

An organ completed at last

Keith Jones was an inventive and inspirational character who encouraged the St Francis Xavier Cathedral parish, Geraldton, to acquire a pipe organ in the late 1970's. His enthusiasm for pipe organs was matched by his desire to be personally involved in the installation of the Lerner organ delivered in 1980. Subsequently, he was often found inside the organ tweaking the pipes so that his daughter, Lynne, could benefit from an "in tune" instrument when she played for mass at the Cathedral.

Keith had a plan to build an organ for Lynne, so with his engineering background providing a solid base from which to start he designed a studio organ around about 1982 and commenced construction soon after. He was often found in his backyard workshop tinkering with various parts for the organ, rollers, squares, buttons, pull downs, springs etc. etc. Over time he acquired two key sets of 56 notes and a 27-note pedalboard. He set about making the chassis with an inventive pedal coupler arrangement which must be unique in the organ building world but nevertheless effective. Keith put his hand to making all the components himself; parts, which organ builders would purchase from suppliers, such as action collets which he sweated on to stainless steel wires for the keyboard and pedal action, felt and leather bushings, roller arms, connectors and pipe feet and many other small parts. He created the steel building frame and set it on four



Keith Jones at Drummond Cove, Geraldton.



castors. He started making wooden pipes with the assistance of Tim, Lynne's husband. These wooden pipes have been retained as part of the Hohlflute rank. Keith also completed two slider chests, a small bellows, trunking, and acquired a small electric blower.



Alas, after some 35 years of 'on and off' labour for his daughter, Keith passed away in 2017 without realising this dream of which he was proud. He left a bundle of drawings, sometimes hard to decipher, and lots of components but only ever heard the sound of a few octaves of his creation.

Early in 2019 Lynne approached Pipe Organs WA with a view to completing her father's project. We had discussed this from time to time over the previous few years but

now was an appropriate time to finish the organ.

My first task was to document the components in existence and take stock of the progress made and to propose a plan to take the organ through to completion, suitable to be housed in a standard lounge room of a suburban home. It was important to honour the integrity of Keith's design but at the same time make alterations which would best suit Lynne's requirements for a practical tonal disposition and a responsive, clean key action. Therefore, I suggested an independent rank for the pedal (Bourdon 16') on its own chest at the rear of the organ and to alter the original "tape and bobbin" method of key action to sets of squares with trackers and collets. Lynne took this advice on board and I commenced work early in 2019 to firstly design, then manufacture, a pedal chest, refurbish 14 reclaimed wood pipes and manufacturing an additional 13 from Oregon timber originally purchased in



New Pedal chest installed at the rear of the organ with Swell action installed



Roller board for the Great division being prepared for installation. It is mounted "upside down" over the top of the Swell roller board.

long planks by Keith.

Over the ensuing months the organ took shape with wooden and metal pipes filling up the chests, a new Schwimmer regulator, a purpose-built blower enclosure, trunking and valves being set in place. Modifications were made to the

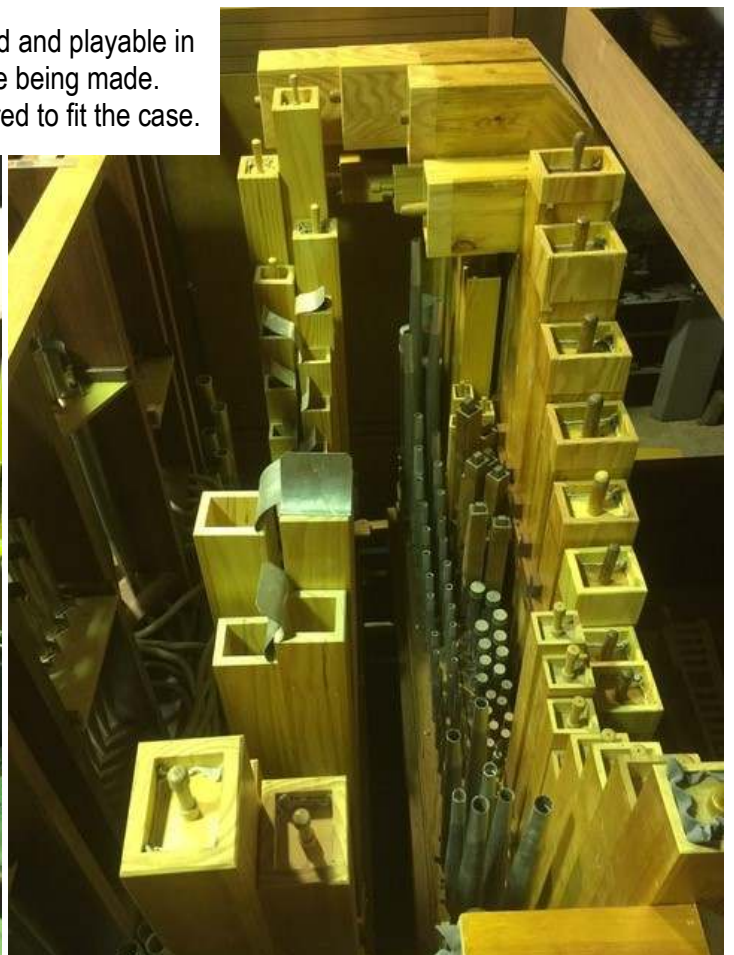
chests to facilitate maintenance and adjustments and then the case work was begun.

As I had some ranks of pipes suitable for this organ, I designed a case which would make the most attractive use of the polished zinc 4' basses and the spotted metal pipes. Jarrah was used for the case timbers as this choice of wood was made in Keith's original plans. The sides are capable of being fully opened for access to the organ's interior and a roof was added to enclose the organ. The pipe shades were designed and executed by me from cedar on a 3mm ply backing for strength.

Finally, all wood detailing was completed, pipes installed, player's bench manufactured, stop action adjusted, organ tuned and given



At left: The organ fully assembled and playable in the workshop prior to the case being made.
At right: The tallest pipes are mitred to fit the case.



preliminary voicing to the point where it is now complete awaiting installation in Lynne's home.

Number of pipes: 307, including 27 on display

Pressure: 65mm w.g.

Mechanical key and stop action

A = 440hz at 21°C

Schwimmer regulator controlling guillotine valve

BOB 3ph blower with inverter for single phase power.

Width 2.1m

Depth 1.6m

Height 2.6m

4 castors, detachable pedalboard

Adjustable player's bench

Graham Devenish



Keith's grandson Dean helping Tim Langford sand a pedal note.

I. Great

Hohlflute 8'
Principal 4'
Principal 2'

II. Swell

Gedackt 8'
Spitzflute 4'

PEDAL

Bourdon 16'

COUPLERS

SW/GT
SW/Ped
GT/Ped

