

Another busy year ahead

After finishing off 2002 with the very popular Christmas Dinner and having a break of seven weeks, the choir has come back with renewed vigour to take on new challenges and attain yet higher standards of performance. All members of the choir know the bar has to be raised higher or it will stagnate.

But it doesn't mean all work - there will be plenty of time to relax and enjoy ourselves as a group.

First fundraiser this year is the FILM AFTERNOON, which will feature "Maid in Manhattan", starring Jennifer Lopez, Ralph Fiennes and Natasha Richardson, on Sunday, 30th March, 1.30 for 2 pm. The choir will sing two or three songs, the Capri Theatre organ will be played, there will be afternoon tea and door prizes. (See the advertisement on page 3 for detail on how to obtain tickets.)

The first major concert of the year will be in Pilgrim Church on Sunday, 4th May, at 2 pm to raise funds for a replacement practice piano. This will be a nostalgia afternoon of well-known songs, beautiful melodies and foot-tapping rhythms. Added to all this you will hear the keyboard skills of Edward Kriek and Jeff Kong.

About halfway through the year a mystery trip is planned. This was held about 10 years ago and proved very popular. More details will be published in the next newsletter.

We will be having another Quiz Night and the date for this will be announced in plenty of time. Last year was the most popular of all that the choir has

held and we are anticipating that this year's will be just the same (or even better).

A notable event this year will be the Concert/Dinner at Regency Park on Friday, 24th October. Again, more of this in a later newsletter.

Three of our minor concerts are at new venues this year. One will have been performed by the time this newsletter is printed and the other two are at Aberfoyle Uniting Church (for the Flagstaff Hill Rotary Club) and the Willunga Waldorf School to be held at the Arts Centre, Port Noarlunga.

NEW MEMBERS

The choir needs more members, particularly **First Tenors** and **Basses**. You do not have to be able to read music, but if you enjoy singing come along to our Monday night practices (from 7.45 to 9.45 pm in the Church of Christ Hall, 100 Grote Street). I am sure that you will enjoy yourselves.

CONTENTS

Low-down on Denis West	2
Notes from Committee	3
Photos from Christmas Dinner	4-5
We'd Love a Piano	6
Food for thought	6
Presentation of awards	7
The Touch of the Master's Hand	7
Think you've got troubles?	7
Gladys Bailey	8
The good news ... and the bad news ..	8

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Mr Doug Karran
Mr Len Turner
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Life Members:
Mr Alan Ansell
Mr Ray Brown
Mr Robert McLeay

Practices are held every Monday
at 7.45pm to 9.45 pm in the
Hall at the rear of the Church of
Christ, 100 Grote Street,
Adelaide

Low-down on Denis West

by Denise Richardson

Now proudly an Australian citizen, Denis was born in Gillingham, Kent, England to Lillian and Earnest West. There were two older sisters and an older brother (who died early in Denis' life) and another sister born later. It's a cliché, but they were a poor but happy and loving family who enjoyed singing and music. His Father had a lovely baritone voice.

The war years came, Father joined the army and Denis and his middle older sister Sheila (who now lives in Hillcrest) were evacuated to Wales. Many tales of mischief have been recounted by Denis in later years, but they were also hard times for a small built boy and his protective sister but Denis has fond memories of Wales. He was a boy soprano in those days, able to hold his own among the Welsh boys of the village.

War ended and the family was back together in Maidstone, Kent. Despite the interrupted schooling, Denis obtained a motor mechanic apprenticeship with Drake and Fletcher. Called John in those days (there was already a Denis in the shop) he did well in his field. In his last exams he topped the county. With a mother and three sisters, much of the 'man of the family' chores fell to him - his father was suffering from muscular dystrophy.

During his apprenticeship he met a lovely young girl from the typing pool, Pamela. They courted in the usual way, dances, walks in the local woods, visiting friends and family. They were engaged, and soon after Denis had to go away for his two-year national service stint.

He was in the REME (Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers) fixing and servicing army vehicles. Denis owned his first car in those days, and raced home for weekends when passes were obtained. Sadly Denis had to sell the car when he left the army, it was unaffordable in 'civvy street'.

August 1953 and Denis and Pamela were married. Their honeymoon was on a bicycle made for two, but the ever-mechanical Denis had fitted a small motor, to aid the pedallers on the uphill stretches.

Always moving during childhood years seemed to have made a rolling stone of Denis. August 1955 saw them on the passenger liner *Orion*, bound for

Australia. Their first home was in the 'silver city' Nissan huts at Gepps Cross - what a hot spot for the two English migrants.

Their first child, Denise, was born, and Denis was working as a mechanic on the Birdwood dam - commuting at the weekend again!

Before long he was on the move to Mundulla, as a mechanic. A second child was born, a son, Nigel. Then a move to Bordertown, and his own business. A further move, this time to Salisbury, and a service station business.

The 60's credit squeeze, and Denis was broke. Time for a change, and he found a new career - selling T&G life assurance but it was not plain sailing. Denis had a bout of illness, including rheumatic fever, and unable to work for some time.

When he recovered, and returned to work, his talent for selling emerged but he only ever sold products he believed in. He moved his family to Gawler, concentrating on the country areas and sales awards followed. His success in sales led to his promotion to inspector, responsible for training and encouraging other salesmen. Again, he topped his field. He then moved to a newly built home, this time at Coromandel Valley.

Denis is the epitome of a committed club member, always giving and never looking at the receiving part except to be grateful when it happens. Very soon after joining he became a committee member, concert manager and chief librarian and he has put his heart into all these endeavours, and at the Christmas dinner last year received a Certificate of Appreciation for this commitment.

A further change, and he went into selling real estate. He moved house, rented twice while he built again. Another job change, selling swimming pools.

Throughout all these moves and changes, some constants remained in Denis' life. Pamela, his friend and helpmate stayed steadfast, and family life was always important. Somehow he found time to establish new gardens, enjoy outings with his children, and serve on committees for their schools. He joined the local footy club, and was manager for the 'B' team.

His relaxation in those years was playing records on his stereo system which he built himself. A wide range of classical music could regularly be heard emanating from their home.

Their children had by now left home, and they became grandparents. Denise had



three boys, and later, so did Nigel. Another change, he and Pamela bought a haberdashery. They added gem collecting and cutting to their hobbies, by joining the Enfield Lapidary Club. As usual Denis was on the committee, and did well in the cutting competitions. Many happy trips were spent in their caravan. Another move, and another house built and Denis and Pamela were on their way to Westlakes. By now he was selling house insulation.

Ill health again visited Denis, and he retired early. Then a big trip to England he had been promising Pam since they arrived in Australia all those years ago. They spent several months revisiting the places of their youth, and travelled around Wales and Scotland and the Continent. On their return to Australia, Sheila encouraged her brother to join the retired teachers choir. A trip to in their caravan to Queensland, with long time friends - another promise kept and 40 years of happy marriage were celebrated.

The next couple of years were the darkest in Denis' life. On return from Queensland it was discovered Pamela had advanced cancer. Treatment was too late, there had been no warning signs, and only a couple of months later she died at home.

Denis returned to the Retired Teachers Choir, and through them has sung with the COTA choir. A fellow singer, Steve Wellington, introduced him to the Adelaide Male Voice Choir.

Later met Irene, his very dear friend, who accompanies him to Choir performances and shares his love of music.

Although a love of music has always been part of Denis' life, singing in public, and learning so much has only happened relatively lately. The AMVC has been a source of joy, achievement, friendship and solace, which Denis has tried to repay by being on the committee.

Thank-you Adelaide Male Voice Choir.



Notes from Committee

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the Annual General Meeting on Monday, 3rd February, all officers and members of the committee were re-elected for a further year

COMMITTEE MEETING, 22/2/03

FILM AFTERNOON

The Film Afternoon, on Sunday, 30th March, was discussed. It will be in the Capri Theatre and all members and friends are asked to get behind this effort to raise funds for the choir. It is hoped that we can at least get 500 to this function. The tickets will cost \$10 and will include some singing from the choir, the film "Maid in Manhattan", lucky door prizes and afternoon tea and biscuits.

"WE'D LOVE A PIANO"

This is the title of the major May concert in Pilgrim Church at which the choir will launch its appeal to raise funds for a new practice piano. Our present one has stood us in good stead

for the past 14-15 years but is nearing the end of its useful life. At the concert Edward Kriek will be joined by Jeff Kong. Not only will both of them play solos but they will join forces and perform duets. This promises to be an exciting event and one not to be missed

CD OF PILGRIM CONCERT

A recording on CD of the last October concert in Pilgrim Church is now available at \$15. Not only does this include the choir but also items by Tasso Bouyessis, Kirsten Johnston and Edward Kriek.

SPECIAL FUNCTION NEXT NOVEMBER

There will be a lot more about this in the next and subsequent newsletters up to the date of this exciting function, but suffice to say that it will be something quite different to what we have done before and, hopefully, will further add to our funds.



Drama

Have you always wanted to act or work behind the scenes in theatre? Here is your chance! The ARPA PLAYERS are looking for new members. No experience necessary as our director will bring out any talent you might have.

For further particulars contact Bill Brooker - phone 8297 6724

Answers - Word Puzzles: Death Valley
1. Forgive and forget
2. Big fish in a little pond
3. Odds and ends
4. Take from the rich, give to the poor.
5. Breaking a custom

Tickets also available at cinema on the day

ADELAIDE MALE VOICE CHOIR

CHOIR

invites you to a

FILM AFTERNOON

Maid in Manhattan

Starring Jennifer Lopez, Ralph Fiennes, Natasha Richardson

CAPRI CINEMA, GOODWOOD

Sunday, 30th March, 1.30 for 2 pm

Tickets: \$10

Phone: 8276 4229, 8270 2628, 8353 6359

- *Film*
- *Songs from the Choir*
- *Capri Theatre Organ*
- *Afternoon Tea*
- *Door Prizes*



