

Sing Joyfully

St Swithun's Choir e-newsletter



Vol. 6 No. 2

March 2018

We know you were expecting a February edition of Sing Joyfully, and we apologise for its non-appearance. But our return from a visit overseas in late January with an Asian flu infection diverted our attention away from the important things in life. Well on the road to recovery now, so back to work.

Our grateful thanks go to several contributors to this issue. Contributions are always very welcome, and as you will see, may be on almost any subject.

The program for March

Messiah, 24 March at 5 pm.

Rehearsals begin on Thursday 1 March for the parish's regular Easter presentation of Handel's *Messiah*. We are inviting members of the congregation to augment our forces for the occasion. Rehearsals start at 7:30 pm and run for an hour each Thursday until the service is held on the Saturday evening immediately preceding Palm Sunday.

The recent past

Evensong, 24 February

The choir's first Evensong for 2018 was on the last Saturday in February. We sang Samuel Wesley's *Lead me Lord* as an introit, Peter Hamilton's *Preces and Responses*, *Psalm 25* to a chant by John Goss, Herbert Sumsion's *Evening Canticles in G*, and a new anthem by Andrée Greenwell, who just happened to be one member of the congregation which nearly filled the church (some more on that below).

Andrée Greenwell

Andrée is the composer of the anthem we sang at our February Evensong – *On Wings Like eagles*. And she was present at the Evensong service to hear her work presented.



Probably like many of our readers, we had not heard of Ms Greenwell before. And there is little personal information about her to be found from web searches, beyond her being Melbourne born, and Sydney based.

Her musical credentials are, however, second to none. She works diversely across mainstream and experimental platforms within the Australian performing arts, screen arts, and radio. Her catalogue of around 100 scores includes credits for Australia's leading performing arts organisations including Sydney Theatre Company, Symphony Australia, Australian Dance Theatre, Bell Shakespeare, Belvoir and Queensland Music Festival.

She is artistic director and composer for Green Room Music. Her capacity to create independent music theatre and multidisciplinary works in Australia, through which she rigorously explores challenging themes concerning a female experience, is unmatched. She is the recipient of the Australia Council for the Arts Music Fellowship for 2018.

She is an Honorary Post-Doctoral Fellow of the University of Wollongong.

It appears that *On Wings Like Eagles* is her first attempt at composing for a four-part choir, and our Evensong presentation was its very first public outing – a world premiere, in fact.

The text comes directly from Isaiah 40: 28-31. The poem speaks to Hebrew exiles in Babylon, rebuking them for their small ideas and flagging faith. God is too great to fail.

Those who trust (“hope”) in Him will be empowered to “renew their strength” and ultimately prevail against their oppressors.

Others have used the text as inspiration for a popular Christian song; Hillsong, Don Moen, Ben Eaton for example, but none to date have captured the essence of the flying eagle quite like Andrée Greenwell.

And it was wonderful to see the faces of Jenny and Richard Kaan when they learned that the anthem was commissioned for, and dedicated to them on the occasion of their Golden Wedding. Congratulations, both of you!



Vale Colin Brumby (18 June 1933 – 3 January 2018)



Colin Brumby, who has died at the age of 84, was not just a much-loved Australian composer, but also a quiet revolutionary in music whose pioneering work in opera and instrumental music is only now being acknowledged at its true worth.

Born and educated in Melbourne, from 1959 onwards Colin was closely identified with his adopted city of Brisbane.

A crucial figure in the early development of the Queensland Opera Company (now Opera Queensland), for several years from the late 1960s he served as its Music Director, and he later composed an original series of 20-minute-long children’s operettas that toured the state and whose engaging melodies and whimsical scenarios turned tens of thousands of Queensland schoolchildren onto the beauty of opera.

Like so many other composers of his generation, Colin Brumby familiarised himself thoroughly with the music of the avant-garde. But as he once told an interviewer, disenchantment eventually set in and after spending a full nine months writing a particularly spiky avant-garde extravaganza, he realised that he could have simply improvised a better musical result!

And thus was born the brilliant, melodic and engaging style that would serve Colin Brumby so well throughout the remainder of his career, typified by his breakthrough work for string orchestra and harpsichord, *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1974) and the *Viola Concerto* (1990).

Regarded with suspicion and even derision at the time, Colin’s bold return to tonality proved prophetic, and a quarter of a century later, many other Australian composers began to make that same transition from abstraction back to audience-communication.

Now, he is indisputably one of the most popular and admired of Australian composers. Kind-hearted and highly-respected as a man and as a musician, his loss comes as a real blow to those who knew him personally and also those who only knew him through his music.

Adapted from an article on the ABC website

As a tribute to Colin, the choir will sing his setting of *God Be in My Head* during the 10 am service on Sunday 11 March. This two-part piece is a strict canon at the unison, meaning that Part 2 sings exactly what Part 1 sings, just a measure later.

God be in my head,
and in my understanding;
God be in mine eyes,
and in my looking;
God be in my mouth,
and in my speaking;
God be in my heart,
and in my thinking;
God be at mine end,
and at my departing.

The text is a beautiful prayer from the *Sarum Primer*, a book of prayers and devotions for the Roman Catholic Church that was collected by the clergy at Salisbury Cathedral in the south central part of England. It contained elements of the Divine Office, including the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Lauds and Vespers for the Dead. The book was originally published in 1514 as the *Book of Hours* (Cambridge) and republished as the *Sarum Primer* in Salisbury in 1558.



RSCM 2018 Summer School Report, contributed by Pamela Summers.

Have you ever thought of attending a Royal School of Church Music Summer School? Well, Penny and I went to Auckland for this year's for a week in January.

I'm a relative newcomer to Summer Schools as this was only my second, but others from St Swithun's have been to many of them over the years (for example, Meg, Judith, Wendy and Brian to name a few). I'm happy to report that they are fun, if you love singing sacred music and if you enjoy learning from world-class musical directors and spending time with a bunch of like minded people.

Importantly, it's one of those rare opportunities to come together in worship with other Christian denominations.

A choir of 75

In Auckland, there were 75 of us and our musical director was Andrew Lumsden, organist and director of music at Winchester Cathedral UK. What a great guy! He was friendly (except when we needed to be whipped into shape before our final concert), he was funny and oh-so-knowledgeable.

The recital he gave on the new \$4million organ in Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral was an experience to put in my treasure store of lifetime memories. He also entertained us very well with his after dinner speech at our final gala dinner in the historic Selwyn Library in Bishop's Court, amid diamond pane windows, photos of former bishops and shields with coats of arms.

Sniffing to stay on pitch

Andrew Lumsden didn't go in for a lot of warm ups, but had some very interesting techniques for keeping us on pitch and in time. At one point we had to stand up and march as we sang, and when the sopranos were struggling to reach some high notes, he had them sing the same phrase four or five times over, each time raising the starting note by a semitone so that by the time they resumed singing at the real pitch it seemed easy. He also got us all (and especially the sopranos) to sniff inwards rapidly three or four times, which he said would raise our soft palates. Any time we sounded flat, he'd stop us for a bit of a sniff. He also made us do quite a bit of "lip trilling", that lip burbling thing we sometimes do during warmups at Swiz, except in Auckland we trilled whole passages in harmony.

Rubber gloves and disinfectant wipes

The summer school was held at Dilworth School, a beautiful campus with an attractive chapel where we started and ended each day with a brief service. Most of us stayed at motels that were in a row just over the road from the school. Penny and I shared a room at one of them. It was only after paying for the non-refundable booking that I read the reviews of the motel on Trip Adviser. Trying not to panic, I arrived with rubber gloves and disinfectant wipes at the ready! It turned out to be completely unnecessary though. The motel was fine and I had been reading reviews for some other motel with almost the same name. We had lunch and dinner each day on campus (excellent catering!), and there was an after dinner bar for socialising.

We also had a full day excursion midweek to Waiheke Island in Auckland Harbour. A gloriously bright, sunny day saw us strolling along the beach, stopping for fish and chips, and visiting a winery.

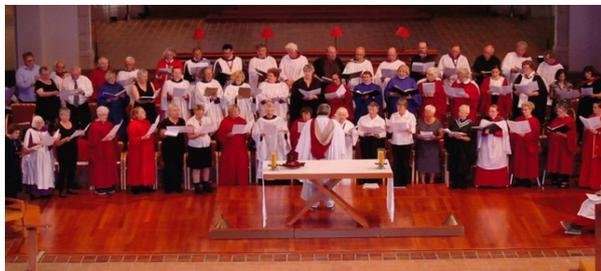
60 years since he died

Celebrating the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams was a bit of a theme as it has been 60 years since his passing. In the course of our concert and two church services, we sang his

settings of: *All people that on earth do dwell; Let all the world; Lord, thou has been our refuge; O clap your hands, and Te Deum in G.*

We also sang works by associates of Vaughan Williams: *Give us the wings of faith* (Bullock); *Magnificat* (Howells); *God has gone up* (Finzi) and *Greater love hath no man* (Ireland).

We were introduced to some wonderful works by New Zealand composers and were privileged to have a composer in residence with us, Chris Artley. The NZ works included: *I will lift up mine eyes* and *In darkness and in light* (Chris Artley); *Lord when thy sweet sense of grace* (John Richie); *Introit of the Beatitudes* (Douglas Mews); *My heart is fixed* (Ronald Dellow), and *The spirit of the Lord* (Martyn Heath).



Two blue Swiz gowns in the choir singing in Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral, Auckland, with Andrew Lumsden conducting.

To fill up any empty spaces in the schedule, we also had some excellent workshops such as by Dr Morag Acheson on caring for the voice, and by Dr Indra Hughes on “Vaughan Williams – the man and his music”.

We were treated to a concert by Dr Rachael Griffiths-Hughes on harpsichord with her husband and two daughters on baroque cello and violins.

No ski jumps but a bronze medal anyway

You may be aware that RSCM has a system of chorister education and award exams called *Voice for Life*, in which anyone can participate. Meg Matthews mentioned *Voice for Life* to us a few years ago – she is an accredited examiner for the awards.

While I was in Auckland, I sat for and passed my Bronze award exam. For this, I had completed three workbooks, and then at the exam I sang a hymn, a psalm and an anthem, did some ear tests and spoke on some set topics such as about appropriate music for a season of the church year, and about the music we normally sing at Sunday services and so on.

At some point soon, I hope to receive my Bronze award medal to wear on my choir robes. I hope she won't mind my mentioning that Amanda is also preparing to sit for an award exam in the UK later in the year. For those not keen on exams, but interested in revising or learning some music theory and deepening their knowledge about the music we sing, there is also a parallel stream of levels which can be worked through but which don't require any examinations. Don't hesitate to ask me if you would like more information about this.

I'd like to put on record my thanks for the fantastic support I received from Phillip in my quest for the Bronze Voice for Life award.

The place to be in July next year

I hope that most of us will participate next year because it's Sydney's turn to host the RSCM School, which will be a winter school for the first time ever – to be held from 6 to 14 July 2019. Exciting things will be happening and I will keep you informed as arrangements come together.

Pamela Summers

Three Special Ladies

Alice Hancox:

Alice had been a member of St Swithun's choir in her early years when Archdeacon Wade was the Rector. A photo of that early choir may be found on page 85 in Marcia Cameron's 'Living Stones'. Ruth Marshall, a close friend and fellow chorister of Alice's, confirmed Alice is in the middle of the top row. Subsequently Alice moved to Melbourne where she sang in the Melbourne Philharmonia Choir. Upon her return to Sydney some years later she returned to St Swithun's Choir. The photo of the choir on page 192 of 'Living Stones' shows her in the front row far right. She was a true alto with a warm voice which I had the pleasure of enjoying as we sat together from some years.

Alice enjoyed a lively sense of humour – a favourite was her comment ‘How uncomfortable’ when the Service Leader would announce ‘We are on page in the prayer book’. Her love of singing in the parish choir was underpinned by her deep faith. She was widowed young with two small children, was a qualified Social Worker and worked for many years at Mowll Village where she finally took up residence. Her music, faith and life experiences were willingly shared and we younger choristers benefited greatly from this.

Having slipped and fallen whilst gardening, necessitating a hip replacement, Alice made the decision to retire from the choir. Anxious not to lose ‘our Alice’ it was suggested the choir create the role of ‘Patron’ for her. This was supported unanimously. At Alice’s farewell party Alice accepted her new role. A brooch, in the form of a harp, was the choir’s present to her and this she wore regularly. On 23 July, 1997 Alice died after a long illness. On 25 July, 1997 in St Swithun’s, where she had worshipped and sung for many years, with one of her signature hats perched on her coffin, the choir sang its farewell to a much loved Patron.



Enid Watt:

Enid came to St Swithun’s with her husband the Rev. Brian Watt in 1994. A warm and friendly lady with long experience in parish work as the Rector’s wife she quickly fitted into the parish. St Swithun’s blossomed under the guidance of this special pair and the choir enjoyed their support. When Roger Chilton began his ministry in early 1996 Brian and Enid chose to stay on as parishioners lending their support to Roger and the parish.

To celebrate the centenary of the founding of St Swithun’s the choir planned, under the direction of James Allington and with Roger’s approval, to travel to the UK and sing the services for a week in one of the great cathedrals there. A committee was formed and the opportunity was taken to discuss the possibility of a new patron. Enid was chosen and the choristers supported the choice whole-heartedly. Approached, Enid accepted the role with great pleasure. A formal certificate was designed by Judith McKernan and Alice’s harp brooch, bequeathed to a chorister, became the ‘Jewel of Office’. A party was held and Enid became our second Patron.

Enid and Brian travelled with the choir to Winchester where it had been accepted by the cathedral there to sing the week’s services. Enid wore her ‘Jewel of Office’ and fulfilled her role with love and humour. She commented that she had never before had a specific title in her life, that she had only ever been ‘the Rector’s wife’.

Eventually Enid and Brian decided to enter Mowll Village. This they did and continued to travel to St Swithun’s for morning services and Evensongs. As time went on this became difficult and Enid, in her usual practical way, came to the choir with her decision to step down as Patron. She did not wish to be a ‘nominal Patron’. Enid returned the ‘Jewel of Office’ and it was with deep sadness that it was accepted (when offered Enid refused to keep the brooch).

Enid and Brian still live in Mowll Village. Ill health meant the need for Brian to move into care in Brian King Gardens and in 2017 Enid, ever practical, made the decision to join him there. Brian Watson shares a birthday with Enid and the thread is not broken

Ros Holmes:

Ros and Barry Holmes joined the choir in the 90s. Ros sang alto and Barry became our Welsh tenor. Ros was a warm, friendly person with a delightful sense of humour and a willingness, with Barry, to open their home for choir functions. They sang with the choir in Winchester and prepared to travel again with the choir for the second planned tour to Lincoln. Ros put in time and effort and finally found appropriate blue shirts for casual wear by the choir. Unfortunately, several days before departure Ros broke her ankle and she was unable to travel.

Sadly, Ros was diagnosed with an auto-immune disease which found her struggling to keep singing. On a Thursday night practice she asked Barry to take her home and with heavy hearts the choir watched her leave.

We were without a Patron. It was decided to convene the same committee in order to discuss the possibility of a new Patron. With the choir’s blessing it was decided to

approach Ros hoping she would feel able to accept. Ros accepted and another choir party was arranged, a new Certificate prepared and the 'Jewel of Office' brought out. Ros said quietly that 'No-one could know how much this role meant to her'.

St George's Chapel Windsor had accepted the choir for its third singing trip to the UK. Ros not only supported us in our preparation but kept us well and truly on our toes assessing our singing. As we were dismissed after the 10.00am service Ros would come whizzing into the lounge pushing her walking frame and, with the 'Jewel of Office' firmly in place, give her opinion of the anthem. Ros and Barry decided they would travel with the choir and a motorized wheel chair was organized. Ros in her red wheelchair was like a flag going before us.

Returning home the pattern of choir functions at the Holmes' fell back into place with a very special 70th party for Ros. Fortnightly Communion Services in the Family Room were led by Roger and those who could joined them. The fourth choir tour was arranged and this time Ros was unable to join the tour. Lovingly she insisted that Barry travel with the choir to sing in Bath and Oxford. Upon our return the Communion Services continued. One evening after playing Scrabble on her computer with Meg Matthews Ros quietly passed away. With aching hearts the choir sang farewell to Ros.

Lynne Bullock



Dublin's "Sanctuary Cathedral" provides new home for asylum seekers' food campaign



An organisation that campaigns for an end to rules that prevents asylum seekers in Ireland cooking their own food has found a new home in Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral. Christ Church was designated as Ireland's first Cathedral of Sanctuary at a launch dinner recently to mark the organisation's, new home. Under Ireland's Direct Provision system, asylum seekers are not allowed to work or cook and are forced to "eat food prepared at set times on an industrial scale by companies profiting from

the system," the organisation, Our Table, said. An Our Table café will operate at the cathedral every Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

"I am delighted with both the initiative and the compassion shown within the city of Dublin," Dr Michael Jackson, the Archbishop of Dublin, said. "As a city we now have a University of Sanctuary (Dublin City University) and a Cathedral of Sanctuary (Christ Church). Both are places of welcome with a strong sense of community, local and international."

Under the Direct Provision system, adult asylum seekers are not allowed to work and are given just €19.10 Euros (approximately A\$30) per week; with just €15.60 per child. "This cruel and unnecessary system needs to end, but in the meantime, Our Table is advocating for the rights of people in Direct Provision to cook for themselves and their families," the organisation said on its website. "Banned from cooking in their rooms, some people secretly cook in toilets just to prepare something they want to eat. People living in Direct Provision report being hungry at night or being presented with low quality or culturally inappropriate food."

At the Our Table café, founder Ellie Kisiyombe and her team of staff and volunteers will "prepare and serve fantastic food as well as spark change through conversation about Direct Provision," a spokeswoman for the united dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough said. "Sharing food with others is one of the most human things in the world. So much of our cultures revolve around the preparation, sharing and ritual of food. However, in Direct Provision, people are denied the chance to cook and share food in the ways that matter to them.

“Our Table is trying to change that along with campaigning for the right to work. It started when Ellie along with other women came together to cook their favourite recipes, taste each other’s food and learn about each other’s culture.”

Kisyombe arrived in Ireland from Malawi eight years ago and was placed on Direct Provision. At the launch dinner, she spoke of the loneliness and anger experienced by the 5,000 people living in Direct Provision. “If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude,” she said. “We don’t want to kill our dreams. We do everything to carry our hope. This is reality and this is me. This is real for over 5,000 people [in Direct Provision] who have found a home in Ireland. We can’t call it home but it is home and we will call it home,” she stated.

Asylum seekers living under Ireland’s Direct Provision system enjoy a meal at the new home for the Our Table café in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, at a launch event on Friday, alongside church and civic dignitaries. Photo: United dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough



The Dean of Christ Church, Dermot Dunne, said that the cathedral’s spirituality was balanced by its social concern. “Our Christian witness seeks to embrace the issues of our times and engage with the social problems of our wider community,” he said. “It is a natural yet extraordinary departure for our community to engage with the Our Table project. I am very pleased that we continue to engage with the Direct Provision issue and endeavour to bring the issues to an audience that would not be aware of or engaged with those who live in Direct Provision.

“I couldn’t think of a better way of sharing experiences than sitting down together and sharing food.”

From the London based Anglican Communion News Service.



Choir program – 2018

Date	Venue	Time	
Thur 1 Mar	Swiz	7:30 pm	First Messiah rehearsal
Sat 24 Mar	Swiz	5 pm	Messiah presentation
Sat 16 Jun	Swiz		Mozart concert

You may be sure that there will be more; these are the only firm dates we have so far.