



NEWSLETTER



April 2021

VOL. 2

VIC WELSH CHOIR

Choir Update

Tony Davies

As we got into January, our rehearsal hall liaison officers were busy behind the scenes, dealing with the two churches which we use in Bendigo and Blackburn. All churches had to formulate a CovidSafe Plan which had to be checked and endorsed by the relevant diocesan administrations. Once we had sight of these, VicWelsh was able to tailor its own plan to fit in and adhere to the churches' requirements.

For registration purposes, two different QR codes were obtained and posted in prominent

positions at the respective venues. A sanitising regime had to be implemented and approved and set-up teams instructed on the finer points of social distancing choristers' chairs. The music team needed to be shielded by perspex screens and positioned a certain distance from the choir. Airflow was achieved by keeping doors open at both ends of the halls. In Bendigo a couple of rehearsals were held outside in the church grounds with the March 4 'St David's Day' session being relocated, for the first time, to the new soundshell at the Botanic Gardens.



February 24 Blackburn rehearsal photo by Drew Hopkins

The first few rehearsals required singing with masks on but this rule had been relaxed as from the second week of March. In both places, our ‘normal’ semi-circular, two-rowed setup, has had to be radically changed to preserve the minimum distancing with the search for the best sectional positioning still evolving.

Bendigo numbers are more or less back to normal but Blackburn is probably only at two-thirds strength with some choristers not planning to return until after the completion of the vaccination program.

Ballarat members have been travelling to either Bendigo or Blackburn in order to participate and to catch up with colleagues. Ballarat rehearsals restart in late April.

With the uncertainty affecting hirers’ confidence to draw worthwhile audiences, all of our planned performances for the first half of the year have been either cancelled or postponed to the second half or, in some cases, into 2022. At the moment, our first concert is likely to be in June or July at the earliest.

Tony Davies



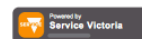
Victoria Welsh Choir
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Victoria Welsh Choir



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QR code at Blackburn photo by Tony Davies

March 4 outdoor rehearsal at Bendigo's Botanic Gardens Soundshell.



Rev. Tom Morgan

Chorister since 1987 & Choir Chaplain.

Born Horsham - 14 October 1928

Family, siblings, parents' occupations

Tom was the eldest of three children and the fourth generation in which a son was called Thomas and this was perpetuated in the fifth generation. He has two sisters (both living): Lilian - who became a nurse with Bush Church Aid Society working in outback Australia though she too was later ordained, like Tom, into the Anglican clergy.

Catherine - who became a schoolteacher and married the Rev Neville Curtis but is now a widow.

Thomas Snr (one of a large family from Euroa) had enlisted in the seventh battalion First AIF and, at war's end, completed a repatriation course training as a hairdresser, and was working in Horsham.

Catherine, Tom's mother, was the daughter of a Ballarat miner but was working at Horsham and it was there that they met and married. The family lived in Horsham where Thomas worked as a hairdresser until he was laid off in 1930/31 in the Depression.

They then moved to Romsey, initially to live near Dad's sister. Thomas Snr. eked out a living while Mum, who was very able, taught herself sewing and together the family was able to rent a small house in Romsey. Tom remembered a day when his mother had used all her savings (2/6d) to buy a dress pattern and sent him to pick it up from the Post Office. On the way home he lost it and he saw his mother cry when he told her, so he retraced his steps until he found the package on the edge of a gutter.



Tom & Doreen Morgan photo by Geoff Serpell

When war was again declared his dad re-enlisted in 1942 and was posted as QM Sgt to Thursday Island from where the large QM Stores forwarded equipment to Australian forces in the New Guinea theatre. The regular remit of his Sgt's pay restored the family's finances. After his discharge from the army in 1946 Thomas Snr also joined the Victorian Railways becoming a barber in the VR Hairdressing Salon at Spencer Street Station.

In 1947 (in a time of housing shortages and through Tom's apprentice contacts) the family heard of a house for sale at Williamstown and were able to use a 'war service loan' to buy it; but only after paying the vendor a further \$200 'rent' in addition to the \$2700 price allowed by the Equity Prices Commission.

Education

Tom went to Romsey State School (366) and completed his Merit Certificate. He then attended Sunshine Technical School in 1942 & 1943. He used to travel by railcar leaving home at 7am and returning for tea at 8pm if the train was on time. He gained his Intermediate Technical Certificate and in 1944, after working on a farm in Lancefield for three months, at the age of 15, he joined the VR being accepted as one of that year's two apprentice 'armature winders' - a five-year course. His course included twelve months heavy general engineering experience on steam locomotives at Newport and twelve months at Spencer Street Workshops repairing anything from radiator elements, hair clipper motors, fans, through to large stationary motors. By 1949 he had completed his apprenticeship and worked for a year at the Jolimont Workshops to build up his savings whilst attending Taylors Coaching College in the evenings to complete his Leaving Certificate.

Anglican Calling & career highlights

Tom was 'called' to the Anglican ministry and studied at Ridley College. He became a Lay Reader at Holy Trinity Coburg and was ordained in 1953 having gained his LTh.

He was accepted as a candidate for the Bush Church Aid Society, and in March 1955 went to work in the Otway Mission centred at Beech Forest. He and Doreen remained there for seven winters or six and a half years. Doreen was told by a resident, "It rains for eleven months of the year and drips off the trees for the other one." There were ten centres including Apollo Bay and Beech Forest. Tom doubled the number of services per month at each centre and successfully developed the youth work at Beech Forest, Johanna River and Apollo Bay so that it had 35 participants and

within six years both Beech Forest and Apollo Bay were able to support their own ministers. His parish provided a car and a parishioner calculated that in the six and a half years Tom travelled about a phenomenal 156,000 miles (equivalent to six times around the earth) over winding Otway mountain roads.

The Morgans then moved to St Augustine's Moreland in 1961, where they remained for a further six and a half years. After this he was nominated to go to a growing Holy Trinity Doncaster which, in just over fourteen years, grew from 700 to 1,467 families. While there he saw through the extension of the historic church and extended the vicarage. Also, under his care was St. Philip's Deep Creek which he was called upon to establish upon a new larger site, becoming an independent Parish. Tom finished there in 1982 and then moved to St Thomas's at Moonee Ponds where he remained until he retired twelve years later. In this role he also became Deputy Chairman of Lowther Hall School Council, and when the local Bishop David Penman became Archbishop, Tom became Chairman for the next ten years. Finally retiring from the full-time ministry in May 1994. Tom was an Anglican representative on the Social Questions Committee and the Chairman of the Victorian Temperance Alliance, now The Coalition on Alcohol and Drugs. Whilst in parish work, he also became a part-time Army Chaplain and loved it. Tom is a member of the Romsey-Lancefield RSL.

At one stage he was on eighteen committees and had only three nights a month free! In forty-one years of Parish Ministry, Tom conducted roughly 2500 baptisms, 2000 weddings and 1000 burials.

Academic, musical and sporting achievements.

Tom played football for Beech Forest in appalling conditions - weather - as part of the Old Otway Association.

Through Lance Hardy, the Cathedral organist, Tom met Victor Harding who was teaching singing at the Athenaeum. Tom happily took vocal lessons from Mr. Harding and studied music theory under Miss Ethel Ferriman, being examined at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, finally gaining his A.Mus.A. as a bass-baritone. All this was done while he was vicar of St. Augustine's Moreland.

Tom had learnt the violin for about four years whilst in Romsey.

Family

Tom and Doreen were married at St Paul's Kingsville in December 1953. They had first met at an Anglican youth leaders' conference in 1947. At that stage Tom had moved to Williamstown from where he had been boarding in Camberwell and was worshipping and a member of the choir at St Mary's Church there but was now fully involved at Holy Trinity Williamstown. By 1953, Tom was serving a curacy at Holy Trinity Coburg under the Rev. C. L. Crossley. For their honeymoon Tom used their A model Ford to tow their hired caravan through western Victoria including the Grampians and the Great Ocean Road before returning to Melbourne. After their marriage they initially shared the Coburg Church Vicarage with the widowed vicar, Mr. Crossley, in return for housekeeping assistance.

Tom and Doreen have four children: David, (Jerrabomberra NSW), Thomas, Andrew and Esther.

How Tom joined VicWelsh

Tom was a member of the Essendon Choral Society when he saw a notice advertising a concert by the Victoria Welsh in 1986. As the Morgans were proud of their Welsh heritage he went along and, during the programme, heard the late Horrie Walpole doing a solo from Morte Criste. It was the third verse, "See from his head, his hands, his feet", sung by Horrie with great meaning which so impressed Tom. During supper after the concert, whilst mingling with the choir members, Tom was invited to join the choir, finding that amongst others, a former Secretary for Railways was a choir member. After some thought he decided to leave the ECS and joined VicWelsh in January 1987. At that time there were about twenty-four members on stage and the conductor was Geoff Beynon.

Over all these years, Tom gives thanks to God for His guidance and loving care, finding great blessing, friendship and fellowship in Victoria Welsh Choir.

Andrew Naylor

Hiraeth - The untranslatable word that connects Wales



A blend of homesickness, nostalgia and longing, *hiraeth* is a pull on the heart that conveys a distinct feeling of missing something irretrievably lost.

The image of a small harbour I knew well catches me by surprise with its flash of familiar cobbled streets and blue skies. It's Wales: the land I grew up in and home to memories on that very harbourside in Porthmadog. Almost 6,000 miles away, the tide of recollections recedes, and I sit, a deep longing settling inside me. Childhood memories are entwined with echoes of a long lunch in a beautiful garden two summers ago when last I returned. The pull on my heart is known in Welsh as *hiraeth*. Deeply connected but not tied to Wales itself, the feeling is a longing for something greater than a spot on a map.

Porthmadog Harbour

Hiraeth is often likened to nostalgia in English, *saudade* in Portuguese, or the German *sehnsucht*, but none quite match exactly. It combines elements of homesickness, nostalgia and deep longing. Interlaced, with a sense of an irretrievable loss – a unique blend of place, time and people that can never be recreated. This unreachable nature adds an element of grief, but somehow it is not entirely unwelcome.

“It’s a kind of longing for a person, a place or a time that you can’t get back to, a kind of unattainable longing,” explained Marian Brosschot, a Welsh

language officer currently working in Trelew, Patagonia.

Formed from *hir* meaning long, and *aeth* meaning sorrow or grief, *hiraeth's* literal translation offers some insight but fails to convey the term's complex nuance. "Hiraeth is almost impossible to translate because it has so many cultural overtones," said Sioned Davies, professor emeritus of the School of Welsh at Cardiff University.

Often connected to a deep pain, the word appears in the earliest of Welsh records and has been a constant weight for poets throughout the ages. In the early Welsh verses, known as Hen Penillion, an unknown poet pleads for the purpose of this *hiraeth greulon* (cruel hiraeth) that breaks his heart and wakes him in the night. Imbued with grief, it's often seen as an ode to the loss of a homeland, a language or traditions – but could also serve as the key to their revival.

Whilst seeking to preserve their culture and language, many joined the small but steady line of Welsh emigrants heading to the Americas, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, among other destinations. While many enclaves were formed, one of the most distinct was *Y Wladfa* (The Colony) in the Chubut region of Patagonia. The settlement was particularly unusual since it wasn't driven by economic opportunity or to escape religious persecution; *Y Wladfa* was driven by a simple desire to preserve Welsh culture and language.

The significance of *hiraeth* to emigrants and the recognition of the things that might inspire it were recognised at the time, noted Bill Jones, professor of Welsh Modern History and specialist in Welsh emigration during the 19th Century. "While promoting emigration," he said, "some

19th-Century Welsh emigrant guidebooks acknowledged that emigrants would experience *hiraeth* for Wales, their relatives and friends, and the landscape and ways of life of the localities they had left."

The concept of *hiraeth* is still largely unfamiliar outside of Welsh-speaking communities

This may go some way in explaining Wales' high rate of 'back migration': the return of emigrants to their homeland. Between 1870 and 1914, approximately 40% of Welsh emigrants returned – a figure significantly higher than the rest of the UK. This included Joseph Jenkins who emigrated to Victoria in 1869 but returned as an old man in 1895.

While Wales is a place easily returned to, what I miss is the unique sense of being home, perhaps in a way that is now unattainable, but nonetheless where I want to be.

*By Lily Crossley-Baxter
15 February 2021
courtesy BBC Travel*

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Diaries of Joseph Jenkins (1818 – 1898)



These notes are a selection taken from the diaries of Joseph Jenkins held in the Manuscripts Section of the State Library of Victoria

Jenkins was born on the 27th February 1818 at Blaenplwyf farm near Ystrad Aeron, Ceredigion. By 1869 he was a Welsh farmer when aged 51 he immigrated to Victoria, leaving behind a nagging wife and his family.

Joseph (pictured opposite) also won prizes at Eisteddfodau for his poetry and initially became a swagman, travelling from farm to farm to find work. He spent his later years in the Maldon region initially at North Walmar at what he called “Ants Hill Hermitage” and subsequently at Maldon in another modest dwelling he identified as “North Railway Gate Lodge” immediately NNE of the northern Maldon station gate on waste ground. In 1887 he describes his house as being “25 yards from the station”. Its slate doorstep was later recovered and given to the nearby railway preservation society by local residents.

Jenkins was working as a contractor clearing street gutters and drains for the town of Maldon. It would have been very hard work for a man in his mid-seventies so in 1894 at the age of 76 and suffering hiraeth Joseph returned to Wales with but £12 & a few shillings to his name.

Whilst in Australia, Jenkins had kept a diary and the entries were collated and published as the ‘Diary of a Welsh Swagman’ by a descendant. The entries reveal that Joseph was a pertinent observer of local and international affairs.

On 27th February 1994 a water drinking fountain and plaque were unveiled at the railway station in Maldon, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of his departure from the town.

Joseph's diary covered an immense variety of subjects but even these selected which concerned the railway gave an interesting insight into colonial matters. Through even these comments connected with the railway it can be seen that some things never change.

“Ants Hill Hermitage” - North Walmar

- 1882** September - Construction of Maldon line begins “The men working on the railway have gone on strike for better pay, an extra 7/6 per day. Their strike succeeds but the strike organizers were paid off.”
- 1884** June 16 – “I was within 200 yards of the station when the train was leaving for Castlemaine and I saved my 6d which I would have rather spent. Later the train was to leave at 10 o'clock for Maldon to open the new line. I was present at the Opening of the Castlemaine to Maldon Railway. The ceremony was poor and short, as the big men did not appear as advertised.”
- October 25 (Saturday) Jenkins makes a return journey to Castlemaine from North Walmar. “I rose before dawn to walk the four miles to Muckleford station to meet the 6.15AM train from Maldon. It deposited me in Castlemaine before 7AM, rather too early to transact my business at the Council Offices. (which opened at 10AM). I was the only passenger to take a ticket from Muckleford today. Railways without passengers won't pay.”
- 1885** September 19 “This was the last day to obtain a 6/- farmers excursion ticket (Three week return). Usual fare £1. There were over 300 passengers on the train”.
- 1886** December – Some railways were built to transport the wool clip once a year – but there will be uproar when ‘the Cockney’ wants his railway loans repaid

- 1886** February - North Railway Gate Lodge purchased by Joseph for £15 .
- North Railway Gate Lodge - Maldon
- 1886** September 23 – “The Railway Commissioners are expected to arrive via a special train from Melbourne ...at seven o'clock to examine the need for an extension into the wheat lands. There were over 100 people waiting on the platform.” Many Members of the Assembly were with the Commissioners.
- “I composed the following verse on the platform(!):
- “Welcome to our railway kings
They deserve our credits
Through them our railway system brings
Our comfort, speed and profit”
- September 24 (Monday) The commissioners were riding in their special carriages. The government is very liberal with the borrowed money – it will ‘tell’ someday”.
- September 25 (Tuesday) Today the commissioners returned to Maldon and left for Melbourne by special train at 3PM. They made a quick way of it. It is no wonder, with their flying survey, that the tenderers contracts were double the estimates of the surveyors.
- 1887** July 28, The railway commissioners returned today and Jenkins composed a letter for the aboriginal Equinhup who came to his house half starving and with whom he shared his food and blankets that night.
- Jenkins’s letter read as follows:
- “To the Railway Commissioners
Gentlemen and Brothers too,
I am the last of the aborigine’s tribe in these parts. I do humbly wish you to compare two sets of Title Deeds.
I received mine from the Author of Nature while the land occupied by all the railways is titled by the white man’s lawyers.

Always humble praying your charitable consideration

Signed Equinhup (nicknamed ‘Tom Clarke’ by the whites)”

The response to this short petition brought Equinhup 20 shillings in silver with the promise of more but nothing for Joseph.

1889

July 28 - Railway to Lannacoori (Shelbourne) “They are going to cut the first sod of the long talked about and delayed route, up to nine years late because the selectors could not agree on the route and there were too many ‘counter influences’ as each selector wanted it to pass his own door’ as they ‘expected to carry tons of wool to the ports’ but the real idea was to enhance the value of the land. During the period of competition the government gave money to make another railway and so deprived the disputants of railway traffic for eight years.”

1889

December 27(Friday) Navies working on the new (Lannacoori) line got their fortnight’s holiday pay and a cheap excursion ticket convenient to all parts of the colony.

1890

December 23- “Locust swarms delay the train when their crushed bodies caused the wheels to lose grip. Yesterday they were so thick as to cover the rails and the train could not pass through them”.

December 26 swarms of locusts entered the carriages, failed to pay their fares and were not removed till we arrived at Sandhurst. (Bendigo)

“Railway water tanks empty again”

1891

March 26 Thursday - “The 16km. Maldon to Lannacoori (Shelbourne) railway was opened today in the absence of any special ceremony. I went on board the engine ‘Eastern Ho’ which the contractors had to build the line. The engine driver and his cleaner were busily engaged while the engineers were testing the line but the driver was worse for drink.”

September 21- “I came up to the (Maldon) railway station where they were loading a big boiler weighing over twenty-eight tons using about a dozen strong and skilful hands.

They did it quickly and appeared to do it easily. It was moved from the railway truck to a very strong wagon drawn by eight horses. It was as much as the horses could do to keep the loaded wagon moving on the level. ...The boiler was destined for Mr. Oswald at his payable gold claim, they say that the boiler will consume thirty tons of firewood in a day and I don't know how much water."

1891

October -"Very busy day at the (Maldon) railway station when an excursion train left for Castlemaine. Twenty big carriages were crammed with school-children and their guardians. The children were neatly clad but their manners were appalling, and their language foul." For example When one asked "Where is (so and so)?" the response was "Dammed if I know where the b.....buggars are!"

November 25 Joseph Jenkins departs Melbourne to return to Wales.

1894

Andrew Naylor



Listening to Victoria Welsh Choir on Eastern FM (98.1)

Until the Covid lockdown VicWelsh enjoyed a monthly thirty-minute slot on Radio Eastern FM (98.1) in Lyn Woods' Lunch Spot Programme on a Tuesday between 11.30 - 12.00 pm.

During the lockdown Eastern FM was restricted to telephone only interviews but, happily, normal service has now resumed. Tune in to hear the latest choir news whilst Andrew Naylor highlights one of the choir CDs.

The next appearance will be on April 13.

Acknowledgements

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www.newcompanymarketing.com.au

Words by Andrew Naylor & Tony Davies

CDs

All our CDs are priced at \$25 plus \$3.00 postage and packing charges (inc. GST) within Australia and \$9 overseas.

To order a CD click on our web site.
www.vicwelshmenschoir.com.au
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