

MEET AN AUSTRALIAN MEMBER

The Revd. Dr. John Bunyan

John Bunyan keeps in touch with us from time to time. This is an edited version of some of his communications, and also includes a note of his books.

John Bunyan is a priest in the Anglican Church of Australia, but has wide ecumenical sympathies. The family of his maternal grandfather, John Beattie, came to Australia from Cathcart and fetched up on the goldfields. Adding in other family influences, he describes himself as ‘almost three quarters Sassenach, with a sliver of Irish and a good pinch of African American.’ John has written a number of books, which are described in what follows. He lives in Campbelltown, a separate community on the outskirts of Greater Sydney, the town called after Elizabeth Campbell, wife of Governor (1810-1821) Lachlan Macquarie (born in Ulva, off the west coast of Mull). He is a member of the RSCM and one of only two Australian members of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland. John describes himself as ‘culturally and liturgically conservative’, and remarks that “theologically his home would be somewhat akin to that of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in northern Ireland.” He is now in his mid-eighties. John has frequently visited Scotland. He writes:

I love the beauty of Scottish moors and mountains and islands, clambering up Ben Arthur, the Cobbler, long ago for a wonderful view of those. And I have enjoyed Scottish authors ranging from R.M. Ballantyne, Robert Louis Stevenson and George Macdonald to John Buchan and George Mackay Brown. And have learnt from Scottish Christians. When I was a child our next door neighbour was from Falkirk, a winsome member of a Gospel Hall when she and her husband were on furlough from their ministry among lepers in India. And when I was a man there were bishops, from Leighton to Dowden, Tait and Lang, and Richard Holloway, and ministers William Barclay and the Baillie brothers and George Matheson and one whom I have met and one to whom I have written, George MacLeod – and Ian Bradley with us still.

Thinking of those Christians, I think also of the Scottish houses of God attended over the years. On my Episcopalian side, for example, Evensong at St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh and in the Cathedral of the Isles, Communion on a weekday in the little Priory Church of St Mary of Mount Carmel at Queensferry, and on Sundays St John's Princes Street for Choral Matins. St Giles' Cathedral too, appreciating the provision there of both a choral morning service, and the congregation gathering round the Table at the earlier Communion; the transforming of St Giles' by Gilleasbuig Macmillan described in the latest *Record* is superb. Best of all, morning services and Holy Communion at my favourite, Paisley Abbey – all blessed by the excellent latest *Church Hymnary*.

John has written five liturgically-based books, one including his hymns.

DayLight : SunDown : Daily Morning and Evening Prayer : with a Psalm for each Day which is a revision of 1662 Book of Common Prayer (BCP) Matins and Evensong, designed for personal use.

Make It Matins challenges a common paradigm, and with support from scholars of all traditions argues for a restoration of Matins (and chants written for it).

Matins Being Made is a companion to this with chapters on reverence in church, Morning Prayer and mission, psalms, hymns, and music for Matins, Morning Prayer and the environment, &c.

Sing Heart and Mind : A Coverdale Daily Psalm Book : The English Classic Clarified. This offers a less heavy diet than the BCP which has the full Psalter read over the course of a month. It retains the Coverdale version unaltered.

From Golden Gully to Kingdom Come : A Pilgrim's Sixty Songs and Ninety-Three Sonnets which contains his own hymns written for use in his parish.

John suggests that anyone who wishes any of them might send a donation to the Amos Trust in Edinburgh. He himself would cover postage. He suggests as

donations: DayLight £10, Make it Matins £10, Matins being Made £10 [£15 for both these], Sing £5, Golden Gully £15. His email address is bunyanj@tpg.com.au.

John Bunyan

was rector of a Sydney Anglican congregation for 22 years before retirement and is now honorary chaplain to Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital, the Macarthur/Ingleburn National Servicemen, the Australian Intelligence Corps Association, and patron of the Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society.