



# Newsletter

December 2013

*Patron: Sir Trevor Garland*

*Past Patron: Dr I G Dicker*

## From The Director

It has been a very busy period for TCS as you can see from this newsletter. A weekend in Canberra and a recording session are some of the highlights but we must not forget our primary role as a liturgical choir singing in churches for services.

It is an unusual time of the year in some ways – the end of the calendar year and rehearsals but start of the liturgical year. The period of Advent is (or used to be), a time for reflection although this is difficult in our secular society and all the commercialism of Christmas. Society as a whole seems unable to cope with more sombre periods and is reluctant to be solemn – everyone has to be happy all the time!

Another problem with Christmas is that it starts in September/October in the shops. I can just remember a time when some churches' carol services were actually after Christmas – the argument being that it was like having an Easter service in Lent and that Christmas actually starts with Christmas Eve. However, I am not sure if this happens anywhere now. Whilst different countries have different traditions, the world-wide commercialism has made most Christmas festivities happen before Christmas itself. Some countries make the main celebration on Christmas Eve whilst for others Christmas Day is the principal day.

TCS is, as usual, busy at this season with several carol services and concerts, many at our regular places but a new venture was for the Ku-ring-gai Council at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden at St Ives. We hope that the New Year will bring some new tenors and basses as we have had to rely on deputies quite a lot recently. Our thanks go to them and indeed all deputies who have helped this year.



I hope that our supporters will be able to see/hear us at some point over the festive period.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

**Jim Abraham**  
**DIRECTOR**

# From the Chair



Greetings, everyone!

As we come to the end of another year, we can thank God for the way He has looked over us and guided us in 2013. We are grateful for the new choristers who have found us over the last year. Two of them, Nicola and Emma, have contributed very interesting articles to this Newsletter. Young Fiona (see Canberra tour article) was great fun in Canberra but had unfortunately found the time commitment too much to continue singing with us



Nicola, Emma & Jim at the Ku-ring-gai function

Our program is now almost complete for 2014 and the new committee are now starting to plan for next year and beyond. We are keen to find more men, especially tenors, as it is difficult to plan good music without enough regular members across a full range of voices. You will read how we travelled to Canberra in October for a successful weekend of singing and fellowship. Next year we will be going to Bathurst.

I continue to be amazed as events unfold and new and exciting invitations arrive. One example of this is singing carols at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Gardens for the Ku-ring-gai Council this week. We were privileged to receive a grant from them recently as was highlighted in the last Newsletter, and will be holding more vocal workshops soon.

Recently we recorded two carols and a hymn at Foxtel Studios for the Wesley Mission, with the help of several deputies. It was fun and will be telecast to all major Australian cities at 6 am on Christmas Day. We will now be singing carols until Christmas as is listed further in.

With every good wish for the Christmas season and for 2014.

God Bless,

**Jan Kneeshaw – Editor/Chair**

Check out our website and then tell your friends!

**[www.cathedralsingers.org.au](http://www.cathedralsingers.org.au)**

*See details of the choir, news, coming events, music listings, contacts for bookings weddings and other events, information for interested choristers wanting to audition.*

**TCS welcomes new singers, especially tenors and basses.  
Check out the new website for details of what we do.**



## Christmas with TCS Come and join us!

|  |                               |                            |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Sunday 8th December<br/>6.00pm</b>        | Service of Lessons and Carols | <b>St John's Balmain</b>   |
| <b>Friday 20th December<br/>7.30pm</b>       | Service of Lessons and Carols | <b>St Peter's Cremorne</b> |
| <b>Sunday 22nd December<br/>7.30pm</b>       | Service of Lessons and Carols | <b>St John's Gordon</b>    |
| <b>24<sup>th</sup> December<br/>11.00pm.</b> | Midnight Eucharist            | <b>St John's Gordon</b>    |

For further details contact Jan Kneeshaw on 9144 4915 or [tcs@cathedralsingers.org.au](mailto:tcs@cathedralsingers.org.au)  
Further information about TCS is on our website: [www.cathedralsingers.org.au](http://www.cathedralsingers.org.au)

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## Thank-you to Volunteers Evening – Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden



As reported previously, we have been awarded a grant by the Ku-ring-gai Council recently, and were invited to provide carols for their annual Thank-you to Volunteers Evening. A real privilege.

What a wonderful place to be asked to sing carols!  
As we warmed up in the car park, the cicadas started up in competition.



We were then welcomed by Mayor Jennifer Anderson, who expressed her interest in TCS and had personally suggested that we be invited to provide the entertainment for the evening.

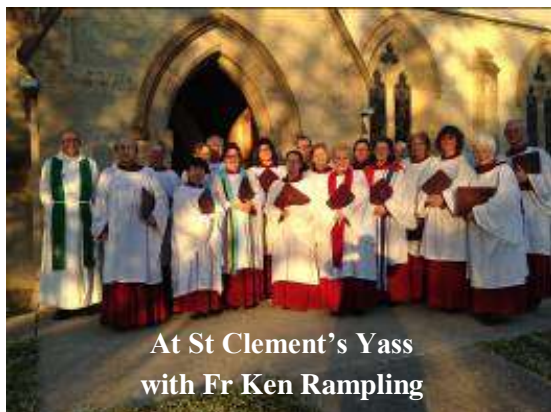
Many thanks to Mayor Anderson and the Council for their hospitality.

**Ed.**



## Yass & Canberra Tour 2013

'How to keep women quiet in a bus'. That is what the women of The Cathedral Singers assumed Director Jim Abraham had Googled prior to driving TCS to Yass. The answer – turn the air con on so that they have to conserve energy and warmth by not speaking! It certainly worked, and it certainly allowed us to sing with enthusiasm and vigour that night at St Clement's Yass.



When we arrived at Yass we tumbled out of the bus, yawning and stretching but excited to explore Yass before the evensong and concert that night. We had a group lunch at The Roses Café, allowing us to catch up with those who did not catch the bus. Then we split up, several of us going to 'Tara-jay Country' and others going to exploring the little town by foot. In the rehearsal prior, we were lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the wedding taking place in St Clement's prior to our evensong and concert. You know you're in Australia when everyone arrives to a wedding in a Holden and whilst waiting for the bride, the men take photos of the cars!

That night we headed back to our 'home' for the next 2 nights – Manuka Park Apartments. We organised our music for the next day and headed to Coles to buy dinner. At 10 pm. As a new member to TCS, I learnt one very important thing. Jan can really drink. Also that Emma and I, as the youngest members got stuck in the junk food aisle whilst Madeleine, Jan and Angela were busy finding real food for dinner. Kids these days!



*\*knock knock\**

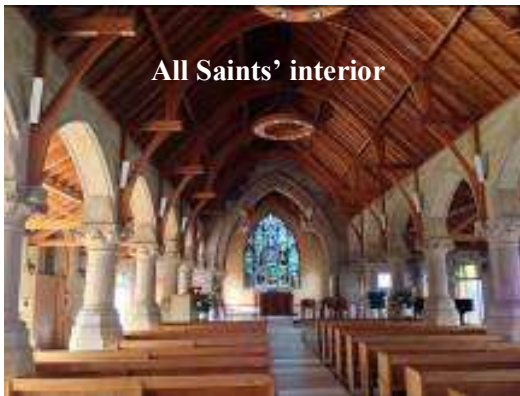
*'Oh, that'll be Jan making sure we're up!'*

Jan, the mother-hen of TCS, making sure we are all presentable and ready – that includes making sure we are awake at an early hour to be ready. Funny! - that wasn't Jan making sure they were awake at that time, it was Madeleine knocking to ask the question.



Very early in the day, we headed to St Paul's, Manuka – a short walk from where we were staying. We admired the organ and the beautiful cathedral-like building as we sang and filled the space with music.

That afternoon, with a few hours free time, we all explored Canberra and the various attractions it offers. We were also lucky enough to see some of a performance by a family of singers in the Public Hall of the High Court of Australia! (*It was the renowned singer Tobias Cole and his family! What an experience – Ed*)



All Saints' interior

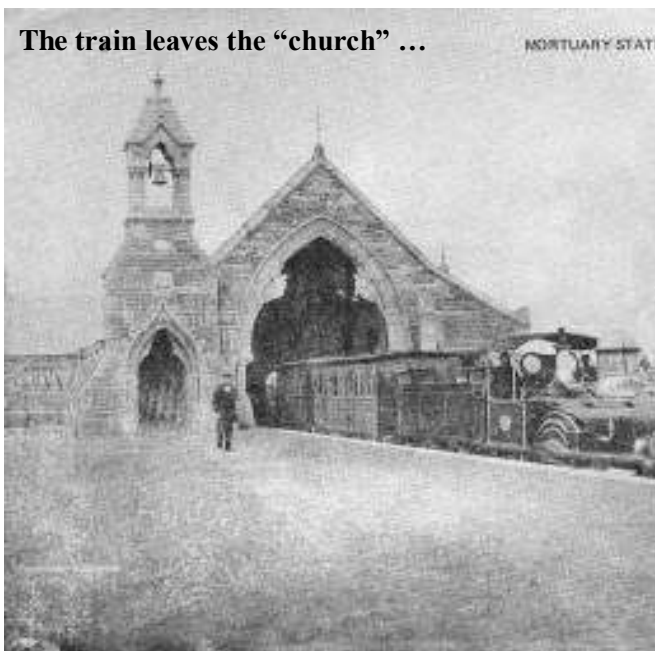
Then we headed to All Saints' Anglican Church, Ainslie to be greeted with a Latin sign in the bell tower – in translation: *'Sleep through this, heathens!'*

This building was originally Cemetery Station No.1 on the Rookwood Cemetery railway line. It is interesting to note that this building was dismantled and moved in Canberra in 1958.



The bell tower sign!

The building is really from all over, as one of the stain-glass windows was part of a church in Gloucestershire, England which was bombed in World War 2. The bell was originally on a shay locomotive owned by the Commonwealth Oil Corporation. It was dismantled in 1925 and presented to the church by the Australian Railway Historical Society in 1958. On June 1 1958, a stone was set on the church by the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Lord Carrington to mark the blessing of the church.



The train leaves the "church" ...

MORTUARY STATION



TCS congregates at the "station" ...

TCS was blessed to sing an evensong in such an historically interesting church!

Sunday 6 October, NRL Grand Final between Sydney Souths and Manly Sea-Eagles. In the meantime, TCS were enjoying a lovely dinner at Saffron Restaurant. A big thank you to Pauline who found this lovely restaurant for us! I think that night really defined TCS!



One of our two tables at Saffron



After a few drinks, half the table had burst into ‘Teddy Bear’s Picnic’, somewhat embarrassing the rest of the group and shocking the restaurant. Embarrassing only because not everyone could remember the words.

I think this was one of the most memorable moments of this tour – realising that you are a singer wherever you are and if you are in a group of singers, you will sing wherever you are!



The bus group at APH

Speaking of singing wherever you are, our last morning in Canberra lead us to Parliament House. We surprised tourists with our half-hour performance in the Great Hall.

**Fiona Sin** – TCS Probationer/Deputy



Our tour guide explains the Lower House



Getting ready to sing in the Great Hall



The Great Hall performance



A certificate commemorating the performance is presented to Jim



Fiona (right) & recent recruit Angel Ngu atop APH

*Fiona joined us as a probationer in September and was a real asset to the 2nd Soprano line. Her sight reading was impressive!! Unfortunately she got a promotion at work and the pressure of that with her university studies meant that TCS were the losers. We really enjoyed having her with us and hope she is able to return sometime. She writes a good article too and was fun to have around!!! Ed.*

## Our personal bus and driver

How many choirs can boast of having their own driver who arrives “with Bus” to provide our transport? Our grateful thanks to our multi-talented Director, whose energy is limitless and skills unending. Thanks, Jim! Thanks too, to Pittwater House School, who were willing to provide the bus for us – at a very good price!



## Our Deputies



Padraig  
& Don

We really appreciate our deputies who help us out from time to time – Don, Darrall, Phil, Rajah, Peter Hughes and Padraig. What would we do without you guys!

Don and Darrall came with us to Canberra and most of the photos in this edition were taken by Darrall and Cheryl. Thank you!

We have been very pleased to welcome Tom Edwards, who is the new Director of Music at St John’s Dee Why. He had not been in that position long when we discovered he was a tenor! Welcome, Tom and thanks for singing with us at the Wesley recording. We look forward to working with you while you are in Australia.

Finally, those who know Padraig and Hilary – their family is growing very fast – and they still find time to join us!! They even came to Canberra with us.

Ed.



**DO YOU LIKE SINGING IN  
CHOIRS?**



**Do you like Cathedral Style Music?**

Would you like to join or do you know anyone who would be interested in joining TCS?

**For further details contact Jan Kneeshaw on  
9144 4915 Mobile 0411 785 117**

**Membership Secretary Mary Carter  
on 0408 424 319**

**Or the Director, Mr Jim Abraham on  
0405 817 276**

***The Cathedral Singers***

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[www.cathedralsingers.org.au](http://www.cathedralsingers.org.au)



# Music Therapy



Thanks to the website (the old one), I found TCS. An instinct sent me back to singing and thankfully I listened and acted on it.

I have experienced moments of pure joy while singing and a general feeling of well-being afterwards. I go home and am wide awake some hours after practice with no hint of tiredness. I wondered what was behind it and being research-minded started to look for evidence and information to support the results I was seeing. By the way this is not the way to conduct research – the generally accepted methodology is that you commence with a hypothesis and then proceed to disprove (or prove) the hypothesis.

This is a small section of what I discovered: Little has been done recently on the science side of ‘music as therapy’. It appears it was a prevalent theory around 10 years ago and then fell into oblivion due to lack of compelling evidence. It has recently experienced a resurgence of interest and I managed to find one randomised, controlled, clinical trial that demonstrates a positive effect on people of working age, diagnosed with clinical depression (under International Classification of Disease criteria - ICD10). The trial compared standard of care therapy (psychotherapy, antidepressants in conjunction with psychiatric counselling and support) with standard of care plus music therapy and found that music therapy was a valuable addition to standard of care, although due to the small numbers involved in the trial (n=79) the effects did not reach statistical clinical significance. (*British Journal of Psychiatry* 2011, 199:132-139)

Several studies reported at the annual conference of the American Society for Neuroscience in 2013 confirm the beneficial effects of music and identify these benefits as anything from improving the ability of the nervous system to integrate input from all senses to generating new processes in the brain affecting cognition, creativity and learning (Megan Brooks, *www.medscape.com* November 18<sup>th</sup> 2013).

Most of these studies focus on playing an instrument ie a non-verbal process and also only look at small numbers. As we know, what appears to be an effect in small populations needs to be tested and validated in larger populations, so there is still much work to be done to clearly demonstrate that the effects in small populations can be reproduced in large populations.

Until then, I know my sense of well-being is increased through belonging to The Cathedral Singers and integrating my voice with others as a group performance. Thank you, TCS.

(By the way – if anyone is interested in exploring further I found the following website packed with useful articles: <<http://daniellevitin.com/publicpage/articles/for-researchers/>> Daniel Levitin is a neuroscientist, musician, author and comic – a testament to expanding the neuronal processes and possibilities with music, perhaps?)

**Nicola Leaney**

*(Nicola has been persuaded to write an article in the next edition to continue this very relevant subject. Ed.)*



## Television stars for Wesley Impact

The mood was palpably excited in the early morning of Saturday 23rd December, as the majority of the TCS choristers filed through the security gates at Foxtel studios. Our cheerful escorts led us into the green room, where we were welcomed by the smells of toast and coffee, and encouraged to help ourselves, while our venerated leader had his visage perfected in the make up room, alongside his better half.



Some were sleepy, others jittery. The hottest topic in the lead up to the recording was not phrasing, or wrinkles in surplices, but in fact whether or not the more tardy and disorganised among us would be able to make use of an autocue, knowing that we were singing without music. From the tone of the discussion overheard by this humble author I believe we are safe in concluding that a fair number waited in hope that the words would be available. Not ranking among them however was our long suffering director, who had been commenting since Wednesday's rehearsal that the proper place for a TCS chorister's attention is surely his own person, and certainly upon reflection of that fact we would all have to agree. Certainly in this instance, when his person had been so expertly beautified it seemed a shame for us to be casting our attentions elsewhere.

Before long it was time to robe up in some of the most luxurious robing areas our fine choir is likely to see. What a nice change, not to be worried about knocking over vases and candlesticks as we donned our cassocks. A quick run through of 'Abide with Me', followed by some pleased murmurs from the Foxtel staff, and we were ready to stand by outside the studio itself, before being waved in by our commanding but encouraging floor manager.



Being properly inside the studio generated some goofy smiles and childlike nervousness among us, which was a fitting mood for our first number, *Away in a Manger*. This we sang a capella, easily completing a dry run and a couple of takes. The spirit of Christmas began to descend upon the studio as our beautiful sopranos sang the last verse with restraint and dignity. Well done, ladies!

Mention must be made of the morning's back row, the ranks of which were swelled by some very fine reinforcements. The lads outdid themselves and with no music, had nowhere to look but at the autocue. As luck would have it, standing directly in front was none other than our esteemed leader. We all were a part of the cosmic event occurring, as the director and the basses remained in constant and unhampered communication. Lightning may well have been forking above the building as the fabric of the universe was re-woven, at this time. We would not have known, though, as the studio maintains an impressive standard of sound and light proofing.

Onto 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing' we went, at which point the sublime sounds of Melissa Abraham's trumpet joined the fray, accompanied by the reassuring and exuberant playing of our keyboardist for the day, busting his chops on what we were told was an extremely high tech keyboard.



Melissa with the studio music director

Christmas had well and truly arrived early but it was time for a more serious number, as we began work on Abide with Me. In a true show business moment, a cry of “Lose the tree!” rang out across the studio. It was duly rolled away behind a curtain, while our charming keyboardist posed and played for a band break. After the adjustments to the set, the choir resumed its place. Easily replacing the splendor of the tree was our radiant trumpeter Melissa, playing beautifully but with some magnitude into the bulletproof ear of first soprano Lynn Bock. Well done Lynn for going where no first soprano has gone before and holding your own line against another that is equally loud. Your alto sisters only a row back, were looking on with pride. ‘Abide with Me’ took a few takes but by the end we had come down from the joy of Christmas to a more fitting contemplative mood, and this meant we ended our recording session sounding very fine indeed.



This completed our work for the morning, and totally elated by these events we trod gingerly on sore feet back to the green room, where a home made morning tea was waiting for us, and of course, more coffee. Here we hobnobbed and soaked up the atmosphere of show business over some miniature boiled fruit cakes and hand made biscuits. Each of us was given a bon bon filled with chocolates by the Wesley Mission, surely too much on top of the opportunity to sing together at the studio. We left feeling very much like stars as we sauntered casually

out to the car park as if it was something we did every day. I think it was a truly exceptional experience for each one of us. It is always a great thing to be a TCS chorister, but for one morning in November this year, it was also, briefly, a very glamorous thing!

**Emma Ericson**  
TCS Alto



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**Details of the Television Presentation.**

*Press release from Wesley Impact.*

Wesley Mission has been spreading the Good News of the gospel on Australian Commercial Television for more than 35 years. Join us for our Christmas celebration on Wesley Impact across Australia on Christmas Day at 6.00 AM on Channel Nine. (Capital cities only)

The program highlights an interview with the new Anglican Archbishop of Sydney Glenn Davies as he shares the real message of Christmas. The show also features a performance from The Cathedral Singers and a Christmas message from Wesley Mission’s CEO, Rev. Dr Keith Garner.

**Join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on Channel 9 on Christmas Day at 6.00 AM.**



# 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)

- CD 3 “Lo! The Star” @ \$20 each \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- CD 2 “The Cathedral Singers” @ \$20 each \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- CD 4 “The Cathedral Singers Sing Evensong” @ 20each \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- CD 2 + CD 4 @ \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- CD 2 + CD 4 + CD3 @ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- + Postage and handling @ \$5 per CD \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Donation for our ongoing ministry \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Total: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***Cheques should be made payable to “The Cathedral Singers Inc”***

***Banking details for direct transfers:***

**Bank account details: BSB 814 282 A/c 1074 8975**

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

Please email us for further details: [tcs@cathedralsingers.org.au](mailto:tcs@cathedralsingers.org.au)

or ring Jan Kneeshaw on 9144 4915 or 0411 785 117

More details on our website: [www.cathedralsingers.org.au](http://www.cathedralsingers.org.au)

**All donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible**