

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 1993

By Norman Martin
Registrar & Honorary Archivist

JANUARY

Thursday January 14th

Tonight's rehearsal was visited by David Wyndham Lewis, organise of the World Choir Project. After the rehearsal a meeting was held to explain the conditions for a visit by the Choir to Atlanta, Georgia from February 8-12. Time was essential and names of choristers wishing to go must be given on Tuesday. The cost per chorister is £50 with the £50 per man from Choir funds. This is to cover the short fall in air fares of £5,000. Accommodation on travelling to the USA will be met by the World Choir organisation.

Thursday January 21st

At tonight's rehearsal Life Membership was conferred on John Davies and Alun Hughes.

FEBRUARY

Saturday February 6th

Warwick University

On the day that Wales emerged from its recession by beating England at Cardiff Arms Park 10-9, the Choir travelled to Warwick University to start the year's engagement programme. For the first time the Choir travelled by Bebb's buses which left Treorchy at 4.15pm and travelled from the BBC Studios to Cardiff Castle to pick up choristers after the match. The drivers were Wally Underhill and Mike Griffiths. Finally the Choir reached Warwick University in time for tea and sandwiches and the concert started at 8pm. The Mayor presented a large cheque of £2,5000 to Kenilworth Round Table who had organised the concert, the proceeds of which were in aid of the Amanda Bevan Rehabilitation Centre in Coventry. As always there was a large and responsive audience and the choristers were elated with the Welsh rugby success. Mair Roberts entered into the spirit by walking on stage in a Welsh cap and scarf! The evening's performance was a total success, as displayed by the enthusiastic audience. A thrilling night for David Syms (2B) on his debut performance. The concert finished at 10.45pm.

8th – 12th

Tour of Atlanta, Georgia, USA

See separate report

Thursday February 25th

Bethlehem Chapel, Treorchy

The Choir returned to the concert platform following its trip to Atlanta, Georgia with an engagement in Treorchy. This was a return to this chapel after nine years and the proceeds were in aid of Cancer Research. For the first time with the Choir was the pleasing soprano Ros Evans, and it was gratifying to see several old members of the Choir in the audience. It was particularly pleasing to see Jennifer, the former accompanist, there. After the hustle and bustle of the Atlanta escapade, it was satisfying to perform in such a splendid venue and with choristers and audience enjoying the atmosphere and singing it was a very pleasant evening's entertainment.

MARCH

Tuesday March 9th

For the first time the rehearsal was conducted to Marion. This was due to the illness of John Jenkins and the unavailability of Andrew Badham. Marion conducted and accompanied the Choir with the same assurance, competence and enjoyment as she displays in every concert.

Thursday March 11th

Habersdasher School for Girls, Monmouth

The Choir returned to Monmouth for a concert in the School, which began later than advertised due to a mis-calculation of travelling times! John Jenkins was still unwell and Andrew took up the baton. The Choir staged and following a further pregnant pause as Andrew and Marion sorted out the programme, the concert began at 8pm, organised by the 1st Wyesham Scout Group. Despite the upsets the Choir gave an excellent performance under the relaxed and confident Andrew. This was amply displayed by the reaction of the capacity audience, which included the Mayoress of Monmouth, and it was satisfying to the choristers as this was their first time at this venue. Many enjoyed the delights of the Green Dragon pub afterwards!

Thursday March 25th

St Augustine Church, Penarth

The Choir left Treorchy at 6pm and took the motorway to Penarth for a concert in St Augustine Church which has stood on this site for 125 years. The fine building was opened on the site of a much older Christian site dating back 700 years, and is internationally recognised as one of the finest examples of Victorian architecture. The great Welsh composer Dr Joseph Parry is buried in the churchyard. All proceeds from the concert were for the Marie Curie Cancer Care and the choristers were issued with badges which they wore during the performance. As with all fine church buildings, it was a grand place for singing. The audience, which included civic dignitaries, showed their gratification of the performance with prolonged applause.

APRIL

Friday April 2nd

St David's Hall, Cardiff

For the second time the Choir held a concert in St David's Hall sponsored by Barclays Bank. The proceeds were allocated for the Sick Children of Wales and the Choir funds. A rehearsal took place at 4.15pm with the West Glamorgan Youth Orchestra as the second half of the concert was performed with them. This being two new items, "Nevsky's Song" and the prodigious "Beethoven Fantasia" with soloist piano, male quartet, orchestra, Choir and many a heart missing a beat! The rehearsal concluded at 5.35pm. The concert began at 7.30pm and the first half was shared between the Choir and the artists Jason Howard who was well received by the large audience. In the second half Marion enthralled the audience with her playing of the intricate piano solo for the "Beethoven Fantasia". The orchestra enchanted the crowd with their playing with the Choir captivated the audience. John Jenkins was equally as impressed with his conducting and Jason Howard overwhelmed everyone with his performance. Despite all the misgivings, it was a memorable concert. There were a number of

“firsts this evening” in that John Jenkins conducted a combined concert, Marion appeared as a soloist and Andrew accompanied the Choir. It was the first concert for Joe Harris (2T) and Darren Evans (1T) and Mrs John Jenkins (Wendy) played in the orchestra. Tonight the Choir gave debut performances of the “Tribute to Queen Medley”, “Choral Fantasia” by Beethoven and Prokofiev’s “Nevky’s Song”. The Choir soloists sang together for the first time with another soloist to form a duet. They were Dean Powell, Bert Stevens and Clive White.

Tuesday April 6th

The Annual General Meeting was held. There was one change in the Committee as Idris John did not seek re-election and Dai Foulkes was elected. Robert Turner and Cliff Chislett did not seek re-election for the post of Publicity Officer / Assistant Librarian. The post of Publicity Officer saw Dean Powell and Bert Stephens apply. Dean Powell was elected. The post of Assistant Librarian was contested between Colin Rogers and Geoffrey Howard. Colin Rogers was elected. Life Membership scrolls were presented to Mr John Davies (Chairman), Alun Hughes (former Chairman) for their outstanding contribution to the Treorchy Male Choir. A Long Service Membership Certificate was presented to Mike Peachy but unfortunately he was unable to attend. Ron Green accepted it on his behalf.

Friday April 9th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The 28th consecutive Good Friday concert was an extra special one for the Park & Dare Band. It was formed in 1893 and called the Cwmparc Temperance Drum and Fife Band, but from April this year is called British Fuels Band. The ingredients of the musical cake were the same – Band, Choir, full house audience. It was an unforgettable engagement for Jeff Hocking (1B) for his initial stage appearance.

Thursday April 22nd

A television broadcast for the Pebble Mill programme “Good Morning with Ann and Nick” took place. The purpose of the programme was to try and evaluate the feelings of the people of the valley on the loss of the name “Rhondda” during the new local government re-organisation. After singing “Cwm Rhondda” eight times, choristers were interviewed – John Davies, John Mallin, Meurig Hughes, Norman Martin, Cliburn Willis.

MAY

Saturday May 1st

Winchester Cathedral

The Choir travelled to Winchester to perform in the Cathedral in a concert with the Hampshire Youth County Band. This was the third time for the Choir to perform with the band and the second visit to the Cathedral. This engagement was particularly important as it was in celebration of the 900th anniversary of the Cathedral and the 30th anniversary of the formation of the Band. A capacity audience filled the cathedral to the brim and with the Band playing on home ground, they rose to their celebration year with a magnificent performance. The Choir, although restricted in numbers, were not restricted in the quality of performance and in such exalted surroundings with Marion and Andrew at the helm, gave some truly inspirational singing. The result from the audience left them in no doubt of their enjoyment of the concert. It was a

“first” for Dean Powell as his notes were published in the concert programme for the first time as Publicity Officer.

Thursday May 6th

Tabernacle Chapel, Skewen

After a period of 19 years the Choir returned to Tabernacle Chapel. The concert started at 7pm and all of the proceeds were in aid of the Skewen Eisteddfod Appeal which will contribute to the running of the National Eisteddfod in Neath in 1994. The concert was ensured of success as sharing the platform was the Coedffranc Junior School Choir and the chapel was full of their families and friends who enjoyed a wonderful evening of song.

Saturday May 29th

World Choir, Cardiff Arms Park

It was a spectacular extravaganza event! The second World Choir Concert at the Cardiff Arms Park. Owing to traffic problems the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra was late and amid all the frenetic activity that surrounds such a major production there was only time for a frantic rehearsal beforehand. Owain Arwel Hughes led the 8,000 voices, orchestra, band and artists through a confident rehearsal before the major evening showpiece began. Representatives of the Choirs made presentations to David Wyndham Lewis, Owain Arwel Hughes and Ann Harris before the rehearsal finished at 4.55pm. Within two hours the Choir reassembled and lessons had been learned from the previous year, when owing to a torrential downpour the spontaneous entertainment was started by the Choir and put everyone in a happy mood. So this time again in wet, cold conditions a sing-song was organised by Dewi Griffiths (BBC). He compered and conducted the event. A pleasant surprise is when Dewi called on a member of the audience to help with the entertainment. This person was Max Boyce! He led the many thousands through “Hymns and Arias” and was followed by yet another “Mexican Wave”. Just before the concert began a runner encircled the pitch with a flame, symbolising world peace, which put everyone in a happy frame of mind. The concert was another tremendous success despite the wet and cold conditions. In the most pleasant atmosphere, the fervour of the performances of each artist, particularly the Orchestra, Choir and “lightning” Conductor drew the most tremendous response from the audience. The evening included Wynford Evans who beguiled the crowd with his performance. Paata Bulchulanza was astonishing with his wide range and power. It was also a delight for a male choir of this magnitude to welcome the Richard William Singers on stage for a delightful performance. The “youngsters” of the concert were Oliver Sammons and Catrin Finch who were both excellent. Of course, for many the highlight of the night was the introduction of the great “diva” herself, Shirley Bassey, whose vivacious talents left everyone spellbound. The concert concluded with a mass exodus of tens of thousands of people in the Cardiff streets. Quite an evening to remember!

JUNE

Saturday June 5th

Farnham Hall, Fareham

On a gloriously sunny summer’s day the Choir made its first trip to Fareham near Southampton. During the stop at Cleverley Services, Dean Powell was presented with a specially printed “business card” from Daryl Stacey, suggested his willingness to

travel as a soloist, along with a speciality number, much to everyone's amusement! The journey continued to Shirley and its Citadel where an excellent buffet was served on buffet tables draped with the Welsh flag! On arrival at the hall for rehearsal it became painfully obvious that this neat and compact auditorium would be a difficult place to sing owing to the poor acoustic value. The concert started at 7.30pm and with the heat, poor acoustics and the piano positioned amid the choristers, this was a challenging night for the performers. A pleasing moment was the fact that in the audience was Gerald Neighbour, the son of the Choir's first Chairman George. "Gwahoddiad" was sung in memory of his father. The performances of Mair Roberts, trumpeter Paul Sharmen, accompanist Brian Willets and the Choir certainly met the challenge of the difficulties as shown by the response of the audience. The late bus spent a pleasant time in the "Golden Bowler" where Mr Neighbour subscribed £60 to the refreshment kitty!

Saturday June 19th

Civic Hall, Bedworth

The Choir gave a concert in one of its favourite venues with a seventh visit to the Civic Hall in Bedworth. A short rehearsal was held and it was obvious that the small attendance of choristers was very disappointing to say the least. The Chairman soothed the anxiousness felt by the choristers by stating his appreciation for their efforts at being there, which was endorsed by John Jenkins. After a buffet the concert started at 7pm and although the chips were down, the effort was up. With such a magnificent hall, Mair responding to the acoustics, Marion playing brilliantly and the choristers reacting to the inspirational leadership of John, the appreciation shown by the large audience proclaimed another successful engagement by the Choir. The concert concluded at 9.30pm and one bus enjoyed the hospitality of the Nuneaton Rugby Club.

Saturday June 26th

Abbey Road Studios, London

The Choir travelled to London by leaving Treorchy at 9am and heading directly to the Abbey Road Studios, famous as the home of the "Beatles" for their many recordings. The reason for the visit to the studios was the making of the record "Treorchy Sings Queen" and it was recorded in the same studio used by the Beatles. The recording started at 2pm and during the session a "small choir" was made from choristers to perform various arrangements. Tea was taken at 3.30pm and the session finished at 5.40pm. This is an EMI recording and producer Gordon Lorenz came down from the recording room to tell a couple of risqué jokes, unaware that in the studio was Mrs Morgan and her son James who had travelled along with the Choir! The choristers laughed more at his embarrassment than the joke and as always everyone took this as harmless fun. Although this was the end of the recording sessions the BBC sent a crew to film the Choir making the record and while they set up the cameras "Happy Birthday" was performed for Fred O'Brien. The recording was concluded by 7pm and the choristers travelled to the Hilton International in Wembley. Many choristers then went out to sample the local hostelry for refreshments of all manner!

Sunday June 27th

Abbey Road Studios, London

After breakfast the Choir left the hotel to reach the studio for 9.30pm where Andrew conducted the "warm up" of "Gwahoddiad" before John took the stand for another

recording session. Before this occurred Mr Jenkins read out a “good luck” card from John Cynan Jones. During this session the choristers were introduced to singer Carl Wayne who is a soloist on the record. Carl performed the role of lead singer in “The Move” whose hit song “Flowers in the Rain” was the first track played on the “new” BBC Radio 1. The recording session was over by 3.15pm and as usual Gordon Lorenz came down again to give another risqué jokes, but made sure nobody “underage” was about! After the laughter died down he explained how the idea came about due to John Jenkins and the deliberations with notable pop musicians that the challenge of making this record was accepted. He stated his delighted with the end produced and thanked everyone, especially John, for all the effort put in to make it. John responded with his thanks to Gordon and choristers and Meurig Hughes (Vice Chairman) reciprocated on behalf of the Choir.

JULY

Friday July 2nd

St Peter’s Church, Dinas Powys

After a period of five years the Choir returned to Dinas Powys. As with the first visit, this is a small church and the staging was difficult, especially the middle sections. At the end of each section choristers had to leave for an adjoining room or sit on the steps. The Conductor stated beforehand that he had received a message from Gordon Lorenz who was overjoyed with the recording and was sending a demo tape. It was a glorious summer’s evening and during the first half the choristers were rather uncomfortable in the heat, so they staged the second half without jackets. During the performance the Conductor announced the presence of visitors from Australia, much to their enjoyment and embarrassment. Mair Robert performed a restricted programme owing to a cold, but remained top of the game. Similarly Marion had to battle a piano which was also under the weather! Despite the setbacks the concert was a most enjoyable one. Following a buffet in the church hall, the late bus enjoyed the 19th hole of the Dinas Powys Golf Club.

Saturday July 20th

Civic Hall, Guildford

Into the regions unknown! The Choir made its first visit to Guildford with a concert in the Civic Hall. Not a very encouraging start as the hall was closed on arrival, but once inside a rehearsal was held. Again it was a pleasant hall but the acoustics were less than pleasant. The concert started at 7.30pm and with an audience inside the acoustics improved and the programme went on its merry way. Mair, Marion and Andrew made a terrific trio for the evening with the Choir bringing respect and admiration from the most appreciation audience. The concert was arranged by Brian Bates Honorary Member who worked tremendously hard to make this engagement such a success. The second bus enjoyed the disciplined atmosphere of the Sandhurst Military Academy.

Sunday July 11th

St Andrew’s Church, Tonypany

Members of the Choir appeared in the Civic Sunday Service for the new Mayor of Rhondda, Cllr David Morgan. The Morgan family have been associated with the Choir for decades as David’s father (also David) for an early chorister. His uncle of course is the Choir Secretary Islwyn! A fine service took place with contributions by

soprano Claire Dee, Tonypandy Comprehensive School Orchestra and Tonypandy Primary School Choir. Afterwards all participants enjoyed refreshments at Penygraig Labour Club.

SEPTEMBER

Thursday September 16th

Salem Chapel, Blaina

After a period of 32 years the Choir bounded back to Blaina with a concert in Salem Chapel before a capacity audience. The Choir was introduced by a very competent chairman, Berwyn Hale, who after extolling the Choir's reputation, wittingly remarked they had reached their pinnacle by appearing in Blaina. This brought laughter and applause from all present. In such an atmosphere the Treorchy Team of Marion, John, Mair and choristers gave a successful return to the concert platform after the summer break. The proceeds of the concert were in aid of the chapel and their funds were certainly enhanced by the support the concert received.

Saturday September 18th

Bath Abbey

Despite a whole host of traffic and transport problems, which caused a serious delay to the travelling arrangements, the Choir eventually reached Bath Abbey at 7.50pm and within 20 minutes began the concert for a capacity audience. Despite the late arrival the audience clearly displayed their total enjoyment of the evening in no uncertain terms and their sustained applause demanded, and received an encore. The concert was held in aid of the Bath Lions Club and was a total success – despite the timing issue.

Tuesday September 29th

At rehearsal Chairman John Davies announced that Andrew Badham has resigned as Associate Conductor to take up the post of Musical Director of the Cwmbach Male Choir. He thanked Andrew for his excellent contribution to the Treorchy Male Choir and expressed his regret of losing him but congratulation him and wished him every success in his new position. John Jenkins stated the pleasure of working with him as they were a very compatible duo and would miss him greatly. Andrew replied by stating it was a great privilege, experience and pleasure to be with the Treorchy Choir and he was approached by the rival choir to take up the post. He said he had spent an agonising and soul-searching time in deciding and thought it was time to have a Choir of his own.

OCTOBER

Sunday October 3rd

St Mary's Well, Penrhys

It was television time again for the Choir. Reg Stephens and Norman Martin were interviewed in Cardiff Street and the choristers made a sound recording of "A Valley Called The Rhondda" in Bethlehem Chapel, Treorchy. The reason was for the forthcoming filming of "Songs of Praise" and the Choir was chosen to give a solo item in the programme. After the sound recording they travelled to the statue at St Mary's Well in Penrhys where small amphitheatre exists overlooking the beautiful

view of the Rhondda Fawr. This setting proved perfect for a filming of the Choir which brought a whole new experience. As choristers sang “A Valley Called The Rhondda” they were actually filmed from a helicopter that zoomed back and forth to take spectacular films of the valley and Choir. Despite the long filming session, often interrupted by unruly local children and stray dog, coupled with chilly weather, the television crew were satisfied with the results of this new experience.

Tuesday October 5th

After rehearsals in Treorchy Comprehensive School, the tenth official photograph of the Choir was taken. It was the first photograph with the present music staff of John Jenkins, Marion Williams and Andrew Badham and was particularly important as Mr Badham is shortly leaving the Choir and the photograph would be a constant reminder of his happy time with us. Unfortunately John Cynan Jones and Cliff Taylor were unable to be present for the photograph

Wednesday October 6th

There was a sense of shock and disbelief with the news of the sudden death of John Davies, Chairman, as he attended last night’s rehearsal and organised the taking of the Choir photograph. He lay on the bed and his wife, Mary, failed to wake him. He was taken to East Glamorgan Hospital but failed to regain consciousness.

Thursday October 7th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The performance of the 12th Annual Concert was in memory, admiration and respect of Mr John Davies. In the dressing room beforehand John Jenkins expressed the feelings of everyone on this tragic news. He explained that changes to the programme would take place to reflect these feelings and show the respect the Choir felt for him, and knew the choristers would display those emotions in their singing. Before the start of the concert Vice Chairman Meurig Hughes spoke of the valued contribution John made to the community and Choir and expressed his regret to the family, inviting the entire theatre to stand and give a respectful silence for a few moments. John Jenkins led the Choir into the singing of “Arglwydd Mae Yn Nosi” in an emotional and reverent performance. This set the tone of the performance and together with soloists Diane Fuge and Nigel Hopkins, the most satisfying concert took place, one worth of John Davies who will never be forgotten while there is a Treorchy Male Choir.

Sunday October 10th

Park & Dare Theatre

The “Songs of Praise” recording continued in the Park and Dare Theatre with a massed Choir of 21 different choirs, making approximately 800 voices. Earlier Dean Powell was interviewed by Pam Rhodes, the presenter of the programme outside the theatre. The Conductor was Dr Terry James and the organist was Robert Court. The Treorchy men thought they had stepped back in time as Dr James had an uncanny resemblance to John Cynan Jones in appearance and mannerisms! The rehearsal started at 3.10pm and during it Dr James related two particular experiences as a conductor. The first was an embarrassing error of conducting the Pentonville Prison Male Choir and commenced the programme with “Steal Away”! His second was on leaving university in 1959 he was invited to a Treorchy Choir rehearsal to conduct. While conducting he rather pompously remarked, “Gentlemen in the allegro section, the intonation is rather suspect”. The choristers looked back with blank faces. To this

remark John Haydn quickly explained, “Boys, he means in the fast bit you’re a bit flat”! A lesson Dr James never forgot! After teabreak in the comprehensive school, the rehearsal re-started at 6.45pm and the assembly was introduced to Pam Rhode and floor manager Iola Protheroe who brought laughter and obvious remarks when she gave instructions on the position of the song sheets – “Gents, if you want to hold them, then keep them up all night”! The rehearsal recording finished at 9pm – a long but enjoyable day.

Wednesday October 13th

Today was the funeral of Mr John Davies, Choir Chairman. The funeral service was in Bethlehem Chapel at 12noon and was full of choristers, ex-choristers, staff of Treorchy Comprehensive School, leading figures of the community, all come to pay their respects to a popular man. The Choir, conducted by John Jenkins sang his favourite hymns, “Arwelfa” and “Rhys”. Also “Abide with Me” with the congregation. After an extremely moving tribute by Gladys Thomas, his Deputy Headteacher, the service ended with “Arglwydd Mae Yn Nosi”. At the cemetery the six bearers were Islwyn Morgan, Roger Morse, Meurig Huges, Daryl Stacey, John Mallin and Alun Hughes who lowered him into his final resting place. “The Lord Is My Shepherd” was sung at the graveside. It was a very sad day and the choristers were clearly moved by the emotional farewell to John. They remembered him as an energetic Chairman and an outstanding Publicity Officer along with being a loyal, dedicated and popular chorister. His masterly command of the spoken and written word left everyone in awe and admiration of his ability. Anyone who was presented when he delivered his oration in the Ben Hill Methodist Church in Atlanta was left in wonderment of the magnificence of his speech. It was an occasion never to be forgotten. Through the sadness there is a quiet satisfaction of that knowing John Davies had enriched the lives of so many people, and will be remembered for the joy and laughter he brought them.

Saturday October 30th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The Choir took part in a programme celebrating the 70th anniversary of sound broadcasting in Wales. A rehearsal was held with the Parc & Dare Band at 4pm and for the first time with their new conductor, Nigel Weekes. This proved to be an exhilarating and satisfying experience as he is an excellent Conductor. The other artists were Doreen O’Neill and Patricia O’Neill, sisters of tenor Dennis O’Neill and the comperes were Angharad Pair and Hywel Gwynfryn. The concert was recorded to be broadcast early next year as two separate programmes. Everyone’s enjoyment of the evening performance was evident from the happy atmosphere and enthusiastic applause.

NOVEMBER

Friday November 12th

Gloucester Cathedral

It was off to Gloucester again with a departure time of 4.15pm. The concert started at 7.30pm and there was a capacity audience, including many civic dignitaries. Jean Goldsbrough, a mezzo soprano, proved a first-class artist. Marion, playing excellently, John conducting inspirationally and the Choir performing brilliantly in

this majestic building resulted in an outstanding evening. The Choir responded with some magical music, especially in the controlled splendour of the pianissimo singing, making it a memorable night. The concert was special for Ken Waldron who made his first appearance with the Choir and also Bryn Howells who is celebrating his 60th birthday. The success of the Choir was gratifying as the proceeds were for the National Star Centre, a college for students with a disability; and also the Cotswold Care Hospice for those with a terminal illness. The buses left the Cathedral for supper at the Civic Service Club.

DECEMBER

Wednesday December 1st

Rhondda Heritage Park, Trehafod

It was a “massed choir” event when Treorchy, Cambrian, Cwmbach, Morlais, Pontypridd, Llandybie and Caerphilly met at the Rhondda Heritage Park to film the “Noel Edmunds Christmas Presents Show”. Arriving at 12noon the producer explained that an old Welsh miner, Emlyn Thomas, who now lives in Norwich, wished to recall his days in the valley. He was originally from Trealaw and moved away thirty years earlier. His present from his family was a surprise performance by the massed choir. By strange coincidence he is the brother-in-law of Edward Owen (2T). After the rehearsal, held under the baton of John Asquith, food was prepared and at 3.15pm the choir hid in concealed places around the shaft and lamproom. Noel Edmunds appeared with Mr Thomas and the choristers suddenly appeared into the open humming and singing “Cwm Rhondda” in Welsh. This left Mr Thomas and his family spellbound. Noel Edmunds thanked everyone for their patience and good humour. The programme will be broadcast on Christmas Day. A memorable first engagement for George Jacob (2B).

Saturday December 18th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The engagement programme ended for the year with a concert at home for the Rhondda Boys Club. On this occasion George Jacob and Robert Hopkins made their stage debut while Ken Simcox made his first stage appearance of the year after a heart operation. It was a carol-type concert befitting the festive season and all those taking part – artists, band, choir and Treorchy Primary School children, made it a pleasant evening indeed.

Thursday December 30th

During the Choir’s Christmas break two tragedies took place as two choristers died suddenly, leaving all members in a state of shock and disbelief. Today was the funeral of Rhyddian Hunt and the attendance at his funeral left no doubt of his popularity. He had collapsed on the 20th at his home and died two days later. The church in Tonyrefail was overflowing with mourners and the excellent attendance of choristers displayed their respect of him. It was gratifying to see many old members there and John Cynan Jones, who played the organ, was present with Marion. The Choir sang “Tydi a Roddaist” and “Arglwydd Mae Yn Nosi”. At the graveside in Trane Cemetery all sang “Cwm Rhondda”. Thus a gentle person and an excellent chorister and Librarian was laid peacefully to rest.

Friday December 31st

Today former Chairman Alun Hughes was given an emotional and respectful tribute. Alun suffered a road accident on the 19th and died four days later. The church at Glyntaff was filled with capacity with many mourners stood outside. Again the respect shown for Alun was excellent as members gave a heartfelt rendering of “Rhys”. Also present was Mair, Marion and John Cynan, along with many former choristers who paid their respects as he was laid peacefully to rest.