

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir April Newsletter No 36



As reported in our last newsletter, the choir is still rehearsing hard using the Zoom conferencing software which, while not ideal, gives us the opportunity to get together virtually and follow the directions of our music director.



Shown above is a view (courtesy of Ray Kitto) taken during the last rehearsal.

After a certain amount of confusion and byplay, as choristers learned where the mute button was, and when to use it, we all enjoyed a good hour and a half session learning a new song featured in the film “Fisherman’s Friends” which was released last year. This together with a number of other sea shanties sung in the film will form part of our repertoire later this year.

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir’s New Promotional Video

Not only have we been rehearsing, but we have produced a gem of a performance, about which hopefully you will already have received information.

Our music director - David Ashton-Smith is the architect of this project, which involved a significant number of choir members, two guest artists Roy Best and Mike Brady plus some great work by Tim Holly our video editor.

To view this, if you haven’t already done so, use one of these links:

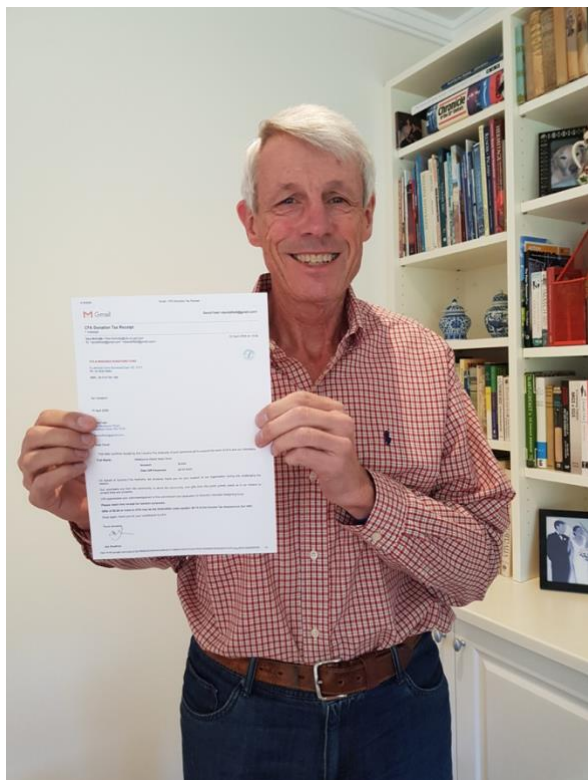
YouTube - go to <https://youtu.be/IjGKQ0otAKU> , subscribe to our YouTube channel (there is no cost), then view the video

Facebook - go to <https://www.facebook.com/MelbourneWelshChoir> , and click on the video link (or search for Melbourne Welsh) to view; please like, as well.

(This Facebook site is also the best place to post your reactions and comments on the video - positive comments only, please!)

Whilst arrangements have been made to share this video across several sectors of the choir's network, we are hoping that it might also be shared by those who have viewed it - particularly as we are inviting donations to the Melbourne Recital Centre's Performer Support Fund, in support of an industry that is being hit hard at present.

Anything that you yourself might be able to do, in terms of sharing with your family and friends (especially via Facebook or other social media, if possible), will be much appreciated.



Our Charitable Commitment

Part of the Choir's charter is to support charitable causes. This is often achieved by performing concerts on behalf of the communities involved. Such was the case with our concerts in Bairnsdale, following their floods or more locally for Eastern Suburbs Palliative Care group.

Those of you who attended the Choir's wonderful St David's Day performance would be aware that we undertook to make a donation from our profit from the concert to the "Fireys", who did such a courageous job during the recent bush fires.

This we have done and the attached photo shows our president David Field, with the receipt for our donation of \$1,000 to the CFA (CFA & Brigades Donations Fund).

The stories behind some of our Welsh songs

In our last newsletter we outlined the story behind one of the songs which we sing in Welsh and we provided the English translation.

Here is another, it's the story of "Y Darlun" which is one of the songs which the choir learned for its performance at the Royal Albert Hall in London for the 21st London Welsh Festival of Male Voice Choirs.

"Y Darlun" translated it means, "The Picture."

The story is that, during the 15th century, a family of 18 called the Durers lived near Nuremberg Germany. They were relatively poor, but two sons, Albrecht and Albert, wanted to attend the Academy of Arts for four years.

The toss of a coin decided that Albrecht would go, while Albert would work in the nearby mines; after which they would exchange roles.

Albrecht became very successful with his etchings, woodcuts and oils and earned large commissions for his works.

When he returned home the family feasted, and he toasted his brother Albert, and said, “ it is now your turn to attend the Academy and follow your dreams.” Albert replied with tears in his eyes, “no it’s too late for me. Look at what the mines have done to my hands in four years. I can’t even raise a glass to respond to your toast, let alone make delicate lines on parchment or canvas with a brush or pen.”

So, to pay homage to Albert, Albrecht made a drawing of his brother’s abused hands with palms together and fingers stretched upwards, He called this powerful drawing, “Hands,” but the world opened their hearts to the great masterpiece and renamed his tribute of love, “The Praying Hands.”

Most people are familiar with it as copies can be found all over the world.

The composer of “Y Darlun,” relates his experience of having it hanging next to his bed, and every morning when he wakes up, feels prayer emanating from the picture, although he cannot hear it.

Y Darlun

Dwy law yn erfyn
sydd yn y darlun
Wrth ymyl fy ngwely i.
Bob bore a nos
mae’r weddi yn dlos,
Mi wn er na chlywaf hi

*There are two hands,
which beseech me in the picture
by the side of my bed;
each morning and night
their prayer is a pretty one
I know although I hear it not.*

Pan af i gysgu
mae’r ddwyllaw hynny
Wrth ymyl fy ngwely i
Mewn gweddi ar Dduw
i’ m cadw yn fyw,
Mi wn er na chlywaf hi

*When I go to sleep,
those two hands
are at the side of my bed
in prayer to God
to keep me alive,
I know although I hear it not*

A phan ddaw’r bore
a’r wawr yn ole
Wrth ymyl fy ngwely i
Mae’r weddi o hyd yn fiwsig i gyd.
Mi wn er na chlywaf hi

*And when morning comes,
and the dawn is light
by the side of my bed,
the prayer is still full of music,
I know although I hear it not*

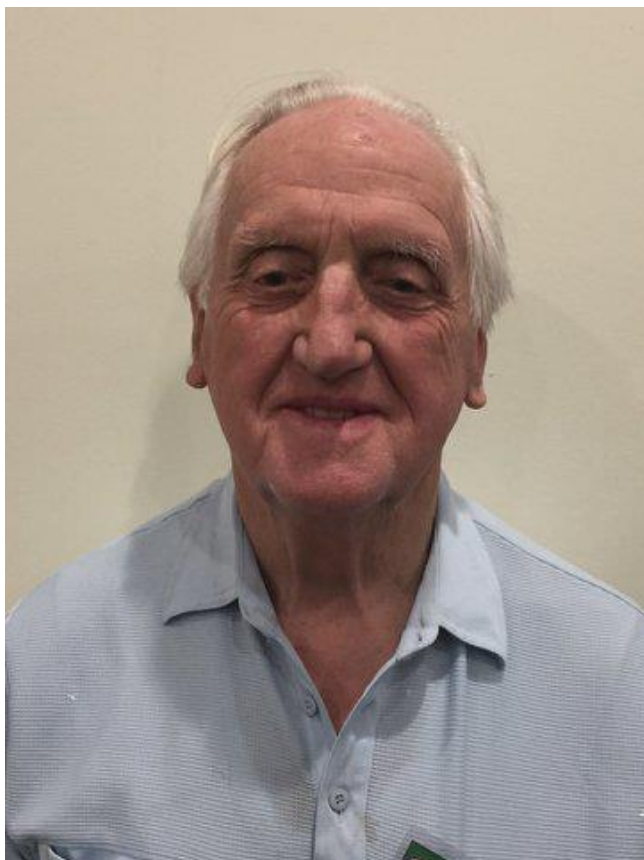
Rhyw nos fach dawel
fe ddwg yr awel
O ymyl fy ngweli i
Y weddi i’r ser,
fel eos o ber
A minnau’n ei chlywed hi.

*Some quiet little night
the breeze will take
from the side of my bed
the prayer to the stars,
with nightingale sweetness,
And now I hear it too*

New Choir Chorister Profile – Don Thacker – second tenor

Age is no barrier to joining a choir and Don is a case in point.

Don was born in Sheffield England in 1936, where his Dad was a pattern maker for a foundry. He has one sister who still lives in England and is 5 years his junior.



Don married Coral in 1957 and was with her for 60 years until she passed away in 2017. They have 4 adult children, 9 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. In 1965, at his wife's suggestion, they relocated with three of their children to Australia, to a warmer climate, since Don suffered with very severe asthma which he has subsequently overcome. Don found a sponsor who provided him with a job and a house in Blackburn. Since then he has worked in sales and as a teacher for 20 years. He began teaching in a technical school as an engineering teacher and finished in an all-girls school in Mentone. When he retired from teaching, he started a lawn mower shop which he ran for 14 years, but now he is fully retired.

Don spent about 10 years as a part time chauffeur, driving Rolls Royces and other luxury cars for a family company in Box Hill (Always Classic Cars). The family built a house in Mulgrave, but he now lives in Mooroolbark. His family has taken up

much of his time over the years, but he has found time to follow car racing around Victoria. He has always enjoyed tinkering with anything mechanical, particularly cars. He likes watching cricket and soccer and playing golf, though he gets very little chance to do so these days - he's worn out all his partners! Don also loved cycling in his younger days.

He's always enjoyed live music and has sung in many choirs with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and for many years with the U3A choir in Croydon

Why MWMC? Don and his wife have attended many of our concerts; he loves the music and the presentation. He has spoken to a few of our members and sensed a good atmosphere in the group and that was felt at his first rehearsal.

Don, welcome to the MWMC, and particularly to the Tenor 2 section. We hope you continue to enjoy your time with us.

In times like these, laughter is still the best medicine

Hard of hearing

(1) State of the art

A man was telling his neighbour, "I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me four thousand dollars, but it's state of the art. It's perfect."

"Really," answered the neighbour. "What kind is it?"

"Twelve thirty."

(2) Medical advice

Morris, an 82 year-old man, went to the doctor to get a physical.

A few days later the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young lady on his arm.

A couple of days later the doctor spoke to Morris and said, “You're really doing great, aren't you?”

Morris replied, “Just doing what you said, Doc: “Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.””

The doctor said, “I didn't say that. I said, ‘You've got a heart murmur. Be careful!’.”

Flowers

“What the heck is going on here?” said an angry man storming into a florist shop.

“I just lost one of my clients and it's your fault!”. “Why don't you calm down a bit” said the lady behind the counter, “and let us know exactly what happened”. “Well” said the man, “my biggest client moved to a new location and, to be nice, I called you guys up and asked you to send him some flowers with a note saying, “*congratulations on your new location*”.

He calls me up and says to me “What's the big deal with sending me a note that says, “*rest in peace?*”. “Oh no!” she sighed “Now I know why I got that nasty message from the funeral parlour!”

Mathematical

A Native American chief had three wives, each of whom was pregnant.

The first gave birth to a boy. The chief was so elated that he built her a teepee made of deer hide.

A few days later, the second gave birth, also to a boy. The chief was very happy. He built her a teepee made of antelope hide.

The third wife gave birth a few days later, but the chief kept the details a secret. He built this one a two story teepee, made out of a hippopotamus hide. The chief then challenged the tribe to guess what had occurred.

Many tried, unsuccessfully. Finally, one young brave declared that the third wife had given birth to twin boys.

“Correct,” said the chief. “How did you figure it out?”

The warrior answered, “It's elementary. The value of the squaw of the hippopotamus is equal to the sons of the squaws of the other two hides.”

We wish all our friends a safe and healthy time during this COVID-19 lock-down period and look forward to seeing you at our concerts in the not too distant future.