



FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

SGC @128 YEARS



As we approach the end of term and the school year, we have a great deal to be thankful for at the College. As a community, we have interacted and shared so many positive experiences from the Form One parents evening at the beginning of January through to the Advent Carol Service on the first of December. There is so much to reflect upon both individually and collectively as a community.



Far and Wide

I thank all the staff who have been involved in this intensive course, allowing students to express themselves and share multiple experiences in a variety of different situations.

Students in Form Two attended parent/teacher consultations on the 28th November and through a process of discernment have been able to make sensible choices for the subjects to be studied at the start of their IGCSE courses in 2025.

An area of improvement for all students in 2025 is the ability to wear the famous uniform proudly. Often this year, personal appearance upon arrival at school left a great deal to be desired.

Our thoughts now turn to the celebration of Christmas. As a Jesuit school, we urge our students to look beyond the commercial aspects of this religious celebration.

As we gather for this global Christmas celebration, I invite you to reflect on two guiding questions: what can we learn about the power of compassion and connection in a world where 250 million children are out of school and many face barriers to their education and secondly, how are we as a community becoming agents of compassion and helping to bridge this divide through active citizenship and advocacy, especially during this Christmas season. Men and women for and with others.

I trust that the St George's College community has a peaceful and contemplative Christmas and that those who may be travelling-safe travels. We look forward to meeting again as a community in the week beginning 13th January 2025.

John Farrelly
Headmaster



Advent Carol Service



L6 Service/Leadership Programme

The final month of our school term saw our Cambridge examination candidates leaving school, except for the L6 who returned to school on the 20th November for their service/leadership programme. This included a residential programme at Far and Wide in the eastern highlands.



Far and Wide

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- Lower 6 Residential Programme at Far And Wide.
- Christmas Carols at St George's – some historical reflections



Advent Carol Service



Lower 6 Service/Leadership Programme



Far And Wide

Lower 6 Service/Leadership Programme Photography Collage



First Aid



First Aid



Building a Computer



Level 1 Rugby Coaching



Practical Skills



Counselling Course



Level 1 Rugby Coaching



Zoom Meeting



Defensive Driving



Level 1 Rugby Coaching



Counselling Course



Christmas Carols at St George's – some historical reflections

Following the joyous and well supported Advent Carol Service held in the Chapel on 1 December, we thought a brief look back at similar Christmas related events at St George's might be of interest. The school, of course, has a long and proud choral tradition. As far back as 1898 when there probably weren't enough pupils to form a decent choir, one of its founding fathers, Fr. Victor Nicot SJ, was central to the Catholic community's church choir in Bulawayo.



Bulawayo Church Choir, 1898 – Fr. Nicot standing 3rd from left

Thereafter, while there is plenty of evidence of the school's choirs performing at the annual prize giving and other public events, as well as the Eisteddfod from the 1930s, it wasn't until December 1935 that the College staged its first Nativity Play, when several traditional carols were also sung. Even then, it wasn't for another 10 years that the first actual carol service was held in the Chapel, with Benediction as its central feature. The Chapel (now the Library) then remained the carols venue until 1950 when, owing to the increasing popularity of the carols, what had been a Chapel based service, grew into a carol concert, and it was moved to the Beit Hall.



1962 Carol Concert, Br. L. Connors, Choir Master

The following year, Brother Lawrence Connors SJ, who had joined the staff in 1949, took over as Choir Master, and a whole new carols concert tradition started – one that was to last until 1973, when he stepped back as Choirmaster, pending his retirement. Such was the growing popularity of the carol singing with the wider public that, in addition to the annual concert in early December at the College, the Choir also performed at Nazareth House for several years running.

In December 1961, with its fame having already spread well

beyond the country's borders, the annual Beit Hall performance was followed by a 7-Day tour of the Copper Belt, during which six carol concerts were given in five different towns, including Ndola. Since quite a few members of the Choir were in fact boarders from Zambia, they had the particular thrill of being able to perform in front of their own families and friends.



College Choir, 1961 – Br. Connors centre rear

Meanwhile, back at the College, the Housemaster of Hartmann House, Fr. Christopher Farwell SJ, had begun a Pantomime tradition, with the staging in the Beit Hall in November 1958 of "Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp". This was followed in 1959 by "Robinson Crusoe", and "Dick Whittington" in 1960. Always associated with Christmas, these well attended pantomimes were much enjoyed, both by the audiences as well as the large casts of Hartmann pupils.



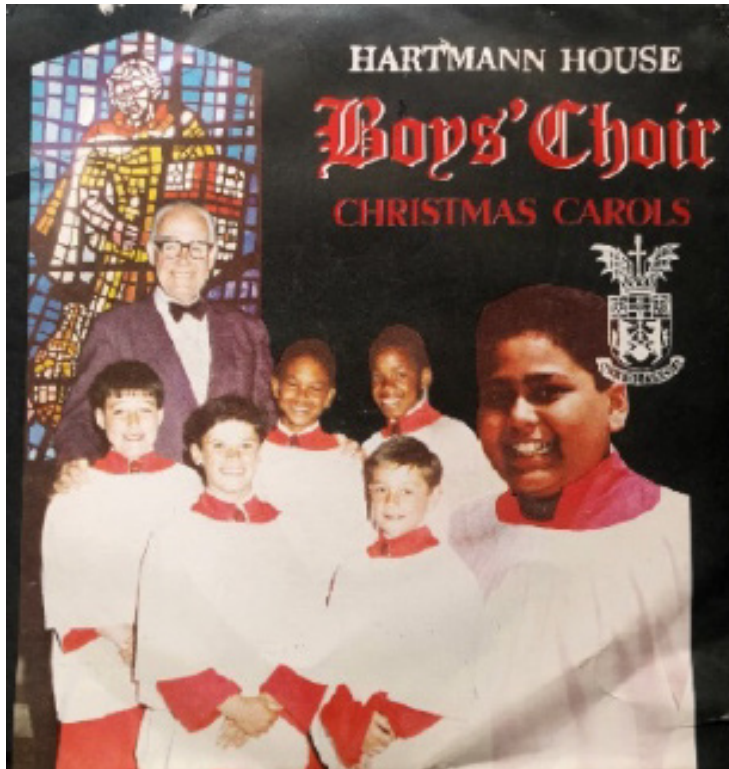
'Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp' – Brendan Tiernan (later Headmaster at St George's), front 2nd from right

Sadly, following the prevailing and very real polio scare, there was no pantomime in 1961, and the tradition wasn't revived. As an aside, it's worth recording that Fr. Farwell, who was already well known as the director of several theatre performances at the College in the 1950s, continued in that role after his return to the College in 1963 and will probably be best remembered for the outdoor staging of the famous Passion Play in 1971.

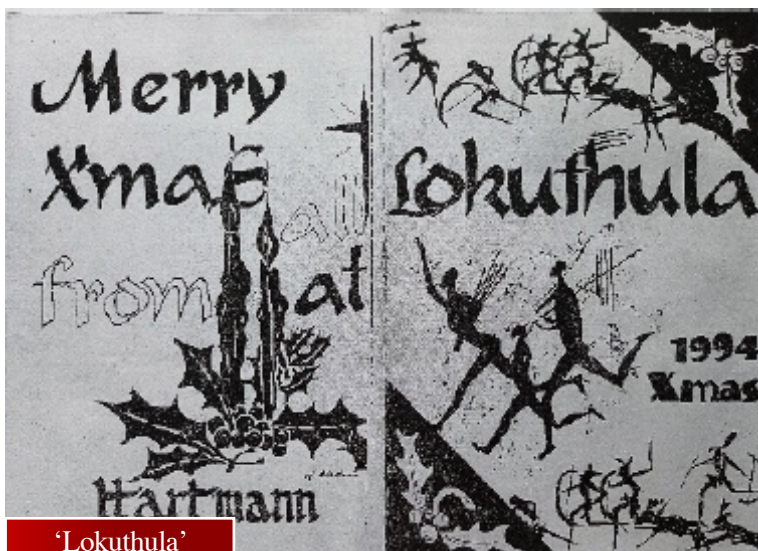
As already indicated, following Br. Connors' retirement, St George's then reverted to the Advent Carol Service tradition, arranged by different people over the intervening years, principal among them being Mr Vince Haddad, Mr Rem Fernandes, and, for the last two years, Mrs Maria Wilson.

Christmas Carols at St George's – some historical reflections

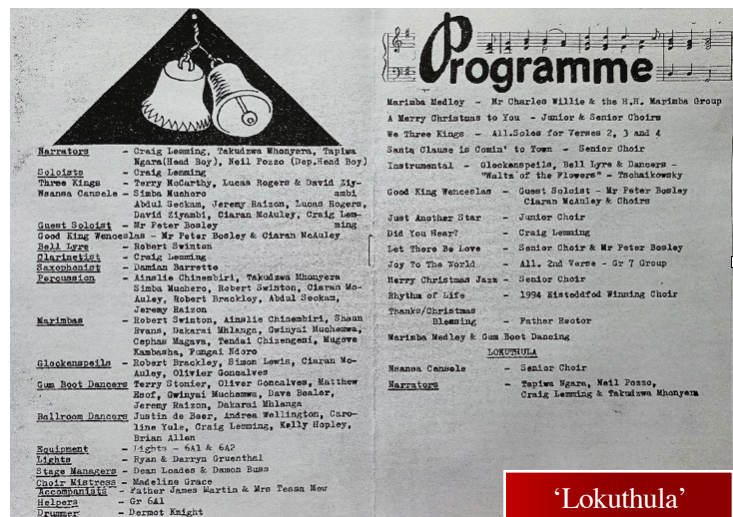
For the last several years, she has also trained the Boarders Choir, which adds so much to the quality of the hymn singing in the Chapel at Mass on a Sunday during the term time. Unfortunately, given the fact of the public examination programme starting earlier and earlier each year, by the time the Advent Service comes around, she is left with fewer and fewer boarder choristers to work with!



Finally, this historical review wouldn't be complete without mention of two other Christmas related 'achievements', the first of them being the phenomenal success of the Hartmann House Choirs in the 1990s, trained by Ms Mags Grace. Not only did her choirs win several awards at successive eisteddfods, as well as perform at concerts and weddings, but they also produced a Christmas Carol record in 1993, and in 1994 were central to a magnificent Christmas pageant entitled 'Lokuthula' staged in "The Tank" at Hartmann House.



It involved both a Christmas Legend, acted out by a cast of over 30, as well as a full selection of carols.



The other Christmas related and ongoing achievement, is that arranged by Ms Kundisai Mtero, the Director of Music at Saints.

To quote from the flier for the next "Christmas in Africa" series of concerts to be held between the 13th and 15th of December, it will 'revisit and celebrate the Birth of the King in amazingly different performances of song, music, dance and narrative with an afro-centric flavour, garnished with "Zimbo" satire.'

Involving as it does students from the College, as well as a variety of guests, it has become a popular annual event staged in the Beit Hall, and is now into its 13th year. Apart from being most enjoyable, importantly, proceeds from the concerts go towards Kundisai's Rotary charities.

