



# Stephen White (1760-1831)

## Organ builder, Pianoforte & Harp Maker

Stephen White built at least two medium-sized organs and several chamber organs in Belfast in the early years of the 19th century, but relatively little is known about him. Referred to as a ‘mechanic from London’, he was an organ builder, a pianoforte and Irish harp maker who also worked for some time in Liverpool. While in Belfast, his workshop was located in Orr’s-entry, High-street.

This paper is a chronological listing of currently known references to Stephen White and the instruments he made – almost certainly with a margin of error.

Full details of each source, where known, are given after the relevant listing. At this point in the paper’s first version (April 2018) I wrote, ‘Please do make contact through this website if you are able to amend or add to the information’.

That, of course, still applies, but I am indebted to Paul Tindall who made contact with further information about specific instruments and invaluable genealogical details. These are now incorporated in this second version and Paul’s contribution has been acknowledged as appropriate.

It was Edward Bunting (1773-1843) who enticed Stephen White to Belfast and acted as the consultant for the 1806 organ for the Second Congregation in Rosemary Street, Belfast, and most likely for the first organ in the Chapel of Ease (St George’s Church), Belfast. But who was Stephen White?

Born c.1760, we know that, just before his death, Stephen White was living in Henry Street (nowadays Allitsen Road) in the London Borough of Camden (confirmed by the Gloucester City Freeman reference detailed below). He was buried at St Pancras Parish, on 20 November 1831, aged 71.

(London Metropolitan Archives: P90/PAN1/197, St. Pancras burial register.)

Paul Tindall (hereafter ‘PT’) identified the same ‘Stephen White Organ Builder’ (helpfully recorded as that) recorded as the father of a son, ‘Stephen of Margaret his wife’, born on 26 November 1791 and baptised on 18 December 1791 at St Luke, Old Street (nowadays LSO St Luke’s).

(London Metropolitan Archives: P76/LUK/006, St Luke’s composite register 1789-1800.)

Other children, James (born 29 March 1788) and George (born 29 January 1803), were baptised at the Percy Chapel, St. Pancras.

(Paul Tindall, *BIOS Reporter*, April 2011, 57)

The register for St Anne’s Soho, Westminster, London, records the birth of ‘Thomas White of Stephen and Margaret’ on 27 July 1805 (baptised 25 August 1805).

(London Metropolitan Archives: DL/T/087/005)

It seems most probable that it was our Stephen White who married Margaret Shields in St Leonard’s, Shoreditch, London, on 13 May 1787, in the presence of Edward White (a brother perhaps?) who, like Stephen but unlike Margaret, was able to sign his own name.

(London Metropolitan Archives: P91/LEN/A/01/Ms 7498/14)

Note: a chest organ, built c.1788 for Osterley Park, Middlesex, and attributed to Henry Holland has, underneath the organ, a graffito which shows that it was actually made by 'Ed. White Invent et Delinea/May ye 30th 1788'. Could this be the same Edward White?

Source: website of Goetze & Gwynn, [www.goetzegwynn.co.uk](http://www.goetzegwynn.co.uk), accessed April 2019

PT also notes that Thomas White became a Freeman of the City of Gloucester in 1830, 'organ builder of 15 Margaret Street, Regent's Park, son of Stephen White organ builder of 34 Henry Street, Hampstead Road, formerly of Stephen Street, Tottenham Court Road.'

(Peter Ripley and John Junca, *A Calendar of the Freeman of the City of Gloucester 1641-1838* (Stroud, 1991) 493/1830)

PT reckons that 'since both Stephen and Thomas White were living in London in 1830, it is possible that Stephen was a native of Gloucester, allowing his son to become a Freeman by patrimony'. (For more about Stephen White's son Thomas, see page 23.)

He adds that further evidence of Stephen White's Gloucester origins is suggested by the fact that, in 1791, White was working for the organ builder John Avery (c.1755-1807). 'Avery was a native of Stroud, and was working in Gloucester from an early age, at first as a cooper. In 1791, White and Alexander Buckingham both signed and dated the inside of Avery's organ belonging to Colonel Lemon, which was moved by the builder in that year from 2 Bryanston Street, Marylebone to [the Church of St Michael in] St. Michael's Mount Castle in Cornwall.'

Dr Boeringer has commented that, 'The organ was built by John Avery [likely in 1786] for Colonel Lemon, who played it so much that his neighbours obtained an injunction to restrain him. They were no doubt pleased when the Colonel sold it to Sir John St. Aubyn. In 1790 it was taken down and in 1791 installed by John Avery in St. Michael's Mount Parish Church [i.e. St Michael's Church].'

Source: James Boeringer, *Organa Britannica: Organs in Great Britain 1660-1860, a Complete Edition of the Sperling Notebooks and Drawings in the Library of the Royal College of Organists*, Bucknell University Press, 1983, Vol.1, p.249

White, of course, is a relatively common surname. Alongside a Dublin clan of organ building Whites, were there others (or not), causing confusion, if not in Gloucester, then with researchers?

Dr Boeringer wrote, 'One of Avery's assistants was John [sic] White, who evidently went into business for himself sometime before 1801, when he made a chamber organ ... for one Mr. Pomeroy [but see **1801** below, page 5]. A partnership between White & Langshaw, ... also existed before 1821, but the first names of the two parties involved are not known.'

Source: James Boeringer, op. cit., Vol.1, pp. 88,89

Dr Boeringer writes 'One organist of Lancaster Parish Church was also a barrel-organ maker who became famous beyond his actual significance because he pinned the barrels of a spectacular self-playing organ built by John Snetzler and others in 1762 and later improved by Alexander Cumming. His name was John Langshaw, Sr., who was born in 1718 and who died in 1798. ... His son John, Jr., born in 1763, active as late as 1821, continued his father's activities, both as organist of the same church and as a barrel-organ maker, forming a partnership with an unidentified White, probably Steven [sic] White, who was independently active in London ca. 1790. Yet another unidentified White formed a partnership with various individuals named Southwell [but see **1820** below, pp.19,20] ... Finally, one John White is described [on page 89, Vol.1 – see above].'

Source: Boeringer, James. *Organa Britannica* ... etc, Bucknell University Press, 1983 Vol.2, p.95

Aside from such confusions of name, PT has identified Stephen White as renting a property at 7 Union Place, Orchard Street, Westminster, when the freehold was offered for sale.

(*Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 4 April 1796)

The *National Pipe Organ Register* (NPOR) database of organ builders lists an address for Stephen White at Cumberland Street, Fitzroy Square, London, based on an 1834 reference in Alexander Buckingham's notebooks (see *c.1803 perhaps* below, p.8).

Note: Alexander Buckingham (c.1777-1853) was an important London-based organ builder in the early 19th century. His notebooks were compiled on travels around England and Wales between 1823 and 1842.

That address is confirmed, at least for pre-1806 activity, by a series of advertisements in the *Morning Post* (see *1802* and *1805* below) which gives 'Mr. White, Organ Builder, No.24, Cumberland-street, Middlesex Hospital'.

Across the period 1806-1808 and later, White worked from Orr's-entry, High-street, Belfast. How often did he return to London during that period?

## The Listing

(NB. By its nature, some of these listed instruments may be duplicate or multiple listings of the same instrument.)

### c.1791

► A CHURCH ORGAN to be SOLD, compass from GG bass to F in alt; great organ contains 8 stops and pedals, swell organ, 4 stops, in a mahogany case. The above was made by Mr. Stephen White, organ-builder, now of Liverpool, about 32 years since. May be viewed at Battersea, and price known, by application, or letter, to Mr. C. Chabot, near the bridge, Battersea, Surrey.

Source: *The Times* (London), Wednesday, 6 August 1823, page 1. [Organ built c.1791]

That instrument was re-advertised a few months later, this time with more information:

► FINGER ORGAN to be SOLD, containing 8 stops in the great organ and 4 in the swell, the choir organ made by a shifting movement[,] compass of great organ: from GG to F in alt, long octaves, swell down to middle C, in a mahogany case.

The above described organ was built by Mr. Stephen White, organ builder, of Liverpool, 32 years since, for Battersea church [St Mary's?], is in complete repair, and contains great sweetness and power in the smallest possible space, and would suit any moderate sized church, chapel, or concert rooms.

May be viewed at Mr. Davis's auction rooms, Rathbone-place, Oxford-street, and price known of Mr. [James] Butler, organ builder, 52, Rathbone-place, or of the proprietor, C. Chabot, near the bridge, Battersea, Surrey. Letters to be post paid.

Source: *The Times* (London), Wednesday, 1 Oct 1823, page 1, [Organ built c.1791]  
Interestingly, Rathbone-place was also the site of organ builder George Pyke England's workshop at the tail-end of the 1790s.

## c.1796

► Finger and Barrel organ in Belper, Derbyshire. Made for Bridge Hill House, the 1795 residence (demolished 1938) of George Benson Strutt. Mahogany case with 3 circular towers; 10'9" x 5'9" x 4'10". Michael Wilson (see source below) notes that a 1794 newspaper was found inside the organ when it was restored in the 1980s.

Details were recorded by the travelling organ builder Alexander Buckingham, London, 1822-24, who removed the barrels and made and fitted new horizontal bellows.

In 1905, the organ was installed in St Mark's Mission Church, Openwoodgate, Belper, by the organ builder J.H. Adkins, who added a Swell. See *The Organ*, ?1988, Tomkins, Rodney, *The pipe organ at Openwoodgate Church*. Wilson notes that during these church years, the instrument was mistakenly attributed to Snetzler.

In 1987, the organ was in the home of Dr Francis Jackson, East Riding, Acklam, Yorkshire, 'now here in "much rebuilt" form' (<http://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=D03507>). See *The Organ*, Nov 2007 – Feb 2008, page 8.

L.S. Barnard says of Buckingham's notes: 'He writes with pride of the improvements he had made in an organ for a Mr. Strutt of Belper'. Then follows the relevant notebook quotation:

*G. B. Strutt, Esq., Belper, near Derby* — An Organ with one set of keys from GG long octaves to F in alt and a piano movement to leave the Diapasons Principal Flute and Dulciana.

Open Diapason	58
Stop Diapason	58
Dulciana to fiddle G	35
Principal	58
Flute	58
Twelfth	58
Fifteenth	58
Sexquialtera	139
Hautboy to middle C	30
Total	552

The Sexquialtra from GG to F# below m/C is three ranks from G to the top two ranks. A Mahogany Case with three circular towers 10 ft. 9 ins. high, 5 ft. 9 ins. wide, 4 ft. 10 ins. deep. This Organ was made by Stephen White, of London[;] Finger and Barrel but the whole of the instrument has undergone a thorough alteration and improvement. The barrels are taken away, new horizontal bellows with double feeders have been made. The Op Diapason original was to G, the lower octave has been added of a large scale that answers for a double Diapason, also an octave of Pedals to act on the keys and two piano movements in addition to the one above[,], the first to leave the Diapasons and Dulciana, the second to leave the Stop Diapason and Dulciana. All of those alterations as well as other additions and improvements have been made by A. Buckingham, of London, in 1822-1823-1824.

Belper, 24 November, 1824. A.B.

Sources: *National Pipe Organ Register (NPOR)* V2.19 (British Institute of Organ Studies); Wilson, Michael I, *The Chamber Organ in Britain, 1600-1830*, Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 2016; *The Organ*, No.208, Vol.LII, pp.179, 180, (L.S. Barnard, *Buckingham's Travels*, Part IV), 1972-73

## 1796

► ‘An elegant-looking chamber organ inscribed ‘Stephen White Londini fecit 1796’ was sold at Christie’s on 12 June 1974. It had a mahogany case with swan’s-neck pediment and a framed central oval of front pipes (15) with two outer divisions (3); original brass candleholders. Sliding keyboard with fallfront, brass drawstops for Open Diapason T, Stopt Diapason B/T, Principal and Fifteenth. Present location unknown.’

Source: Wilson, Michael I, *The Chamber Organ in Britain, 1600-1830*, Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 2016.

## 1801

► A large three manual organ by Stephen White for the Hon. George Pomeroy, an amateur musician and music-theorist who ‘Samuel Wesley had met and had disliked as a “most conceited Pretender to musical Criticism”’. (Olleson, Philip, *Samuel Wesley: The Man and His Music*, Boydell Press, 2003). Joseph Kemp’s *Six Glees*, Op.2 was dedicated to Pomeroy.

Leffler writes: ‘The Hon<sup>ble</sup>. G. Pomeroy’s organ has three setts of Keys from F to GG long octaves, Pedals to C. Built by White 1801.’

PT adds that the Hon. Captain George Pomeroy was a naval officer, who lived in 1805 at Albany, Piccadilly (*Holden’s Triennial Directory*). He also suggests that this is the same organ advertised for sale in 1802 and sold (opposite the Albany) in 1805 (see both below). ‘It’s about the right size, and surely a small builder would not build two such large organs at the same time.’

GREAT ORGAN		CHOIR ORGAN		SWELL ORGAN to F	
Double Diapason open	58	Dulciana to Gam <sup>t</sup>	47	Open Diap	37
Open Diap	58	Stop Diap	58	Stop Diap	37
Stop Diap	58	Flute	58	Dulciana	37
Principal	58	Fifteenth put in & Bassoon		Principal	37
Twelfth	58	taken out	58	Cornet 3 ranks	111
Fifteenth	58			instead of a Trumpet which	
Sesq. 3 ranks	174		279	has been taken out.	
Trumpet	58				
	580	Has Leffler counted the Fifteenth			259
		and the Bassoon? Otherwise 221.			

Leffler totals his own figures, giving him 1155 pipes, rather than 1060. He also adds ‘Cost 1200’.

Source: Henry Leffler’s Notebook, facsimile edition with introduction by Peter Williams: *The Leffler Manuscript*, British Institute of Organ Studies, 2010, p.174

## 1802

► Stephen White advertises a nineteen stop, three-manuals (Great – eight stops, Choir – four stops, Swell – seven) and pedals instrument. Desperation sets in and at the third attempt it's to be sold or let.

**CAPITAL ORGAN.**—To be SOLD cheap, an INSTRUMENT, lately finished in the most perfect stile; is fit for church, chapel, or concert room; has nineteen stops, three sets of manuals and pedals to play the bass of the loud organ. Inquire of Mr. White, Organ-builder, No. 24, Cumberland-street, Middlesex Hospital.

Source: *Morning Post*, Friday 30 April 1802, page 1.

**CAPITAL FINGER ORGAN.**—To be SOLD cheap, an Instrument lately finished in the best manner, is suitable for a Church, Chapel, or Concert Room; has nineteen stops, three sets of manuals, and pedals to play the bass of the loud organ.—For particulars inquire of Mr. White, Organ Builder, No. 24, Cumberland-street, Middlesex Hospital.

Source: *Morning Post*, Wednesday 19 May 1802, page 1.

**AN ORGAN** to be SOLD, or LETT, suited for a Concert Room, Church, or Chapel, of the following description: three sets of keys; the great organ contains eight stops, choir four, swell seven. Apply to Mr. White, No. 24, Cumberland-street, Middlesex Hospital.

Source: *Morning Post*, Tuesday 29 June 1802, page 1.

## 1803

► Stephen White is credited with ‘a chamber organ dated 1803 and currently in Switzerland’.

Source: Wilson, Michael I, *The Chamber Organ in Britain, 1600-1830*, Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 2016.

## 1803 – or c.1790?

► Chamber organ formerly in the residence of Thomas William Bourne (1862-1948), Red House, Blakeney, Norfolk. PT adds that Bourne ‘was a music collector, whose holdings were bequeathed to the Bodleian. He was living in Finchley at least from 1891-1911, much of the time “on his own means”, though he is called “retired librarian at the British Museum” in 1939.’

Bourne presented the organ in 1939 to Thomas Armstrong for use in Christ Church Song School, Oxford. Stephen White’s name is inlaid. The following pic was sourced online.



Organ by Stephen White, said to be 1803, pic courtesy and copyright of organ-builder Mateusz Jabłoński.

Paul Tindall, having been in touch with the owner of the Christ Church Oxford organ, was sent some photos of the instrument which show that it's undoubtedly the organ pictured above – ‘there's no doubt about it’, writes PT. ‘The name board states “Stephen White Builder London”, but is undated. I don't know where 1803 comes from. The owner found it in an antique dealer's warehouse in Oxford.’

PT continues, ‘it does in fact have a compass of CC-c, 61 notes: the *National Pipe Organ Register* is wrong’. Indeed, the organ is described in the *NPOR* as a ‘very small instrument, like an upright piano, no display pipes’. The drawstops have ivory labels with ‘copperplate’ font. Apparently low c# plays the octave above and a swell pedal raises part of the lid. Gordon Paget suggests a date of 1790. The instrument was restored by Kenneth Tickell in 1987. In 2002 the organ was removed to a private residence in Oxford.

The organ pictured above certainly has a greater compass and uses the whole lid as a swell if necessary. This is the *NPOR* information, contradicting the evidence of the pic:

Compass – low C to high f<sup>3</sup>. 54 keys

- Stopt Diapason Trebl 8' (from mid C)
- Stopt Diapason Bass 8'
- Dulciana 8' (from mid C)
- Principal 4' (bass octave stopped pipes)
- Fifteenth 2'

Source: *National Pipe Organ Register* V2.19: i (Norfolk) E00570;  
 ii (Christ Church, Oxford) D01788;  
 iii (Oxford private residence) E00572.

See also Gordon Paget *An Account of the Organs in the Diocese of Norwich*,  
 (Bury St. Edmunds, 1976) pp.49-50.

## 1803

► A chamber organ said to be in the Victoria Hall, Victoria Road, Saltaire, West Riding. Reference number A00339 in the *National Pipe Organ Register*. The date given is 1803 and the builder is Stephen White. Is the instrument still extant? In 1986 it appears that the ‘organ will be sold if a buyer can be found’.

The listed specification is:

Open Diapason  
Keraulophon [almost certainly a much, much later addition!]  
Stop Diapason Treble  
Stop Diapason Bass  
Principal  
Cornet Treble           stop changed  
Sesquialtera Bass       stop changed

PT has written to the owners of the Saltaire reed organ collection which is now in storage in Keighley. No reply to date.

### c.1803 perhaps

► All Saints’ Parish Church, Breadsall, Derbyshire. A chamber organ of four stops by Stephen White, London. Undated. Limited details in *NPOR*, N05306. Installed in Breadsall by Alexander Buckingham in 1834 – his first job of the year. Church and organ burnt down by the suffragettes in 1914.

‘This Organ was made by Steven [sic] White, Cumberland Street, Fitzroy Square, London, but I think the Venition Swell and the Bellows have been added by Flight. It was bought at the Pantehnicon in London by the Revd. H. R. Crewe for 45 pounds and erected in Breadsall Church by A. Buckingham, 17 January 1834.’

Note: London’s Pantehnicon was an 1830 Greek revival building in Belgravia. It began life as a gallery, furniture shop and storage facility. Only its façade survived a huge fire in 1874.

Source: *The Organ*, No.212, Vol.LIII, p.126, (L.S. Barnard, *Buckingham’s Travels*, Part VIII), 1975

## 1804

► PT noted the following advertisement on page 4 of the *Morning Chronicle*, Saturday 21 April 1804. ‘When the stock in trade of the music seller George Smart of Oxford Street was sold, a small organ with four stops by S[tephen] White was included.’

Capital MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, Ancient and Modern  
MUSIC, &c. Oxford-street,—By Mr. WILLOCK,  
On the Premises, on Wednesday the 2d of May, and two fol-  
lowing days. at 12,

**T**HE large and valuable STOCK-IN-TRADE of  
Mr. George Smart, (retiring from business) at his Music  
and Musical Instrument Warehouse, No. 331, in Oxford-street,  
the corner of Argyle-street: consisting of a great variety of  
forte pianos, with and without additional keys, many of them  
new; a most superb and unique pedal harp, made for the late  
Queen of France, by the celebrated Coulineau, various other  
French and English pedal harps; a capital large finger organ,  
with eight stops, fit for a chapel or spacious hall, by Snetzler; a  
smaller organ, with four stops, by S. White; a very curious an-  
cient harpsichord, by Rucker, of Antwerp; a great variety of  
barrel organs, violins, violoncellos, Spanish and English guitars;  
flutes, oboes, clarionets, &c. &c.; a complete set of Handel's  
Works, in forty volumes, neatly bound; a collection of music  
by the best masters, ancient and modern, &c. &c. To be viewed  
two days preceding the sale, when catalogues may be had on the  
Premises; at the Baptist Coffee-house, in Chancery-lane; at  
Garraway's; and of Mr. Willock, No. 25, Golden Square.

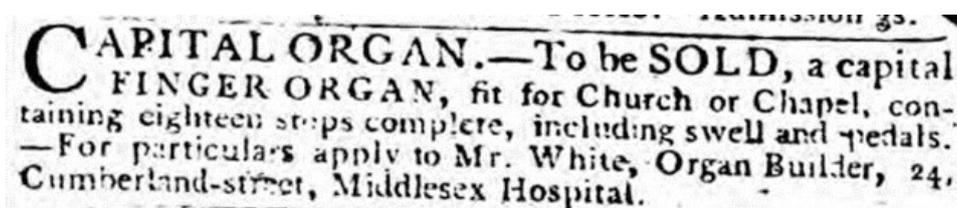
1805

► Two advertisements describe an eighteen stop organ, with two manuals and pedals. The first advertises an auction that day; the second is surely the same instrument that probably hadn't sold at the auction. Neither advertisement actually specifies that the builder was Stephen White himself, though that does seem to be most likely.

#### Sales by Auction

Capital Church Organ.—By Mr. STEWART, at his Auc-  
tion Rooms, 194, Piccadilly, (opposite Albany), THIS  
DAY, exactly at 1,  
**A** CAPITAL ORGAN, fit either for Church or  
Chapel, with 18 stops throughout, stands 14 hands  
high, 8 feet wide and 7 feet deep, with pipes, &c. and other  
apparatus to enlarge it considerably, built only three years at  
a very considerable expence, the property of a Gentleman  
leaving town. May be viewed, by applying to Mr. White,  
Organ Builder, No. 24, Cumberland-street, Middlesex Hos-  
pital, any day previous to the sale, from the hour of 10 to 4.

Source: *Morning Post*, Saturday 22 June 1805, page 4.



Source: *Morning Post*, Saturday 20 July 1805, page 1.

## 1805

► Alexander Buckingham’s notebooks mention a four-stop bureau or cabinet organ dated 1805 and made for a Mr. [J?] Dewsnap of Sheffield. Another instrument probably like the one pictured on p.7. It had an unusually long compass, CC (no CC#)-c<sup>4</sup>.

Source: Wilson, Michael I, *The Chamber Organ in Britain, 1600-1830*, Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 2016.

‘Mr. Dewsnap of Sheffield had a small organ with a compass longer than was usual at the time. It was nearly modern, running from CC to C five octaves, but lacked the CC# so had 60 notes instead of 61. It had only four stops and was a portable organ made by Stephen White of London in 1805.’

Source: *The Organ*, No.210, Vol.LIII, p.19 (L.S. Barnard, *Buckingham’s Travels*, Part VI), 1973-74

## 1806

► Organ for the Second Congregation, Rosemary-lane, Belfast, with ‘consultant’, Edward Bunting.

‘This is the first Congregation of Protestant Dissenters, in the North of Ireland, which has introduced an organ into the public worship. It will be played by Mr EDWARD BUNTING, whose musical talents are well known and acknowledged. It has been built by Mr WHITE, an ingenious mechanic from London, and is constructed so as to acquire considerable power from the use of pedals. – The organ is reckoned by judges one of the best in this part of the country.’

Source: *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Saturday, 6 September 1806, page 2.

A newspaper article by S. Shannon Millin (the church’s historian) for the *Larne Times* gives the following purportedly original specification:

GREAT [GG to F]	SWELL [from tenor F]	CHOIR [GG to F]	PEDAL ORGAN
Open Diapason	Open Diapason	Stop Diapason	[Pedals (likely limited in number) but probably no actual pipework in 1806. Some added before 1808]
Stop Diapason	Stop Diapason	Dulciana	
Principal	Principal	Flute	
Fifteenth	Flute	Principal	
Sesquialtera [3 ranks]	Cornet [3 ranks]	Fifteenth	
Trumpet	Hautboy		

Source: *Larne Times*, Saturday 22 January 1916, page 6.  
 See also more details in the PDF, *Second Presbyterian Church organ, 1806*, on this webpage:  
[www.byersmusic.com/edward-bunting.php](http://www.byersmusic.com/edward-bunting.php)  
 And see also details of the 1979 rebuild in Newry on the *Northern Irish Pipe Organs* website:  
<http://www.amccartney.org/niorgan/specs/newrymsp.html>

‘Mr. White, organ-builder, whose advertisement appears this day, is the person who was brought over to Ireland by Mr. Bunting, and was the maker of perhaps the finest toned instrument in this kingdom, for the use of the 2d congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Belfast. Since its erection he has added a number of *Pedal* pipes, which renders it in power equal to the organ of Westminster Abbey. ...’

Source: *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday, 30 August 1808, page 3

The following comments from Alistair McCartney’s *Northern Irish Pipe Organs* website, seem to have been made following the 1979 rebuild by the Wells Kennedy Partnership:

‘Swell Principal is attributed to Renatus Harris (1680-1724). Voicing style suggests that the organ may originally have been by Samuel Green although there is no proof for this statement.’

The *National Pipe Organ Register*, C00768, states ‘Sometimes attributed to Snetzler, but almost certainly by George Pyke England’. Perhaps that provides a hint as to the source of White’s organ pipes. See also the reference to sourcing pipes from London, under the year **1812** below (page 17).

### c.1807

► Large barrel and finger organ for Thomas Hull, a dancing master, 10-12 Ann-street, and master of ceremonies for Belfast’s Subscription Assemblies (society balls in the Exchange and Assembly Rooms). Was the organ used to accompany dancing? See the For Sale notice on page 12.

GREAT ORGAN	SWELL ORGAN	PEDAL
Open Diapason	Stopped Diapason	‘... has pedal pipes ...’
Stopped Diapason	Dulciana	
Principal	Flute	
Flute	Hautboy	
Fifteenth		
Tierce		
Sexquialtera (‘Six quarter’)		
Cornet		
Trumpet		

‘During his [Stephen White’s] short residence in this country, he built for Mr. Thos. Hull an organ on an extensive scale, consisting of open diapason, stop diapason, principal[,] flute, fifteenth, terse, six-quarter, cornet and trumpet, [sic] stop, which completes the chorus of the great organ. Its swell contains stop diapason, dulciana, flute, and hautboy. This instrument has also pedal pipes, and is constructed to play with barrels as well as the fingers.’

Source: *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday, 30 August 1808, page 3

The instrument, probably dating from sometime in 1807, would surely have been erected in the ball-room of Hull's establishment in Telfair's-entry in Ann-street. That likely setting is referenced in an advertisement in the *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Saturday, 28 September 1816:

'The Adelphi Exhibition, of Robert Lefevre's celebrated whole-length portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte, as large as life, is now open for a short time only, at the Ball-room, 2, Telfair's-entry, Ann-street, formerly occupied by the late Mr. Thomas Hull'.

The Hull organ's next mention after 1808 is in the *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Monday, 11 June 1810, page 3:

#### AN ORGAN FOR SALE

TO BE DISPOSED OF, AN ORGAN of the Finest Tone, built by WHITE, of London. Its compass from Double G in the Bass, to F in Alt, Full Octaves, with Eighteen Stops; also, Twelve Large Pedal Pipes.

To persons in want of an Organ on the grandest scale, for a place of Public Worship, or a Nobleman's Library, such an opportunity will seldom present itself.

In order to accommodate a place of Public Worship, the Proprietor will accept of payment in Annual Instalments, for a reasonable consideration. The Organ is new, and built entirely of Mahogany.

Apply to THOMAS HULL, Ann-street, Belfast, where the Organ may be seen on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

Price, 500 Guineas, which is only one half the London charge. Belfast, June 9.

I believe Mr Hull knew his target audience, because plans for the new Chapel of Ease (St George's, High-street) were very much 'in the air'. See the Organ for sale listed below under *c.1812*, p.17, advertised in the *Dublin Evening Post* in 1824 as being in the Belfast Chapel of Ease.

The 'eighteen' stops mentioned of the 1810 'for sale' organ don't quite tally, though perhaps that depends on how one counts those stops which 'draw in halves'. And then there's the suggestion that in 1824, the organ is 'about twelve years' old, whereas it must have been at least 16 years old. There's also the disparity between a Twelfth in one specification and not in another, but it does seem likely that all three listings are for one and the same instrument.

Did Mr Thomas Hull find a buyer? Did St George's pay for it in instalments, recognising a bargain and anticipating its eventual use? Where was the instrument stored in those intervening years before its usage in St George's? Who bought it in 1824/25 and where did it end up?

## 1808

- ▶ A chamber organ in a mahogany case. Four stops. Price 70 guineas.  
Open Diapason, Stopped Diapason, Principal, Fifteenth.

The advertisement which refers to this instrument (reproduced below) gives the Belfast address for White – presumably where he lived and worked. Orr's-entry ran between High-street and Rosemary-lane, parallel with modern day Bridge Street. It was destroyed in the Second World War Belfast blitz.

There's also very relevant editorial comment on the same newspaper page (transcribed overleaf) stating that White was 'brought over to Ireland' by Edward Bunting.

Had they business dealings before 1806? And after 1808?

White's advertisement states that he intends to return to his native city in a short time, but he was working in Belfast in 1810. Was business good and so he remained in the town? Or had he left and returned some time later?

**MR. WHITE,**  
**ORGAN BUILDER, PIANOFORTE & HARP MAKER,**  
**FROM LONDON,**

**B**EGS leave to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen, that he intends to return to his native City in a short time. On this account, those who have Organs or Pianofortes that require Tuning, or Repairing, particularly the Hammer of the latter new-leathered, (which makes the tone equal to what it was when the Instrument was first imported), ought speedily to give their orders, addressed to him in Orr's-entry, High-street, Belfast.

Since his arrival in this Country he has repaired a number of Instruments, Organs, and Pianofortes, to the universal satisfaction of their Proprietors. Belfast, August 29.

\* \* \* He has on hands and nearly ready for Sale, a CHAMBER ORGAN; fit for a Drawing-room, or a small Church. It contains four Stops, viz. Stop Diapason, Open Diapason—Principal, and Fifteenth.—Price, in an elegant Mahogany Case, Seventy Guineas.

Source: *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday, 30 August 1808, page 3

The accompanying editorial in the *Belfast News-Letter* reads:

‘Mr. White, organ-builder, whose advertisement appears this day, is the person who was brought over to Ireland by Mr. Bunting, and was the maker of perhaps the finest toned instrument in this kingdom, for the use of the 2d congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Belfast. Since its erection he has added a number of *Pedal* pipes, which renders it in power equal to the organ of Westminster Abbey. During his short residence in this country, he built for Mr. Thos. Hull an organ on an extensive scale, consisting of open diapason, stop diapason, principal[,] flute, fifteenth, terse, six-quarter, cornet and trumpet, [sic] stop, which completes the chorus of the great organ. Its swell contains stop diapason, dulceana, flute, and hautboy. This instrument has also pedal pipes, and is constructed to play with barrels as well as the fingers. He has also tuned and repaired the church organ, and done the like with respect to several others. In addition to this view of his labours, it is a symptom of the increasing taste for music in this part of Ulster, that he has orders for three chamber organs nearly finished.’

### c.1808 (i)

► Ardboe Parish Church, Co Tyrone. The NPOR, C00694, simply lists an undated early 19th century organ, one manual with six stops (no details) by Stephen White. It would seem most likely that it was built while White was working in Belfast – hence my approximate dating. However, there's no proof of that so far. Details of stops to follow in due course.

I am grateful to Canon Barry Paine (Ballinderry, Tamlaght & Ardboe) who has explained that the [Fourth] Earl of Castle Stewart had presented the organ to the church during the incumbency of the Rev. Charles Leslie Garnett, (1875-1894), the Earl's son-in-law. He continued, 'Built by Stephen White, the Ardboe organ was installed in a gallery above the West Door. It has been moved to the centre of the nave (late 1980s). In 1896 the Select Vestry considered replacing the organ with a small Estey [American reed] organ for £34, but as the 'old' organ was deemed repairable by Telford & Telford, a fund raised £9 2s 6d for repairs. You will be glad to know the organ is used every week! We are very proud of it.'

It seems that this organ was one of a pair (see next entry below) of Stephen White organs acquired by the First Earl of Castle Stewart (1725-1809) for the family seat at Stuart Hall, near Stewartstown, County Tyrone. Maybe a grand gesture to celebrate the 1806 marriage of his eldest son, Robert, to Jemima Robison (sometimes Robinson) (c.1786-1859), only daughter of Col. Charles Robison of Chapelizod, Co Dublin, and the Royal Artillery, and/or to celebrate the birth of Robert and Jemima's first son, Edward Stewart, on 11 September 1807.

Alternatively, perhaps Robert, the Second Earl, bought the pair of organs for Stuart Hall in memory of his father who died on 26 August 1809.

Alistair McCartney recalled (email dated 17 April 2018) that the late Ken Gibbons of Portrush told him that 'the Ardboe organs were a pair on either side of a fireplace in a big house'. Ken Gibbons had restored the Ardboe Parish Church instrument in the closing years of the 20th century.

The gift to Ardboe Church was likely an *In Memoriam* tribute to the Fourth Earl, Charles Andrew Knox Stewart (1810-1874), a son of the Second Earl and a brother of the Third Earl. Charles, the Fourth Earl, died in 1874 (12 September) – six months before the Rev. Garnett married Charles's sister, Lady Ella Sophia Stewart in 1875 (2 March).

## **c.1808 (ii)**

► Mullinahoe Chapel, Parish of Ardboe, Co Tyrone.

Canon Barry Paine also mentioned (email dated 13 April 2018) the Stewart family's gift of an organ to the Roman Catholic Chapel at Mullinahoe: 'The Mullinahoe Chapel organ was not in good condition to be transferred to their new Chapel, but the organ pipes are preserved in the Cistercian Monastery at Portglenone'. Brother McLoughlin in the Portglenone Monastery has since confirmed that the bellows and a few metal pipes have indeed survived, some damaged. He plans to send me details of the markings on the pipes which might assist with identifying their source.

The Third Earl, Edward Stewart (1807-1857) died on 20 February 1857. He had converted to Roman Catholicism in 1835 and he became the Third Earl in 1854.

Did this establish (or perhaps continue) the pattern of Stewart family *In Memoriam* tributes? On this occasion in 1857, the organ was surely presented in memory of Edward, the Third Earl, from his mother, Jemima, Dowager Countess of Castle Stewart.

*The Ulsterman*, Friday 16 October 1857, page 2

### **CHARITY SERMON**

ON SUNDAY, the 15th of November, 1857, a CHARITY SERMON will be Preached, at TWELVE o'clock Noon, by the Celebrated Doctor CAHILL, in the CHAPEL of MULLINAHOE, Parish of Ardboe and County of Tyrone.

Vocal and Instrumental Music will contribute to impart grandeur, sublimity, and solemnity to the interesting occasion; and the magnificent Organ so generously presented (through their esteemed Pastor), to the Catholics of Ardboe by the illustrious Dowager Countess of Castlestuart, shall peal forth its thrilling strains under the influence of a distinguished Performer.

*A Collection will be made after the Discourse.*

*Admission—To the Gallery or Reserved Seats, 2s; Ground Floor Seats. &c, 2s.*

Spelling footnote: As the Public Record Office for Northern Ireland has recorded: ‘The family name of the Earls Castle Stewart is Stuart ... It appears to have been the 1st Earl Castle Stewart who adopted for all but one of the family titles the spelling ‘Stewart’; and Stuart and Stewart have coexisted confusingly in the family ever since.’

### **c.1808 (iii)**

► An elegant chamber organ of five octaves. The newspaper advertisement below, from 1821, might possibly be one of Stephen White’s instruments built in Belfast around 1808 or earlier. A word of warning: at this date (1821) Bunting was now living in Dublin, and perhaps Mr May was dipping his toes into the world of musical instrument commerce. ‘All the latest improvements’ could well suggest a recently made instrument. It might have been ‘imported’ from anywhere, including Dublin.

As a postscript, there had been a major household auction at this King-street address at the end of January 1821, but I’ve been unable to trace who had lived there – or died there (it doesn’t seem to have been simply an auction room) or indeed if the organ has any relevance to that sale. For the auction listing, see *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Saturday 27 January 1821, page 3.

#### ***Church or Chamber Organ***

FOR SALE,

To be SOLD, an ELEGANT CHAMBER ORGAN, of FIVE OCTAVES, from *G.G. to G. in alt.* containing the following STOPS, viz, — Stopt Diapason, Open Diapason, Principal, Twelfth, Fifteenth, and Hautboy; enclosed in Mahogany Case, with Glass Swell Front, and all the latest Improvements in Mechanical Principle. This Instrument possessing a *superior quality of Tone*, and being of a considerable size, is well adapted for a CHURCH or CHAPEL.

To be seen at No. 21, KING-STREET; or on application to Mr. MAY, No.19, Academy street, Belfast. Nov. 7, 1821.

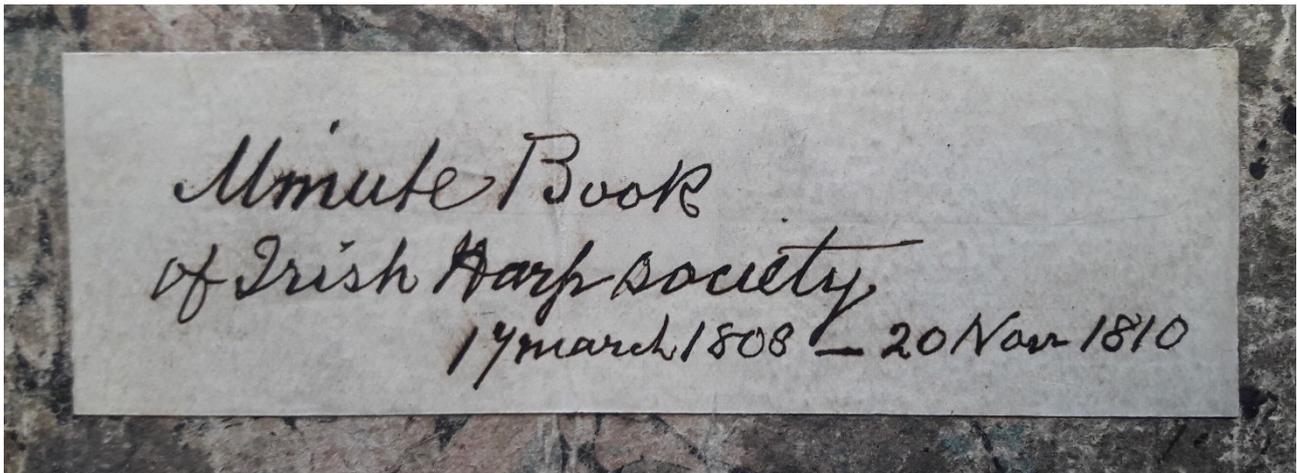
Source: *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Monday, 12 November 1821, page 1

Footnote: James May was leader of the Belfast Theatre ‘orchestra’ and a ‘professor of music’. In a letter to Bunting, dated 19 July 1839 (quoted in Charlotte Milligan Fox, *Annals of the Irish Harpers*, London, 1911), James Sidebotham recalled weekly Belfast meetings in ‘days of old’ of at least eight friends, including May and Bunting, to ‘scratch’ symphonies by Haydn and Beethoven (his first three, though the *Eroica* was deemed ‘ferocious’ and ‘postponed by universal consent’!). Perhaps Bunting persuaded James May to buy a Stephen White organ?

### **1808 – 1809**

► Three Irish harps for Belfast’s Irish Harp Society. Edward Bunting was a founding committee member, though he seems to have been missing between May 1809 and May 1810, likely because of the publication of his second volume of *Ancient Irish Airs*.

Source: Minute Book of the Irish Harp Society, Linen Hall Library, Belfast.



Linn's Hotel, [Belfast,] [no exact date given] June 1808

Resolved – That Messrs Alex Scott, Samuel Bryson and Alex MacDonnell be [missing word?] and they are requested to receive an Estimate from Mr White for making three Harps and to treat with Mr McClenaghan for one, and report progress next meeting.

4<sup>th</sup> July 1808

Resolved – That the Gentlemen appointed at last meeting to receive an Estimate from Mr White for three Harps be further instructed to learn from him the lowest terms on which he would agree to furnish that number or a single Harp on the plainest pattern and if he will engage one for 20 Guineas or three for 12 or 15 Guineas each to make an agreement with him accordingly.

6<sup>th</sup> December 1808

Resolved – That Messrs John McAdam, William Ratcliffe and Alexander Mitchell be appointed to treat with Mr McCabe for the purchase of one Harp, it to be got at a reasonable price, and the choice of the Harp to be purchased is to be made by Mr O'Neill [resident harper, Arthur O'Neill].

Thursday [no exact date given] Aug 1809

Mr. Mitchell having reported that he had consulted with Messrs. Ware [William Ware, organist of St Anne's Parish Church] and Guarini [Vincenzo Guerini, professional leader of the Anacreontic Society and also paid by the First Presbyterian Church for assisting with the choir etc.] as to the quality of the Harp offered for purchase by Mr. McCabe, and they having thought it unadvisable [sic] to offer a large price for it, it was resolved – that the Secretary inform Mr. McCabe that they will give five guineas for the harp and if he refuses to sell it at that price, they will give one guinea for the loan they have had of it.

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 1809

Two harps made by [Mr.] White having been sent in and examined by Messrs Williams and Mitchell assisted by Mr Guarini, it was resolved, from their accommendation [sic] that they be purchased at the rate of ten Guineas each.

Resolved that the Secretary write to the Secretary of the Dublin Harp Society, to inform him that Harps of superior tone can be procured here.

1810

## STEPHEN WHITE.

### *Organ Builder, from London,*

BEGS leave to inform the Nobility and Gentry of Ireland, that he has on hand an Assortment of BARREL ORGANS, suitable for CHURCHES, CHAPELS, or CHAMBERS, with Drum, Triangle, and Flageolet; and the music properly adapted.

S. W. has likewise an eminent Person lately arrived from London, who sets music on the Barrels; by which means, he can assure his Friends, they may have new Barrels or old ones set to new music, in a superior style, by an early application.

PIANO FORTES and ORGANS of every description, repaired and tuned on the shortest notice.

✱✱ A Grand PIANO FORTE and IRISH HARPS for sale.

Source: *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Monday, 17 December 1810, page 3

### c.1812

► Twelve years after 1812, the following organ was advertised in the *Dublin Evening Post* on Saturday, 13 March 1824. If the ‘about 1812’ date is actually correct, does it suggest that Stephen White was still working in Belfast up to this date?

Why was this organ being sold? What instrument replaced it in St George’s Chapel of Ease? Was it a temporary organ for the new church in 1816 where Bunting became organist for about two years (1817-1819)? Where had the organ been for the previous four years?

Actually, there’s a very strong case for it being the c.1807 organ built for Thomas Hull – apart from the minor problem of the disparity of dates and the lack of a mention of it being capable of playing barrels. Both ‘problems’ could be easily explained away. I believe that this is indeed that c.1807 organ built for Thomas Hull.

I think it’s safe to assume that Edward Bunting himself was the person referred to by ‘built under the direction and immediate inspection of an eminent Organist’. Note also that ‘the Pipes were brought from London’. Joseph Wright of Rosemary-lane was a leading Attorney in Belfast.

TO be SOLD, the ORGAN at present in the BELFAST CHAPEL of EASE, which for Sweetness and Brilliancy of Tone, in all the various Stops, cannot be excelled.

This Instrument was built in Belfast, by STEPHEN WHITE, of London, a man of eminent abilities in that line, about twelve years ago.

The Timber is of the best seasoned wood, most carefully selected, and the Pipes were brought from London, and being built under the direction and immediate inspection of an eminent Organist, renders it every way desirable.

This Instrument contains the following Stops

#### *In the Great Organ, viz.,*

Open Diapason,	Fifteenth,
Stop Diapason,	Tierce,
Flute,	Sequalta [sic],
Principal,	Cornet, and
Twelfth,	Trumpet.

*In the Swell Organ,*

A Stop Diapason, Dulciana, Flute and Hautboy with Stop Diapason Bass. This Instrument has two sets of Keys, long Octaves from F Alt. to Double Gamut, and twelve Pedals with complete Pipes of extra Pedal size attached; a Pedal to take off the loud Stops of the great Organ, the greatest number of which Stops draw in halves. It would answer for a Church, Concert Room, or a Chamber.

Application to be made (if by Letter, post paid) to Mr. *Edward Bunteng* [sic], Professor of the Piano Forte, 28, College-green, Dublin, or to Mr. *Joseph Wright*, Belfast.  
28th February, 1824.

**T**O be SOLD, the ORGAN at present in the BELFAST CHAPEL of EASE, which for Sweetness and Brilliancy of Tone, in all the various Stops, cannot be excelled.

This Instrument was built in Belfast, by STEPHEN WHITE, of London, a man of eminent abilities in that line, about twelve years ago. The Timber is of the best seasoned wood, most carefully selected, and the Pipes were brought from London, and being built under the direction and immediate inspection of an eminent Organist, renders it every way desirable.

This Instrument contains the following Stops

*In the Great Organ, viz.,*

Open Diapason,	Fifteenth,
Stop Diapason,	Fierce,
Flute,	Sequialta,
Principal,	Cornet, and
Twelfth,	Trumpet.

*In the Swell Organ,*

A Stop Diapason. Dulciana, Flute and Hautboy with Stop Diapason Bass. This Instrument has two sets of Keys, long Octaves from F Alt. to Double Gamut, and twelve Pedals with complete Pipes of extra Pedal size attached; a Pedal to take off the loud Stops of the great Organ, the greatest number of which Stops draw in halves. It would answer for a Church, Concert Room, or a Chamber.

Application to be made (if by Letter, post paid) to Mr. *Edward Bunteng*, Professor of the Piano Forte, 28, College-green, Dublin, or to Mr. *Joseph Wright*, Belfast.  
28th February, 1824.

Source: *Dublin Evening Post*, Saturday, 13 March 1824, page 1

## 1820

Following unsatisfactory work in 1815-16 on the organ of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, by Gray of London, we meet Stephen White in Ireland again.

'The necessary adjustments [probably revoicing work] were made, but not without extra expense, Stephen White, an organ builder receiving in the region of £120 for his work' in August 1820.

Source: W.H. Grindle, *Irish Cathedral Music*, Belfast 1989, p.135  
(culled from the chapter acts of St Patrick's).

There's no evidence at present to link this Stephen White with William Henry White, organist of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin (1844-52) or the important organ-building firm of Messrs John White & Sons, founded in 1844. W H White lived at South Anne Street, Dublin – as did the pianoforte maker and tuner Thomas White (c.1789-1847). They were possibly father and son. (See Alexis Paul McKeever *Aspects of Organ-Building in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, referencing White, Telford, and Post-Emancipation Choral Practice*, Ph.D thesis, University of Limerick, 2012).

It's certainly stretching a point to suggest any connection with Stephen White 'from London'. Nor indeed with Thomas, Stephen's brother. A pity. The 'mechanic', inventor and instrument-maker all made for some interesting conjectures. There is however one Dublin connection with another family.

An important pianoforte maker in Dublin was William Southwell (See Debenham, Margaret, *William Southwell (1736/7-1825): Anglo-Irish Musical Instrument Inventor and Maker - an Extraordinary Life*. Margaret Debenham: website publication, 2013).

Interestingly, William Southwell's brother Nicholas was in business for a time as an organ-builder with Stephen White. When their partnership began remains unclear. We know when it ended from the formal dissolution of their partnership:

Liverpool, November 6, 1820.

The Partnership existing between us the undersigned, Nicholas Southwell and Stephen White, carrying on business as Organ-Builders at Liverpool, in the County of Lancaster, under the firm of Southwell and White, is this day dissolved by mutual consent: As witness our hands.

Nichs. Southwell.

Stephen White.

Source: *The London Gazette*, Issue 17,654, 25 November, 1820, page 2199

More about Nicholas Southwell at <http://www.debenham.org.uk/william/NicholasSouthwell.php>

More about William Southwell at Dr Debenham's website: <http://www.debenham.org.uk/william/>

A barrel organ by Southwell and White survives in an Australian collection:

► Barrel organ, c.1815-1820 Southwell & White, Liverpool & London. 4 ranks, 18 notes, triangle, drum. At the residence of Norm Geschke, 42 Andrew Street, Oakleigh, Melbourne.

Source: J. Maidment, *Gazetteer of Victorian Pipe Organs* revised August 2011.

PT notes that 'another barrel organ by Southwell & White is mentioned in Langwill and Boston (first edition, p. 67): perhaps it is the one now in Melbourne, Australia. It belonged to Mr. S.D. Dyer-Gough, who bought Natelywd Hall in Ruthin, Denbighshire, in 1934. His widow Jean Dyer-Gough (1908-98) sold the house to the local council in 1984.' Certainly like the Melbourne instrument, Dyer-Gough's had 'four stops plus drum and triangle. Three barrels of ten tunes each, one sacred and two secular.'

The interlinking Southwell connections with Belfast extend back to the St Anne's organist, William Ware. He was an agent for Broadwood pianos long before Edward Bunting followed in his footsteps.

Dr Debenham mentions two *Belfast News-Letter* advertisements which link Ware to William Southwell.

In the first, 23-26 July 1793, Ware was selling a 'new PIANO-FORTE made by Southwell, Dublin, with a "Swell Lid"'.

The second advertisement, 9 December 1800, was for a Fine Ton'd NEW PIANO-FORTE by Southwell, Dublin.

Dr Debenham also noted correspondence between the Broadwood firm and Southwell's son, Henry, dated 5 February 1807, about a debt from 1803 owed by William Ware of Belfast and a mix-up in invoices.

### **Uncertain date, chamber organ advertised for sale in 1823**

So at some point after his sojourn in Belfast (perhaps even overlapping), Stephen White was associated with Liverpool and his partnership with Nicholas Southwell. This next instrument may date from after 1820, when that partnership ended.

► ON SALE, at J. Hatton, jun.'s, 15, Concert-street, Bold-street, a FINGER ORGAN (Stephen White, builder) fit for a small Church or Chapel, containing Stop Diapason, Open Ditto, Principal, Flute, Fifteenth, Cornet, and Sisquattia [sic].

The Pupils of J. H. will please to note, that in consequence of his engagement at the York Festival, no business will be done after Saturday evening next, until Monday the 29th.

*Liverpool, September 19, 1823.*

Source: *Liverpool Mercury*, Friday 19 September 1823, page 1.

I assume this to be the shop owned by the musician father of Liverpool-born John Liptrot Hatton (1809-1886), composer, accompanist, singer and conductor.

### **Uncertain date, chamber organ advertised for sale in 1832**

► Another White chamber organ, likely dating back to the early years of the century.

It had four stops and is here being auctioned at Christie's in London.



**CHAMBER FINGER ORGAN.—To be**  
SOLD, a fine-toned FINGER ORGAN, in a mahogany case, built by Stephen White. The compass from G to F in alt., with stop diapason, principal and fifteenth all through, and open diapason down to G; Venetian swell, and piano movement. Price 63l. To be seen at Messrs. Christie and Manson's, King-street, St. James's-square.

Source: *The Morning Post*, Monday, 16 April 1832, page 1

## Uncertain date, church organ advertised for sale in 1838

► A classic Stephen White specification for two manuals and pedals, sited in Leicester at this time:

### CHURCH or CHAPEL ORGAN.

TO be SOLD, a fine powerful-toned ORGAN, built by the late Mr. Stephen White: it is long octaves; has two rows of keys, pedals, a shifting movement: is 16ft 6in. high, and 10 feet wide; contains, in the great organ, two open diapasons, one throughout, the other to gamut G; stop diapason; principal, flute, twelfth, fifteenth, sexquialtra, three ranks; cornet, three ranks; and trumpet throughout, in the swell to tenor F.; open diapason, stop diapason; principal hautboy. Price 240 Guineas.

Further particulars may be obtained on application (if by letter, post paid) to Messrs. Gray and Son, organ builders, 8, New-road, Fitzroy-square, London; or of Mr. Deacon, Music Warehouse, Leicester, where the organ now is.

Source: *Globe*, Thursday, 31 May 1838, page 1

## Further uncertainties – White & Langshaw, unknown dates

Stephen White's partnership with Nicholas Southwell has been confirmed, but proof is needed to confirm that Stephen might also be the 'White' of White & Langshaw.

Issue 12 of *Carousel Organ*, July 2002, page 21, note 60, mentions that White & Langshaw organs are in *Drehorgeln: Schaurig-Schoen*, (Karlsruhe: Badisches Landesmuseum, 1994), plate 45 and Barrel Organ, plate 74. To date, I have been unable to access that exhibition catalogue.

The Music Box Society of Great Britain in its journal *The Music Box*, Vol.9, No.5, Spring 1980, pp.239, 240, features an article entitled *An 18th Century Street Organ, [A] Rare survival from Georgian London*.

It illustrates 'an organ at present in the collection of Marvel Freund of Rockville, Maryland [USA]. The organ, heavily restored over the years, dates from the period 1790-1810 and is thus one of the oldest street instruments surviving. ... The instrument [pictured in the article and below] ... is stylistically identical to a White & Langshaw organ known to date from a similar period.'

However, this particular instrument has an engraved inscription (all upper-case) 'A Hinton, organ builder. ... The organ has four stops which, in keeping with the period, allow the control of all four ranks: the foundation or diapason which later street organs tended to leave permanently on-wind, can be cut off. The stopped wooden pipes are, of course, all beneath the organ ...'



An auction by Antiquorum at the Hotel Noga Hilton, Geneva, 11 October 2003 included as lot 211 a barrel organ by White & Langshaw. However, it was dated c.1840, perhaps because the firm seems to have been taken over by a certain John Puncher many years earlier. The instrument was described thus:

‘A fine mahogany barrel organ on stand. To be sold without reserve. ... in the Chinese style, front with two brass sound frets, hinged top, raised on stand with brass-bound bracket feet, brass plaque inscribed “White & Langshaw, Organ Builders, No. 5 Old St. Square, John Puncher Proprietor”. M. Wood drum for four tunes, endless screw, three bellows. Dim. 34 x 72 x 46 cm. In fair condition.’

See a picture here: [http://www.lacotedesmontres.com/Enchere-No\\_9641.htm](http://www.lacotedesmontres.com/Enchere-No_9641.htm)

In the first edition of Canon Noel Boston and Lyndesay G. Langwill’s book, *Church and Chamber Barrel-Organs* (Edinburgh 1967) mention is made on page 70 of ‘White & Langshaw: London, pre 1821. Organ Builders, No.57 Old Street Square, John Puncher, Proprietor. Showman’s organ with shoulder strap hooks. Brass plate lettered as above. A. Ord-Hume Collection, London.’

The same instrument is mentioned again on page 59 of Boston and Langwill’s listing for another builder: ‘Hicks, J. & Son: Bristol. This name occurs on the barrel of a barrel-organ in Bethnal Green Museum. In the windchest of [a] showman’s organ by White & Langshaw is written “Repaired by J. Hicks of Bristol, June 2n, 1821.” Ord-Hume Collection.’

Boston and Langwill (page 62) also record that John Langshaw was born in 1718 and worked in London and Lancaster. He was an ‘Organist and barrel-organ builder who was employed about 1761, under the direction of Handel’s amanuensis, John Christopher Smith in setting music on the barrels of a very large organ built by Snetzler and others for Luton Park for the Earl of Bute. This organ was later destroyed by a fire at the mansion.’

‘John Langshaw became organist of St Mary’s Parish Church, Lancaster in 1772 and died in 1798 when his son John (born in London 1763) succeeded him and may have been a partner of White and Langshaw. John Langshaw, Organist, appears in the Lancaster Poll Book of 1818. He probably sold his interest in White & Langshaw, London, to John Puncher about whom nothing is known.’

David Byers, Belfast, 17 April 2018, revised and updated 5 May 2019.  
Some page number references updated 18 September 2019.

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See overleaf for information from PT about Stephen White’s organ builder son, Thomas White.

Stephen White's son Thomas was also an organ builder – as indeed was *his* son George. As Paul Tindall has pointed out, the White organ building tradition stretches into the 20th century.

He notes that Thomas White's 'partnership with F.W. Isaac and George Staples as "Organ, Seraphine and Pianoforte manufacturers" was dissolved in January 1833,<sup>1</sup> but was still advertising the "improved Royal Seraphine" as Isaac & White, organ builders, at 17 Charlotte Street in August.'<sup>2</sup>

'The partnership with Joseph G. Kirkman (1790-1877), son of James Kirkman the harpsichord maker, as Kirkman & White offered an "improved seraphine" in 1836, from 3 Soho Square. That partnership was dissolved in 1837 and Kirkman continued as a piano maker.'<sup>3</sup>

*London Gazette*, 14 March 1837

Notice is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofore subsisting and carried on between us the undersigned, Joseph Kirkman and Thomas White, as Seraphine Makers, at No.3, Soho Square, in the county of Middlesex, was this day dissolved by mutual consent, and that all debts due to or from the said partnership will be received and paid by the said Joseph Kirkman, and that the said business will in future be carried on by Joseph Kirkman only. Dated this 11th day of March 1837. Joseph Kirkman. Thos. White.

'In 1841<sup>4</sup> Thomas White organ builder aged 35 was at Northampton Street, St Pancras. Probably buried at St Luke Old Street 10 March 1850, from Old Street.<sup>5</sup> Thomas's son George Stephen White (born 1832) was also an organ builder, living at 6 Newman Place, Somers Town, St Pancras, in 1881. George Stephen White's son, in turn, George Frederick White (b.1863) and *his* son traded as George White & Son of Tooting from 1909 to 1942. They built a handful of small organs for Suffolk churches, such as Snape (now gone, replaced with a new organ by Peter Bumstead).'

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<sup>1</sup> *London Gazette*, 29 January 1833

<sup>2</sup> *Morning Post*, Wednesday 21 August 1833

<sup>3</sup> Robert J.Allan, *Reed Organs in England*, [http://tardis.dl.ac.uk/FreeReed/organ\\_book/node4.html#seraphines](http://tardis.dl.ac.uk/FreeReed/organ_book/node4.html#seraphines),

accessed April 2019

<sup>4</sup> 1841 census - HO 107/681/5, f. 37 p. 68

<sup>5</sup> London Metropolitan Archive P73/LUK/073; St Luke Old Street burials and marriages.