

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 2009

By Dean Powell, Publicity Officer
& Honorary Archivist

JANUARY

Saturday January 17th

Anvil Theatre, Basingstoke

Following a fifteen-year period, the Choir made a welcomed return to the Anvil Theatre in Basingstoke. The visually impressive auditorium, which the Choir first performed in shortly after it was opened, played host to the Treorchy men on their opening engagement of 2009. Over 850 people crowded into the theatre as the vast array of musical organisations took to the stage for the evening performance.

The 66 members of the Treorchy Male Choir were situated in the choir stalls above the main stage which remained crammed with members of the Hampshire County Youth Band and the Winchester Youth Orchestra. The happy relationship between the Rhondda choir and the young musicians began over twenty years ago when the late Treorchy-born musician Leighton Rich was head of music for the county of Hampshire. This marked the first concert with the various orchestras and bands since Mr Rich passed away following a long illness.

The compere for the concert was Lt Col. Chris Davies of the Royal Marines and all proceeds from the concert went to the Naomi House Children's Hospice and the St Michael's Hospice in Hampshire. Also performing that evening was our very own Mezzo Soprano Kate Woolveridge who stole the show with her first-class renditions. Janice Ball conducted the Choir and Helen Roberts accompanied.

Treorchy Male Choir's involvement in the concert was actually quite minimal, a factor that did cause some unease as they "topped the bill" but only actually performed at the beginning and end of each half. However, the standard of the actual performance was excellent, particularly of the *Les Miserables Medley* which concluded the first half.

In the second half the Choir once again gave of its best, particularly in performances of *Love Could I Only Tell Thee* and the magnificent *Nessun Dorma* which concluded their section of the concert. The Choir, orchestra and band combined to perform the anthems at the conclusion of the evening, which was somewhat later than expected owing to the "overload" of performers on stage!

Saturday, January 31st

Armstrong Hall, Thornbury

The Choir's performance at the intimate Armstrong Hall, Thornbury marked their second visit to the auditorium. They first performed in the venue eight years ago and made a welcome return for a very enthusiastic audience of 400 admirers. Organised by the Thornbury Cymmrodorion Society, the concert also welcomed soprano Rhian Owen who made her first appearance with the Treorchy Male Choir. Conductor for the evening was Janice Ball with Helen Roberts as Accompanist and Dean Powell as Compere.

Two very special features of the concert included the first performance for Adrian Owen (1T) and it also marked a welcomed return to Wyn Davies as tenor soloist.

Wyn last performed as a soloist over fifteen years ago. For more than twenty years Wyn regularly performed as the Choir's tenor soloist but decided to relinquish the position in 1994. This evening he performed the solo section to *Prayer Perfect* to the warmest of applause from audience and Choir alike.

The concert opened with the rousing *With A Voice Of Singing* which caused the first rapturous applause of the evening from the very enthusiastic audience. Other highlights included *Old Time Religion* and the firm favourite *Les Miserables Medley*. The second half began with operatic favourites *Soldiers Chorus* from Faust and *Speed Your Journey* from Nabucco. Once again *Love Could I Only Tell Thee* provided a truly rousing moment in the proceedings and the with *Nessun Dorma* as the final encore, followed by *We'll Keep A Welcome*, the choristers left the stage to the ringing of applause in their ears.

MARCH

Sunday March 1st

Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff

In celebration of St David's Day the Treorchy Male Choir performed in a massed choir concert at the iconic Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay. The late afternoon concert was a "mini" version of the Festival of Male Choirs performed the previous year at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Much of the repertoire and concert format remained the same, with fewer choirs involved on this occasion. Unfortunately the shortage of space on the tiered seats meant that the Treorchy men stood on the same level on the stage, with their vision greatly compromised by the London Welsh Male Choir who were stood in front.

The concert was held in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust Unit at the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff. Conductor was the inimitable Dr Haydn James with Gwawr Edwards as soprano soloist, tenor Wynne Evans, baritone Eddie Wade, accompanist Annabel Thwaite and compere Frank Lincoln. The other choirs performing on stage that evening were Aberhondda, Alcester, Builth Wells, Cardiff Arms, Cheddar, Dunvant and Onllwyn. Also on the programme was the outstanding Cory Band under the direction of Dr Robert Childs.

A packed concert hall of over 1,800 people rejoiced in the glorious sound of the massed choir who, although many were aware that their individual performances were not of the highest standard, couldn't fail to be impressed by the large "volume" of their combined voices.

The programme included many of the firm favourites from the Royal Albert Hall concert including *Cadwyn O Emyrau Cymraeg*, *Va Penseiro*, *Buddugoliaeth*, *I Dreamed A Dream*, *Bring Him Home*, *Do You Hear The People Sing*, *Ysbryd Y Nos*, *Ai Am Fod Haul Yn Machlud* and to conclude the first half, *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*. The second half included *Gwahoddiad*, *Prayer*, *Sit Down Your Rocking The Boat*, *Old Time Religion*, *Y Darlun* and *Morte Christe*. The final combined item with the audience was of *Love Divine*.

Wednesday March 4th

Porth County Community School

The first Semi-Final of the Treorchy Male Choir & Coca Cola Junior Musician Of The Year Competition 2009 took place at Porth County Community School. Adjudicators for the evening were Helen Roberts and the Deputy Conductor of Cwmbach Male Choir Norman Harris.

Saturday March 7th **St John's Church, Gowerton**

Although not listed as an official engagement, the wedding of Choir Treasurer Gareth Lawrence saw a large group of choristers perform at the ceremony under the direction of Janice Ball with Helen Roberts as Accompanist. The venue was the intimate St John's Church in Gowerton where Gareth was married to Helen Rowlands in the mid-morning ceremony. The Choir of over 30 members performed several items during the signing of the register including *Senzenina* (with Dean Powell as soloist) and *Men of Harlech*.

Following the ceremony the Choir travelled over to the King Arthur Hotel in Reynoldson for the reception where the members were lined up from top to bottom of a grand staircase which lead into the main banquet hall. To rapturous applause the choristers performed a selection of items, starting with *Love Is A Many Splendoured Thing* as the happy couple walked down the staircase alongside the choristers, making for a visually spectacular moment.

Wednesday March 11th **Coleg Morganwg, Llwynypia**

The second Semi-Final of the Treorchy Male Choir & Coca Cola Junior Musician Of The Year Competition 2009 took place at impressive new auditorium of the Colwg Morganwg Llwynypia campus. Adjudicators for the evening were Janice Ball and mezzo soprano Kate Woolveridge.

Wednesday March 25th **Treorchy Comprehensive School**

Talented schoolchildren throughout the Rhondda gave the performance of their young lives at the Grand Final of the Treorchy Male Choir and Coca Cola Junior Musician of the Year Competition 2009.

A total of 19 children took to the stage at Treorchy Comprehensive School hall, which had been magically transformed into an atmospheric theatre, before a packed audience of 600 parents, teachers and supporters for the major event.

The winner of the Singing Category was Treorchy Primary School pupil Jack Johnson who performed "Where Is Love" from *Oliver!* The winner of the Instrumentalist Category was Charlotte Lewis of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen who performed "Can You Feel The Love Tonight" on the cornet.

Now celebrating its fourth year, a total of 20 primary and junior schools in the two valleys entered the competition which is sponsored by Coca Cola Enterprises. The patron for the competition is Welsh bass-baritone Bryn Terfel MBE.

Rhondda Assembly Member Leighton Andrews opened the evening's proceedings and Welsh actress Ruth Madoc, famous for her role in the 1980s comedy, *Hi De Hi* presented the prizes. Compere for the evening was Dean Powell and a performance of items by the Treorchy Male Choir was also given, resulting in rapturous applause.

The finalists received a certificate, trophy and tickets for themselves and an adult to a day out in London to *Grease* in the West End. The two winning finalists of one singer and one instrumentalist each received £200 prize money, a trophy and the Treorchy Male Choir & Coca Cola Trophy to be retained by their school for one year. As a special prize they will also enjoy an all-expenses paid trip to Euro Disney, Paris for themselves and two adults. They will also have the opportunity to share the stage with the Treorchy Male Choir at the Park & Dare Theatre on Good Friday this year.

The Grand Final had an impressive list of adjudicators, including Dr Alwyn Humphreys MBE, the Conductor Emeritus of Morrision Orpheus Male Choir, WNO Soprano Ros Evans, Conductor of the Four Counties Youth Choir Derek Holvey, Janice Ball, the Conductor of the Treorchy Male Choir and David Geoffrey Thomas, organist at Llandaff Cathedral.

Ruth Madoc, told the audience: "The incredibly high standard of entrants, and the high-profile list of adjudicators illustrates just how important this evening has become and Treorchy Male Choir should be congratulated for making it another outstanding success.

"The young people here tonight have been magical and it takes me back to my own childhood when performing in the eisteddfod. This is the starting point for them to enjoy a future in music, either as a career or a pastime. You are all exceptionally talented and this really has been an occasion to remember."

APRIL

Saturday April 4th **Great Hall, Exeter**

Almost twenty years had passed since the Treorchy Male Choir last performed at the Great Hall in Exeter. On this occasion 72 choristers appeared at this impressive auditorium for a concert in aid of the Rotary Club of Exmouth Raleigh charity's Hospice of Care.

Over 1,000 hugely enthusiastic admirers packed the grand concert hall for a memorable night of music, laughter and song. Stunning applause followed every item and the slick presentation of each section of the concert provided an over all feel of sheer professionalism.

With a Voice of Singing began the proceedings to rousing effect, followed by *Tydi A Roddaist*. Other memorable items included *Lords Prayer* and once more the first half

of the concert concluded in the most majestic of fashions with the *Les Miserables* medley.

During the second half of the concert the Choir gave a debut performance of the new Jeff Howard arrangement of Abba hits. *Mamma Mia*, *Winner Takes It All*, *Slipping Through My Fingers* and *Thank You For The Music* make up the medley of songs which include solo sections for Kate Woolveridge, John Bowen and Dean Powell. For a first attempt, the response was excellent and the Choir felt assured this would be another “showstopper” item in the ever-increasing repertoire.

The concert also had another debut moment for Gareth Rees and Dean Powell when they performed the opening bars of Alwyn Humphreys’s arrangement of *The Pearlfishers Duet* by Bizet. With full choral accompaniment, this new item also caused a massive amount of enthusiasm from the capacity crowd. Gareth kindly agreed to perform the item as Ray Daniels was absent from the concert but will fulfil the baritone role in the future.

Other highlights during the evening were *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*, the *Senzenina* and *Men of Harlech* items (with Dean Powell as soloist on this occasion) and once again *Nessun Dorma* to conclude. A standing ovation assured the Choir that one of their final performances in the UK prior to the tour of Australia and New Zealand had been a hugely successful endeavour.

Friday April 10th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The 43rd annual Good Friday concert at the Park & Dare Theatre, saw the Choir once more reunited with their friends of the Parc & Dare Band. The line-up of the band had changed substantially since the previous year with a change of bandmaster with Gareth Pritchard in charge and many new players making up the ranks. However, the over all performance of the Band had not diminished and coupled with the expert singing of the Choir created a very successful Good Friday concert.

A combined item of *Llanfair* opened the sell-out concert to rousing effect before the Choir performed the first of its sections under the baton of Jan Ball and accompanied by Helen Roberts including *With A Voice Of Singing*, *Ysbryd Y Nos* and *Prayer Perfect* (soloist Wyn Davies). The evening had some rather exciting new moments for the crowd as well, not least of which was the first performance in Wales of the new Abba medley which surprised and entertained even the most ardent male voice choir follower!

Other highlights included *You Raise Me Up*, *Senzenina* and *Men of Harlech* (with band accompaniment) and of course the *Les Miserables Medley*. During the second half the Choir stole the show with *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*, *My Way* and *Nessun Dorma* before a final joint item of *Morte Christe*.

The Good Friday Concert also welcomed the two winners of the Treorchy Male Choir & Coca Cola Junior Musician Of The Year Competition who performed their individual winning items to the delighted crowd. The evening also marked the Choir’s penultimate concert performance prior to their Tour of Australia and New Zealand, a

factor which compere Dean Powell had great delight in reminding the audience of time and again throughout the concert!

Saturday April 25th
The Pavilion, Plymouth

Treorchy Male Choir's debut performance at this venue and final concert prior to their Tour of Australia and New Zealand was one of the most outstanding evenings of music and song to take place in 2009. This evening soprano Iona Jones joined the Choir under the direction of Janice Ball with accompanist Helen Roberts and compere Dean Powell. The concert programme itself was designed to reflect the make-up of the repertoire for the forthcoming tour of which Iona would play a major part.

Tonight's concert was absolutely first-class, as reflected by the level of loud applause, cheers and stamping of feet from the 700 spectators in the crowded auditorium. As always many of the firm favourites received the usual level of acclaim, including With A Voice of Singing, Llef and the Les Miserables Medley in the first half. The new arrangement of The Pearlfishers was another memorable moment, as was the Abba Medley and the finale selection of You Raise Me Up, Senzenina & Men of Harlech and Nessun Dorma to conclude. The encore of We'll Keep A Welcome was received with equal enthusiasm and the Choir felt assured it had left its mark on Plymouth.

Following the concert both coach-loads of choristers retired to the RAOB Club nearby and enjoyed a thoroughly enjoyable evening! The packed club gave the choristers the warmest of welcomes and the singers performed a number of items after enjoying the singer on stage. It was a very late hour when the "Rodneys" coach of members returned to the nearby Ibis Hotel for an overnight stay as the "Deacons" returned to Wales in the early hours.

MAY

Tuesday May 5th
Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

Film producer Robert Jenkins and his crew visited the Rehearsal Room this evening. They filmed the Choir during the rehearsal session for a forthcoming music DVD to accompany the release of Vernon Hopkins's Liberation Hymn. The new CD single, which was originally recorded back in 2000 and called The Millennium Hymn, is being released for the first time with all of the proceeds going towards the Help for Heroes Campaign for wounded British soldiers. The single will be released in June and the video will accompany its release on internet webpages.

Thursday May 14th
Parc Primary School, Cwmparc / Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

Members of the Choir performed at the annual Ceremony of Remembrance held in Parc Primary School to honour the memory of those people who died in the bombing of the village in 1941. Later that day a second "engagement" took place when a film

crew visited the Rehearsal Room to film the Choir for a forthcoming heritage DVD being produced by Porth Community First.

Friday May 22nd – Sunday June 14th
Treorchy Male Choir Tour of Australia and New Zealand

See separate report.

JUNE

Tuesday June 23rd
Town Hall, Birmingham

Nothing could have prepared the choristers for the truly unforgettable response to tonight's concert from this exceptionally enthusiastic audience of admirers who had travelled from all part of the world. Nobody could have imagined the level of sheer delight, deafening applause, cheers, stamping of feet, encores and three standing ovations from an absolutely ecstatic packed hall of spectators. Choristers were left dumfounded and deeply moved by the entire experience which rivalled the very best audiences found "down under" on the latest tour.

The evening concert was held in Birmingham Town Hall, a majestic auditorium that has recently undergone a £10million refurbishment scheme. It was in this magnificent setting that the Choir raised its voices to a crowd over 1,000 people who had travelled from Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand and many other countries. The concert was one of the highlights of the 100th Conference of International Rotarians and delegates were encouraged to hear the Choir perform as part of the week-long event.

Jan Ball conducted with Helen Roberts as accompanist, Iona Jones performing as soprano soloist, David Geoffrey Thomas as organist and Dean Powell as compere. The entire concert mirrored the final performance in Brisbane on the overseas tour and as already stated, the response was absolutely magnificent.

With each item came the same intense excitement from the Choir and audience alike with the roaring applause overpowering the final notes of each song. Dean Powell had great pleasure in taking advantage of such enthusiasm with his anecdotes and witticisms which added to the slick presentation of the concert.

With a Voice of Singing set the scene for what was to come, followed by *Y Darlun*, *Y Nefoedd* (soloist Dean Powell) and finally the full-force "amen" section of *Tydi A Roddaist*. David Geoffrey Thomas enthralled all present with his superb performance of Vidor's *Toccata* on the Town Hall organ, following by the Choir's deeply moving rendition of *The Lord's Prayer* and *Llef*.

With the end of the first half came the *Les Miserables* medley which causes such great enjoyment to every audience who hear it. *Bring Him Home*, *I Dreamed A Dream* (soloist Iona Jones), *Stars* (soloist Dean Powell) and *Do You Hear the People Sing* result in thrilling ovations each and every time.

As always Iona Jones gave a first-class performance of firm favourites, including Ivor Novello and Handel. However, it was her performance of Puccini's glorious *O Mio Babino Caro* that left the audience and Choir totally spellbound.

With the second half came operatic favourites in *Soldier's Chorus*, *The Pearlfishers* (soloists Ray Daniels and Dean Powell) and *Speed Your Journey*. The *Abba Medley* also had a very enthusiastic applause from an audience unaccustomed to hearing Welsh male choirs – let alone ones that can tackle Swedish pop anthems!

The final selection of *You Raise Me Up*, *Senzenina* and the wonderful *Men of Harlech* (which raised the roof!) was followed by *My Way* and *Nessun Dorma* as an encore. With two standing ovations received it seemed only appropriate that another firm favourite concluded the concert and so *We'll Keep A Welcome* caused them to rise to their feet one more time. A totally thrilling experience for one and all.

Wednesday June 24th

National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham

The majority of the Choir stayed overnight in Birmingham following last night's unforgettable concert in the Town Hall. On the previous morning they were invited to give two short engagements at the NEC building on the outskirts of the city. As part of the 100th Conference of International Rotarians, the delegates from all parts of the world were once more thrilled by the performance. In the first short "concert" held a staggering 18,000 filled the NEC and rewarded the Choir with a standing ovation! The same happened to the second audience of 5,000, assuring the Choir that they had indeed made their mark on this international event and had gained many new fans from all corners of the world in the process.

JULY

Saturday July 4th

Atrix Theatre, Bromsgrove

Following a gap of two years the Choir returned to the intimate Atrix Theatre, Bromsgrove on what was an incredibly warm summer's night! A packed audience of around 300 people filled the concert hall for the evening's performance that was arranged by producer Jeanne Gray. Once again Iona Jones joined the Choir as its soprano soloist and due to the unavailability of Helen Roberts, David Geoffrey Thomas accompanied the men on the piano.

The concert was another great success as displayed by the warm appreciation of each item. As always the usual firm favourites won the hearts of all in the auditorium, particularly *Llef* and *Les Miserables* in the first half, followed by *The Pearlfishers*, *Men of Harlech* and *Nessun Dorma* in the second half. Despite the sweltering heat on stage, the choristers and music staff once more gave of their best. Conductor for the evening was Janice Ball with Dean Powell as compere.

Following the concert a social evening was held in the theatre bar where a buffet and drinks were supplied for the singers and an enjoyable few hours were spent in great company.

Saturday July 18th **St James Church, Ludgershall**

The performance in the quaint village of Ludgershall took place due to the long association between choristers and the local villagers who frequent the Queen's Head public house. For several years the "late bus" had stopped in Ludgershall on a Sunday afternoon following an overnight stay on the south coast of England. Such is the relationship that the pub locals decided to organise a full concert for the Choir with all proceeds going to the various charities supported within the pub. It was with this in mind that the Choir accepted the invitation to perform in the small St James Church in the centre of the village.

Despite fewer than 200 people being crammed into the church on the glorious summer's evening, the response from them was totally overwhelming, making for a memorable final full concert of the season. As the performance was held close to a military barracks, several soldiers attended the concert in uniform and news of the proceeds of the new Liberation Hymn being donated to the Help for Heroes campaign naturally caused loud applause of support. It was one of these lone soldiers who found themselves in the centre of some hilarity with Kate Woolveridge as she performed while sat on his knee! Such was his enjoyment of the evening that he even presented the Choir with his military cap!

Janice Ball inspired her musical troops throughout the performance, accompanied by both Helen Roberts on piano and David Geoffrey Thomas on the church organ. David even performed Vidor's *Toccata*, despite the state of the aged organ – nothing compared to the Sydney Opera House of course! As always Dean Powell was compere and performed many of the tenor solo items with colleague Ray Daniels performing the role of baritone soloist.

The concert repertoire itself remained constant as with previous performances of the season. As usual the "crowd pleases" included *With A Voice Of Singing*, *Llef*, *Y Nefoedd* (soloist Dean Powell) and *The Lord's Prayer* in the first half (the latter causing many tears to flow it seems). Also *Y Darlun* was well received and as usual the final medley from *Les Miserables* earned the total respect and admiration of all present.

The second half's operatic favourites in *The Pearlfishers* and as always the surprising introduction of the Abba medley to raise plenty of eyebrows. The *Senzenina & Men of Harlech* duo resulted in probably the loudest applause of the night before *You Raise Me Up*, *My Way* and *Nessun Dorma* concluded this truly magnificent final concert of the season with a rousing standing ovation.

As always the Choir was quick to retire to the Queens Head where a buffet and free bar welcomed them. They were certainly assured of making their mark on Ludgershall and hoped a return visit would be possible in the not too distant future.

Wednesday July 22nd
Cardiff City Stadium

Treorchy Male Choir scored another “goal” in their illustrious career by becoming the first choir to sing at the new £100 million Cardiff City Stadium. The 80-strong Choir was invited to sing on the pitch prior to the pre-season friendly against Celtic F.C. at the 27,000-seater development.

The Cardiff City Stadium is the new home of the Cardiff City Football Club and will host the home matches of the Cardiff Blues rugby union team. Conducted by Musical Director Janice Ball and accompanied by Helen Roberts, the Choir will entertain the crowds prior to the game with a selection of all-time favourites to raise the atmosphere of the spectacular occasion.

A crowd in excess of 16,000 people showed their appreciation of the Choir’s performance prior to the kick-off as Welsh Minister Rhodri Morgan and Leader of Cardiff City Council Rodney Bernam announced the opening of the stadium. The Choir performed *You’ll Never Walk Alone* for the visitors, *Men of Harlech* for the home team and *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* for the finale.

With the present Cardiff “Bluebirds” and many former players joining them on the pitch with the team coach and manager, it was a memorable evening for the Treorchy singers to play such an active role in an historic moment. Following the performance they were invited to watch the opening game and enjoyed a sumptuous buffet supper during their visit.

Friday July 24th
City Hall, Cardiff

The final engagement of the summer season was held in the beautiful surroundings of the main banqueting hall at City Hall, Cardiff to a packed audience of diners. Throughout the week a major sporting event was taking place in Cardiff with the Ashes cricket tournament being held in Sophia Gardens. To celebrate the event a dinner was held in City Hall for an Australia Pharmaceutical Company and their VIP guests attended the event.

Following their meal it was over to some traditional Welsh music with the Treorchy Male Choir performing on a rather small stage. Janice Ball conducted and Helen Roberts accompanied with Dean Powell carrying out his duties as compere. The circumstances of the performance were indeed difficult as it was almost impossible to hear the piano, the Choir was positioned in an awkward and space-limiting setting and the room was incredibly hot. However, despite these shortcomings the Choir still gave a first-class performance and received tumultuous applause on leaving the stage.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday September 12th
Llandaff Cathedral

The first concert of the new season took place in what is becoming a regular venue these days in Llandaff Cathedral. The Choir was invited to undertake the concert by fundraiser Dudley Evans in aid of the Tenovus charity. The concert was shared with the Girls Section of the Cathedral School Choir and soprano Iona Jones. Janice Ball conducted the Treorchy choristers with Helen Roberts as accompanist, David Geoffrey Thomas as organist and Dean Powell as compere.

The concert proved another outstanding success for the Choir as they performed four sections of music throughout the evening. As always firm favourites including *With a Voice of Singing*, *You Raise Me Up*, *Nessun Dorma* and the *Les Miserables* medley were warmly welcomed by the enthusiastic crowd.

With significant building work being carried out in the cathedral, including the installation of a new organ, there was little room for the Choir to stand below Epstein's sculpture. With each section the choirs marched up the aisle to their places, with the enthusiastic audience applauding them all the way!

Thursday September 17th **Llantrisant Parish Church**

The decision to hold tonight's concert was made by Dean Powell who suggested a fundraising event to raise money for the Treorchy Male Choir & Coca Cola Junior Musician of the Year competition. For the second time in three years the choir travelled (by their own means!) to the beautiful 11th century Llantrisant Parish Church in the heart of the ancient old town. A packed audience of over 250 people filled the building and helped raise almost £1,500 for the competition.

The Choir was joined on stage by Kate Woolveridge who once again shone throughout the entire performance and certainly enchanted every member of the audience. Janice Ball inspired her musical troops with Helen Roberts on piano and compere for the evening being "Llantrisant boy" Dean Powell.

Due to a general lack of space, the Choir performed in block formation on this occasion and produced a magnificent sound. The audience was absolutely overjoyed by the performance and rewarded the singers with a rousing standing ovation at the finale.

There were numerous highlights to the concert, particularly the operatic choruses, the *Les Miserables* medley and once more the Abba medley. So many firm favourites were expertly performed, particularly *You Raise Me Up* and *My Way* which caused the ovation. The encores of *Nessun Dorma* and *We'll Keep A Welcome* ensured the people of Llantrisant would not forget this evening in a hurry!

Friday September 25th **Treorchy Primary School**

Treorchy Male Choir became the first choir in the country to be honoured with a Blue Plaque in recognition of its massive contribution to the rich cultural heritage of Wales. The Choir had two Blue Plaques unveiled in Treorchy to celebrate its two distinct periods of history which stretch back over 125 years.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council presented a plaque to be erected on the front of the Red Cow public house on High Street where the original “Treorchy Male Choir” was formed in 1883 and later went on to perform for Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. The Choir decided to purchase a second plaque for their “home” at Treorchy Primary School where they were reformed following World War II on October 16th 1946 and still rehearse twice a week.

A special unveiling ceremony took place for both plaques at the school where Mayor of Rhondda Cynon Taf Cllr Robert Smith unveiled the first plaque, while President of the Choir Brian Bates unveiled the second. Former conductors, accompanists and soloists joined members of the Choir for the very special event. Over 230 member of the Treorchy Primary School Choir thrilled the crowd with a performance.

Treorchy Male Choir also performed You Raise Me Up and Men of Harlech under the direction of Janice Ball and accompanied by guest accompanist Bryan Davies. Former accompanists Jennifer Jones and Rhiannon Williams were also in attendance, along with Conductor Emeritus John Cynan Jones and soprano soloist Mair Roberts.

Cllr Smith said: “It amazes me that wherever you go in the world people seem to have heard of the Treorchy Male Choir. They are an integral part of the make-up of our county borough and are wonderful ambassadors for us throughout the world. Many thousands of visitors come to Treorchy every year to hear them perform in concert or during rehearsals and now they will also be able to see the two Blue Plaques commemorating the wonderful work they have done for over a century.

“Their impressive record speaks for itself with international concert tours, almost annual records released, competition wins, royal command performances and of course many thousands of concerts in aid of so many charities. Congratulations to the Choir, members and staff past and present for their outstanding work.”

Assembly Member for the Rhondda Leighton Andrews and Headteacher of the Treorchy Primary School Louise Evans also praised the Choir, especially its work in encouraging children to sing and play instruments through the Treorchy Male Choir Junior Musician of the Year Competition which began four years ago.

For almost two years Rhondda Cynon Taf Council’s Libraries & Museums Service has been working closely with various voluntary organisations and individuals to determine 30 sites in the county borough as yet unrecognized for their historical background with the placing of a Blue Plaque. Due to £49,200 of Heritage Lottery funding, the project has set out to identify icons, events and buildings, culminating in the placing of blue plaques to commemorate their history and achievements.

Saturday September 26th **Winchester Cathedral**

Winchester Cathedral has always been a firm favourite as a venue for the Treorchy Male Choir with its outstanding interior and wondrous acoustics. Organised by Winchester Rotary, this concert was held in aid of a charity very close to the hearts of the Treorchy men, Help for Heroes, for which the Choir recently released a CD

single. The founder of the charity, Bryn Parry, was present at the concert which also featured the Band of the Adjutant General's Corps under the direction of Captain Ian Johnson, Director of Music.

The evening also had three difference Masters of Ceremony in Lt. Col Chris Davies, the famous war correspondent Kate Adie OBE and Choir compere Dean Powell who each introduced sections of the concert. The Choir was conducted by Janice Ball, accompanied by Helen Roberts and David Geoffrey Thomas. The soloist for the evening was mezzo soprano Kate Woolveridge.

More than a thousand people crammed every available seat in the cathedral, many of whom were unable to see the performers except for a series of large television screens attached to pillars throughout the building. The sound, however, washed over them in waves as the building supported the performers in creating this wonderful sound.

The Choir was undoubtedly on top form this evening and gave an absolutely first class performance. The programme itself was befitting of the surroundings with such rousing items as *With a Voice of Singing*, *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*, *Llef*, *Pearlfishers* and *Nessun Dorma*. The performance of *Les Miserables* caused the most rapturous of applause. The Choir and band also combined for several joint items including *Men of Harlech* and a new arrangement of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

With over £25,000 raised, the Choir felt assured it had indeed contributed greatly to a splendid evening and retired to Winchester Rugby Club for a warm supper and refreshments.

OCTOBER

Saturday October 10th

Parc & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

Treorchy Male Choir's Annual Concert broke with many traditions this evening. On the first hand it was held on a Saturday night rather than the usual Thursday evening and more importantly the Choir shared the stage with another male voice choir for the first time in this event. The outcome was one of the most splendid Annual Concerts ever held by the Choir as they not only performed individually to the highest possible standard but also combined brilliantly with their new-found friends of the Rhos Male Voice Choir.

The decision to invite the North Wales-based Choir to the Rhondda took place two years ago when Treorchy performed at the Stiwt in Rhosllanerchrugog. The post-concert social evening saw choristers from both choirs becoming excellent comrades in song and so the hand of friendship was stretched out once more to bring them to Treorchy. The concert allowed both choirs to perform a large selection of their own items, plus three combined pieces which certainly thrilled the packed audience.

Treorchy Male Choir opened the evening with a rousing selection of songs including *With A Voice Of Singing* and *Llef*. Our wonderful mezzo soprano Kate Woolveridge also performed a section of songs before Treorchy concluded their second section in the first half with the *Les Miserables* medley. For the duration of the evening Jan Ball

conducted with Helen Roberts and David Geoffrey Thomas performing as accompanists. Dean Powell performed the role of Master of Ceremonies for both choirs and soloist, allowing a smooth transition throughout the entire evening.

As the curtain came down Choir Chairman Gareth Evans welcomed Len Gale onto the stage and presented him with a gold watch in commemoration of his 50th anniversary as a chorister of the Treorchy Male Choir. Then it was time for the curtain to rise and the Rhos Male Voice Choir to take centre stage with their conductor Aled Phillips and accompanist Kevin Whitley. At the close of the first half both choirs combined to perform Arwel Hughes's arrangement of *Tydi a Roddaist*.

Dean Powell explained to the audience that if ever two Welsh towns should be twinned for their musical tradition then surely it must be Rhos and Treorchy. The connections through the Hughes family (Arwel, John, Owain Arwel and Meuryn) have all strengthened this link along with the proud tradition of male voice singing. Treorchy and Rhos first met in the National Eisteddfod in Caerphilly in 1950. In 1961 when Rhosllanerchrugog was the venue for the National, Treorchy was victorious. The following year Rhos took their crown of six unbeaten consecutive "firsts" (and John Haydn Davies was the first on stage to congratulate the winning conductor) with Treorchy reclaiming the title two years later. The mutual admiration of both organisations had been the starting point of this year's Autumn Concert.

Treorchy opened the second half of the concert with *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*, the *Abba Medley* and a selection of operatic items including *Pearlfishers* and *Nessun Dorma*. To conclude they performed *Senzenina* and *Men of Harlech*. During the proceedings. Chairman Gareth Evans and Dean Powell paid moving tributes to former chairman Bob Griffiths who passed away in June. Following a decision by the Management Committee, it was decided to award him Vice Presidency of the Choir posthumously and his widow, Mair received it on the concert stage.

Rhos Male Voice Choir performed a further two selections of items, again with Kate Woolveridge as the soloist inbetween each part. The finale of the concert saw both choirs combine once more to perform *Morte Christe* and *Gwahoddiad*. The latter was dedicated to Rhos Choir by its arranger, John Tudor Davies who is now Life President of the Choir. It was an honour to see Mr Davies in the concert audience. The thrilling conclusion was certainly an event nobody would forget and with the performance of the Welsh National Anthem, all choristers felt assured they had given a superb concert. The evening came to a close at the Parc & Dare Ex Servicemen's Club where presentations were made to both choirs and a convivial evening of laughter and song was enjoyed by all.

Saturday October 24th
Assembly Rooms, Worthing

Following a two-year absence the Choir made a triumphant return to the Assembly Rooms, Worthing for a concert organised by Jeanne Gray. A packed audience of more than 800 people gathered to hear the Choir perform another of its first class concerts. Jan Ball conducted with Helen Roberts as accompanies, Kate Woolveridge as soloist and Dean Powell as compere.

The Assembly Rooms provided some very fine acoustics for the evening performance which saw the Choir give its first public performance of Dr Alwyn Humphreys's arrangement of *What Would I Do Without My Music*. This poignant tune was performed brilliantly and will obviously make a fine addition to the concert repertoire. On this occasion it was dedicated to members of the Sussex Gruffs Male Voice Choir who were in the audience. Kate charmed the audience as always, particularly with her new item composed by Welshman Karl Jenkins.

The Choir, although low in numbers, took almost five hours to travel to the venue through atrocious weather. However, the sound of applause ringing in their ears made the intrepid journey more than worthwhile. With the opening performance of *With A Voice Of Singing* and *Ysbryd Y Nos*, the Choir secured themselves another excellent concert to remember.

Some of the highlights of the evening included *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*, *Cwm Rhondda*, *Les Miserables* and the *Senzenina / Harlech* medleys. With the final note of *My Way* performed the audience gave a standing ovation, resulting in the performance of *Nessun Dorma* and *We'll Keep A Welcome* before the anthems concluded the concert.

NOVEMBER

Sunday November 8th

Blaenrhondda War Memorial / Treherbert War Memorial

Members of the Treorchy Male Choir attended two Armistice Services in Blaenrhondda and Treherbert on Remembrance Sunday. A wreath was also laid by the Choir in memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Friday November 13th

Millennium Stadium, Cardiff

Treorchy Male Choir was invited to perform at the magnificent Millennium Stadium in Cardiff prior to the kick-off of the international rugby match between Wales and Samoa. Dr Haydn James conducted the pre-game entertainment accompanied by a brass band and the Choir gave 20 minutes of first-class rousing renditions.

For this prestigious event the 71-strong Choir rehearsed a selection of new items, including *Yma O Hyd*, *Hymns and Arias* and of course the *National Anthem of Samoa*. With 65,000 supporters packed into the Stadium, the atmosphere on the pitch was truly electric. As we performed the final item, *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*, choristers, players and supporters alike were filled with Welsh pride to attend such an occasion.

Saturday November 14th

The Town Hall, Cheltenham

A welcomed return to Cheltenham Town Hall was undertaken thanks to the stirring efforts of David Green. The concert was held in aid of the Acorns Hospice before a packed audience of supporters. Jan Ball conducted the Choir, with Helen Roberts on

piano, David Geoffrey Thomas on organ, mezzo-soprano Kate Woolveridge and Master of Ceremonies, Dean Powell.

In this truly beautiful, majestic, auditorium, the Choir opened with a rousing performance of *With A Voice Of Singing*, *Y Darlun* and *Llef*. In the second section the Choir performed a new “amen” section to *Cwm Rhondda* and conclude the first half with another brilliant performance of the *Les Miserables Medley*.

The second half opened with David Geoffrey Thomas’s brilliant introduction to the *Hymn from Finlandia*, with soloist and Choir combining for the climatic conclusion. It was followed by *Ysbryd Y Nos* and another performance of the newly resurrected *Battle Hymn Of The Republic*.

For the lighter section of the programme, the Choir sang the *Abba Medley* and concluded the concert with the beautiful *What Would I Do Without My Music*, *Senzenina* (with Dean Powell as soloist due to the unavailability of Ray Daniels), *You Raise Me Up* and *My Way*. Once again the encores of *Nessun Dorma* and *We’ll Keep A Welcome* ensured a standing ovation from the thrilled crowd.

Thursday November 26th
Dyfodwg Street, Treorchy

At the invitation of the Mayor of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, a selection of members of the Choir were invited to perform at the Christmas Tree Lighting Festivities in Treorchy. Choristers performed traditional items and carols to the enthusiastic crowd of onlookers.

Saturday November 28th
Oakengates Theatre, Telford

A return visit to the Oakengates Theatre in Telford was organised by theatre agent Jeannie Gray and although the Choir was small in number, they nonetheless gave another memorable performance. Janice Ball conducted with Helen Roberts as accompanist, Kate Woolveridge as mezzo soprano and the Master of Ceremonies was Dean Powell.

This intimate theatre provided a perfect setting for the evening concert that was held in aid of Choir funds. *With A Voice Of Singing* opened the proceedings followed by *Y Darlun* and *Llef*. The Choir sang *Lord’s Prayer* beautifully and concluded the first half once more with the atmospheric *Les Miserables Medley*.

In the second half of the concert the Choir opened with *Cwm Rhondda* followed by the operatic items *Speed Your Journey* and *Far Inside The Shrine*. Following the Abba medley, the concluding items were *What Would I Do Without My Music*, *Senzenina*, *Men of Harlech*, *My Way* and *Nessun Dorma*.

DECEMBER

Monday December 7th
The Cathedral, Llandaff

The last full concert engagement of the year took place in the magical setting of Llandaff Cathedral for a concert in aid of Tenovus, the cancer charity. It was a truly wonderful way to round off our concert year with a large choir on top form and accompanied by some thrilling fellow performers. On home territory, Jan Ball conducted with Iona Jones as soprano soloist and David Geoffrey Thomas as organist. Helen Roberts was the piano accompanist for the evening and Dean Powell shared the role of Master of Ceremonies with BBC broadcaster Sian Lloyd.

The guest artistes for the evening with the light-hearted pop-singing Admiral Choir who roused the audience with some exciting performances of music made famous by the likes of Robbie Williams and Queen. Needless to say the clapping and sing-along atmosphere made this a really memorable night. One of the other highlights was the opportunity to hear carers and supporters of Tenovus form their own Choir for a performance, again thrilling the packed audience.

Treorchy Male Choir's performance was truly inspirational and resulted in two full standing ovations from the crowd. A sure sign that everyone had a magnificent evening of first-class entertainment. Some of the memorable moments of the Choir's concert programme included the first performance of Bizet's *Divine Braha* from the Pearlfishers that led neatly into the famous Duet with Ray Daniels and Dean Powell singing the solo sections.

The *Les Miserables Medley* was another highlight of the concert, followed by Iona Jones and the Choir singing *O Holy Night*, with the Choir concluding the evening with *You Raise Me Up*, *Nessun Dorma* and the encore of *We'll Keep a Welcome*. A great night indeed.

Friday December 11th
Rhondda Heritage Park, Trehafod

Members of the Treorchy Male Choir were invited to attend the launch of "A Black & White Actor", the autobiography of Tonypany-born actor Glyn Houston. The launch, organised by Dean Powell (who was editor of the book) took place in the Rhondda Heritage Park Restaurant with more than 70 guests, including Beverley Humphreys, Dewi Griffiths and Catrin Collier in attendance. The Choir of around 30 men sang *Cwm Rhondda* and *Men of Harlech* much to the delight of the audience and of Glyn Houston himself.

Friday December 18th
The Lion, High Street, Treorchy

At the invitation of the Treorchy Chamber of Trade, a selection of choristers were invited to perform outside The Lion public house in Treorchy. Full of festive cheer, the singers performed traditional items and carols for the passing crowds and in appreciation of their performance a donation was made to the Choir's Junior Musician of the Year Competition.