

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir

Newsletter No 63 December 2022



A Merry Christmas or, as they say in the language of heaven “Nadolig Llawen” to all our choir friends everywhere.

It’s been a tough couple of “COVID” years for the choir and our audiences, but we look forward to 2023 with renewed optimism.

We have some talented new members, a lot of new songs and the camaraderie and harmony is as strong as ever. All we need is you, our loyal members and your friends to fill the seats when we perform.

In the meantime, may we wish you the compliments of the season and all the best for the New Year

Upcoming events and concerts

Mooroolbark Community Centre, 17th December 2022

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir Christmas Concert



Mooroolbark Community Centre 125 Brice Ave, Mooroolbark, 3138
Two concerts 17th December 2022 11:00am and 3:00pm
Tickets www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets



By the by...

It was interesting to see that two of our former SOTY finalists who have appeared as guest artists in the choir's concerts, baritone Samuel Dundas and soprano Antoinette Halloran are appearing as *Ebenezer Scrooge* and *Ghost of Christmas' Past* respectively in the Victorian Opera's performance of "A Christmas Carol" at the Palais theatre this December.

We have fond memories of Antoinette who travelled with the choir on it's first tour to Tasmania to perform with us while she was on her honeymoon!

St David's Day Concert 2023

We are pleased to announce that we will be returning to one of the choir's favourite venues, the James Tatoulis Auditorium at the Methodist Ladies College (MLC) for our celebration of St David's Day on Saturday 25th February 2023 at 7:30 p.m.



Ceri Haf Roberts

Once again, our guest artist will be the Blue Riband winner of the 2022 Welsh National Eisteddfod competition and this year it is a lovely mezzo soprano - Ceri Haf Roberts.



The choir at MLC

As in previous years, the Blue Riband winner is brought to Australia by the Welsh Church in Melbourne to appear in the Gymanfa Ganu (a festival of choral and community singing) on the Sunday afternoon nearest to St David's Day (which is March 1st).

Members from all the men's and women's Welsh choirs in and around Melbourne join together to lead the community singing at this event which is open to the public and is free (apart from the Church offering).

We are indebted to the Welsh Church for allowing Ceri to perform with us.

Background to another of the songs in the choir's repertoire – *Deus Salutis* or *Llef*.

Llef (in English "A Cry") is a popular [Welsh hymn](#), written by David Charles (1803-1880) (son of [David Charles](#) (1762–1834)). The Latin name *Deus Salutis* (God of my Salvation) is always associated with this song although the history of this is obscure.

The tune was composed in 1890 by Griffith Hugh Jones ([Welsh language](#) name *Gutty Arfon*) (1849 – 1919) and was written in memory of his brother Dewi.

The hymn was included in the soundtrack for the 1941 John Ford drama film *How Green Was My Valley*.

The choir has recorded this hymn and it is featured on our *Great Southern Lands* CD.

O Iesu mawr, rho d'anian bur
I eiddil gwan mewn, anial dir,
I'w nerthu drwy'r holl rwystrau sy
Ar ddyrys i'r Ganaan fry.

Pob gras sydd yn yr Eglwys fawr,
Fry yn y nef, neu ar y llawr,
Caf feddu oll, eu meddu'n un,
Wrth feddu d'annian Di dy Hun.

Mi lyna'n dawl wrth dy draed,
Mi ganaf am rinweddau'r gwaed,
Mi garia'r groes, mi nofia'r don,
Ond cael dy anian dan fy mron.

O Jesus, let Thy spirit bless
This frail one in the wilderness
To guide him through the snares of lie
On Canaan's way to Thee on high.

All grace that through Thy Church doth flow,
In heaven above and here below,
All shall I have, all shall be mine
If I but have Thy grace divine.

To Thy most holy feet I'll cling,
The virtues of Thy blood I'll sing,
The cross I'll bear, the wave I'll ride,
If Thou but with me now abide.

Interested in joining the choir?

Do you want to experience the joy and rewards that come from joining a choir and our choir in particular? There is nothing quite like being rewarded by an audience's ovation at the end of a concert. If you are keen then, whether you've been involved in music all your life, sing in another choir, or only sing in the shower, come along to our rehearsals at Maroondah Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood and join in the fun and the stimulating learning process, that being a part of the choir is all about.

While our heritage is Welsh, and a quarter of our concert programs are Welsh songs (not necessarily all in the Welsh language), we are fundamentally a multicultural choir with probably only half of us having any Welsh heritage.

The choir is open to people of any age and any nationality, and our current and past members have included people with Scots, English, Irish, New Zealand, Dutch, French, German, Egyptian, South African, Tongan, Samoan and Australian backgrounds. We even have a Kiwi as the current president!

So, whether you are eighteen or eighty provided you pass the (simple) audition, you will be made most welcome.

Our rehearsal facility at Federation Estate is excellent. It has a grand piano, comfortable seats, good acoustics and facilities for tea and coffee at interval. In addition, we have the best music director and accompanist combination in Melbourne.

Our Music Director, David Ashton-Smith's background as an opera singer and adjudicator, shows in his coaching of our voice development and projection, as well as his role in teaching us new songs. He is ably assisted by our accompanist, Simon Walters, himself a music director and arranger of some note, whose keen ear picks up any problems with pitch or timing.

We have mentors for each section, who look after all new and prospective members, to ensure they are introduced to other members of their section and are properly equipped with the relevant music scores.

They oversee the new member for the duration of the probationary period, help with pitch or pronunciation, where appropriate and answer any questions, he might have.

There is a break for tea or coffee during rehearsals, which gives everyone the opportunity to get involved with other choir members. On the first Wednesday in the month, one of the sections provides the choir and visitors with (a sometimes sumptuous) supper.

Car parking is plentiful and free, while Ringwood railway station is only a 5-minute walk away.

If you contact us on the phone numbers or email addresses shown in this newsletter, we will respond promptly and arrange to introduce you to the choir. Otherwise, just come along on a Wednesday evening, introduce yourself and you will be made very welcome.

Once you decide to join the choir, we will provide you with access to our web-based aids, which assist in learning the songs and practising the individual parts at home. This makes the process of getting up to speed with the Choir's repertoire so much easier.

We also have Welsh language sessions, given by some of the Welsh speaking members of the choir, to assist new and existing choristers in the pronunciation and translation of the words of the Welsh songs in our repertoire.

Following a number of rehearsal sessions and a formal audition, you could be singing in one of our concerts within weeks and possibly joining us on our next tour.

Need to hire a choir?

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

The choir is available for community, corporate and sporting events, dinners, anniversaries, weddings etc., at most times in the year. So, if you are, or know of, an organization which might require anything from a short rousing opening to a conference (say) to a full two-hour concert, together with quality guest artists and an orchestra or band (if required), please contact **Gwyn Harper (0419 562 353)** or any committee member. Please bear in mind that we're talking about a choir of 40+ voices plus a professional music director and accompanist.

We have an eclectic repertoire, a great sound and provide excellent entertainment and value for money.

Would you care to sponsor the choir?

The choir is a not-for-profit organization and we rely on revenue from concerts, membership fees, sponsorship and donations for our continuing operation.

If you would simply like to donate to the choir, please contact any member of the committee. The choir is a registered charitable body and all donations are acknowledged and are tax deductible.

Alternatively, if you have a product or service which you believe might appeal to our audiences, then please contact us and we will be delighted to promote your product in our concerts, marketing material and promotions.

The choir is actively seeking donors and sponsors for the continuing support of our prestigious *Singer of the Year (SOTY)* concert.

This event, which has been running for 29 years and is open to singers under the age of 35, draws competitors from all parts of the state and indeed interstate as was the case with this year's finalists.

A testament to its success and drawing power is the number of winners and runners-up of this competition who have gone on to make careers on concert and opera stages worldwide.

In addition to awarding monetary prizes to the SOTY finalists, the choir gives them an opportunity to perform as guest artists in our concerts during the year.

All sponsors are acknowledged in our programs and publicity material and are given the opportunity to

be involved in the SOTY presentation ceremonies on the finals' night and in the elimination heats.

The choir is willing and able to perform at a sponsor's nominated site if required, as we have done in the past.

If you would like to be associated with any of our 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.

Communicating with the Choir

Feel free to copy or circulate this newsletter to any of your friends and relatives. We are keen to increase our supporter base, so if you would like us to add them to our distribution list, simply let us know their email address. Alternatively, they can subscribe directly to the newsletter via our website:

www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au or via our Facebook page.

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

Email is our preferred way of communication with our supporters, so please send us an email and we'll respond promptly to whatever queries you may have. Alternately if you want to speak with the newsletter author about any of the content, please phone 0419 562 353.

Your feedback is important to us, so let us know what you think about the choir, our newsletters, or our recent performances, whether on video or live.

Please introduce us to your friends and be sure to let us know what you would like to see us perform in our future concerts.

In times like these, laughter is still the best medicine.

Painting

A Briton, a Frenchman and a Russian are viewing a painting of Adam and Eve frolicking in the Garden of Eden.

"Look at their reserve, their calm," muses the Brit. "They must be British."

"Nonsense," the Frenchman disagrees. "They're naked, and so beautiful. Clearly, they are French."

"No way! They have no clothes and no shelter," the Russian points out, "They have only an apple to eat, and they are being told they live in a paradise. Obviously, they are Russian."

Checkout embarrassment

The cashier told me "Strip down Facing me."

By the time I realized they meant the credit card, it was too late.

Children's antics

The lifeguard told the mother to make her young son stop urinating in the pool.

"Everyone knows," the mother lectured him, "that from time to time, young children will urinate in a pool."

"Oh really?" said the lifeguard, "from the diving board?"

Deathbed bequests

Cardiff man, Daffyd Williams, is on his deathbed, knows the end is near and is with the nurse, his wife, his daughter, and two sons.

“So”, he says to them: “Evan, I want you to take the Saltmead houses.”

“Dilys, take the flats over in Canary Wharf.”

“Aled, I want you to take the offices in Plasnewydd.”

“Rhiannon, my dear wife, please take all the residential buildings in Pontcanna and Llandaff”

The nurse is just blown away by all this, and as Daffyd slips away, she says, “Mrs Williams, your husband must have been such a hard-working man to have accumulated all this property”.

Rhiannon replies, “Property? . . . The silly old fool only has a paper round!”

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CHOIR DIRECTORY

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