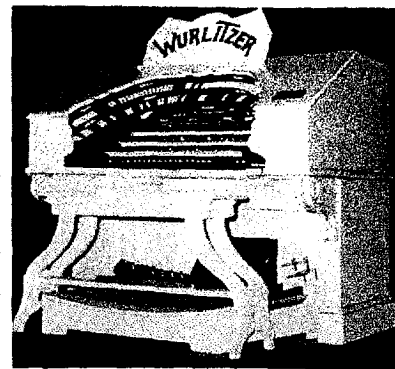


APRIL, 2001

TOSA



2/11 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Marrickville Town Hall

3/17 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ
Orion Centre Campsie

FESTIVAL 2001

An Organ Odessey

Last Chance for individual bookings for the
Festival - Friday, 13th - 17th April (See page 8)



2001 ORGAN ODYSSEY

A Festival of Theatre Organ

13th - 16th April 2001

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

The National Convention of the Theatre Organ

Society of Australia

Volume 40
Issue 3
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TOSA NEWS

APRIL, 2001

THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW DIVISION) Inc.

For the smooth running of TOSA, please contact the right person :

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Ticket Bookings - TICKET SECRETARY

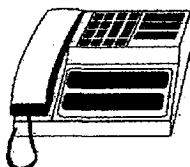
Membership, Renewals, Change of Address -

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

TOSA NEWS Items, Advertisements - EDITOR

All numbers use the prefix 02

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<http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~sgroves/tosa/home.html>



COMING EVENTS

APRIL

Monday 2 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting

Thursday 12 at 2.00pm Members' Playing Afternoon
Orion Centre Campsie

Important : Phone on the day to confirm 9716 0151

Friday 13 to Monday 16

National TOSA Festival, Brisbane

(See Pages 4 and 5)

Saturday 28 and Sunday 29

Southern Highlands Hospitality Weekend

(See Pages 6 and 7)

MAY

Monday 7 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting

Thursday 10 at 2.00pm Members' Playing Afternoon
Orion Centre Campsie

Important : Phone on the day to confirm 9716 0151

Sunday 20 at 2.00pm Tony Fenelon Concert
Marrickville Town Hall

Thursday 24 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall

Important : Phone to confirm 9798 6742

JUNE

Monday 4 at 7.30pm Committee Meeting

Thursday 14 at 2.00pm Members' Playing Day
Orion Centre Campsie

Important : Phone on the day to confirm 9716 0151

Thursday 28 at 7.30pm Members' Playing Night
Marrickville Town Hall

Important : Phone to confirm 9798 6742

From The President

Last month I recounted some of the difficulties we faced in getting the **Marrickville Wurlitzer** up and running with the new blower-room switch-gear. Without boring you with minor details I just want to say that we had further problems in getting the overload setting just right, which unfortunately cost some members their playing time. **David James** and **Dick Benham** came in from the country only to find the organ wouldn't go. Fortunately we were able to pop over and set the show running for them. I thank them for their good humour over the incident.

That same evening **Wendy Hambly** was good enough to go to **Marrickville** to try out a new setting - only to find the organ had cut out again. Thank you, **Wendy** - sorry you didn't get to play though.

Anyway it all seems to be **REALLY** fixed now. **Anthony Weismantel** has also finished installing the "low-voltage" switch box and all appears in order.

We were able to welcome **Albert Hudson** of **TOSA Tasmanian** fame to our last **Members' Afternoon**, together with his wife **Shirlee**. They were on a short stayover as part of a holiday. We managed to have **Albert** come ahead of the crowd and have a play. Then he had another turn at the end and played the organ down while **Bill** took his picture. We enjoyed **Albert's** music, while he seemed to have the time of his life! Nice to have met them.



Ron Mosman has been doing some good work for us. Remember the logo he designed for **Festival 2000**? If you have the souvenir program or bought a **TOSA** carry bag you'll know what I mean. Well, now we have the logo incorporated into a new 4 page "**Introducing TOSA**" leaflet! (there was one on every seat at the last concert).

As well as some new letterheads for official **TOSA** correspondence, **Ron** has created an "**ABOUT TOSA**" booklet of some dozen pages in which there are small colour pictures of the **Marrickville** and **Campsie Wurlitzer** consoles, with a couple of shots taken inside the chambers. It also describes and gives the specifications of both organs. This booklet was on sale for \$5 at the last concert. If you would like a copy, send \$5 to **TOSA** at **PO Box 243, Burwood, NSW, 1805** and I'll see you get one by return post.

We wish the **Queensland** folk well for their **Festival** this **Easter**. If you are going, we know you'll enjoy it. **Barry Tooker** and **Peter Harding** will be attending as our **Sydney** delegates.

Enough for now
- watch this space,
Walter Pearce

Welcome To New Members

TOSA (NSW) is happy to announce the following new members and to wish them many musical delights among our ranks:

Norma ANET - **Burwood Heights**
Eve CHESTERTON - **Condell Park**
Arthur SUTTON - **Baulkham Hills**.



Some of the regulars came along to the **Orion Players' Afternoon** on **8th February**. Those who did come had longer than usual at the console.

Then a good crowd turned up on **8th March**, including **Albert** and **Shirlee Hudson** who were visiting from **Tasmania**. **Jack** and **Betty Rose** were missing, and we heard that **Jack** had been in hospital with a heart attack. We learned later that he had been in hospital with a problem - but not a heart attack - and was recovering well. We wish **Jack** and **Betty** well. They always help keep us happy.

Listeners were **John Atkins**, **Shirlee Hudson**, **David James**, **Jenny Pearce**, **Margaret "Ruth" Dillon**, **Ray** and **Edna Hambly** and **Ron Mosman**. Players were **Bruce Bisby**, **Ron Ivin**, **Wendy Hambly**, **Bill Schumacher**, **Walter Pearce**, **Simon Ellis**, **Jack MacDonald**, **Frank Lewis**, **John Batts** and **Albert Hudson**.

Articles in this journal need not represent the views of the committee or the editor

The deadline for each edition of **TOSA News** is the 12th of the preceding month



2001 ORGAN ODYSSEY
A Festival of Theatre Organ
13th – 16th April 2001
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
The National Convention of the Theatre Organ
Society of Australia

2001 Convention Secretary: 10 Eucalyptus St Boondall 4034 Brisbane Queensland
or call Ian Kubler 61 7 32654050 fax 61 7 38654361 or Email: tosa2001@telstra.com

If you are unable to take advantage of the full Festival Package, we invite you to consider the following individual concerts at:

Kelvin Grove High School L'Strange Tce. Kelvin Grove

Friday 13th April: 4:00 – 6:00 pm Afternoon Concert featuring fantastic local Artists

**“Mr. David Bailey” and “Glenda Kubler” as well as
“The Two Jays”(Mr. John Ellis & Mrs. Judy Vale)**

6:00 – 7.30 pm Dinner

7.45 pm. Special Concert featuring the ever-popular showman

Mr. NEIL JENSEN

This Package is just \$35.00 and must be booked and paid for 6th April.

Saturday 14th April 2:00 pm.

This is a concert not to be missed.

This concert will feature one of Australia's best known and internationally renowned organist **“Mr. John Giachhi”** who will be supported by talented Brisbane organist **“Mr. Robert Wetherall”** & a great local pianist **“Mr. Stewart Free”**.

Tickets are just \$20.00 and will be available at the door or may be pre booked.

And if you wish Join us at the CENTRA from 6.00pm for our Festival Dinner tickets are just \$60.00 which features entertainment by Mr Craig Shaw.

Sunday Night 15th April at 7.30pm:

This is the must attend concert of the year

The sensational talents of our feature artist. **British Organist “Mr Richard Hills”**
Concert only tickets are just \$20.00 and will be available at the door or may be prebooked.

OR For just \$38.00 you can get the *DINNER AND SHOW* package . Join us from 5.30 pm for a Buffet Dinner before enjoying the concert.

Dinner tickets need to be booked and paid for by 6th April.

Monday Morning, 16th April: We meet at Kelyin Grove at 8.00 am for a cameo concert and after this concert there will be open console.

The official closing will be at Lunch at 1.00pm but the afternoon can continue.

The programme, including lunch, is just \$30.00 and must be booked and paid for by 6th April.

Monday & Friday Tickets will NOT be available at the door.

FESTIVAL 2001

The Renaissance of the Brisbane Christie

Robert Wetherall recounts the history of the Christie organ - centrepiece of the 2001 Festival
- from *Tibia*, January 2001

The Christie Theatre Pipe Organ owned by the Theatre Organ Society of Australia (Queensland Division) and installed in the Kelvin Grove High School Auditorium, was purchased and brought over from the Granada Circuit's showcase theatre in Maidstone, south-eastern England in 1971. The organ was the Christie Organ Company's 2911th instrument built, and had three manuals and eight ranks of pipes.

The organ was opened in Maidstone in 1934 and was one of the last Theatre Pipe Organs installed in England. It was used regularly until the console was destroyed in 1968 when the Medway River flooded the stalls to a depth of eight feet.

The Queensland Theatre Organ Society found a suitable 2-manual console and converted it to a 3-manual console. A suitable location for the organ was found and TOSA installed it over a time span of about 10,000 hours. The installation in the Kelvin Grove High School Auditorium is in two chambers on either side of the stage with the console rising to stage level in the middle of the stage and the blower in an adjacent building.

Over the years in its second home the Christie Organ has been used for many concerts and functions, and has in the later year shown this use by needing continuous maintenance by dedicated members. In 1995 it was decided that a total re-build of the organ would be necessary. So in 1996 the restoration process began with the organ out of action for about 10 months while the main chamber was being restored.

Restoring a theatre pipe organ is no small task. With the restoration of our

Christie Theatre Pipe Organ, every single component has been restored to 'as new' condition. This involves the re-leathering of all regulators and tremulants, and the re-leathering of all the pneumatic motors in the chests, in the toy counter, the tuned percussion and replacing leather on the lips of some of the wooden pipes. Also all wooden surfaces including the wooden pipes have been sanded down and re-finished. All metal pipes have been thoroughly cleaned and, where needed, all the bent pipes have been straightened.

To bring our organ up to today's standard in theatre pipe organs, all bass off-sets have been taken off tremulants and 7 new regulators and 2 new tremulants have been added. Three new ranks have been added to the original eight, these being a *Clarinet* (in the main chamber), an *Orchestral Oboe* and a *Solo String* (both in the solo chamber). The *Tuba* has been moved to the main chamber and the *French Trumpet* has been moved from the back of the solo chamber to the front. The *Diapason* has been extended to 2 foot and the *Concert Flute* has been extended down to 16 foot. The chambers have been designed so that tuning is easier with the placement of tuning walkways closest to the reed pipes (which need to be tuned regularly) and the maximum space used for the organ's expansion.

Since the console of the organ was converted from a two manual console to a three manual console, all the measurements are incorrect, therefore making it uncomfortable for the organist to play. To fix the problem, a lot of modification would have had to be done to the console and still the problem might not have been fixed. So it was decided to build a brand new

console from scratch, only using the toe pistons, the swell pedals, the pedal board and the keyboards and some trim timber from the old console.

The new console has been made out of western red cedar, the same wood as the old console. The console will be polished with a modern Estapol finish. A Christie keyboard has been kindly donated by the Bendigo Theatre Organ Society to replace the non-Christie, solo keyboard on the old console. The new console has also been re-specified to modern theatre pipe organ standards, allowing even more beautiful combinations to be used. To help make the organ more 'user friendly' a new combination system has been purchased to allow 15 range settable preset pistons per manual plus some other additional pistons on the great and accompaniment manuals.

Future plans for the Christie organ are to place the new console on a moveable platform so the console can be taken onto the stage when the organist is playing with other instruments or onto the auditorium floor where the organist can hear the organ more clearly when making a recording. A recording unit is also planned to allow record/playback for organists wishing to record the organ. (The organ is on a roller platform - Ed.)

All this work on our Christie theatre pipe organ wouldn't have been at all possible if it wasn't for the very hard work of Don Clark, our Vice-President for restoration, who receives no payment from the Society, as his interests only lie in the future of a very beautiful instrument. Thanks must also go to Kevin Purchase, Kevin Charters, Don Bland, Ken Davies, Merv Lock, Russ Evans and Russell Cornish who helped in the restoration and re-installation of the organ.



Southern Highlands Hospitality Weekend 28th-29th April



Enjoy a fun-filled weekend of organ music, friendship, good food, and sight-seeing with fellow TOSA members in the beautiful Southern Highlands, just an hour's drive down the M5 Motorway. Thanks to a couple of resident TOSA members, two house parties have been organised for the weekend. Outside these events you'll have time to explore this interesting historic region of NSW. The Autumn tones will be lovely and the air fresh and cool. Tip: dress accordingly. The towns of Moss Vale, Mittagong, Bowral, and Berrima are just short drives from one another. Why not car-pool with some friends for a great weekend break in the country?

Saturday 28th April

Hosts: Dick & Kerry Benham Ph: 4869 3956

18 Dengate Crescent Moss Vale

Arrive from 2pm and stay into the evening. Players bring your music and try the Thomas Paramount and Conn 650. Catering will include afternoon tea and the evening meal of a BBQ with salads, bread, dessert & soft drink. B.Y.O.G. & glassware. Cost: \$12.00 pp

Sunday 29th April

Hosts: Chris Styles & Dominic Wong Ph: 4872 3003

23 Webb Street Mittagong

Chris and Dominic moved into their new "Storybook Cottage" in March 1998. The house stands on 1-1/4 acres and the gardens are now well advanced with three very large herbacious borders. Players and listeners will enjoy the 805 electronic Wurlitzer organ which has its own special niche in the cottage. Our hosts will provide a "Morning Tea Garden Party" 9.30am-12noon Cost: \$3.00 pp.

Following the morning's activities, a suggested lunch venue is the Mittagong RSL.

For catering purposes please RSVP by 26th April for both events.

Either ring Margaret Hall-Nelson in Sydney on 9584 2353, or contact the hosts directly. Please provide your name, phone contact and number attending. If you're coming to both events, all monies (ie \$15.00pp) will be collected on Saturday as you arrive. After expenses, any surplus will go into TOSA funds.

Don't delay booking accommodation if you plan to stay over. See suggestions below.

Bong Bong Motel*** Ph: 4868 1033
238 Argyle Street Moss Vale
\$55-\$85 Double

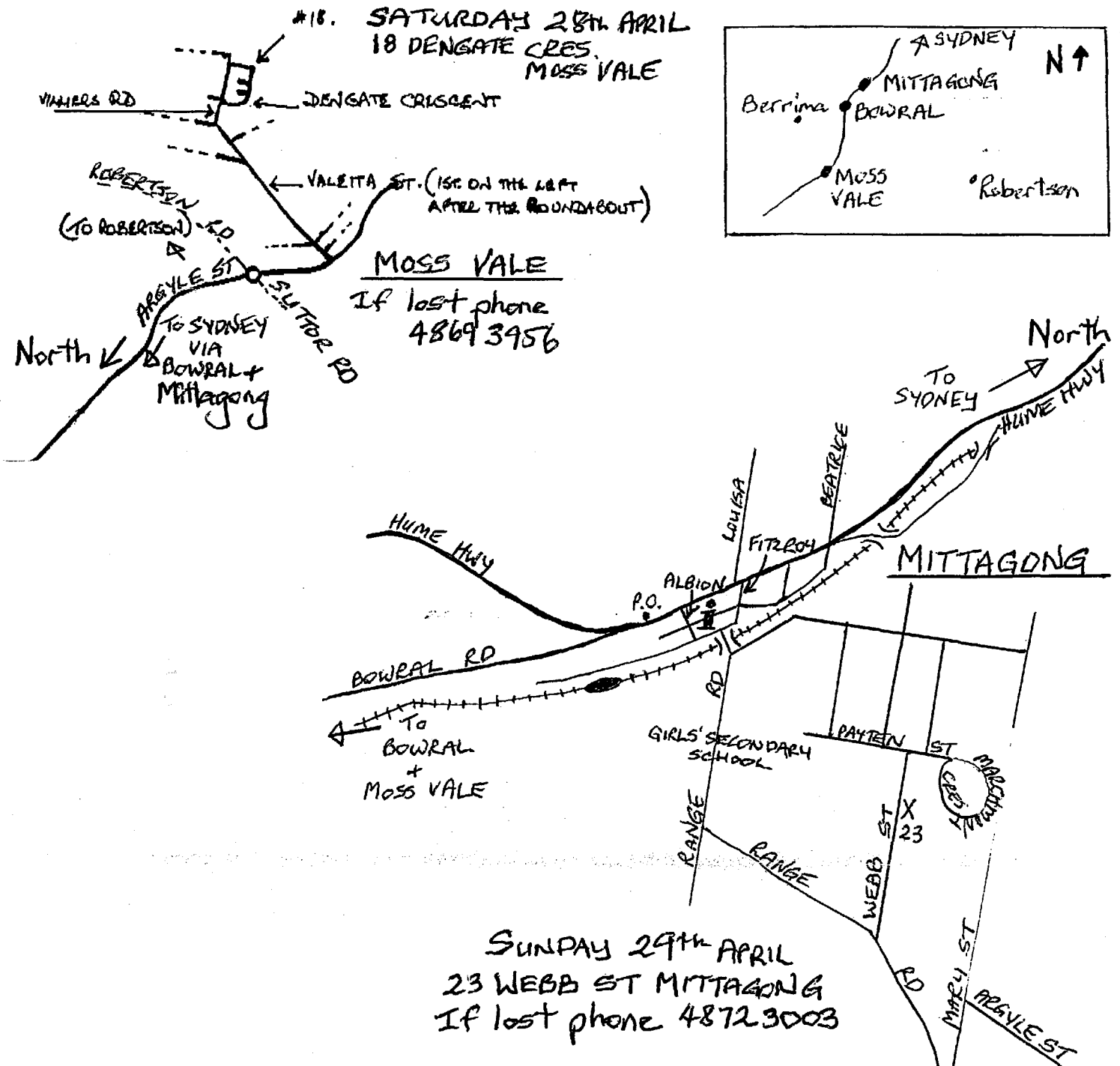
Lynton B&B*** Ph: 4868 2552
618 Argyle Street Moss Vale
\$95-\$150 Double

Golf Ball Motel*** Ph: 4868 1511
Arthur & Spring Streets Moss Vale
\$55-\$75 Double

Moss Vale Village Caravan Park Ph: 4868 1099
Willow Drive Moss Vale
On Site Vans \$35 Double (supply own linen)
Powered Site \$15 per night

How to find our Southern Highlands Hosts

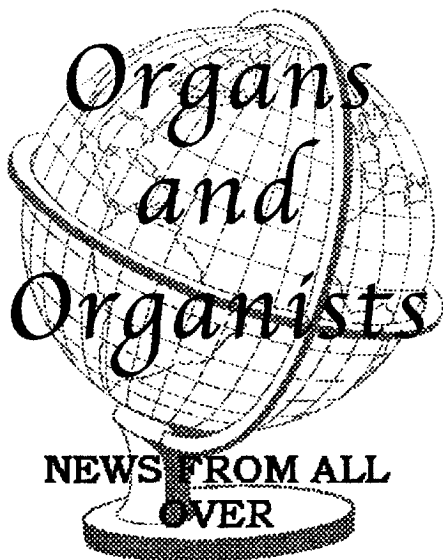
- Please note the "North" position on the maps below. For further information on things to see and do in the area contact Southern Highlands Visitor Information Centre (02) 4871 2888. Information Centre is indicated on the Mittagong Map between Fitzroy and Albion Streets. (Either of these streets give you access to Range Rd via railway bridge which takes you to Webb St for Sunday's "Morning Tea Garden Party")



During the organisation of the weekend, one of our hosts, Dick Benham, penned these few lines:

"I hope that the weekend will be "ranked" as a success as it takes considerable "organ"ising. I like the "principal" of these types of events as they allow members to socialise. However, we must be careful to keep out any "oboes" as they would lower the "tone" of our gatherings! In the event that the weekend is not a success we can "console" ourselves by saying we tried."

We could go further to say that the weekend has been in the "pipeline" for almost twelve months and we're "pulling out all stops" to revive the once popular TOSA House Party. So come along and have a "swell" time!



.....
 • St Mary's Cathedral •

Sydney's St Mary's Cathedral will be hosting a recital by world-famous Olivier Latry at 3pm on Anzac Day, 25th April, 2001.

So if you were looking for a good excuse to see and hear their controversial, new *Létourneau* organ played by one of the world's best, here is your chance!

At 39 years of age, Olivier Latry is the organist at Notre Dame de Paris Cathedral in the centre of Paris, surely one of the world's most prestigious appointments for any organist.

The leaflet in *The Sydney Organ Journal* says that Olivier Latry is "arguably the greatest living organist", and this visit is sponsored by the French Government and the Alliance Française.

He will be playing:
 Bach's *Sinfonia* from *Cantata 29*;
 Widor's *Choral* from *7th Symphony*;
 Vierne's *Carillon de Westminster*;
 Dupré's *Choral - In dulci júbilo* and
Prelude and Fugue in B Major;
 Alain's *Trois danses - Joies, Deuils, Luttés*;
 and he will play an *Improvisation on a given theme*.

There is an additional organ Masterclass on Thursday 26th April at 3pm for those interested in learning more.

Recital tickets are \$20, \$10 concession. Masterclass tickets are \$10, \$5 concession.

Enquiries: 9144 4915

.....
 • Melbourne Town Hall •

The Autumn 2001 issue of *The Sydney Organ Journal* from the Organ Music Society of Sydney Inc. includes an advertisement for the re-opening concert of the Melbourne Town Hall organ. The editor of their *Journal* mentions that this is after 'the much-discussed and admittedly controversial rebuild of Melbourne Town Hall's HN&B organ.

Also in that issue, there is a lengthy (although labelled "brief"!) history of the Town Hall's organs, written by Thomas Heywood.

The advertisement, which includes a couple of provocative statements, reads as follows:

"\$4.5 million and 4 years later, the famous Melbourne Town Hall organ is ready to spring to life.

Organ Concerts Australia presents a concert experience like never before! Hear the Largest Pipe Organ in the Southern Hemisphere at the Opening Solo Concert Sunday 27th May 2001 - 2pm.

Featuring Thomas Heywood, internationally acclaimed as Australia's finest concert organist with an outstanding reputation as one of the world's leading concert performers.

Hear the world premiere of Thomas Heywood's solo Concert Organ arrangements of:

Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*;
 Rossini's *Overture to The Barber of Seville*;
 Haydn's *Trumpet Concerto*;
Concert Fantasia on Bizet's *Carmen*;
 Bach, Elgar and Rachmaninoff.

Adults: ARes \$40/BRes \$33;
 Pensioner/Unemployed: ARes \$33/
 BRes \$25;
 Student/Youth: ARes \$23/BRes \$18.

Prices include a Souvenir Programme.

Ticket Bookings Essential through Organ Concerts Australia. Phone: (03) 9718 0383."

(It sounds like a really impressive event for anyone who can get there, especially as Thomas Heywood is a great performer with a warm personality. He played a concert at TOSA's Melbourne Convention in 1999- Ed)

.....
 • Robert Hope-Jones •

The February issue of ATOS International News, the Newsletter of the American Theatre Organ Society, has a little item headed "Robert Hope-Jones Lives" and points out that this not the famed organ tonal director and unit orchestra developer, also named Robert Hope-Jones, but he is, however, his great grand nephew.

The item reveals that "Austin Organs Inc. has appointed Robert Hope-Jones as regional representative for the Hong Kong area." Also it continues "Born in Liverpool, Hope-Jones emigrated to Hong Kong several years ago. He was on the installation and tonal finishing teams for the recent Austin project at Forbidden City Concert Hall, Beijing, China."

Actually Robert Hope-Jones is quite well-known in Cinema Organ circles in the UK where he has often written for the Cinema Organ Society's journal called *Cinema Organ*.

In the Autumn 2000 issue, he wrote an article called *A Capital Time in China with Opus 2779*, about the installation of the Beijing Austin and his first impressions of mainland China. The introduction to the item says: "It seems that in the whole of China there may be only 5 pipe organs. It may also be that there is no-one who can actually play the organ. In spite of that, a brand new symphony hall, as everyone knows, requires a brand new organ. The Austin Company of Hartford got the contract to install a three-manual concert instrument in Beijing, China's capital city. Robert Hope-Jones, who now lives in Hong Kong, was one of the installation crew."

.....
 • FOR SALE •

Hammond Aurora
 Classic 200 series
 2 manuals, with many features:
 • Melody Maker, Auto Vari 64,
 • Fascinating Fingers,
 • Philhamonic Strings, Easy Play,
 • One Finger Chord, Percussion,
 • Preset Pistons and Tone Bars
 Price: \$500 o.n.o.
 Phone 9451 3832
 after 9th April

The Christie Unit Organ

During 1998, *Tibia*, the magazine of the Queensland Division of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia, ran published the following material which relates to the Christie organ features in this year's *Festival 2001*

Don Clark thought you may be interested in some of the promotional material produced in the late 20's by Hill, Norman and Beard to sell the Christie organ

FOREWORD

The *Christie Unit Organ*, which has attained world fame in a very short period through the sheer merit of its performance and the outstanding appeal of its tonal beauty, is the product of Wm. Hill & Son and Norman & Beard Ltd whose history dates back to 1755.

Although the cinema organ, as it is known to-day, includes so many innovations which were unknown to organ builders a generation ago, the value of the fundamental knowledge and experience possessed by the oldest established organ builders in the country went far to make the adventure into the cinema entertainment world such an immediate success.

The comparatively recent introduction of the cinema organ was not the first incursion into the entertainment world by the firm, for as long ago as 1853 it built the remarkable organ at the Royal Panopticon of Science and Art, Leicester Square, London, where, for the first time in history, scientists and public alike were amazed at the prospect of a mighty organ controlled by three separate consoles.

The organ at the Panopticon was a worthy pattern for a number of great organs which have been built from time to time by the Company throughout the world to meet the requirements of huge buildings of public assembly and entertainment.

In 1913 the Company built its first cinema organ in a London theatre, and to those acquainted with the arduous duties imposed upon an organ of this type the knowledge that it is still performing its full duty after twenty

years is significant proof of the durability and merit of work of the Company.

Meanwhile, a development had taken place which was to revolutionize the craft of the organ builder. Robert Hope-Jones, an Englishman by birth, had introduced the Electro-Pneumatic Action, which has since become the accepted means of operating all modern organs. He formed a company which erected a factory at Birkenhead.

This was in course of time taken over by Norman & Beard, together with the patents and entire staff. Norman & Beard experimented and improved upon the system of Electro-Pneumatic Action until it was placed in a position from which it has never receded.

After the war, the firm under the direction of Dr Arthur G. Hill and Mr G.A. Wales Beard, concentrated its attention upon the development and perfection of the Hope-Jones system of Electro-Pneumatic Action.

In June 1923 Dr Hill died and Mr John Christie, of Glyndebourne, Sussex, became the Chairman of the Company. By that time the firm had installed numerous theatre and cinema organs, and the latter had become so important a section of the business that a special department was created for the purpose of developing the instrument on still more modern lines.

The Unit System of construction was incorporated and the full requirements of the entertainer were met in regard to those inner mysteries commonly called Effects. New machinery and equipment were introduced and the fruits of past experience actively combined with unceasing experiment in quest of further possible improvements.

Thus originated the Christie Unit Organ which has gained world-wide renown as a triumph of the modern organ builder's craft.

BRIEFLY DESCRIBING THE "CHRISTIE" UNIT ORGAN

In commercial circles the belief is widely held that art and business are unfitted to be partners because the ideals they serve are incompatible. The artistic temperament, it is alleged is an impediment to business, and the counting-house is not concerned with aesthetics. This is a rash assumption. The two can be partners for the very good reason that each has something to contribute to the partnership: art - the qualities that make for distinction; and business - the machinery of organization. We claim to have proved it.

Our experience is that with an organization equipped to ascertain and supply what is needed, there is no reason why a theatre organ should not take high rank as a work of art. That in such an instrument practical requirements rank first is no obstacle. The architect of a palace is no less bound to them. But that does not hinder either the organ builder or the architect from simultaneously serving other ideals than those represented by business requirements.

There may arise a situation where adaptation becomes necessary. Then experience intervenes and enables art and business to arrive at a mutually acceptable compromise. Only a tyro allows one or the other to suffer.

Such, at least, is our opinion, based on the success with which the *Christie Unit Organ* has met every requirement of the entertainment world and at the same time enhanced its artistic status.

The *Christie Organ* as it is to-day is the outcome of many years of practical research, during which experiments were constant in all departments of the organ builder's craft. These are grouped under three main headings: Tonal Production; Electric Mechanism; and General Construction.

The production of new tone-colours and the improvement of those already in use is a never-ending quest, and the object of almost continuous experiment.

The adaptation of electrical mechanism to the organ has made vast strides in recent years. Many devices hitherto beyond the dreams of organ builders have been brought into service, developed and perfected.

The hundreds of pipes, percussions and effects can be efficiently controlled from a comparatively, small console placed at any reasonable distance from the organ itself. With no other form of action would this be possible.

The electrical mechanism employed in *Christie* organs originated in the brain of an Englishman, Mr Robert Hope-Jones, towards the end of last century. The earliest electric organs, were built at his factory at Birkenhead, and some of these instruments are at present in use in various parts of this country.

At a later date the Hope-Jones patents and staff were taken over by the present firm, under whose auspices scientific research and experiment continued, culminating in the high standard of efficiency and reliability for which the *Christie* organ is renowned.

It is not proposed to give here a detailed technical description of the mechanism which makes it possible for one individual to operate so many different tone-colours and effects. It is necessarily of a very intricate nature, involving many thousands of contacts, wires and soldered joints, besides hundreds of different points where circuits are controlled by multiplex switches devised for the purpose.

The *Christie* electromagnet is perhaps worth particular mention. It is probably the most important unit in the mechanism, inasmuch as through its medium, ultimately, the action is set in motion. It is specially designed and capable, under normal working conditions, of forty repetitions per second, which is, of course, considerably faster than any human being can play.

The electric contacts throughout the main relay and the console are made of standard silver and are housed in holders made of maple wood.

The main cables between console and organ are of very strong

construction, double cotton-covered, enamelled, bound, and finally insulated.

Christie Console Design

As standardized to-day the *Christie* console is the outcome of careful co-operation with the leading organists in the country. Our aim has been to combine efficiency with comfort by making all parts easily accessible, and at the same time to achieve an attractive appearance.

To appreciate and understand all the finer points of control and design, it is almost essential to have them demonstrated at the console itself.

In all but a few cases, at least two of the manuals are fitted with second-touch control, which means that by pressing through first-touch to second-touch, a second and quite distinct tone-colour or effect can be produced from the same rows of keys.

Ten single or double-touch thumb pistons are arranged under each row of keys, which make it possible for the organist by pressing any piston to alter immediately the combination of stops, and produce an entirely different effect. Furthermore, by means of a control board placed at the back of the console, any combination of stops can be arranged on these pistons at the will of the organist.

As a further means of control, each department of the organ is fitted with a *Christie* cancel bar, by the depression of which all stop keys on that manual are immediately returned to the normal position, and all stops become dumb.

By a complete system of coupling, any one manual can be connected to any other, and all manuals connected to the Pedal organ if required.

A full range of orchestral effects is also controlled from the keyboard. These effects are distributed over the various manuals and the pedalboard, and include Drums and Cymbals, and on the manuals Triangle, Chinese Block, Castanets, and so forth.

Special inter-manual couplers are fitted to various models of the *Christie* organ to augment the usual unison couplers. These special couplers are sometimes controlled by first-touch and sometimes by second. For instance, Solo Octave to Accompaniment second-touch or Accompaniment Sub Octave to Great first-touch, enable the organist to produce quite unique effects.

The Pizzicato key control is capable, in the hands of an experienced organist, of producing effects which are bewildering to the listener. The pluck of a string or the ripping of an orchestral trumpet can be imitated, effects which, but for this device, would be impossible. It will be readily appreciated that these expression controls at the organist's finger tips bring almost any imaginable effect within range.

Besides the control of the various organ tone colours - Wood-Wind, Brass, and so forth, there are also provided suitable controls for Percussions, Drums and other Effects. Placed in the organ chambers, either in the Solo or Accompaniment chamber, these Percussions and Effects are operated by Electro Pneumatic Action.

The drum-sticks, for example, are attached to pneumatic motors operated by, electromagnets which work with such rapidity as to reproduce the Snare Drum Roll or Bass Drum Roll. The Snare Drum is controlled from the manual keys. So long as a key is depressed the Drum will keep on rolling. The Bass Drum, Cymbal Crash, Triangle, and so on, are controlled from the pedal keys.

The same principle is used for Tonal Percussions such as Harp, Marimba, Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Chimes, Vibraphone and Chrysoglot. Some require only a single blow, others, such as Xylophone and Glockenspiel, are fitted with a re-iterating action as well as a single action.

Other effects such as Surf, Telephone Bell, Bird Whistle, Siren, Boat Whistle, etc., are operated by stop keys in a special position over the Solo Keys.

Christie consoles are fitted with crescendo pedal indicators, a clock and a voltmeter.

The external casework is designed in association with the theatre architect to suit the architectural scheme of the theatre. Almost unlimited designs are available.

The console is usually placed on a rise-and-fall platform in the orchestral enclosure.

Christie Tone-Colours

The number of different tone-colours in an organ depends of course, on its size and the requirements of the

theatre. Because an organ is a large one however, it does not follow that it is overpoweringly loud.

Certain fundamental tones must form the basis of all properly drawn-up theatre organ specifications, otherwise power, balance and dignity will be sacrificed.

Variety of Tone

Given the fundamentals, a specification can be enlarged almost to any extent in order to secure variety of tone, and it is in variety that the true beauty of *Christie* organ voicing claims first place.

Solo stops, such as Clarinet, Oboe, Vox Humana, Saxophone, French Horn, English Horn, Trumpet and Tuba, all go to build up a truly magnificent instrument capable, through the controls mentioned above, of almost any variation in tone.

The fundamental organ tone is produced, broadly speaking, by the Diapasons, Strings, Flutes, Diaphone and Diapason Basses, and augmented by Reeds.

By use of the Unit System of construction which is general throughout all *Christie* organs, these fundamental ranks are fully extended to form bass and treble registers of suitable strength and balance.

The treatment and voicing of this side of the instrument is an all-important and delicate task, because besides being fundamental, some of the stops are also accompanimental.

Christie Voicing

Voicing is the art of making the pipes "speak". When the voicer receives the pipes they are quite dumb and no sound whatever can be got from them.

The voicer's art is truly a delicate one, only to be acquired by many years of patient training and later by experience. Voicing often runs in families, and the knowledge is handed down from father to son.

Voicing is divided into three quite distinct departments - Flue stops, Reed stops and Tonal Percussions.

In Flue stops the tone is produced on much the same principle as in a tin whistle.

In Reeds the tone is produced by various forms of reed made of carefully selected brass, vibrating against a brass

"shallot".

Percussion tone is produced from the actual instruments themselves, which consist of metal or wood bars of different sizes, fitted with resonators. The bars are struck by specially made hammers.

Under the heading of Flue stops are such stops as Tibia, Open Diapason, Viol d'Orchestre, Flute, Celeste, and so on.

By manipulation of the lip, languid and windway, the pipes are made to speak, and through the medium of a voicing machine, which is really a miniature organ, each one is treated, cut to pitch length, and balanced against its neighbour.

Every stop in the *Christie* organ is scaled and voiced for the particular theatre in which it is to be installed. In the voicing of Reeds, among which are Clarinet, Oboe, Saxophone, Tuba and Trumpet, the operation is more complicated and intricate. The Reed voicer is responsible for selecting the brass for the "tongues", for cutting it to the exact shape and size required, and for so curving each tongue and "loading" it as to produce the tone he wants.

Tonal Structure and Scales

The power and balance of a theatre organ are dependent to a large extent on the scale of the various stops which go to make up the specification.

Wind pressures also play a large part. *Christie* organ scaling is very large, and the wind pressures employed are high.

Scale is the organ builder's term for diameter. The expression 7" scale means that the lowest "C" of the stop measures 7" across the top.

When the specification of a *Christie* organ has been decided upon, it is a tonal specialist's business to set down against each stop the scale to which it shall be made. He has as many as twenty or more scales to choose from in one stop alone, from which it will be seen that the scaling of an organ requires experience and judgment.

The specification of an organ on paper means practically nothing. Details of the scales or the materials to be used are rarely given by builders, and even if they were few would understand them. In Unit Organ

construction, where numerous tone-colours are secured from comparatively few ranks of pipes, specifications can be more than ever deceptive, and it is for this reason that we urge prospective purchasers not to be carried away by a large array of stops on paper, which may mean nothing.

For the proper treatment of the tonal structure, the scales of the pipes and materials used, the purchaser is dependent on the builder's good name and reputation.

Christie Materials

The materials used throughout the construction of a *Christie* organ are guaranteed to be the finest obtainable.

Practically everything is made at our factory. We have even our own Engineering Department for the manufacture of Blowing Plants and the assembling of electric mechanism, magnets, coils, and so forth. Everything, even the smallest electric or pneumatic movement is subjected to the most rigid tests.

Among the different types of timber used are pine, spruce, sequoia, mahogany, birch, maple and oak. Large quantities of each are always in stock to become thoroughly seasoned.

All electric mechanism, including magnets, cables and switches are made by our own staff from the best raw materials obtainable.

In addition to the large number of *Christie* organs in daily use throughout this country, they have also been installed in important theatres in France, Germany, Austria, and Czecho-Slovakia.

They are also to be found in Australia and New Zealand. Each one of these organs is known to be an outstanding success and a definite "Box Office" attraction.

Why You Should Buy a Christie organ

The purchase of a cinema organ, involving the expenditure of an appreciable sum of money, is obviously a matter for careful consideration, and full investigation by the cinema proprietor. Naturally, the best is required at a minimum of cost, but to obtain this, quality must not be sacrificed, and we claim that the

Christie organ, whether small or large, represents the finest value obtainable.

Each "*Christie*" is specially constructed to suit the acoustics of the theatre for which it is destined, Specifications are prepared to give the greatest variety of tone-colours, together with perfect balance in combination.

The action is absolutely reliable and from a mechanical standpoint, the whole instrument is thoroughly dependable.

Only the best quality materials are used and finest craftsmen employed in its construction, and each *Christie* organ is fully guaranteed.

The theatre organ is a product of modern times, but, without the use of all the fundamental principles of organ-building science no organ, whatever purpose it may be required to serve, can be successful or reliable. In the *Christie* organ these principles are applied and maintained, and the knowledge and experience gained and progress made in a period extending over nearly two hundred years, places it in a unique position.

Whether it be in the selection of timber, the making of pipes, the manufacture of the electro-pneumatic action or in voicing and finishing, these essential principles are rigidly observed.

The *Christie* organ is built in ideal conditions and under efficient organization in the largest organ works in Great Britain, fully equipped with modern appliances.

"AFTER-PURCHASE" SERVICE

One of the vital questions the purchaser of any Unit Organ has to consider is the maintenance of the instrument in good condition after it has been installed.

As with all mechanical apparatus, only regular and skilled attention will ensure 100% efficiency. In this respect the purchaser of a *Christie* organ can be assured that he has at his command, for a moderate annual fee, the finest service organization in the country.

In addition to our numerous Branch Works we have, in almost every large town, a resident organ builder who is

fully qualified to take charge of the *Christie* organs in his district. They have his attention at regular intervals, and he is also available at the shortest notice for emergency calls.

The great advantage of this organization is abundantly apparent to the proprietors of provincial theatres, and the opinions of the proprietors will bear testimony to this statement.

Guarantee

For a period of Five Years after a *Christie* organ has been installed, we undertake to make good any defects developed under proper use and arising from faulty materials or workmanship, provided that the organ remains in our sole charge for tuning and regulating under our usual form of contract.

EPILOGUE

It was not in the course of my professional duties as a music critic that I first developed a taste for the "pictures". It was as a tired worker in quest of restful entertainment - and, of all entertainments, the film is the most restful. But professional interest was soon aroused in the problem of film accompaniment, which is still far from having reached an ideal solution.

Just as railway carriages long retained a close resemblance to stage-coaches, the accompaniment on the sound-film, with all its limitless possibilities, still resembles that which the local musical director hurriedly assembled once or twice a week. But that is another story, and it needs another place for the telling.

So far as music is concerned the outstanding achievement inspired by the cinema is not the sound-film but the cinema organ. Serious musicians who still retain a prejudice against concessions to popular taste are disposed, when criticizing this modern feat of instrument-making, to forget one essential thing. Its habitat is a theatre.

Everything that contributes to presentation in a theatre needs adaptation to the strong light thrown upon it. The faces of the performers are flat and dull unless properly made-up, and music shares the same necessity. Countless operas have failed because the composers did not realize this and

wrote music suited to the concert-room, and devoid of make-up.

Now the modern theatre organ is an organ, built with all the accumulated resources inherited from its tradition as the "king of instruments", but made-up to face the conditions awaiting it in the theatre.

When organists of the older persuasion hold up their hands in pious horror, they are merely perpetuating in another form the Puritan attitude to the actress. It is a little late in the day.

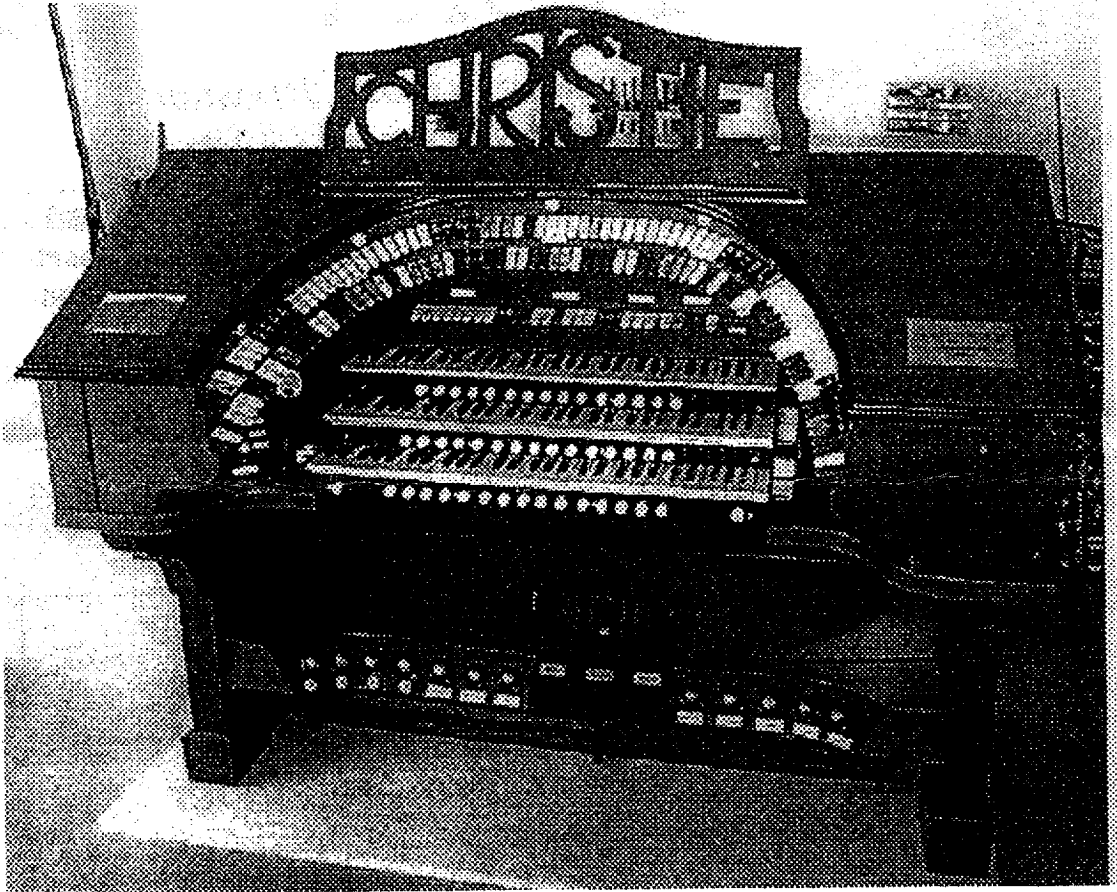
This is not to deny that the theatre organ, like all other modern inventions, has its potentialities for mischief. The responsibility is on the performer. If he overdoes the expressive tremolo, or rings the changes without discretion on all the percussive effects within reach, that is not the instrument's fault. It provides unlimited temptations, but they can be resisted. And against the few who fail in this respect, think of the amazing skill and ingenuity of the best performers.

As a musician possessing an excellent memory, in his head, but none at all - not even a bad one - in his fingers, I'm constantly filled with envious admiration of these organists, who can take us with them on a musical journey, through scenes grave and gay, never failing to produce, as it were, from their sleeve some evocative fragment which somehow fits into its context.

Sometimes there is a flash of humour of the kind which a musician appreciates none the less for its being concealed from his neighbour - some trick of combined themes, or some exhilarating modulation. I am not going to mention names, but there are some organists who rarely fail to draw from me a complimentary chuckle at their nimbleness.

And all this, which would have been almost unthinkable on the unwieldy instruments of our grandfathers' times, has been made possible by the application of electrical mechanism, and the inclusion of a host of devices which, whatever our grandfathers may have thought or still think of them, have manifestly proved their amazing usefulness in the entertainment world.

✓ Brisbane's New *Christie* Console



Ray Thornley at the Orion console after his February concert - photo by Barry Tooker



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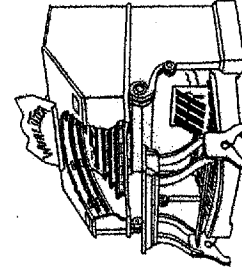
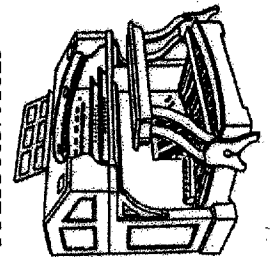
TOSA NEWS

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