



Newsletter

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

November/December 2018

From the Director

Well, it's past October so that means the shops will be full of Christmas ware! It is often bemoaned that Christmas starts earlier each year and personally I think that is evidence that supports this. However, Christmas has changed considerably over the years and moving the commercialisation earlier is just one of those changes. Much of the well-known choral repertoire, poetry and traditions come from the Victorian era and Christmas was very different before then. I say well-known but then think that children today actually do not know many of the "traditional" carols and are



limited to *Jingle Bells* and *Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer*. Of course, Christmas varies in different parts of the world and many of the carols we sing were written with a European winter in mind. However, it is good that the Australian carols, for instance those written by W.G. James, are still sung in some schools and churches.



As can be seen from our engagement list, we are busy starting with an Advent service in Leura (pictured) followed by many Christmas Carol services.

Jim Abraham
Director

*****g*****

Grateful thanks to St John's Gordon for allowing us to use their premises and facilities for our rehearsals, and for all the support they have given us over many years.



From the Chair

Greetings everyone

Once more we are coming to the end of the year and I am hurrying to advertise the services we are assisting with for Advent and Christmas.



Many thanks to the various people who have contributed to this issue – it is varied and interesting. I received many comments about the last edition, which is encouraging.

Many thanks also to those people who have supported us over the year by giving a tax deductible donation. That is very much appreciated. We are thrilled to announce that we have received a generous grant from Ku-ring-gai Council recently. That is wonderful.

As you can see, we have had to farewell Michael Austin, who has been a member of TCS almost from its inception and was at one time Chair. Now we really need another bass or two to swell the bass ranks, especially since Bob now has a job that takes him swanning around defence facilities, most of them away from Sydney during the week. Good for Bob, but not so good for us! We are pleased to welcome Jane Wang, who has joined the sopranos and who is enjoying her time with us.

We are very pleased to be able to print Brett McKern's article about the new organ to be installed at St John's Gordon to be ready in early 2020. The organ builders are being very diligent about sending frequent progress photos and there is noticeable progress each time we see new ones. As St John's is our home base, we are very thrilled that this is happening.

As you can also see, we have been busy since September, singing at St Mary's Cathedral, Balmain and Terrigal as well as again singing the Faure Requiem with an augmented choir at St John's Dee Why, under the direction of their new Director of Music, Anthony Pasquill. It was good to work with him and to see him again last week when we returned to sing Mass for the festival of Christ the King

We look forward to a trip to Leura tomorrow to sing Advent Carols – a service that has become a tradition. After that, we will sing at Evensong at St Andrew's Cathedral and then carols at West Pymble shops - a fun time for us and appreciated by the passing spectators. A series of services of lessons and carols will bring us up to Christmas, and Midnight Mass, which we will sing at Holy Spirit, North Ryde, this year – a change for us.

On behalf of all the members of TCS, may I wish all our supporters a happy and holy Christmas and blessings in the year ahead.

God bless

Jan Kneeshaw
Secretary/Chair



Continuing TCS Program for 2018

Come and join us for some of our events in 2018

| Month | Day | Date | Time | Event | Venue |
|----------|----------|------|----------|--------------------|------------------------|
| December | Sunday | 2 | 7.00pm | Advent Carols | St Alban's Leura |
| | Thursday | 6 | 5.15pm | Evensong | St Andrew's Cathedral |
| | Saturday | 15 | 10 – 1pm | Carol Singing | West Pymble Shops |
| | Sunday | 16 | 6.00pm | Lessons and Carols | St John's Balmain |
| | Friday | 21 | 7.30pm | Lesson and Carols | St Peter's Cremorne |
| | Sunday | 23 | 7.30pm | Lessons and Carols | St John's Gordon |
| | Monday | 24 | 9.30pm | Choral Mass | Holy Spirit North Ryde |

TCS History goes digital, thanks to Kent

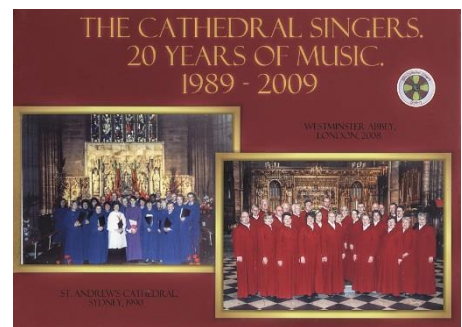


As many of you know, The Cathedral Singers was started in 1989 at the instigation of Bishop Ken Short to sing at St Andrew's Cathedral when the main choir was on holidays.

Over the years, the choir has evolved and now sings at churches all over Sydney and beyond.

It has a rich and interesting history, having also had two tours to the UK, singing in many cathedrals all over England. Marg Wright, as archivist, produced a comprehensive book in 2009, showing by documents, words and pictures, the history of the choir. This was a very limited edition and, now times have moved on, it can be seen on-line.

Kent Bowyer, who was in the choir for many years, spent many hours transferring this book to a format that is readily accessible for those who would like to reminisce or who are interested in the history of the choir. For a digital viewing of this book, go to:



<http://www.members.iinet.net.au/~kbowyer@ihug.com.au/book/cover.html>

This link can be also accessed via our website – www.cathedralsingers.org.au.

We are grateful to Kent for the work he has done in making this history more accessible and would like to thank him publicly for his support of TCS.

Thanks Kent!

Jan Kneeshaw – Editor.

Check out our website and then tell your friends!

www.cathedralsingers.org.au

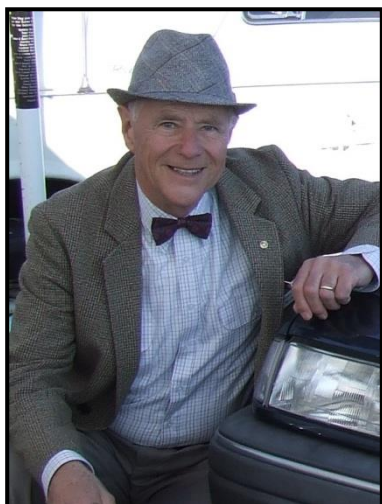
Would you like to consider joining us?

Contact Jan Kneeshaw on 9144 4915 or the Director,

Jim Abraham on 0405 817 276

Email: jan.kneeshaw@optusnet.com.au

Time for a change!



Back in 1998, when I worked for the Bible Society in Bathurst Street, before going home on a Wednesday evening I would attend the weekly healing service at St. Andrew's Cathedral, just across the road. On one of these occasions a lady sitting in front of me turned around, complimented me on my voice and asked whether I would be interested in auditioning for The Cathedral Singers. The lady was Margaret Haage and it wasn't long before my TCS journey began under the directorship of Eric Peterson. The member who joined just before me was Kent Bowyer and within a few weeks, Lynn Bock was also singing with us. The (almost legendary) Pauline Thomas seemed to manage every aspect of the choir's business at the time. In those days I would join the Sunday congregation at All Saints, Hunters Hill where the organist and choirmaster was a young and very talented man named Brett McKern.

Early in 2000, Pauline led us to join a mass choir in Sydney Opera House where we "performed" for a UK TV favourite, "Songs of Praise". Later in the year, Gunilla and I went to England for a family wedding; the Olympics were happening in Sydney at the time and we had the amusing experience of watching our Olympic edition of "Songs of Praise" whilst staying with my aunt in Bedford, thousands of miles away!

Another funny memory was in us responding to an invitation to sing on the soundtrack of "Happy Feet" along with many other choristers from around Sydney. Not many can say they have been in a movie with Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman!



(Above – probably our last picture with Eric Peterson, front left, at St James Church, Sydney. Margaret Haage is on the far right – she got me into this. Thanks, Margaret!)

Many readers will know the story of how "The Singers" moved away from the Cathedral, guided by Meg Shaw, Kent Bowyer and myself, becoming independent and "Incorporated" with the professional help of Don Mayes. The saddest side to this transition was that we lost our Director (Eric) whose patience and expertise with us was exemplary. At this point, I chaired our meetings, Meg was Secretary and we were very fortunate in recruiting Brett McKern as our new Director. Fortunately, an anonymous former choir member very generously financed his stipend for the first 18 months or so!

With the blessing of the new Dean, the choir was allowed to keep the name "The Cathedral Singers" and for a while, we continued to "fill in" at St. Andrews and rehearse in the Cathedral school. Our robes and music belonged to The Singers and the final break with the Cathedral came when their Musical Director and organist, Michael Deasey was ordained and moved on to Bathurst.

The Singers also moved on - lock, stock and barrel (as they say) to St. Paul's, Burwood. Pauline and I opened a new bank account and I became Treasurer. The ATO awarded us "deductible status" for donations as our new Director (Brett) was also a composer and this new music may still become a lucrative Australian export! I seem to recall that preserving heritage church music came into it somewhere.

Brett and the choir made some enjoyable CDs and, in 2008, came the wonderful opportunity for us to travel and sing in some of England's Cathedrals. I particularly enjoyed Westminster Abbey, Salisbury Cathedral, Bath Abbey and Wells Cathedral although there were several other memorable places where we led services in that year. Judy Russell and Brett put in a lot of work in organizing that tour.

Gunilla and I stayed-on in England when the choir came back to Sydney and I didn't rejoin The Singers until 2011 when we were again heading for England. This time, we added a few more iconic Cathedrals to our list, particularly enjoyable for me were York Minster, Southwark, Westminster and St. Paul's Cathedrals. Again, Judy put in a lot of the organising along with Madeleine Rowles and, of course, Brett. An evening with Lady Mary Archer and author husband Jeffrey in their London penthouse was just an amazing bonus diary date. A special memory of that tour is our visit to my home church, Bunyan Meeting in Bedford, where I was in the Scouts, the Choir, taught the Sunday School and was a Deacon for more years that I remember. We made a special coach trip to view the John Bunyan Museum and to sing for a full-house lunchtime concert, returning briskly to Ely Cathedral to sing Evensong. (pic below of the Cathedral Singers in Bunyan Meeting Bedford. August 2011)



There have been enormous gaps in my recollections here and only over the past year or two years have I been able to spend more time with this talented and irreverent bunch of musicians. To our current Director, Jim Abraham, Secretary Jan Kneeshaw, Treasurer Janet Long, Librarian Lynn Bock, fellow UK travelers David Lewis, Bob Watson and all ...thanks a lot for some amusing memories and for allowing me to share 20 years of my life with you all. God bless The Cathedral Singers and your Ministry of sharing God's love through music.

Michael Austin

We are really going to miss Michael and wish him and Gunilla God's blessing in their future endeavours. We hope he will come back to visit us as often as possible! Ed.

Vigil Mass at St Mary's Cathedral



The participation of The Cathedral Singers in the Saturday Vespers and Vigil Mass at the St Mary's Cathedral on 6 October added to the traditional ambiance of a spring afternoon in Sydney: several brides lined up for photographs on the steps, windy weather, tourists milling around and people gathering for worship.

As the last bridal party departed, the beautiful singing of the TCS-supplied cantor introduced Vespers for a small group of dedicated worshippers. Many more worshippers attended the Vigil Mass which was enriched by the rendering of Mozart, Palestrina and Stanford by The Cathedral Singers, conducted by the Director, Jim Abraham and ably supported by organist and St Mary's Assistant Director of Music Simon Niemenski.



TCS at St Mary's Cathedral on 6 October

Maureen Hovy
Groupie

Evensong at Holy Trinity Terrigal



Bob, Madeleine, Margretta, Lynn & Angela

As a resident of Terrigal nowadays, I was fortunate enough to attend this delightful service in the beautiful modern Holy Trinity Anglican Church, with a sizeable congregation in attendance. The Cathedral Singers, approximately 14 in number on this occasion, sang beautifully and the organ accompaniments by their director Jim Abraham on the wonderful new digital pipe organ were always just perfect. We were also privileged to hear the trumpeter Ian Cox playing along in some of the items in his usual brilliant style.

The setting of the Magnificat was from Charles Villiers Stanford's beautiful Evening Service in B Flat, as was the Nunc Dimittis, most of which was sung by the males only and very well indeed. An inspiring sermon about saints in the church was presented by the Rector, Father Mark Watson, who also sang all the introductory lines very professionally. He is indeed a professionally trained bass who often sings solos in the local area, especially with the Central Coast Chorale

The anthem was one I know very well – Batten's 'O Sing Joyfully' and the choir really did it justice, as was the case with all their singing. The postlude, performed by Ian Cox and Jim Abraham, was the stunning "Trumpet Voluntary in D Major" by John Stanley.

It is wonderful that The Cathedral Singers are able to travel to so many different venues to present this wonderful spiritual music and they are helping to keep the tradition of Evensong alive. Long may they continue.



Elizabeth and John enjoy afternoon tea.

Margretta Haage

TCS Decani Alto 1990 – 2010

Ed: TCS also appreciates the support and encouragement of the resident organist, Chris Sillence who was known to some in his earlier Sydney days.



TCS at Holy Trinity Terrigal

WE VISIT HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC CHURCH, NORTH RYDE.

On Saturday 10 November 2018, a beautiful Spring evening, we ventured forth to sing Mass and perform a little concert at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, North Ryde, this being the home church of our own Madeleine Rowles.



I had not been in this “new” church before and found the atmosphere reverent, calming and holy, in a very large semi-circle formation. The altar was draped with a beautifully coloured quilt depicting Biblical scenes and from the ceiling hung huge red flames, shimmering and circling free in space – a tangible reminder of the Holy Spirit. Actually (I hate to admit it!) Phillip and I did spend quite a few entertaining evenings at HSCC many years ago playing housie in the old school hall. Our excuse was we *had* to take a visiting relative somewhere to play housie as he was an avid fan, and HSCC was the closest venue. We didn’t win anything but had great fun playing and the justification for gambling (for me anyway) was that it was all for the good of the Church!

The Priest welcomed us warmly as we began to rehearse for the Mass and soon after the congregation, which amounted to quite a large group, began to filter in.

Our repertoire for the Mass was: Mass of St. Francis (Taylor), offertory Lead Me Lord (S.S. Wesley) and the motet Ave Verum (Elgar). Jim accompanied us on the organ. The sopranos had the unenviable position of being in front of the organ with Jim behind us, so we sang with a lot of concentration and thought transference! It seemed to work OK. We were thanked by the Priest for visiting again and he looked forward to our next visit on Christmas Eve.

For the mini concert we performed: Christ Has No Body Now But Yours (Ogden), excerpts from Faure Requiem, excerpts from Missa Brevis (Mozart), Who Would True Valour See (Archer), This is the Record of John (Gibbons) and Dear Lord and Father of Mankind (Parry). A few “music buffs” stayed for the concert and were very enthusiastic in their applause and appreciation of our selection. Jim introduced each item with some interesting facts and battled with a less-than-co-operative microphone! But all was good and we felt satisfied that we had contributed to the worship at HSCC in a meaningful way. We even sold a few CDs!



Madeleine made arrangements for us to have dinner together in the Parish hall which was a lovely way to round off the evening. It was a BYO affair with some nice wine and lots of chit-chat. Thanks Madeleine for organising another TCS visit to HSCC.

Belinda Bongers
TCS Soprano

Morning Worship at Scots Kirk, Mosman



The annual visit of the Cathedral Singers in September has now become quite an institution at Scots Kirk, and is particularly appreciated by our our own choir, who get to sit in the congregation for a change! I think it is the only Presbyterian church that TCS visits.

Our minister Brett Graham has had a wonderful ministry with us for approximately 5 years, and we are fortunate that he is supportive of a wide

variety of music in worship.

Presbyterian services don't often contain a setting of the Kyrie Eleison, but the divine music of Haydn is surely uplifting in any context.

I managed to persuade Jim Abraham that we would also love an Anglican chant, and the choir gave us a setting of Psalm 42, "Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks", in a setting by Wesley.

This turned out to be particularly apt, as some of us from Scots were involved in the annual Walk to Water appeal that day, raising money for persecuted Christian communities in the Middle East who have been denied access to a supply of fresh water.

Later in the service we enjoyed Walford Davies' "God be in my head". By way of contrast, this was followed by John Gardiner's buoyant and somewhat jazzy setting setting of "Fight the good fight". The organist had to count rather carefully in this one, and do some quick page-turns! Anyhow we ran the straight race' with energy to spare.

Normally we have 4 hymns in our service, but with the extra choir items we opted for three firm favourites, "Christ is made the sure foundation", "Come down O Love divine" and "And Can it be". The music of John Rutter is always well received by our congregation, and they were given a sensitive rendition of his beautiful "Clare Benediction" to conclude the service.

In keeping with the 'water' theme, my organ prelude was Bach's "By the waters of Babylon", with the Hornpipe from Handel's Water Music as a postlude.

We are most grateful to Jim and TCS for their special contribution to our worship, and we look forward to welcoming them once again next year!

Heather Moen-Boyd.

Director of Music and Organist - Scots Kirk Mosman.

“Two stained glass windows were given as a tribute of love by the Holland Family, wife and children in 1949 in memory of Major L. L. Holland A.A.M.C. The Australian Hospital Ship “Centaur” was lost at sea by enemy action on 14th May 1943.”

The interesting windows at Scots Kirk Mosman (built around 2011) are all explained in a beautiful book available at the church. As we sing in front of the organ, we face these two windows, and I have always thought how unusual and special they are. It is good to know their significance.

Jan Kneeshaw – Ed.



New Pipe Organ for TCS home base at St John's, Gordon



A visualisation of the new chancel organ case. It can be seen that it sits at first floor level, which means not only will choristers no longer get blasted in the stalls in such a direct way, but that there will be more space for choir stalls!
The new east case – the zimbelstern star can be seen at the top in the middle.

The contract for the first and largest of two stages for the new St John's Gordon organ has been signed and construction begun. It is being built by South Island Organ Company of Timaru, New Zealand and based on a 1930 Hill, Norman and Beard organ. While the time line is still developing, it should be playable in early 2020. Pipe organs are very complex mechanically and take a long time to hand build! One can compare them to the complexities of a motor car, but larger and with a mechanism required to obtain musical subtlety; and every one is different.

The instrument has been designed especially with choral and liturgical accompaniment in mind, but it will also be a worthy recital instrument. While not especially large at just over 30 ranks (sets) of pipes, it has been spread over four manuals (keyboards) to afford greater flexibility. For example, the fourth manual does not have any pipes of its own, but will play stops from other manuals. The Hill, Norman and Beard console (of blackwood) is being reconfigured to suit the St John's installation and will be on a movable plinth to allow it to be reoriented or placed centrally on the chancel dais for recitals, masterclasses, lessons or rehearsals. It will generally live in the place occupied by the current console. The organist will have a CCTV monitor to see the conductor and other parts of the building. Other playing aids include adjustable pistons (presets for stop combinations) with multiple memories to cater for a number of organists.

We won't see any action at St John's until about June 2019. The current Rendall organ will then be removed and sent to New Zealand. It will be restored and reduced to its original size as a gallery division (Stage 2 of the project, not yet finalised) to help combat the acoustical difficulties of the building. For the six months or so we will be without a main organ, we will be using the beautiful small 1882 Hill pipe organ in the chancel at St John's. While we'll have one Christmas without a main organ, we are hoping that period will not include a Lent/Easter or Stainer's *Crucifixion* performance!

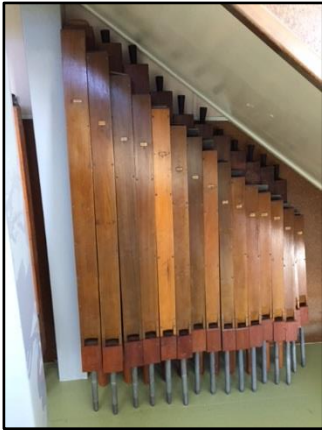
One of the features of the organ will be a zimbelstern (bell star) – small bells that 'tinkle', like the triangle in an orchestra. The star on the top of the new east division case is attached to the zimbelstern and spins when it is in use (see the visualisation below). It sounds fanciful, but pipe organs have commonly had zimbelsterns for centuries! Other features include sounds that haven't been heard at St John's in living memory (like an Oboe and Celeste stops), and other sounds that will never have been heard there before, but will greatly enhance the organ's use in liturgical accompaniment and repertoire (like a Clarinet stop).

Work is well and truly under way in NZ, as the photos show. Tax deductible donations to the St John's Music Association are still welcome to ensure the success of the project and will help ensure Stage 2 happens ASAP. Both stages happening simultaneously would save time and money and ensure the best musical outcome.

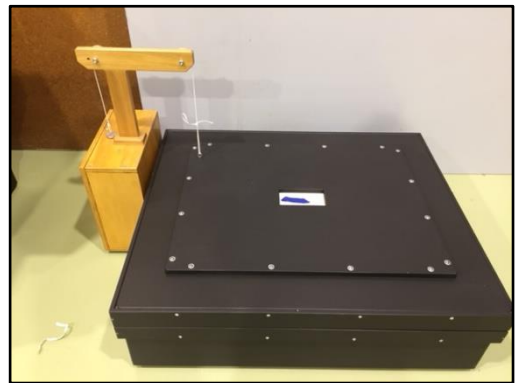
St John's greatly values TCS's ministry to us and the wider Church, and is excited about the new organ project, and that it will also benefit TCS.

by Dr Brett McKern,
Organist & Director of Music at St John's, and TCS supporter

Progress photos (from the factory in NZ):



Flute pipes of the Great manual division.



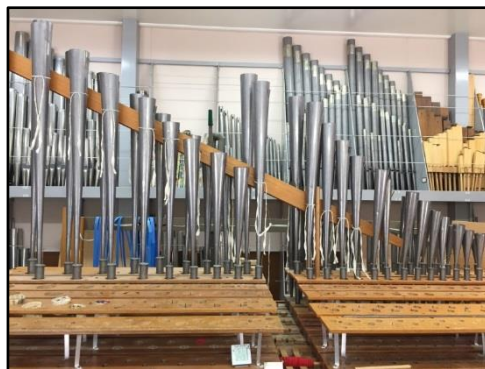
Brand new wind reservoir and control valve.



More flute pipes, on the voicing machine.



New Great division windchest under construction.



Reed pipes on the voicing machine.



The 'new' console takes shape – note the lovely 1930s detailing, contemporaneous to within a few years with the St John's church building.

CD Order/Donation Form



The Cathedral Singers



TCS Sings Evensong



Lo! The Star

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr/Other _____

Address: _____

Postcode _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

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

TCS CDs

- “The Cathedral Singers” – Hymns, Psalms, Canticles, Anthems, Mass Settings, Wedding Motets.
- “Lo, The Star!” – Seasonal Carols, old and new.
- “The Cathedral Singers sing Evensong” – Evening Canticles and Anthems.

A bargain at \$5 each! Postage and handling \$5 each (if required).

Any CDs - \$5 each _____ \$ _____

+ Postage and handling @ \$5 per CD _____ \$ _____

Donation for our ongoing ministry _____ - _____ \$ _____

Total: _____ \$ _____

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

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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: tics@cathedralsingers.org.au

or ring Jan Kneeshaw on 9144 4915 or 0411 785 117

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

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