KU-RING-GAI
MALE CHOIR

75 Years of History

1946 - 2021

By Tony Rathbone – 2021

[including material from SIXTY YEARS OF FOUR PART HARMONY: The History of the Ku-Ring-Gai Male Choir 1946 – 2006 by Terry Barrett]

The Ku-Ring-Gai Male Choir was established in 1946 by a small group of returned servicemen and others with a common love for singing.

1946 - 1960

The Choir has no record of the names of the men who comprised the original first membership group. It is more than likely that a significant number of the 27 members listed in the 1952 choir membership were also part of the initial group.

At that time, the Choir consisted of

- **8 First Tenors**
- **5 Second Tenors**
- **9 First Basses**
- **5 Second Basses**

Paul Nunns conducted the Choir, his and accompanist was V D Renshaw. Paul continued as conductor of the choir until 1960.

On 28th January 1952, the Choir auditioned for the ABC at studio 217 Woolworths Building Kings Cross. However, it seems that the management of the ABC did not find the choirs performance of "suitable entertainment value" to be recorded and broadcast. This did not discourage the Choir from entering the 1952 Railway Eisteddfod on the 27 November 1952, being placed first in the "over 16 voice section".

In those early days, the Choir practiced in the old timber school hall at St. Albans Church Lindfield on Monday evenings.



The concerts given by the choir during these early years were by request only and were conducted in church halls mainly on the Upper North Shore, but also including similar venues at Dee Why, Epping, Eastwood, and Strathfield. In May 1953 it was decided that unless the concerts were "definitely for charity" a fee of 10/6 ($1.05) would be charged for the Choirs services. During the 1950 the Choir averaged about 7-8 concerts a year.

On the 19th of September 1953, 23 members of the Choir took part in the Sydney Eisteddfod, obtaining a mark of 233/300, a merit pass.

During 1953 and 1954 the Choir struggled to maintain membership, with numbers falling to 24 and 22 respectively, with only 12-15 members attending practice on a regular basis. The "Summary of Events" for 1954 showed that the Choir only performed 5 concerts that year.

At the Choir's 1954 Christmas Party a son of one of the members performed a bracket of numbers on the piano, his name was Roger Woodward, then only about 12 years of age, but from all accounts already demonstrating the prodigious talent that ensured his success as one of the world's great pianists. Roger continued to be involved as a guest artist with the Choir for several more years.

Other artists who regularly performed with the Choir during this period included.
Muriel Hawkins – Soprano
Mildred Dudley – Elocutionist
Bert Ayres- violinist.

In February 1955, the members agreed that the Choir should "widen our field of activities by letting other charitable organisations know that we are available to assist them in their concert programs". As a result, during 1955 the Choir performed some 14 concerts, including the ANZAC Service at Linfield, two concerts at the TPI Club, a concert at the War Veterans Village at Narrabeen, a performance at the Royal Historical Society's Christmas Party and a concert at St. Albans Hall Lindfield in aid of Carlingford Homes.

September 1956, the first mention of a uniform for the choir appears in the minutes. It is noted that two dozen ties had been ordered for the members, with each member paying 6/9d for his own tie.

In 1959 the Choir managed to present only 5 concerts plus another 4 performances in a support role. For these events, the Choir averaged only 16 members per performance.

On 15th May 1960 saw the Choir play a supporting role in the inaugural concert of the Ku-ring-gai Chamber Orchestra. In the minutes of 6th June 1960, it was noted that: *"nine members attended the St Albans Church Hall, which was very disappointing to those present being unable to practice owing to insufficient numbers and not having any music. New member Mr. Ted Fryer".*

History has shown that Ted was not to discouraged by this inauspicious start to his involvement with the Choir. Ted was a World War II Veteran and served in the Royal Australian Navy and was one of saved when the HMAS Parramatta was sunk on route to Tobruk on 27th November 1941. Eight months later he had to abandon the HMAS Nestor after it was bombed and severely damaged off the south west coast of Crete.



Ted finally resigned as a member of the Choir in July 2005, a membership of 45 years (the longest recorded) serving as Treasurer for 28 years from 1970 to 1998.

July 1960 the Choir's conductor Paul Nunns died suddenly. The minutes record that he had been the conductor "since the earliest days of the choir."

On 14th November Mr Les Buck was welcomed as the new conductor. Les was to guide and develop the choir until he retired on medical grounds in late 1967. In early November, the Choir performed its only concert for the year at West Pymble Congregational Church.

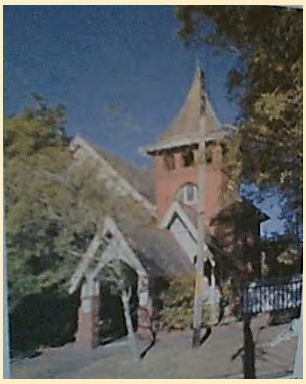
1961 – 1970

In early February 1961, the Choir welcomed a new accompanist Mrs Lillian Sharpham. This proved to be a long and successful relationship lasting over 16 years. The involvement of other members of the Sharpham family continues to this day. Lillian's nephew, Ernest Sharpham joined the choir in 1993, followed by his son Bruce in 2003. Bruce is still an active member of the Choir. Ernest who often performed as a soloist with the Choir, even while in his 80's, finally retired in 2006.

During the early 60's there was a concerted effort to increase the membership. This included arranging for articles to be placed in the North Shire "Courier" and North Shore "Times" and organising a radio appeal on station 2GB. However, membership numbers continued to hover in the mid-twenties, with practice nights attracting less than half that number.



2GB



At the end of 1963, because of a decision to demolish the St. Albans Hall, the Choir moved to the Lindfield Methodist Hall for its regular practice. That location was to become the home of the Choir for the best part of twenty years.

During this period major concerts were few and far between, with the Choir mainly assisting at local church services.

Choir records contain a copy of a program from a successful concert in August 1962 at the Turramurra Methodist Church featuring Meg Temple soprano and Beryl Potter pianist. Beryl had been performing as a guest artist with the Choir from at least 1958 and continued performing with the Choir throughout the sixties.

Members of the Choir were very pleased when Beryl renewed her association with the Choir after many years when she acted as guest accompanist in September 2005.

Towards the end of the decade the number of concerts performed by the Choir increased. In 1968 the Choir participated in 6 concerts, St. Giles Church of England Greenwich. Mosman Civilian Widows, Lakemba Church of England, East Roseville Church of England, Roseville Bowling Club, and the Masonic Lodge Fairfield.

Following Les Buck's retirement Bob Vincent, previously from the disbanded Wollstonecroft Male Choir, became the conductor and was to direct the Choir for the next 5 years.

The Secretary's report for 1969 records that the Choir participated in 9 concerts during the year and

finished the year with just 16 members.

During the early years of the 70's there appears to have been a conscious effort to increase the proportion of concerts specifically aimed at senior citizens and performed in nursing homes and retirement villages.

It was about this time that Mrs Meg Fox, comedienne and vocalist began a very long successful and valued association as a featured artist. Meg, in partnership with vocalist Beryl Ewing, was very popular with audiences. Meg continued to perform with the Choir for the best part of thirty years.

In 1970 Bill Parker resigned as treasurer, having held the position



for 10 years. The responsibility for this function was taken up by Ted Fryer, who became the longest serving treasurer in the history of the Choir, finally resigning in 1998 after 28 years in the job.

1971 – 1980

During 1971 the Choir gave 13 performances, which was a record for the Choir. The record was again broken the next year with 14 performances, with about half the concerts conducted in retirement villages or nursing homes. These busy schedules were achieved despite the membership remaining at about 18-20 during the period.

Between 1974 and 1978 two members of the Choir, Cliff Gartrell and D. Coote shared the responsibilities of music director and conductor until a permanent replacement could be found.

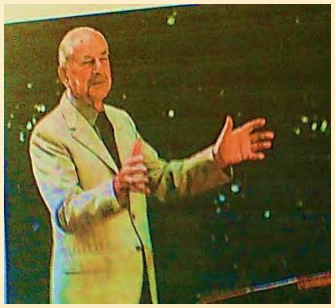
In late 1976 Lillian Sharpham informed the Choir that she had finally decided to retire after 16 years as accompanist. The choir was very fortunate that Mrs Lucy Gartrell, Cliff's wife, was able to take on that role and she continued in that position until 1985. Following the retirement of Lucy Gartrell, Dorothy Bennett joined the Choir as accompanist and served in that role for the next three years.

Choir papers record that on 27th January 1979 "an excellent organist and conductor who had conducted the Roseville Lord St. Church



Choir" was approached to consider taking on the role of conductor for the Choir. That conductor was in fact Paul Whiting who at the time was not able to take up the position because of University studies. Fortunately for the Choir, Paul must have found the offer tempting because he finally became the Choir's conductor some 21 years later!

The Choir was nevertheless fortunate to gain the services of another conductor Jim Waters who



was to have a significant influence on the direction of the Choir over the next two decades.

Jim had been involved with Choir's for many years. In the 1950's he established

the Hawkesbury Choral Society. During the 1960's he led the lane Cove Municipal Choir to four wins in the City of Sydney Choral Championships. Jim also undertook to rearrange many choral works in the Choir's repertoire to better match the needs of four-part male singers. Many of these arrangements are still sung by the Choir.

On the 17th March 1980 members of the Choir were saddened to hear that ex member Frank Underwood had passed away. Frank had been a member of the Choir for over 32 years and was one of the original members when the Choir was first assembled in 1946.

Between 1971 and 1980 the Choir operated on a financial year reporting cycle. The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 9 July 1980 indicate that the annual donation for the use of the church hall would be $20.00. The Treasurers report showed a credit balance of $162.54. Membership of the Choir then totalled 20 plus Lucy Gartrell accompanist and associate artists Meg Fox and Beryl Ewing. Eleven concerts had been performed during the previous 12 months.

1981 – 1990

Unfortunately, most of the official records of the Choir for the period 1981 to 1995 cannot be located so the comings and goings of the Choir and its concert programs during that period have been difficult to assemble. However, from the odd material that is available it is clear that this period was a very busy and productive one under the musical direction of Jim Waters.

In February 1983, the Choir's then Secretary Cliff Gartrell, produced a brief "History of Ku-ring-gai Male Choir". Cliff had been a member during that whole period, being listed in the 1952 records as a first tenor. It is also possible that Cliff was in fact a foundation member.

Cliffs contribution to the life and success of the Choir were significant and long lasting. He not only undertook the roles of secretary, conductor, and historian with enthusiasm, but he was also responsible for obtaining one item that is still in use by the Choir today.

Cliff decided that he needed something to stand on, in order to be seen by all members of the Choir. Being a handyman, he constructed a stool out of scrap timber. For added comfort he covered the top with an off cut of carpet that he "found" at Northhaven Nursing Home, Turramurra, then one of the concert venues. That conductor's stool still travels with the Choir to all our concerts.

Early in the decade, The Choir moved its practice venue from Lindfield to the Uniting Church Hall, Congham Street, West Pymble. The



practice night was finally changed from Monday to Tuesday night in about 1992. By 1995 the Choir comprised about 30 members.

During the early 80's Cath Waters (Jim's wife) became the Choir's



Publicity Officer, and as a result regular item began appearing in local newspapers, in particular the "St Ives Village News" and the "North Shore Advocate". In the main these articles emphasised the Choir's need for more members, particularly tenors. The shortage of tenors remains a problem to this day.

It was about this time that Jim Water's son and daughter-in-law prepared a poster calling for new



members, particularly tenors. The poster, which was distributed widely throughout the district, featured two singing birds each holding handkerchiefs, a reference no doubt to Luciano Pavarotti who was then at the peak of his career.

During 1984 Beryl Ewing, after many years as associate artist, indicated that she would not be able to continue performing with the Choir. Fortunately, the Choir was able to acquire the services of



Wendy Dalton who was introduced by Eric Barlow, a member and long-time supporter of the Choir. Thus began a long term and valued association with the Choir that continued for over 20 years. In March 2002 Wendy received the Premier's Individual Award for Outstanding Services to the Community and New South Wales in recognition of her services to the aged.

In 1988 the Choir obtained the



services of a new accompanist, Pam Cornish. Pam was to continue as the Choir's accompanist until 1999. Pam's father was Choir member Phil Skinner, an accomplished mandolin and banjo player who often accompanied the choir in some of its pieces as well as performing as a solo artist. Phil lived at "Kamilaroy" a retirement home at Lane Cove, and for a number of years it became the venue for the choirs first concert of the year.

In June 1988, the Choir comprised 27 members plus Pam Cornish, and associate artists Meg Fox and Wendy Dalton. Wendy finally retired as full time Associate Artist in July 2006.

As choir members increased, a number of performance venues had to be discontinued due to space availability. Included on the program during that period was a weekend away, singing at the Mount Eymard Retirement Village, Harbison on the Moss Vale Road south of Bowral on a Saturday night. A baked dinner was served before the concert. So much for singing on an empty stomach.

1991 - 1996

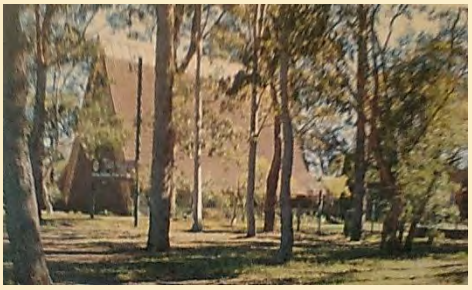
The Choir in 1992 with Jim Waters, Conductor, Pam Cornish, (right front) accompanist, and Meg Fox (left front) vocalist and entertainer.



Long distance travel was clearly not a barrier for some enthusiastic members of the Choir. Although Pam Cornish later moved to Wyee (Lake Macquarie) she "never missed a Tuesday night practice or concert). It was because of Pam's move to Wyee, and her work commitments, that the practice/concert nights were changed from Monday to Tuesday. Furthermore in 1994 two long time serving members of the Choir, Maurice Wheeler, the assistant conductor, and George Coggings, compere, had moved to Springwood but continued to travel to West Pymble every Tuesday for practice. At the same time, on several occasions Wendy Dalton returned to Sydney from Cleveland, Ohio, where her husband had been transferred, in order to meet her concert commitments.

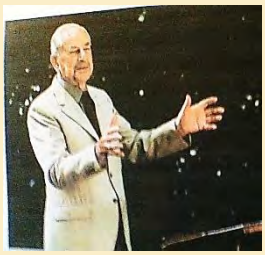
By the mid 90's publicity for the Choir indicated that the concert program had become very similar to that existing today with about 18 concerts per year mainly in retirement villages with a few special concerts. For example, in November 1994 the Choir participated with the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra and various dance groups in a concert arranged by the Ku-ring-gai Performing Arts Committee.

Towards the end of the 90's the Choir again moved its practice



venue, this time from West Pymble to the Uniting Church, Kissing Point Road Turramurra.

In the 19 years as Musical Director and Conductor Jim Waters greatly improved the Choir's performances and reputation. During those years, each performance by the Choir commenced with their signature tune, a special arrangement of "Finlandia" with opening words "Here in this place we greet you with a song,



Music our theme, the Universal Tongue". Jim Waters enthusiasm and dedicatiobn to choral music and the community over many years was recognised in 1994 when he was awarded an OAM in the Australia Day Honours List.

The Choir's fiftieth Anniversary Concert was held at the Turramurra Uniting Church Auditorium on the 19th October 1996. The concert also featured the Mirrabooka Singers



and the Sydneysiders Men's Barbershop Chorus (Note: your editor Tony Rathbone sang that night with the Sydneysiders Barbershop Chorus). The Master of Ceremonies was Gordon Boyd.

In October 1997 the Choir, conducted by Jim Waters and



accompanied by Pam Cornish, attended the Powerhouse Studios in Alexandria to produce a CD "A Choir Sings". The CD contained 17 songs ranging from "Kentucky Babe" and "De Animals a Cumin" to "Speed Your Journey" and "Where E'er You Walk". The fact that 8 of the songs had been arranged by Jim Waters to suit the needs of a four-part (TTBB) male choir reflects the extent of Jim's influence on the musical direction of the Choir.

In late 1997, Jim Waters indicated



that he would not be able to continue as conductor and musical director beyond the end of the year. As a result, on the 9th December, a special farewell concert was arranged to formally recognise Jim's invaluable contribution to the life of the Choir over some 19 years. The concert was held at Pennant Hills Public School, with the Choir being supported by the Pennant Hills Public School Choir, and the Pennant Hills High School Band.

At the Christmas Party in December 1997 Meg Fox was presented with a pendulum clock in recognition of her thirty years of service as an



associated artist with the Choir. The clock had been made by Choir member Alex Moses and



featured a hand beaten copper face showing the name of the Choir, a figure on a music box representing Meg, and a piano with an articulated lid.

Following the retirement of Jim Waters, the Choir obtained the services of Michael Khlentzos who had previously conducted "The Sentinels". The Choir was also enhanced by the addition of some new members who had been part of that group.

In a new development the Choir commenced a program of daytime concerts aimed at different audiences, mainly pensioner groups. Unfortunately, because of work and family commitments, this initiative was not popular with many of the members and was not continued beyond 2000.

Prior to 1998 the Choir's uniform consisted of a dark business suit,
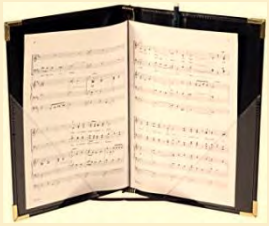


white shirt, and red bow tie. A red over-sized floppy quarto folder was used to hold the sheet music. It was during Michael's period as conductor that he initiated a project to obtain a new and distinctive uniform for the Choir.

It was also agreed that the new uniform should include a unique pocket. A suitable design was developed by Choir member Dick Glover and agreed to by Choir members.



Having agreed on the uniform, the Choir approached the Ku-ring-gai Council for a contribution towards the purchase of jackets and ties with a view to enhancing the appearance and stature of the Choir at performances. It was pointed out to the Council that any donations received by the Choir for performances were in turn donated to a number of charities. As a result, the Council provided a grant of $2,800.00 and the Choir obtained 35 monogrammed jackets and a similar number of yellow ties.

To compliment the new uniform, new music folders featuring the Choir's new monogram were required and donated by Wendy and David Dalton.



Following the retirement of accompanist Pam Cornish in early 1999 the Choir obtained the services of firstly, Jane Stewart (1999), then Serena Carmel (2000-01) and finally Grace Edwards-Barnetson who has provided outstanding support to the Choir since 2002.



At its Annual General meeting in February 2000 the Choir passed a vote of thanks to Michael Khlentzos (Conductor) for his efforts during the previous two years.

The Choir then appointed Dr. Paul Whiting as Conductor and Paul has continued to guide and direct the Choir from that date.



2001 – 2006

In 2001 the Choir moved from Turramurra to its present location at St. Swithuns Church Hall, Pymble. At the time, it was agreed that the Choir would make an annual donation of $300.00 to the Church for the use of the hall.



In 2001 the Choir performed at the International Year of the Volunteers function at the Willoughby Town Hall in front of an appreciate audience of 600. In a letter to the Secretary, David Magnusson the Federal Member for Bradfield, Dr. Brendan Nelson stated:

"The response of the audience of 600 both on the evening and in subsequent comments and correspondence to me reflects the great appreciation of those privileged to hear the choir perform"

In May 2002 Dick Glover was instrumental in organizing a Charity Concert by the Choir in the auditorium of the Sydney Grammar Preparatory School, St. Ives. The purpose of the concert was to raise funds for the Sir Eric Woodward Memorial School, a school for profoundly disabled children. Guest artists included Kamahl, flautist Janet Webb, vocalist Caron-Anne Petherick and Warwick Allsopp, and the string quartet from the Pymble Ladies Collage. The concert was a great success and $18,000 was raised for the school from ticket sales and refreshments.





The School Principal also reported that the publicity about the work of the school provided by the concert flyers raised another $10,000."

In July 2003 Dick Glover's contribution to the life of the Choir, together with his other community activities, were formally recognised when he was awarded a Centenary Medal "for long service to the community, the local choir and fundraising".



In 2004 the Choir adopted a new constitution and finally became incorporated, a move that had been proposed seven years earlier.

Although some variations do occur in the concert program from time to time, more recently the Choir has consolidated its program around a core group of retirement villages and nursing homes.
In addition to the 14 or so concerts performed each year in the retirement facilities, a concert by the Choir is now a regular inclusion in the Macquarie University's "Music on Winter Sundays" program. In August 2005 the concert attracted an audience of 450, featured guest artists Penny Chilton, (soprano), Su-Lin Leong (mezzo soprano) and Warren Fisher (tenor).

The first special concert of 2006 was performed at the Hornsby RSL Club on 22 April as a "Tribute to ANZAC".





Featured artists included mezzo soprano Vivienne Powell, tenor Kenneth Plant and our own Wendy Dalton all accompanied by Grace Edwards-Barnetson. The concert was well received by the audience of over 250 and the Choir received a donation of $1,000 from the club for later distribution to our supported charities.



On the 30th June 2006, the Choir celebrated its sixtieth anniversary with a charity concert held at the Ravenswood School for Girls in the impressive Centenary Centre auditorium. The aim of the concert was to raise funds for SPELD, a charity devoted to assisting children and adults with specific learning difficulties.

The featured guest artists were the internationally acclaimed mezzo soprano Andrea Catzel, also Wendy Dalton and Grace Edwards-Barneston performing both as an accompanist and soloist. An appreciative and enthusiastic audience of 200 attended, and $2,000 was raised for SPELD.







During the course of the evening the contributions of seven members, each with fifteen years or more service with the Choir, were formally recognised with the presentation of certificates Those receiving the certificates included:



David Armstrong
Tim Moore
Norman Lees
Arthur Baillie
Ted Moore
Jim Fergusson
Barry Alsop

2006 was a busy 60th anniversary year. The Choir has 55 active members, of which 40 on average attend Tuesday night practice. 12 concerts were performed in retirement villages and three special concerts (ANZAC at Hornsby, Macquarie University, Eastwood Music Club).

Associate Artists

The Choir had nine (9) associate artists perform with them throughout the 60th anniversary year, these included Wendy Dalton, Warren Fisher, Marlene Vaughan, Vivian Powell, Karen Fisher, Kenneth Plant, Xiaomei Sun, Sherrie Harris and Andrea Catzel. Each of these performers enhanced the Choir's concert repertoire so much, that it is hard to describe in a few words the impact of their contributions.

After twenty (20) years serving as an active associate artist with the Choir, Wendy Dalton, decided to retire. The Choir wishes Wendy all the best for the future.



HAPPY FEET

A group of 11 Choir members, together with other choirs around Sydney, participated in a recording session for the animated movie "Happy Feet" and raised $990.00 for the choir.



The events in 2007 were influenced by plans that were initiated in 2006, for example the proposal to produce a CD. Such a decision was significant and contentious and took many months of discussion and reviews before the Choir became committed to taking the step.

During 2007 the choir gave 13 concert performances at



retirement villages and 3 Major concerts:

1. Macquarie University.
   Featured artists were Warren & Karen Fisher.

2. Hornsby RSL Club on Saturday 21 April "Special ANZAC Concert.
   Featured artists were Vivienne Powell and tenor Dennis Gillespie.

3. Recorded a 15 song CD entitled "The Best of the Ku--ring-gai Male Choir".

In July, the Choir was approached by Quail Television to provide them with a record of the Choir in rehearsal and in concert so that they could consider putting together a pilot of various choirs performing a range of music. Bruce Sharpham videoed the choir and a DVD was put together, however Quail Television decided not to proceed.

Unfortunately, during the year, the Choirs accompanist Grace Edwards-Barneston became ill and then later in the year fractured her arm. The Choir was grateful to Beryl Potter, Norma Williams and Sumiko Yamamura who very capably filled in at short notice at rehearsals, concerts, and CD recordings.



With the retirement of Wendy Dalton, the Choir was very fortunate in securing the services of The special concerts were:
Turramurra Uniting Church: A fund raising concert for the Ku-ring-gai Lantern Club in support of deaf and blind children. $2,300 was raised.

Hornsby RSL Club: Sunday 17 May
Featured artists:
Warren Fisher (Tenor)
Karen Bruce (Soprano)

Macquarie University: An audience of over 400 was the best attendance of all the winter concerts.
Sherie Harris, Ann Finlay and Marlene Vaughan to perform as soloists at the Choirs retirement village concerts.

2008

Orange Weekend Concert 12/13 April. 27 members of the Choir and their wives travelled to Orange for a combined concert with the Orange Mail Voice Choir on Saturday evening followed by the afterglow, On

Sunday morning the Blessing of the Harvest service at a local vineyard followed by a BBQ.
This was the first time in 30 years that the Choir had travelled outside the Sydney environs for a concert.

On 22nd November 22 members of the Choir attended with a total of 300 male voices from 8 choirs the Male Choirs Association of Australia "Maestro and the Men" massed choirs, festival in Canberra

2009

11 concerts were performed at retirement villages and 4 special concerts with total audiences for the year of over 1600 and raised over $7,000 at these concerts (this included $2,300 at the Ku-ring-gai lantern club concert). donations of $1,200 each to the following charities:

1. **Braille music camp for blind children.**
2. **National Breast Cancer Foundation.**
3. **Spastic Centre**

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Macquarie University: An audience of over 400 was the best attendance of all the winter concerts.

Killara Uniting Church: A combined concert with Orange Male Voice Choir – The church was full of an appreciative audience. Both choirs also took part in the church service the following morning.



During the year the Choir was saddened by the passing of two former conductors Jim Waters (1979-1997) and Michael Khlentzos (1997-1999). The Choir sang at the memorial service for Jim.

The first event of the year 2010 was the funeral of Ted Fryer. Ted was a long-standing and very loyal member of the choir. Ted (as a returned serviceman from the Second World War) – was thought to have been the last member who could have been one of the originals even though Ted wasn't in the choir when it started in 1946.



The Choirs Annual Concert at Hornsby RSL Club on Sunday 4th July with Sophia Mitchell (Mezzo Soprano and Jenny Bonner (Soprano) as the guest artists
Once again, the Choir performed as part of the "Winter Sunday Series" at Macquarie University. The concert was held in the recently re-furbished Macquarie Theatre. Guest artists were Warren Fisher (Tenor) Karen Bruce (Soprano)

Male Choirs Association concert on 14 November 2010 at the Sydney Town Hall. Getting ready for this event did have quite an impact. Apart from the performance itself and the rehearsals on the Friday and Saturday, the choir had fewer

Retirement Village this year, but had two additional practices

2011

This year the Choir performed 10 concerts at retirement villages plus two additional practice sessions with Alpha Gregory.

Sunday 14th August Annual Concert at the Hornsby RSL Club the featured artists were Warren Fisher (Tenor) and Karen Bruce (Soprano).
Year.

In **2012** the Choir performed 16 concerts, including a very good performance at the Ryde Eisteddfod where they came second. Choir membership stabilised to around 50 members.

On Sunday 12th August the Choir performed their annual concert at the Hornsby RSL Club. Featured artists were Sherrie Harris (Soprano) and Salina Bussier (Soprano).

On 17th November the Choir participated in the MCAA Festival held at the Dallas Brooks Centre Melbourne. The massed choir was conducted by the international renown Alwyn Humphreys.



This year the Choir finally acquired an electronic piano thanks to the Committee's securing a donation from the Ku-ring-gai Council for this purpose. Joe Blansjaar of the choir generously donated a very fine amplifier and speaker system for use with the piano. This has made a great improvement in sound.

2013

In April the Choir was approached by The Sydney Male Choir to join with them in the Anzac Day Dawn Service in Martin Place, as many of their members were overseas singing at the dawn service at Villers-Bretonneux, France. 28 of the choir participated in this most moving service



On June 3, the Choir performed for the Killara Music Club with Anita Kyle and Naomi Giselle as their guest artists. The Ravenswood Centenary Centre was well filled by the Music Club members and the performance was enthusiastically received.





The Choir performed, once again, as part of the "Winter Sunday Series" at Macquarie University together with another choir. The concert was held on 14th July in the recently re-furbished Macquarie Theatre. The guest artist was Anita Kyle.

The Annual Concert at Hornsby RSL Club on 11th August was a great success with Naomi Giselle and Anita Kyle as the guest artists. The auditorium





was well filled with an enthusiastic audience. The financial result of the concert was an increase over the previous year.

A charity concert in aid of Streetwork was held at Killara Uniting Church on 15th October and featured guest artist Elizabeth Hilton. An enthusiastic audience raised over $900 for Streetwork and the evening was capped off by an excellent supper.



Lane Cove Music Club was the venue for the Choirs last concert of the year on 3rd December. Anita Kyle and Sophia Mitchell were the guest artists.

The Choir had a busy year at Retirement Villages, with eight engagements (two less than last year). Funds received from these performances are wholly donated to charity. This year the Choir decided to support two charities - the Braille Music Camp for Blind Children at Mittagong and Streetwork – a new charity for the choir, which is dedicated to working with homeless and destitute youth on the North Shore – particularly in the Chatswood – Willoughby area.

2014 like most years was a challenging and yet exciting year for the Choir. From the list of concerts venues, the Choir lost a number some of which the Choir have enjoyed singing at for several years. Probably the most significant venue missed was the winter performance at Macquarie University which was an event that the men of the choir always enjoyed. Gleneon and Lourdes were two retirement villages which were also withdrawn, however Rohini village at Turramurra replaced one of the losses.

At the Buckland Springwood concert $500 was raised for the aid of those who suffered losses in the terrible fires in the previous year – this was an initiative of the Choirs past president Ross Smith).



Most of the work during the year was focused on new music to perform at the festival of choirs to be held in Canberra at the Australian institute of sport arena in November, where over 400 men performed with an audience of over 1300 people.

Another special concert was also held at Tallwoods Hornsby to honour retiring member Dick Glover and present him with a life membership award. A small program for about an hour was presented. Dick's families were well represented and put on a nice afternoon tea.



The annual concert at the Hornsby RSL was a very special event for the Choir where they managed to achieve an audience of over 400. Featured artists were Anita Kyle, Naomi Gisele,

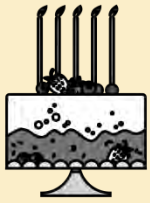
2015

In terms of actual performances, a 

very important early year commitment for the choir on ANZAC Day, 2015, was the Choirs participation at the Dawn Service at Hornsby, marking the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli Landings in World War One. It was an honour for the choir to join in this community service and to subsequently also sing at a breakfast held at Hornsby RSL Club.

Through this year, A Medley of Songs from the First World War arranged by Alwyn Humphries has again been regularly included in the Choirs concert programs and it continues to be very popular with audiences.

Six concerts were performed at retirement villages which represents a further drop of two concerts from the previous year.

At Buckland Retirement Village at 
Springwood, the Choir received a very special welcome this year together with an anniversary cake to mark the 


20th consecutive year that the choir has performed there.

During 2015, donations kindly given by the retirement villages are again being wholly donated to the charities: The Braille Music Camp for blind children at Mittagong and Streetwork.

On 22 August 2015, the Choir joined with the Orange Male Voice Choir in a charity concert at All Saints Anglican Church, Canowindra in aid of the Virginia Cullane Cancer Foundation A church service at Orange on the Sunday followed by lunch.

The Choirs annual Concert at Hornsby RSL Club in September was again very successful with Anita Kyle as our soloist.



At Christmas time 2015 - 25 members sang carols and some choir items at a Christmas Evangelical Church Service at the Dougherty Centre Chatswood

2016

The 70th 'Anniversary Year' of the Ku-ring-gai Male Choir. In addition to the usual activities and performances a special "70th Anniversary' brochure printed entitled 'Seventy Years of Four- Part Harmony'.

A '70th Anniversary Dinner' at the North Ryde RSL Club

The Choir performed at seven Retirement Villages this year – an increase of one over last year

The Choirs accompanist Grace Edwards-Barnetson earned a good rest and travelled to Scotland for a holiday during the year During Grace's absence the Choir was fortunate enough to have Louise Scott play for them. Louise quickly adapted to the choir's needs and her musical skills were greatly appreciated.



In May the Choir returned to the Aminya Retirement Village at Baulkham Hills after many years of absence and were warmly welcomed back.

St Stephens Anglican Church Willoughby invited the Choir to sing at their Anzac Day Service

In July several Choir members attended a masterclass conducted by American Dr Jerry Blackmore at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church Sydney. Here they worked on two new songs 'When I was young and twenty' and 'Loveliest of trees, the cherry now'. Dr. Blackmore's warming up exercises will be remembered as 'very different' and challenging.

The annual Hornsby RSL concert was a great success with 265 tickets being sold – the best result ever.

In August the Great Western Choir invited the Choir to sing at a joint concert at St Marys.

On the 2nd of September the Choir was invited to sing on the Channel 7 'Morning Show'. This was quite an experience, and it was fascinating to see what goes on behind the scenes at a television studio.

As a result of the 70th Anniversary Charity Concert at the Uniting Church Willoughby in October, a donation of $1624 was made to 'Streetwork' organization which is one of the two charities the Choir support – the other being the Braille Music Camp for blind children at Mittagong.

On 23rd October the Choir was invited to sing three songs at the 'Music Clubs of Australia Memorial Concert at the Uniting Church Turramurra.

In October, once again, Rasa and Joe Blansjaar (an ex-member) invited the choir to their home in Medlow Bath. It was a beautiful spring day – the garden was magnificent and the food sumptuous.



The Ryde Eastwood Music Club concert was conducted in November at the North Ryde Community Centre

On the 6th December, instead of having a traditional Christmas Dinner



function, an informal get together



was organised in the St Swithun's church hall Pymble. Several members or groups performed various musical items or said a poem and a great 'fun' night was had by all. Supper followed



However, the BIG news this year is that on Australia Day, the Choirs esteemed Musical Director Dr. Paul Whiting was awarded the OAM – Medal of Australia in the General Division for service to the community through Choral Music.

2017

The Choir sang at seven Retirement Villages and were again invited to perform at the Anzac Memorial Service at St. Stephen's Anglican Church Willoughby.

In August the annual Concert was held at the Hornsby RSL: the result was an outstanding success both in attendance and financially.

A lot of work went into the Wollongong MCAA Concert held in October. The Choir learnt a few new songs and polished up a few from the archives for this event

2018

There were several highlights The Lane Cove Music Club, the Anzac Service at St Stephens Church in Chatswood,

The Choir's repertoire improves every year. Popular new songs mastered this year include Bird Songs at Eventide, Waiata Poi, The Huntsman's Chorus, Calon Lan, and Colours of a Mother's Heart that is a moving tribute to WW1 soldiers introduced to the Choir by the Orange Male Choir.

The Choir performed at eight retirement villages including Buckland in Springwood. It also contributed to the Anzac celebration at St Stephen's Willoughby.

On Saturday September 22nd the Choir was invited to perform at the 100th anniversary of the first direct telegraph message to Australia from Wales.



2019

The Choir had a most successful year, with a full programme of 11 concerts, comprising 6 retirement villages, one less than 2018 as Lindfield gardens, a valued venue for many years, was unable to accommodate the Choir this year.

Another concert was a most enjoyable event with the Orange Male Choir who were the guests of the Choir in April 2019.

A well-supported fund raiser at the Hornsby RSL,

The Lane Cove Music Club, the Anzac Service at St Stephens Church in Chatswood,

A special event concert to support one of the Choir's charities, Streetwork.

The Choir are busy rehearsing songs selected for a spectacular event later in 2020 when there will be a Male Choirs Festival in the Sydney Town Hall.

An important project initiated by the Committee recently is to review the Choir's Constitution so it will up to date and more suited to the Choir's future. The proposed revised Constitution was approved by the Committee.

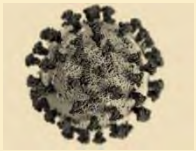
The year ended with a splendid Christmas Dinner for 70 people at the Hornsby RSL. and the evening was a great success with superb food decorations, formalities and presentations, and hearty renditions of two bird songs, Birdsongs at Eventide and Sing a Song of Sixpence.

A celebration of 20 years of membership with the Choir this year was also held at the dinner with certificates and special name tags awarded to 4 members of the Choir.

Bill Flynn Sandy Potter
Bob Sadler Paul Whiting

2020

A most difficult year, with a full programme of 12 concerts scheduled for 2020. One concert was performed at the Aminya Retirement Village in Baulkham Hills on 3rd March 2020, all the other concerts programmed had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.



The Choir's repertoire continues to improve. A key to these improvements has been a series of 34 rehearsals conducted on the internet using Zoom technology. This programme was organised by the Choirs Music Director, 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. The membership of the Choir is holding up well, with 40 loyal and enthusiastic singers remaining ready to resume.

Especially important has been the programme 15 songs agreed to be sung at a concert in the Sydney

Town Hall, by the Male Choirs Association later this year. This has been deferred from November 2020 to October in 2021 due to the Pandemic

A major project in 2020 has been to review the Choir's Constitution, an old document that needed updating. After numerous drafts, discussions and suggestions from several 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 project this year has been to update and reorganise the Choir's website. 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.



The Choir's new newsletter, Grapevine, is also available on the web site. The introduction of the newsletter, Grapevine, is another initiative commenced in 2020, with monthly editions now being issued by the 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.



Louise Scott advised the Choir in the middle of 2020 that she would be unable to continue as the Choirs accompanist. Members wished Louse well in her future endeavours.

The Choirs committee have commenced a search for a replacement and hope to have a new appointee in place for the day the Choir resumes face to face rehearsals.

A most enjoyable Christmas Party was held at the Hornsby RSL on 1st December 2020, despite the Covid-19 concerns, with health precautions closely followed.

20 years of membership was celebrated by the awarding of certificates and special name tags to the following members of the Choir,

John Middleton John Gibson
Gerry Foley John Gallo



Due to health precautions the Choir was prohibited from singing this year. However, the superb soprano, Anita Kyle, accompanied by Paul Whiting, sang a bracket of songs, to help celebrate Christmas.

The Choir welcomed the new year hoping this will be a better year than 2020, a most difficult year for all choirs, as the Choir strived to keep connected and engaged to musical activities – despite Covid-19 restrictions.

The first weekly Zoom rehearsal this year took place on 2nd February 2021. Members were encouraged to participate in these rehearsals.



The first Committee Meeting for the year was held on 3rd February 2021. where preparations were made for the Choir's AGM on 9th March .

Tuesday, 9th March, the Choir



recommenced face to face rehearsal after a period of 12 months in recess due to the Covid 19 pandemic.



The AGM was completed in the first hour. The second hour was spent singing several songs from the Red Song Book.



Tuesday 16th March, the Choir welcomed their new accompanist Hank Xiang a well-known concert pianist. The Choir were extremely fortunate in obtaining his services.

On Saturday 19th June the Choir held their first concert for the year at the Killara Uniting Church. During





the performance the Choir sang thirteen songs, and these were supplemented by two vocal performances by Anita Kyle and the Choir's accompanist Hank Xiang.

The NSW Premier announced a further Covid19 lockdown, and the remainder of the Choir's concert schedule was cancelled.

The annual concert at the Hornsby RSL Club in October was also cancelled. The Choir decided to name this concert "The 75th Anniversary Concert" Another suggesting was to organise a "rousing" End-of-Year Dinner.

The MCAA Committee decided to cancel the proposed festival on the weekend of 30th-31st October 2021 with a view to deferring it, yet again, to the weekend of 30th April - 1st May 2022 at the Sydney Town Hall.

September 30th and the Choir continue to rehearse on Zoom and will continue until Covid19 restrictions are removed and they can resume face to face rehearsals once again.

To celebrate Christmas this year the Choir are organising a Christmas Dinner on Tuesday 30th November at the Hornsby RSL Club