

## **Telecom, J.E. Dodd, Hornby trains and pipe organs - recognising and maintaining our heritage**

by David Shield

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### **preamble**

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*It gives me great pleasure to deliver the first paper of this Conference. Even though I have lived in South Australia for 23 years I am a Tasmanian. In my teenage years I can recall coming to Paterson Street and being overawed by the feel of this splendid church with its, to me, immense organ, which has already seen almost twice my years, having celebrated its 80th birthday last year. [1]. Drink in that feeling, listen carefully to its sounds, for it may be the last you hear.*

*At the outset, let me cross the Continent and thank the following OHTA members for their contributions to what is to come. Bob Elms in Western Australia, John Stiller in South Australia, John Maidment in Victoria and Kelvin Hastie in New South Wales. To each I sent a list of Pipe organs known to have been built for churches, institutions or individuals in their States, and received valuable comments in return.*

*And now to begin ....*

### **telecom, J.E. Dodd, Hornby Trains and Pipe Organs**

As I prepared this paper my mind focused on the Telecom advertisement featuring the late Willie Fennell who passed away on Wednesday 9 September. [2] Here we have the imagery of an old and increasingly worried man walking his way through the Yellow Pages, searching for help with his broken heritage, a lost bogie on his Hornby clockwork railway carriage. Remember his delight at success; in tremulous and excited tones he says, "Gwen, Gwen, I've found someone". Remember too his wife's laconic and patronising response "Yes Dear" and note the uninterrupted chopping of the celery!

When we are born we automatically receive an inheritance. We do not ask for it, but it is there as part of our birthright. Our parents give to us all that they and the world can offer. But when do we recognize this inheritance How close do we have to be to history to recognize its importance Is there an age at which recognition of heritage is possible and what sort of a steward will we wish to be Like the old man will we lovingly cherish the toys of our childhood or will we have discarded them because they are no longer of any use I ask you to think briefly of your own toys. Some you will have used,

some abused. Others will have been given away, possibly by parents without your consultation, some may have been lost, or just observed, BUT SOME WILL HAVE BEEN LOVED AND LOOKED AFTER.

It is now 40 years since J.E. Dodd passed away on 30 January 1952 aged 95 years. It was the year I was to turn six and, having acquired a clockwork train, was duly elected a member of the Hornby Railway Company on the eighth day of July. [3] It is not my intention to detail the work of Dodd, that has already been done by Bruce Naylor [4], suffice it to say that after his apprenticeship with George

Fincham in Melbourne, he bought out the business and commenced on his own from 1894. 84 new organs were made by Dodd. The remainder of this paper seeks to determine, both quantitatively and qualitatively, their present condition. Have we recognized this inheritance As we shall see the pipe organs of Dodd, like children's toys, have been used, abused, lost and cherished.

### ... and then there was one ...

We may never be absolutely sure of the number of pipe organs built by Dodd. Larger rebuilds were included alongside, and described in similar terms, as new instruments in correspondence and trade catalogues. [5] Of the 84 instruments to be surveyed the only organ believed to be in this category is a house organ for Leo Conrad in 1899 which may refer to a rebuilt organ originally made by George Stace and now at St Agnes' Anglican Church, Grange, S.A. This has been listed as "lost" as its whereabouts are unclear. The following table shows the distribution of new pipe organs built by J.E. Dodd.

Table 1

Showing the original location of pipe organs built, interstate transfers of organs, those instruments broken up or otherwise destroyed, and the current distribution.

	<b>Originally</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Lost</b>	<b>Current</b>
South Australia	50	- 3	47	2	45
New South Wales	13	- 1 + 1	13	1	12
Victoria	10	+ 2	12	2	10
Western Australia	8	+ 1	9	0	9
Tasmania	1	0	1	0	1
New Zealand	2	0	2	1	1
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<b>Totals</b>	84	0	84	- 6	78

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## Note

Under transfers, instruments from the Primitive Methodist Church, Wellington Square, North Adelaide, 1898, and the house organ for C.H. Fisher of Walkerville, 1906, have been moved to the Uniting Churches at Benalla and Ivanhoe respectively, that formerly at Wallaroo Mines, 1921, has gone to St Vincent's Catholic Church, Ashfield, NSW where it is to be restored. The instrument at St Brigid's, Coogee, NSW, 1926 is now in Western Australia hopefully to be restored.

Ignoring the Conrad organ we find that only 5.95 per cent of the Dodd legacy has been irretrievably lost.

However, in terms of Willie and searching for original material the picture is not good. But first let me define my terminology. The term **original** refers to an instrument that is in original condition and has required only maintenance and/or repair. Altered instruments fall into two categories, (a) those that have had their action changed, and (b) those that have also been tonally altered or enlarged. "**Lost**" refers to instruments broken up or otherwise destroyed. [6]

As the numbers of instruments in New Zealand and Tasmania are small, let us deal with them first. The large three-manual instrument for St John's Cathedral built in 1907 was destroyed by the earthquake of 1934. The current status of the two-manual tracker and tubular pneumatic organ of Trinity Wesley Church, Napier, 1910 is unknown but the figures suggest a change in action would not be surprising. The instrument here at Paterson Street has also had its action changed. So we are left with a total of 76 instruments in the other four states.

It is perhaps easiest to refer to a table for comparisons. In Table 2 it may be seen that approximately one quarter by percentage, of the instruments built by J.E. Dodd remain in substantially original condition. If we argue that those in category "B" are restorable, then the figure becomes slightly in excess of 50 per cent. However as is shown in Table 3, in real terms we are talking of a total of 21 instruments many of which are at risk and the majority in South Australia having minimal legislative protection.

### Table 2

Showing percentage of instruments in each State defined in four categories. *Note:* category "D" is inflated by the inclusion of instruments transferred interstate.

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
South Australia	26	24	40	10
New South Wales	15	31	46	8
Victoria	25	50	8	17

Western Australia	30	31	46	8
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<b>Average</b>	24	31	33	11

A = as original

B = action changed, tonally intact

C = action and tonal change

D = "Lost"

### Table 3

Showing actual instruments for each State in each of four categories.

*Note:* category "D" is inflated by the inclusion of instruments transferred interstate, only 4 have been destroyed.

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
South Australia	13	12	20	5
New South Wales	2	4	6	1
Victoria	3	6	1	2
Western Australia	3	2	4	0
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<b>Totals</b>	21	24	31	8

A = as original

B = action changed, tonally intact

C = action and tonal change

D = "Lost"

Perhaps the worrying feature of the tables is the number of instruments that have been irretrievably changed and cannot be restored. All the King's Men of Humpty Dumpty fame can do little with them! [7] By their exclusion our original inheritance is reduced to 46. Perhaps this is quite sufficient for the historical record in quantitative terms, but what of the nature of the instruments.

**... for the want of a nail ...**

A complete qualitative review of the Dodd legacy would take too long for the time allocated this morning. However, a brief survey will indicate the fragility of its situation. To take his large instruments first it is clear from the results tabulated below, for the want of a nail, or at least a changed attitude, the kingdom has already been lost!

#### Table 4

The current status of the larger instruments of J.E. Dodd.

### **3 Manual**

#### **South Australia**

1901 University of Adelaide, Elder Hall: removed to Pt. Pirie, has undergone numerous tonal alterations.

1913 Hamilton, St Matthew's Anglican: action changed 1991

1918 Payneham Uniting (Methodist): rebuilt, action changed

1926 St. Francis Xavier Cathedral: rebuilt, action changed

1928/9 Maughan Uniting (Methodist): rebuilt, action changed

#### **New South Wales**

1912 Lismore, St Carthage Cathedral: rebuilt, action changed and tonally altered

1926/7 Darlinghurst, First Church Christ Scientist: rebuilt

#### **New Zealand**

1910 Napier, St John's Cathedral: destroyed 1934 earthquake

#### **Tasmania**

1911/12 Paterson St. Uniting (Methodist): rebuilt, action changed.

When we turn our attention to the two manual instruments, the majority of Dodd's output, we might expect to find that there is a healthier situation, simply by virtue of the larger numbers. A review of those in original condition indicates otherwise. Table 5 sets out the status of the smaller instruments in "original condition". As may be quickly seen there are further instruments at risk either from changing worship patterns or falling congregational numbers.

As for the single manuals ... one stands alone at Semaphore Baptist Church in South Australia, although the pipe organ at Light Pass in the Strait Gate Lutheran Church has seen minor tonal alteration.

#### Table 5

A list, by State, of Dodd's smaller instruments substantially in original condition.

### **Two Manual**

## **South Australia**

1896 Norwood, St Bartholomew's Anglican

1897 Norwood, St Ignatius Catholic, revoiced, new mechanical action, Leith Jacob 1989

1897 Norwood, Clayton Memorial Uniting (Congregational)

1898 Mt Barker, Christ Church Anglican, reversible vertical bellows added, original in place

1900 Hindmarsh Square (Congregational) moved to St Patrick's Catholic, Grote Street

1901 Semaphore, St Bedes Anglican

1911 Alberton, Uniting (Methodist)

1912 Parkside, Baptist

1912 Parkside, Epworth Uniting (Methodist), at risk, currently not used

1917 Parkside, St Raphael's Catholic, poor condition

1922 Manthorpe Memorial Uniting (Congregational), alternate worship style

1927 Glenelg, Our Lady of Victories Catholic

## **New South Wales**

1917 Murrumburrah, Uniting (Ross Memorial Presbyterian)

1923 Quirindi, Munro Memorial Uniting (Presbyterian)

## **Victoria**

1920 Montague, St Barnabas' Anglican; inst. St Paul's Anglican Fairfield; unaltered but in poor condition

1921 Pt. Melbourne, Methodist; private ownership, stored since 1967

1924 Coburg, Uniting (Methodist); unaltered but in poor condition

## **Western Australia**

1926 acquired 1992 from Coogee, St Brigid's Catholic by John Larner, awaiting buyer

1931 Crawley, St George's College Chapel

1933 Dalkeith, house organ for Johnston, in storage since 1980 and at risk

## **One Manual**

### **South Australia**

1901 Sempahore Baptist

Taking a ruthless position it would seem that only a quarter of Dodd's instruments remain. This works out at a loss rate of a little under two instruments per year. If this should continue we have a decade left.

## **S u m m a r y**

And so to return to Telecom, Willie Fennell and Hornby trains. It is interesting to note that the carriage with the lost bogie is more akin to the electric model OOHO gauge model trains. The clockwork trains were a larger toy on wider rails, I had one! Has Telecom forgotten the need for accurate historical research Perhaps they felt the modern audience couldn't identify with the real thing. It is not the purpose of this paper to suggest action, merely to point out the ease with which we forget our heritage. Not even half a century has seen the demise of three quarters of the pipe organs of J.E. Dodd. I for one do not wish to be walking through the yellow pages in search of this lost or broken heritage, especially with a patronising community looking at me and continuing to cut up the past.

## **notes**

1.'Tasmanian Organ Celebrates 80th Anniversary', *OHTA News*, vol.15, no.2., April 1991, pp.9-11.

2.*South Australian Advertiser*, Thursday 10 September 1992, p.4.

3.Membership Certificate, Hornby Railway Company, David John Shield, No 223511, dated 8 July 1952.

4.Bruce Naylor, 'J.E. Dodd : a romantic organbuilder', *OHTA News*, vol.5, no.2, April 1981, pp.4-20.

5.For example, the rebuild of the instrument by Robert McKenzie at All Saints' Church, Hindmarsh, South Australia, is listed alongside St Mary's Presbyterian Church, Esk Bank, N.S.W., and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (now St Mary's Catholic Cathedral), Perth, West Australia. *Dodd Letters*, 1909-1913, p.273, dated 7 June 1910. See also undated Trade Catalogues c.1907 and c.1918, Mortlock Library of South Australia, PRG 70/1 and 2.

6.see *Australian Pipe Organ Preservation Standards*, Camberwell, OHTA, 1992, for definitions.

7.reference to OHTA's IXth Annual Conference, Adelaide, 5-9 September 1986.