

# In The Pipeline



Opus XIX 1963  
By Paul Hufner

Refurbished and  
enlarged 2013 by  
Pipe Organs WA  
for  
Bruce & Maree Duncan  
Clackline

Article Page 14.

**The Organ Society of Western Australia (Inc.)**

**Founded in 1966**

**ABN 49 302 148 987**

**[www.oswa.org.au](http://www.oswa.org.au)**

**Vol. 18 No. 1 - February 2014**

## Paul Hufner's Opus 18 reborn

A young teenage boy trudges barefoot across a grassy paddock, through a paperbark tree-lined creek flowing at the bottom of a shallow valley, and up a sandy hill toward an alluring sound. He had heard it before, from his grandfather's house further back on the property, but today it was clear and sweet on the early summer breeze.

It was the sound of an organ, and the boy had asked his grandfather why it was that you could sometimes hear an organ way out here in the backblocks of Perth (as it was then). His grandfather told him that a part of the property, facing King Street, had been sold off so that a developer could put something called an "industrial estate" into practice. Among the first people to take up a block was an organ builder who needed space to develop an expanding business.

The boy continued up the hill towards the shed where this delightful sound originated and, finding the big doors open to catch a light breeze, wandered in to the workshop. There he found a man playing away on a pipe organ.

Interestingly, the boy knew about pipe organs, because his father had taken him to see and hear an uncle who was the organist at Perth Central Baptist Church. That church had, interestingly enough, an organ built by the father of the man he was now watching play a brand new pipe organ in the Bayswater workshop. Of course all this anecdotal information came to the boy in later life, all he knew at the time was that there was a very nice sounding organ being played and he wanted to hear it.



Paul Hufner working on an organ in the workshop in King Street, Bayswater, early 1960's.

The organ in this photo was for St. Columba's Presbyterian Church, Devonport, Tasmania.

The man stopped playing and turned to the boy. "Come on in," he said. "do you play the organ?" The boy said that he had been given a few piano lessons and had sometimes played the organ (harmonium) at church. "You have to give this a try," Paul said. With a bit of trepidation he sat down at his very first pipe organ.

The year was 1963 and Perth was showing the benefit of the fairly recent (1959) Billy Graham at which 107,000 people had been exposed to American evangelism. Churches bloomed because of the spiritual awakening of the Crusade, to be followed in 1964 with the Missouri Australia Crusade.



At the same time Perth was becoming a focal point in international affairs: Eric Edgar Cook was executed for murder (the last person to be hanged in Western Australia), and Donald Campbell broke eight absolute world speed records on water and on land in the 1950s and 1960s and remains the only person to set both world land and water speed records in the same year (1964). Campbell broke water speed record at Lake Dumbelyung, south of Perth, travelling at 276.33 mph (444.71 km/h).

These influences on Western Australia and Western Australian church life were profound and the spiritual influence of them continues to be felt to this day. Churches were growing in an unimagined rate, and with this growth came the need for pipe organs. Paul Hufner was the man for the moment. He built at least 40 pipe organs in his lifetime, and the eighteenth new one was this organ the young boy sat before in the Bayswater workshop.

I was that young boy, and I am sure that Paul may have explained to me some of the technical aspects of his Or-



Opus 18 at it first appeared.

This organ was built for the Carnamah Community Church and then later was sold to St Matthews Church, Armadale, where it is seen in this photo.

gan Number 18, but I don't recall that. I do remember that he selected a couple of stops and told me to play away. I had no music, so I tried to recall a piece that we had been singing at church recently. It was a popular gospel piece "I serve a risen saviour".

I got through the verse and was into the chorus before my memory ran out and I faltered. Paul leaned over me and took up the music where I had left off, completing the piece perfectly. I was instantly hooked—there could never be a substitute in my life for a real pipe organ from that day forward.

That particular organ was being built for the Carnamah Community Church, a Wheatbelt town where an Anglican and Methodist fellowship had com-



bined and built a modern facility which they wanted complete with pipe organ.

Another organ just like it was built the following year for All Saints Church in Collie.

At High School I had the opportunity to have some organ tutoring on another Paul Hufner organ at Victoria Park Methodist Church (demolished in the 1970s). That organ was built in 1958, relocated to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Katanning, in 1977.

Several years later I visited Carnamah and played Opus 18. After that I did not see it again, but kept track of its moves to Armadale and Maylands from where it was eventually dismantled and put into storage.

By this stage I had moved with my family to a farm at Clackline which we developed for olive growing. It had long been my desire to have a pipe organ and I had heard that Opus 18 was probably available for sale.

I located the owner, arranged the purchase, then drove down to John Larner's Yarloop workshop in 2011 to pick up the organ stored there.



Fortunately I was able to fit all of the larger organ pipes, collapsed casework and chests into my trailer with the con-



sole lying on its back on top. The smaller pipes, blower and other parts fitted into the back of my ute and on the back seat of the car. My wife, at one stage, thought she might have to walk home!

I decided to try and reconstruct as much of the organ as possible at Clackline to see what could be made of the instrument. It turned out that a lot of the electrics were both very old (technologically) and worn out. I reconstructed the treble chest to see what the pipe array would look like.



From this exercise it was apparent that the kind of restoration work needed was beyond my ability. Furthermore, at about this time, Irvin Philips (organist at St Matthew's Anglican church, Armadale, where the organ had once resided) contacted me to advise he had made five bass pipes to com-



plete the final octave of the Bourdon to 16' CCC but had never installed them in the organ. He had worked in conjunction with Paul Hufner to make the pipes exactly to the scale of the original organ. I purchased these pipes from Irvin and brought them home.

There the organ sat, gathering dust and occasional moisture from condensation when the shed roof froze and then thawed. I had to make a decision about the instrument before it began to deteriorate, so I asked Graham Devenish (Pipe Organs of Western Australia [POWA]) if he would look at the organ and give me an idea about restoration.

I developed a concept whereby the organ would be divided into two sections—basically a manual section and a pedal section. I wanted to add a pedal board to the organ. Although it was still a one rank organ, I wanted every pipe to be visible and I wanted to restore the clear clarabel/stopped diapason sound of the organ.

Graham takes over the story at this point: POWA took delivery of this organ in its dismantled state in April 2013. Five bass pipes (CCC – EEE) had been manufactured but not finished some years earlier. They were constructed of Nyatoh timber in the same style as the existing stopped and open pipes.

The organ contained 85 wood pipes and 12 metal opens at the top end. The Open woods commence at 8' Tenor C. To improve the wind supply, a reclaimed Discus blower was used along with a single rise bellows which regulates air to 65mm for the flue pipes. Each of the flue pipes was stripped down to bare wood, splits and other

imperfections repaired and then polished to a dull sheen using wax and oils. The pipes are regulated at the feet and many upper lips were modified for the slightly lower pressure than they had originally been accustomed.



The reed chest regulator keeps the pressure at 60mm WG by means of a large pneumatic motor which actions a regulating valve

POWA built a new bass chest of 18 pipes to incorporate the original 13 pipes and the five new pipes. This became the "Pedal" division. At our suggestion, 66 new Horn pipes were hand made in Poland from high percentage tin, using English style shallots and thin reeds for the lower pressure needed. These full length pipes are mounted in racks and stays in front of the wood pipes for easy removal for voicing. The chest has a separate regulator at 60mm WG.



The console was completely stripped down to the basic component parts and all the warped timbers were straightened by saw cuts and fillets, re-glued and finished with acrylic lacquer. A reclaimed keyset of 54 notes was purchased and installed to replace the original 49 note short keyboard. The switching of all pipes is done through KA gang switches operated by each of the tabs.



Five reclaimed tabs of the same design as the existing were sourced through John Lerner and installed to the left of the originals. A reclaimed pedal board of 24 notes was refurbished and set into the footprint of the console along with a reclaimed and refurbished player's bench, the original not built to accommodate pedals.

The organ was erected in the POWA workshops, Bayswater. The new casework allowed for a pedal division of



the Bourdon 16', Bass Flute 8' and Horn 8' available by independent tabs. There are no couplers.

The manual division provides a full Bourdon 16' (replacing an autobass switching device), Claribel 8', Principal 4', Piccolo 2' (all Wood pipes), Sifflote 1' (Metal), Horn 8' and Clarion Horn 4' (Metal pipes).

A new cabinet was created for the organ pipes and working parts, based on a design by Bruce Duncan. This utilised the original treble chest for the majority of the Paul Hufner wooden pipes. New multi-core cables to the chests were purchased and this provides flexibility in terms of console placement. A new 15vDC power supply is installed in the console.



The organ at Bayswater and, at right, assistance with tuning!



Bruce picks up the story again: In November 2013 the organ was ready to be installed at Clackline, except for the new Horn pipes which had not yet arrived from Poland. The main part of the instrument was installed in a new



Installing the organ at Clackline in the new music room.



music room and was made playable.

The eagerly awaited reed rank arrived later in November and Tomasz Nowak installed the pipes, each cut to exact length. The trumpet rank occupies the front of the "pedal" division and the full-length 8' resonators are almost as tall as the 16' Bourdon pipes behind.

The question must be asked: why put a significant reed stop onto a small single rank organ? Why not a Regal or a softer stop? For that matter, why not a Diapason or some other more "conventional" stop?





The answer lies in the instrument itself. As mentioned, Paul Hufner built many small organs and a few larger ones. All of his instruments are quite powerfully voiced in the European style in which he was accustomed to build. Remember that his era was before the thrust of the so called "organ



Tomasz Nowak installing and tuning the new trumpet rank. Each pipe is cut to exact length.

revolution", and he built stops to sound like they were intended. In this case, the organ is quite remarkable. The single rank of wooden clarabel pipes (some stopped, some open) give very good diction throughout and in the new organ case, without the swell box that had been a part of the original instrument, is very powerful. It would have been difficult to find another rank that would complement the existing beauty



20

of this organ except for a reed stop. I specified an "English" type of reed that would be enigmatically round and strong at the same time.

In remodelling the console I was conscious of the need to retain posterity and authenticity. I wanted to have additional pipes and pedals, which meant more keys, more stops and, of

course, a new pedal board. Graham worked with me to ensure as much of the original organ that could remain in place would stay.

The end result of this rebuilt and expanded instrument is one which acknowledges the origins and blends a dynamic new sound with the already strong tonal characteristic of the organ. The new winding system has given the organ a very stable and adequate wind supply. It is an excitingly dynamic small instrument with a remarkable large sound, responsive and exciting to play. I can't forget the first time I played the instrument 50 years ago and I am thrilled to have it at home now. I believe Paul Hufner would be as proud of the organ today as when he built it.

*Bruce Duncan*

