Waterperry, Oxon. 1843-1848, Baron acquired the Rectory of Upton Scudamore near Warminster, a Queen's College living which he held until his death in 1885. It was the second richest in Wiltshire, and Baron lost no time in appointing G.E. Street to restore his church in the approved Ecclesiological manner between 1854 and 1859. A great deal of work needed to be done, and despite the comfortable income of the living, Upton Scudamore is and was a very small village. In 1856 he wrote to the *Guardian*² describing how his own resources had been exhausted by the restoration of the chancel, and how inspired by Hopkins & Rimbault's book, he had devised with Street and 'Mr Hall, the organ-builder living in the parish,' a plan for a simple village chancel organ with one stop, costing less than 40 pounds. The letter evidently created a stir, since it was reprinted in the *English Churchman*, and in 1858 Baron published a substantial book, 'Scudamore Organs,'³ where he sets out his ideas in more detail. He is a sprightly writer, and quotes widely from Chaucer, St Paul, Herodotus and the pioneer of massed singing John Hullah. Sir John Sutton's *Short Account of Organs* of 1847 is mentioned,⁴ and *Scudamore Organs* is typeset using the obsolete 'long s' in the same way. Baron pays attention not only to the instrument itself, but how it is to be played in a small village, and describes training two local boys as competent players, with the aid of *Rinck's First Three Months at the Organ* and a Broadwood square piano

¹ See 'Legacies of British Slave-ownership', ucl.ac.uk/lbs, accessed June 2020

² The Church of England newspaper. Reprinted in Baron, xiii-xiv

³ John Baron, *Scudamore Organs. Or Practical Hints Respecting Organs for Village Churches and Small Chancels, on Improved Principles*, London, Bell & Daldy 1858. 2nd edition, enlarged, 1862

⁴ 2nd ed 16.

purchased for £5.⁵ Hullah comes in for criticism when he suggests putting women in the chancel to sing, but not through any marked theological objection as such. Having wrestled with St Paul, Baron comes down against it mainly because of ‘low dresses of pink, blue, white and yellow,’ and of ‘variously shaped and extremely large hats.’⁶

Despite his Ecclesiological credentials, Baron puts unusual emphasis on good placing for organs, unlike, for example, Pugin.

‘Ecclesiologists put an undue strain on their principles when they take an organ from the west gallery or choir-screen, where it was in all men’s sight and well heard, to thrust it into some hole out of sight, and where it is less satisfactorily heard.’⁷

The book was widely reviewed in enthusiastic terms, and he was invited to lecture and demonstrate his inventions at the General Architectural Congress in Oxford, during May 1858. He was heard there by a generous cross-section of relevant authorities, including the architects Gilbert Scott and S.S. Teulon, and the influential politicians and antiquarians Beresford Hope and Sir Henry Dryden. Baron demonstrated several organs, by both Hall and by Henry Willis: an anonymous correspondent implies that Willis had made some improvements to the designs,⁸

Another clergyman whose influence may have been helpful in spreading Baron’s ideas was the Rev. William Edward Dixon (1823-1910), who was Precentor of Ely 1858-1895, and wrote a memoir entitled *Fifty Years of Church Music*.⁹ Born in Richmond, Yorks, he was sent for tutoring in 1839 to one of the Deverill villages near Warminster, where he became honorary organist, and acquired a second-hand organ to tinker with. After Cambridge Dickson was appointed to Goostrey in Lancashire, but returned to Brixton Deverill in 1856 to marry Cassandra Walsh, whose father was Perpetual Curate of Christ Church, Warminster. One of the Rev. Walsh’s servants was born in Upton Scudamore, and one of Nelson Hall’s adverts lists him as a referee. Dickson from his own account retained a keen interest in organ-building, and given the coincidence of place and time was no doubt well aware of Baron and his activities, though they don’t mention each other in their books. Both acknowledge the influence of John Hullah.

⁵ 45-48

⁶ 2nd ed, 37-40

⁷ idem 33, footnote

⁸ Letter to *The Union*, 3 December 1858

⁹ Ely, T.A. Hills & Son 1894

John Baron's 'convenient local organ builder' was Nelson Hall (1828-1862). He was born in the clothing town of Westbury, three miles distant, the son of Joseph Hall, a blacksmith.¹⁰ How he became involved in organ building is unclear, though many carpenters, weavers and other craft workers of various kinds established themselves as more-or-less competent organ builders in a small way in the early nineteenth century, odd though this seems from our modern viewpoint. Unfortunately the entire 1851 census seems to be missing for Upton Scudamore: perhaps he learnt the craft elsewhere, but Hall was already 'organ builder' of Upton Scudamore in 1852 when he married in Tilshead.¹¹ In 1855¹² he started advertising 'Organs from £15 upwards' and 'Organs carefully repaired and tuned.' 'Reference is kindly permitted to the Rector and other employers,' - his workshop at this point was a barn at Court Buildings, west of the church, as was recorded when it burnt down in 1899.¹³

The Upton Scudamore organ,¹⁴ with a plain but characteristically solid pipe rack case by Street, was completed by April 1856, when Baron mentions it in his letter to the *Guardian*. Street made at least two other designs, illustrated in the book. organ, but it would be egregious to describe it as a case, especially at the His involvement is a surprise, since (like William Butterfield) he showed next to no interest in designing other organ cases: after inheriting the restoration of Salisbury Cathedral from Scott he provided some basic woodwork for Willis's organ, but describing it as a case would be egregious, especially given the reported cost of £1000.¹⁵ The so-called Pipe Rack, without visible woodwork above the impost, though ubiquitous in the Victorian age from our perspective, appears to have been a sudden innovation. Gray & Davison's organ for the Great Exhibition of 1851, now at St Anne, Limehouse, is perhaps the earliest prominent example.¹⁶ It was not only free of woodwork above the impost, but was also painted in patterns,¹⁷ a form of decoration which, though normal in the earlier seventeenth century, seems to have fallen out of use soon after 1660. In 1849 the new organ of Hope Street Unitarian Chapel in Liverpool was '*splendidly painted in gold and colours, by Mr. Gibbs of London, whose fame in polychromic and stained-glass designs needs no comment.*'¹⁸ It is called a

¹⁰ Baptized Westbury Leigh, 9th November 1828.

¹¹ Wilts & Swindon History Centre, Chippenham, 3318/2 Tilshead marriages 25 October 1852

¹² *Devizes & Wiltshire Gazette*, 25 October 1855

¹³ *Warminster & Westbury Journal*, 23 September 1899

¹⁴ Replaced with a larger organ by Vowles in 1891

¹⁵ *Musical Standard* 988, Vol. XXV New Series, 7 July 1883

¹⁶ Designed by Albert P. Howell (1828-1886), of 2 Holywell Street, Westminster, an architect and surveyor who was one of the dozens of obscure competitors for the Exhibition building itself. *Official, Descriptive and Illustrative Catalogue*, (London, Spicer Bros. 1851), Part II Class X, 555

¹⁷ This was later removed

¹⁸ *Preston Chronicle*, 20 October 1849

‘unique front,’ so was evidently unusual. Isaac Alexander Gibbs (1802-1851) and his sons were certainly well known: Alexander (c.1831-1886) was closely associated with Butterfield. For the origin of the nineteenth century caseless organ, one has to go back to Pugin. Despite the fine designs he produced for John Sutton’s book, his known executed organ cases seem rather forced and strange (Oscott College) or are just screens, as for his own organ at The Grange, Ramsgate). He writes of St James, Reading (1839): ‘*The organ pipes require painting and diapering,*’¹⁹ and in 1841, regarding St Giles, Cheadle: ‘*I have arranged a most glorious plan for...doing away with the odious organ Loft*’.²⁰ The payments for Cheadle mention only brasswork in connection with the organ, rather than woodwork or carving. William Butterfield produced two early pipe-rack designs for *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica*, a source-book for church furniture published by the Ecclesiological Society. It appeared as a part-work, in two series, published in 1844-47 and 1850-56. The first design was probably published in early 1847,²¹ and is labelled ‘*W. Butterfield del...This design has been successfully executed. It is a mere framework for holding the pipes, which in this Organ are of wood*’. It is perhaps even less than a mere frame: there is absolutely nothing except wooden pipes above the impost and below it consists of simple gothic arcading with buttresses. Butterfield’s second design (1850?)²² ‘*has been executed for a Village church.*’ It has post and rails with minimal gothic detailing, and a screen of pierced quatrefoils concealing the pipe mouths. Meanwhile, something similar was visible at the consecration of his cathedral at Perth in 1849: ‘*the eye rests upon the rich painting of the organ pipes, which instead of being concealed by an elaborate cage, become themselves their own ornament.*’²³

Baron’s book sets out the Tractarian position very instructively. He makes a call for truthfulness of design and function,²⁴ (later to be a Modernist position), and applies the same reasoning to the arrangement of organs, arguing that medieval churches ought to have medieval-looking organs: precedents are sought in the positives depicted by Raphael and Giotto, among others.²⁵

¹⁹ Belcher, M. (ed.): *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin*, Vol. 1 1830-42, Oxford, Clarendon Press 2001, 139: letter to John Ringrose, 21 August 1840

²⁰ *idem*, 269: letter to Lord Shrewsbury, 28 August 1841

²¹ *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica*, edited by the Ecclesiological late Cambridge Camden Society, London, n.d., plate LXIX, in part XII [the last]. The preface is dated Jan 21 1847, and seems to have been issued with the last part.

²² *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica, Second Series*, edited by the Ecclesiological late Cambridge Camden Society, London. The preface is dated April 1856: the organ case is plate XV in part III, issued in September 1850. Reproduced in *JBIOS* 7 (1983)

²³ *Perthshire Constitutional & Journal*, 18 December 1850

²⁴ v-vj

²⁵ xx-xxi

The pipe-rack evidently had other influential advocates from an early date: Baron notes that a proto-Scudamore organ ‘*of one stop, metal pipes...was constructed by an amateur, Mr J.H. King, of Exeter College, Oxford, and placed in a quasi-chancel position on the north side of the church at Littlemore*’ in 1843.²⁶ Littlemore was the church built just outside Oxford by John Henry Newman, before his conversion to the Roman church. John Keble, Vicar of Hursley, near Winchester was another important figure in the Tractarian movement, and his church there possessed one of the earliest Scudamore organs, designed originally by Baron for Captain R.C. Douglas, of the Delhi Mission.²⁷

It must be remembered that the purpose of the Scudamore organ was not for churches to have organs for their own sake, but as a support for singing. Encouraging congregations to sing has been an obsession for the Anglican clergy from at least the eighteenth century up to the present day, generally with disappointing results, as Maggie Kilbey has shown in her recent groundbreaking work.²⁸ Nevertheless, Baron applied himself assiduously to the task, and was Local Secretary to the Salisbury Diocesan Choral Association. With other local clergy such as his curate, the Rev. Richard R. Chope, frequent church choir festivals took place: a typical example in Warminster in June 1860²⁹ attracted nearly 100 participants from twelve parishes. To the Ecclesiologists, a parish church choir was decidedly a part of the worshipping congregation, though set apart by position and dress. The use of paid singers (outside the ancient foundations) had more than whiff of Popery: grand performances using operatic voices were common in the 1850s in larger towns and cities, and underlined the new Catholic Triumphalism attendant upon the restoration of the British catholic dioceses.

In more mainstream organ terms, Baron was certainly in tune with the latest developments: he took Edmund Schulze ‘*of the pre-eminent firm of Schulze & Sons of Paulinzelle*’ to see the Upton Scudamore organ in January 1857, and mentioned the great organ at Doncaster.³⁰ By October 1858,³¹ Henry Willis had been persuaded by Baron to enter the Scudamore organ market, and his eight-page Prospectus is added to the second edition of Baron’s book, published in

²⁶ 97

²⁷ 89-90. On the 26 November 1857 Keble wrote from Hursley Vicarage to a Mr Lear, discussing its disposal: ‘It is entirely of Cedar, having been made by order of Capt. Douglas for the Delhi Mission. It has no stop, but is all open Diapason. Its price I believe £37. For the size, price and construction, I believe it is thought to answer pretty well.’ [letter for sale in London, 2004]. Keble replaced it with a larger Willis Scudamore which is listed in his Prospectus attached to the 1862 edition of Baron’s book.

²⁸ Maggie Kilbey, *Music-Making in the Hertfordshire parish 1760-1870*, Hatfield, University of Hertfordshire Press 2020

²⁹ *Devizes & Wiltshire Gazette*, 14 June 1860

³⁰ 2nd edition, 15, 27

³¹ 2nd edition, Willis’s Prospectus, 7

1862. It lists forty organs of various Scudamore types which Willis had by then supplied. However, Hall himself appears to have made an impressive number himself before his untimely death in March 1862, and the survivors are of high quality. He moved to a new workshop in Back Street, Warminster (the nearest town) in October 1858, and when an organ was opened at Dilton Marsh at the end of the year³², it was said to be his 17th instrument made in two years. A correspondent calling himself 'A Wiltshire Priest' wrote in August 1861 that Hall had made more than fifty organs.³³ At the 1861 Census³⁴ he is said to be employing five men. One lived next door, a George E. Horton, born c. 1832 in Middlesex. Another, Arthur E. Dyer, (1843-1902) advertised as an organ and piano tuner in Warminster from 1860,³⁵ and shortly after Hall's death claimed to have worked for him for two years, and for one year with a London builder.³⁶ He was the son of James P. Dyer, music seller and organist of the parish church.³⁷ Arthur Dyer had moved to Weston super Mare as an organist by 1871, and died in Cheltenham. A third was Nelson Hall's younger brother William (c.1831-1869), who was organ builder in Deverill Road, Warminster in 1861.³⁸ He appears to have died in Bath in October 1869, where his widow Miriam swiftly married a blacksmith.³⁹

It is possible to make a suggestion for one of the other two men working for Hall.⁴⁰ A likely candidate is William Snelgrove, who also provides another link to Willis. In 1861 he was an organ builder, born in Bratton, Wilts., aged 19, living at the Duke Inn in Turnpike Road, Westbury with his father who was the landlord.⁴¹ Hall often opened his own organs, and at Edington Priory in 1860 he was assisted by Snelgrove.⁴² After Hall's death Snelgrove was in London from 1863-1867⁴³, when he probably went to Liverpool, evidently working for Willis

³² *Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 1 January 1859

³³ *The Union*, 30 August 1861

³⁴ RG9/1304, f.64 p.11

³⁵ *Warminster Miscellany*, 1 November 1860. He claims also to have worked for Oetzmann & Plumb, a London piano maker.

³⁶ *Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 15 March 1862

³⁷ These Dyers were presumably not related to the London organ builders of the same name, who came from Coggeshall in Essex. James Potter Dyer was born in Wotton-under-Edge c.1814, and was in Walcot in 1840, and Frome c.1841-1850s.

³⁸ RG9/1303 f.77 p.1

³⁹ Somerset Heritage Service, Taunton, D/P/wal.sw/2/1/50. St Swithin, Walcot marriages.

⁴⁰ Henry Reynolds, born in Westbury in 1835, was later a journeyman organ builder in St Pancras, but was already in London in 1858, so if he was connected with Hall he must have left earlier. In the 1861 census he lives next door to a family named Hall.

⁴¹ RG9/1301 f.23 p.2

⁴² *Wiltshire Independent*, 13 September 1860.

⁴³ He joined a London masonic lodge in 1863, but his subscriptions cease in 1867. Information from Bruce Buchanan, June 2020

there in 1871⁴⁴, and he was the firm's Glasgow representative for more than twenty years, dying in 1900.⁴⁵ Other circumstantial factors suggest that perhaps Willis was supplying the metal pipework to Hall before he began manufacturing the organs himself. When Hall's stock-in-trade was auctioned in 1862,⁴⁶ it included eight carpenter's benches and 'several thousand feet of pine, mahogany and oak boards,' but only 12 new metal pipes, and some second-hand ones. Bratton is in Willis's list of Scudamore organs, but when it was opened the local press attributed it to Hall.⁴⁷ Nelson Hall had a son of the same name, born in 1857, who was apprenticed to a cabinet maker in Warminster, and later is found in a great variety of places: Woodford, Essex in 1881, Cheltenham 1891, Nottingham 1901 and Birmingham 1911. Whether he had anything to do with organ building is unknown.

Willis was not the only person to see that the idea of the 'Scudamore organ' had possibilities. The great church restoration epidemic was given impetus by the ecclesiological movement, which required a dignified setting for worship even in village churches. Few village churches had a 'finger organ' in 1850, and the adaptation of the buildings for ecclesiological worship almost always involved the removal of the west gallery, traditionally the home of the church band or the barrel organ.⁴⁸ The 'Scudamore' organ was cheap, and small enough to insert in the narrow chancel of the average village church. Builders who mentioned the word 'Scudamore' in their advertising included Robert Allen (1859),⁴⁹ William Rushworth (1863),⁵⁰ T.H. Harrison (1863),⁵¹ Bryceson Bros. (1865),⁵² and William Barker of Northampton (1867).⁵³ Other builders did not necessarily include the word Scudamore, but the Chancel Organs of Bevington, Forster & Andrews, Gray & Davison, Lewis and others were being made from the early 1860s, and must have reached thousands in number.

As a result of this wave of wide popularity, the unexpected death of Nelson Hall in early 1862 had little effect on the dissemination of Baron's ideas. There are indications that Hall may have run into financial difficulties, having produced so many organs in such a short time. Late in 1861 he appeared at the County Court charged by a Frederick Shepherd for £12 regarding a 'finger organ', and

⁴⁴ 115 Salisbury Street, West Derby. Henry J. Snelgrove, one of William's brothers (c.1844-1903) eventually became Willis's chief clerk, though he was unemployed in Newcastle in 1871.

⁴⁵ In 1881 John Baron had two young servant girls called Snelgrove.: RG11/2055 f.8.p.9

⁴⁶ *Wiltshire Independent*, 20 March 1862

⁴⁷ *Frome Times*, 28 November 1860

⁴⁸ See Maggie Kilbey, *op. cit.*, for a recent and comprehensive survey of this transitional period.

⁴⁹ *Western Daily Press*, 28 October 1859

⁵⁰ *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 June 1863

⁵¹ *Rochdale Observer*, 18 July 1863

⁵² *London Evening Standard*, 29 September 1865

⁵³ *Northampton Mercury*, 28 December 1867

Alfred Bryant claimed £3 11s 6d for tuning three organs in Chepstow.⁵⁴ Both debts were admitted. Hall was still opening his own organs in late 1861 and working on one for Warminster Wesleyan Chapel shortly before his death.⁵⁵ A son was born on the 17th of January, but Hall himself died on 8 March, leaving less than £100.⁵⁶ Perhaps he took his own life. A certain ‘R.H.N.B’ wrote soliciting support for his family in June 1862,⁵⁷ saying that his widow and five children under eight were completely destitute. As can be seen from the worklist, Hall does not seem to have been thrown over by Baron by the ascendancy of Willis in producing these organs, since there was such an explosion of demand. In a letter to the *Ecclesiologist*,⁵⁸ Baron states ‘*I for one shall be careful not to undervalue or forget the important assistance rendered by a local organ-builder...I still hold to the importance of encouraging native, or at least local talent...Some of the worst work as well as some of the best comes out of London...*’

A PARTIAL OPUS LIST FOR NELSON HALL

Mere. Organ by Holland repaired by Hall 1855 ⁵⁹
2 second-hand organs for sale 1855 ⁶⁰
Upton Scudamore 1856
St Thomas, Oxford c.1856 ⁶¹ Detached and reversed console
Captain Douglas, Delhi c.1856 ⁶²
Heytesbury Independent Chapel c, 1857? ‘built 12 to 14 years ago (1869), now rebuilt for the new chapel by Mr Papps of Holt for 50 Guineas. 12 stops’ ⁶³
St Cecilia model, before 1858 ⁶⁴
Caldicot 1858 ⁶⁵
An anonymous letter of 1858 ⁶⁶ mentions, Caldicot, Tidenham and St Thomas, Oxford, and also Clyst St Mary, Devon, Stourton, Wilts and Cuddesdon, Oxon, implying that they are also by Hall.
Dilton Marsh ⁶⁷ 1858. Said to be Hall’s 17 th instrument

⁵⁴ *Warminster Herald* 2 November 1861. Alfred Bryant (1822-1863), probably a Bath-trained organ builder, was active in Frome from 1851 until his death.

⁵⁵ *Warminster Herald*, 8 March 1862

⁵⁶ National Probate Calendar: Letters of Administration to his widow Caroline Hall

⁵⁷ *The Union*, 6 June 1862

⁵⁸ November 1858, reproduced in the 1862 edition of *Scudamore Organs*, 90

⁵⁹ *Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 28 July 1855

⁶⁰ *Devizes & Wilts. Gazette*, 25 October 1855

⁶¹ 2nd edition, plate 5

⁶² 2nd edition, 23. Never delivered, owing to Douglas’s death in the Indian Mutiny.

⁶³ *Warminster Herald*, 24 April 1869

⁶⁴ 2nd edition, 76

⁶⁵ *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 11 September 1858

⁶⁶ *The Union*, 3 December 1858

⁶⁷ *Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 1 January 1859

Highbridge, Dorset 1859. ⁶⁸
Maddington 1860 ⁶⁹
St Denys, Warminster. Temporary organ erected for a Festival of Choirs ⁷⁰
St Laurence Warminster 1860 ⁷¹
Hill Deverill 1860 ⁷²
Norton Bavant 1860 ⁷³
Trinity Church, Wood Green, near Witney 1860 ⁷⁴
St John, Bemerton 1860 ⁷⁵
Edington Priory 1860 ⁷⁶
Bratton 1860 ⁷⁷
Semington 1860 ⁷⁸
Beckington 1860 ⁷⁹ , 2 manuals, 11 stops. Presumably the ‘Fine-toned organ’ with 6 Great stops, 4 Swell and Pedal, for sale at the beginning of November 1860 ⁸⁰
Warminster Atheneum. 1861 ⁸¹ Temporary organ lent by Mr Hall for a lecture by H.M. Gunn: ‘The Music of the Reformation.’
Pill 1861, ⁸² 5 stops, reversed console
Brown Street Chapel, Salisbury. Enlarged 1861 ⁸³
Warminster Atheneum. ‘A splendid organ’ bought by Mr Hall for G. Vicary Esq. at a sale of the effects of the late Rev. F.H. Wilkinson of West Ashton (original cost £1000),’ kindly erected here’. ⁸⁴
Camerton 1861 ⁸⁵
Purbrook, Hants, before August 1861. Mentioned in the letter of note 33
Tidenham, Glos, before December 1858: see above, and Williamson, ⁸⁶ 317
Warminster Wesleyan Chapel 1862 ⁸⁷
Okeford Fitzpaine n.d., erected at Stourton Caundle 1875 ⁸⁸
Sale at 44 Keyford, Frome 1906, includes ‘Pipe Organ in Oak Case by Nelson Hall.’ ⁸⁹
Drayton House, Northants. Supplied by Martin Renshaw from a private owner

⁶⁸ *Sherborne Mercury*, 28 June 1859. Removed to the Baptist Chapel, presumably in 1887 when St John’s received a new organ. Sold 2013 and moved by Martin Renshaw to Penvénan, Brittany 2015

⁶⁹ *Salisbury & Winchester Journal* 11 February 1860

⁷⁰ *Devizes & Wilts Gazette*, 14 June 1860. Baron was the Secretary of the Choral Association, and Mr Dyer of Warminster played the organ.

⁷¹ Extant. It has FF-f compass, 61 notes, and the console projects at right angles.

⁷² *Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 30 June 1860

⁷³ Ditto 28 July 1860

⁷⁴ *Oxford Chronicle*, 25 August 1860

⁷⁵ *Hampshire Chronicle*, 22 December 1860

⁷⁶ *Wiltshire Independent*, 13 September 1860. Since 1905 at Tilshead

⁷⁷ *Frome Times*, 28 November 1860. Also on Willis’s list of 1862. Extant, though enlarged.

⁷⁸ *Devizes & Wilts. Gazette*, 20 December 1860

⁷⁹ *Frome Times*, 26 December 1860 and 2 January 1861

⁸⁰ *Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 3 November 1860

⁸¹ *Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 20 April 1861. Accompanied by Miss Dyer. Georgina Dyer (born c. 1842) was Arthur Dyer’s sister, and claimed to have been a pupil of Henry Gauntlett. (*Weston-super-Mare Gazette*, 27 May 1865)

⁸² *Bristol Mercury*, 6 April 1861

⁸³ Ditto 27 April 1861

⁸⁴ Ditto 17 August 1861, *Frome Times* 31 July 1861

⁸⁵ *Warminster Herald*, 7 December 1861

⁸⁶ Roy Williamson, *The Organs of Gloucestershire*, Winchcombe, The Author 2008

⁸⁷ Ditto 22 March 1862. By ‘the late Mr. Hall’

⁸⁸ *Southern Times*, 25 December 1875

⁸⁹ *Somerset Standard*, 22 June 1906

In an advert of November 1861, ⁹⁰ Hall claims references from the Rectors of Chilmark, Christ Church, Warminster, Maddington & Shrewton, Tidenham, (Glos.), Thornham, Packwood (Warwicks.) and John Amott, organist of Gloucester Cathedral, but not all may represent an organ built by him.
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A SURVIVOR: ST LAURENCE'S CHAPEL, WARMINSTER, 1860

This small building in the centre of the town, of medieval origin, had passed into the hands of Trustees, where it remains, and was much restored in 1855-6. The organ, positioned against the south-west wall has a number of interesting features, and is well-preserved, despite a rash of replacement plastic buttons in the action. It cost £60. The shallow case (fig.1) is solidly made of oak, and the design of the traceried side panels and other detailing is very similar to Street's case for the original Upton Scudamore organ, pictured as the frontispiece to Baron's book. The case is considerably wider, since the Upton Scudamore instrument had only one stop. The console (fig.2) is arranged at right-angles to the soundboards, to give an uninterrupted view of the altar. The action is consequently quite complex, with large rollerboards and many angled trackers, but it works well (fig. 4). The divided Stopped Diapason is mainly upside down (fig. 4), and the pedals are pull-downs. The single manual descends for flexibility to FF, like some later (and C18) one manual instruments, but with only a principal and a tenor C Open Diapason in addition to the Stopped Diapason it is essentially an organ to accompany the singing, as Baron intended. Baron's original Scudamore organ was 'all Open Diapason' and he never envisaged them having more than about five stops. Small organs by builders such as Holdich come from an earlier tradition: miniaturising an organ of larger resources, and usually providing a full chorus including upperwork. These may appeal to us more today, (especially in resonant buildings), with their more forthright chorus and greater variety, but by 1900 Baron's concept was in the ascendant. Such organs by Holdich and others were often altered by replacing Mixtures and Fifteenths with a greater range of eight foot stops. It is notable that Baron does not seem ever to have advocated a swellbox, probably to avoid complexity and expense. Small chancel organs by others often had most of the organ enclosed, leaving only the (short-compass) open in the front.

The Reverend John Baron's achievement, within its limited aims, can be seen as perfectly successful. In 1800 there were perhaps 600 pipe organs in British cathedrals, parish churches and public chapels. By 1900 a church of any sort, however small, without an organ of some kind was a rarity, and besides the estimated 18000 Anglican churches in England there were enormous numbers

⁹⁰ *Warminster Herald*, 9 November 1861

of be-organed catholic and nonconformist establishments. Besides those by Nelson Hall and Willis, small instruments by Bevington and others were produced in their thousands for churches of impecunious means and modest demands, and later added to by the Positive Organ Company, with their ingenious though technically over-complex solution to the demands of the Village Organist. A large proportion of these organs continue to function, and provide a simple but useful resource for whatever keyboard players can be recruited today.