

Kurashiki Youth Chorus

Visit to Christchurch 24-29 March 2004.

The final event of the 30th Anniversary Celebrations of the link between the City of Christchurch and the City of Kurashiki was the visit to Christchurch of the Kurashiki Youth Chorus. The group consisted of 31 young people between the ages of 9-18 plus a group of 7 adult leaders and parents. The group sang a variety of music including Traditional and Popular Japanese songs and a variety of Popular Western songs and musicals.

The Chorus at Cathedral Grammar School.

The arrangements finally fell into place following the visit of the Mayoral delegation to Kurashiki in August 2003. The dates were confirmed and fell within the same time slot as the NZ Sister Cities Conference also being hosted by Christchurch the same week.



At the Sister Cities Conference Welcome.

This gave the exciting opportunity for the group to sing at the opening welcome night for the Conference. The 180 delegates attending the Conference on the Conference Centre were treated to a 20 min series of songs from the group, at the welcome ceremony.

Members at the School visit



The group had requested visits to schools and the committee agreed to

host the group to several sightseeing facilities around the city, as the final event of the anniversary.

Two schools were chosen to host the group on the Thursday, with Cathedral Grammar hosting them in the morning. The group first sang to 4 different groups within the school, then did a workshop with the schools coral group and performed their joint piece to the whole school. The school café provided a delicious lunch.

Lunch at School with the visitors

During the afternoon, a similar programme was held with Selwyn House School. In both cases the schools experienced a wonderful exchange of music and culture between both the teachers and the students.



Is this REAL WOOL?

A request for one night homestays for 24 of the group was also fulfilled. Because of a change in NZ lifestyles with more homes having two workers and less spare rooms, it has become extremely difficult to find suitable homes for students to stay for a night or two. However in the end we found 24 beds for a one night hosting and in some cases Christchurch folk had one each of the two nights. Some of the hosts had never taken Japanese students before so it was a new situation for them. In every case it was a real success with many stories of exciting experiences even for one night.

Visiting Flockhill Station for a BBQ Dinner



At their own expense the group requested we arrange on their behalf a

full day trip to a farm, jet boat rides and an evening meal at Flockhill Station. These were all arranged locally in Christchurch on behalf of the group.



Ready for the Jet Boat rides.

The visit to Rubicon Farm was arranged with a Jet Boat ride for all of the group, a try at feeding the sheep with a bottle and a demo with the sheep dogs.



Sheep Shearing Demonstration.

The highlight was the viewing of the sheep shearing and the opportunity to have a go with the hand clippers.



Watching the Sheep Shearing

The looks of glee and excitement will remain in the minds of the visitors for many years.

The arranging of the evening meals and the lunches were planned to give a variety of restaurants and food styles. They ranged from light finger food meals with kiwi style sandwiches, savouries, cheerio's fish bites and chicken nibbles to Chinese meals, roasts, set meals and smorgasbord dinners. The variety reflected the cosmopolitan food collection now available in Christchurch.



Leader liked his 2nd helping of PAVLOVA.

The farewell evening was hosted by the Sister City Committee and was a huge success with over 40 local people and the 40 from the group eating a kiwi roast meal at the Papanui Club, followed by a brief concert from the members. Some thank you speeches and gift exchanging concluded the very interesting night.



They ate well at the Restaurants

The group sang in Cathedral Square outside the Cathedral, during the Friday

Lunchtime Concerts and performed well to a passing crowd estimated at over 1,000.



The group sang in front of the Cathedral.

The second Concert was held in the Great Hall at the Arts Centre on Sunday afternoon for 90 minutes. The main promotion for this concert was members of the group roving around the Arts Centre singing and handing out flyers for the Free Concert that afternoon. The numbers attending were very gratifying with over 500 attending throughout the afternoon and approx. 250 there at any one time. Again this concert consisted of a variety of items from the group in both their uniform and traditional kimono dress.



The Arts Centre Concert in Kimono Uniforms

The group contributed almost \$10,000 to the local visits and meals, while the Sister City Committee contributed just over \$5,000 for the transport, hosting and farewell costs within the city.

Newton Dodge & Cheryl Thorne
Project Conveners.