

Our Twentieth Anniversary Year

Weston Lodge, Hollywood

Thanks go to the 13 singers who provided the program at Weston Lodge, Hollywood on Friday 29 June. Our songs fitted in well with the 'movie' theme that was being promoted in the lodge for that week.

Notwithstanding our lack of recent match practice the singing went over well, and the residents loved it. For future occasions we'll have to be careful in matters like getting there on time and being 'switched on', ready to perform.

Changes Approaching?

A recent message from Dan Millgate, our BHA President, alerts our movement to the fact that the American Society, with whom the Australian movement is affiliated, has moved to open its membership to include women singers. Dan explains the Australian movement has yet to make a similar decision, but all the signs point that way.

Christmas in July Club Night

Tuesday 24 July is the evening when we remind ourselves of the repertoire that we'll be singing at our various outings in the lead up to Christmas. While this club night is not a public concert in any sense it is a happy taste of good things to come.

Here is the list of songs that we'll be singing: *Joy to the World; O Holy Night; In the Bleak Midwinter; Virgin Mary; Let There Be Peace; O Come all Ye Faithful.*

Citizenship Ceremony

Our next appointment for the City of Stirling is on Wednesday 25 July at 5.30 for 6.00 p.m. (the day after our 'Christmas in July') and the song list for the occasion is:

City of Stirling; I Have a Song to Sing (with voice-over); Waltzing Matilda; Coney Island Baby; My Country

Home Among the Gum Trees; Wonderful Day; I Still Call Australia Home; I Am Australian; Advance Australia Fair.

Quarterly Subscriptions

Treasurer Doug Routley reminds us that the quarterly subscriptions of \$80 fell due on 1 July. Thanks, Doug.

Some of the Wonders of Music

Over the past few months we have been investigating some of the wonders, facts, oddities and legends surrounding certain interesting aspects of music. Here are some reminders of topics that have been discussed as part of the series.

- No less a person than the great philosopher **Pythagoras** (4th Century BC) is credited with discovering the importance to music of the note we now refer to as 'the fifth' or 'the dominant' in our scale. And then he went on, by identifying the consecutive series of fifths, to define what we now know as our chromatic scale – that is, the series of 12 semitone intervals between any note and its upper or lower 'octave'.
- In the 1400 years following Pythagoras's breakthrough musicians struggled with the difficulty that no one had invented an effective system for writing music. This problem was solved, to a very large extent, in the 11th Century, by the monk **Guido of Arezzo** who added a red line to the existing 'ladder' of lines and gave his line a fixed pitch, which we now call 'F'. By doing this Guido was guiding all musicians, existing and future, in how to find the correct (same) pitch. Refinements in music-writing followed, but Guido's was the crucial step in making it possible for musicians to read and perform the work of other musicians.
- Pythagoras's system wasn't perfect and his series of perfect fifths doesn't land us exactly on the note sounding an octave higher. This discrepancy, called the '**Pythagorean Comma**', was eventually solved in the time of J S Bach (18th Century AD) – by tuning each note in the organ or other keyboard a

tiny bit ‘imperfectly’ so that the semitone intervals are all the same. Thus, music can be played in any key on such instruments – without having to provide for either having different notes for F# and Gb, for example, or constantly having to retune the instrument to cope with a different key.

- Bach is generally credited with convincing the musical world of the validity of this system by composing a series of preludes in each possible major and minor key. As though this monumental series of 24 preludes were not enough **Bach** repeated the exercise and published a second book of **24 preludes**. It seems that this was sufficient to persuade unbelievers – and so ‘The Well-Tempered Clavier’ as he called it, became the standard – for keyboard and fretted instruments (but not unaccompanied singers such as barbershoppers).
- The system of notes used in ‘Western’ music to create a scale is commonly called the ‘diatonic scale’ or the ‘heptatonic scale’ and it comprises eight notes which give us seven ascending intervals: tone, tone, semi-tone, tone, tone, tone, semi-tone. This forms what we call a ‘**major**’ scale. Most of our music uses this scale. Occasionally we use a minor scale and in this the third and sixth note are lowered.

(To be continued.)

Check Your Diary

Several changes have occurred in our program of future events. Please take careful note of this month’s list, particularly the items in **bold**. It would help if we let Ken Richens know, as soon as possible, if we’ll not be available for any event.

Rosters for July

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

Quartets and VLQs

3 July

McGuire, Richens, Tay, Friebel

McGuire, Clayton, Okely (bari), Nelson

10 July

Richards, Commerford, Clee, Blackmore

17 July

McGuire, Merrells, Pedler, Tay, Durham, Routley

24 July

Sebbage, Okely, Tay, Brigatti

31 July

McGuire, Lugg, Lam, Clee, Lehmann, Mitchell

7 August

McGuire, Richens, Tay, Friebel

Kitchen Assistants

3 July: Lehmann, Lam, Routley

10 July: Richens, Friebel, Tay

17 July: Clayton, Nelson, Richards

24 July: Clee, Blackmore, Friebel

31 July: Merrells, Pedler, Durham

7 August: Routley, Richards, Commerford

- Barberpole Cat for July: *Down Our Way*

Engagements and Activities

(Additions and alterations are shown in bold.)

- Tuesday 24 July - "Christmas in July" Club Night.
- Wednesday 25 July, 5.30 for 6.00 p.m. – Citizenship Ceremony at City of Stirling.
- ~~Sunday 5 August, 1.15 for 2 p.m. – Participation in afternoon Church Service at St Peter and Emmaus Church. (See 2 September.)~~
- Wednesday 22 August, 5.30 for 6.00 p.m. – Citizenship Ceremony at City of Stirling.
- **Sunday 2 September, 8.45 for 9.30 a.m. – Participation in Church Service at St Peter and Emmaus Church.**
- Wednesday 12 to Wednesday 19 September – BHA Convention & Harmony Academy, Adelaide.
- **Friday 28 September, 1.45 for 2.30 p.m. – Aegis St Michaels, 53 Wasley St., North Perth.**
- Tuesday 2 October - Club Spring Social Evening.
- Wednesday 10 October, 5.30 for 6.00 p.m. – Citizenship Ceremony at City of Stirling.
- Sunday 21 October, 2.15 for 3.00 p.m. – Concert at North Beach Anglican Church.
- Wednesday 14 November, 5.30 for 6.00 p.m. – Citizenship Ceremony at City of Stirling.
- Monday 19 November, 12.15 for 1 p.m. – Harold Hawthorn Centre, Victoria Park.
- **Friday 7 December, 1.45 for 2.30 p.m. Juniper Riverslea, 100 Guildford Rd, Mt Lawley.**
- Tuesday 11 December Annual Dinner & Awards Evening.

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 (7)

May 2006 saw the first return visit by the South Australian barbershoppers and their partners. It was an exciting and busy time – beginning with a welcome dinner at the Café Saccaria in Northbridge. (We had found lodgings for the whole party in ‘City Stay’ in Wellington Street, Perth, and this made city transport relatively easy.) Mike Donnelly, then our national president, was present to welcome the party and a good time was had by all. Then, to quote from Geof Wilkins:

‘Rehearsal commenced the next day, and we were hard at it. Most fortuitously at one of our rehearsals, a roving reporter from the ABC heard our singing and asked if she could record it. At that point the President and Treasurer were a bit concerned at the additional costs – particularly the stage extensions – and whether tickets sales would see us break even. It was rather looking as if that would not be the case. The gods of chance however favoured us. The recording was aired on Eion Cameron’s breakfast program, and ticket sales shot up. Suddenly we had to secure additional seating, but ultimately the show was such a success financially we almost broke even on the entire visit, to our utter relief.’

In addition to the rehearsals, the ‘Great Big Barbershop Show’ in the Perth Town Hall and Sunday church service we fitted in quite a bit of sight-seeing. One highlight was a train trip to, and a fish-and-chips lunch in, Mandurah. – All in all, the Voices in Harmony 2006 was a huge success and planning began almost immediately for a return trip to South Australia in 2008.



Combined choruses with BlackJaq at the Perth Town Hall.

Up to this stage our regular chorus rehearsals had been held on Fridays at the Churchlands Senior High School. This provided us with more facilities and space than we needed, but a problem occurred when the school had need of the buildings. On these occasions we usually found alternative accommodation at the St Nicholas Anglican Church Hall, Floreat. In July 2006 the club decided to vacate Churchlands SHS and take up residence in the church hall in Floreat. This arrangement was very suitable as it was available on Fridays, was not as spread-out as the school facilities and came with its own kitchen!

During 2007 we undertook to provide members with a new ‘casual, walking-out’ costume. This featured a grey-blue long-sleeved shirt with club logo and a maroon/red casual jacket and tie. Usually teamed with grey slacks. After a couple of years’ trial, the blue/grey shirt fell out of favour and was eventually abandoned. The jacket, trousers and tie remain in use to the time of writing.

The balance of the year was taken up with a variety of events including: exchange visits with Southside Harmony, the annual performance at Winthrop Hall for the primary schools choir festival, programs at the Springfields Village in Rockingham, St Ives Northshore, St Patricks Church Mount Lawley, Parkerville Baptist Church, Karrinyup Anglican Church, charity concert for Save the Children Australia, and so on. It was a typically busy year.

To mark the close of the first decade in the life of the chorus a history, *A Decade of Song*, was written and published. A copy of this publication on CD-ROM can be obtained on request to Yours Truly. The list of ‘ten-year-olds’ reads: Graham Bishop, Arthur Boddy, John Christie, Doug Davies, Terry Geiles, Gordon Grigor, George Jamieson, Richard Lambert, Ian McAllister, David Macgill, Jeff Mirfin, Duke Nachbar, John Nelson, Bruce Okely, Allan Parsons, Doug Routley, Keith Swannell.

- Bruce Okely