



Newsletter

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

February 2019

TCS in 2019

New Year Greetings to all our supporters

As Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent in a couple of weeks, we are breaking with recent tradition and changing our front page in order to send out our Newsletter quickly to give our supporters a list of the events that have been organized for the year so far and to advertise our annual presentation of Stainer's "Crucifixion" on Good Friday.

We are back in harness for 2019, preparing music for the many and varied churches where we sing. Recently we were welcomed at our home church, St John's Gordon, for the annual re-dedication for the work we do. This took place during the regular Eucharist Service, with Fr Keith Dalby, our Chaplain, giving the blessing.



Alex Hovey, one of our tenors, was privileged to go to Oslo and Weiden on business and sent pictures of the snow back to us when we were sweltering in a heatwave. He has now provided a great article of his time over there – with pictures to keep us cool.

Brett McKern has also just returned from New Zealand to check on the progress of the new organ for St John's Gordon, where we rehearse and where we will be leading several services soon. We are very keen to know what this organ is like. He came back with glowing reports of the progress of the organ, his confidence in the men who are working on the instrument and the quality of their work. He is giving an update in this issue.

Our Director, Jim Abraham, is still recovering from a school adventure last week in Ivan Milat's old haunts down south. While he was away, we welcomed Rachele Elliott to lead a valuable workshop. During this she taught us a traditional Icelandic hymn - in Icelandic! Maybe when the weather settles down, we will get our energy back enough to sing it to Jim and maybe use it in a service sometime!

We look forward to greeting you again soon.

Jan Kneeshaw - Chair

Jim Abraham - Director





Stainer's *Crucifixion*

✠ **Good Friday**

19 April 2018

2.30pm

St John's Church

Corner Pacific Hwy/St Johns Ave

Gordon

Spencer Darby, Tenor

Lachlan Massey, Baritone

Brett McKern, Organist

The Cathedral Singers

Jim Abraham, Choir Director

Free Entry

Donations to The Cathedral Singers encouraged

TCS Program for 2019

Come and join us for some of our events in 2019

Month	Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
February	Sunday	24	6.00pm	Evensong	St John's Dee Why
March	Sunday	10	4.00pm	Evensong	St John's Gordon
	Friday	29	7.00pm	Stations of the Cross	Holy Spirit North Ryde
April	Friday	19	2.30pm	Crucifixion - Stainer	St John's Gordon
	Sunday	28	11.30am	Ku-ring-gai Anzac Service	St John's Gordon
May	Sunday	12	4.00pm	Evensong	St John's Gordon
	Sunday	19	3.00pm	Evensong	St Jude's Bowral
		19	3.45pm	Concert	St Jude's Bowral
June	Sunday	2	TBC	Holy Communion	Pymble Uniting Church
	Sunday	16	8.00am	Choral Communion	St Martin's Killara
	Sunday	23	9.30am	Mass	St John's Balmain
	Saturday	29	5.30pm	Vespers	St Mary's Cathedral
			6.00pm	Vigil Mass	St Mary's Cathedral
July				RSCM Winter School	St Paul's College
August	Sunday	4	6.00pm	Evensong	St John's Dee Why
	Sunday	11	4.00pm	Evensong	St John's Gordon
	Sunday	25	6.30pm	Evensong	Christ Church St Laurence
	Saturday	31	5.30pm	Vespers	St Mary's Cathedral
			6.00pm	Vigil Mass	St Mary's Cathedral
September	Sunday	1	9.30am	Mass	St John's Balmain
	Sunday	15	9.00am	Divine Service	Scots Kirk Mosman
October	Sunday	13	3.00pm	Evensong	Holy Trinity Terrigal
November	Friday	1		Fauré Requiem	St John's Dee Why
	Sunday	10	4.00pm	Evensong	St John's Gordon
	Sunday	24	10.00am	Mass	St John's Dee Why
December	Thursday	5	5.15pm	Evensong - TBC	St Andrew's Cathedral
	Sunday	8	7.00pm	Advent Carols	St Alban's Leura
	Sunday	15	6.00pm	Lessons and Carols	St John's Balmain
	Friday	21	7.30pm	Lesson and Carols	St Peter's Cremorne
	Sunday	22	7.30pm	Lessons and Carols	St John's Gordon
	Monday	24	11.00pm	Choral Mass	St John's Balmain

Note – Some extras dates may be added during the year..

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,

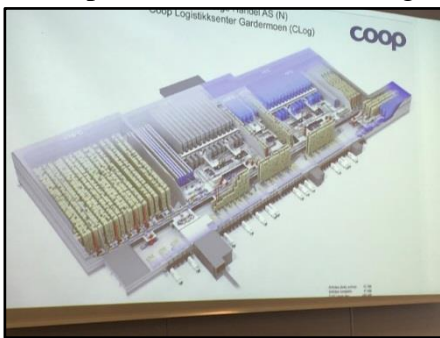
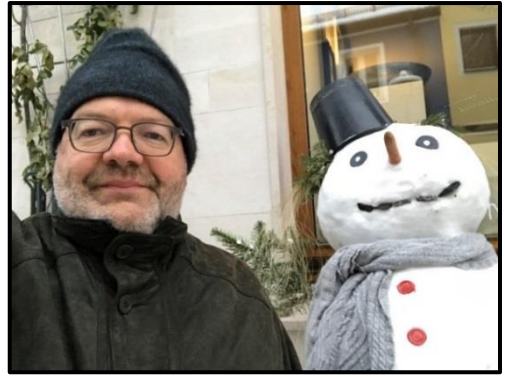
Jim Abraham on 0405 817 276

Email: jan.kneeshaw@optusnet.com.au

Alex's Adventure!

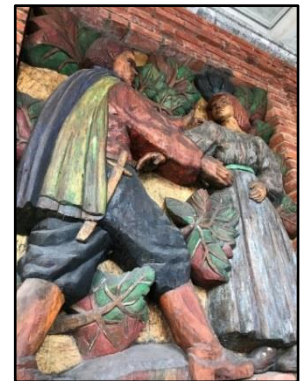
I was extremely fortunate to get the opportunity to go on a quick business trip to Oslo and Weiden (near Munich) in the first week of February. My only diary clash was the first TCS practice and after much thought and deliberation I decided that I would take the trip and skip the practice!

We have won the contract to build 2 automated distribution centres for Coles, one in Brisbane and one in NSW: each a \$165 million build with \$450 million automation in it, 280m long and portions being 36m high (a big challenge in itself as it is a single storey warehouse). The trip was to inspect 3 facilities in Norway and then have workshops in Germany with the German automation company to understand and develop the automation/building integration.



The attached photo is an axonometric of a facility in Oslo that we visited which, in concept, is what we will be doing; high bay storage on the left and then a sortation system that fetches and arranges specific orders for delivery out to stores.

Oslo was lovely, -15 degree C, lots of thick snow and I visited the Oslo town hall which is a very interesting space with a lot of colour and different materials (external timber 3D panels and main hall shown).



We then flew to Munich and drove to Weiden, an old town 160km north of Munich where the automation company had its headquarters.

The company is a family concern with the owner being 84 years old and a very religious man. This could be seen in the offices and workshops where a lot of religious artefacts were placed (photo shows our meeting room with 2 statues along the wall). It was interesting negotiating with the Germans, first they are rigid and then, once issues are explained, they become rational and pragmatic: we had to wear them down sometimes!



I met some interesting people, the snowman being one of them.



On our way back we stopped at the famous Hofbrauhaus in Munich where the waitresses were impressive: 8 off 1 kg beers easily supported on their fingers. The 14 fellow Australians were very happy when I said I am prepared to not drink so that someone could drive the minibus back to Munich airport (reason I have a Coke in the photo !!)

A good time was had by all and many valuable lessons learned!



Alex Hovy
Tenor (and Architect)

New St John's Organ Update

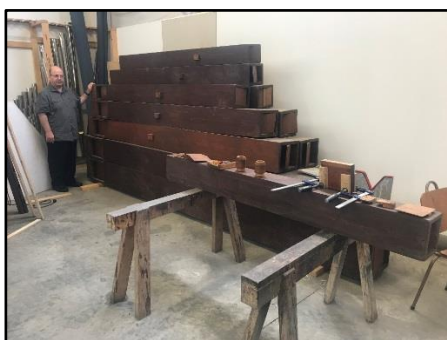
*by Dr Brett McKern,
Organist & Director of Music at St John's*

On behalf of the Church Wardens and Organ Project Committee I went to New Zealand this month to inspect progress on the new St John's organ. Being at TCS home-base, this instrument will be a great resource for TCS, designed, as it is, specifically for liturgical and choral accompaniment.



Choir pipework being 'racked in'.

I spent two full days at the South Island Organ Company (SIOC) factory in Timaru, met with all organ builders working on this project (nine), and the complete SIOC team. I was made very welcome and all at SIOC were keen to show me the parts of the instrument on which they are working. There is a pride in their craft and art, as well as an excitement about this project that was palpable.



The men were keen that I should understand what they were doing, and they were open about the problems they have had to overcome as well as the successes. One of the organ builders even trained with the organ builders in England (Hill, Norman and Beard) who originally made the instrument our new one is based upon in 1930. I must say that the standard of craftsmanship at SIOC is impeccable.

Brett standing with the pedal Open Wood lowest notes – one gets a sense of the size of these pipes which are up to about 5 metres in length.

Moreover, the materials used are first class quality. Seasoned timbers have been stored or sourced, some needing to be matched with the 1930 work; electrical components and hardware are coming from at least four countries; and there is much local customisation. If a component was found to be not exactly what was required or specifications not as originally budgeted, SIOC have replaced them with better or more appropriate ones at their expense. There is a sense that this organ is special, and quality is paramount.



So many different components and activity: swell box, great soundboard, pedal bourdon, reservoirs, pipe racks, etc.



While in NZ I also undertook two other tasks. The first was to play the annual Earthquake Memorial Concert at the Catholic Basilica in Timaru. This concert remembers the losses of the large 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, particularly the latter when SIOC lost three men when a church collapsed on them as they were removing an organ damaged in the previous major quake. While there is a sense of moving on, memories are long, and a museum in Christchurch I visited brought home just how devastating these two major quakes were.

Honoured to be asked to play the concert, I was also humbled by the list of international organists who have played it in previous years. Nonetheless, a large audience (over 120 people) were very receptive to my varied programme of memorial works and some lighter works, as well as serious organ music. John Hargraves of SIOC also sang two short poignant works. Fittingly, as it turns out, the Basilica closed the very next day for earthquake strengthening to be carried out on the building.



The Earthquake Memorial Concert

The second task I undertook was to visit six previous SIOC organ projects and to talk to the clients. Three of these were in Christchurch and three in Dunedin. I also visited several other SIOC instruments. These organs ranged from one completed last year to others almost fifty years ago. Again, the quality of work is exemplary. It is rare that anything lasts half a century now, it seems, especially items with heavy reliance on electrical components, but these instruments were going strong, even under heavy use (such as in an Anglican cathedral). All clients talked of the SIOC dedication to their task and quality of work. This is even more impressive when SIOC are the only major professional organ builder in NZ so it would be possible to lapse in the absence of competition. History shows they have not, and comparison internationally also shows SIOC have retained very competitive pricing.



I came home from NZ not just believing St John's has the right people on the job with SIOC, but that we are lucky to have them. These people are professional and dedicated, and excellent at what they do, as well as being kind and generous people. I am now even more excited about the possibilities our new organ will afford us.

Brett playing some of the new St John's organ Swell pipework on the voicing machine.

An Icelandic Hymn - Heyr Himna Smiður

As mentioned on page one, while our Director was out in the wilderness having adventures with school children, TCS welcomed Rachelle Elliott, who among other things, introduced us to an historic Icelandic hymn, Heyr Himna Smiður, which when sung properly is a beautiful, haunting piece of music. As we struggled with the unusual construction of the melody and the Icelandic words, it did not sound very beautiful, but we plan to persevere and sing it in the future.

Egil Skallagrimsson – a Viking age poet, warrior and farmer



“Heyr Himna Smiður” is an Icelandic poem written in or just before 1208 AD. It was written by Kolbeinn Tumason who was a chieftain in one of the Icelandic family clans at the beginning of the most violent and turbulent time in Icelandic history. The poem is a prayer to God for strength, peace, and guidance in the face of the prospect of open inter-clan warfare. The words themselves are now over 800 years old, but music was not added to it until the 20th century.

In 1208, Kolbeinn and his followers attacked Guðmundur and his supporters in Hjaltadalur by Víðines. The ensuing battle is known as the Battle of Víðines. Kolbeinn died in the conflict, his head bashed in with a rock. The poem was (allegedly) written on his deathbed.

I was fascinated to know how it sounded properly, so looked up some versions on line. For those who read this on line, you may be interested to look up some of these links.

The first version I found was sung by a group of guys in a railway station in Dresden! It is great and I could almost pick out some of the words – certainly the melody. Very contemplative!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4dT8FJ2GE0>

Next was a large choir of students from Trondheim. That was gorgeous! It was interesting to read the comments – apparently the pronunciation was good!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sycH-zf6_J0

The next one is the one to learn from. You can hear each part and the words. It is beautiful.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewkBfgsUQIA>

This one is a group of students, I think from Berlin. Another hauntingly beautiful version. The comments are amazing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLT8i3zfCZY>

It is indeed a haunting piece of music and I hope we can one day do it justice, as in these examples.

Jan Kneeshaw

TCS Alto



Captions Courageous!

Entries by Dave:

John:

“... and now I’m starting ballet lessons”

Madeleine:

“I think I need a rest”



CD Order/Donation Form



The Cathedral Singers



TCS Sings Evensong



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Email _____ Telephone _____

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

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- Any 2 CDs - \$15 _____ \$ _____
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- + 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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