

## AUSTRALIAN WELSH MALE CHOIR NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2020

This newsletter opens with the celebration of all that is Welsh in Melbourne.

March 1<sup>st</sup> is St David's Day, and the Melbourne Welsh Church borrowed St Michaels in Collins St to stage the annual *Gymanfa Ganu*, a sustained celebration through songs of praise. Members of all the Welsh Choirs in Melbourne and surrounds were assembled by about midday



From there to the balcony of the church for practice with visiting conductor Dilwyn Price.



As can be seen, the Church was full – some members of the general congregation found themselves sitting upstairs with the choirs – Australian Welsh, Excelsis, Geelong Ladies' Welsh, Melbourne Welsh, Mornington Peninsula Ladies' Welsh and Victoria Welsh – a record six choirs!

Dilwyn Price unleashed a formidable combination of excellent musicality and flamboyant showmanship to keep the event lighthearted and truly celebratory – a memorable *Gymanfa*. The children who were called to the stage for a “photo opportunity” will remember the day for a long time.



And our guest artists added much to the occasion as well.

Erfyl Tomas Jones is a farmer from North Wales who won the Blue Riband at the 2019 National Eisteddfod of Wales. Listening to his two brackets of songs made it very easy to see why.



Similarly, the married duo, Eleri and Aled Edwards, both Blue Riband winners

themselves, were spellbinding. Mair Roberts was an impeccable accompanist.



Since the weather was a deal more temperate this year, the afterglow session at the Lusty Squire pub was very well patronised indeed. It was, as these things usually are, noisy, gregarious, melodic, and fun.



The St David's Day celebrations continued for the choir on Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at "Cranlana", the home of Baillieu Myer in Toorak. Mr Myer told an invited audience of his own Welsh heritage, and invited them to listen to the first Welsh Choir concert in the hundred year history of his home. Choir members enjoyed the heritage listed gardens next door, and were invited to supper after. Guest artist

Shauntai Batzke, of Short Black Opera, added much to the occasion. As is usual, Mr Myer joined the choir in *Men of Harlech*.



photo: G Selby



photo: C Manktelow

On Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> March the Choir Committee took the decision to suspend rehearsals in the face of the coming covid 19 threat. Our own demographic, and the demographic of our hosts at Village Baxter

left little choice, even before social distancing rules became mandatory.

The choir continues to rehearse assiduously, led by Tom Buchanan and Michelle Nguyen, who are laying down weekly online rehearsals for all sections to practise at home against the time when the choir, like the audience, is able to come back better than ever.

Many thanks to our Patrons and Sponsors. We are most grateful to all who help to cover the substantial costs for a choir of our size, especially to Mr Sidney Baillieu Myer AC, Mrs Tamie Fraser AO, and Dr Readers

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*N.B. Deadline for inclusion of articles is the 20<sup>th</sup> day of February, April, June, August, October. David Brown. Editor. All correspondence to Secretary AWMC*

#### COMING EVENTS

Readers will appreciate that Covid 19 makes any forecasting impossible.. there are some plans in the pipeline, but it is difficult to see a time when a group of 40 men will be allowed to assemble in front of a large audience. When we know more, we will pass it on quickly to you. Meanwhile, practise, practise, practise ...

