

Taylor-Hammond Associates Ltd

Services for pipe organs

London, UK

www.taylor-hammond.com

mail@taylor-hammond.com

07768 902876

Client: The London Empire, Formerly the Regal Cinema, Uxbridge

Project: Restoration of the Compton cinema organ pipe chamber contents and reconnect the console



The Regal cinema Uxbridge in 1965, showing the organ console in the centre of the orchestra pit

Further to our document concerning the pipe organ console at the former Regal cinema Uxbridge, this document looks at the condition of the organ pipe chambers and what would be involved with restoring the organ to playable condition.

We were invited to undertake an inspection of the organ in January 2026 which revealed the condition of the organ console, now moved into the foyer, and the condition of the organ pipe chambers which are situated behind the left hand wall grill. The chambers are located one on top of the other - the accompaniment chamber at the bottom with the blower room just outside the chamber, and the solo chamber located above. When we were working in the building in 2007 the organ pipes were all present, although some had significant damage, probably due to the chambers being used as general storage spaces. Unfortunately the situation now is somewhat worse. Four out of the six sets of pipes seem to be missing completely, presumed stolen. There is also a lot more 'stuff' thrown into the chambers, plus the top chamber has suffered significantly from pigeon infestation. The resulting contamination would need attending to. The organ blower used to be visible in the room just outside the lower chamber, albeit under a false floor put in by the health club. However now it's not easy to gain sufficient access to the room to see if the blower is still there – although the false floor is gone, there's a huge number of items thrown into that space. I think it very unlikely the blower has been removed due to it being very heavy (it's a large round item made of cast iron and can't be lifted without heavy lifting equipment), and I suspect it's still under all the 'junk' in that room.

The original relays are still in the lower chamber (these relay the signals from the console to the electric valves that let the compressed air from the blower into the pipes) and so are all the percussion instruments that are a part of the organ (xylophone, glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes, drums, cymbals etc).

As far as restoration is concerned, the entire organ could be restored. Every pneumatic item, such as wind chests, regulators etc, would need to be re-leathered and refurbished, all wiring replaced, wind trunking replaced, percussion instruments and actions refurbished, the blower refurbished, a new motor and 3-phase power provided, a new low voltage DC supply unit supplied, and of course replacement organ pipes found. This latter item might not be as difficult as one might think – there were over 260 Compton cinema organs built and many were broken up for parts when their cinemas no longer wanted them. It might well be possible to obtain the necessary genuine Compton sets of pipes to replace the missing ones. If not, it would still be possible to have replica sets made.

As well as the above, the console would need to be reconnected to the pipe chambers. This is best done with a modern solid state control system that would link the console outputs with the pipe chamber contents via a high speed data connection. This would mean that the console could still be stored in the foyer but moved into the auditorium on a wheeled plinth and plugged into a discrete data socket in the auditorium.

The console condition is dealt with in a separate document, although this is mainly concerned with its appearance and construction. In addition to this, the electrical contacts and operational items on it would need to be refurbished.

Having thought carefully about every item in the organ that would need attention, as well as the removal and disinfecting of pigeon droppings, we have arrived at the following breakdown of work/expenditure needed for the project:

Full refurbishment of:

- Pipe chests (including those at floor level for the larger pipes)
- Regulators
- Tuned percussion – xylophone, glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes
- Non tuned percussion – the entire 'traps' unit, comprising cymbals, drums, castanets, tambourine shakers and other sound effects etc
- Relays
- Wiring to chests etc
- Swell shutters
- Shutter motors
- Blower, with new motor and coupling
- Trunking, with provision of new trunking where needed
- DC power cabling
- Pipe ranks – restoring those present plus sourcing replacements where needed
- Tremulants
- Console wiring
- Key contacts
- Stop unit functions – contacts, coils, armature movements etc
- Other sundry items

Supply and install:

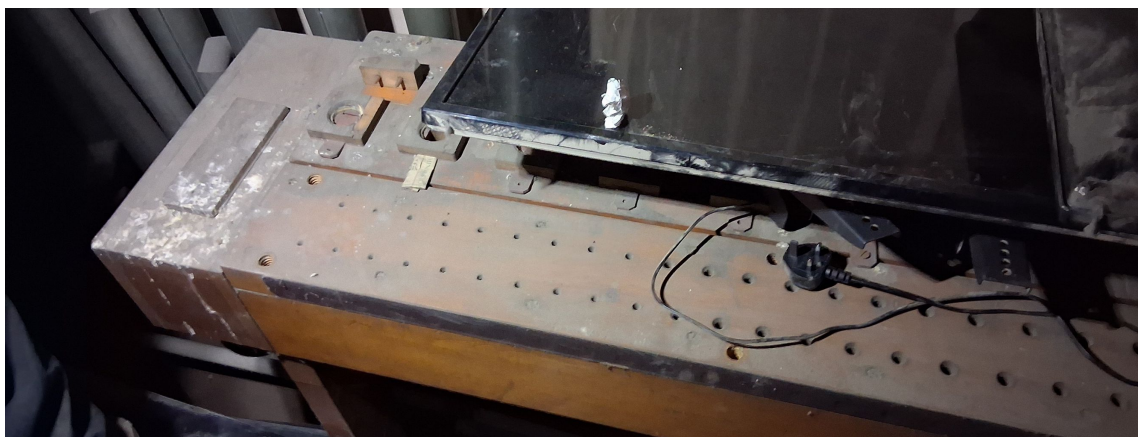
- Opus-Two solid state control system components for multiplexing between console and chambers
- 3 phase power supply and control gear (in conjunction with the client's electrical contractors)
- DC power supply units for console and chambers for the DC control voltage needed for the organ

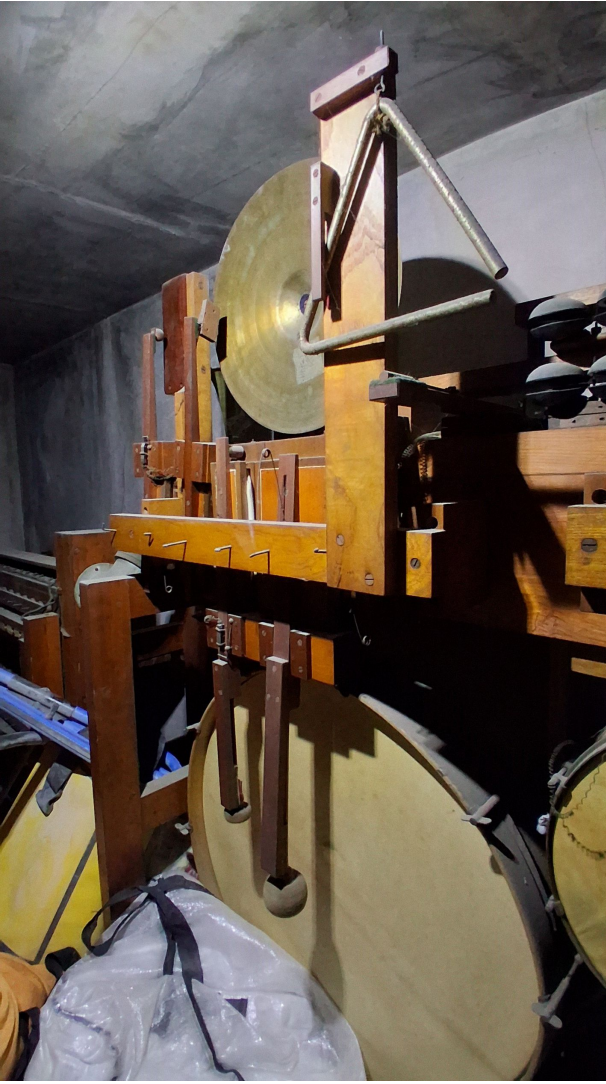
Other considerations:

- Cleaning chambers, including dealing with pigeon mess
- Testing, snag fixing
- Pipe regulation & tuning
- Travel
- Accommodation as required
- Project management

The cost of implementing the above would be in the order of **£80k to £90k + VAT.**

The photos below illustrate the current condition of the organ chambers:





One thing that would be hugely beneficial to the organ components in the chambers and blower room is to remove all the 'stuff' that's been put in there over the years. I strongly suggest that we are booked for a day's work to do this, plus a skip provided at the rear of the building to dump it all in (unless of course any items are required to be kept by the owner). We noted that new windows have already been installed at the chamber external window openings, which is very good and which increases general security, and I suggest that a new lockable door is put on the blower room entrance once the chambers have been cleared out.

In one day we could clear all three rooms of junk without any further damage to any organ components. This would also provide a clearer picture of which organ components are damaged or missing. Our charge for this would be £400+VAT.

We are very happy to respond to any questions or to clarify any of the above if required.

Peter Hammond
Managing Director
Taylor-Hammond Associates Ltd
January 2026