

AUSTRALIAN WELSH MALE CHOIR NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2022

This Newsletter begins with a few awards to deserving choristers who were unable to attend our Christmas function last year.

We can also record yet another successful foray into the Bunnings tent – this time at Morningson. Dominic Xuereb and the 16 others who participated are to be thanked yet again... Your Treasurer loves you!



Richard, Phil & Lauren - the morning shift

Welcome to Neil Armstrong, Who successfully auditioned for the second tenors! Well done.



We celebrated St David's Day by singing (a day late) at the Charles Dickens Tavern in Collins St. on March 2nd.

This is a venue chiefly supported by our City Chapter, who practice on a Wednesday evening at the Melbourne Welsh Church (Yes, you would be very welcome! No, you don't need to read music! Yes, there is an audition, but I passed, so it can't be too demanding! Go have a look!)

As is usually the case, the evening was a good one, with the audience helping us along, and Tom Buchanan and Mina Yu leading from the front. We sometimes forget how good our musos are.



Finishing up the awards from December last year, our ever-restless President made sure that Barry Richardson, Ron Lofts, Len Charlton and Lindsay Richardson were presented with the requisite gongs at home or at rehearsal. December's Newsletter had details.



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The highlight of this Newsletter period has to be the weekend spent at the Mid-City Motel in Ballarat.

Saturday was spent getting our heads round some new repertoire, the standout being the Sinatra hit *Come Fly with Me*. Some very challenging harmonies in there, for sure.

It was good to have Heather Wicks, formerly our principal accompanist, back with us. A great musician and an unfailingly cheerful presence

Tom was his usual energetic self, and attendees were certainly kept very busy.



Photo - Phil Young

Singing in the pub was once again a going concern on March 30th, after much to-ing and fro-ing due to covid restrictions for the choir, staff shortages for Kirks and so on. It was good to be back!



Photo - Google images



And of course, after all that hard work, sustenance was required. Dinner and a *Capella* afterglow were enjoyed at the Golden City Hotel in Sturt St., just down the road. Convivial, noisy and a deal of fun.

Lest our overseas readers should think that all is now settled down in Victoria, we still have a way to go.

Covid surged through the community generally, and through the choir following the weekend in Ballarat, and the rehearsal on April 4th was very sparsely attended. The next Monday rehearsal was scrapped completely, though our City Chapter brethren were able to gather on Wednesday the 13th. The monthly Singing in the Pub at The Charles Dickens has been cancelled for its scheduled May 4th date.

So, in common with the rest of the world we're making the best of it, and recognising that improvement, while it's there, is slow, and incremental. A day-by-day proposition.

So, it is with a considerable sense of relief that we can record a second outing to Kirks on the Esplanade to finish our reporting period. Wednesday, 27th April saw a really good hit-out for all concerned. The pub was able to find staff, the choir found choristers, and there was an audience as well. A good night.



Photo - Geoff Selby

Helen Selby, wife of baritone Geoff took the opportunity to do some recruiting for her own Mornington Peninsula Welsh Ladies Choir - (Yes, you would be very welcome! No, you don't need to read music! No, you don't need to audition! Go have a look! Ring Helen on 0424 719 291). As a sidenote, she collected \$60 in unsolicited donations from pub patrons.



Pub staff & Choir, Photo Geoff Selby

Unfortunately, in a group such as ours, where the average age is well north of seventy, we are frequently confronted by the death of members and friends.

VALE MARGARET EVELYN RIACH [TUCKER]

1930 - 2022



Margaret Riach was the long-time partner of Tenor Barry Tucker. She was always known as Margaret Tucker within the choir. She was a part of our fabric for many years.

She used to tour Victoria with Barry, and they would seek out suitable venues for country and regional concerts. Senior members of the choir remember Margaret's neatly written slips of paper bearing details of tour accommodation, cost, and dinner locations, with total payable calculated at the end.

Others of us remember her fitting us up with choir issue raincoats, and fronting the tea and coffee table.

She was a powerful personality, and a remarkably tenacious worker for what she believed in.

She will be missed.

Our thoughts are with Barry, Ann, Julie and their families at this time.

VALE RON SIMPSON



Ron Simpson passed away on April 8th. He was 87. He joined our baritones four years ago. He was an enthusiastic member of the choir. His daughter, Virginia, sent us a letter that underlines what we're about – easy to overlook among the grumbles about covid, masks, repertoire and so on.

"I'd like to express our appreciation of your wonderful organisation. Dad was so proud of being part of the Australian Welsh Male Choir. It brought him much enjoyment, kept his brain busy, exercised his diseased lungs, gave him something to look forward to every week, and of course he revelled in the camaraderie and banter. I was in awe of my octogenarian father studying Welsh and memorising all those lyrics. I happened to use my phone to record 'Nothing Like a Dame' at the concert in December, oblivious that not only did he have a solo part, but that it would be his last outing with the choir. When it came to choosing an outfit to take to the funeral directors, there was no choice. He leaves this world dressed in his official choir blazer, ready to audition for whatever comes next."

Ron always sang *Prayer of the Children* with a particular relevance to his own experience. In 1993, as this treasured, worn newspaper clipping (above right) shows, Ron was a member of a team who delivered medical and other supplies to the refugee children about whom the song was written.

His Memorial service is yet to take place due to his wife, Joan, having contracted Covid.

Again, our thoughts are of course with Joan, Virginia and their family and friends



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 the late Mr Baillieu Myer AC, Mrs Tamie Fraser AO, and Dr Haydn James.

Our Sponsors: -



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

Would you like to support us through the Covid emergency?

To make a donation please email treasurer@awmc.org.au with your details and we will send you a receipt.

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COMING EVENTS

By now we are all used to the notion that Man proposes and COVID disposes. Any forecast is subject to change.

The choir remains committed to singing at Kirks on the Esplanade in Mornington on the last Wednesday of every month. Kirks advise that bookings are necessary. 5975 2007.

Similarly, we sing, when it is legal to do so, at the Charles Dickens Tavern, downstairs at 290 Collins Street on a Wednesday also. Phone 9654 1821.

Saturday May 14 - High Street Uniting Church, Frankston, 7pm.

<https://www.trybooking.com/BXWQE>

Sunday June 26 - All Saints Church, East St.Kilda, 2pm.

Friday 16 September - Monday 3rd October 2022 - AWMC Western Australia Tour

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