

## Concert at Rosanna Uniting Church

It is always nice to sing in a new location and to a new audience, as was the case when the choir sang as part of the Arden Crescent Concert Series on Sunday afternoon 8th September, at the Uniting Church, in Rosanna.

Since the church is fairly small, David Ashton-Smith, our Music Director (as well as being a soloist and the compere for the afternoon) needed to conduct the choir from the aisle, in the middle of the capacity audience, providing quite an "up close and personal" experience for all concerned.



Our guest artist was the lovely Kate Amos (seen above with David and choir president David Field), who was already a favourite with the audience, having sung at a previous Arden Crescent concert some time ago.

She performed *Musetta's Waltz Song, I dreamed a dream* and *This song in May* in the first half of the program. This was followed in the second half by a medley of songs from ***The Sound of Music*** which included the lovely *Do Re Mi* with the choir playing the part of the children's chorus (well we're all kids at heart!) and *I could have danced all night* from *My Fair Lady*.

Kate joined with the choir in the finale which included the stirring *World in Union* (the theme song of the Rugby World Cup) and *You'll never walk alone*.

The ovation at the end of the concert was testament to the audience's enjoyment and we look forward to a return engagement at Rosanna.

## Remembrance Day at the Shrine

The choir has accepted an invitation to perform as part of the 10:00 a.m. Remembrance Day service at the Shrine on November 11th, 2019.

This is a special occasion since it will be the 100th year in which the Remembrance service has been held.

The choir will sing a short bracket of songs appropriate to the occasion, some of which we sang at the "***Till They All Come Home***" concert at the Melbourne Town Hall, which celebrated the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1.

The service is being transmitted by a number of the TV networks, so look out for us on the steps of the Shrine. Hopefully the weather will be fine!

## Geelong Senior Citizens Concert

(sponsored by Tuckers Funeral and Bereavement Services)

St Mary of the Angels Basilica

Friday 4 October at 2:30 p.m.

In what is our longest continuous engagement, the choir was delighted to perform its 17th consecutive concert for Seniors Week in Geelong.

However, as compere Brian Evans advised, it was actually our 22nd performance at the Basilica since during the first five years we gave two performances in one day!

The choir enjoys singing in this magnificent old cathedral and in particular we love the audiences who tend to fill it for our concerts.

The weather was drizzly, the footy finals results were but a distant memory and the church was full, so everything was set for an uplifting afternoon of singing which is exactly what happened!

The program included a number of old favourites like *American Trilogy* and *Cwm Rhondda* together with a number of songs, which are new to our repertoire, including beautiful arrangements of *The Water is Wide* and *Homeward Bound*.

Our guest artist for this concert was a young, classically trained, soprano - **Amelia Wawrzon** - who was brought up in Geelong and has a special link with St Mary's - her mother, who was in the audience, was married in the church!

Amelia delighted the audience with her interpretation of *Birdsong at Eventide* (Eric Coates) and *Maids of Cadiz* (Delibes). For her second bracket she sang a selection of popular songs from the ***Sound of Music*** and joined with the choir (and audience) in singing *Do, re, mi*.



In her final appearance she combined with the choir to sing the haunting *You'll never walk alone* from ***Carousel***.

While this was Amelia's first outing with the choir, we are confident it won't be her last.

## Christmas Concert Sunday 15th December 2019

Mooroolbark Community Centre

125 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark

For this concert, which has been a sell-out for seven years running, the box office is now open.

As our readers may be aware, because of the size of the Hall, the choir gives two concerts in one day. The concerts will feature some Christmas carols, some old choir favourites as well as some of the new material which we have developed in 2019.

To book please contact Yarra Ranges on 1300 368 333 or via email to [boxoffice@yarraranges.vic.gov.au](mailto:boxoffice@yarraranges.vic.gov.au)

## Choir Chorister Profile – Clive Dickinson – First Tenor

It was probably inevitable that I should find myself singing in a Welsh male voice choir at some stage in my life. The surprise is that it took fifty-eight years of my life to eventuate.

I joined the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir in 2002. There were a number of factors which conspired to ensure that this would happen one way or another.

Although I grew up in England, my Welsh heritage always figured prominently in my upbringing. First it was my grandfather. He was a fervent Welshman from



the Valleys of South Wales and I used to accompany him everywhere. He was proud of me and I loved him. After he died, my mother took the educational reins. I also would avail myself of any opportunity that presented itself to visit Wales. My father used to deliver cold storage units to shops all over England and Wales so I used to travel with him. I was awed by the coal mines of South Wales, the huge slag heaps and the slate quarries in the north. I was also impressed with the beauty of the countryside – the Brecon Beacons, Snowdonia and the quaint little villages like Ebbw Vale and coastal towns like Harlech, Caernarfon and Aberystwyth.

As I grew up, I started to take an interest in music, armed with a hand windup gramophone and the 78 rpm records left to me by my grandfather. Joseph Locke, Gracie Fields and Stanley Holloway were among the records I played on it. One day I was given a long playing record of the Morrision Orpheus and Treorchy Choirs. Their singing captivated me. I was so impressed with their harmonies, their exquisite timing and their control of musical light and shade that, from there on I resolved to obtain as much Welsh music as I could.

In 1960 my family emigrated to Australia. I did not want to come and it took me quite a while to settle into my new home. I was only fifteen when I left school, where I had been living a rather sheltered existence. After some heartache and many mis-adventures I began to make my way in the brave new world of employment and began studying at night school.

Meanwhile, my mother and I discovered that there were Welsh choirs in Melbourne and we would sometimes attend concerts, given by them.

I continued with part time studies to improve my career chances and obtained several degrees and diplomas. I was eventually able to become a teacher and taught mathematics, physics and chemistry for many years in secondary and tertiary institutions around Australia and overseas. During this time, I also studied several languages (Latin and German at tertiary level, French, Italian and Maltese at secondary

level), and I discovered that I had a propensity for learning foreign languages.

Then one day it happened! A Welsh car salesman, who sang with the Victoria Welsh Choir, suggested to me that, since I liked Welsh music and languages, I should try joining a Welsh choir. I had sung a little with a couple of other choirs but the Welsh choirs seemed far above my level of ability. Nevertheless, after some more persuasive argument, I decided to give it a try. I am so glad I did, because the benefits I have received from singing have been overwhelming.

I soon realised that the skill in choral singing is to make your voice blend in, so that you are adding to the tone, volume and harmonies, without standing out too much. This affords people, like me, the opportunity to sing without having a special voice or special voice training. I simply contribute.

The fact that we sing in Welsh and other languages (Italian, German, Latin, French, Mandarin, Maori etc.) is, for me, a bonus. I love the challenge of learning to pronounce these languages and to produce the beautiful harmonies which other cultures achieve.

After a very rewarding, if varied, career in teaching and managing my own computer consultancy for thirty-five years, I retired in 2011 and did not know what I would do with myself. I soon found out!

Nowadays there is not much time in the day for myself. I have two beautiful grandchildren, with whom I spend lots of time five days a week. I also sing in two Welsh male voice choirs. These roles are very important to me and take up much of my time. I still pursue my studies, although very casually now, through online university courses, since I believe that you never stop learning in this life.

One of the most important events in my life took place in 1968. I married a vivacious and very positive young lady who had recently migrated to Melbourne from Malta. Nathalie has been my principal support, my friend and lover for over fifty years now and marrying her was easily the smartest act I ever did. Together we have weathered all of life's storms, produced two beautiful children and now have two wonderful grandchildren. She is still the most important part of my life and her smile, greeting me every morning, is what inspires me to live each day.

Music, to me, is food for the soul. Being a very emotional person who is subject to rather sudden mood swings, I welcome anything which will give me a boost and make me feel more positive. When I sing, I receive a lift which I can only describe as spiritual. Consequently, I sing almost incessantly. If I am not singing aloud then I am singing inside my head. If I am sad, the singing raises my spirits. If I am happy then it boosts my spirits. Moreover, the greatest fillip is obtained by my singing myself. I can listen to and appreciate the music of others, but there is nothing more satisfying than to sing yourself.

Of course, there are other bonuses to be had from singing in a Welsh choir. I have toured overseas three times, sung in several states of Australia, met some VIP's, sung at major events (e.g. MCG, Eureka Stockade Memorial Ceremony, Pacific Law Conference) and sung with some famous stars.

## New Choir Chorister Profile – Peter Day – First Tenor

Peter Day is originally from Adelaide but has lived in Kilsyth since 2015.

He worked in the flooring industry and had a parquet business for 17 years; then for the last 15 years of his working life he was in merchandising for Beaumont Tiles. He is now retired.



Peter has been married for 47 years to Margaret who is of Dutch heritage; they met on a working holiday in an English holiday camp in 1971. They have two daughters and 6 grandchildren and Peter and Margaret moved to Melbourne in order to be closer to their grandchildren.

We have all witnessed how seamlessly Peter has joined the first tenors, so it is no surprise to hear that he was a member of the Metropolitan Male Choir of South Australia for 19 years and the Melbourne Welsh and the Jubilate Mixed Choir since 2014. He has also sung in performances held by the Male Choirs Association of Australia and in the Royal Albert Hall in London.

Peter says he has no Welsh heritage, but on his mother's side of the family there is Cornish and on his father's side there is English dating back to 1840 when they emigrated from Fording Bridge in Hampshire, and we reckon that's almost close enough to being Welsh.

Peter, welcome back to the Melbourne Welsh, and particularly to the tenor section.

### Would you like to join the choir?

As people become increasingly aware of the benefits of singing for physical and mental health, more and more people are joining choirs. Many of our own members also sing in other choirs on a regular basis or, as is the case with a number of our choristers, perform for a single major event, such as Carols by Candlelight (which has an invited choir of 230 and is conducted by a former music director of our choir – Doug Heywood).

If you are a member of another choir, a bathroom vocalizer or someone who simply wants to learn to sing why not come and do so with the best team in the business?

We are always on the lookout for new members, whether experienced choristers wanting a new challenge, or young (or not so young), inexperienced singers who would benefit from the coaching and direction of our professional music team 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.

Concerned about singing in Welsh, well don't worry! It's just another language and we already sing songs in Italian, Latin, Maori and German. We do however have a language class just prior to rehearsal, to introduce newcomers (and experienced choristers) into the pronunciation and meaning of the songs which we sing in Welsh.

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 had no formal musical training prior to joining, but the choir has helped them to read and interpret our music scores. We all work hard, enjoy what we do and strive to help the choir achieve new heights.

Our concerts often take us around the country and overseas as well as to some of the most prestigious concert halls in Melbourne. If you simply want to see and hear the choir rehearsing, please come along to our rehearsal rooms at Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood Ave, Ringwood. 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 some 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.

### Developing a new choir recording

The choir has been hard at work over the past few weeks laying down tracks for our next recording, which we hope will be available and on sale in time for Christmas.

Belying its modest exterior, the Oaklands studio in Nunawading, which we used, is a new state of the art recording facility, featuring an orchestral room capable of holding 65 musicians and a Yamaha C7 concert grand piano. The choir met there, on our scheduled rehearsal night, over a period of four Wednesdays.

Some of our guest artists e.g. Roy Best and Kate Amos will be recorded separately and spliced seamlessly into our joint songs, such is the skill of our MD and the crew at Oaklands. We look forward to seeing and hearing the finished product.



### Would you like to hire the choir?

Anyone who attended our concerts at major venues such as the Melbourne Recital Centre, Ulumbarra Theatre Bendigo and the Melbourne Town Hall, would be aware that the choir has the skills, capability and contacts to produce and run high quality major events.

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), 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.

### Communication

While we are an amateur choir, we employ a professional music director and accompanist, who enable the choir to present a professional image. This, together with the infrastructure expenses e.g. rehearsal rooms, website, music scores etc., makes the choir quite an expensive organisation to run (and we receive no external grants).

We depend primarily on hire of the choir for events, plus ticket sales to our own concerts and sales of our CDs for the majority 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 or relatives and if you would like us to add them to our distribution list, so they get their copy direct, then let us know their email address.

Alternatively, they can subscribe via our website: [www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au](http://www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au)

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

We treat all information provided as confidential and our subscribers can opt out at any time.

We value your feedback so please write and let us know what you think of our performances, introduce us to your friends and tell us what and where you would like to see us perform in future concerts.

### Would you like to sponsor the choir?

If you have a product or service which you believe might appeal to our audiences then contact us and we will be delighted to feature your product in our concert material and promotions.

The choir is always seeking sponsors in particular for the annual funding of our famous Singer of the Year (SOTY) concert. This prestigious event, which has been running for 27 years and is open to singers under the age of 35, draws competitors from all parts of the state (and indeed sometimes interstate).

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 the 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.

All sponsors are acknowledged in our programs and publicity material and there is also the opportunity to be involved in the presentation ceremonies on the night and during the elimination heats.

If you would like to be associated with this wonderful event or any of our other prestigious concerts please contact any member of the choir's committee and we will be delighted to work with you to get the best value out of your sponsorship

### Laughter is the best medicine

In the current world of social media, mobile phones, Facebook, Twitter etc., here is a witticism which appealed to us.

Out of the mouths of....

"Wi-fi went down for five minutes, so I had to talk to my family.

They seem like nice people".

*Sign on a church door in Italy* Roughly translated:

If you would like to come inside to reflect with God, you are most welcome, however it is unlikely God will call you on your mobile phone so please turn it off.

If you would like to converse with God, please find a quiet area and do so for as long as you like, however it is unlikely God will be communicating with you through Facebook or Twitter, so you will not need your electronic device.

If you would like to see God, then why not try texting God while you are driving.

### Contacts

Marketing - Gwyn Harper and Colin Brown .....	<a href="mailto:marketing@melbournewelshchoir.com.au">marketing@melbournewelshchoir.com.au</a>
President - David Field .....	<a href="mailto:president@melbournewelshchoir.com.au">president@melbournewelshchoir.com.au</a>
Secretary -Kevin Seerup .....	<a href="mailto:secretary@melbournewelshchoir.com.au">secretary@melbournewelshchoir.com.au</a>
Vice President - David Simm .....	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@melbournewelshchoir.com.au">vicepresident@melbournewelshchoir.com.au</a>
Phil Tomlinson, Paul Gawthorn, Mal Andrews, Ieuan Thomas, Doug Utley .....	<a href="mailto:committee@melbournewelshchoir.com.au">committee@melbournewelshchoir.com.au</a>

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