

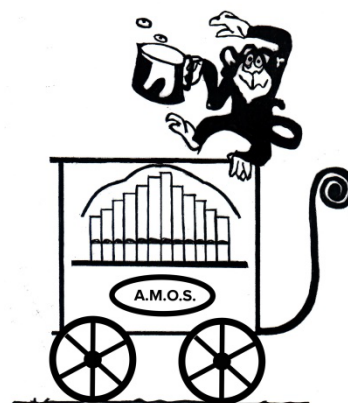


A.M.O.S.
WIND
CHEST

MARCH, 2021

**The Newsletter of the
Australian Mechanical Organ Society Inc.**

ABN 51 312 657 041



George King with his Raffin organ at the Geelong Rally 2001

(article about George further in newsletter)

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.

.....
THE COMMITTEE

AMOS WEBSITE: www.australianmechanicalorgansociety.com

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual authors and may not necessarily represent those of the management and members of AMOS. All text and cartoons are copyright and may be reproduced with permission and acknowledgement

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

We would like to welcome Mal Horsfall from Quakers Hill, NSW to our club.

Mal is in the final stages of building a John Smith organ, and we look forward to meeting him at our next rally.



2021 NHMA (National Historical Machinery Assn) RALLY – MUDGEE, NSW

Some of our members are also members of the above club and it is sad to learn that they have had to cancel their annual National Historical Machinery Rally in April due to the current covid health problems. Unfortunately, this is a sign of the times and hopefully by the end of the year things may get back to some sort of new normal.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is hard to believe that two months of 2021 have gone already and autumn will be with us in no time. For those of us who thought we would be on our way to Thirlmere shortly, please see the article below as it has been postponed until later in the year (this seems to be the trend with many events as organisers are unsure if they can hold them with all the restrictions about crowds etc).



I know a lot of you have missed not catching up with fellow members at events (and our rally) and as soon as I hear about new dates for various events it will be in the newsletter, or in the case of the Lost Trade Fairs and Thirlmere Pam or Richard will contact those that usually attend by email. At the moment the Rally in October is on schedule – more news in the June newsletter.

Looking forward to getting together in the near future,

Daphne Holt

THIRLMERE STEAM FESTIVAL MARCH 2021 POSTPONED

Members who intended to be at the Thirlmere Festival of Steam in NSW in March have already been informed by AMOS by email that this event has been postponed. This is not really a surprise given the very uncertain situation concerning the Covid 19 Virus and its effect on events like this.

Whilst Thirlmere is, as far as anyone knows, completely virus free it hasn't helped that the NSW Government has declared it part of "Greater Sydney" thus potentially creating issues for interstate members. The Thirlmere Steam museum hopes to announce another date for the festival, "possibly in May". I'll inform those members who have previously indicated their interest in the festival of any future date.

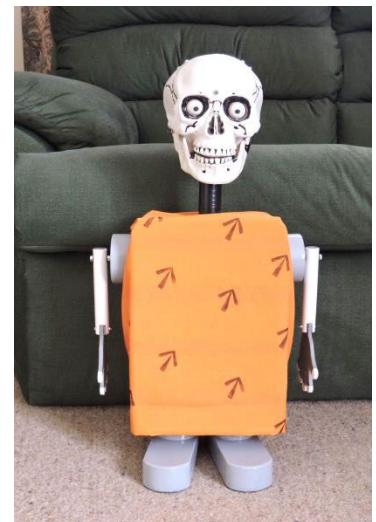
Richard Ellis – Webmaster/organiser.

WHEN YOU HAVE TIME ON YOUR HANDS

Fred the Emu came first and now we have SHORTY the skeleton – both are ventriloquist dolls. (Shorty is an escaped prisoner)

I only hope the virus clears up soon as I hate to think what David will come up with next.

Daphne Holt.



THE CASTLEWOOD ORGAN STORY

By Peter Datson

When I was looking in 2015 for a small mechanical organ I had heard a lot about the John Smith models and self-build plans. During my search I came across the Castlewood Organ kit and it was manufactured in Australia!

Tom Newsome, an engineer in Western Australia, set about designing a 20-note mechanical organ in around 2001 and used his knowledge of engineering and laser cutting to produce a relatively cheap and easy-build solution. To date he has produced over 250 of these kits (\$1,500AUD + shipping) which have been purchased by organ enthusiasts across the world.

The kit ships as a series of laser cut, flat-pack plywood panels together with shafts, bearings, gaskets, gears, bellows leather, tubing, spools and incidental items (even an electronic tuner). All associated components come in sealed bags with a comprehensive contents list. The outer case and panels are also part of the kit. All the constructor needs to provide is Titebond wood glue, sandpaper, shellac for sealing and any decoration or painting they feel appropriate. A very comprehensive manual with step-by-step instructions, photographs and tips comes with the kit. A GroupSpaces website (previously a Yahoo Constructors Group which has since closed) provides a wealth of information with photos and techniques and is a great sounding board for first timers.



The organ has 20 stopped pipes, each made of component cut-outs which lock together in castellated joints (hence the name Castlewood). There is a stern warning that the constructor should label the part number on each piece with pencil before removing them from the plywood sheet as many look the same! Each pipe has a minimum of 8 components and the recommendation is to make the pipes in batches to gain experience with the assembly. As I discovered, you need to develop a streamline system of gluing and clamping to achieve the complete sealing of joints. Organ pipes are designed to have air enter from one source and exit only via the pipe lip. Any minute pinprick holes will cause the pipe to not speak correctly or sound shallow. Fortunately, shellac applied liberally on the inside and outside surfaces achieved a good seal.

Even the tracker bar assembly is constructed with several layers of plywood and has brass sleeves to connect to the tubing, which in turn feed directly to the base of the pipes (there is no Windchest).



Custom Perspex side panel to show bellows and crank and bass pipes.

The double-acting bellows (using piano-cloth) feeds a regulated reservoir to produce a constant wind pressure. A larger plastic pipe feeds the pressure box under the lid assembly, where the 20-note music roll is drawn across the tracker bar. When a hole in the music roll is exposed as it moves across the tracker bar, pressurised air is forced via a tube directly to the corresponding pipe for the duration of the music roll hole/slot.

This organ is fitted with both left and right-handed handles, which drive the main shaft assembly to pump the bellows and rotate the secondary shaft to draw the music roll across the tracker bar to a take-up spool. To rewind the roll a reverse turn of the handle engages a quick rewind mechanism.

The organ is based on the Carl Frei 20er scale with 3 Bass pipes (F, Bb, C) and 17 melody pipes (D, Eb, E, F, G, A, Bb, C, D, Eb, F, G, A, Bb, C, D). Tuning is simplified with a custom-built tuning tool which accurately positions and locks the pipe stoppers (with flexible plasticine seal). Moving the stopper up or down within the top of the pipe allows tuning to the correct note pitch.



Within the mechanical music fraternity, I soon discovered (like the analogy of the laser printer and the large cost of the first replacement toner cartridge) that the music roll/book becomes the most expensive part of this hobby. A 3-tune roll will cost about \$70 AUD, punched and shipped from the UK.

However, a hobby is a hobby and I can attest you will get many hours of achievement from assembling the kit and the ongoing pleasure from playing this compact mechanical organ to friends and others.

For more information – <http://www.castlewoodorgans.com/>

AMOS RALLY 8th 9th 10th OCTOBER, 2021

Lardner Park, Warragul, Victoria.

Accommodation below – more information in June edition of newsletter.

Comfort Inn Motel & Suites, Warragul (4stars) 03 5623 2189 info@warragulmotel.com.au

Warragul Gardens Holiday Park – 03 6523 2707 enquiries@warragulcaravanpark.com.au

Edinburgh Motor Inn Motel (4stars) – 03 5622 3339 info@edinburghmotorinn.com.au

Warragul View Motor Inn Motel (4stars) – 03 5623 5222

email@warragulviewsmotorinn.com.au

These are the only motels and caravan park in the area, so please book early.

LOST TRADES FAIRS

Hello everyone from Pam McDiarmid,

Should the news not have reached you, the **BENDIGO** Lost Trades Fair has, unfortunately, been cancelled for 2021. The following is the letter from Lisa:

“It does not need to be said that it is with a heavy heart that we will be announcing the cancellation of the Lost Trades Fair Bendigo.

Despite the last couple of months of preparation, days of work completing the Covid-Safe planning documentation for DHHS and DJPR, posters and advertising being out in market since early December and the support of the Bendigo Council and their amazing tourism team; the position on all events is changing on a daily basis and the potential for more border lockdowns add another layer of difficulty for many artisans and visitors.

What I do know is that we will not be the only event in Victoria announcing cancelling. The last thing we want is to be inspirational and infectious, be labelled as a potential super spreader event in regional Victoria, or be thought of as reckless by holding an event that draws visitors from not only across the state but interstate. People were planning to travel to Bendigo, even in these uncertain times, from Qld, NSW, and SA – all to see you do what you do best and be truly inspired.

The decision has been made first and foremost for health and safety of everyone involved, as this is more important than anything else.

Take care and thank you for your support. We look forward to seeing you on the other side of all this.

Lisa and Glen”

At this stage no decision has been made about the **TOOWOOMBA Lost Trades Fair** in May, or the **SYDNEY Lost Trades Fair** in October. Information about these two events will be sent out closer to the time of the event.

If you need any further information about these events before the next newsletter comes out please contact me

pam@pmcdiarmid.com

Roll on Warragul!

Pam McDiarmid

To keep a secret is wisdom, to expect others to keep it is folly.

Take my advice – I’m not using it.

There may be no excuse for laziness, but I’m still looking.

George King



As our oldest AMOS member approaches 100 years of age, I thought it would be nice to share some interesting things about George with our members. *(photo George King 2011 at the Geelong Rally)*

George was born on Anzac Day in 1921 in Newcastle and moved to Sydney while a baby. It was the Depression and times were hard. His father Syd worked in the electrical department of the railways. To enable more people to earn a wage during these tough times, he worked two days one week and three days the other.

Growing up in Sydney, from an early age George had a fascination with the water and boats, and he initially wanted to work on a sailing ship, which would have been rough work. Instead, he went to Rushcutter Bay and joined the Navy Reserves. Every Tuesday night he would go along and ‘learn the ropes’ –about ships, rigging, knots, etc. and really

enjoyed this voluntary service. By day he worked at Metters as a sheet metal worker. Some of you will remember the Metters’ range of baths, stoves, etc with their Koala and Kookaburra brands. Metters also made sinks, and these ‘modern’ products were considered innovative with their inbuilt steel draining boards.

Soon war was declared and George was quickly enlisted in the Navy. He had always harboured a desire to become a motor mechanic, so navy life sounded ok – no marching, and the new recruits were told they would be back home in a couple of weeks! George was relegated to small naval vessel, a corvette, the *Bathurst*, one of several in a convoy, where they were armed and undertook duties of mine-sweeping and surveillance to protect the larger vessels in the fleet. Within a very short time he was bound for Singapore, and then later to Alexandria and the Middle East.

George met his loving wife Glad on a blind date organised by a friend. Their courtship was carried out by letter while George was away on duty. It was customary for all letters to be censored during the war, and even the number of ‘kisses’ written at the end of each letter was censored (ie. cut out – leaving just ONE x).



After the Japanese surrender things quietened down and George got leave and he and Glad were married at Marrickville. He spent the remainder of the war years working at the depot. His years spent in the navy confirmed for George that he definitely wanted to work outdoors.

(Glad and George at Bathurst Rally 2014)

“The post war period was one of immense growth for Australia. The government saw the need for the country to become self-sufficient, rather than depend on imported goods and soon we were manufacturing everything”.

Initially George worked for a builder, but soon, with a mate Arthur he met at ‘*The College of Knowledge*’, they began to build houses on their own. These early days revealed George could turn his hand to any and every aspect of the building trade, even roofing, brick-laying and concreting. This became easier when Glad encouraged him to buy a concrete mixer! George mortgaged his own home to build the first house which was sold before being completed. This successful business venture of building and then selling each house to finance the next one was a very happy time for George, and also Glad, who did all his book-keeping. Eventually the partnership with his friend split – Arthur moving to farming and George went on building industrial units.

George was not only a very practical man, he was also a savvy entrepreneur. He became interested in growing orchids, which were quite expensive items at the time. But, resourceful as ever, George commandeered his brother’s old truck and went bush and collected the bark and residue from where they had been cutting up logs and then sold this to other orchid growers as a perfect growing medium. Of course there was often a free orchid bulb given away with the mulch!

Throughout his life George has been a collector of things, mostly mechanical, that took his fancy. There were the cars, including an antique French model of the 1909 – 1910 era which he totally restored from being a derelict wreck. George can recount many stories of all the wheeling and dealing that went on during this time, and the excitement of the ‘hunt’ to find each collector’s item. His forever friend and wife Glad supported him in this hobby by machining all the leatherette upholstery for the various vehicles he bought and sold over time. Glad had always worked in the fabric industry, so was able to share his interest by using her talents in this field. The fact that he and Glad could share and work together on projects was something George valued greatly throughout his life; Glad was not only his wife, but they were best friends. He was intensely proud of her and admired the porcelain dolls she made and collected, helping her when it came to assembling them before making their outfits. Likewise, Glad would willingly hold pieces of a traction machine in the making, while George riveted each piece in place. Such was their support and respect for each other.

When George’s working life came to a close he looked for something to fill his time and it was then he started model boat-building. Securing the original plans of vessels, he worked from these, reducing them to scale and, over time, built a number of large model boats. The first was a pilot boat. The *Titanic* was also one of his models and another, of which he was very proud, was a model of the *Bathurst*, the original vessel he sailed in when he joined the navy in the Second World War. Having worked on this ship, he had an intimate knowledge of the fittings, and every fitting was replicated down to each individual ringbolt, etc.

It was at this time that he was out with a friend when he saw a boat being scrapped – and yes, he recognised it as the *Bathurst*, due to some damage evident on the deck that he was familiar with. Since it was being scrapped, some small items became interesting mementos of a past era.

Continued page 9

Throughout his time collecting a wide variety of items, George really enjoyed restoring the items, then perhaps trading them to finance other objects. He could work with many materials – wood, metal, etc and was resourceful in restoring furniture as well as mechanical items. He also had a keen eye for detail and an appreciation of good design and beautiful materials and finishes.

(picture – 52 Key Ruth at Darling Harbour)

It was inevitable that George ended up with an organ collection. Again, he enjoyed the procuring of instruments, appreciating the mechanics involved in each one and enjoying sharing the organ music with the public whenever possible. In the 1980's and 90's, he and several fellow organ enthusiasts would arrange to take their organs down to Darling Harbour at the weekend to play for the people wandering around. We all know the euphoria experienced doing this, and the warm feelings one gets meeting so many wonderful individuals at the same time.



As George met other organ players and collectors, he and Glad spent much time helping out by unloading, putting together and generally helping out when asked to assist others with their instruments. And George always kept his finger on the pulse when 'special' items appeared at auctions or became available on the grapevine and passed this information on to whoever was in the market for a certain item.

His first organ was a 48 key Gavioli, which had undergone a quick restoration. This organ is now owned by Doug Drummond and it resides at the Bathurst airport. His 52 key Ruth organ can now be viewed at Craig Robson's museum. A very old barrel organ, circa 1890, resplendent with beautiful inlay was another collector's piece he owned and there was also a 20 note Raffin organ, much easier to carry around the countryside to play at rallies.



Synonymous with organs are monkeys, and George tells some great stories about a particular monkey called 'Chicko'.

Chicko was George's pet, a rhesus monkey, and lived with him on the *Bathurst*. An intriguing animal, like most monkeys he was mischievous and sometimes destructive, and frequently got into

trouble. Bathing Chicko was “*like bathing an octopus*”, said George. One day, when in the port of Aden in the Middle East, George came across a man selling cones full of peanuts. Thinking how much Chicko would appreciate some nuts, George took them back to the ship and spread some out on the table. Surprisingly, Chicko didn’t pay much attention to the peanuts, but George was puzzled at seeing his eyes - and hands darting around the table. Having sampled the odd peanut himself on the way back to the ship, George quickly realised that Chicko was not so much interested in the nuts as the weevils that were trying to escape from them across the table!

George was one of the founding members of AMOS, and until a few years ago he and Glad were familiar faces at many rallies. Sadly, Glad passed away in 2018. George still gets out and about and recently visited Craig’s museum in Bowral.

There are so many stories that could be recounted about George and his pursuits, but I hope this short summary of just a few of them will convey to you what an interesting and active man George is. In a few weeks he will be celebrating his centenary. It is a real honour to have such a gentleman in our association. His interest in life is invigorating and his resourcefulness in all the activities he has pursued is nothing short of inspirational.

On behalf of AMOS, we all wish you Many Happy Returns George and look forward to sharing more stories with you at future rallies.

Pam McDiarmid

EDITOR’S NOTES

Thank you to everyone who sent in articles etc for the latest newsletter, it is much appreciated. As I have said before it is your newsletter and I do love to hear from anyone with little bits of information (maybe about a website you have looked at) the odd photo which may be of interest, or a full article – it is all appreciated.



Information re the Lost Trades Fairs will be in the next newsletter, but you can always get in touch with Pam direct pam@pmcdiarmid.com if you need to know anything before the next newsletter comes out.

Daphne Holt – Editor

An oldie, but a goodie.

