



Welcome back to all our readers.

On behalf of the choir may I wish you a very happy and prosperous new year filled with love and good music.

This year promises to be just as exciting as last year with new guest artists such as the lovely Sylvie Paladino, whom many of you will have seen in the recent, "Carols by Candlelight" concert on Christmas Eve 2018, performing with us later in the year.

We will keep you up to date with details of dates and locations but, currently, we are concentrating on the celebration concert for St David's Day, which this year, will be held at the James Tatoulis Auditorium at Methodist Ladies College in Kew. This is surely the best and most intimate suburban hall in Melbourne in which to perform and listen to musical performances. This year we will be featuring (courtesy of the Welsh Church) the Blue Riband winner from the Welsh National Eisteddfod baritone Andrew Jenkins as our guest artist, as well as the lovely Chloe Harris, who was one of the finalists in our 2017 Singer of the Year competition.

Andrew is a member of Risca Male Choir, which is where one of our basses, Malcolm Andrews, learned his trade. I suspect there will be a fair bit of catching up to do for these old friends before and after the concert!

Andrew Jenkins – Baritone



A native of Newport in South Wales, Andrew has been singing as long as he can remember. During his studies at Crosskeys College, near his home town, Andrew sang with the college choir and took part in many musical events as a soloist. He possesses a natural baritone voice of a beautiful quality, and enjoys singing a wide range of music from music theatre to operatic items.

Andrew has been a member of Risca Male Choir for many years and has regularly performed as soloist with them, particularly in their unique Christmas theme shows. On tour with Risca Male Choir, Andy has sung as a soloist in St Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna; the Mariacki Basilica in Krakow; St Thomas's Church, Leipzig; and in the cathedrals at Ghent and Arras. He can be heard on many of the choir's CDs.

Andrew has also been a soloist with a number of other South Wales Choral Societies and Male Choirs.

In 2004 he won the baritone solo competition at the National Eisteddfod when it was held in Newport, eliciting high praise from the adjudicators. Since then, he has been a regular prize winner at local Eisteddfodau, and until recently he continued to compete in such events.

For local choral society, Gwent Chorale, Andy has appeared as a soloist in Stainer's Crucifixion, Fauré's Requiem, Purcell's Dido & Aeneas, Verdi's Nabucco, The Pirates of Penzance and Mozart's Missa Brevis in Bb. He has also taken solo roles with other societies in Puccini's Messa di Gloria, Purcell's Come ye sons of art and Handel's Messiah. He was the soloist in the Welsh premiere of Simon Mold's choral cantata Passiointide, with the choir of Newport Cathedral. He has also performed a number of recitals as part of the duet team, "Tenor & Baritone", embracing a wide range of items: art songs, arias from opera and oratorio, show songs, and duets including the famous one from The Pearl Fishers, a version of which can be seen on YouTube.

At the end of 2017, Andy released a CD called Jenkins the Voice, comprising recordings of live performances made over recent years and featuring Risca Male Choir on some tracks.

In August last year, at the National Eisteddfod in Cardiff Bay, Andy won the bass/baritone competition, and went on to be awarded the Blue Riband – the pinnacle of his already impressive Eisteddfodic career. His prize included engagements to sing in Melbourne at the St David's Day celebrations in 2019. Needless to say, he is thrilled to be here as a part of those events.

Andy studies with well-known Welsh musician, Martin Hodson MBE.

Chloe Harris – Mezzo-Soprano

Chloe has recently graduated with first class honours from the Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Music (Hons) majoring in performance.

She has been awarded for her efforts at the Conservatorium of Music with the Mona McCaughey – The Elise Weideman scholarship, Murray Ormond Vagg scholarship, Muriel Cheek scholarship and Walter Kirby scholarship. Chloe has been accepted as the recipient of the Sleath Lowrey Scholarship for 2017 and was a finalist in the Acclaim Awards masterclasses with Italian soprano, Valeria Esposito. Chloe has been awarded a full scholarship to continue as a scholar for the current Opera





Scholars Australia's 2018/19 season and was a finalist for the prestigious Scholar of the Year award 2017/18.

She has been the recipient of other awards and scholarships such as a finalist at Liederfest in 2016 and 2017 with the Loris Synan and Hedy Holt & Roger Prochazka awards, and the winner of the Janet Perkins vocal scholarship 2016. Chloe has also been a finalist in the Ringwood Aria competition and the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir competition for 2017.

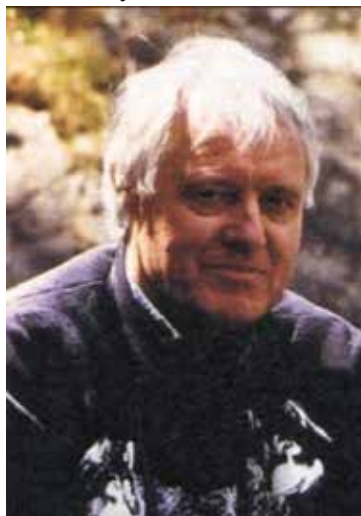
Chloe has been involved in the VYO production 'The Grumpiest Boy in the World' in 2015. She performed the role of Third Lady (2016) and Dorabella (2017) in Conservatorium productions of Mozart Opera excerpts with international director, Beverly Blankenship. Last year, Chloe workshopped the role of Dorabella with Lyric Opera of Melbourne's Director Workshops. Chloe will continue on with Lyric Opera performing the role of Margaret Hargrave in an Australian contemporary opera, FLY.

This will be Chloe's third outing as guest artist with the choir since she competed in our SOTY competition and every time she has wowed the audience. We expect her performance this time to be equally well received.

Vale John Prytherch

One of our former choristers John Prytherch died on 28th November aged 82.

23 members of the choir attended his funeral on a very hot day at Montsalvat, and sang Gwahoddiad and Eli Jenkins Prayer, to sing his spirit home. Kurt Ambrose, a fellow first tenor with John wrote this tribute, which was included in the service. "Memories of our gentle friend and fellow chorister have come flooding back. John had a breadth of interests and



experiences, and you would find yourself lost in his world within seconds of starting a conversation. An active intellect, he was an energetic observer and recorder - a twitcher, who also kept records of all his concert appearances with the choir. John had delved into his family history, declaring that he had traced his lineage to 930. 'Am or pm,' I inquired, which got a very delayed reaction, such was his concentration. Choir was not his only creative outlet. At rehearsal one evening, John produced a locally produced collection of verse, among which was his very own poem. All this, and he played at hooker for Victoria, when rugby meant something in this State! Sadly, the failure of John's eyesight prevented him from driving to rehearsal, and continuing in the choir, a

passion he actively encouraged new first tenors to embrace. A gentle presence, fondly remembered."



Recent Concert – Mooroolbark Christmas Concert

The choir's last concert of the year is traditionally the "Two shows in one day" at Mooroolbark. The community centre at Mooroolbark only holds around two hundred people and because a single Christmas concert by the choir was always sold out, we agreed to do two concerts in one day. This has been going on for a while and for the past five years the second concert has been a sell-out too.

This year's performances on Sunday 16th December at 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. followed the traditional pattern and the audience was treated to a feast of four-part harmony with a Welsh flavour such as Gwahoddiad and Sing Rhondda plus old and new favourites plus carols including John Rutter's beautiful Angels Carol, the spiritual Mary had a baby plus community singing favourites, Away in a manger, Joy to the world and O come all ye faithful.

For our soloist - Mike Rogers (bass baritone), it was his first performance in this role with the choir and his rendition of the old favourite, What a Wonderful World was very well received by the audience, so I suspect it may not be his last solo spot.

Choir Chorister Profile Barrie Pickersgill, Baritone

In 1996, Dee and I went to celebrate the New Year with some friends of ours and I bumped into Bob Corden, one of our elite Baritones. He told me about



the Melbourne Welsh Choir and suggested that I came along to a rehearsal. So I joined the choir in January 1997 and later that same year travelled to South Africa with them.

I was born and raised in Bradford, West Yorkshire. My father was very musical and in his younger years sang with choirs around the area so perhaps I was destined to join a choir. I can remember singing the boy solo in "O For the



Wings of a Dove” at the local Eccleshill Methodist Church we attended. In my late teens and early twenties I did some amateur operatics in Bradford and Leeds, singing in the chorus in shows such as *Guys and Dolls*, *Desert Song*, etc.

However, sport intervened, as I had progressed from school sports to being a playing member at the Bradford Cricket Club. We played matches in the summer months and attended indoor nets sessions in the winter. After leaving school I worked on different farms in the East Riding of Yorkshire, followed by studies at the Bishop Burton College of Agriculture. After college, I was employed by the Ministry of Agriculture and this work involved spending the majority of my working days visiting farms, predominantly in the Yorkshire Pennine hills, inspecting cattle, sheep and various crops. I had always loved the countryside and the wide-open spaces, which was why I opted to work in agriculture.

During my time with the Ministry of Agriculture, I was seconded to the Gilbert and Ellis Islands (now Kiribati and Tuvalu), working with the local community on agricultural extension programmes. I was stationed on various outer islands, namely Maiana, Beru and Abemama. In the late 1960's and early 1970's these outer islands were truly remote and it was not unusual to have to wait 10 or 12 weeks between visits from ships bringing supplies and for transport between islands.

On returning to work with the Ministry of Agriculture, I met and married Dee. We have one son, Richard. I had moved to working in North Yorkshire based in Northallerton and we made the move to Australia in 1981. The first job I was offered was with Barastoc Stockfeeds as a Dairy Development Representative. However over a 20-year period with Barastoc (which became part of the Ridley Corporation) I had many jobs including Sales Manager and Site Manager and when I resigned from Ridley I was a Regional General Manager.

Before finally retiring, I had a short 6 months spell with Lely Australia (agricultural machinery) and completed a 12 month Agricultural Audit of Casey and Cardinia, funded by the Federal Government.

Having lived in Langwarrin for 27 years, Dee and I moved to Safety Beach in 2009 where we bought a block of land and built a house. We spend much of our time working in the garden, which we built from scratch and in the last few years we have become members of the Mount Martha Valley Probus Club, where my term as President concludes in March. We also spend much of our time running around and looking after our two grandchildren!

I have learned so much about singing and music in over 20 years with the Melbourne Welsh Choir and the learning continues under our current MD. As a bonus, Dee and I have had some amazing and wonderful experiences both at home and abroad. Long may we continue.

New Choir member – John Oliver, Bass

John Oliver was born in Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset across the Bristol Channel from South Wales. Welshmen will be familiar with Weston, not only as a popular holiday destination, but also a place where you could have a drink on Sundays, which was prohibited in Wales in those days!



His forebears on his father's side were from Cornwall but his grandfather moved to Cardiff and his father was raised there.

John and his wife, Jean, live in Black Rock; they have lived in the Bayside area for about 35 years since they emigrated from the UK to Australia in 1983. They have two daughters and four grandchildren. They have both been retired for a good many years now.

John's background is predominantly in newspaper management; however, he started life as a cadet in the merchant navy. In fact after attending boarding school in Somerset, he enrolled at the Reardon Smith Nautical College in Fairwater, Cardiff. He then went to sea with BP as an apprentice navigation officer, but opted for a career ashore where he followed a career in market research and newspaper publishing. He worked for The Times of London, special reports division between 1970 and 1981, eventually becoming commercial manager. In 1983 the family moved to Australia where he worked for The Age, ending up as publisher of the newly launched Sunday Age in 1990. Later he joined Haileybury College as Marketing Director and finally Swinburne University as Director of External Affairs. After a year of retirement and with too much time on his hands, he decided to take up a law course at Melbourne University and ended up with a Masters in International Law.

His musical background is a bit fragmented, but he sang in the school choir and later in church choirs. He has joined the Melbourne Welsh Choir because he was so impressed by the standard of singing at our recent public performances, which he found both moving and inspirational. He is grateful that choir members have gone out of their way to make him feel welcome. He realises that there is a steep learning curve ahead of him, but he hopes to make a meaningful contribution, especially to the Bass section of the choir.



Upcoming events

A Celebration of St David's Day, Saturday 3:00 p.m. 2nd March. MLC, 207 Barkers Road, Kew.



The choir's annual concert to celebrate St David, the patron Saint of Wales' official day will be held again at MLC's wonderful auditorium with guest artists Andrew Jenkins and Chloe Harris. While having a traditional Welsh theme the concert will also feature some of the recent additions to the choir's repertoire.

Tickets are available from the ticket secretary on 0413 488 560 or via our Trybooking website.

Gymanfa Ganu, Sunday 3:00 p.m. 3rd March

St Michael's Church, Collins Street,



The Welsh Church's tradition of having a Gymanfa Ganu (Communal singing) led by a well-known Conductor from Wales plus the winner of the Blue Riband at the Welsh National Eisteddfod, has been thrown into a bit of disarray as a result of the illness and resulting cancellation of her trip down under by the well-known Welsh conductor Meinir Richards (and her daughter). Nevertheless the Gymanfa will continue and our choir will be one of the four (possibly five) choirs (the Australian, Melbourne and Victorian Welsh Male choirs plus the Geelong Ladies Choir and potentially a new choir, the Peninsular Welsh Ladies Choir) represented in the balcony (nearer to heaven). In addition, Andrew Jenkins will perform some solos and the inimitable Huw Jones will no doubt entertain us with his harp and his Welsh humour. The revised format is still evolving but it will still be the best free entertainment (apart from traditional collection) in the city on that Sunday afternoon. Seating, although free, is limited, so to ensure a good spot, come early.

Bendigo Concert 2:00 p.m. Sunday 24th March

Sacred Heart Cathedral, Mckenzie Street.

This will be the choir's first engagement at Bendigo's beautiful cathedral and we are looking forward to experiencing singing in a structure with such tall (24 metre) ceilings.

The choir's program will include some of our traditional favourites together with some of the hymns and anthems etc., which hopefully will allow us to exploit the cathedral's unique acoustics.

Our guest artist for this concert will be the lovely soprano Kate Amos who won our Singer of the Year competition in 2016. Kate completed her Bachelor of Music (Performance) with Honours at Melbourne University and a Diploma in Italian.

Her performance credits include Victorian Opera's Noye's Fludde and Snowqueen, La Traviata (study cover: Violetta, cover: Annina) Hansel & Gretel (Dew Fairy), and leading roles in Gilbert and Sullivan Opera's The Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado and Lyric Opera's The Red Apple. Kate recently played Christine in Windmill Theatre Company's The Phantom of the Opera, receiving a Lyrebird Award.

Numerous awards include: AME 'Opera Scholar of the Year', E & L Jullyan Academic Excellence scholarship and Sleath Lowrey scholarship.

Kate studied at the Fondazione Spontini Pergolesi in Italy after winning a scholarship through the Italian Acclaim Awards and recently was a Finalist in the IFAC Australian Singing Competition winning the Symphony Australia Prize, Merenda scholarship and UK Royal-Overseas League Award.

Kate was also a guest artist when we performed at the Ulumbarra Theatre in Bendigo in June last year

Tickets for this concert are available via the choir's website. If you have friends in Bendigo or the surrounding area we would be pleased if you could let them know about this concert.





**Bunjil Place, Narre Warren
Joint Concert with Frankston Ladies Choir
3:00 p.m. Saturday 13th April**



We are delighted to be joining Frankston Ladies Choir (FLC) again for a concert at Melbourne's newest Performing Arts Centre in the City of Casey. The complex with its 800 seat theatre has won numerous international awards and we are keen to test its capabilities. We enjoy performing with the FLC and with our talented accompanist - Simon Walters being the music director for the FLC, you can be assured that the joint numbers will be well integrated and memorable. The rest of the program will highlight the different individual interpretations and abilities of both choirs.

Bunjil Place should be an excellent place to sing and listen as well as an easy place to get to and park. Make sure you put it in your diary.

Would you like to sponsor the choir?

The choir is actively seeking sponsors in particular for the annual funding of our famous Singer of the Year Concert.

The number of winners and runners-up of this competition who have gone on to make careers on concert and opera stages worldwide is testament to the significance of this event. In addition to awarding monetary prizes to the finalists, the choir provides opportunities for them to perform as guest artists in our concerts during the year.

If you would like to be associated with this wonderful event or simply wish to have your name or product associated with the choir, please contact any member of the choir's committee and we will be delighted to work with you get the best value out of your sponsorship.

Would you like to hire the choir?

As can be seen from the results our major concerts at the Melbourne Recital Centre, Ulumbarra Theatre Bendigo and the Melbourne Town Hall, the choir has the skills, capability and contacts to produce and run major events. In addition, the choir is available for community, corporate and sporting events, dinners, anniversaries, weddings etc.,

So if you require anything from a short rousing opening for a conference (say) to a full two-hour concert, with guest

artists (if required) together with the choir's risers and electric piano, please contact Colin Brown (0409 188 109), or any committee member to discuss your needs. Please bear in mind that we're talking about a choir of up to 60 voices plus a professional accompanist and music director, so we provide great value for money.

Would you like to join the choir?

We're on a mission. That mission is to bring the power and passion of 70 plus men singing together to everyone's ears. Moving audiences to tears, shouts of joy and the realisation that when these ordinary men sing together, it's not a concert, it's an experience - like no other.

There are rules, of course. Some of the rules include socialising with each other, forming life-long friendships, laughing, talking, camaraderie second to none, having the occasional drink, oh and learning to sing together! To achieve this we are on the lookout for new members, whether experienced choristers wanting a new challenge or young inexperienced singers who would benefit from the coaching and direction of our professional music team (which we believe to be the best in the business) and the mentoring of our established choristers.

Our web-based learning aids enable newcomers and established choristers to come up to speed with new and existing material very quickly.

Whatever your level of musical competence, you will experience a sympathetic conductor and accompanist, a great rehearsal environment and a group of friendly, dedicated and talented choristers. Many of our members have had no formal musical training, but they work hard, enjoy what they do and are keen to help the choir achieve new heights.

If you simply want to see and hear the choir rehearsing, please come along. Visitors are always welcome and if you come on the first Wednesday in the month we'll even offer you a sandwich or a cake. You'll appreciate how a four-part harmony, male voice arrangement is developed to the polished state you see on stage. Having an audience tends to keep our choristers in check, without inhibiting the fun and banter, which is part of every rehearsal!

Rehearsals are held every Wednesday (excepting school holidays) and run from 7:00 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. when the choir is updated by the choir president about upcoming events and related choir matters.

We especially welcome younger members, although potential members of any age are always encouraged to come for an audition.

If you are interested give Gwyn Harper (0419 562 353), or any choir member, a call and we will be pleased to introduce you to an irreverent but highly motivated group of guys who love the company of their fellow choristers and enjoy the challenge of singing in 4-part harmony.



Communication

We depend on ticket sales to our concerts for most of our income, so your patronage is essential to our survival and growth. Please feel free to copy or circulate this newsletter to any of your friends and if you would like us to add them to our distribution list, so they get the copy direct, then let us know their email address.

Email is our preferred way of communication with our supporters so, if you've recently joined the internet fraternity, send us an email and we'll add you into our database and include you in all future communications.

Feed-back is important to us, so write and let us know what you think of our performances, introduce us to your friends and tell us what you would like us to perform at forthcoming events.

Apology

In our last edition of the newsletter the credit for the excellent photos taken at the "Till they all come home" concert was inadvertently omitted. They were taken by Neil Roberts who was also responsible for the shots of the choir taken in the gardens at Federation Estate which appear on our website.

Laughter is the best medicine

While singing in the choir is a wonderful way to maintain physical and mental health, laughter is still the best medicine. Here's a joke or two to keep you going.

Golf Stroke

It was a perfect Saturday morning, and Mike was beginning his pre-shot routine, visualizing his upcoming shot when a voice came over the clubhouse speaker – "Would the gentleman on the ladies tee please back up to the men's tee!" Mike was still deep in his routine, seemingly impervious to the interruption. Again the announcement – "Would the man on the women's tee kindly back up to the men's tee! Please!" Mike had had enough. He turned and shouted, "Would the announcer in the clubhouse kindly shut up and let me play my second shot!"

Loud Scream

Dentist says to his patient: Could you help me? Could you give out a few of your loudest, most painful screams?

Patient: Why? Doc, it isn't all that bad this time.

Dentist: There are so many people in the waiting room right now and I don't want to miss my 4 o'clock tee time!

Attorney and the Pathologist

In a murder trial, the defence attorney was cross-examining a pathologist. Here's what happened:

Attorney: Before you signed the death certificate, had you taken the pulse? Coroner: No.

Attorney: Did you listen to the heart? Coroner: No.

Attorney: Did you check for breathing? Coroner: No.

Attorney: So, when you signed the death certificate, you weren't sure the man was dead, were you? Coroner: Well, let me put it this way. The man's brain was sitting in a jar on my desk. But I guess it's possible he could be out there practicing law somewhere.

No land lovers here

A seaman meets a pirate in a bar, and talk turns to their adventures on the sea. The seaman notes that the pirate has a peg-leg, a hook, and an eye patch. The seaman asks, "So, how did you end up with the peg-leg?" The pirate replies, "We were in a storm at sea, and I was swept overboard into a school of sharks. Just as my men were pulling me out, a shark bit my leg off." "Wow!" said the seaman. "What about your hook?" "Well", replied the pirate, "We were boarding an enemy ship and were battling the other sailors with swords. One of the enemy cut my hand off." "Incredible!" remarked the seaman. "How did you get the eye patch?" "A seagull dropping fell into my eye," replied the pirate. "You lost your eye to a seagull dropping?," the sailor asked incredulously. "Well," said the pirate, "it was my first day with my hook".

My Living Will

Last night, my kids and I were sitting in the living room and I said to them, 'I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that ever happens, just pull the plug.

They got up, unplugged the computer and threw out my wine!!

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