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FINAL REPORT

PARTIAL RESTORATION OF THE 1905 GEORGE FINCHAM & SON PIPE ORGAN HURSTVILLE DISTRICT CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIA WRK 2009 240

SUMMARY

The project for the Hurstville District Christadelphian Ecclesia was to restore partially the 1905 George Fincham & Son pipe organ. The project was completed by Peter D.G. Jewkes Pty Ltd in August 2009 and its base cost of \$42,000 was supported by a Heritage Office grant of \$21,000.

AIM OF THE PROJECT

The aim of the project was to restore the organ partially, noting that work had been done in 1981 by Pitchford & Garside Pty Ltd and when the organ was moved from Rose Street Hurstville to the present building in 1992.

The current work has involved the full restoration of the pedal coupler action, restoration of the tremulant, the reinstatement of dead notes on both Swell and Pedal divisions, the full restoration of the Great and Swell soundboards (the major component of the work) and the restoration of the pipes of the Swell Oboe 8', with careful attention to voicing and regulation of the rank using other surviving Fincham examples (notably at St Joseph's Edgecliff) as a guide. The internal components of the organ were dismantled and reassembled upon completion, with the wooden and metal cone-tuned pipework cleaned, regulated and fine tuned.

The completion of the work has enabled the organ to sound to best advantage in the building, where it will continue to be used to accompany congregational singing, solos and in conjunction with other instruments. It will also be used for concerts and in conjunction with social events in the building.

BACKGROUND WORK

The extensive experience of the firm in working with nineteenth and early twentieth-century tracker organs has been the principal source of expertise. The acquisition of time-honoured skills and their development and application in bench work, woodworking and tonal finishing has been critical to the project.

Various publications, have also informed the project:

1. John Stiller's "Christadelphian Ecclesia – Ecclesial Hall, Hurstville NSW: Documentation of Pipe Organ built by George Fincham & Son, 1905". Organ Historical Trust of Australia and Heritage Council of NSW, 10 July 1985.
2. Graeme Rushworth's *Historic Organs of New South Wales: the instruments, their makers and players, 1791-1940* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1988), 187.
4. *NSW Heritage: Pipe Organ Conservation and Maintenance Guide* (NSW Heritage Office and Organ Historical Trust of Australia, 1998). This provided the guiding principles for organ conservation that have governed the firm's work in this and other organ conservation projects.

The conservation plan developed by Peter D.G. Jewkes Pty Ltd was contained in the firm's quotation of 30 October 2007 and the work schedule of 7 November 2007.

WORK UNDERTAKEN

The organ was dismantled and the soundboards, pipework, stored pedal action components and stored tremulant were removed to the firm's factory at Ermington.

1. The Swell and Great chests were cleaned and stripped down, with the bars sealed with animal glue. The tables were planed, and owing to the segmentation (into four plates) characteristic of Fincham organs, there was no evidence of splitting in the table and thus no screws, or infill were required. The tables, upperboards and sliders were planed true and covered in graphite for lubrication. Traditional blue paper was applied to the bearers. The pallets were recovered in new felt and lambskin and new canvas was used to cover the grid. New pulldown wires, of phosphor-bronze, were used to replace the previous steel set and new guidepins provided for the pallets. Rackboards were cleaned and new shellac was applied.
2. The tremulant was releathered, rebushed and a new drawstop control installed.

3. The Oboe resonators were sent to specialist pipe makers, Australian Pipe Organs Pty Ltd, of Melbourne, for extensive repairs. The stop was then voiced at the Ermington works and regulated on site.
4. Extensive work was undertaken on the pedal couplers, with the assembly cleaned and repolished. Broken backfalls and roller arms were repaired. New brass pins were provided to the wooden rollers, which were then rebushed in red felt. New leather buttons, red felt cloths, glued red thread and phosphor-bronze wires were provided for the restored trackers.
5. The dead Pedal note (top A sharp) and leaking conveyances to the bottom octave of the Swell Violin Diapason 8' stop were repaired.
6. The pipework was cleaned and regulated upon the reassembly of the organ. It is important to note that the original cone tuning was retained for open metal flue pipes.

COSTING

The cost of the organ restoration project, including GST, was \$42,955 to which additional items, such as consultant's fees and the value of voluntary management of the project can be added to this figure. The NSW Heritage Grant came to \$21,000.

DURATION OF PROJECT

Work commenced on the project in February 2009 and concluded in August 2009. (The delayed commencement of the project was due to the late announcement of grants in mid-2008, with only 10 months to complete projects. The firm, in the meantime, had to sign contracts with other clients, thus affecting the commencement date for the Fincham project).

FUTURE WORK

Further work on the organ is not necessary at the present time, although the following items could be attended to at some stage in the years to come:

1. Restoration of the casework, pipe façade and console area, including the bench
2. Recovering of the key surfaces, repairs to parts of the pedal division, adjustment of the composition pedals and restoration of the bellows to double-rise operation.

PERSONS INVOLVED

For Peter D.G. Jewkes Pty Ltd:
Organ craftsmen

Murray Allan
Rodney Ford

Peter Jewkes
David Morrison
Kornelius Schmidt
Daniel Tidman
Carmel Grech (office administrator)

Organ consultant: Dr Kelvin Hastie OAM

Project Manager: Dr Rachel Hocking

CERTIFICATE

The organ is certified as being restored in terms of the quotation dated 30 October 2007 and Heritage Branch grant requirements – the processes described above are in compliance with the principles of *NSW Heritage: Pipe Organ Conservation and Maintenance Guide* (NSW Heritage Office and Organ Historical Trust of Australia, 1998).

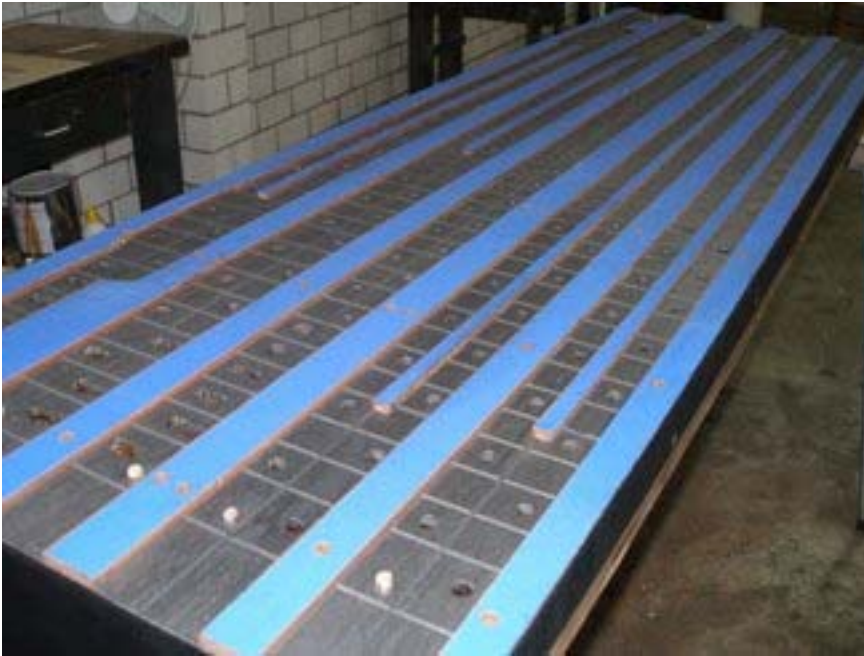
Kelvin J. Hastie
Consultant

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Restored coupler action section, showing new buttons, cloths wires and bindings:



2. Restored Swell soundboard, showing restored table, and bearers:



3. Repaired and repolished Swell rackboards:



4. Restored Swell pallets:



5. Cleaned and reinstated Swell pipework:



6. Cleaned and reinstated Great pipework

