

"I had a monumental idea this morning, but I didn't like it" – Sam Goldwyn



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The Wind Chest

The newsletter of the Australian Mechanical Organ Society Inc. -ABN 51 312 657 041



Hans M plays his Deleika at the Berrima Historic Vehicle 50th anniversary (H.Moll)

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FROM THE EDITOR



Here is my third edition, containing information about the upcoming rally in Horsham. Some members are coming from a considerable distance, and I thank all who intend to be there. It isn't too late....get your motel booked now!

I would also like to appeal to you as AMOS members to send me photos and information about your activities for inclusion in future editions.....

Richard Ellis, Editor.

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**IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR SUBS FOR 2023- 4
PLEASE DO SO NOW – WE NEED YOU TO STAY
INVOLVED!**

FROM THE PRESIDENT



We all are looking forward to visiting Horsham again for our Rally and AGM in October. If you haven't returned your Rally or Membership form, please do so a.s.a.p. so that we know you are coming and we can include you in our Membership list if you wish.

There are some further details in this issue of our Rally in Horsham in October. The Garden Festival people are very keen to see AMOS as part of their event.

This weekend also includes our AGM, and I am seeking items for the Agenda in advance so we are aware of member's queries before the meeting rather than getting tangled up during General Business.

I am seeking ideas for the 2024 Rally, which we hope will be 'up north' in NSW or close to the border with Victoria and preferably linked with a local event. We also need people to offer to organise the 2024 Rally.

Please give some thought to the Agenda and Rally items and contact Graeme McDiarmid by late September.

secretary@australianmechanicalorgansociety.com.

Pam McDiarmid has kindly agreed to assemble a **Register of Organs in Australia**. This will include not only AMOS member organs, but any other known instrument which we can locate. Please make your organ details available for AMOS.

Many of you have organ knowledge on a variety of subjects and I encourage you to put 'pen to paper' and write an article for Windchest.

Peter Datson, President

THE "BUMBLING BRUDER" TOUR – PART 3

By Peter Datson

After a very long bus trip travelling across Germany and France, we arrived overnight at Les Gets in France and in the morning visited the **Musée de la Musique Mécanique**. <http://www.musicmecalessgets.org> In the middle of what is a ski village in winter, it was surprising to find a modern museum and extensive collection of mechanical music instruments in a multi-level building. In a series of rooms and gathered for over 40 years is a unique collection of over nine hundred unique items: - chimes, music boxes, clocks, barrel organs,

orchestrions, automatons, phonographs, gramophones, animated pictures, automatic violins and fairground organs. The annual Festival International de la Musique Mécanique takes place in July, attracting people from all over Europe to this event. More recently they have produced a book of the History of the Limonaire-Freres Organs – but only in French!



A Limonaire organ seen at the Mechanical Organ Museum in Les Gets in France (P.Datson)

Our next destination in Switzerland was the Museum for Musikautomaten at Seewen. This is a government sponsored museum with many items from a private collection and we were privileged to a guided tour by Raphael Lüthi. A huge Carl Frei organ (façade only) is in the foyer (currently under restoration) and a Mortier Dance organ, and the tour continues through to the Workshop Hall with many technical aspects of mechanical music instruments. The museum houses a vast range of music boxes, orchestrions, dance organs and automatons and the tours are suitable for all ages – including some hands-on mechanical music demo for the demonstration to the younger generations.

A highlight of the tour is the Welte Philharmonic ‘Britannic’ Organ, the long missing organ built (but never installed) in the ocean liner ‘Britannic’ – the sister ship of the ‘Titanic’ that sank in 1912. It was finally identified in 2007 and has been fully restored, together with 1230 donated music rolls, and we were treated to a magnificent recital in a custom designed hall.

<https://www.musikautomaten.ch/mma/en/home.html>



The “Britannic” organ seen at the Seewen museum in Switzerland (P.Datson)

Still in Switzerland, we travelled to the **Klang-Maschinen Museum** in Dürnten. Set in several levels in an old silk factory this was the best presented museum on the trip. In a series of well-presented Art Deco and Art Nouveau rooms, there were various eras of mechanical music instruments, cylinder music

boxes, polyphons, gramophones, barrel organs and small fair organs. In the large organ hall (in which we were served a fantastic lunch by the volunteers) were a range of large and small fairground and dance organs, a horse and car merry-go-round, puppet machines and a cinema organ making up this



A Ruth & Sohn organ seen at the Klang Machine Museum in Switzerland (P. Datson)



A triple violin Hupfeld Phonolizt Violana, reminiscent of the instrument in Australia at "Fairground Follies" (P. Datson)

...incredible collection of mechanical musical instruments. A Decap Robot organ was a great hit with its uniqueness together with other Th. Mortier and Ruth & Sohn organs. The unique Hupfeld Phonoliszt-Violina – 3 violins played with mechanical fingers and a rotating bow linked to a perforated music roll with pianola accompaniment. This was once dubbed the 'eighth wonder of the world'. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qewdC3hX4iQ>
<https://www.kmm-duernten.ch/home>

The town of Rüdesheim on the Rhine River in Germany was the next destination. Many river cruises stop here, and a highlight attraction is **Siegfried's Mechanical Music Museum**, a fascinating array of mechanical music instruments across the ages. Now run by his son Jens and grandson, we were treated to some of the special rooms that were not part of the standard tourist tours. The museum has a separate workshop some distance away which we visited and in addition to tourist tours, they are now involved with reproduction of orchestrions and restoration of many instruments. A special highlight in the museum is a double Hupfeld Violin-Virtuosa with six violins and piano which was amazing to listen to. <http://www.smmk.de>



A large trumpet organ seen at Siegfried's Organ Museum (P. Datson)

A new addition to their holdings is the *Museum Mechanicum*; set in the offices of an old distillery, it has a vast number of simple and complex automata and

kinetics (mechanical moving figures) from some of the world's best automata makers. <https://mechanicum-asbachgasse.de/>

The Bumbling Bruder Tour crossed another border into the Netherlands to the **Johan Hinzen Collection** in Swalman, which boasts of the largest private collection of fairground organs (especially Ruth and Sohn) in the world. Hinzen's operates a fairground amusement business, and their collection of mainly Ruth & Sohn organs is spectacular. No expense has been spared in the restoration and some organs are in original Mack trailer wagons built in Waldkirch. I counted over 7 Ruth organs, a Waldkirch Gavioli, Wellerhaus, and a roll playing Gebruder Bruder organ as part of the collection. Outside playing was the recently acquired Ruth 36b Organ from Paul Kirrage in the UK.

Onwards to **Luc Peeters Draaiorgel Museum/café** in Voortkapel, Westerlo, Belgium for dinner. Located in a residential street, this was a typical Belgian café with tables and refreshments as well as an assortment of organs and mechanical instruments. We were treated to a BBQ dinner, and we explored the various rooms filled with Decap, Bursens and Mortier organs. The walls were full of posters and memorabilia, and we were allowed to explore the very cramped restoration workshop and saw the book punching machine. This is a family business started by Luc and now carried on by his son and other family members. www.orgelmuseum.be



A café in Belgium presented as Luc Peeters Draaiorgel Museum where the group had dinner (P.Datson)

As mentioned in Part 2 of this tour we also visited Gebroeders Decap whose website address is www.decap-gebr-antwerp.com/.

Arburo's Place has recently moved to this new location and features the 84-key Mortier 'Brabancon' providing a magnificent sound with a very large façade which took up most of the width of the factory. A very quaint 68-key Arthur Bursens organ 'Sint Bernard' (1975) was played and this being a lunch stop, salad rolls and drinks were supplemented by the 96-key Arburo dance organ 'Canada'. <https://zalen.be/zaal/arbueros-place>

Another factory stop was the temporary home of the **Ghysels Collection** of mechanical dance and fairground organs, originally owned by Jef Ghysels and now purchased by the Flemish government (Kijk-en Luisterdepot) in Bevan, Belgium. Many of the four large historical organs (Mortier, Hooghys, Bursens) and twelve smaller organs are supplemented by organ statues and other memorabilia. The oldest organ, the 92-key L'Hermoine Mortier dates back to 1895 and dominates the collection and play with a strong voice and tone for the audience. The collection remains here until the organs can be relocated to the Museum Vleeshuis which is undergoing renovation. The curator is a young mother who had her baby in tow, complete with child's ear muffs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rm-s23YPJxY>

The private collection of **Gino Musters** was a series of large organ halls filled with Decap organs, a bit like an organ extravaganza. We arrived at 9:15am to be greeted with cake and coffee. Tables and chairs were laid out in the main hall as each of the organs were played in sequence. The Decap dance organs and music are best described as a sound and light show; tunes to dance by with flashing coloured lighting highlighting the saxophone, playing accordions with drums and other percussion – wood blocks, cymbals, bells, etc. We set out to explore the back of the organs to see the vibratone pipes and the continuous playing book hoppers and some with incorporated electronic Hammond style organs.

Still in the Netherlands we were treated to the **Museum Dansant** - a huge, decorated dance/reception hall, dominated by the 101-key Mortier 'Poseiden', Carl Frei and 105-key Decap 'Robot' organs. Another scrumptious lunch of sandwiches, croquettes and drinks was interspersed with the organs playing loudly in rotation during our tour. The final surprise is the basement which is decked out in the style of a 19th Century carnival showcase complete with sideshow alley and pretend carousel. Very historic and colourful and a visit to remember.

<https://www.museumdansant.nl/>



A robot organ seen at the Museum Dansant (Netherlands) – P. Datson

THE BUMBLING BRUDER TOUR WILL CONCLUDE IN THE
DECEMBER 2023 WINDCHEST

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

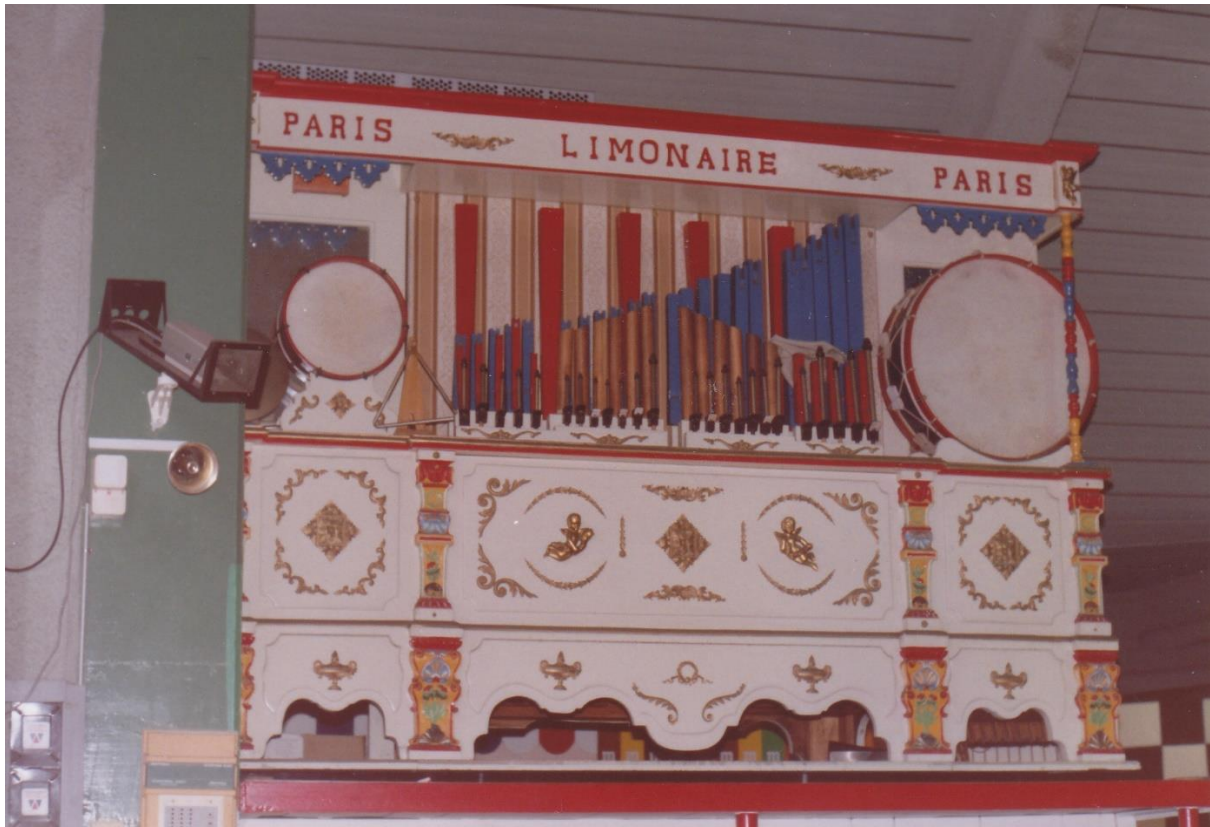
Some time ago I was talking to Des Lang about mechanical organs in general and I said that there were about 50 organs that had just disappeared. So we started counting, and yes there are a lot.

6 from WA, 12 from SA, 3 from Alice Springs and the list just went on and on. The other thing is the condition that some of the organs are in leaves a lot to be desired. If at any stage you find one BE CAREFUL!

In late 2004 Magic Mountain at Glenelg in SA was being demolished and all the amusements and equipment went up for sale. The Limonaire organ was sold and taken to NSW where it was stored in a container. A few years ago a reliable club member had a look at it and found it to be in poor condition. Someone had removed half the pipes and the original keyframe and replaced the keyframe with one that was faulty. Anyone who bought it would have to have both the knowledge and money to restore it (if they could find parts).

This also applies to a lot of the other organs around, so the advice is BUYER BEWARE as you may be taking on more than you can handle or AFFORD. Another thing to watch out for is the amount of music that goes with the organ, as this can also be quite expensive and in some cases quite hard to find.

David Holt



The above photo was taken at Magic Mountain, Glenelg, South Australia where the Limonaire organ was raised above the ground out of reach of the public. It has now almost certainly been destroyed (D.Holt)

VALLEY HEIGHTS STEAM FESTIVAL

I was invited to play my organ at the railway museum at Valley Heights in the Blue Mountains of NSW. The notice was short but what made the schedule a bit of a challenge was a number of new State rules which had come in force in recent times.

To perform in a public place one has to have a certificate issued by the government to clear you to perform with children present. A process which includes you providing proof of identity and then a search of your criminal records (If any)! This can be done via internet or directly at any motor registry offices in your state of residence. I suggest you choose the latter, because to pass the test, you have to present proof of your identity, birth certificate, passport, drivers licence, medicare number &/or a few more documents acceptable to the authorities in person! This search can take as long as two

weeks, but I got the all clear within two hours (phew!). Then you have to do an online induction course for the specific place and organisation you will attend. Luckily this was all done in good time and I was able to attend. This process will be enforced in most public attended club activities as time goes by, so be prepared!

At seven a.m. my wife and I set off from Bowral and arrived in plenty of time to familiarise ourselves with the premises of this museum before it opened to the public. It was an enjoyable day, principally organised by the Campbelltown Steam Museum and Sydney Steam Tram groups in support of both themselves and Valley Heights.



Hans M at the Valley Heights Railway locomotive shed playing his organ. Valley Heights is a subsidiary site of the Thirlmere Museum.

HANS M

2023 AMOS RALLY – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Horsham is a regional city in the Wimmera region of western Victoria. Located on a bend in the Wimmera River, Horsham is approximately 300 kilometres

northwest of the state capital Melbourne. Horsham had a population of 20,429.

The ***Horsham Spring Garden Festival*** is set in the historic Botanical Gardens, close to the main town centre. The Festival is organised under the guidance of the Rotary Club of Horsham on **Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th October 2023**.

Our customary Friday night BBQ will be held at the Best Westlander Motel (where most people are staying) at 6:00pm. There is a new BBQ area and shelter from our last visit. Please remember to bring your own drinks and chairs, as we catchup with new and old friends.

On Saturday and Sunday, the Rally will be held at the Horsham Botanical Gardens, a five-minute drive from the motel between **9:00am to 4:30pm**. There are toilets in the centre of the gardens.

A plan of the organ layout will be available at the BBQ. Large organs need to be onsite on Friday afternoon. No power is presently available so bring your 240v generator and make sure any leads are tested and tagged.

Small organs will free to wander around and play around the site, but need to be taken off-site on Saturday night as there is no storage facility. Large organs can be left onsite overnight and there will be security patrolling the gardens.

The Garden Festival has local community groups providing catering for purchase onsite for lunch. There is no cost to enter gardens for AMOS people, **wear your name badge** – but you are expected to buy a raffle ticket!

We will be asked not to play music during speeches and other musical performers on stage and we will be given a timetable on Saturday.

We have been asked to deliver a five-minute talk on mechanical organs and AMOS on Saturday & Sunday on the stage.

Bring your insurance certificate/card and name badge to wear.

The Saturday night dinner will be at the Westlander Motel in the restaurant from 6:30pm. Drinks are available at bar prices, no BYO.

The AMOS AGM will follow the dinner in the same venue.

If you want an item on the Agenda please sent the details to Graeme McDiarmid Email: secretary@australianmechanicalorgansociety.com at least two weeks before the meeting.

We will have copies of the Agenda/2022 Minutes/Financial Report for the meeting, as well as our Model Rules from Consumer Affairs Victoria.

We will be asking members in advance to nominate potential towns for the 2024 Rally (in conjunction with a local event) and members willing to organise the rally (somewhere in NSW or close to the Victorian border) Start getting your thoughts together please.

For those intending to stay for dinner at the Royal Hotel on Sunday night, we

will gather names at the BBQ to make a booking.

On Saturday and Sunday mornings, there are lots of cafés for Breakfast on Firebrace Street.

A map with all relevant details is enclosed – we are all in one place for the Rally during the weekend. Any questions? Please contact:

Peter Datson

M: 0418 350 114 Email: president@australianmechanicalorgansociety.com

From the AMOS Secretary: The annual rally is when we hold the AMOS Annual General Meeting. This will be on **Saturday evening, 14 October 2023.**

The AGM is an important event for the club. Each year all positions on the committee must be filled to ensure the smooth running of the club. (The committee positions are listed in the club rules, page 22, section 44. A copy of the rules are available on the club website home page)

The ordinary business of the Annual General Meeting is as follows:

- (a) confirm the minutes of the previous AGM
- (b) to receive and consider -
 - (i) the annual report of the committee
 - (ii) the financial statements of the association
- (c) to elect the members of the Committee and to decide on the number of ordinary committee members to be elected.
- (d) to decide the amount of the annual subscription for the next financial year. (2024 – 2025)

The club rules provide for a member to appoint another member as their proxy for the meeting. If you are unable to attend the AGM and wish to appoint a proxy, please contact the Secretary for further information, secretary@australianmechanicalorgansociety.com

Membership subscriptions for 2023/24 are now overdue. These can still be paid into the AMOS bank account, Bendigo Bank, BSB 633000, Account Number 122304983 (please quote your name as the reference), by cheque to the treasurer or to the treasurer before the start of the meeting.

You must be a financial member to be elected to the committee, to nominate a member or to cast a vote.

Graeme McDiarmid, Secretary, AMOS.



REGISTER OF MECHANICAL ORGANS IN AUSTRALIA

When on a tour of mechanical organs with a group of collectors and enthusiasts last year, I was in awe of their collective knowledge of all the mechanical organs we saw – their provenance, physical musical attributes and façade appearances, etc. Many overseas mechanical organs are known by name, and their heritage is well known.

I determined it would be a very good thing historically to attempt to create a record of all the mechanical organs we have in Australia.

Australia is isolated geographically from countries which have a mechanical organ tradition. A number of very fine European-built instruments have been imported into our country, but the cost of importing is beyond the reach of many who enjoy the hobby / interest.

This has resulted in resourceful Australians doing what they do best – ‘If you can’t buy, you build’.

A significant number of instruments of all sizes have been constructed by Australian builders.

It is my intention to record information about these organs and their builders while there are people with the relevant knowledge around to provide this. Such a listing will also include imported instruments, creating a comprehensive account of mechanical organs in Australia.

I will commence the listing by inviting AMOS members to submit details of their organs.

If you know of other organs / builders other than AMOS members, please include details such as address, contact name and number in order that I can contact them to add to the list.

At present a lot of people have a lot of information about organs in Australia. When this information is compiled, this listing will be of interest to both Australians and overseas collectors / enthusiasts / museums alike and Australian builders will be rightly acknowledged for their work.

- NB: Personal information about each organ will be recorded separately and will not be provided to any person enquiring to see the listing without the permission of the owner.

** Please copy extra sheets/s for each organ.

** Please add extra sheets if necessary to record information

Your co-operation in this project will be much appreciated. By completing the information sought in this way, you will be playing an important part in recording the history of mechanical organs in Australia.

Pam McDiarmid M: 0417 058 095 Email: pam@pmcdiarmid.com

Register of Mechanical organs in Australia

Your Name:

Phone Contact: Email:

Mechanical Organ

1	Type of organ: (Fairground, J.Smith, Busker, etc)	
2	Organ's Name:	
3	Organ builder:	
4	Year built:	
5	Country of origin	
6	Condition of organ (Excellent condition, Working, needs repair, in pieces, etc)	
7	Present location: (State, City/Town)	
8	Previous owner/s and location/s & date/s (if known)	

Music

9	Scale: (Barrel, Key or Keyless, 36 key, Limonaire, etc)	
10	Number of pipes:	
11	Registers: (Bourdon, violin, flute, trumpet, etc)	
12	Percussion (Bass, Snare drum, Glockenspiel, Bells etc)	
13	Type of music: (Barrel, Book, Paper Roll, Midi, etc)	
14	Wind supply (Hand cranked, Bellows, Blower)	

Physical Appearance & Special Features or Themes

15	Facade / proscenium / décor	
16	Animated character/s (Conductor, bell ringers, cupids, etc)	
17	Method of transporting organ (Trailer, cart, table model, etc)	

Pictures and Sound

18	Images of organ supplied?(JPEG)	Y	N	19	Music clip (MP3 or Wav) supplied?	Y	N
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20. Any other noteworthy factors:

Name/s & contact details of other known organ owners in Australia:

Please send to: P McDiarmid PO Box 10 Gisborne Vic 3437 or email copy to: pam@pmcdiarmid.com