

# NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
**ORANGE MALE VOICE CHOIR Inc.**

August, 2011

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'Friendship through song'

Founded 1926

Visit our website [www.omvc.org.au](http://www.omvc.org.au)



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## Leon's Legacy

The Choir honoured Leon Paix with a testimonial dinner in March following his retirement as our M.D. It's always difficult to précis long and outstanding contributions in any field, but the dinner made a good attempt to set out the extent and value of Leon's service.

One of the most notable changes of the Leon era was a return to our original name. Leon had long held that this was important; it brought the Choir full circle after a period of almost 40 years honouring the name of Rowland Gregory. Once again we are clearly domiciled as an Orange choir and our name poses no problems in its pronunciation and spelling for the unwary! Rowland Gregory's name remains honoured in perpetuity however with the institution of the annual service award which bears it. A new uniform completed the makeover of the old RGOS and Leon was also one of the members of the uniform sub-committee which took oversight of this project.

Very much an ideas man, Leon saw several more of his visions realised. Establishing a 'home' for the Choir suggested itself as an important priority to him after the 2002 UK tour. With typical energy and enthusiasm, he set about the task of securing Newstead as our home, complete with honour boards, trophies, photos and promotional signage.

Always a strong advocate of an ethos of mutual support, camaraderie and friendship within the Choir, Leon promoted what was to become the Choir motto, 'Friendship through Song.' This found expression in many ways, not least during those times when members became ill or were facing their final days at which time he was always keen to tactfully provide comfort in music if it was sought by families.

He urged the Choir towards continuous improvement in its performance with the creed 'onwards and upwards' and appealed to every individual member's commitment to 'the team' to achieve the highest standard possible in every sphere of activity. Three CD's were produced during Leon's tenure and their quality matched that of the overseas tours he led to New Zealand (1996 and 2004) and the UK (2002). He also led the memorable tour to South-East Queensland in 2007.

With his wide experience and depth of musical understanding, quality became a by-word for Leon's direction. He introduced some innovative strategies in the service of choral and music education for the Choir and believed in the virtue of hard work. He penned some outstanding compositions and arrangements for the Choir. Many will almost certainly agree that 'Across Australia' remains quite superior to the current national anthem. When your Editor suggested 'Shelter' for the repertoire and introduced him to 'World Anthem', Leon produced two arrangements of exceptional quality for the Choir.

The local community was always a high priority for Leon and he made a strong commitment to it. The City of Orange Eisteddfod became a regular feature on the Choir calendar and some outstanding concerts flowed from his vision for local festivals, notably the 'Voices of Orange' and the more recent 'Voices, Brass and Pipes' spectacular for Cancer CareWest. But Leon also looked beyond Orange. He was a great supporter of smaller rural communities and relished concerts in towns like Bogan Gate, Lake Cargelligo and Carcoar. His pivotal role in the recent revival of the Male Voice Choirs of Australia (MCAA) signified a broader commitment - to the great tradition of male choirs that has spawned so much wonderful music and so many inspiring choirs worldwide.

Another hallmark of Leon's association during his 17 years was his unstinting promotion of the Choir and several very active campaigns to recruit new members for its advancement. Leon's agreement to serve as our Deputy M.D. ensures valued contact and ongoing friendship into the future. But for the past 17 years the Choir community gratefully and simply says 'thank you Leon' for a job truly well done.

### **Leon Paix Testimonial Dinner**

A large number of guests gathered at Orange Ex-Services Club on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> March to honour our retiring M.D.

The evening got off to a lively start with Leon and Jacquie being piped in to the stirring sounds of the Battlefield Band's 'The Fruiting Branch.' It was as well that Russell Turner (one of our patrons) kept a packed program moving, it was almost 11.30 pm before the evening ended!

It was wonderful to have the company of so many past and present friends of the Choir, as well as a good representation of past members. Fond memories of our 2004 New Zealand Tour were revived with Barbara Newton (and husband Rick) joining us again. Barbara was joined by pianist Tony Baldwin as our guest artists for the evening. Both provided glittering performances; Tony with stupendous performances of works by Bach, Ravel and Liszt and Barbara's warm soprano caressing Porter's 'So in Love' (*Kiss Me Kate*) and invoking her Welsh roots with 'We'll Keep a Welcome.' We were privileged to have Alpha Gregory from Woden Valley Youth Choir and Alastair Crombie (President, MCAA) among our guests.

In some of the more light-hearted moments of the evening Leon was presented with awards by Ken Fishpool, Allan Grant and David Hughes, and David Woodside, all recalling some key characteristics of the inimitable Paix style and assisting his transition to retirement from the Choir.

The slide presentation 'In His Time: an MD's Journey' provided a nostalgic review of the Leon years - the tours, concerts, milestones, and celebrations of 17 memorable years.

The evening ended with tributes from Ken Fishpool, Alastair, Bev, Alpha and patrons Deidre Penhall and Rod Wykes. These were followed by presentations to Jacquie and Leon and finally Leon's response before the singing of 'Auld Lang Syne.'





### **Vale Jim Richards**

The Choir bade a sad goodbye to Jim Richards in May following a brief illness. Always one of our very hardest workers, Jim will be missed. During the years 1994 to 2000 Jim served as Choir President. He was also Music Librarian for many years and rarely missed a rehearsal. With his broad Cornish accent, Jim was always a distinctive presence. The loss of wife Jean several years ago was a huge blow to Jim but in typically indomitable fashion he remained as active as ever, maintaining his involvement and high level of activity across a wide range of community organisations. Jim is survived by children in Orange and in the UK, as well as grandchildren.

### **Vale Barry Sutton**

Although only a Choir member for several years, Barry was an enthusiastic member and looked forward to a close association with the Choir - as too did the Choir with him. Barry was a keen sportsman throughout his life, most recently excelling in lawn bowls. He was an ardent supporter of the South Sydney Rabbitohs and would have relished their fast finishing form in this year's NRL. He was determined to sing in last year's MCAA concert in Sydney Town Hall and won the admiration of members for his gutsy determination in taking his place on the stage. Barry is survived by his wife Pat, children and grandchildren.

### **Vale Bill Hill**

Bill joined the Choir in 1992. One suspects it was no mere coincidence that Bev Glover was his neighbour at the time. Bill was born in Orange and worked at the James Douglas Timberyard before managing Glenroi Builders from where he retired. He was a keen gardener and golfer. With his wife Win they were great supporters of the Choir during the bustling 1990s. Bill was a valued member of the Choir as both a singer and active member.

OMVC extends its heartfelt sympathy to the families of Jim, Barry and Bill.

Our M.D. Melanie Meers lost her father in Queensland recently after a period of poor health. The OMVC family extends its condolences and warmest wishes to Melanie and her family.

### **Stop Press**

Bev Glover's resignation as Choir Accompanist has been received. Bev's iconic status has been forged during 22 continuous years of legendary work and commitment. She will be a huge loss to OMVC. Work is underway to attempt to find Bev's successor.

Our good friend Andy Osborne has had a stay in hospital, only recently being discharged from Intensive Care. We're glad to hear you're on the way back Andy and look forward to having you with us again soon.

Our website has undergone a makeover recently. The website address remains [www.omvc.org.au](http://www.omvc.org.au). The site builds on the great work undertaken by John Spencer in setting up and maintaining our original website. John's son-in-law, Stefan Evans, has provided wonderful technical assistance through all stages of the birth.

### **New Zealand Flight Details**

**Wed. 23/11/11**

Checkin Sydney International. 7.30 am

Flight. NZ 846 L. Depart Sydney. 9.20 am

Arrive Wellington. 2.30 pm (NZ time)

**Mon. 28/11/11**

Checkin Wellington 1.30 pm (NZ time)

Flight. NZ 849 L. Depart Wellington 3.30 pm

Arrive Sydney 5.10 pm (Aust. time)

## Calendar

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 27 August       | Orange Eisteddfod (Orange Civic Centre)  |
| 29 September    | Concert with National Boys Choir (OHS auditorium)  |
| 23 October      | Orange concert with Woden Valley Youth Choir   |
| 26, 27 November | Wellington, N.Z. Anniversary concert with Wellington and Nelson Male Choirs (Sat.) and concert at Southwards Auditorium (Sun.) |

### For your diary

Our next Bunnings BBQs is Sat. 3<sup>rd</sup> September.  
Congratulations to all the team who raised over \$900 at our 6/8 BBQ. A great effort all round!

### Before you go ....

Here are some extracts from actual workplace performance evaluations.

*He would be out of his depth in a parking lot puddle.*

*This young lady has delusions of adequacy.*

*He sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.*

*This employee should go far - and the sooner he starts the better.*

*Since my last report, this employee has reached rock bottom - and shows signs of starting to dig.*

*I would not allow this employee to breed.*

*His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity.*

*This employee is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.*

And arguably the best ...

*Works well when under constant supervision - and cornered like a rat in a trap.*