

Victorian Heritage Database Report

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MOYLE PIPE ORGAN-ST LINUS ANGLICAN CHURCH



Moyle organ St Linus Merlynston_front_11 Feb 08



Moyle organ St Linus Merlynston_front detail_11 Feb 08 2



Moyle organ St Linus Merlynston_front with dummy pipes_11 Feb 08 3



Moyle organ St Linus Merlynston_nameplate_11 Feb 08 5



Moyle organ St Linus Merlynston_site in church_11 Feb 08 10

Location

21 GLYNDON AVENUE COBURG NORTH, Moreland City

Municipality

MORELAND CITY

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2159

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO86

VHR Registration

June 12, 2008

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 11, 2008

What is significant?

The Moyle organ now in St Linus' Anglican Church was built, probably in the 1850s, by James Moyle of Prahran, who was among the first organbuilders in Melbourne. Little is known of the history of the organ. It is likely to have been built for a private home, and it could have been at one stage in St John's Anglican Church, Horsham. By 1930 it was in St Cuthbert's Anglican Church, Brunswick, but was removed in about 1975 and stored at Christ Church, Brunswick. In 1978 it was given by the parish to the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). The restoration of the instrument began in 1984 following an appeal, launched in 1983 by the then Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, organised by the Organ Historical Trust of Australia. The restoration, of the windchest (including the fitting of a new table), bellows, action and pipework, was carried out by George Fincham & Sons of Richmond. The casework was restored by George Vlahiogannis, of Rendec Pty Ltd of Northcote. In 1985, following the restoration, the organ was placed in St Linus Anglican Church, Merlynston on permanent loan from the National Trust.

This organ is a small instrument of chamber organ dimensions, with a distinctive Gothic style case. There are three flats of gilded wooden dummy pipes placed within three cusped arches on the front of the instrument. The cornice of the case is boldly crenellated and the music desk, carved in oak, incorporates a lyre motif. The casework is of pine which has been stained and finished to resemble cedar, although the latter material has been used for the keyboard assembly. The hood moulds above the three cusped arches were at some stage removed and have been replaced. The original builder's nameplate survives. The wooden pipework bears the impressed mark 'J. Moyle', but the metal pipework was almost certainly imported.

How is it significant?

The Moyle organ is of historical significance to the state of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Moyle organ in St Linus' Anglican Church is of historical significance as the earliest known example of local organbuilding in Victoria. It is the only known surviving example of the work of James Moyle, who began work in Melbourne in 1848 and was among the first organbuilders in Victoria.

The Moyle organ has social significance for its continuing role in aiding religious worship in the state since the early days of European settlement.

Permit Exemptions

General Conditions:

1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of

the registered place or object.

2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan.

4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

Routine maintenance: Pipe Organs require regular servicing particularly tuning and attendance to action problems. Such procedures usually take place monthly, quarterly, half yearly or annually. Such activities would not impact in any way on the heritage status of the instrument provided they are carried out by appropriate firms, and would not require a permit.

Construction dates	1850,
Heritage Act Categories	Heritage object/s,
Hermes Number	1281
Property Number	

History

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Organbuilding was one of the earliest craft industries in colonial Victoria, despite the fact that it required careful training and highly technical skills. As early as 1842 there were men in Melbourne who, although not organbuilders by trade, erected organs imported from England and did tuning. Early organbuilders in Melbourne included James Moyle, Jesse Biggs, Henry Smith, Robert Mackie, William Anderson and George Fincham. All but the last relied on imports for some of the parts, particularly metal pipes.

There were about twenty organs in Melbourne and its suburbs before 1860. At first organs were erected mainly in private residences, but gradually they began to be installed in colonial churches. Many organs were imported but it was found that organs built locally with timber seasoned to withstand the local climate were more reliable. From the 1860s the organbuilding industry received tariff protection from the Victorian Government, resulting in an expansion of the local industry in the 1870s and 1880s. As time went on churches often replaced older and smaller organs with larger ones, and older organs were often restored or rebuilt insensitively, so few early examples have survived. [E N Mathews, *Colonial Organs and Organbuilders*, Melbourne 1969.]

St Linus' Anglican Church, Merlynston

The nave of St Linus' Church was designed by the architect Charles Heath (1867-1948) and built in 1932. It was planned as the first section of a more imposing building which, when complete, would have included transepts, a central tower and spire and a sanctuary. These later sections were never completed. In 1978 Vanne Trompf redesigned the building, reversing the original orientation so that the congregation now faces west towards an ambulatory. The crossing arch was filled with a striking steel and glass structure which houses the baptistery. The building is notable for its absence of ornamentation and lofty, well-proportioned interior. It is the only known example of Heath's church architecture, although he carried out considerable work at Fawkner Crematorium nearby.

James Moyle

[From E N Matthews, *Colonial Organs and Organbuilders*, Melbourne 1969, pp 2-3.]

'As early as 1842, there were men in Melbourne who, although not organbuilders by trade, erected organs imported from England, and did tuning. James Moyle was probably the first organbuilder in Melbourne. Born in 1803 at Manchester, England, he was forty-five when he arrived in Melbourne in 1848, and had no doubt learned the trade in England. He had a workshop in High Street, Prahran, where he built organs. One of these was later bought by St John's Church, Horsham, which could possibly be the instrument which appeared in St Cuthbert's Church, East Brunswick in 1930 and is now in St Linus'. The small one-manual instruments built in the fifties or sixties, had some imported parts and pipes. Moyle also erected the Bevington organ in St Stephen's, Richmond, in 1853; he moved it to another position in the church in 1855, and did tuning and maintenance work for several years. His name appears in the records at Christ Church, Hawthorn, where he was tuning the organ in 1865. Moyle died on 7 November 1874, at 112 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, at the age of seventy-one.'

Charles Heath (1867-1948)

(from 'An Ideal City: The 1912 Competition to design Canberra')

<http://www.idealcity.org.au/46/shortlist-60.html>, and the website of the City of Moreland)

Charles Heath spent his career in Western Australia and Victoria, becoming an Associate of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in 1890. He was both architect and surveyor. When he applied successfully for registration with the Victorian Architects Registration Board he stated that for the previous 17 years he had practised that profession in Melbourne.

Heath submitted a design for the 1912 competition to design Canberra (Entry no 60 of 137) and was in the final 46 shortlisted. For the City of Coburg he designed new offices, a town hall and a soldiers' memorial hall with clubrooms, which opened in 1922. He also designed the Fawkner Crematorium (1926) Melbourne's first crematorium complex, in the Greek Revival style, richly decorated and sumptuously furnished, which operated until the late 1970s.

HISTORY OF PLACE

The organ now in St Linus' was built, probably in the 1850s, by James Moyle, of Ivy Cottage, High Street, Prahran. It is the only known example of Moyle's work to survive and is the earliest known example of the craft of organbuilding in Victoria.

Little is known of the history of the organ. It is likely to have been built for a private home and it could have been the Moyle organ at one stage in St John's Anglican Church, Horsham. Unfortunately no documentary evidence has yet been uncovered. At some stage the pedal pulldowns were added and the hand blowing arrangements modified.

In about 1975 the organ was removed from St Cuthbert's and stored in the parish hall of Christ Church, Glenlyon Road, Brunswick. In 1978 it was given to the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) by the Christ Church parish, and it was decided to place the instrument, following restoration, at St Linus' Church on permanent loan.

The restoration of the instrument, funded by a National Trust appeal coordinated by the Organ Historical Trust of Australia, began in early 1984 following the launch in 1983 of the appeal by the Prime Minister of Australia and patron of the appeal, Bob Hawke. The restoration work was carried out by George Fincham & Sons of Richmond, who were responsible for restoring the windchest (including the fitting of a new table), bellows, action and pipework. The casework has been restored by George Vlathogannis, of Rendec Pty Ltd of Northcote, who is well known for his skilled restoration work at a number of National Trust properties.

In 1985 the organ was rehoused in St Linus Anglican Church, Merlynston, and was officially unveiled on 23 April 1989.

Assessment Against Criteria

a. *The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object*

b. *The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness*

The Moyle organ is the oldest known example of local organbuilding in Victoria. It is the only known surviving example of the work of James Moyle, who began work in Melbourne in 1848 and was among the first organbuilders in Victoria.

c. The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage

d. The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects

e. The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features

f. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements

The Moyle organ demonstrates a level of organbuilding technology in Victoria in the 1850s which was unmatched in local organbuilding for another decade.

g. The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations

The Moyle organ has been used for religious worship in Victoria for a century and a half, since the early years of settlement in the colony.

h. Any other matter which the Council deems relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

Plaque Citation

This is Victoria's oldest locally made organ, built in the 1850s by James Moyle, an Englishman who began work in Prahran in 1848. It was restored and placed in this church in 1985.

Extent of Registration

The object described as the Moyle Organ, currently located in St Linus' Anglican Church, 19 Glyndon Avenue, Merlynston.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place data owner.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>