

An afternoon with Pipe Up for Pipe Organs

In September 2022 Martin Renshaw came to Enfield to show us the film *Organ Stops: Saving the King of Instruments*, which documents the work he has done to save organs from churches that have closed, and transplant them to other venues. So when I heard that Pipe Up for Pipe Organs was going to dismantle and save the organ in the Baptist Church in Chipperfield on July 13th, I decided to volunteer to help.



Volunteers dismantling the organ at Chipperfield Baptist Church

The afternoon began with an Open Console session at which anyone was welcome to try the one-manual and pedal Kirkland organ, dating from about 1900. Alfred Kirkland (1857–1927) came from Nottinghamshire but established his business in Holloway in North London. I play a Kirkland organ at Leverstock Green so I was interested to try another. The church closed in February 2023 but the organ had been well looked after until then and although there were some tuning and mechanical issues, it had a warm, mellow sound, and it was certainly loud enough for the building. The organ still had its pump handle for the bellows and I understand that it was possible to hand pump it.

After this the next activity was to remove the pipes, wrap them all in bubble-wrap and label them, having first ascertained the pitch. Most of the pipes had the note names stamped on them but I found that the A Tuner Lite app on my phone came in handy when the letters were not clear. During the afternoon we were served cake provided by local ladies, and by 7pm all the pipes had been removed. It was a joy to meet the other volunteers who were giving up their

time to save this organ from oblivion, some of whom were local people and others from further afield.

I could only spare half a day, but the volunteers were planning to complete dismantling the organ the next day and take it to a storage facility in Rickmansworth where it would stay until a new home could be found. If you feel inspired to become a member of Pipe up for Pipe Organs, visit their website at <https://www.pipe-up.org.uk/>.

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