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## 2012 Summer Newsletter



**The Tuba Soundboards of Brisbane City Hall showing the restored 1891 Willis soundboard and the new 2 rank replica soundboard and stop machine made in our Hemmant workshop. Spot the difference.**

We are continuing the restoration of the **Willis Organ of Brisbane City Hall**. I seem to have been writing these words for quite a while but that is exactly what the main activity has been in our workshop.

The 1891 Tuba soundboard was unused for many years but is now being reunited with its original pipework. It has been restored with new replica rackboards and stop action as the originals were missing. A new Willis-style soundboard was made for the 1990 Tubas 8' and 4'. Even the new Willis style rack pins were made here in Hemmant.



**Replica Willis Wooden Rack Pins for the new soundboards and to replace old damaged units as manufactured by our Research & Development Department.**

We have now overhauled all the stop actions, tremulants, swell motors, slider soundboards and all underactions. Almost all pedal chests have been restored. We are presently refurbishing the high pressure Orchestral soundboard. The showcase repairs and repolishing is complete and the console repolishing and rewiring has begun. The show pipes have been sandblasted and are now being repainted.

The new equipment for the organ has arrived from Laukhuff of Germany including 7 new blowers (!! ) for the plant room and the new computerised relay and capture system. All operations of the relay and capture system can be set by a touch screen including the playback options. The original console had only 8 generals in the key cheeks but using the touch screen, 36 generals are now available. The touch screen is virtually a second console, allowing the 1927 Willis console to be restored to former glory without any add-ons.



**Derek and Tomaz beside the newly painted showpipes of the Brisbane City Hall.  
The unpainted 32' pipes can be seen to the bottom right.**

Meanwhile, regular maintenance has continued to be carried out:

The leather of the schwimmers had perished in the 1990 Smenge organ **St Andrew's Lutheran Church, Brisbane** and the wind noise had become very audible in the church. We had to remove the pipework from the organ, dismantle the action and tip up the soundboards so the swimmer mechanism could be removed. The schwimmers were recovered in supple kangaroo skin and the regulating valves repaired. This gave us the opportunity to clean all the pipework as well as the whole organ. The action was carefully adjusted after the soundboards were replaced. The result was a new organ with a warmer tone and more integrated. Obviously the regulation valves had been faulty for some time.

We carried out further work on the organ in **St Martin's Anglican Church, Mullumbimby**. We have cleaned and revoiced the Swell pipework and replaced the

Swell puffers. This part of the organ was originally part of the 1933 Whitehouse in the Eagle Junction Congregational Church and is a cone-pallet soundboard. The Great is mostly located on a Norman and Beard slider soundboard and we suspect this came from the choir organ of Christchurch Cathedral, Newcastle. This organ has continued to improve as the refurbishment in stages has progressed. It is now a very pleasant and useful instrument for the church and town.

A new Laukhuff SK200 capture system has been installed at of **St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane**. This replaced the 24 level capture system installed in 1990 which had developed a nasty habit of unexpectedly turning on a general piston at random times and locking so that the stops could not be changed even by hand (a bit disconcerting during a service). The new system has 264 general and 16 divisional levels. General settings can be saved and loaded via a USB stick.

The 1931 Whitehouse organ in **the Grand Hall of the Masonic Temple, Ann St, Brisbane** had a few problems just before Christmas. The organist reported that the organ had been chirping and whistling during the December meeting. Intrigued, I called in the next day to investigate and on opening the trapdoor to the chamber was drenched in water. The roof over the Great had leaked during one of the ferocious summer storms Brisbane has been having. Water had leaked through the pipework, the Great soundboard, the puffer rails and then out the underside and onto the floor. It was a miracle that the organ had played at all or had not shorted. All pipework was removed and cleaned of all the detritus from the roof. The soundboard was stripped and opened and left to dry out over Christmas. The upperboards were flooded with glue to seal the channels, planed flat and fitted with new bedding. All soundboard valves and puffers were inspected and replaced as necessary. All the electro-magnets were treated and lubricated. Everything was then reinstalled and the pipework tuned. This organ is a fine example of a good sized Whitehouse organ in an excellent acoustic. Mechanically it has proved very reliable and tonally complete.



**The water damage to the Great soundboard of the Masonic Temple Brisbane.**

We are cleaning the 1980 Roger Pogson organ in the chapel of **the Anglican Church Grammar School, East Brisbane**. The organ has become filthy as it is next to the west door which is open during the day. Derek Smart made a new door and panel for the Great to prevent dirt blowing directly onto the pipework. It is made from Queensland Maple and matches the rest of the fine casework by Pogson. The feet of the showfront pipes had collapsed so Ivan Cowell had to repair these with new tips in our pipe shop. The pipework for the Nazard is also being added to the Great and this now completes the tonal design of the organ. After the pipework has been cleaned, it will be reinstalled, regulated and tuned to Vallotti.



**The Churchie Chapel organ in the midst of being dismantled.  
Richard, Lyn and Matthew taking a break.**

We are pleased to announce the signing of the contract to build a new 43 stop mechanical action organ for **St Paul's Anglican Church, Ipswich** incorporating the pipework from the old 1860 organ. Completion date is set for late 2015.

**(Inset showfront case design)**

With best wishes,

*Simon*