

Trinity College of Music Reunion 2019

The day for me began in the beautiful city of Salzburg, enjoying my morning coffee overlooking the neat yellow facade of the ordinary house, now immortalised as the birth residence of one Amadeus Mozart. I had much more to contemplate however on this particular morning than the life and music of the great master. I experienced a palpable frisson of excitement for what was to come later that day, as the long-awaited, and much discussed Trinity Reunion would take visceral form in in another great city of culture far to the north.

There was a certain nervousness that the success of the long-planned event may be jeopardised by the last-minute discovery that the specified location, namely the upstairs area of The Angel in the Fields pub, was not in fact currently open for business due to renovations. The concern was real because this was to be an inter-generational reunion, with no restriction on the years of attendance and so it may be difficult to identify who was and was not an ex-Trinity student amongst the regular customers, which could be expected to be numerous in and of themselves on a summer Friday evening in the heart of London. In truth, I also had some concerns that I would know very few of the expected number of people who had said they were coming along, and I think I was not alone in having those doubts about the event either.

For convenience, I had booked to stay in the Durrants Hotel, almost visible from The Angel looking straight up George Street and this afforded me the time to freshen up after my trip to Salzburg, enjoy an excellent meal in St Christopher's Place and still arrive at the venue by 17:30 in excited anticipation of what was to come.

I don't mind admitting, I approached the Angel doors with a degree of trepidation. Would anyone really turn up? Would I recognise anyone even if they did? Would the much-vaunted event be reduced to only an intimate, quiet, catch-up with a couple of half-remembered strangers? This was also my first look inside the Angel for well over a decade and possibly a great deal longer and so, after pausing for a brief moment to savour the occasion, I ventured inside and allowed my eyes to scan the building for signs of recognition.

To my relief, the pub was only sparsely populated with regular customers at this time making it easier to assess the possibility that at least some of the few individuals present may in fact be there for the reunion. I glanced awkwardly at the first few people I saw, nervous that they would suddenly greet me with a recognition I was completely unable to reciprocate! To my further relief their status as strangers was accurate and they moved through the slipstream of their own lives, oblivious to the heavy levels of expectation for journeys of nostalgia yet to happen.

Only shortly after my arrival I was joined by faces I knew extremely well, Simon and Debbie Car turned up, looking so much like I remembered them from 35+ years ago; at that moment I knew that recognition of people at least from my years was going to be easier than I imagined and, even more surprisingly, apparently my own advanced signs of ageing proved no match for their own memory of me either! We greeted each other with a warmth and familiarity not dulled at all by intervening years, indeed the friendships you make in your early formative years are kept alive by enduring memories that only become more important as they percolate through the years of absence.

I have such wonderful memories now of June 2019, the year I re-formed connections with friends from so long ago that I have so often thought about over the past 35 years even if we haven't managed to stay in contact. Time is an illusion. It was wonderful to see so many people I knew, including (please forgive using maiden names), Rebecca Howard, Martin Berridge, Nick Austin,

Simon & Debbie Carr, Rachel Bucknell, Chai, Sue Busby, Karen Noakes, Jane Bingham, Julian Richards, Gavin Reid, Gavin Greenaway, Tony Gammage et al. If your name is omitted please do not feel slighted, everyone's presence was fully appreciated. The only thing I would have changed is to have had fewer missing friends. There are so many names that came up in delightful reminiscences that would have been lovely to talk to again – another time perhaps.

It wasn't long before people started arriving thick and fast; soon the reunion completely dominated the pub and genuine strangers hoping for a quiet drink realised they were no match and drifted off. I'm fairly certain too that every customer in the pub was, by now, part of the reunion. In fact, by the end of the evening the manager thanked me, saying that their takings were up 20% on a busy Friday night!

I am pleased to report too that the ease and warmth referred to above meeting people from my own time at Trinity permeated across the generations even amongst people I hadn't formerly known, such is the bond between former Trinity students. If you are friends with one, you are friends with all and what better epithet can there be than that?

For me, the evening was a tremendous success because it achieved its aim of bringing together people from across the decades who have all shared something special through their time at Trinity. Nobody present knew everyone there and yet people refused to stick only to their own years and instead reached out across the years to make new friends; to my knowledge nobody felt lost or isolated and were made welcome by everyone. A shared history creates an unassailable bond and I am confident in saying this will most definitely not be the last large-scale reunion and indeed I know others are already planned.

The list of people present is long and many I do not know so I may or may not have all the names listed correctly, but to the best of my knowledge the list includes the following people:

Martin Berridge, Richard Winch, Simon & Debbie Carr, Rebecca Howard, Nick Austin, Sue Busby, Sue Eversden, Karen Noakes, Jane Bingham, Julian Richards, Gavin Reid, Gavin Greenaway, Tony Gammage, Sui-Leung Chai, Alan Brown, Rachael Bucknall, Mark Winn, Nelloe Catheringe, Helen Errington, Dai Pritchard, Rosemary Wiseman, Francesca Carpos, , Anne Sheridan, Jo Wilson, Debbie Gordon, Emma Dogliani, Simon Leeson, Gary Cairney, Rosemary wolf, Jan Matthews, Felicity Sadler, Yves Salmon, John Tobin, Richard White, Ross Frayling-Cork, Michael Round, Lulu Le Goff (aka Michael Flowers), Richard Winch, Chris Williams, Colin Loughhead, Julian Woods, Pat Nixon, Chris Bracewell, Linda Herst, Maggie Gray, Christopher Holemann, David & Jackie Cox, Catherine Denley

Postscript:

Since writing this report a number of weeks have passed and during that time there has been a wonderful sense of comradeship amongst those who are members of the Trinity Facebook group which has been fantastic to see and be part of. I am now back in Australia, many thousands of miles away and yet the memory of that one event is the stand-out one for the whole trip. It was wonderful to catch up with so many friends and acquaintances, it was like stepping back in time, just for a short while. I look forward to remaining in contact with so many people with whom I have now re-established contact.

Chris Cox

