

November began quietly – lots of Christmas work coming up after all.

November 19th saw the choir singing at St Peters Church Box Hill, formerly ministered to by Rev Shane Hübner, a chorister who has returned to his roots in Queensland. We are left with a good many memories ...

The Church has very good acoustics, and we had around forty choristers present, so the concert went very well.



Photo: Kerri Page

Not to mention the generous afternoon tea to follow ...



Meanwhile, back in Baxter, the choir was gearing up for a Nine Lessons and Carols event, to take place later in the month.

There was a very pleasant interruption to all of this. Vice-President Geoff Selby provided the following text and Photos. Thanks Geoff.

Bernie Rumble is a Life member of the Australian Welsh Male Choir and Its his 90th birthday this week.

Bernie tells that in 1973 he went to Wales during his long service leave holiday “It was there that I heard my first Welsh choir, and it was a wonderful sound. I have always loved singing and when I returned to Australia my Welsh friend Taffy Evans took me to what was then the Frankston Welsh Male Choir which became the Australia Welsh Male Choir. I absolutely loved it and have been singing with the Australian Welsh ever since. I live for my choir. I appreciate the friendship, comradeship and support I get from my fellow choristers”

Bernie captured perfectly what our choir means to so many of us. He was unable to get to choir rehearsal on his birthday, so the choir went to Bernie to sing “Happy Birthday!”



It felt a little like a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*.



At least the window was open.

And so back to business!

There were two functions for the choir to finish the choral year.

The Jaguar Club invited us along to help with their Christmas break-up function on Sunday 11th December. The Club is a well-appointed venue, with a small stage overlooking a dining area. The couple of self-avowed petrolheads we have on board were walking around with somewhat glazed eyes – some beautiful cars and lots of spectacular memorabilia.



The green room was well-catered too, as the photo opposite shows.

Simon Stone, Assistant MD, accompanied for the day.

We should thank first tenor Greg Pennicuik for his work in setting this concert up for us, and for ferrying a number of choristers from Frankston to Springvale, and on into Melbourne before completing the round trip at around 8 pm. Greg's health has been somewhat poorly this year, so this

was a big effort from him. Thanks Greg. And thanks, too, to Sue Mackie who organised a social get-together for the ladies, who were not able to join us at the Jaguar Club.



And a final note. Congratulations to Cedric Howard, who won the choir gift raffle for an E type Jaguar! Shame it's only about 6 cm long!

By 2pm St Michaels Church in Collins St. Melbourne was calling. So, onto the bus/into the car and away for a 4:30 rehearsal.

This was a Nine Lessons and Carols format, and was unique in that all of the choirs conducted by Tom Buchanan were together for the event – Excelsis, Australian Welsh, Peninsula Ladies, and Kingswood College. Guess who was busy!



The choirs sit high above the congregation at St Michaels, and we are assured that all sounded as it ought in the body of the church.



All photos at St Michaels: Maree Renowden

The choir has rediscovered its social self this year, too!

In some ways we function as a musical men's shed, and our members enjoy the *camaraderie* and the sense of common purpose that governed most of their working lives. Now that the world is settling down, we are able to look beyond the next concert, and to plan social events. So it is that Ian and Sue Mackie organised a wine tour on the Mornington Peninsula, where boutique wineries abound. Elgee Park produces a good drop. The home of our late, great patron, Baillieu Myer was remembered while his wine was sampled at the Merricks Store.



Photo - Ian and/or Sue Mackie

A meal at *The Pig and Whistle* rounded off an excellent day. Thanks to Ian and Sue.



Bunnings Hardware, Australia's largest hardware retailer, continue their tradition of allowing community groups to raise money by enabling annual Christmas markets in their stores. This year we were represented at the Mornington and Keysborough stores, both on Thursday evening 8th December. A special mention to Phil Young who made lots of jams to sell on the night, and to those others who contributed time and saleable items. It represents a great chance to present ourselves to a mostly untapped section of the community. And we'll be back selling sausages later in the month, too!



Photos -- Geoff Selby, James Marrs

And a report from our City Chapter, who practice on Wednesday evenings at the Charles Dickens pub in Collins Street:-

The City Chapter (a.k.a. "The Chapter of Chaps") was formed in 2018 and has met from 7 pm to 9 pm on Wednesdays, except on "Kirks" nights and during the Covid restrictions.

The venue started off as being the Welsh Church, with its excellent acoustics, in LaTrobe street, then moved for a while to St Peter's Box Hill (courtesy of its then vicar, Shane Hubner) and then to the Charles Dickens Tavern in the Block Arcade, Collins Street, where the management have graciously allowed us to occupy one section of the premises, and where the patrons regard us appreciatively, albeit curiously.

Tom Buchanan conducts our rehearsals, more-or-less a repeat of what had taken place at Baxter on the previous Monday, with Mina Yu as our faithful accompaniste. We have a tea break at half-time, although when at the Charles Dickens this becomes an occasion where the choristers repair to the bar.

Our members hail from a wide range of places including Mordialloc, Bentleigh, Malvern, Yarraville, and as far afield as Werribee and Geelong -- and one member literally lives " around the corner" in a city apartment, and kindly allows us to store the keyboard there when we're at the Charles Dickens.

The number attending fluctuates around 12 each week, always augmented by some kind and loyal "Baxter chapter" members who make the journey to add balance and experience to the ensemble. Although the numbers are small -- and we live in hope that recruitment will increase them -- one advantage is that we can more easily hear each other...and stay in tune!

We thank the Committee (and the Welsh Church) for enabling the City Chapter initiative. It has led to an expansion of the choir at our performances and attendances on the 2018 U.K. and 2022 W.A. tours.

Thanks to correspondent Tim Gibson.

And so to our end of year festivity – this year at Mornington Golf Club



As is usual, we take the opportunity to celebrate milestones achieved by individual members.

Many thanks to Larry Evans for the Photos. His "mug shots" are great.

Mike McCormack leads the way with 25 years of service, including a term as president.



Gerald Hogg has completed twenty years, and was for a long time our treasurer.



Phil Young, currently Secretary and for a long period our merchandising guru, has also clocked up twenty years.



Musical Director and former principal accompanist Tom Buchanan has been with us for fifteen years



Arthur Poole is another fifteen year man who is a former President, too



And a ten year stint has been completed by Ron Marshall, who for some years was the organiser for Bunnings sausage stalls – a very considerable task indeed.



Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to Phil Young, whose smiling face is already above. Anyone who has been Secretary of an organisation knows why Phil qualifies. He is also a major provider of jams, pickles and so on for choir stalls.

Dominic Xuereb is a former Vice President and committee member, and was the man who did much of the trailer towing over many years. He has taken on the Bunnings sausage tent in the last couple of years, and is still the man who marshalls us on and off the risers.



Neil Kinsey has been President of the choir for several terms, and retains still a high profile in organising various aspects of the choir's activity. This year he takes a bow as our librarian;



Ian Mackie rejoined the choir after some years doing other things. He is an active member, organising a wine tour this year, and a singing in the pub event in Fremantle. (Is there a pattern here?) His wife, Sue has also weighed in with some social initiatives, too.

It is as the Principal of Snap Printing, Dandenong South, that the choir has chosen to issue a certificate of appreciation, since many of our programs this year have been produced at no cost to the choir.



Peter Murray is another long-time chorister and past president. He has frequently given advice on legal matters, too, but was this year recognised for his fund-raising efforts with the weekly rehearsal raffle. (He wins it sometimes which seems a little unfair!)



There is a certain symmetry about our activities this year. I opened our February newsletter with a photo of Dominic and his troops busy cooking sausages at Bunnings.

Our year is about to close the same way. We're booked in to serve them up between Christmas and the new year as well.

Here are the lads taking a run at Mornington. Neil Kinsey tells me that they just sold their first ever drive by sausages.



The Christmas Raffle was once again organised by Dominic Xuerub, whom we thank for his continued efforts over many years.....

Lucky winner was treasurer Richard Simcock, while Peter Murray won the Christmas cake. Other prizes to Len Charlton, Lew Wilson, Bill Liston, Mike McCormack, Kristian Kupsch, and Jeanette Blaxall. Congratulations all!

THE CHOIR IS PLANNING A 'BRING A FRIEND' REHEARSAL AT KIRKS ON THE ESPLANADE ON MONDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2023. IF YOU LIKE TO SING AND YOU FEEL YOU MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE A GO - COME ALONG.

And some memories to finish –



Singing in Geraldton....

Meeting some old friends in the pub



Resting in Margaret River.



Singing in the pub at Kirks with Welsh visitors.

It's been a great year! Merry Christmas!

It remains to me to wish all of our readers, at home and abroad, the best of Christmases and the most prosperous of new years. I hope all of you have enjoyed reading this publication as much as I have (mostly) enjoyed writing it.

See you next year!

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

COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Sunday 26th – Gymanfa Ganu (Hymns – a celebratory service in a Welsh tradition)
St Michaels Church, Collins Street.

Wednesday 22nd – 8pm – Singing in the Pub
Kirks on the Esplanade, Mornington.
Booking essential [03] 5975 2007.

MARCH

Sunday 5th – Village Baxter concert.
Wednesday 29th -8pm – Singing in the Pub
Kirks on the Esplanade, Mornington.
Booking essential [03] 5975 2007.
Saturday/Sunday 18th 19th
Celtic Festival Weekend, Shepparton.