



Newsletter

Patron: Sir Trevor Garland

November 2023

From the Director

The TCS Christmas newsletter is usually written in November. A month or so later, when closer to Christmas, I usually read a really good article. Last year was no exception. I noted it down but unfortunately did not record where I came across it so apologies to the author. It was concerning the “contemporary view” of taking religion out of Christmas and the trend in some shopping centres to remove the crib scenes and replace it with Santa etc. The writer of the article was unconvinced ...



“As always with stories of this kind, however, I can’t help wondering who it is that the busybodies are so desperate not to upset. Presumably they imagine that “Christian-centric language” is somehow offensive to members of other religions. But this is absurd. In fact, the very idea that it’s offensive to members of other religions is itself offensive to members of other religions. After all, it patronisingly implies that they’re so ludicrously thin-skinned that the mere word “Christmas” upsets them. This is both unfounded and insulting. On top of that, it stokes division, because Christians may be offended by the suggestion that non-Christians may be offended, and resent them for it. By attempting to avoid causing offence, therefore, such advice may actually cause more of it!”

Whilst I think we have to acknowledge that Christmas in today’s society is not just the Nativity scene and also has roots in pagan festivals in Europe during winter, to remove it in case it offends is, in my opinion, ridiculous. I am writing this on the festival of Diwali from the Hindu faith. I have seen articles and photographs in papers and it is interesting to see what other cultures and faiths celebrate. I am not at all offended and I think we should respect other faiths even if we do not necessarily agree with their beliefs – there would have been far less wars throughout history with a bit more respect for other opinions...

We have a busy programme at TCS and I hope you will be able to join us at one or more services.

Jim Abraham – Director



From the Editor

This is a short Newsletter to update you all on the plans we have for this coming Christmas season. Advent is next week! How the year has flown!

We have had a couple of interesting events in the last 2 months – a trip to Terrigal and a weekend at Mudgee. This proved very successful as a time for the choir to travel together and to sing again at two churches there. We appreciated the welcome we received and hope they found our contribution helpful to their worship. At the Catholic church, we were joined by some of their own choir – a lovely thing to do. Belinda is going to write more about that below.

In September we sang in a service of Vigil Mass at Holy Spirit North Ryde. This was well received as was our Evensong at Holy Spirit Terrigal.

At Terrigal it was lovely to catch up with Margretta Haage, who was a TCS alto for many years. She is still singing in choirs up the Central Coast. Thanks to Rev Mark Watson, Chris Sillence, and to the congregation for their hospitality. They serve a good afternoon tea!



It is rewarding to see how church music can be used to God's glory, as on such occasions. This was obvious at St John's Gordon last week too, when we sang Evensong for Remembrance Day.

We are now preparing carols for the many events we have been invited to in the next month. It will be busy! Details are on the next page. We hope we may be able to meet some of you in the next few weeks. Next week is Advent!

Although I have not got used to saying it yet, on behalf of Jim and the choir, may I wish you a very happy and blessed Christmas season and thank you for your support throughout the year.

God bless

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

Mudgee Weekend Away



On the weekend of 21/22 October the Choir travelled to Mudgee to sing at two churches. Apparently TCS last visited Mudgee ten years ago. Most of us met on Saturday afternoon after a 3 plus hour trip from Sydney. Some stopped at Leura, Katoomba or Lithgow for a lunch break and then proceeded to the Soldiers Motel for a quick freshen up before assembling at St Mary of the Presentation Catholic

church for rehearsal for the 5pm Mass. Phillip and I travelled up on the Friday and thus were able to spend Saturday exploring Mudgee before singing at Mass. Mudgee is a picturesque place, with lots of historic architecture and wide tree-lined streets. We enjoyed our visit to the Mudgee Honey Haven where we, of course, purchased honey and sampled wines (not too many!).



A visit to the Colonial Inn Museum is a must – a very historic building which began life as a pub in 1856 and has seen many reincarnations before being purchased by the historical society. It has a huge collection of over 8,000 items of memorabilia through the ages, making use of every room in the two-storey house, a huge barn, covered sheds and garden to display items from the smallest thimble to coaches and cars: two hours well spent for us.



Our repertoire for Mass at the Catholic Church included Mass of St Francis, Celtic Alleluia, Ave Verum (Guilmant) and O Lord Increase Our Faith (Loosemore). We were very pleased to have members of their church choir sing with us for the hymns and congregational parts of the Mass, while TCS sang the introit and anthem. After the service we performed a short concert for the congregation which included Cantate Dominum (Pitoni), Kyrie and Agnus Dei from Missa Brevis KV140 (Mozart), Teach me O Lord (Attwood), Magnificat (Walmisley), God So Loved the World (Stainer), Turn Back O Man (Holst), Psalm 23 (Goodall) and God Be in My Head (Tipping). Director Jim gave an interesting introduction to each piece. Our performance met with very enthusiastic applause and appreciation. It was a successful evening of worship together with the choir and congregation and they were very grateful

for our visit.

We all then retired to “Club Mudgee” for a well-earned drink and meal and thence retired for a sound sleep before our early start on Sunday morning.

St John the Baptist Anglican Church was our venue for a 9 a.m. service the next day. This is another beautiful historic church with a lovely pipe organ in the gallery where we sang from. It was a feat worthy of a mountain goat climbing up the very ancient wooden flight of stairs to reach our lofty singing perch. We sang the Dudman Eucharist setting and reprised the Loosemore, Guilmant and Tipping



pieces from Saturday’s Mass.





STOP PRESS

I was at the stage of finalising this Newsletter when a parishioner from St John's Gordon sent me a piece that she thought I might enjoy.

It was a scan of a piece that was written in "Yarra Yarns – Dec 05 -Jan 06". The editor called it "Just for Fun".

*It is hilarious so this Editor quickly decided we had to give it a new audience!
Enjoy!! -Ed.*

"The Messiah" by Handel

A performance of this great Oratorio was being given in the Cleckheaton Town Hall many years ago and old Cuthbert Briggs from Liversidge thought he might like to go. He tried to persuade his wife to go with him, but she wasn't too keen. *Nah, Cuthbert lad - you know it's not my line. Give me a bit of comedy or a singsong on the end of Blackpool Pier ... no, you go and tell me about it when you come home." So Cuthbert went on his own. He had no idea what to expect. In fact he had never heard of "The Messiah". It was just that he fancied doing something a bit different from his usual Saturday night visit to the Sun Inn.

When he got back home, Cuthbert's wife was all ears. "Come on then, tell me all about it." "Oh well ..." began Cuthbert, "it were all right but not quite what I expected. There weren't a lot of movement on the stage. In fact there weren't a lot of room on the stage - It were full of singers. I'd been sitting there for a bit when in comes a load of fellas carrying fiddles. They brought in the biggest fiddle I'd ever seen. It were that big they had to wheel it in on castors and a little chap rubbed its belly with a stick and you should have heard it groan. It sounded like a cow with croup. Well, the fiddles joined in and made such a racket.

"Then they settled down and it all went quiet. After about a minute in come the Messiah - well I think it were him because everyone clapped and all the fiddlers stood up to welcome him. He were a dapper of a bloke all dolled up in a white waistcoat with a red carnation in its buttonhole. I'm sure it must have been the Messiah. Then he picked up a little stick and started waving it at everyone on the stage. They were all staring at him wondering what were up. Then they started to sing.

'They'd not been going long before they were arguing. They all wanted to know who were the

King of Glory. First one side said HE is the King of Glory and then the other side said HE is the king of Glory and then they went at it hammer and tongs but it fizzled out in the end. Then there were a right to-do about some sheep that had gone astray. Some of the singers must be a bit partial to a bit of mutton because they kept singing 'O we like sheep'. Personally I like a bit of well-done steak, but never mind. Well, I think that them lost sheep must have belonged to one of the singers because he stood up and said that every mountain and hill should be laid low. I thought 'Good - if they flatten all the mountains they'll be sure to find the sheep that were gone astray.'

"Then the organist started up and the band joined in and by gum, they seemed to be getting mad over something. The way they were sawing at them fiddles I was expecting them to fall apart. Then after that all the women stood up to sing. Believe me some of them were a bit past it, by looking at them they must have been 70 if they were a day and they sang 'Unto us a child is born' and all the fellas shouted 'Wonderful!' I thought 'It's a blooming miracle.'

'Then they all composed themselves a bit and sang about a woman called Joyce Greatly. I'd never heard of her but apparently she's a daughter of Zion, whoever he is. Oh well, I were getting a bit fed up by now 'cause I'd been sitting there for nearly 2 hours when all of a sudden I got cramp in my leg. I jumped up out of my seat and what do you know? Everybody else jumped up at the same time. They must had all had cramp same as me. Then the choir shouted 'Hallelujah it's going to rain for ever and ever.' Well I never thought to bring my brolly so I thought I'd better get off home before it started. So seeing as how I were on my feet I reckoned I'd had my money's worth. It was different but I do hope they find them lost sheep.'

(Just for fun - The Editor!)



Christmas Concert



Featuring :

1. The Absolute Banger
2. The Traditional Obligation
3. This is Modern and Everyone Will Hate it
4. Oh God, Not This One Again
5. A Half-Decent New Piece Composed by Someone Who Knows the Choir
6. Please Kill Me Now So I Don't Have To Sing This
7. Something With Angels in the Title
8. One that Classic FM Featured This Year
9. John Rutter
10. A Willcocks Descant
11. Hark the Herald

Contributed by
a VERY cynical TCS Chorister.
I am sure we don't all think like that! (Excuse the formatting!)



Happy Christmas!!!

How to support TCS

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