



Newsletter

Patron: Sir Trevor Garland
Past Patron: Dr I G Dicker

December 2017

From the Director

I wrote in the last newsletter about the fact that English cathedrals are having an increase in attendance whereas many parish churches are struggling and some suggestions as to why this may be the case. Soon after this was published, we visited Terrigal and listened to a very interesting sermon which stated that there had been a marked increase in numbers attending Choral Evensong in the UK. This is a relevant statistic as this is one of the services that we sing most frequently. In 2017, 9 out of 35 services were Choral Evensong. A more recent article stated that attendance at Christmas in Cathedrals increased last year for the first time since statistics were recorded in 2000. It was thought that the traditional carols and buildings were attracting younger people who would not normally go to church. I also found it interesting that Advent also had higher attendance – maybe people want a break from the commercialisation which has taken over so much today?

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/11/09/cathedrals-report-record-christmas-attendance-congregations/?WT.mc_id=tmgliveapp_iosshare_Aptk917WC7Jq

It is foolish to take statistics in one country and assume that the same will happen in a different situation. And there is certainly room for more in our evensong congregations - we have not needed to set up a video broadcast to the car park outside due to the church being full yet!

Closer to home, an Australian article says that a bigger percentage of church attendees have degrees than used to be the case.

<https://www.ternitynews.com.au/australia/highly-educated-church-attenders-on-the-rise/>

Again, we have to be careful with statistics – more people go to university than before. However, it does to a certain extent dispel the myth that churchgoers are there because they are unable to think for themselves –

which I have heard a few times from people who do not like “organised religion”. The fact that educated people believe in something which has no scientific proof is worth considering.

Although, of course, having a higher degree is not the only measure of being educated!

We are approaching the end of the year (although the start of the church year) and it is, as usual, very busy. I hope that we will be able to see many of our supporters at one or more of the events where we are singing.

Jim Abraham
Director



From the Chair

Greetings all

It never ceases to amaze me how quickly the years go by. It seems no time since the August newsletter was written but it is now well out of date. We have had our annual country tour, this time returning to Bathurst. This is a fun time for those able to go as we have opportunity to socialise properly.



We have had our quiet few weeks when we were able to learn some new music. We have also visited such places as Mosman, Balmain, Dee Why, Terrigal and St Mary's Cathedral. Now we have come to Advent and we are about to embark on a ridiculously busy few weeks singing carols before Christmas as well as singing for a wedding. The full list of these events you will find later in this newsletter.

I am constantly thankful that we have a wonderful choir of people who front up to rehearsals and services regularly when in most cases they lead extremely busy lives and manage to fit in TCS as well. I know they find singing beautiful uplifting music a time of enjoyment and refreshment. We are very lucky to have such a talented group of special people. We are especially thankful that Jim continues to put up with us and faithfully does a huge amount of work behind the scenes as well as leading us so well. He has a ridiculously busy life in the "real world" also.

We are pleased to note that we are singing Evensong at St Andrews Cathedral at 5:15 p.m. on the 7th of December. It is fitting that we return to the place where TCS was formed 27 years ago. Maybe we will see you there?

As ever, we are keen to find more people interested in joining us. Hilana, our latest "recruit" says in an article further on that she cannot believe the amount of liturgical music we get through. It is indeed a challenge for a non-musician like me and sometimes not for the faint hearted!

In this edition, as well as welcoming Hilana as our latest member, I am thrilled to include news of two choristers who have been involved with the choir for many years. Hilary and Pdraig Byrne as choir members toured with us in 2011 and are still deputies. Michael Austin is a previous Chair and is still a valuable Bass (we miss him when he goes travelling!) in the present choir.

On behalf of our choir, may I wish all our supporters a Christmas and New Year blessed with peace and joy.

God bless you

Jan Kneeshaw

Editor



Check out our website and then tell your friends!

www.cathedralsingers.org.au

Would you like to consider joining us?

Contact Jan Kneeshaw on 9144 4915 or the Director,

Jim Abraham on 0405 817 276

Email: jan.kneeshaw@optusnet.com.

TCS Program for 2017

Come and join us for the last of our events for 2017

Month	Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
December	Friday	7	5.15pm	Evensong	St Andrew's Cathedral
	Saturday	9	10am	Carol Singing	West Pymble Shopping Centre
	Sunday	10	6.00pm	Lesson and Carols	St John's, Balmain
	Friday	15	7.30pm	Lesson and Carols	St Peter's Cremorne
	Sunday	17	7.30pm	Carol Service	St John's Gordon
	Sunday	24	11.00pm	Midnight Mass	St John's, Balmain

Your choir urgently needs your help!

Do you have a spare man in your home? Does he like singing?

Your choir needs him!

Your gift of a tenor or bass will make all the difference.

Not only will his life improve, yours will also!

Your tenor or bass will make new friends, develop a social life and enjoy life just a little bit more.

In turn you will have the house to yourself at least once a week for a few hours.

Your donation is free! What could be better at this time of year??



We men take our singing seriously!!!

Are you a lady with too much time on your hands?

Full of Talent and nowhere to take it ?

Try joining our choir either as a Soprano or as an Alto.

Your life will never be the same again

The bumpy road to Bathurst – September 17th and 18th , 2017.

The Cathedral Singers again enjoyed an invitational tour to a regional city. The journey was eventful for some – ask Alex about experiencing a flat tyre on the Great Western Highway or Angela about sitting in the joy seat in Jan’s luxury Lexus.

After checking in at our accommodation, the choir moved off to rehearsal.

Mass at the *Cathedral Parish of St Michael and St John* with Madeleine as our Cantor was a reflective time of worship.

The concert afterwards was well received. We were all delighted to see Dr Hilary with Sean and Liam.

Many of us were able to enjoy dinner together in the Bistro of the Mount Panorama Motel. Unfortunately, a choice of vegetarian meals doesn’t appear to be a priority in the country! The chicken parmigiana however was beyond the capacity of some!

The 8.00am service at All Saints Anglican Cathedral was also meaningful and encouraging. The congregation expressed thanks for the choir’s support for the investiture of the new Archdeacon for the Greater Western diocese. A delicious morning tea was provided.

To conclude our delightful weekend a group of us went to Mount Panorama to enjoy the view. It was a glorious day and a peaceful end to a special time.

Thanks Bathurst we will visit again.



Welcome to Hilana



I was born in Marrakech, Morocco and from the age of eight, I attended an English-speaking school. That is how I came to be trilingual. At the age of 18, I decided to move to York in the UK to read Languages and Linguistics as my upbringing had fostered such a keen interest and passion for languages. I would be accused of false humility if I didn't say that I had an unfair advantage in that domain. My love for singing was always there but it lurked in the shadows as my parents had never encouraged me to pursue it. They did insist that I spend ten years studying the piano until one day, my teacher, either through sheer exasperation or misguided encouragement, declared that I had decidedly no talent or future as a pianist. I have barely touched the keyboard since.

The love for singing endured but it was one I'd borne specifically for classical music. I always felt that my voice was terribly mismatched to contemporary music; one of many things that alienates me from my peers. I joined a French choir at the age of 17 before I left for the UK. Therein, I was given the chance to discover beautiful, awe-inspiring music. I will never forget the experience of singing Charpentier's Te Deum which had been featured on national television. I continued to sing at university but never gave it serious consideration. Never straying far from Yorkshire, I moved to Leeds after having completed my Bachelor's to pursue a Master's in Interpreting and Translation.

After a total of six years in the north of England (including a short stint in Lancashire), wherein I met my Lancastrian husband, we moved to Sydney, prompted by a job opportunity. Ever the language enthusiast, I decided to take up Hebrew lessons (a year later, I took up Italian as well!). One day, on my way to Hebrew class, I stumbled across and was captivated by a stunning mezzo-soprano voice in the streets of Newtown. I traced the source of the singing and stood outside a house where someone was clearly giving singing lessons. Having never taken a singing lesson myself, I decided to book a class. From then on, I became hooked to the operatic and classical repertoire. I was lucky to have made the acquaintance of my teacher. It is thanks to her that I am now seriously considering a degree (and perhaps a career) in opera.

After having built up some confidence, I decided to audition for The Cathedral Singers in March 2017 and I am now proudly the latest member. Little would have prepared me for what my colleagues do and have done for years. The sheer volume of liturgical music that needs to be learnt every week is intimidating. I feel nothing but gratitude to have had such opportunities as well as this gift which has imbued me with much joy.

HILANA ALOUANI-BIBI

Soprano



Hilana, one of the sopranos at a wedding at Pennant Hills recently

Dr Hilary Byrne

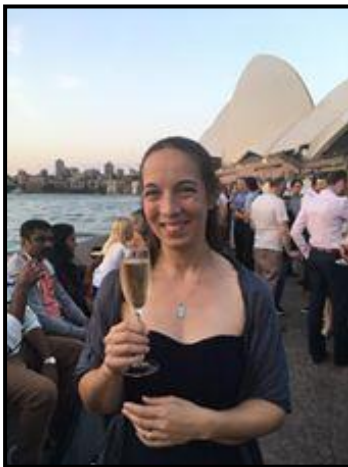
We are thrilled to note that one of our most valuable past choristers has just graduated from Sydney University with a PhD in Physics.

Here is what she has to say about it:

“There are probably only a few left in the Cathedral Singers now who remember me starting my PhD, back at the start of 2009. I arrived in Australia with my husband Padraig for a brief stay as a backpacker, but we were seduced by the sun and after a few years got our Permanent Residency. Aside from the existential significance of that, it opened up the opportunity to start a PhD under an Australian government grant.

Physics has always fascinated me – that little tug at the back of your mind wondering why things happen the way they do. Being able to do a PhD has been an amazing opportunity for me. It has also been a long journey, with the arrival of first Sean and then Liam! Graduating this September was a lovely chance to celebrate that journey and the support I have received from so many people to make it possible.

Balancing the demands of a job and two little boys is challenging, and both Padraig and I appreciate the chance to escape occasionally to sing with the Cathedral Singers. Padraig joined the choir for their recent tour to Bathurst so we made a family weekend of it. Sean and Liam both love singing (albeit mostly silly songs in the back of the car!), and were fascinated to hear the choir perform. On balance though, I think the dinosaur museum may just have won out on popularity! “



Ed: This has been a very long 6 years during which Hilary and Padraig managed to keep working and produce two gorgeous boys – Sean and Liam. Padraig still sings with us when he is able and we were very appreciative of his help (along with Peter Hughes and Stephen Fox) during our trip to Bathurst.

Hilary brought the boys to join us at times and they showed an amazing readiness to listen to our singing. Liam is even quite keen on it, I am told.

I am sure all TCS members present and past join me in saying

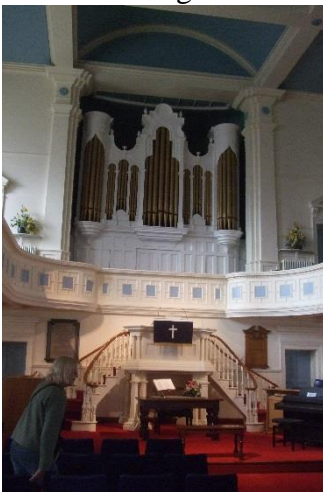

Congratulations!

Mike's adventures

Every now and then, our long-serving bass, Mike Austin, disappears from our line-up for months at a time, usually on overseas adventures or commitments. Although Mike's latest trip was only for 5 weeks, he managed to spend time with friends and family around Worcestershire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Hampshire, West Sussex, Kent and London – topping this off with a two-day Rotary International / United Nations peace conference in Geneva!



In early October, Mike lost a dear and trusted family friend to cancer and was moved to make the long journey to his former home town of Bedford to attend the funeral. As it transpired, many of Mike's former colleagues also attended, making it a special reunion of friends he had not seen for almost twenty years.



Within forty eight hours of his arrival in England, the opportunity arose for him to attend the peace conference in Geneva, making it necessary for him to adjust his plans and giving Mike the chance to sing with his former choir at Bunyan Meeting Free Church in Bedford on four consecutive Sundays. Members of TCS who toured and sang in the English Cathedrals with Brett during 2011, will remember singing a lunchtime concert at this church in Bedford, fitting it in with our commitments at Ely Cathedral – yes, we did make it back to Ely in time for Evensong that day!

The crowning glory of Mike's trip just had to be the birth, in Bedford, of his first great grandchild, Hunter James Harrison, in the evening of 29th October, just a few hours before Mike was due to celebrate his own birthday. So, in Sydney time, Hunter and Mike share the same birthday!



On this trip, Mike's long-suffering wife Gunilla stayed at home in Sydney, caring for their aging Weimeraner, Scooter. Gunilla has been a keen golfer for many years whilst Mike has contented himself with other interests. Anyway, one of Mike's friends in England was keen to teach him the rudiments of this strange game and so, with several lessons "under his belt", he has returned to The Cathedral Singers just in time for our Christmas season of merry singing and to whack little white balls around the place!

Michael Austin

Bass/Past TCS President

Some photos here show the Bunyan Meeting Free Church at Bedford to which Mike refers. It was John Bunyan's church and has wonderful windows showing scenes from Pilgrim's Progress. This one says "Evangelist Points the Way". It is one of my favourite photos from our 2011 trip to the UK. Ed



CD Order/Donation Form



The Cathedral Singers



TCS Sings Evensong



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Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr/Other _____

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Enclosed is my cheque/money order for: (✓ Tick appropriate box/s)

- CD 3 “Lo! The Star” @ \$10 each _____ \$ _____
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- CD 4 “The Cathedral Singers Sing Evensong” @ 10 each _____ \$ _____
- Any 2 CDs - \$15 _____ \$ _____
- Any 3 CDs - \$20 _____ \$ _____
- + Postage and handling @ \$5 per CD _____ \$ _____

- Donation for our ongoing ministry _____ \$ _____

- Total: _____ \$ _____

Cheques should be made payable to “The Cathedral Singers Donation Fund”

Banking details for direct transfers (please notify us by email):

Bank account details: BSB 814 282 A/c 504 371 53

Postal address: The Cathedral Singers PO Box 569 Gordon NSW 2072

Please email us for further details: tcs@cathedralsingers.org.au

or ring Jan Kneeshaw on 9144 4915 or 0411 785 117

More details on our website: www.cathedralsingers.org.au

All donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible

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