

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 1975

By Norman Martin, Registrar
& Honorary Archivist

January

Thursday January 9th

Glanrhyd Hospital, Bridgend

The year's concert programme began with a "self rewarding" appearance in the Glanrhyd Hospital, Bridgend. The audience were some of the staff and patients of the hospital and although the concert started late, due to one of the buses arriving late, the concert was enjoyed by those present. One's admiration goes out to Herbert Jones who carried on in his own special way under trying circumstances and to Jennie who battled and won against the piano.

Thursday January 16th

Hermon Chapel, Treorchy

Tonight's concert marked the return of the Choir, after 18 years (January 17th 1957) to Hermon Chapel, Treorchy. The concert was marked with one of those pleasant coincidences; Mr Cennard Davies, Chairman of the Concert, was the boy soprano in our concert in the chapel on Monday July 31st 1949. It was pleasing to see two life members, Idris Thomas and Haydn Thatcher, dressed in full concert regalia, sitting in the audience. The proceeds were in aid of the chapel funds.

Thursday January 23rd

Tabernacle Church, Pontypridd

There was disappointment at the concert in Tabernacle Church, Pontypridd as Max Boyce, the popular folk singer, did not appear due to his illness. This was dispelled by the brilliance of Alun Williams' (BBC) wit and amusing piano playing. The programme was marked by the reintroduction of "Vinetta" and "The Sabbath Pasterole". "Vinetta" was last performed in a broadcast from the BBC Studio, Cardiff on Saturday April 8th 1967 and the "Sabbath Pasterole" in Aberdare on November 16th 1967. Mr John Cynan Jones was the Conductor at this concert. The presentation of the bouquet of flowers to Jennie was made by the daughter by the daughter of Bryn Jones (2B) who suffers from Spina Bifida, and the proceeds of the concert were in aid of people with this condition. To this end a collection was made and raised £77 in addition to the ticket sales.

February

Tuesday February 4th

It was "fame and fortune" tonight for one of the choristers – Malcolm Johnson and his wife. They appeared on the popular quiz programme "Mr and Mrs" on ITV and answered all the questions with what appeared comparable ease and won the £120 jackpot.

Thursday February 6th

Tabernacle Church, Cardiff

The proceeds of tonight's concert in Tabernacle Church, Cardiff was in aid of the church organ. As the organist is Mr Arwel Hughes, the retired conductor of the BBC Welsh Orchestra, two of his musical contributions, "Sanctus" and "Tydi A Roddaist" were sung in his honour.

Thursday February 13th

Hebron Chapel, Ton Pentre

The proceeds of the concert held in Hebron, Ton Pentre, were in aid of the Rhondda Branch of the Kidney Fund. For this concert Herbert Jones was on the “other side” of the stage as he is the Chairman of the Rhondda Branch. Once again Jennie filled a dual role as accompanist and harp soloist and during the evening she and Sam appeared for the first time together as soloists when she accompanied Sam to the song “Little Welsh Home”.

Saturday February 22nd

Christchurch, Cheltenham

The Choir paid its first visit to Cheltenham with a concert in the magnificent Christchurch on Malvern Road. It was a first class concert, marred only by the fact that the heating in the church was not as it should be. The Lord Mayor of Cheltenham was present and the large audience was most appreciative, still applauding as the Choir left the stage. The engagement marked the initial concert appearance of Huw Williams (2T) and the first performance of the monologue “Earthenware” by Herbert Jones. After the concert a pleasant evening was spent with our new fond friends in the Community Centre.

Sunday February 23rd

The Choir held its Annual General Meeting in the rehearsal room. A plaque was presented Mr Haydn Erasmus in recognition of his services as Chairman from 1967 to 1973. Mr Cliff Chislett was presented with his 21 years Long Service Membership certificate and Mr Cas Powell was appointed Vice Chairman.

March

Saturday March 7th

County Secondary School, Haverfordwest

The Choir made its first appearance in Haverfordwest with a concert in the County Secondary School. On arrival at the school the choristers were served with a cooked meal in the canteen. The concert was organised by the Rotary Club and the proceeds were in aid of local charities. Mr Richard Mills (1B) made his first concert appearance. Again one of those amusing incidents took place – when the Choir had assembled on stage waiting for the Conductor and Accompanist, in walked Alun John, Assistant Librarian, and placed the music on the Conductor’s stand. At this the audience began to applaud thinking Alun was the Conductor, and at this he beat a hasty retreat to the side of the stage!

Friday March 28th

Parc & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

For the 10th years the Choir and the Parc & Dare Band gave a concert in the Park and Dare Hall, the guest of honour was Mr Alex Jones M.P., Mr Selwyn Tudball, Mayor of Rhondda, announced that the Choir had donated their part of the proceeds to the Royal Lifeboat Institution who are celebrating their 150th anniversary. The Choir gave the first performance of the “Three Hungarian Folk Songs”, “Morte Christe” and the “Easter Hymn”. Cyril Bevan (1T) made his first concert appearance. There was a capacity audience and a near capacity Choir, with 91 choristers present.

April

Saturday April 5th

Albert Hall, Nottingham

The Choir paid a return visit to Nottingham for another excellent weekend. The concert was again held in the splendid Albert Hall and for the “Fantasia of Welsh Airs”, Jenny changed her concert dress to the Welsh National costume

Tuesday April 15th

The Choir is used to single practice with Mr John Davies taking the tenors and Mr John Cynan Jones the bass, but tonight in practice a new trend was started with Jenny taking the tenors. This is the first time she has conducted and this is another “G” string to her musical bow.

Saturday April 19th

The members and their wives travelled to the Angel Hotel, Cardiff where the Choir held a Dinner and Dance. The Chief Guest was John Brace M.A., Director of Education for Mid Glamorgan.

Saturday April 26th

Great House, Chippenham

The engagement for the Great House, Chippenham followed the same pattern of the previous visits. Tea at the Great House followed by a short concert held on the lawn in glorious sunshine. Prior to this concert the presentation was made to the patients of 30 bed lockers which were bought from the proceeds of the last concert. The Choir was presented with an autographed photograph of Group Captain Leonard Cheshire V.C., founder of the Cheshire Homes.

St Andrew's Church, Chippenham

The concert in St Andrew's Church was tele-recorded by the local TV station to be shown at a later date in the Swindon area. “Diniweidrwydd” was given its first performance by the Choir and a pleasant get-together after the concert was held in the hall in Kington Langley.

Tuesday April 29th

St George's Church, Cwmparc

The Choir made a tele-recording of the programme “Dechrau Canu Dechrau Canmol” for BBC in St George's Church. Cwmparc. Also appearing were the children's choir from the Welsh School at Ynyswen who were conducted by Mrs Mary Cynan Jones, so it was quite a night for the Jones family.

May

Thursday May 1st

Bethany Chapel, Treherbert

To assist the project of building a new boys' club in Treherbert, the Choir gave a concert in Bethany Chapel, Treherbert. It was pleasing to see Mr and Mrs John Davies in the audience. Mr Clive Thomas, Secretary of the Boys' Club of Wales was the Guest Speaker. This engagement was the Choir's third concert in seven days.

Saturday May 17th

Civic Centre, Fleet

Once again the Choir found pastures new when they paid a first visit to Fleet in Hampshire. What a well organised visit it was! The organisers met the Choir outside Fleet and guided them in to the Civic Centre where there awaited a first class meal of chicken and turkey salad. The concert was held in the Civic Centre and at the interval the choristers were provided with a drink and after the concert a drink and sandwiches were given for the homeward journey! Mr John Cynan Jones was presented with an inscribed silver tray, Jenny and Donna (for his wife) received a bouquet. The audience was most appreciative thus making the visit to Fleet a very pleasant one. First concert appearance for John B. Lewis (1B).

June

Saturday June 7th

Guild Hall, Portsmouth

After a period of eight years the Choir returned to Portsmouth for a weekend visit. The concert was held in the Guild Hall with an audience of 1,500. The artists was the Portsmouth Citadel Band and the concert was organised by the Lions. Jack Newman (2T) was fortunate to make his debut at such a splendid venue. After the concert a convivial evening was spent in the Management Centre, where the Choir were staying. A total of 340 miles was travelled to fulfil this engagement.

Tuesday June 10th

Dumfries Street, Treorchy

The Choir once again entered the realms of television with a scene of them walking down Dumfries Street, Treorchy, suitably dressed as miners, miming to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic". This was one of the sequences in a new May Boyce and Ryan Davies television show.

Thursday June 19th

ICI Fibres Club, Pontypool

After a decade the Choir returned to the I.C.I. Pontypool to give a concert in their splendid employees social club. Some choristers took advantage of the I.C.I. employees concessions and purchased items from the shop in the club premises.

July

Saturday July 7th

Great Hall, Exeter University

Again the pioneering spirit of the Choir enabled them to visit for the first time the City of Exeter. The concert was originally to be held in the Cathedral, but it was changed to the Great Hall in Exeter University. This had no adverse effect as the Great Hall is one of the finest halls the Choir has ever performed in. This fact together with the artists, particularly Maureen Gulley (pianist) and a most appreciative audience, contributed to a first class concert. The proceeds were for Dr Barnardo's Homes and president, Lord Roborough, made a short speech during the interval. The Choir travelled in glorious weather, listening to the Wimbledon Men's Final between

Arthur Ashe and Jimmy Connors, and the 270 miles travelled to fulfil this engagement passed fairly quickly.

Tuesday July 10th

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

The Choir entertained visitors in its rehearsal room with an impromptu concert.

August

Wednesday August 27th

The Choir singing “All in the April Evening” was played by Sam Costa on his show. He commented on the splendid sound and stated some facts about the Choir’s record.

Sunday August 31st

The recording made by the Choir in St George’s Church, Cwmparc last April was shown tonight.

September

Thursday September 11th

United Reform Church, Porth

With its first concert after the summer break the Choir returned to the English Congregational Church (now the United Reform Church) in Porth after a period of 11 years. It was a concert in celebration of the 90th year of the founding of the church.

Saturday September 20th

Community Centre, Llanidloes

It was “pioneering time” once again with the Choir’s first visit to Llanidloes. On a sunny day the Choir travelled through the sparsely populated by beautiful scenic Mid Wales to a concert in the Community Centre, organised by the R.A.F.A. Association. The Choir arrived 45 minutes before the start of the concert, but people were already queuing. 160 miles were travelled to fulfil this engagement.

Tuesday September 30th

With the largest number (90) of choristers present in practice for some considerable time, the Secretary read a letter concerning a most unusual request for an engagement. The request being to appear in a wedding celebration. The letter from Paignton inquired about the terms for a wedding in Yorkshire, This brought forth very a merry quip from the choristers.

October

Saturday October 4th

The Abbey, Bath

The Choir was privileged to appear in one of the great historic buildings in the country when they sang in Bath Abbey. This engagement was again organised by the Silver Ring Choir, and as befitting such a magnificent venue the Choir and audience came out in strength. There was 1,700 members in the audience and a greatly

satisfying 98 choristers. The concert was broadcast to the local hospitals and David Davies (1B) and Alun Davies (2B) were making their concert debut.

Sunday October 12th

Brangwyn Hall, Swansea

The Choir travelled to Brangwyn Hall, Swansea to make another record for the EMI company with the same recording team. The day was marred by the news that our Secretary, Mr. W.J.Griffiths was taken to hospital last night. All choristers expressed concern and spoke of their wishes for a speedy recovery. The record contained first performances of the following items – “Comrades in Arms”, “Sara”, “O Mor Ber”, Oh, Mary Don’t You Weep”.

Thursday October 16th

Again the Choir was privileged by a visit to their practice room of a celebrity. This was Max Boyce who was accompanied by Mr David Richard, who is producing the television show in which Max Boyce and the Choir are appearing.

Saturday October 18th

The Pavilion, Corwen

It was “pack your case” time again for the Choir when it travelled to Corwen in North Wales for a weekend visit. The route through Brecon, Leominster, Shrewsbury and Llangollen proved to be a very pleasant one, with the magnificent scenery of the Llangollen Valley. The concert was arranged by the Ladies Circle and the proceeds donated to Leukaemia Research and local charities. It was held in the Pavillion and food and drink was provided there after the concert. The drink was available thanks to William Davies (2T) who was called from the stage by the Conductor, to organise it, being “in the trade” as it were. Some of the choristers were billeted deep in the country. Islwyn Jones (2T) and Terry Hale (2T) were making their first concert appearances.

Thursday October 23rd

Bethel Chapel, Cwmparc

The Choir paid its first visit to Bethel Chapel, Cwmparc. In the programme the Choir gave the first public performances of “Comrades in Arms” and “Sara”. Herbert Jones maintained this theme with his first performance in the Choir concerts of “Mine Family – the Man With a Single Hair”.

November

Sunday November 2nd

Leisure Centre, Pontypool

It was television time again as the Choir travelled to Pontypool Leisure Centre to film the Max Boyce Show. This proved to be a long, wasteful day as the Choir arrived at 3.30pm and left at 10.30pm and sang one song only. The accompanist was Mr Bryan Davies as Jenny had a previous engagement. One of the artists was the internationally famous folk singer Julie Felix and the Benny Litchfield Orchestra provided the accompaniment. This was also a special engagement for Mr John Cynan Jones as it marked the 10th year from his first engagement as Conductor of the Choir.

Wednesday November 5th

The Pavilion, Porthcawl

After a period of five years the Choir returned to the Pavilion in Porthcawl with a concert for the Rest Home. The hall was full and present in the audience was the Mayoress of Ogwr and the Mayor and Mayoress of Porthcawl. Mr Bryan Davies was making his last appearance as guest accompanist as Jenny fulfilled her commitments.

Thursday November 20th

Jerusalem Chapel, Ton Pentre

The concert in Jerusalem Chapel, Ton Pentre was in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Ton, Pentre and Gelli Boys Club. The timing of the date of the concert was well planned as the club was officially opened on 21st November 1925, making it the first Rhondda Boys Club to reach this landmark. Mr Herbert Jones continued to introduce new items with the first performances of “Smiles” and “The Highwayman”, the latter being the monologue he recited when he won his first competition many years ago.

Friday November 21st

The social side of the Choir was maintained when a dance was held in the Legion Hall, Pentre for the choristers, wives and friends.

Sunday November 23rd

Today’s rehearsal proved to be another milestone in the Choir’s history. Owing to the illness of Mr John Cynan Jones the full rehearsal was conducted by Jenny. Thus for the first time the Choir was conducted by a woman. In spite of the very short notice, Jenny only knew when she walked into the rehearsal room, it proved to be a most enjoyable one.

December

Saturday December 6th

Colston Hall, Bristol

After a lapse of two years the Choir returned to the Colston Hall, Bristol to share a concert with the Stanshawe (Bristol) Band. Unfortunately Major Hargreaves, the Conductor, was unable to be present owing to food poisoning. The Deputy Conductor, Mr Lewe, ably filled the position. The last item of “Land of Hope and Glory” proved to be so successful with the audience that it was sung three times. A pleasing gesture was made by a support of the Choir by giving Jenny a small Welsh doll with a note thanking the Choir for singing “Myfanwy”. It was a well supported concert with an audience of 2,200 with the proceeds in aid of the band.

Sunday December 7th

HTV Studios, Pontcanna

After the Bristol concert last night the Choir returned to the television in HTV Studios at Pontcanna, Cardiff, with a sound recording of a new series featuring Welsh choirs called “Sing Aloud”. Four items were recorded with Harry Price as soloist in “Amazing Grace” and the first performance of “Where Shall I Be”. In spite of a very busy couple of weeks, 84 choristers turned up for this engagement.

Friday December 12th

HTV Studios, Pontcanna

Down to the HTV Studios again to film “Sing Aloud”. Even on the last engagement there was drama abroad as Mr John Cynan Jones was unable to attend to illness, but no panic – who stepped into the Conductor’s breach – no other than dependable Jenny. Thus the Choir was conducted in an engagement for the first time by a woman. The compere for the programme was Wynford Vaughan Thomas. Thus the year ended on this pleasing note with 87 choristers making the final effort.