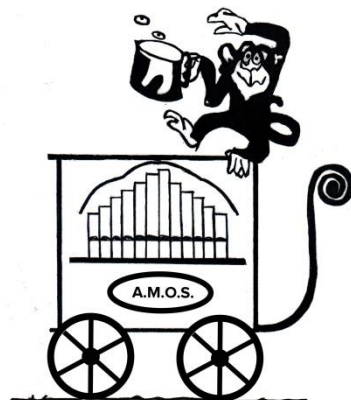




A.M.O.S.
WIND CHEST
SEPTEMBER, 2022
The Newsletter of the
Australian Mechanical
Organ Society Inc.
ABN 51 312 657 041



DAYS ARE HAPPY HERE AGAIN

COME ONE



COME ALL

GRIFFITH RALLY IS ON

FRI 14TH 15TH 16TH OCTOBER, 2022

HOPE TO SEE MANY OF YOU THERE

AS IT IS TIME TO CATCH UP AND

PLAY OUR ORGANS.

WIND CHEST — Wind Chest is published by the Australian Mechanical Organ Society Inc. quarterly in March – June – September – December, and is distributed free to members of AMOS – closing dates for Wind Chest are:

15th February for March edition
15th August for September edition

15th May for June edition
15th November for December edition.

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THE COMMITTEE

The Committee consists of a President, Secretary, Treasurer and Windchest Editor.

AMOS WEBSITE: www.australianmechanicalorgansociety.com

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DEATHS IN THE AMOS FAMILY



I am sorry to have to inform members that long time member PETER S (photo left) died on 18th May, 2022. Peter and Betty will be remembered by members who attend the rallies, as they were regular attendees and we will all miss seeing them.

Some members have already been informed by email that DOUG D of Bathurst (photo right), another long-time member, died in early May. He will also be missed at the rallies as he was another regular attendee. Members who attended the Bathurst rally that Doug organised will also remember the flights that he arranged.





It is with great sadness that I have to announce that George K (our oldest AMOS member) passed away on the weekend of 6/7th August.

George turned 101 on Anzac Day this year and was a member of the AMOS family since its inception and before that he was at a lot of other organ playing events in New South Wales etc.

He will be sadly missed for his cheeky smile and for the sound of his Raffin organ at our events.

AMOS ANNUAL RALLY

GRIFFITHS, NSW

14TH 15TH 16TH OCTOBER, 2022

Just a reminder that if you have not already booked accommodation for the rally, that this is a very busy time in Griffiths as it is their Spring Festival. Our motel of choice is below, but we cannot guarantee you will find a room available at this late date – it is always worth a try in case they have a cancellation.

EXIES BAGTOWN MOTEL and Function Centre
2-4 Blumer Avenue, Griffith
Contact is Karen – phone 02 6962 7166

A standard room is \$130 per night or a Premium room for \$150 per night. All rooms have a Queen bed and a single bed, toaster, kettle, microwave and hairdryer.

A map of how to get there is on coloured paper included with this newspaper.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I hope everyone is looking forward to our first rally since Numurkah, it seems hard to believe it is three years ago – what a lot we will all have to talk about! COVID has certainly affected all our lives in many ways, so we must all make the most of it and enjoy the rally in Griffith that Pam McD has been very busy putting together for us. We really appreciate all your hard work Pam!



As most of you know the position of President is usually only held in our club for five years, BUT with AMOS being unable to have an AGM until the Griffith rally I have been in office much longer than usual. The position in our club is basically a title with very little to do other than countersign cheques with the Treasurer (and not many of them), do a report for the three monthly newsletter and talk to the Editor and other Committee members about the odd decision now and then. What I am saying is it is not a time consuming job, so please think about putting your hand up at the AGM for the job (you must have been a member for five years).

Also, our long standing Secretary Janet D will not be putting her hand up again so we need someone to fill that vacancy- something else to think about. Janet has been Secretary for many years and all her work as Secretary and organiser of the Friday BBQ has been greatly appreciated by all. She deserves a medal for all the odd places she has had to use to get things arranged with food etc – of course, some of the ladies have always helped her (and a few men) and they deserve our thanks as well. WELL DONE JANET!

More food for thought – where to have a rally in 2023! The best places for us to hold a rally are country towns that are central for members coming from South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, Qld and Tasmania – always a big ask. Although it sounds biased towards Victoria some of the northern central towns there are ideal distances for most of us to reach, as is western NSW. There are some of us (I live in South Australia) that usually have to make it a 2 day trip to get to a rally, although Horsham was a great one for us. So please think about offering to organise a rally next year so that we have some ideas when it comes up at the AGM. We do not mind returning to a town where we have held a successful rally before.

Something else we will speak about at the AGM is how we can attract some new members to our club, never an easy thing to do, so put your thinking caps on and let us hear some of your ideas at the meeting.

We may all be three years older than when we met up for the Numurkah rally and age may be showing on some of us, but I am sure that our enthusiasm for our hobby and meeting up with old organ friends will be well worth the trip. We hope to see as many of you that can make it there. For those that cannot get to Griffiths I will have photos and news about our get together in the December newsletter.

Daphne H – President

FOR SALE

48 KEYLESS ORGAN

“THE FLYING PIEMAN”

Built by Richard E in 1987

Sits on a flatbed, single axle trailer (not registered) in storage at Campbelltown Steam Museum. It can be towed by a typical car as it is under the 750kg trailer weight GVM, which means it does not need fancy trailer brakes.



**It comes complete with over 2hours of music books.
At the moment it plays badly and needs all the leather puffers replacing
and some tender loving care. It has a blower – not bellows.**

\$3,000.00 negotiable

If interested please contact Henry R 0438 443 195

WANTED TO BUY

Cardboard music books

For a hand turned 36 key organ

If you can help please send titles to

Doug M

AMOS Annual Organ Rally in Griffith, NSW

14 – 16 October, 2022.

Griffith is a large, prosperous regional city located in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area in the Riverina region of New South Wales. The city plan was devised by landscape gardener and designer Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion, who as a team, also designed the Canberra layout.

Griffith is a vibrant city featuring a number of attractions. It is also known as a food-bowl because of its rich soil and adequate water enabling a great range of fresh produce, wineries, etc. to be grown.

During our weekend there, on either or both days, our members will be welcomed to play our organs at some Open Gardens, a Multicultural Festival, the Pioneer Park, indoor Plaza Market, the Citrus Sculptures and a Rotary Market.

Our customary Friday night barbeque is being held at the Open Garden home of Marge and Mick. Their generous offer will provide us with shelter should the weather be inclement and it is about a 10 minute drive from our motel. A nice way to say 'thanks' to Marge and Mick would be to bring them a little plant or cutting – their garden is a real treat!

It will be a bit like a jigsaw puzzle allocating organs to venues, **so I will need confirmation by the Sunday 11 September as to what organs you are bringing to play in Griffith.** You will have indicated this on your Rally attendance form and I will confirm the number of organs with Des after this date. Allocations of venues (with maps, times and any particular details) will be given out at the Friday barbeque.

One of the attractions in Griffith is a soft sculptured Theatre Curtain, created by members of the local community over a 12 month period and completed in 1987. Marge (of Open Garden fame) will organise a special viewing of this curtain for us, most likely first thing on the morning of Monday 17th October. Usually there is a fee of \$4, but I don't know if this will apply or not. We would need to have a group of around 10 to make it worth her while to organise. Please email me ASAP if you would like to see this and I will let Marge know.

Specific Rally points:

1. Accommodation: Exies Bagtown Motel & Function Centre, 2-4 Blumer Avenue, Griffith. There is adequate parking for Fairground organs down the back of the motel. (see maps)
2. Friday night barbeque at Marge & Mick's home: 'Rosewood Park', 2355a Stokes Road, Hanwood. (see map). This will commence at 6.00pm, as visitors to their Open Garden may still be leaving up 'till then.
3. Owners of Fairground organs **should bring their own generators as 240v power** cannot be guaranteed.
4. Make sure you bring your Insurance documents and name badges with you.
5. Since we will be playing in areas where the public are, access to toilets will be available.

The Rally is shaping up to be a great weekend and it will be wonderful to renew friendships and talk about organs, etc., after the major distraction of Covid over the past couple of years.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER REGARDING THE GRIFFITH RALLY

**THERE IS NO POWER AVAILABLE, SO ANY ORGAN NEEDING
POWER WILL NEED TO BRING THEIR OWN GENERATOR.**

**PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU BRING YOUR INSURANCE
CERTIFICATE AND NAME BADGE WITH YOU.**

**YOU MUST LET DES KNOW BY 11th SEPTEMBER IF YOU ARE
BRINGING AN ORGAN (of any size) BECAUSE IF WE DO NOT
KNOW IN ADVANCE WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU A
SITE.**

**YOUR MAPS ARE ON COLOURED PAPER, PLEASE BRING
THEM WITH YOU SO THAT YOU KNOW WHERE TO GO TO THE
MOTEL AND BBQ (it is not at the motel)**

Daphne H, President

EDITOR'S NOTES

Firstly I must thank Pam McD for all her information and maps for the Rally in October. Hope everything is clear for those attending the rally.

Secondly I must thank Peter D for his descriptive article about the organs in Craig's collection. Peter has also written another article about a trip to Europe with a tour (Craig Robson and the McD's also went) which is very interesting and will be in the next two or three newsletters. Thanks very much Peter.



If anyone else has a snippet and an article I am always looking out for something to put in your newsletter.

Daphne H – Editor

Thirlmere – the Alternative Organ Adventure

By Peter D

Editor – the first part covered the events leading up to the time in the museum, but the rest is completely different as it goes into detail about the organs that Craig has.

We played our three small organs for a short time before being introduced to Craig, together with the tea/coffee and cupcakes! Craig gave a short introduction to the history of his place and then he gave us a tour of the major and smaller mechanical instruments in the collection. Each organ was played with several excerpts of tunes, as the potted history was explained and how many of them had been rescued from destruction and neglect and are now in preservation. Each instrument and object in the collection has its own history and vital facts, so I have selected several to describe in more technical detail to be of interest to AMOS members.

The **89-key Gavioli** (mounted in the gallopers/carousel) and known as the Black Forest Gavioli (Waldkirch, Germany), is a No. 2 style; with four registers and considered as



a showman's machine. Only six were manufactured and of two now in existence, this one still has its mechanical bellows. It was made in 1894/95 and the price was equivalent to a London house of the era. With 350 pipes, bass drum, snare drum, two bellringer, xylophone and cymbals and a magnificent

and richly carved façade it dazzles the viewer as you listen attentively whilst looking through the fast spinning horses. It has a chequered ownership through Holland, Belgium and finally to Sydney in the 1950s. By 1980, it was derelict under the Coney

Island slides when Ken Beech acquired and restored it. A few owners later, it now is a signature instrument in the Fairground Follies collection.

The organ is in Commander Baldock's English Gallopers – a 1902 ride which revolved at up to 30 rpm under the power of the internal steam engine, but now runs at a modest 10 rpm driven by an electric motor. This is an amazing piece of movement, colour and lights with the magnificent Gavioli organ playing a variety of tunes (up to 11dB) you will be spellbound as you envisage it in its heyday attracting people to the fairground.

A number of **Belgium De Cap** organs are featured, including one with three robot players – built for the pre-war market to intrigue people on the dance floor as they whirled around to the dance tunes. Only ten were built and there are only six still in existence. These were made to compete with increasing numbers of amplifiers and juke boxes, which eventually pushed them out of the dance halls. The centre robot stands and takes a bow at the end of the music and then sits down.

Tucked away in a corner is a **Calliope** of 1914 vintage which was restored by John Ham in Victoria. This one is a theatre model, and less intrusive than the steam models which could be heard fourteen miles away and were often mounted on river paddle steamers.



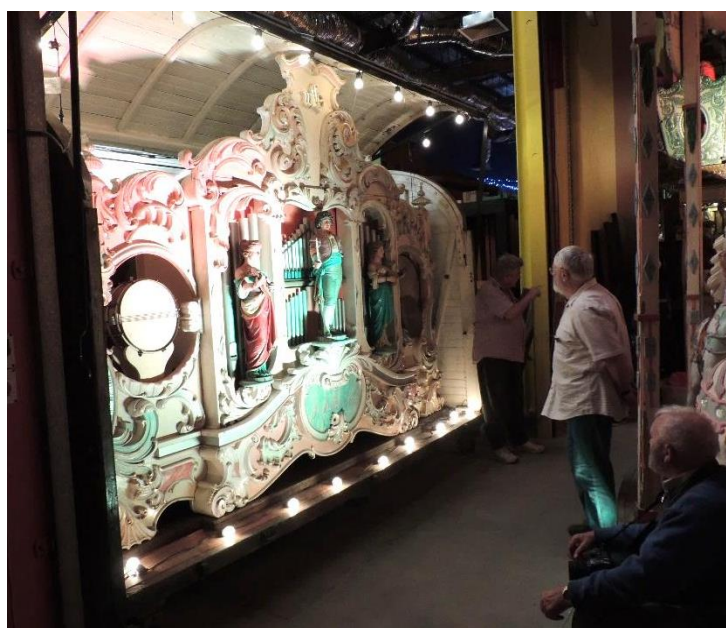
My favourite organ was the **87 Keyless Gavioli Military Band Organ** (from the Black Forest, Waldkirch) - given as an engagement present to a showman's fiancé and no doubt to induct her into the work of the showman on the fairground. This organ does not have a top façade, as it was at some stage mounted in a wagon.



What impressed me was the original patina of the paintings and the gold gilding on the superbly carved figures. It just looked like it has aged gracefully without facing restoration. I investigated the rear interior pipework and it is original and in operating condition. The instruments sound capacity is equivalent to a fifty-five piece military band (over 100 dB) and plays stirring marches and European waltzes.

Another favourite was the 36 Ruth, converted with extra pipework to a **37 Keyless A. Ruth & Sohn Organ**. This WW1 era organ has a long history from being in a factory in Europe, travelling to the USA and finishing at Fairground Follies. It played a variety of marches (Dam Busters March) with the rich and distinctive Ruth tonal quality.

It is fitted into an original timber Mack wagon and plays on book and midi formats.



The 101 key **Mortier Dance Organ ‘The Taj Mahal’** is the centrepiece of Fairground Follies.

The Mortier Company was located in Antwerp, Belgium, building organs from the turn of the twentieth century to shortly after 1950. They were regarded as the finest

machines to be used in dance halls and travelling shows. The carving work on the facade, the pipes and the effects were master-crafted, and over one thousand light globes adorn the façade, and these are activated in spectacular patterns. This machine was built after WW1 and has over one thousand pipes, snare drum, bass drum, woodblocks, triangle, castanets, xylophone and other unique instruments including a large brass gong which was stuck to signify the change of dance partners.



The 101 key is regarded as being the ultimate instrument and two were made with extremely ornate facades and extra musical embellishments. The only one remaining is the magnificent Taj Mahal.

The organ was delivered new in 1924 to St Jean's Palace, a dance hall in Antwerp, Belgium. It was an

amazing success and of course being in Mortier's home-town it was their icon.

The facade is approximately 8.5 metre long by eight metres high and symbolises good luck (Chinese dragons), prosperity (Grecian urns of plenty), music (Saint Cecilia - the Patron Saint of music) and love (Aphrodite's statue). The facade was carved in Italy over a two year period and decorated with three forms of gold leaf. It is spectacular to see and hear the Taj Mahal playing either modern or traditional music. Automatic changing lighting effects created by over one hundred small bulbs are driven by the music book.

However, looking behind the façade, there are no pipes or instrumentation to be found! All these are mounted adjacent at high-level music section which is flood lit in various colours. This organ features in the 'The Mortier Story' (2019).

There are lots more instruments which were played for us and others still awaiting restoration - it was a fantastic afternoon of experiences for the AMOS group.

On Saturday, we attended the Goulburn Steam Punk festival where Craig took his **90 Key Mortier Concert Organ** of 1913, '**The Golden Lion**'.

This organ was originally three times larger - entertaining in the dance halls of Europe but cut down to suit for street use in the Netherlands.



The organ has twelve registers controlling over 470 pipes, base and snare drums, triangle, woodblocks, glockenspiel and animated figures. It has a full and rich tonal rang and Graeme and I were privileged to run the key frame for over 2 hours with a large variety of books to play.

The Mortier serial number 838 is prominent near the register box.



Sources:

- Craig Robson Fairground Follies (website and his talk to members)
- The Mortier Story (2019)