



On behalf of our Music Director David Ashton-Smith and whole of the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir we wish all our friends and patrons "Blwyddyn Newydd Dda" (Happy New Year) and may the joy of music lighten every day.

Our next major concert will be:

A Welsh Celebration for Saint David's Day
Sunday, March 5th, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.
James Tatoulis Music Auditorium - MLC,
Barkers Rd, Kew VIC 3101
Tickets: 9720 4336

www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets

Come and help us celebrate all that is Welsh. Our own celebration of Wales's national day will take place on the Sunday after St David's Day (which is March 1st). In addition to the Welsh Hymns and choruses there will be many of the Choir's favourite pieces together with a preview some of the items we plan to sing in Cornwall.

The Music Auditorium at MLC is somewhat different from our usual venues and acoustically is significantly superior. It is also wheel-chair friendly, but has a smaller seating capacity so make sure you book early to avoid disappointment. There is ample parking onsite and in the surrounding streets.



We are delighted to announce that our guest artist this year is Samuel Dundas, a star of the Australian Opera and our 2009 Singer of The Year. With the stature of a god and a voice of an angel, Samuel is fast becoming the hottest ticket in Australian Opera circles.

Samuel is a graduate of the Melba

Conservatorium of Music and his performance experience encompasses opera, musical theatre and concerts.

After making his operatic debut with Opera Queensland in 2005, Samuel went on to become a member of Victorian Opera's Artist Development program.

Roles he has performed with Victorian Opera include the title role in Don Giovanni, Papageno (The Magic Flute), Guglielmo (Cosi fan tutte), Belcore (The Elixir of Love), Harlequin (Ariadne auf Naxos), the Second Soldier (The Love of the Nightingale), Creon/The Messenger (Oedipus Rex) and Chief Clerk (Metamorphosis), as well as Schaunard in the Puccini: The Sacred and Profane Gala concert.

Samuel joined Opera Australia as a member of the Moffatt Oxenbould Young Artist program and is now a principal artist with the company, where the many roles

he has performed include Papageno and Priest (The Magic Flute), Dr Malatesta (Don Pasquale), Belcore, Marcello (La Bohème), Guglielmo, Prosdocimo (Il turco in Italia), Yamadori (Madama Butterfly), Masetto (Don Giovanni), Ceprano (Rigoletto), Pish Tush (The Mikado), Morales (Carmen), Gaoler (Tosca), Sid (Albert Herring), Fiorello (The Barber of Seville), Doctor/Inquisitor/Judge/Stanislaus (Candide), Handsome (La Fanciulla del West), Cascada (The Merry Widow) and Starveling (A Midsummer Night's Dream), as well as the title role in Opera Australia's Regional Tour of Don Giovanni.

Mooroolbark

The Choir finished the year as usual with a Christmas concert at Mooroolbark, which has become part of our regular program over the years.

Because of the seating limitation at the community hall and the overwhelming demand for tickets, the choir actually performed two concerts (or the same concert twice) once on the Saturday evening and again on the Sunday afternoon. This unorthodox arrangement works for the organisers and the audience so the choir was happy to comply.

A full house on both occasions enjoyed a mixture of Welsh hwyl, community carols, songs from the shows and some choir favourites with both concerts ending in a standing ovation.

Choir Christmas Party

Our Choir's Christmas party was held at the Waverley Golf club and our guest of honour for the evening was our local Federal MP - Michael Sukkar - who spoke quite eloquently and provided one of the prize Christmas hampers. A good time was had by all.

Extramural Activities

While the choir as a whole had a quiet Christmas period, some of our members have been involved in other choral activities such as the Carols by Candlelight concert, which is televised live by Channel Nine on Christmas Eve. The 24 hours of rehearsal i.e. four Saturday mornings and two full rehearsals at the Myer Music Bowl, represent a significant commitment especially at Christmas time.

Three of our choristers, Paul Gawthorn, Gwyn Harper and Doug Utley (together with wife Geneve) were part of the





invitational 230 strong CBC choir conducted by one of our choir's previous musical directors - Doug Heywood. The CBC choir includes representatives of many choirs in the Melbourne area including some individuals from the Victorian Welsh and Australian Welsh choirs as well as existing and former members of choirs which Doug or Alex Heywood have conducted over the years. Members of the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir have been involved with this event since 2002 and it provides a wonderful example of the camaraderie of the music community in Melbourne.

Our Music Director David Ashton-Smith has also had a busy time with his other choir, the Ashton Smith Singers, performing in their traditional New Year's Eve Concert at the Hamer Hall.

This year's concert featured Marina Prior, Sylvie Paladino, Denis Walters, Roy Best and the Australian Pops orchestra under the baton of John Foreman.

David himself was present in a relatively unfamiliar role - singing with the basses.

Chorister profile

In this edition of the newsletter we profile one of our older members and more significantly one of the few native Welsh speakers in the choir - **baritone Owain Jones**

I was born in 1934 in Manchester of Welsh speaking parents from Flintshire, North Wales and consequently I learned "The Language of Heaven" at an early age.

My education generally, was sorely hampered by the war, so I left school at 15. However I was fortunate to get an apprenticeship in the Printing industry, interrupted by two years National Service. I served in the Royal Engineers based mainly in the Suez Canal Zone where "I grew up". On return to the UK, I set about finishing my apprenticeship and gained more experience in different firms, before branching out into junior management and sales. It was in this role that in November 1960 I flew out as a "Ten Pound Pom" to Melbourne, to act as a sales representative for an English Ink Company.

After 4 years I accepted the role of Trade Instructor at the Melbourne College of Printing and Graphic Art, where I spent 16 happy years.

During the last four years there, I completed 8 subjects of my Bachelor of Arts degree at Melbourne University and finished it during my first of three years at Coburg Technical College.

From there I spent three happy and profitable years gaining experience in leadership roles at Dandenong Technical College, which enabled me to obtain a further promotion in 1987 as head of Humanities at Mooroolbark Technical College.

I learnt a great deal during those three years before retiring

from teaching at the start of 1990. However I continued to be employed for a further eight years as an Educational Consultant for the Educational Publisher, Heinemann.

Life has not solely revolved around work; my other interests include Rugby, Music and Theatre, which I still enjoy.

Ladies were also of interest and in December 1970 I married my darling Liz, and together we formed a happy family with the arrival of Cathryn in 1971 and then Philip in 1973 at our home in what was Chadstone, but is now Malvern East.

Luckily, Cathy and hubby Mike and our grandchildren Nicholas (12) and Caitlin (10) live nearby in Ashburton and we see a lot of them. Our son Philip has chosen to live with his lovely Susanne in Gotheborg, Sweden, though we are often in contact.

I joined the choir in early 2008 and have relished every minute since, particularly the music, mateship and a real sense of continual learning.

I gained experience in singing with a local choir, then the Philharmonic Choir, Ken Taylor Singers and Vic Opera (when it was largely amateur outfit.) I also did a stint with the Kew Theatre Guild, Gilbert & Sullivan Society and gained experience in musical comedy and straight theatre with both the Toorak and Malvern Players.

Currently, besides MWMC, I am involved at my local church, especially with the Men's Breakfast meetings and helping in the small choir on occasions.

"Lunching" is an interest I enjoy with the Beefsteak and Burgundy Club and the monthly discussion group lunch at the RACV, not forgetting my beloved Rugby club - Harlequins and their monthly "Geriatrics" lunch.

Tour guiding is something I love doing in my "retirement years", as is learning Italian and writing "My Life Story" at my local U3A.

All in all I try to keep busy and Liz and I are very much looking forward to the Choir's trip to Cornwall.



For more information on concerts visit
www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/concerts



CORNWALL INTERNATIONAL MALE CHORAL *festival* 27th April - 1st May 2017

More information about the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir's itinerary

As our Friends of the Choir will know, the choir will be performing at Cornwall International Choral festival, held over five days in and around Truro, Cornwall.

What we did not point out in our last newsletter was the rest of the tour includes concerts at Bristol, Maesteg and Weybridge. The Maesteg and Weybridge concerts will be a reprise of the concerts on our last tour in the UK and we look forward to catching up with the friends we made then.

If you have friends overseas who might want to attend our concerts or if you yourself will be in the UK at that time please feel free to contact us and we will make sure that you or your friends are warmly welcomed.

There is a Facebook page with information about the festival <https://www.facebook.com/153019875053574>, which will be continuously updated.

If you care to follow our own website, we will endeavour to keep you up to date with details of our tour as we go.

Vale Robyn Jenkins

Robyn, the wife of one of our longest serving baritones - Peter Jenkins passed away at the end of December after a long illness. 45 choristers attended and sang at her funeral in Camberwell.

Our thoughts go out to Peter and his family.

Melbourne Welsh Church Gymanfa Ganu

Sunday, February 26th, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.

The annual Melbourne Welsh Church Gymanfa Ganu, in celebration of St David's Day will once again be held at St Michael's Church in Collins Street, for what must be the best value concert in the City of Melbourne. The concert, which is free (except for the offering), features overseas guest artists - the celebrated conductor, Edward-Rhys Harry, together with the soloist and the winner of the Blue Riband at the 2016 Welsh National Eisteddfod Kees Huysman.

In addition, seated closer to heaven in the balcony, will be representatives from the Australian, Victorian and Melbourne Welsh Male Choirs and the Geelong Ladies Choir.

Apart from being the Music Director of the largest Welsh male voice choir in the world (the London Welsh Male Voice Choir), Edward-Rhys Harry has a very impressive Curriculum Vita.

Edward is the Artistic Director of the South Wales Choral Union and 'The Harry Ensemble' - his chamber choir who, through performances and recordings, promote British choral music overseas. Their debut album 'Remember' is available to download now. Give them a listen!

He is also Musical Director of the Reading Festival Chorus, the London Welsh Chorale and Eastcastle Street Chorus.

Edward is a member of the training team for the Association of British Choral Directors, leading workshops in singing and conducting across the UK and is the Conductor-in-Residence of the British Sinfonietta orchestra.

He has recently returned (along with a number of the London Welsh community) from directing concerts in Buenos Aires and the Chubut Province, Patagonia where he adjudicated at Eisteddfodau and led the sesquicentennial Gymanfa Ganu in Trevelin.

The church tends to fill fairly quickly, so be early if you want a good seat!

Sponsorship

The choir is actively seeking sponsors in particular for our overseas trip to Cornwall together with the annual funding of our Singer of the Year Concert.

Samuel Dundas, our guest artist for the St David's Day celebration concert, is a fine example of the results of the SOTY sponsorship.

If you would like to be associated with either of these wonderful events or wish to be involved in any of our other concerts then please contact any member of the choir's committee and we will be delighted to work with you to make the most of your sponsorship.

The choir is also available for corporate and sporting events, dinners, anniversaries, weddings etc., So if you require anything from a flash mob to a full two-hour concert please contact me, or any committee member to discuss these opportunities.