



Friends of the Auburn Tower Newsletter

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Summer 2012

Friends' Concert Programme

The Friends' 2012 concert season kicked off with a different format, when **Geoffrey W Graham** (aka "The Banjo Bloke") presented his night of verse, comedy and music celebrating our Aussie heritage in the Hall on Saturday 24 March, followed by a supper prepared by the Friends. This was the first time in some years that we had committed to pay a fixed fee to an artist, but we need not have been worried, as a near-capacity crowd attended, resulting in a healthy profit. See Ian Scott's review in the Autumn 2012 Newsletter for a full report of the evening.

The next concert was **Vivat Regina!**, a grand choral concert in the Church on Sunday 3 June, featuring the Ashton Smith Singers of Australia, virtuoso organist Thomas Heywood and Josh Rogan's brass ensemble. The first half of the concert included music from the 1953 Coronation, and the second was an eclectic mix of English music, from Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody to Parry's Jerusalem. The Friends was fortunate to secure sponsorship from the Menzies Foundation to assist us in staging this event. See Colin Jenkins' review in the Spring 2012 Newsletter for a full account of the concert.

O Music, the annual joint concert with the Australian Boys Choir and the Vocal Consort, was held on Sunday 24 June. An audience of 200-plus enjoyed an afternoon of superb vocal music, from the 16th to the 21st century.

The fourth concert, **La vida es un pasahe**, on 9 September, featured early music group Troveresse, singing and playing the music of medieval Europe. Musicians Helen Dell, Solveig Jankowski, Alistair Lord and Will Thompson delighted us with their voices and medieval instruments.

The final concert was a recital on the historic Fincham organ by Australian born and internationally acclaimed organist **Dr Gordon Atkinson** on Sunday 18 November. Gordon, a sprightly octogenarian, entertained us with a varied programme of organ music from the 17th to the 20th century, including one of his own compositions, and concluding with Liszt's monumental Prelude and Fugue on BACH. A member of the Friends was so impressed with the quality of the performance that he made a donation to cover the artist's fee, thus doubling the Friends' profit from the day.

The Friends now have been conducting a concert programme since 2004, and your committee have been giving some thought as to its future. On the one hand, it is wonderful to hear talented local artists performing in the superb acoustics of the Church. On the other, it is embarrassing to expect professional musicians to perform for a pittance in front of a handful of people. Our attendances have ranged from over 200 (for a choral programme) to 25 (for an early music programme), with an average of about 40. The proceeds are small in relation to the volunteer time involved in producing the concerts. We cannot afford paid publicity, and have nobody with the time and contacts to achieve free publicity.

The programme for 2013 will therefore be limited to the joint Auburn Uniting Church – Australian Boys Choir concert, on Sunday 5 May, and an organ recital in the latter half of the year. Our efforts will then be directed to a major concert, to mark the 125th Anniversary of the opening of the building, in September 2014.

Alan Chuck

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Auburn Uniting Church Complex Building Works

Have you wondered about the work that has either already been undertaken or is being considered to be undertaken to the Auburn Uniting Church complex to ensure it is a safe environment and a visually welcoming place to visit? Over the past fifteen years, substantial work has been carried out by two hardworking groups, mostly the Parish Council and, since its establishment eight years ago, the Friends of the Auburn Tower Inc has contributed to the upkeep of the tower. Many of the improvements to the complex may not be visible, however all of the works have been essential to keep the beautiful suite of buildings open for the congregation to worship in and as a service to the public.

The Tower

Extensive work had previously been carried out by the Parish Council on the tower to strengthen and support it and to prevent any further structural damage. At the same time it was decided to soft light the inside of the tower. Later, the Friends of the Auburn Tower installed a bird eradication sound system to make it a less attractive roosting and nesting place for birds. In addition, to improve public safety in the tower, hand rails have been installed as well as decking in the viewing area. To further the tower works, on the agenda of the Friends of the Tower Inc is a commitment to raise money for the restoration and preservation of the columns of the tower.



The Grounds

External signage, lighting and an upgrade to the existing fence lights has been carried out and initiated by the Parish Council. In addition, extensive drainage works covered the complete suite of buildings. Once the drainage works were completed it was necessary to replace the asphalt. New brick pillars have been reinstated to the front fence of the Church. Low flushing toilet suites have been installed in all toilets and a complete refurbishment of the toilet facilities is due to take place in 2013.

The Church

The Parish Council has overseen the following major works; the recent completion of the Church roof including drainage, bird proofing of all vents, installation of anchor points on the roof and replacing the balcony ceilings. Proposed Church works for 2013 include painting the external woodwork of the stained glass windows on the east and west side of the church and installing new weather-proofing sheet metal flooring in the balconies.

Over the past years extensive work was undertaken by the Parish Council on the organ including the installation of a fire alarm system. Each year the Friends of the Tower Inc plans an Organ Recital to give people the opportunity to hear the organ in the superb acoustics of the Church.

When passing the Church complex you may have noticed that all the doors on the suite of buildings have recently been painted and in addition an improved door locking and closing system has been installed on all doors in the complex.

Other buildings in the Complex

The Parish Council has undertaken major works to other buildings in the complex. The Hall roof has been stripped and the slate roof re-fixed. All valleys and ridgings have been painted. Inside, the Hall and side rooms including the Pawsey Room have been completely refurbished including new lighting. Recently new carpet was laid in the Pawsey Room. The addition of a doorway between the kitchen and Pawsey room has proved most convenient. The kitchen too has also had a moderate amount of refurbishment.

The Cottage has been fully refurbished including a new kitchen and painting. The Flat has also been refurbished and sun blinds installed.

So, through the constant diligence and efforts of the Parish Council and, more recently the Friends of the Tower Inc., the Auburn Uniting Church Complex is well maintained and presents as a welcoming building for the Auburn congregation and the public.

The Friends of the Auburn Tower committee extends its appreciation to Mr John Suriano, Treasurer, Auburn Uniting Church for providing the information which forms the basis of this article.

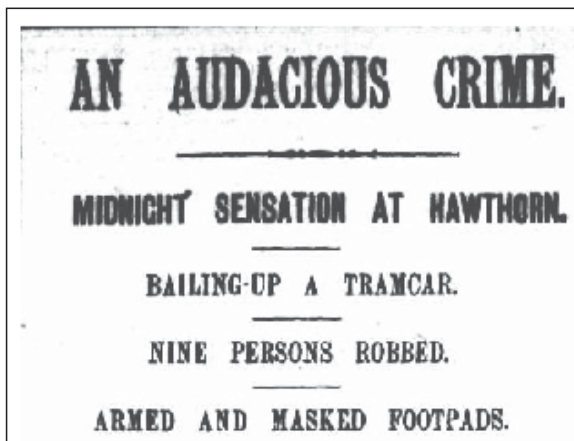
Then and Now: Tramway Robbery in Hawthorn

Peter Duckett (1925 – 2011) was an aficionado of Melbourne’s trams (a ‘gunzel’). He and his wife Patricia ran the Model Dockyard in the city, and he accumulated an enormous collection of tramway photographs and memorabilia, which he bequeathed to the state Transport Department library. In connection with this photograph, he wrote:

“The photo shows the Burwood Road, Power Street and Riversdale Road horse tram system that ran to Auburn Road from Hawthorn Bridge, where the Richmond cable tram terminus was located. It was on this system that the only recorded armed robbery occurred on any Melbourne tram. Early A.M. of 18 / 8 /1901, the Hawthorn horse tram was held up by four masked men as it was proceeding east along Riversdale Road just after leaving Power Street. One of the men leapt on board and held a revolver to the cheek of the driver demanding that the tram be stopped. He complied, but pleaded with his assailant that he be allowed to apply the handbrake to prevent the car from rolling backwards and dragging and crushing the horses with it. He was allowed to do so, but was then thrown into the saloon to join the seven male passengers inside, together with a solicitor who was smoking on the end platform. The urban bushrangers, all wearing slouch hats and tweed coats, demanded that the passengers and driver hand over their valuables ...”

To corroborate Peter’s story, here is the original report as a news item which appeared on page 5 of *The Argus* on Monday 19 August 1901.

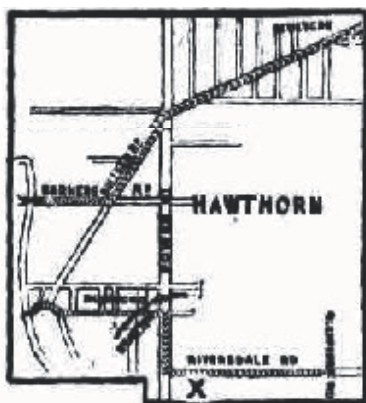
Alan Chuck and Russell Crawford



Dramatic Headline in *The Argus* newspaper



The Hawthorn Tramways Trust’s horse tram in Riversdale Road - the Auburn Tower visible on skyline. Photo undated, but likely between 1889 & 1916



Scene of the Robbery is marked with an X

A crime of the most daring and unique description occurred at Hawthorn early on Sunday morning, when four armed and masked desperadoes boarded the Riversdale road tram, and compelled the driver and passengers to disgorge money and valuables worth about £25.

At half-past 12 o’clock a.m. the last Richmond tram arrived from the city, bringing eight passengers, all gentlemen, who transferred to the Hawthorn horse car ... The driver, Thomas Taylor, a middle-aged man, who is well and favourably known in the district, urged his horses forward ... Taylor saw two men standing on the tram-line. Two others were walking along the footpath about a dozen yards behind and ... Before the car had come to a standstill one of the expected passengers had leapt on the platform, and Taylor, who was intent upon his duty ... was astonished to find himself rudely seized and swung round. “Stop those horses,” cried the man ... adding in the vernacular of the criminal that it would be the worse for him, if he did not. To emphasise the order, the robber pushed the muzzle of a revolver against Taylor’s cheek and repeated “Pull up your horses, you ---, or I’ll spill your brains on the floor.” Realising that where “the strong command obedience is best”, Taylor hastened ...

THE PASSENGERS SURPRISED

Before they had recovered from their confusion the other door of the car flew open, and the one outside passenger was pushed through the door as the driver had been. This passenger was Mr W J Park, the well known solicitor, who had been placidly smoking on the back platform, when the second member of the gang stepped beside him, and, placing a revolver to his temple, compelled him to enter the car. As Mr Park recovered himself, the robber who had pushed him in stood at the door, and called upon the passengers to turn out their pockets, if they did not want a funeral in their families Mr Park, who had taken the seat nearest the door, remembered his silver watch and gold medal, two of his trophies which he valued highly, and, to save them, he removed his money amounting to £1/15/ from his pockets, and held it before him in such a manner as to hide his watch and chain. The footpad, however, noticed his ruse, and, taking the money, bade him roughly hand the articles over. Mr Park removed his watch and chain, and, proffering it to the man, said, “These are worth very little to you, only a silver watch and a medal.” The robber gave one glance at the jewellery, then magnanimously remarked, “All right, you can keep them.”

Edited extracts from *The Argus* of 19 August 1901

About trybooking.com



Over the past few years, bookings for the Friends' events have been available through Trybooking.com. With few exceptions, our concertgoing friends have chosen not to use this very convenient and economical system. Whilst

our concert numbers have not been great, there have been occasions when people have had to queue to pay for tickets, the door person has had to scratch around for change and if the person is running late, there is the risk of missing the beginning of the concerts. For the few who do not have access to a computer, well the old-fashioned way is still the best, But if you are online (and a large number of our Friends are now), in the interests of convenience and simplicity, I will try and demystify this online booking system.

1. trybooking.com is simple to use, available 24 hours a day;
 2. trybooking.com gives you tickets and receipts immediately, allowing you to print your own
 3. There is a significant reduction in time and effort for the people on the door;
 4. No messing around at the door with change, handing out tickets;
 5. You have a record of your payment;
 6. trybooking.com is inexpensive with a very small charge of \$0.30;
 7. trybooking.com is very aware of the risks online and understands that the integrity of the site and its security features are important so your credit card details are delivered to VeriSign a secure website.
- So give trybooking.com a go. There is nothing scary about booking online if you have access to a computer and think how happy your Friends' Exec. Officer will be at the next concert when she sees you at the church entry.

If you wish to know more about just how good using Trybooking.com for next year's events can be **(particularly if you are coming to the BIG concert on May 5th)** go to: http://trybooking.com/html/factsheets/technical/Introducing_TryBooking_to_your_community.pdf

We wish everybody involved with Auburn Uniting Church and Friends of the Tower a very happy and safe Christmas and a wonderful festive New Year. May 2013 bring health, happiness and cheer to all.

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Membership Renewal/Application 18 months 1 December 2012 - 30 June 2014

If you are already a member, please encourage more people to join. Membership applications to:

Executive Officer, PO Box 583, Hawthorn BC, 3122.

I/We apply for membership/wish to renew [delete whichever doesn't apply] membership of the Friends of the Auburn Tower Inc. in the category of:

Individual Adult	\$30
Concession (under 18, over 60, concession card)	\$18
Family (two or more people at the same address)	\$45
Corporate membership	\$200

and enclose cheque payable to "Friends of the Auburn Tower Inc" for \$_____.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Address/Email: _____

I wish to receive the newsletter via email: Yes No

Membership is open to all who have an interest in this inspiring Hawthorn landmark, built in 1889. Members will receive a newsletter, reduced admission to concerts and talks, and free admission to the Tower.

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