



Sydney Male Choir

Newsletter December 2009



Editorial

This is the first of what we hope will be regular *Sydney Male Choir* Newsletters. As you will all know, Winston produced regular updates of activities and these were extremely informative and interesting. We hope that this Newsletter will be equally so and that we can expand the scope and coverage of topics covered. However, to do so we will be relying on contributions from as many people as possible. We will try to incorporate topics of interest to members of the choir, their families and Friends of the Choir and aim to produce a Newsletter about four times a year. Please let me know if there is any topic you would like included.

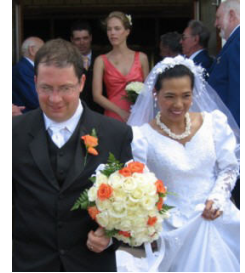
Peter Marshall, Editor

Review of 2009

We have performed at over 20 events this year, including 8 Regional Concerts and 13 Local Concerts. This is a huge contribution from everyone concerned and especially for those stalwarts of the choir without whom we could not function - Eleanor Gair and Alan Thrift. Our thanks to them for their excellent work this year, as every year!

January

Damien and Rita married in Sans Souci and the choir helped the lucky couple celebrate their happy day.



February

Rehearsals start again after the Christmas break. Now wives and partners have a welcome break on Tuesday evenings



March

We visit the Little Sisters of the Poor, Randwick instigated by compère Kevin Burg's mother and a week later helped raise much needed funds for the victims of the terrible bushfires in Victoria with a concert at St Augustine's College, Brookvale. Jim Gair was a prime mover in the worthwhile effort. Some of us were obviously hits with our female guest singers.

April

A busy month with concerts at St Paul's, Chatswood, Frank Vickery Village, Sylvania and, of course, the usual Anzac Day activities with our participation in the dawn service in Martin Place followed by morning service at John Angel's local church, St Catherine's, Gymea.

May

Hopetoun Village, Castle Hill was our first date this month singing to an appreciative audience from the retirement village. As you see the ladies obviously enjoyed it!



The choir then helped the Kogarah Marist Brothers to celebrate their centenary in the wonderful surroundings of St Mary's Cathedral Sydney with its amazing acoustic. Our Vice Patron Peter Kneeshaw was, as usual, the organist for the occasion.

A week later we travelled up the coast to Nelson Bay to appear at the Nelson Bay Diggers Club before a sellout audience who gave us an amazing reception. An excellent concert with a very appreciative audience and great acoustics.

June

This month was devoted to a mini tour during the Queen's Birthday weekend when we travelled to Bathurst to appear with that quality group,

the ladies of the Panorama Chorus in the Cathedral. Brian Watkins took the opportunity to try out the Bishop's chair!

Then on to Parkes where, as well as visiting the 'Dish' we sang with the Parkes Community Choir at the Leagues Club. Finally to Forbes Town Hall where we shared the stage with local Conservatorium students.



July

Only two concerts this month but quite a distance apart. The first with our friends the Wollongong Harmony Singers, this year at the newly refurbished Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre. The guys had great fun joining in with the ladies who put on a great show.



Two weeks later we were in Alan's stomping ground at Cooranbong where we had the thrilling experience of being on stage with the outstanding players of the National Australian Brass. It was quite something to be so close to those incredible musicians, especially those singers lucky enough to be right behind the huge gong! Did that make their ears ring?

August

Another club this month with the choir going to the west of the city to Lidcombe where we sang in Dooleys Catholic Club to raise funds for Auburn Cricket Club, arranged by top tenor Don Rose who is a member of the cricket club.

September

Another of our regular associations, this time with Coast Harmony Singers were the first two concerts this month where we appeared in matinee and evening performances at the Gosford Leagues Club. Although the audience for the first concert was good the evening attendance was disappointing.

Then the Big One, of course, with the Annual City of Sydney Concert, City Recital Hall, Angel Place, Sydney. Great efforts had been made by the Marketing Team, led by Brian Ellis and aided by many in the choir who sold lots of tickets to friends and family. These efforts were rewarded by a near capacity audience who were appreciative of the choir's performance. Lending variety to the concert was guest artist this year, Andy Firth, renowned jazz clarinettist.



October

We returned to the Little Sisters of the Poor in Randwick to help them celebrate the canonisation of Jeanne Jurgan, the founder of their movement. It is inspiring to see the way the Sisters deal with the people in their care. Even the torrential rain could not dampen their enthusiasm.

November

Continuing our efforts with clubs we visited Castle Hill RSL. We were joined by Keegan Joyce, of Oliver fame and a trio of effervescent ladies, The Mosmanettes. Another excellent concert before a select audience - small but beautifully formed!

A couple of days later we spent a rewarding, if tiring, evening in St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney on the hottest day of the year recording a cd of religious music.

Completing activities for November was the moving Remembrance Day service in St Martin Place, Sydney. This was Alan's 20th appearance at this service as Musical Director. His dedication was mentioned, twice, by the Master of Ceremonies, noting that it was also, sadly, Alan's last appearance.



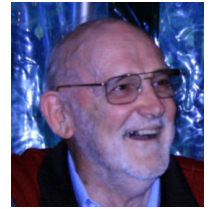
December

We all let our hair down at the annual Christmas Party at the Bowler's Club, Sydney and a great time was had by all. Badges were presented to long serving members. Finally at Harry Halliday's local church, Castle Hill SDA we enjoyed a Christmas service in relaxed and happy mood. The service included *The Shearer's Tale*, presented by Harry Horgan, complete with gifts for the very appreciative children. A fitting end to another excellent year.

President's Ponderings

Congratulations on our first On Line News Sheet!

And...thanks to Peter Marshall for making it possible...Peter has been the heart behind our web site & we thank him for his contributions.



This year, 2009, has been another great year...financially challenging, but a busy & satisfying year. We enjoyed a wide range of concerts & events...the highlights of the year must include our 'Big' concert at Angel Place...our biggest & best...& then there was the tour to Bathurst, Parkes with the culminating concert at Forbes...a wonderful country excursion.

Over the last 3 years we have been sponsoring young musicians in the Forbes District & it is particularly satisfying to see some of the results of this at concerts such as we enjoyed at Forbes.

Another highlight has been the making of the Choirs documentary...soon to be launched in December.

As we roll into 2010 we approach the sad & exciting event at our September Town Hall Concert which will be Alan Thrift's final concert as our Musical Director. We are keen to make this a memorable event as an expression of our gratitude for Alan's many magical contributions to our choir's development over the last 20 years...he leaves an enormous pair of shoes to fill for the new Musical Director.

The next few years are all the more exciting as we prepare for the Choir's centenary in 2013...there are some great ideas emerging which will make our celebrations worthy of the 100 years of musical endeavour that has brought us to what we currently enjoy.

So I want to express my thanks & our gratitude for the contributions made by so many to make this year such a success. Alan with Eleanor continue to be our inspiration as we continue to grow as one of Australia's pre-eminent choirs.

In conclusion....Denise & I wish the choir & supporters a joyous Christmas & a fulfilling & musical New Year

Jim Layton

Prospects for 2010

Concerts booked so far are -

Date	Venue	Time
March		
Sunday 7th	Challenge Foundation, Southern Highlands	2pm
Saturday 13th	Blue Mountains Concert, Blackheath	2pm
April		
Sunday 18th	Shoalhaven Music Club, Nowra	TBC
May		
Sunday 2nd	St Catherine's, Gymea	2pm
July		
24 or 25th	Brentwood Village, Kincumber	TBC
August		
Sunday 29th	Concert with Spirit of the Coast Harmony, Gosford Leagues Club	2pm
September		
Sunday 12th	11th Annual City of Sydney Concert, Sydney Town Hall	2pm
November		
Sunday 14th	Australian Male Choirs Association Combined Concert, Sydney Town Hall	TBC

Who's new in 2009



Pictured are from left to right -
Nico Jusuf - Second Tenor
Andres Perendi - Baritone
Geoff Bell - Bass.

In addition Julius Grant - Second Tenor
and Geoff Plumridge - Baritone joined in
2009

Please make these new members welcome. They are the future of the choir and we need more of them. Its good to see the they are helping to bring down the average age of the choir!

Survey Feedback

A total of 41 replies were received to the recent survey sent to all members. The main issues covered were concert numbers, locations, touring and uniform. A majority (68%) of the respondents were happy with the number of concerts per year with even more in favour of Sat/Sun concerts on a few weekends. While a sizeable majority(74%) wanted more metropolitan venues the choir was evenly split about more regional concerts, although there was a high incidence of 'maybes'. Three quarters of the members thought touring was an important part of the social aspects of the choir's activities and almost as many(65%) were in favour of a 7-10 day tour in 2010 but there was an even split over whether there should be an overseas tour in 2011, although again the 'maybes' number was high at 35%. Commitments outside the choir, work, family, distance of travel did not seem important issues limiting attendance of respondents to concerts. Just over half of the replies showed support of a change of uniform in second half of concerts, with 65% being prepared to pay for this change. The choir was lukewarm about extra social activities with 27% for and 33% against but most people (43%) said it depended on the event. The highest positive response was about recruiting younger members when 80% thought it is important.

Know your Committee



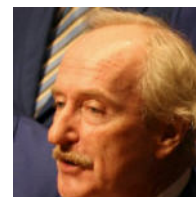
Jim Layton
President



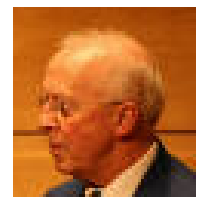
Ron Brown
Treasurer



Tom Coghlan
Secretary



Peter Gair
Vice President



Lloyd Watson
Librarian



Brian Lawler
Committee Member
Chair Members S/c



Brian Ellis
Committee Member
Chair Marketing S/c



Gary Withyman
Committee Member
Centenary S/c



Peter Marshall
Committee Member
Webmaster, Editor

Tailpiece

If you like what you see here, please let me know. If you don't like it, also let me know but more importantly let me know what needs to be changed to be better. Let me have any contributions as soon as you can.
Peter Marshall, Editor