

AUSTRALIAN WELSH MALE CHOIR NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2022

The Choir (or around half of it) has just returned from a very successful tour of Western Australia.



Here they are, on Friday 16th September, all buckled in and wearing N95 fashion statements at the ungodly hour of around 8:00 am on the way to the airport. A smooth trip courtesy of Virgin, and Thompson Coachlines, and everyone was booked in at Crowne Plaza, fronting the Swan River, by mid-afternoon. A buffet meal rounded out the day.

On the bus by 8:15 am Saturday, headed for Geraldton, an ambition rendered rather more difficult when it was discovered that the keyboard was still at Crowne; an error that set things back by an hour or so.

The Pinnacles, a feature of Nambung National Park, were enjoyed while a prepared bag lunch was eaten. There are various theories about how and why this landscape came to be, but the result is certainly very distinctive.

And so on through low lying sandy country to Geraldton, where the Nasuto Apartments became home for a couple of days. Dinner At the Nearby Broady hotel. Breakfast was initially thought to be a prepacked Granola affair, but there was a more popular alternative served in a breakfast room.

Showers turned out iffy too. A power failure one day, and a burst watermain another. Oh, Well!



Larry Evans, Arthur Poole and Jeff Richardson at the Pinnacles.

Sunday 17th saw our first concert in Western Australia, so of course it also saw our first rehearsal, where we were introduced to the considerable talent of Sarah Mills-Minogue, a pianist who travelled with us from Perth to cover the unavailability of Michelle Nguyen, who joined us later in the tour. Sarah was certainly a very good accompanist, and a pleasant travelling companion.



The Concert itself was rather a disappointment from the point of view that there was a very small audience – around 100, and they were probably mostly parents and friends of the very good St Francis Xavier Primary School Choir with whom we shared the concert. All were in good voice,

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however, and the children certainly enjoyed the day.



Here, President James Marrs presents a Certificate of Appreciation to the choir director, Joshua Gibson.



Return to the Apartments was somewhat delayed when the bus door refused to open for around 20 minutes. A driver with a tyre iron and some patience saw us comfortably home!

On the Monday the choir visited the Kalbarri National Park. Here, as elsewhere the fabled wildflowers were just beginning to appear, owing to a wetter, colder winter than normal. Melbourne is not alone.

Be that as it may, the spectacular gorge of the Murchison River showcased in the Kalbarri Skywalk is well worth a good long look,



Photo - James Marrs

as is the mouth of the River at Kalbarri. Cray boats sail from here we're told. A high risk undertaking on many days of the year, one would think.

A final day in Geraldton saw most visiting the HMAS Sydney Memorial



Photo – James Marrs

The local museum was also an excellent place to learn about the terrible wreck of the *Batavia* on the nearby Abrolhos islands.

Wednesday saw the choir back on the road to Perth. As mentioned earlier, the wildflowers were not in full bloom, but early arrivals were growing on the road verges. There were a couple of way-points on the journey, the most notable probably being the monastic settlement of New Norcia,

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briefly infamous for a history of sexual abuse in the sixties and seventies. The community is still an active one.



Google Image

And so to Perth, and the Crowne Plaza once again.

A free day on Thursday 22nd, and many took the opportunity to see the sights of Perth. Kings Park, and its famous Botanical Gardens were a very popular attraction, and many of the plants were in full flower. Really lovely gardens on a magnificent site.



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Ian Mackie arranged a singing the pub event in the evening, over in Fremantle. So a pleasant time was had by all



Friday saw a return to business. By early afternoon the choir was in rehearsal, preparing for a concert shared with the Sydney Male Choir and the Perth Male Voice Choir at Mandurah. Michelle Nguyen had joined the tour, and was welcomed by perhaps the worst rehearsal of the decade; noisy, and generally unmusical. This served to wake all participants up considerably, and the concert was a good one, with a full theatre (splendid venue), and a substantial audience.



Photo: Jennie Toyne

On arrival in Perth afterwards, the bus door malfunctioned again, locking the passengers in this time. The problem was apparently different from the Geraldton one. The fix this time worked!

Saturday 24th September will live in the mind of Kristian Kupsh, Geelong supporter, for a long time. Our Swans followers were rather less enthusiastic.

There's always next year!

Sunday saw the choir yet again in concert with the other two male voice choirs, this time at Churchlands, a large private school. An excellent venue was well filled with a very appreciative

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audience once again. The preconcert lunch was the stuff of legend, and the afterglow memorable.

Most choristers hitched a ride back to the hotel with Perth choristers. A very enjoyable evening..



Preconcert refreshments at Churchlands!



It's hungry work playing piano. Michelle's afterglow

Monday 26th saw a move to Busselton – pretty much a full day on the bus. Most choristers did some self-catering in this very attractive, huge holiday village. Cape Leeuwin and Margaret River were attractive places to visit, and the foreshore in Busselton itself has been developed as a tourist destination, with its famous kilometre long jetty.



Google Image



The Voices of Vasse joined the Choir in a sold-out concert on Wednesday evening. This was an all-female à cappella group with some very serious skills indeed. The choir needed to look alert to match them.

And so, back on a bus on Friday, and off to Albany. The Hilton Garden Inn, Albany, no less.

Friday 30th, bright and early, most took the chance to visit the outstanding Anzac Memorial, built to overlook King George Sound, where the Anzacs boarded ships to join the war in Europe.

It is a highly interactive display, and most found the time allotted flew by. Half a day might scratch the surface.

The Gap was also visited – one of the places where Australia's link to Antarctica is still preserved in the rocks.



Photo – James Marrs

And thence, to business. Concerts at 2pm and 7pm with the excellent Albany Choral Society in the lovely old Wesleyan Church.

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Photo: Trevor Bunning - Google Image

Both concerts were fully sold out, and both were very successful musically, Vivaldi's *Gloria* sounding particularly splendid with two choirs, a piano and an organ to help it along!

There was a memorable afterglow session here. The Choir had gathered in a back bar at the hotel, and was overheard by Lorraine, a young Welsh Lass. The Welsh repertoire was much in evidence, and our guest phoned family in Wales to put us on speaker. Great fun all round.

And so back on a bus to Perth – an almost all-day trip, with MD Tom Buchanan being dropped off at the airport on the way. A smorgasbord dinner, and a reasonably early night for most. On Monday 3rd September, back to Melbourne. All done!

It goes without saying that lots of people do lots of things to get a tour like this one off the ground, but I speak for all participants in Thanking President James Marrs.

His attention to detail, his planning, and his ability to “roll with the punches” made this a really smooth tour for everyone, with the possible exception of himself from time to time. Thanks James!

And thanks to our musicians, too, especially to MD Tom Buchanan, whose belief that we can sing makes it so, at least sometimes.

Back on the home front, the choir sang at Sorrento on October 16th. The small Elderly Citizens hall seats around 100 people, and was filled to capacity. There was a good strong choir of forty or so choristers, and all present enjoyed the occasion. The Choir was asked to return next year!



Raring to go at Sorrento.

Photo: Christine Manktelow.

Just to finish a very busy Couple of months, the choir visited Kirks on the Esplanade in Mornington on the last Wednesday of the month. A capacity audience was on hand after a hiatus while the choir was interstate. Two visitors from Wales were very surprised and very appreciative!



Meg and Peter Bundock meet the choir. Photo Geoff Selby.

These last two months have seen the deaths of two of our long-time choir wives.

VALE JENNY MURRAY



Jenny was born in Harris Park on 20th August 1942, the oldest child and only daughter of Arthur and Gladys Moodie. Her brother, Neil, was born four years later.

Jenny attended Westmead Primary School and the selective Parramatta High School. She won a place at Bathurst Teachers College training as a junior secondary teacher. She was appointed to Wentworth Central School on the banks of the Murray-Darling junction, where she met and later married Peter Murray. They had two sons, Andrew born in 1968 and David born in 1981.

The family moved to Melbourne in 1970, where she taught at Noble Park Tech, then at Noble Park High School.

She loved gardening, cooking, knitting and family life. She was very proud of the fact that her Great Great Uncle and his son (James and Evan James) wrote the words and music of Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Peter and his family. The Choir sang at Jenny's funeral. Thankyou to Emeritus MD Anne Credlin and to the intrepid pianist Tammy Andrews.

VALE RUTH LILLIAN POOLE



Ruth was eighty years old when she died, and was the beloved wife of Arthur for sixty years. The much-loved mother of Kerry, Michael, Daryl and Shelley and devoted Nana to 10 grandchildren, she shared the joy of one great grandchild. Before the onset of her dementia she was heard to say "I have had a good life." The first twenty years of her life were spent at Oakleigh, where she attended primary and high school before joining the workforce as a stenographer at the Melbourne University Union. She was a person of deep Christian faith, and before marriage was involved in the Assemblies of God Church in Oakleigh. Her true alto voice was expressed in church choirs and in the Billy Graham Choir singing to 143,000 at the MCG, as well as Cranbourne Chorale and a community choir whilst living overseas. A quiet, placid personality she enjoyed the pleasures of classical music, accompanying her church choir, reading, crosswords, creative craftwork, and the delights of a native garden. Together with her husband and her family, she lived for two years in New Guinea, and a year in south-east Alaska. Asked about the forty-eight pound (22 kg) King Salmon that she caught in an Alaskan river she would beam with delight and recount the hour-long struggle to net her catch.

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Ruth enjoyed many overseas adventures, several of them with our choir, but the highlight she often spoke about was in the Egyptian desert on the Sinai Peninsula when at 3am she mounted a camel, which over several hours climbed Mount Sinai, made famous by the biblical Moses.

Her married life saw her moving house many times supporting her husband, but she enjoyed being employed for fifteen years as personal assistant/secretary to the Moderators of the Uniting Church across Victoria and Tasmania. An overflowing congregation gave thanks to God for her life in a thanksgiving service at Frankston where the Choir sang and formed the guard of honour. Thanks again to Anne Credlin and to pianist Jenny Stevenson.

Once again, we extend sympathy to Arthur and to Ruth's 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.

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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

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COMING EVENTS

Wednesday November 30

Singing in the Pub Kirk's on the Esplanade,
Mornington,
8pm.

Thursday 8th December

Choir Stall at Bunnings Christmas market,
Mornington 6 – 8 pm.

Saturday 19th November

St Peter's Anglican Church Box Hill
2pm

.Sunday December 11 - Jaguar Club By invitation.

Friday December 23 - AWMC Christmas Breakup –
Mornington Golf Club.

And a few images from the west



Gymnasium shop front, Geraldton: Photo - Phil Young



Cape Naturaliste



Nasuto Apartments, Geraldton