

## Our Twentieth Anniversary Year

### Chorus Resumes on Tuesday 23 January

**Y**es, we return on January 23, refreshed and renewed following almost a month's break. And we need to be able to pick up the pace immediately because our first engagement is the traditional Citizenship Ceremony at City of Stirling, only three days ahead, Australia Day. We meet for the warm-up at 8.30 a.m.

As has become our tradition, **we wear our No 1 costume** and the songs we'll sing are:

*City of Stirling; Waltzing Matilda; Wonderful Day; Yesterday; My Country*

*Home Among the Gum Trees; High Hopes; I Still Call Australia Home; I Am Australian; Advance Australia Fair.*

And don't forget that Andrew and Wendy Blackmore are inviting singers and partners to their home after the ceremony to join them in a 'coffee morning afterglow.' Details and numbers on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### Annual Awards Night

**A**lmost 60 of us, members, former members, partners and guests filled the function room at the Charles Hotel on Tuesday 12 December for our Annual Awards Night. And what a great night it was!



As well as the food, there was friendship and harmony – vocal and personal. Under MD Kim Sebbage's direction the chorus sang all of this year's Christmas songs, together with our other new songs for 2017. These were obviously and enthusiastically enjoyed by the listeners.

John Brigatti presided over the evening in his usual relaxed fashion. (His best quip, when

giving the apologies, was 'and I don't know who else is missing – I can't even see who *is* here!')

The Chorusman of the Year was Derek Cook (pictured with President John) and the President's Cup was won by Terry Bruce. Hearty congratulations go to both of these gents.



In recognition of our Club arriving at its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary special '20 year' badges were also presented to Doug Davies, Doug Routley, John Nelson and Bruce Okely. There were two eligible, but absent, members: Graham Bishop and Pender Pedler and apologies had been received from both.

### More at 'The Mezz'

**O**n Saturday 9 December we returned to 'The Mezz' shopping centre to bring our Christmas songs to the shoppers, shopkeepers and passers-by.

There was a good roll-up of singers – and it was a special treat to have our baritone section once again so well represented with the return of both Francis Tay and Michael Verbrugge.

We must have sounded reasonably convincing because Ken Richens received two separate enquiries during the morning about future possible bookings. Once again, sincere thanks go to all who participated, with special thanks to our feature quartet, The Four Chordsmen.

### Subscriptions

**T**reasurer Doug reminds us that our \$80 quarterly subscription fell due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Thanks, Doug.

## Regis Aged Care, North Fremantle

What a fantastic evening it was, Friday 23 December at this modernised and impressive complex. The audience filled all the available chairs and space so the singers had to spend the whole show on the risers. (This was not the plan – but we managed.)



It was good to have our Music Director, Kim Sebbage, available to direct us and it seemed to this writer that our chorus singing was as good as, or possibly better than, our previous best this year. Certainly all the recent carolling has made us a lot more confident with our Christmas numbers. Thanks to all who contributed. The compliments from audience were overwhelmingly enthusiastic – and John Clayton faced a mini-rush for our CDs!

## Welcome New Member, Tom Clark



It was a real (too rare) pleasure to welcome Tom Clark into our membership on Tuesday 28 November. Here he is (above, left) receiving his set of music files and being received into membership by MD Kim Sebbage and President John Brigatti.

Tom has had a wide experience singing in major choirs in London and Perth and will be a most welcome addition to our baritone section.

## How It All Began

A gremlin crept into last month's paragraph about our early beginnings. The reference to our commencing in 1988 should have read '1998'. Apologies go to barbershop historians – and thanks to our founding President, Graham Bishop, for pointing out the error.

As part of the celebrations surrounding the end of the first decade in the history of the club and chorus a written history of the period 1998 to 2007, some 85 pages in length, was produced. An electronic copy, on CD, can be supplied by Yours Truly on request..

The first of what is intended to be a series of 12 brief summaries, touching highlights of our first 20 years, appears as an attachment to this newsletter.

## Rosters for January

*(Please make alternative arrangements if you are going to be unavailable. Please speak to John Friebe, if you feel you have been overlooked.)*

### Quartets and VLQs

#### 23 January

- (a) Aarnoudse, Lam, Verbrugge, Friebe
- (b) McGuire, Pedler, Tay, Mitchell, Blackmore

#### 30 January

- (a) Richards, T Bruce, Clee, Brigatti
- (b) Sebbage, Commerford, Cook, Clee, Durham

#### 6 February

- (a) Aarnoudse, Clayton, Geiles, Davies, Verbrugge, Routley, Nelson
- (b) McGuire, Richens, Tay, Brigatti

### Kitchen Assistants

- 23 January: Bowes, Lugg, Merrells
- 30 January: Lam, Richens, Friebe
- 6 February: Richards, T Bruce, Pedler

- Barberpole Cat for January: *My Wild Irish Rose*

## Engagements and Activities

*(Additions and alterations are shown in bold.)*

- Tuesday 23 January, 2018 – First meeting for 2018.
- Friday 26 January, 8.30 for 9 a.m. – Citizenship Ceremony at City of Stirling.

The above list should be regarded as 'subject to alteration.'

This newsletter is published monthly. Contributions and comments will be welcome. These should go to Bruce Okely, 60/7 Harman Road, Sorrento 6020. Phone: 9447 0719 Email also available.

Our chorus website is: <http://westcoastchordsmen.org.au>



# From the Archives

Organised men's barbershop singing in Australia had its origin in the visit by the Perth quartet, *The Four Notes*, to the 1984 Convention of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America Inc (SPEB-SQSA) at St Louis, Missouri. At the time *The Four Notes* (pictured below) was a well-known male quartet, originally formed by Laurie Russell a quarter of a century earlier, singing mainly traditional four-part male choral music – much of it accompanied on the piano.

With the passing of the years the personnel of the quartet had changed and, by the 1980s it regularly performed with Laurie Russell and Yours Truly singing first and second tenor, John Little singing bass and David Macgill singing baritone.

The members of the quartet were overwhelmed by the welcome at the 1984 St Louis Convention and were simply amazed at the organisation, the enthusiasm and the tremendously high standard of the singing that they heard. On their return to Perth three of the quartet members determined to try to interest Australian men in this music style. These three were David, John and the writer. With assistance from a former Canadian barbershopper, Wally Bucknell, they formed *Vocal Connection* and this quartet spearheaded the formation of Australia's first men's barbershop chorus, *Men in Harmony*, in 1985. John Christie stepped into the quartet when Wally left to take up work interstate. Yours Truly accepted the role of Music Director of the *Men in Harmony* chorus at its inception in 1985 and remained in that position until 1998. During those years, under leadership from Perth, the national association was formed, conventions and contests began. (And, incidentally, *Men in Harmony* won one Gold and two Silver Medals.) By 1998 the writer felt that there was a need for a chorus for those men who liked to sing barbershop – but did not wish to take part in further contests. A meeting of interested singers was called, which 20 men attended, and it was decided to proceed with the formation of this new chorus.



*Vocal Connection, circa 1986. From left: John Christie, Bruce Okely, John Little, David Macgill.*

A few highlights of that first year, 1998:

- Locating a rehearsal venue, the Churchlands Senior High School;
- Deciding on a 'cheap and cheerful' image, offering our services to nursing homes, churches and charities;
- Electing a Management Committee and choosing Graham Bishop as the President;
- Deciding to become the 'Westcoast Barbershop Harmony Club' and to sing as the 'Westcoast Chordsmen';
- Aiming to make social events, with food, a part of our regular calendar;
- Giving several programs, including combined concerts with the WA Primary Strings Orchestra and the WA Secondary Strings Orchestra;
- Participating in major fundraising efforts for the Heart Foundation.

– Bruce Okely