

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 1999

By Norman Martin
Registrar & Honorary Archivist

JANUARY

Tuesday January 26th

News in the rehearsal room saddened the hearts of choristers. The Secretary announced the death of Eric Morgan. He joined the Choir in 1982 and his commitment to it was 100%, even during his illness he always attended the activities whenever possible. The courage, tenacity and cheerfulness with which he endured his health problems won the admiration of all. His work in the Construction Industry saw him win several prestigious awards. Eric was unassuming, efficient, cheerful and conscientious. The Chairman paid tribute to him for his contribution to the Choir.

FEBRUARY

Tuesday February 2nd

The Choir bid a respectful farewell to Eric Morgan at Coity Crematorium. He was borne into the crematorium by six choristers – Roger Morse, Gwyn Morgan, Alwyn Lewis, Fred O'Brien, Geoffrey Howard and Alun Morris. The large number of choristers present and the volume of people there from the community displayed the high regard in which he was held. With the singing of “Gwahoddiad”, the Choir said goodbye to a popular chorister and friend.

Thursday February 11th

At the rehearsal room the Chairman read out a letter confirming the Australian Tour was going ahead. The tour will start on October 31st and there will be 22 engagements. The itinerary will be issued to choristers when finalised and the cost of the tour would be £50 per head.

MARCH

Tuesday March 2nd

A recording was made of the Bob Marley song “Stir it Up” at the rehearsal room for the charity Wooden Spoon. They are producing a record for the Rugby World Cup period and the charities to benefit from the endeavour will be deprived children. This is the first time the Choir has performed for Wooden Spoon. The single will go on sale shortly.

Thursday March 18th Memorial Hall, Barry

The Choir gave a most interesting, satisfying and honourable engagement in celebration of the 900th anniversary of St John Ambulance. Sharing the stage was the Stanwell Comprehensive School, Penarth Senior Girls Ensemble, from which several performers, both vocally and instrumentally, entertained the large audience. Moving the proceedings along with a smile and a joke was the well known artist Wyn Calvin MBE SB StJ. The Ensemble was in the capable hands of Jan Richards (Conductor and Head of Performing Arts) and brilliantly accompanied Adrian Colborne, a music teacher in the school. It was quite a night for the Badham family. Mrs Badham (Andrew's mother) was serenaded with “Happy Brithday” when Wyn Calvin announced it was her birthday and conducted this surprise for her. Mrs Badham (junior!) was Rhiannon's page-turner. Present at this prestigious occasion were four

Mayors, senior civic dignitaries and high-ranking officers of the St John Ambulance. A satisfying engagement for the Choir, especially for Tom Jones (1T), Andrew O'Brien (2T) and Gwilym Jones (1B) who made their concert debut. The Choir gave its first performance of "Give Me That Ole Time Religion" and "My Heart Will Go On".

Saturday March 27th

Guild Hall, Southampton

The Choir returned to Southampton. Not to a super liner this time, but a debut appearance in the Guild Hall. This is an imposing structure, the main hall being similar to that of the Brangwyn Hall in Swansea. The concert started at 7.30pm, with Ros Evans maintaining her high standards of performance both singing and audience rapport. Rhiannon is ever improving in confidence which was amply displayed by her sensitive accompaniment of the Choir and artist. Andrew Badham was cool, calm and always in command of the proceedings with the Choir responding to his every move. All warming to the wonderful acoustics to give an excellent concert. This was reinforced by the spontaneous, rousing reaction from the large audience, who applauded until every chorister had left the stage. Mr Brian Davies, who organised this concert, introduced the participants and stated that one of the beneficiaries of the evening was Guide Dogs for the Blind. The "hidden audience" was within the local hospital to whom the concert was being relayed. A most rewarding performance where many new friends and admirers were made. The journey to Southampton Rugby Club was full of upsets with the buses blocking a car park, turning into a cul-de-sac and then being separated! All's well that end's well! The rugby club was reached and a splendid buffet served.

APRIL

Friday April 2nd

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

Another successful Good Friday concert – our 34th – with the old faithfuls of the Parc & Dare Band. The one change was that Rhiannon made her debut performance in a Good Friday concert. This annual engagement seems to equate to wine – it gets better with age! This was verified by the tremendous response from the assembled audience.

Saturday April 17th

Civic Centre, Aylesbury

The venue was excellent and the capacity audience couldn't have been more appreciative. The Choir sang their hearts out and our fun-loving and extremely talented Ros Evans appeared as soloist. What more could one need for a first-class concert. Things had changed dramatically since the Choir's last performance in Aylesbury, a fact mentioned by concert organiser Robin Woodruff during his opening remarks. This was our second visit in two years, the last with Alun John as guest conductor and Marion as accompanist. Once again the proceeds went towards the Blackberry Farm Animal Centre. "Fantasia on Famous Welsh Airs" was a good start to the proceedings, followed by the enchanting "My Lord What a Morning". Dean Powell's performance of "Unwaith Eto" resulted in excellent applause and "Love Could I Only Tell Thee" was quite magnificent, but nothing prepared the Choir for the response to "Laudamus" and "Tydi A Roddaist". The second half saw first-class renditions of "Comrades in Arms", "Eli Jenkins", "My Heart Will Go" while "My

Way” was another excellent finale, resulted in calls for encore which were readily agreed to and “Gwahoddiad” was sung. The late bus returned to the Old Royal Ordnance Club near Bicester.

Thursday April 20th

The television cameras came to the rehearsal room this evening to film for a Canadian television programme.

Sunday April 25th

Tower Ballroom, Blackpool

It was a long six hour journey to the Victorian seaside resort. However, the welcomed received made it all worthwhile. The Tower Ballroom is one of the most impressive auditoriums in the country and such opulence can only be described in superlatives, but suffice to say it was a venue the choristers will remember for many years. Added to this factor was the fact that 2,000 tickets had been sold. The Choir shared the stage with the well-known Wulitzer Organ player Paul Kelsall and the Swingin Sounds Big Band. However, the Choir can be assured that their performance captivated this marvellous audience. From the opening bars of “March of the Peers”, the response was unbelievable. With a full programme of favourites, the concert concluded with “We’ll Keep a Welcome”, accompanied by Mr Kelsall. The standing ovation followed this memorable performance and as the last bars of “By the Seaside” faded, the choristers realised that had experienced an unforgettable concert.

MAY

Thursday May 20th

Cardiff Castle

The Choir was privileged to appear in another special occasion, the 25th Reunion Dinner of the 1974 British Lions Rugby Team. This was held in a specious marquee – complete with chandeliers – in the Cardiff Castle grounds. Refreshments were provided from the bar and sandwiches in the main banqueting hall of the castle. The choristers enjoyed the atmosphere of the marquee, joining with the guests and listening to speeches from Willie John McBride, Gareth Edwards, Gordon Brown, Andy Ripley and Marias, the captain of the 1974 South African Team. These were augmented by films of the tour. Many other members of the team were present giving a fine opportunity for autograph hunters. The Master of Ceremonies was Max Boyce and the evening was organised by the Wooden Spoon Society. The mission of this society is to enhance the quality and prospect of life for children and young people in the UK who are disadvantaged either physically, mentally or socially. The evening enjoyment for the choristers was marred by the length of time of the speeches as the Choir did not perform until 12.40am, four hours late! This was unfortunate as the Choir’s contribution was so curtailed when there were 95 choristers present.

JUNE

Sunday June 6th

University Concert Hall, Cardiff

The Choir returned to the recording studio when making a CD at the University Concert Hall, Cardiff. This very fine hall is the music faculty of the University of

Wales. This was the first time for the Choir to record in this venue and under the producer, Tim Willis of Bandleader Recording, 18-tracks were recorded. There was a 40 minute lunch break and the session concluded by 4pm. This was the first recording session for the new staff of Andrew and Rhiannon and all the signs pointed to a successful debut for them. It was also a memorable debut appearance for Brian Williams (Rhiannon's father) and Robert Watkins (1B).

Friday June 18th

Winter Gardens, Malvern

The Choir returned after 11 years to Malvern with a concert in the Winter Gardens. After a pleasant journey on a bright, sunny day, through the glorious countryside the Choir arrived at 6.45pm. then it was realised the Winter Gardens had undergone a radical change and was now a splendid modern structure called the New Space Theatre. In the rehearsal it was found the hall was acoustically satisfying and during this time Brian Bates (President) who organised the evening, displayed a photograph given to him for the Choir on behalf of the Southampton Branch of Guide Dogs for the Blind in appreciation of the concert given in March in Southampton.

The concert was filled to capacity with some extra seating provided and from the first response it was obviously a most gratifying audience! Sharing the stage was soprano Jane Tolchard, making her first appearance with the Choir and beguiling the audience. Mr Badham is gaining in confidence as MC, with his rapore with the audience greatly contributing to the relaxed atmosphere within the hall. The dedication of "Love Could I Only Tell Thee" to a lady celebrating a special occasion and "Myfanwy" for one of the organisers, made it extra special. The audience and Choir sang "Happy Birthday" to Eddie Owen which also greatly enhanced the night. With Rhiannon maintaining her high standards of accompaniment and ever confident Andrew as Conductor, they brought out the best in the choristers. The thunderous, prolonged applause and the cheering from a most responsive and appreciative audience, brought this most successful engagement to an end.

Wednesday June 23rd

Park Hotel, Cardiff

The Choir paid its first visit to is venue for a performance under the auspices of the Cardiff University who were hosting overseas visitors. Despite the humid conditions and Rhiannon battling with a less than favourable piano, the performance was greeted with a standing ovation from the delighted audience.

JULY

Saturday July 10th

Victoria Church, Weston-super-Mare

The Choir made a return visit to this venue with artist Margaret Millington who last shared the stage with them in Porthcawl in 1991. Despite the very warm conditions the reception from the capacity audience was ample evidence of their enjoyment of the night. The proceeds were in aid of the British Diabetics Association (Weston Branch) – the same as last time. The early bus enjoyed the hospitality of the Weston RFC where "Happy Birthday" was sung to Mrs Badham and the late busers were cosy in the Conservative Club.

Sunday July 18th

The Choir spent four hours at Treorchy Comprehensive School to film a publicity video in preparation for the Australian Tour.

AUGUST

Wednesday August 4th

Another foundation member of the Choir was buried today. Reg Davies joined the Choir in the 1946-49 period and was a faithful member. He was a Committeeman for the Second Bass section and elected Chairman and made a Life Member in 1980. Unfortunately ill health forced his resignation in 1984. A splendid turnout of choristers at his funeral displayed the high regard in which he was held.

SEPTEMBER

Thursday September 2nd

On the first rehearsal after the summer break, it was announced the Choir will be travelling to HTV Studios, Cardiff on Saturday at the request of Wooden Spoon to help make a promotional video.

Saturday September 4th

HTV Studios, Cardiff

The Choir travelled to the HTV Studios in Culverhouse Cross to make a promotional video of the "Stir it Up" song for Wooden Spoon with the Caerphilly School Girls Choir. The recording and filming lasted from 10.40am to 3.40pm with breaks for refreshments. A pleasing for engagement for John Jones (1B)

Monday September 13th

CIA, Cardiff

The Choir was invited to perform in the Royal Pharmaceutical Society Exhibition at the CIA in Cardiff. The performance consisted of two "spots" in the main section of the arena. The choristers then enjoyed a splendid buffet and wine. Then the choristers were made aware of Rhiannon's illness which caused her to go home. This left the Choir with no accompanist for the second half on the stage. As ever all rose to the challenge and the unflappable Mr Badham led them through unaccompanied items. This brought a wonderful response from a receptive audience.

Tuesday September 14th

Cardiff Castle

Continuing the association with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, the Choir travelled to Cardiff Castle to serenade the guests from the castle forecourt. Thankfully Rhiannon was better and attended but owing to a change of plans beyond the Choir's control, her services were not required.

Thursday September 16th

The Choir welcomed a visitor from South Africa to the rehearsal room. He was a member of Cor Meibion Cymru De Affrig – the Welsh Male Choir of South Africa. He spoke of his pleasure at being able to come to rehearsal. He then presented his

Choir's shield and cassettes to Andrew Badham. This truly fine gesture was met with sound approval from the Treorchy men.

OCTOBER

Friday October 1st

NCP Car Park, Cardiff

On the opening day of the Rugby World Cup (Wales 23 v Argentina 18), the Choir returned to Cardiff to perform in the most bizarre of venues – the roof of the NCB Car Park on Wood Street. Here, under an open-ended canopy, which was weighted down due to wet and blustery conditions, the launch of “Stir it Up” was done. With all the excitement of television and radio coverage, interviews and filming, the repeated performance continued until 12.45pm. At 5pm the choristers reported to the Angel Hotel to take part in the television “Watchdog” programme. With all the hustle and bustle of the programme, the programme went out live at 7pm. An eventful day!

Saturday October 2nd

Royal Forest of Dean College, Coleford

The concert was shared with mezzo soprano Helen Mary, who was making her first appearance with the Choir. It certainly wasn't her last as she will accompany the Choir to Australia. Helen is the daughter of the renowned conductor Richard Williams. Her performance was such that it left no doubt that she would be a considerable success on the tour. The evidently warm, percussive and oral appreciation from the enthralled audience, exhibited their delight in the performances – a wonderful concert. It was an excellent baptism for Ernard Brooks (1T) and John Jones (1B) making their first concert appearance. The concert finished at 9.45pm and the buses left for the Lydney Rugby Club.

Thursday October 7th

For the 19th Annual Concert the Choir renewed contact with the Hywel Girls Choir and Hywel Boys Singers. They gave a most impressive performance, winning admiration and respect from all present. This was the last concert before the Australian Tour and the large choir gave a performance that brought a wonderful, enthusiastic response from the delighted audience. It was gratifying to know that Conductor Emeritus John Cynan Jones was there to share in this most successful engagement. During the interval the first Autumn Draw took place.

Thursday October 28th

At the last rehearsal before the tour Anita Morgan of the BBC interviewed Dean Powell. Gareth Evans and Norman Martin in the lane behind the school for the “Century Speaks” radio programme.

DECEMBER

Sunday December 5th

St David's Hall, Cardiff

Returning home from the arduous tour of Australia on November 29th, the Choir returned to St David's Hall on the Sunday for a performance in aid of national charity LATCH. There is never a dull moment as at the venue 15 choristers were trapped in

the lift for 20 minutes and they had to slip onto the stage relatively unnoticed. The Choir shared the stage with the three Richard Williams choirs, Helen May, Mark Burrows, Owen Money and Ted Boyce Trio. This star-studded case raised £1,000 for LATCH An excellent way to end 1999.