

# Melbourne Welsh Male Choir

## Newsletter No 70 July 2023



The choir is pleased to announce that entry to our highly anticipated **Melbourne Welsh Male Choir - Singer of the Year Competition 2023** is now open and closes 8<sup>th</sup> September. This competition, which is open to singers under the age of 35, has been won by many performers who have gone on to make their name on concert stages all over the world.

In addition to the trophy and prize money, the finalists have the opportunity to perform as guest artists with the choir in our concert programs.



*Last year's finalists Naomi Flatman, Shania Eliassen and Alessia Pintabona*

This year's competition will be held as part of the choir's concert on Saturday afternoon 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2023 at North Ringwood Uniting Church.

The elimination heats will be held on Friday evening 15<sup>th</sup> September at the choir's rehearsal rooms at Federation Estate, Ringwood. Entry to our rehearsal rooms for the heats is free and open to the public as well as all friends and supporters of the competitors and the choir. It is probably the

best free evening's entertainment anywhere in Melbourne!

The following link will provide all the details, including access to download an Application Form:

<https://melbournewelshchoir.com.au/singer-of-the-year/>

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone who might be interested.

## Upcoming Concerts

The choir has a busy schedule for the rest of the year, which is a fortunate position to be in after our many concert cancellations and enforced layoffs due to COVID.

We look forward to seeing you at some of our upcoming events.

## Mooroolbark Concert

**July 15, 2023, 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm**

**Mooroolbark Community Centre,  
125 Brice Ave, Mooroolbark, Victoria, 3138,**

Following the success of our last July concert at Mooroolbark, we will be returning with an exciting afternoon concert this July. The program will include a beautiful blend of musical hits, spiritual melodies, and Welsh repertoire - all delivered in exquisite four-part harmony.

The Mooroolbark Community Centre Hall is a comfortable environment but with limited seating, so be sure to book early for this afternoon concert.

Book via the Mooroolbark ticketing site - [1300 368 333](tel:1300368333)

or online at [www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/Events/Melbourne-Welsh-Male-Choir](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/Events/Melbourne-Welsh-Male-Choir)



## Proms Concert with the Legends of Brass

Sunday August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

The Centre Ivanhoe  
275 Heidelberg Road  
Ivanhoe VIC 3079

Those of you who attended the previous *Last night of the Proms* concert with the Legends of Brass will recall what a splendid afternoon's entertainment it was.



For this year's concert, in addition to performing some existing songs from our repertoire, we will have a brand new, choir/band song arrangement which was specially requested by the Legends for this concert.

So, book early and bring your voices to join in the anthems and the traditional Proms songs.

This year's pipes and drums are provided by PLC ladies so there will be something for everyone.

Bookings through the choir's website [www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au](http://www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au) or via the trybooking website [www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1079926](http://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1079926)

## Morning Music Concert

Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023,

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Karralyka Centre  
Mines Rd, Ringwood VIC  
3134,



The choir has been invited to host another of the popular Morning Music concerts at our local concert venue, the Karalyka Centre in Ringwood. These are always enjoyable events with an enthusiastic audience buoyed by refreshments in the dining room. Seats are limited so make sure you book early.

Every Morning Music show ticket includes tea, coffee and delicious treats one hour prior to the show time. Morning Tea starts at 9.30 a.m.

For accessible seating contact the Centre team on 03 9870 2888 or [karralyka@maroondah.vic.gov.au](mailto:karralyka@maroondah.vic.gov.au)

## Australian Youth Band Concert

Sunday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023

James Tatoulis Auditorium  
MLC, 207 Barkers Road,  
Kew. VIC 3101

The choir has a great working relationship with the Australian Youth Band (AYB), who provided the instrumental accompaniment, for our concert to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WWI on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2018, at the Melbourne Town Hall.

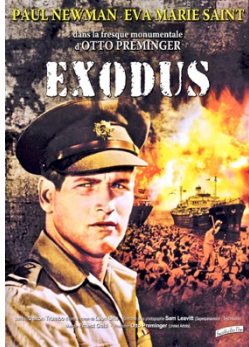
One good turn deserves another, so we will be performing with the AYB at their annual concert at MLC on August 20, 2023. Tickets are available via the AYB website



## Background to one of the choir's new songs – *Exodus*

In the concert mentioned above, and at the band's request, the choir will be joining with the Australian Youth Band to perform their MD's (Richard O'Toole) arrangement of the stirring theme from Exodus.

"Theme of *Exodus*" is a song composed by Ernest Gold. It serves as the main theme song to Otto Preminger's epic film *Exodus*, based on the 1958 novel of the same name by Leon Uris, which tells the story of founding of the modern State of Israel. The song was released on the soundtrack album for the picture. All of the music was written by Gold, who won both Best Soundtrack Album and Song of the Year at the 1961 Grammy Awards for the soundtrack and theme to *Exodus* respectively. It is the only instrumental song to ever receive that award.

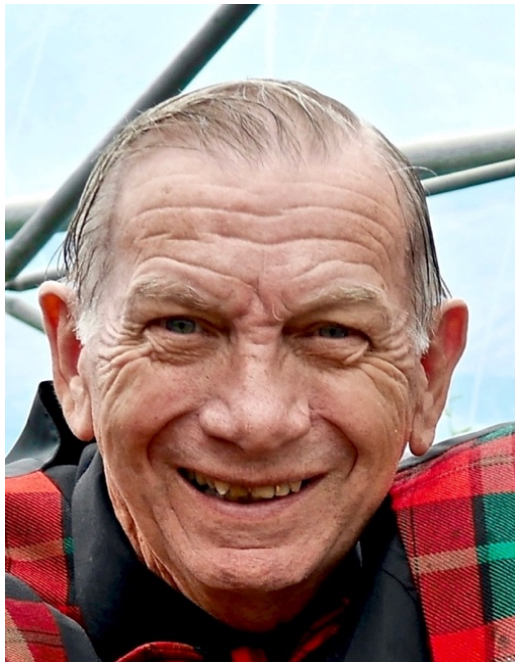


Following its initial film appearance, the theme has been recorded by many artists in both instrumental and vocal versions, and has also appeared in a number of subsequent films and television programs. The best-known cover version of the theme is an instrumental version.

### *Exodus*

*This land is mine,  
God gave this land to me.  
This brave, and ancient land to me.  
And when the morning sun,  
reveals her hills and plains,  
then I see a land where children can run free.  
So take my hand, and walk this land with me  
walk this lovely land with me.  
Though I am just a man,  
when you are by my side.  
With the help of God, I know I can be strong.  
To make this land our home,  
if I must fight,  
I'll fight to make this land our home,  
Until I die, this land is mine.  
So take my hand and walk this land with me  
and walk this golden land with me.  
Though I am just a man,  
when you are by my side.  
With the help of God, I know I can be strong.  
To make this land our home,  
if I must fight,  
I'll fight to make this land our home.  
Until I die, this land is mine,  
land is mine, land is mine.*

## Chorister Profile - Keith McCoy - Baritone



I started life at Concord, Sydney on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 1937.

In 1938 our family moved to Auburn to become grocers in a corner store because three of Dad's right-hand knuckles lost the debate with his works band saw. Our local GP did a fantastic job fixing his fingers so that Dad could have limited use of his hand.

Next door to our shop was a butcher and there were grocers within 200 yards to our south, west and north plus a greengrocer! I did home deliveries with my billycart.

As a little tacker I drove a baker's cart and an ice wagon locally and a sulky to/from Parramatta Town Hall for the butcher's son and his wife to run their Friday Matinee concerts. Parramatta Road was full of thick smog from the charcoal burners which fuelled all trucks during WWII fuel restrictions. I also helped in the nearby ice works storing ice and later cutting the ice ingots.

I became a regular at the SCG for Rugby League's Match of the Day, Sheffield Shield and Test cricket and I also went to other ovals for major events. I was allowed to travel to all these events by myself on the trains and trams.

All those boyhood activities are now considered dangerous or illegal. I am still amazed that my parents allowed me to do any of them!!

In 1949 we left the shop and lived around Eastwood and I became involved with the Methodist Church's Youth Group. In the late '50s the Group put on several variety concerts and plays and then in 1959 we got into Gilbert & Sullivan. We formalised into a Musical Society which is now a feature of Sydney's music scene and celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year.

What little musical talent I possess is attributable to my grandfather, who sang solos and conducted choirs in the towns where he was posted, an aunt who went to the Sydney Conservatory and my father.

I played cricket and soccer for Auburn South Primary, cricket and rugby union for Parramatta High School and cricket, rugby union and soccer with the Church group

The job market was very buoyant in early 1954 when I got my Leaving Certificate results so that when I applied for a chemist's job with six companies, I had six interviews and six offers! I joined a chemical factory at Rhodes and greatly enjoyed the factory life.

I studied part time at Sydney Tech for my Diploma and then converted it to a Bachelor of Science degree at the brand-new University of New South Wales. My tertiary education cost me \$300 (minuscule compared to today) thanks to gaining a Commonwealth Scholarship and my employer paying for my books.

In 1958, I helped my brother when he stood against the, then NSW Premier, Joe Cahill. This led to my substantial involvement within the NSW Liberal Party. Libby and I met at a Young Liberal meeting which led to our marriage at Epping in March 1962. We have four children, eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

I passed IBM's very strange 'IQ' test in 1962 and was part of their second trainee intake. The first morning of the course we briefly introduced ourselves. The person on my left said "PhD DSc DE". So, I quickly said "BSc", then the person on my right said "PhD DSc". Five Doctorates between we three and I had none! What humiliation!

I stayed a bit less than a year and went back to chemistry with BP Australia.

In 1967, I was transferred to the State Office to look after Transport Planning and in 1969 to State Planning. In 1970 I was transferred to BP House Head Office responsible for Market Planning which

included advising executive management on project viability. In 1976 I was promoted to Manager, Corporate Planning

In 1980 I moved to Marketing Systems, where we were at the forefront of integrated distribution and service station systems.

In 1984 I transferred to Staff Remuneration and Policy. At this time BP Australia owned companies in all the Oil, Gas, Coal and Minerals industries providing me with a challenging array of the very diverse practices in those industries and their constituent companies.

In part, this was accomplished by attending conferences that never happened, at places that never existed, nor was anyone there! But those very useful contacts were to the fore when, in 1988, I moved into consulting in the Resources and Manufacturing sectors advising on organisation and job structure and job roles from top to bottom, their size and competitive remuneration.

From 1994 to 2002 I was a Chorister with the Victoria Welsh Choir. Later, both Libby and I were missing singing in the Welsh tradition with hwyl. So, when Libby saw an advertisement in late 2014 for a concert at the Recital Centre featuring Teddy Tahu Rhodes with the Melbourne Welsh Choir, we decided we had to go.

In March 2015 we went to a Melbourne Welsh Choir rehearsal to check it out and we no sooner got there than an old mate from the Vic Welsh (Paul Gawthorn) welcomed us, told everyone I was a baritone and put me in the back row - with no sound check by David Ashton-Smith (our MD).

A year later we were part of the Choir's tour of Cornwall

Leaving home at 4.45 p.m. rehearsing, then getting back home at 11.30 p.m. became an issue last year when everyone concerned agreed that we should stay nearby after rehearsals, rather than drive home because of the risks arising from tiredness, the long travelling time and frequent winter fog in the ranges.

This was resolved by the very kind offer by "Utlely Manor B&B" and we have greatly appreciated and enjoyed the welcoming hospitality and friendship of Mine Hosts, Geneve and Doug Utley.



*With fellow choristers Trevor Hemmings, Paul Gawthorn and Alby van Berkel in Cornwall*

## **Want to join our choir**

If you are interested in singing in four-part harmony, from full throated anthems to gentle love songs, whether you've been involved in music all your life, sing in another choir, or only sing in the shower, please feel free to 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 Melbourne Welsh Male Choir is all about.

The choir is open to people of all ages and nationalities.

Our current and past members include people with Scots, English, Irish, New Zealand, Dutch, French, German, Egyptian, South African, Tongan, Samoan and Australian ancestry.

So, whether you are in your teens or your eighties, provided you pass the (relatively simple) audition, you will be made most welcome.

While our musical heritage is Welsh, and we aim to have Welsh songs as a quarter of our concert programs (not necessarily all in the Welsh language), we are fundamentally a multicultural choir with possibly less than half of us having Welsh ancestry.

We have an excellent rehearsal facility at Maroondah Federation Estate, with 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.

**David Ashton-Smith OAM**, our Music Director, has a background as an opera singer, teacher and adjudicator, which 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 talented accompanist, **Simon Walters**, himself a music director and arranger of some note.

We have mentors for each vocal section, who look after all new members, to ensure they are introduced to other choristers and are properly equipped with the relevant music scores. These mentors oversee new members for the duration of the probationary period, help with pitch or pronunciation where appropriate and answer any questions they 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 our 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 for your introduction to the choir. Otherwise, just come along on a Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m., introduce yourself and you will be made most welcome.

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

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

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

## **Would you like to hire the 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 at smaller venues such as our venue for St David's Day Concert (the James Tatoulis Auditorium at MLC), will be aware that the choir has the skills and ability to produce and run high quality major events.

So, if you are an organization which might require anything from a short rousing opening to a conference or entertainment at a formal dinner(say), to a full two-hour concert, together with quality guest artists and an orchestra or band (if required), please contact **David Field (0418 175 584)** or any committee member.

The choir is available for community, corporate and sporting events, dinners, anniversaries, weddings etc., at most times in the year.

Please bear in mind that we're talking about a choir of 40 to 50 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 like to sponsor the choir?**

The choir is a not-for-profit organisation 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 company and product or service in our concerts, marketing material and promotions.

## **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](http://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 him on 0419 562 353.

Your feedback is important to us, so please 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 might like to see us perform in our future concerts.

## **Laughter is the best medicine.**

### **Don't meddle with a golfer**

Tim decided to tie the knot with his long-time girlfriend.

One evening, after the honeymoon, he was organizing his golfing equipment. His wife was standing nearby watching him. After a long period of silence, she finally speaks: "Tim, I've been thinking, now that we're married maybe it's time you quit golfing. You spend so much time on the course. You could probably get a good price for your clubs."

Tim gets this horrified look on his face.

She says, "Darling, what's wrong?"

"For a minute there you were beginning to sound like my ex-wife."

"Ex-wife!" she screams, "I didn't know you were married before!"

"I wasn't," he replied.

### **Language Rules**

An MIT linguistics professor was lecturing his class the other day.

"In English," he said, "A double negative forms a positive. However, in some languages, such as Russian, a double negative remains a negative. But there isn't a single language, not one, in which a double positive can express a negative."

A voice from the back of the room said, "Yeah, right."

### **A Great Ending**

A tough old cowboy from Texas counselled his granddaughter that if she wanted to live a long life, the secret was to sprinkle a pinch of gun powder on her oatmeal every morning.

The granddaughter did this religiously until the age of 103, when she died.

She left behind 14 children, 30 grandchildren, 45 great-grandchildren, 25 great-great-grandchildren, and a 40-foot hole where the crematorium used to be.

*Contributions welcomed from supporters. Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the choir. The MWMC Newsletter articles may be reproduced, but we do insist on acknowledgement as the source. All articles, sketches, photographs etc., that are included in the publication are published on this condition. The choir will endeavour at all times to seek permission to reproduce material from other sources and/or acknowledge the source as appropriate. The parts of the article on Exodus were taken in part from Wikipedia.*

## **CHOIR DIRECTORY**

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