

# Sing Joyfully

St Swithun's Choir e-newsletter



Vol. 5 No. 3

April 2017

## The program for April

The arrival of April signals the end of Eastern Summer Time. Normal dress for 10 am services on the first and third Sundays (and fifth Sundays in April and July) for the next six months will be “shirts” and this means, for the men, blue shirts, dark jackets and Swiz ties.

## Easter 2017

April this year brings Easter. The St Swithun's massed choir will present **Messiah on Saturday evening, 8 April**. Choral services on Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Day will keep us busy at choir practices beforehand.

## The recent past – March

### Evensong, Saturday 4 March

The first choral Evensong service for this year was a very well-attended affair. A strong choir sang an introit, Wesley's *Lead me Lord*, our Peter Hamilton responses, evening canticles by Thomas Tertius Noble for the very first time, and Wesley's *Wash me thoroughly* as the anthem. Psalm 32 was most appropriate for a Lenten service.

### Sunday 12 March

Meg Matthews directed the March small choir for the 8 am Communion service. It sang Malcolm Archer's baptismal anthem *Grow in Grace*. The term “small choir” is sometimes a misnomer – this month the choir numbered 16 and there would have been 18 had Fred's knee not caused him extreme agony on the Sunday morning, and had Margaret's car started on cue.

The composer was the musical director of the 2017 RSCM Summer School, held during January in Adelaide, and he directed this anthem there. It was first published in 2004, and is said to be suitable for Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost and All Saints Day, but especially suitable for Baptisms.

Its Biblical references are:

- 2 Peter 3:18: “But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”
- 1 Peter 2:2: “as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.”
- Ezekiel 36:25-26. “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean: I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

The small choir omitted the third verse on this occasion – the one about newborn babes. Newborn babes haven't been seen at any recent 8 am services at St Swithun's.

### St James' Church Wednesday 15 March

The choir reprised its Evensong music from earlier in the month at St James' Church, King Street. It is a joy to sing in the Francis Greenway designed space. He probably had very little understanding of acoustics in 1824, but he did a splendid job nonetheless. The high tea served up by Rosemary Sempell, wife of the rector, Andrew, is another great attraction of what has fast become an annual outing for us.

## **Messiah, Thursday 16 March**

Rehearsals for this year's presentation of Handel's Messiah began in the church with a good number of volunteers from all services to swell the ranks of the choir itself. They continue each Thursday until the presentation on the Saturday immediately preceding Palm Sunday.

## **RSCM NSW Branch AGM, Saturday 18 March**

The meeting in the Chapter House at St Andrew's Cathedral was preceded by a choral workshop in the Cathedral itself. The director was Dr June Nixon, AM and organist emerita at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. The event was billed as "Composer's Anniversary Festival" this year being the year in which June turns 75.

All of the music sung in the workshop and in the later service of Evensong was either composed or arranged by June for her Melbourne Cathedral choir. Much of it was not easy and the sight-reading skills of those attending the workshop were seriously tested.

Seven St Swithun's people were there, including Pamela and Roger who are members of the RSCM NSW Branch Committee. Both were confirmed as continuing committee members at the Annual General Meeting.

The dates for the next RSCM Choral School to be hosted by the NSW Branch were announced: 6 to 14 July, 2019. The committee hopes that a winter school will halt or reverse the decline in numbers of people attending summer schools.



## **"The Patrick Project"**

Accommodation invoices have been despatched for those who signed on for the trip before Easter last year. They are due for settlement by 15 May 2017. And the size of the party who will travel Ireland with Insight after our time in Dublin has grown to 27 people.

We are still receiving enquiries from parishioners about joining the choir tour to Dublin and are very willing to talk to anyone who might feel inclined to come along.

To help fill the space at Swiz while we are away, a choir from Abbotsleigh and the Cathedral Singers will sing at the 10 am services on Sunday 20 August and Sunday 27 August, respectively.

## **The road to Dublin**

### **Chapter 18: Druids**

*Druid, (Celtic: "Knowing [or Finding] the Oak Tree")*

Before Christianity arrived in Ireland, Druids were the priests of the Celts. Almost everything we know about druids is second-hand knowledge. Surviving texts that mention them were written by non-druids, something that poses a problem to modern-day historians trying to understand who they were and how their role changed over time.

According to Julius Caesar, who is the principal source of information about the Druids, there were two groups of men in Gaul that were held in honour, the Druids and the noblemen. Caesar related that the Druids took charge of public and private sacrifices, and many young men went to them for instruction. They judged all public and private quarrels and decreed penalties. If anyone disobeyed their decree, he was barred from sacrifice, which was considered the gravest of punishments. One Druid was made the chief; upon his death, another was appointed. If, however, several were equal in merit, the Druids voted, although they sometimes resorted to armed violence. Once a year the Druids assembled at a sacred place in the territory of the Carnutes, which was believed to be the centre of all Gaul, and all legal disputes were there submitted to the judgment of the Druids.



Caesar also recorded that the Druids abstained from warfare and paid no tribute. Attracted by those privileges, many joined the order voluntarily or were sent by their families. They studied ancient verse, natural philosophy, astronomy, and the lore of the gods, some spending as much as 20 years in training. The Druids' principal doctrine was that the soul was immortal and passed at death from one person into another.

The Druids offered human sacrifices for those who were gravely sick or in danger of death in battle. Huge wickerwork baskets were filled with living men and then burned. While the Druids preferred to sacrifice criminals, they would choose innocent victims if necessary.

In the early period, Druidic rites were held in clearings in the forest. Sacred buildings were used only later under Roman influence. The Druids were suppressed in Gaul by the Romans under Tiberius (reigned 14–37 AD) and probably in Britain a little later. In Ireland they lost their priestly functions after the coming of Christianity and survived as poets, historians, and judges.

---

### **My Irish Ancestry**

Pamela Summers has risen to the challenge. Thank you Pamela! She writes:

If you had asked me a year ago whether I had any Irish heritage, I would have said categorically "no!" given what I knew then of my family tree: it seemed to be exclusively English, Welsh and Scottish. Imagine my surprise when I received the results of my DNA test from *Ancestry.com* to find out that I am 34% Irish and only 9% from England/Wales/Scotland. How could I be one third Irish? Surely my saliva provided for the DNA test could not be faulty? Had I been swigging Irish whiskey before I sent it off?

I still find this result puzzling but I have since discovered two distant Irish forebears which means there must be more to find further generations back from them. For example, Penny's and my maiden surname is Leck, and the Leck family were many generations in Glasgow, in occupations relating to marine engineering. Indeed, our father's father left Glasgow to go to sea at age 14 and eventually met and married my grandmother in Australia and moved here to live in 1914 or so. His whole career was spent at sea as a master mariner with the merchant shipping line, Howard Smith. So far, we have only traced the Leck line back to our great-great-great-grandfather, John Leck. According to information in the Scottish censuses of 1851 and 1861, John Leck was born about 1803 in Ireland. So it's a project yet to be done to find out where in Ireland he was born and the names of his parents so that we can trace the Leck family Irish heritage back further.

The other Irish forebear I have found was our great-great-great-grandmother on my mother's father's side who was likely born in 1812 in Whiteabbey, Country Antrim, Northern Ireland. Her name was Martha Carnivan or Carnovan. She died in Moruya, NSW. Her parents were Felix Carnovan born in Northern Ireland in 1785 and Martha Barr born in Ireland in 1790. I know nothing further back than that in that line. Research still to be done!

It will be interesting to see if Penny is also one third Irish when I send her DNA sample off for testing!

Who else can claim Irish heritage? Please send details to the editor at [chideock@optusnet.com.au](mailto:chideock@optusnet.com.au).

## Onward Christian Soldiers

We sing this hymn so rarely now that I cannot pass up the opportunity to write about it after having sung it only a week or two back; particularly as the congregation seemed to enjoy singing it so much as well.

*Onward, Christian Soldiers* was written in 1865 with no intention that it ever be published, especially not in adult hymn books. Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould<sup>1</sup>, its author, was at that time the curate of a small parish in Yorkshire, and he reveals how and why he wrote it:

“It was written in a very simple fashion .... Whit-Monday is a great day for school festivals in Yorkshire, and one Whit-Monday it was arranged that our school should join its forces with that of a neighboring village. I wanted the children to sing when marching from one village to the other, but couldn’t think of anything quite suitable, so I sat up at night resolved to write something myself. “Onward, Christian Soldiers” was the result. It was written in great haste, and I am afraid some of the rhymes are faulty. Certainly nothing has surprised me more than its great popularity.”

Baring-Gould originally set the lyrics to a melody from the slow movement of Joseph Haydn’s Symphony in D, No. 15. Though it was never meant for publication, it found its way into the *Church Times* later that year, and soon it became included in English hymnals around the world.

Is it because of its militaristic theme and martial melody that the hymn isn’t sung very often now? Perhaps we might remember that Paul’s command to Timothy was to “endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3), and that he instructed the church in Ephesus to “put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11)?

The words of the hymn make it clear that the focus is on this spiritual battle—that the foe is Satan, not men, and that our King and Commander in Chief is the eternal, omnipotent Christ whose kingdom cannot fail.

In 1871 Arthur Sullivan further popularized the hymn when he wrote the tune *St. Gertrude* for it, the tune which has ever since been its standard melody.

Sullivan did not want to be remembered for his comic operas with W S Gilbert. “My sacred music is that on which I base my reputation as a composer,” he wrote. “These works are the offspring of my liveliest fancy, the children of my greatest strength.”

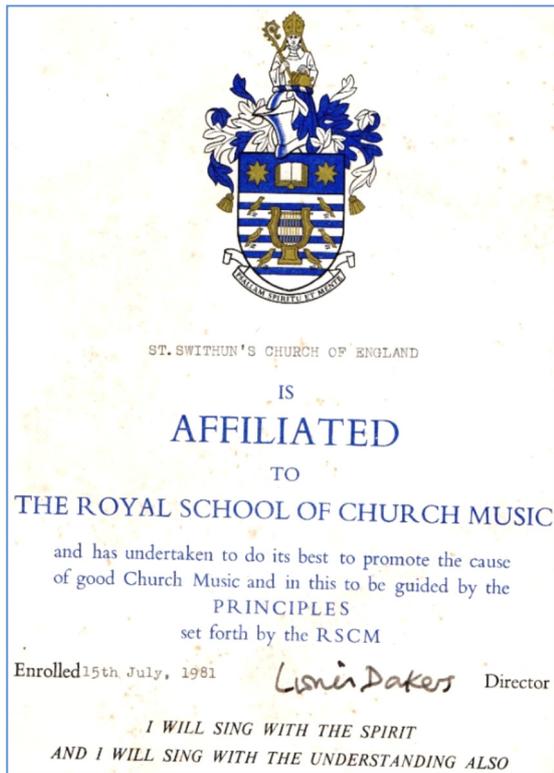
By far the most popular sacred music that came from Sullivan’s pen is the tune for *Onward, Christian Soldiers*. Ian Bradley tells the story of its composition in his book on Sir Arthur Sullivan’s sacred music, *Lost Chords and Christian Soldiers* (SCM Press, 2013). Sullivan was staying with friends, Ernest and Gertrude Clay Ker Seymer, at their large house at Hanford, Dorset, and, by his own account, dashed it off in a few minutes in the drawing-room, naming the tune *St Gertrude* after his hostess. “We sang it in the private chapel,” she recalled, “Sir Arthur playing the harmonium.”



---

<sup>1</sup> Sabine is a name for a girl. Did Mr and Mrs B-G expect a baby girl and not notice when a boy arrived? Or did they suffer from the same sort of obscure infectious disease that affected Mr and Mrs Humphreys upon the birth of their daughter, the one they named Cecil, the one who became Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander.

## I will Sing with the Spirit



Our choir's membership of RSCM goes back to 1981. At the time, Lionel Dakers was the Director, and the headquarters was at Addington Palace, near Croydon in London.

RSCM has changed its logo several times, but never its motto – *I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also*. And if you look closely at the logo on our affiliation certificate you will see that the motto on the logo itself is given in Latin also – *Psallam Spiritus et Mente*.

The motto comes from 1 Corinthians 14:15; “What is the result then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.” Paul was debating with believers in Corinth about the importance of “speaking in tongues”. If a newcomer to the church cannot understand what is being taught, then he will turn away.

In 1994, John Rutter was commissioned by RSCM to compose a simple anthem around the motto, and the result is, of course, *I will sing with the spirit*, the anthem we all know very well.



### Correction

Last month we asserted, incorrectly, that Mendelssohn had bequeathed Allegri's *Miserere* to the world when, of course, it was the teenaged Mozart. Mendelssohn did indeed arrange a version of Allegri's work, but some sixty years later than young Wolfgang, who might have committed one of the earlier recorded instances of copyright piracy if copyright had existed at the time, which it didn't.

Ed.



### Draft Choir program – 2017

Date	Venue	Time	
<b>2017</b>			
Sat 8 Apr	Swiz	5 pm	Handel's Messiah
Fri 14 Apr	Swiz	8:30 am	Good Friday service
Sun 16 Apr	Swiz	10 am	Easter Day
Sun 21 May	Swiz	12:30 – 3:30 pm	Choir workshop
Sat 27 May	Swiz	5 pm	Evensong
Sun 18 Jun	Swiz	2 pm	Huguenot celebration
Sun 25 Jun	Swiz	12:30 – 3:30 pm	Choir workshop
Fri 14 Jul	All Saints Hunters Hill	6 pm	RSCM Midwinter Dinner
Sat 15 Jul	Swiz	5 pm	Evensong
Sat 5 Aug	Swiz	5 pm	Farewell concert
Sun 6 Aug	Swiz	10 am	Commissioning service
Sun 13 Aug	Swiz	10 am	Last service before Ireland
19 – 20 Aug	Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin		
21 – 27 Aug	St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin		
Thu 14 Sep	Swiz	8 pm	Rehearsals resume
Sun 17 Sep	Swiz	10 am	First service after the trip
Sat 28 Oct	Swiz	5 pm	Evensong
Sat 25 Nov	Swiz	7 pm	Bach Christmas Oratorio

Please stay continually alert for advice about additions/amendments. In particular, the program for 2017 is still fluid, apart from the Dublin bits which are firm.

