



KMC Grapevine No. 1



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Welcome to 2021.

Editors' Note

2020 was a difficult year bringing personal and economic hardship even devastation to so many. With the year starting with the bush fires alert in February.

Once these were under control then Covid 19 hit us and the rest of the world.

Now we welcome the new year with its promise of renewed hope ahead, and hopefully a resumption of face-to-face rehearsals.



February 2021

Message from the President

Welcome to 2021. Hopefully, this will be a better year than 2020, a most difficult year for all choirs, as we strive to keep connected and engaged to musical activities – in spite of Covid-19 restrictions.



Our first weekly Zoom rehearsal this year took place on 2nd February 2021. Members are encouraged to participate in

these rehearsals whenever possible. Doing so will ensure that the Choir will be concert ready in record time once we are able to rehearse face to face again.

Meanwhile the search is on for a new accompanist, and we are confident that a suitable pianist will take on this role soon. Also, vaccines will be available soon, and all members are encouraged to avail themselves of this protection as soon as possible.

The first Committee Meeting for this year was held on 3rd February 2021. Of significance, preparations were made for the Choir's AGM on 9th March 2021. Three members will join the Committee at that time, specifically Ken Wade who will replace Ian Stapely as Secretary, Mark Rodowicz who will replace Bruce Elliott as Librarian, and John Gallo who will take over the President's role. I will remain on the

Committee for 12 months, as Past President.

The Choir is holding up well given the circumstances, with the necessary administration in excellent shape for the future. Paul Whiting's continuing work as our Music Director is outstanding and greatly appreciated. All Committee members have made significant contributions during 2020, with special commendation due to Kim Rennick and Stuart Hill. However, we still have a pressing need for a volunteer to take on the Vice President's role.

Also, special thanks to our editor, Tony Rathbone, for his excellent work and ongoing publications of Grapevine. But Tony needs your contribution, so please make the necessary effort.

Finally, I have enjoyed my term as President of the Choir and thank all of those who have helped me in this role, since October 2019. I wish my successor well as he heads up this iconic institution, during the 74th year since formation.

President's Report 2020

2020 has been the 73rd year of the Ku-ring-gai Male Choir. I have been honoured to act as President throughout this year, after I took over this role in October 2019. I was appointed for another year to this position at the Annual General Meeting of the Choir on 19th March 2020.



I am now pleased to present my report for 2020.

We have had a most difficult year, with a full programme of 12 concerts scheduled before Christmas 2019. Only one concert was performed at Amiya in Baulkham Hills on 3rd March 2020, however all of the other concerts programmed had to be cancelled due to the Corona-19 Pandemic. This was a great disappointment, after the superb efforts of our Concert Organiser, David Foster, who scheduled a wonderful programme for the Choir in 2020. Happily, most of our venues are looking forward to rescheduling concerts with our Choir once health regulations permit.

The Choir's repertoire continues to improve. A key to these improvements has been 34 rehearsals conducted on the internet using Zoom technology.

This programme was organised by our Music Director, Dr Paul Whiting, ably assisted by Gerry Foley and Stuart Hill. Of special value has been the use of a software package obtained by Stuart showing the music and accompaniment for the songs being rehearsed. Especially, important has been the programme of 15 songs agreed to be sung at a concert in the Sydney Town Hall, by the Male Choirs Association Concert later this year. This has been deferred from November 2020, to October in 2021 due to this Pandemic. As well the Choir has been rehearsing 16 other songs with several new ones for our repertoire including How Can I Keep from Singing and The Very Best Time of the Year.

The Choir's membership is holding up well, with loyal and enthusiastic singers remaining ready to resume as soon as we get the green light. We have a plan to add up to 10 additional

singers once face to face rehearsals recommence.

We held a most enjoyable Christmas Party at the Hornsby RSL on 1st December 2020 in spite of the Covid-19 concerns, with health precautions closely followed. Sincere thanks to John Salamonsen and Bruce Sharpham for making the necessary arrangements.

We celebrated 20 years of membership with the Choir this year at our Christmas Party with certificates and special name tags awarded to 4 members of the Choir, specifically John Gallo (in absentia), John Middleton, John Gibson and Gerry Foley. How fortunate we are to have such loyal and long-term members. We also had four special guests attending, Dorab and Sherna Kotwal and Anita Kyle and Elizabeth Kyle. Due to health precautions the Choir was prohibited from singing this year.

However, we were all delighted when our superb soprano, Anita Kyle, accompanied by Paul Whiting, sang a bracket of songs for us, to help us celebrate Christmas. We also inducted and welcomed a new member to the Choir, Ken Wade, who has been assisting our Secretary, Ian Stapley, with a view to taking over the Secretary's role .at the 2021 AGM. Similarly, Mark Rodowicz. An enthusiastic member of our Choir for 15 years, has agreed to take over the role of Librarian from Bruce Elliottt.

A major project in 2020 has been to review the Choir's Constitution, a very old document that needed updating. After numerous drafts discussions and suggestions from a

number of members, the proposed revised Constitution was approved by the Committee, and fully endorsed by the Choir's membership. With effect from 1st September 2020, the revised or new Constitution was registered with the Department of Fair Trading. This is now up to date and tailored to guide the Choir for the foreseeable future.

Another success this year has been the result of an application prepared by Kin Rennick to Ku-ring-gai Council for financial support, specifically for the purchase of state-of-the-art Bose amplifiers for the Choir's portable piano. The Council approved our application, and the new amplifiers were delivered in December 2020.

In addition, an important project this year has been to update and reorganise the Choir's web site. Our Webmaster, Stuart Hill, has done a superb job with our web site, updating the content, and transferring various documents from the public access area to the Member's only section. Documents transferred include the Choir's new Constitution, and previous annual reports from the Music Director and the President. As well, the Choir's new newsletter, Grapevine, is available on the web site.

The introduction of a newsletter, Grapevine, is another initiative commenced in 2020, with monthly editions now being issued by our Editor Tony Rathbone. This is



proving to be an excellent adjunct to other communications and is helping to keep the Choir's members informed and in touch with each other.

Our accompanist, Louise Scott, advised the Choir in the middle of 2020 that she would be unable to continue as our accompanist due to being over committed. We wish Louise well in her future endeavours, and we have commenced a search for a new replacement. We hope to have a new appointee in place for the day the Choir resumes face to face rehearsals.

Lastly, we all know how fortunate we are to have Paul Whiting with us as our Music Director. We thank Paul for facilitating the Choir's musical activities, and for continually improving the way the Choir behaves and performs.

We have a challenging year ahead, however all Choirs have to manage restrictions and there is some light at the end of the tunnel. Hopefully, with vaccines becoming available soon, and continued good management of Covid-19 Pandemic in Australia, the Kur-ring-gai Male Choir will be able to resume its activities sooner than later and go from strength to strength.

New Date RSL Concert

The RSL has "double booked" the auditorium on 3rd October 2021 and asked if we would agree to change our date to **Sunday 10th October 2021**. This is in fact a better date for us, being a week after the October long weekend and school holidays. Accordingly, we have agreed to the new date for our RSL Concert **Sunday 10th October 2021**. Please amend your diary accordingly.

**Article contributed by
Peter Wright**

Titanic Lives

**Richard Davenport-Hines
Migrants, Millionaires, Conmen
and Crewmen**

Background

At the time of her entry into service on 2 April 1912, Royal Mail Steamer (RMS) *Titanic* was the second of three Olympic class ocean liners and was the largest ship in the world.

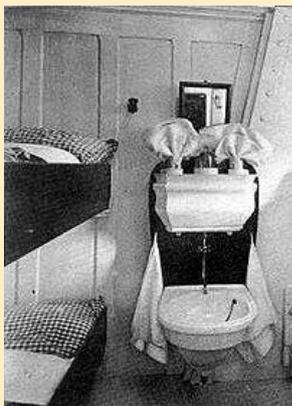


She and the earlier, *RMS Olympic* were almost one and a half times the gross register tonnage of Cunard's *RMS Lusitania* and *RMS Mauretania*, the previous record holders, and were nearly 100 feet (30m) longer. *Titanic* could carry 3,547 people in speed and comfort and was built on an unprecedented scale. Her reciprocating engines were the largest that had ever been built, standing 40 feet (12m) high and with cylinders 9 feet (2.7m) in diameter requiring the burning of 600 long tons (610t) of coal per day.

The passenger accommodation, especially the First-Class section, was said to be "of unrivalled extent and magnificence", indicated by the fares that First Class accommodation commanded.



The Parlour Suites (the most expensive and most luxurious suites on the ship) with private promenade cost over \$4,350 (equivalent to \$115,000 today) for a one-way transatlantic passage. Even Third Class, though considerably less



luxurious than Second and First Classes, was unusually comfortable by contemporary standards, and was supplied with plentiful quantities of good food, providing her passengers with better conditions than many of them had experienced at home.

Titanic's maiden voyage began shortly after noon on 10 April 1912 when she left Southampton on the first leg of her journey to New York. A few hours later she called at Cherbourg harbour in north-western France, a journey of 80 nautical miles (148km; 92mi), where she took on passengers. Her next port of call was Queenstown in Ireland, which she reached round midday on 11 April. She left in the afternoon after taking on more passengers and stores.

By the time *Titanic* departed westward across the Atlantic she

was carrying 1,320 passengers and 892 crew members.

14th April 1912

Iceberg Warnings

The iceberg thought to have been hit by *Titanic*, photographed the morning of 15th April 1912 by SS *Prince Alberts* chief steward. The iceberg was reported to have a streak of red paint from a ship's hull along its waterline on one side. On 14 April 1912, *Titanic's* radio operators received six messages from other ships warning of drifting ice, which passengers on *Titanic* had begun to notice during the afternoon.

The ice conditions in the North



Atlantic were the worst for any April in the previous 50 years (which was the reason all the lookouts were unaware that they were about to stem into a line of drifting ice several miles wide and many miles long). Not all of these messages were relayed by the radio operators. At the time, all wireless operators on ocean liners were employees of the Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company and not members of their ships crew; their primary responsibility was to send messages for the passengers, with weather reports a secondary concern.

The first warning came at 09.00 from RMS *Caronia* reporting "bergs, growlers and field ice". Captain

Smith acknowledged receipt of the message. At 13.42, RMS Baltic relayed a report from the Greek ship Athenia that she had been “passing icebergs and large quantities of field ice”. This too was acknowledged by Smith, who showed the report to J Bruce Ismay, the chairman of the White Star Line, on board the Titanic for her maiden voyage. Smith ordered a new course to be set, to take the ship farther south. At 13.45 the German ship SS Amerika, which was a short distance to the south, reported she had “passed two large icebergs”. This message never reached Captain Smith or the other officers on Titanic’s bridge. The reason is unclear, but it may have been forgotten because the radio operators had to fix faulty equipment. SS Californian reported “three large bergs” at 19.30, and at



21.40, the steamer Mesaba reported: “Saw much heavy pack ice and great number large iceberg. Also, field ice.” This message too, never left the Titanic’s radio room. The radio operator, Jack Phillips, may have failed to grasp its significance because he was preoccupied with transmitting messages for passengers via the relay station at Cape Race, Newfoundland; the radio set had broken down the day before, resulting in a backlog of messages that the two operators were trying to clear. A final warning was received at 22.30 from operator Cyril Evans of Californian, which had altered for the

night in an ice field some miles away, but Phillips cut it off and signalled, back “Shut up! Shut up! I’m working Cape Race.”

“Iceberg right ahead”

Enters Iceberg Alley

As Titanic approached her fatal collision, most passengers had gone to bed and command of the bridge had passed from Second Officer Charles Lightoller to First Officer William Murdoch. Lookouts Frederick Fleet and Reginald Leewere, occupying the crow’s nest, 29 metres (95ft) above the deck. The air temperature had fallen to near freezing, and the ocean was completely calm. Colonel Archibald Grace, one of the survivors of the disaster, later wrote that “the sea was like glass, so smooth that the stars were clearly reflected.” It is now known that such exceptional calm water is a sign of nearby pack ice.

Collision

According to Fourth officer Joseph Boxhall, Murdoch told Captain Smith that he was attempting to “hard-a-port (the iceberg),” suggesting that he was attempting to “port round” manoeuvre to first swing the bow around the obstacle, then swing the stern so that both ends of the ship would avoid a collision.

There was a delay before either order went into effect, the steam powered steering mechanism took up to 30 seconds to turn the ship’s tiller and the complex task of setting the engines into reverse, would also have taken some time to accomplish. Because the centre turbine, could not be reversed, both it and the centre propeller, positioned directly in front of the ship’s rudder, were stopped. This

reduced the rudder's effectiveness, therefore impairing the turning ability of the ship. Had Murdoch turned the ship while maintaining her forward speed, Titanic might have missed the iceberg with feet to spare.

Effects of the Collision

The iceberg buckled the plates, popped rivets, and damaged a sequence of compartments. The impact with the iceberg was long thought to have produced a huge opening in Titanic's hull, "not less than 300 feet (91m) in length, 10 feet (3m) above the level of the keel", as one writer later put it. The gaps, the longest of which measured 39 feet (12m) long, appear to have followed the line of the hull plates. This suggests that the iron rivets along the plate seams snapped off or popped open to create narrow gaps through which water flooded.

Departure of the Lifeboats

The lifeboats were lowered every few minutes on each side, but most of the boats were greatly underfilled. No.5 left with 41 aboard, No.3 had 32 aboard, No.8 left with 3 and No.1 left with just 12 out of a capacity of 40. Crewmen fought to maintain vital services as water continued to pour into the ship below decks. The engineers and firemen worked to vent steam from the boilers to prevent them from exploding on contact with the cold water. A long and winding route had to be taken to reach topside; the steerage-class accommodation, located on C through G decks, was at the extreme ends of the decks, and so was the farthest away from the lifeboats. By contrast first-class accommodation was located on the upper decks and so was nearest.

Last Minutes of Sinking

At about 02.15, Titanic's angle in the water began to increase rapidly as water poured into previously unflooded parts of the ship through deck hatches. Her suddenly increasing angle caused what one survivor called a "giant wave" to wash along the ship from the forward end of the boat deck, sweeping many people into the sea. Eyewitnesses saw Titanic's stern rising high into the air as the ship tilted down in the water. It was said to have reached an angle of 30-45 degrees, "revolving apparently around a centre of gravity just astern of midships".

Titanic's Final Moments

Titanic was subjected to extreme opposing forces- flooded bow pulling her down while the air in the stern kept her to the surface which were concentrated at one of the weakest points in the structure, the area of the engine room hatch. Shortly after the lights went out the



ship split apart. Titanic's surviving officers and some prominent survivors testified

that the ship had sunk in one piece, a belief that was affirmed by the British and American inquiries into the disaster. After they went under, the bow and stern took only about 5-6 minutes to sink 3,795 metres (12,451ft), spilling a trail of heavy machinery, tons of coal and large quantities of debris from Titanic's interior. The two parts of the ship landed about 600 metres (2,000ft) apart on a gently undulating area of the seabed.

Interesting Stories Behind Classical Compositions

The Well-Tempered Clavier by Bach



Now that we can play all the keys on a piano we take it for granted. In the Renaissance Baroque era, all



keyboards were tuned to equal temperament. That is that every note has a specific frequency. In so doing, an A or C major would be different from a A or D major. This meant that only certain keys could be played on one keyboard.

Well-tempered tuning was introduced to solve this problem. A compromise was made so that even though slightly out of tune, all keys could be played on a keyboard.

This tuning survived to this very day.

However, in Bach's time, composers were still comfortable only in the more conservative keys. To this, Bach wrote the two books of the Well-Tempered-Clavier, writing a prelude and fugue for every key. From C major to G sharp minor. With this 48 preludes and fugues in the 24 possible keys, Bach demonstrated the merits of the more obscure keys.

Symphony No.45 Haydn "Farewell"



Franz Joseph Haydn was a court composer in the service of Count Esterhazy. One particular summer, the Count was staying in his summer palace for much longer than planned. The musicians that were part of the entourage were forced to leave their libido untamed and their wives at home and were extremely frustrated with the Count's prolonged stay. Haydn, empathizing with the musicians,

decided to help them convince the Count to go back. In the last movement of this symphony, the musicians leave one by one, packing their



scores and moving off stage. This proceeds for quite some time, until at last only two violins end the symphony. The Count, taking the hint, ordered to return soon after.



Well folks
That's all from me for another month.
Please keep your newsletter contributions rolling into me at rathbone@tpg.com.au

Keep safe,

In harmony
Tony Rathbone
Editor