

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 2017

By Dean Powell
Publicity Officer & Honorary Archivist

JANUARY

Thursday January 9th

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

The Choir was delighted to welcome Hannah Thomas from ITV to the rehearsal room this evening. Following a request by PR officer Dean Powell, she visited the schoolroom to interview Norman Martin and Islwyn Morgan as they both celebrate their 70th anniversaries as members of the Choir.

Tuesday January 26th

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

ITV Wales presenter Hannah Thomas returned to the rehearsal room for another interview and filming session over the Choir's anniversary year in which she interviewed Dean Powell and Conductor Jeff Howard.

FEBRUARY

Saturday February 18th

St Andrew's Church, Chippenham

It was a delighted to make a welcomed return to St Andrew's Church in Chippenham where the Choir would perform almost annually in aid of the Cheshire Homes Greathouse. The concerts had always been organised by the late Reg Coates and it was a pleasure to meet his family who were in the audience. The soloist this evening was Tonyrefail-born soprano Joanne Thomas and Selwyn Jones undertook the role of MC. Jeff Howard and Helen Roberts led the musical team and the concert was another great success. It also signalled the first public performance of "Don't Fence Me In."

MARCH

Saturday March 25th

St Mary's Church, Swansea

The Choir made its first visit to St Mary's Church following an invitation from Honorary Lady Member Ros Evans. Along with her Choir, Mums the Word, Ros had planned a charity concert in aid of Sam Can, which was raising funds for treatment of a young mother suffering from cancer. The church was full to capacity and both choirs gave a great performance of classic numbers and light arrangements. The men of Treorchy performed a wide selection of more contemporary music while the ladies of Mums the Word performed pop songs to backing tracks. Ros also gave an outstanding performance of "Nella Fantasia" and the concert was compered by Dean Powell.

APRIL

Tuesday April 4th

Treorchy Comprehensive School

The Treorchy Male Choir Junior Musician of the Year Competition was held at the Comprehensive School again this year. Roy Noble was guest of honour at the

proceedings which were compered by Callum Howells. A wide range of young talent took to the stage. A performance was also given by the Choir, conducted by Jeff Howard. The winners of this year's competition were Morgan Stoddart and Seren Roberts.

Friday April 14th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The 52nd Good Friday Concert of the Treorchy Male Choir and Parc & Dare Band Tonight's performance saw another large audience thrilled by the concert repertoire and combined items of Gwahoddiad, Morte Christe, Llef and Tydi a Roddaist. Jeff Howard and Helen Roberts led the Treorchy team with Dean Powell as comper for the Choir items.

MAY

Saturday May 20th

Christchurch, Tettenhall

The Choir made its first visit to Tettenhall near Wolverhampton for a performance in Christchurch. They shared the stage for the first time with an outstanding young soprano named Grace Wyatt who is a student of conductor Jeff Howard. A "sold out" audience gave the Welshmen a warm welcome to the stage and accompanied by Helen Roberts with Dean Powell as MC, the evening was a great success.

JUNE

Saturday June 10th

Saunders Club, Bedworth

The Choir gave its first performance in the Saunders Club in Bedworth. Traditionally they had performed at the Civic Hall, so this was a new venue for them in a well known part of the Midlands. Jeff and Helen led the musical repertoire with soloist Callum Howells, hot rom his West End debut with Les Dennis. The MC for the evening was Gareth Evans. Despite the difficulties encountered at the venue, the concert was a success as reflected in the reaction of the large audience.

Wednesday June 14th

Parish Church, Llantrisant

The Choir made its third visit to Llantrisant Parish Church to open the Beating the Bounds festivities which occurs only every seven years in the historic town. Organised and presented by Dean Powell, the Choir was welcomed by a sold-out audience who were thrilled by the performance on this hot summer's night.

Guest artists for the evening were the talented children of Llantrisant Primary School who were led by David Owen and Jenny Lax. They gave a fantastic performance and with an audience filled with admiring parents, it was obvious this would be a successful evening.

Both organisations gave an outstanding performance with a varied repertoire to suit all tastes. Funds were raised for the Choir and the Beating the Bounds celebrations which take place on the weekend ahead.

Friday June 16th

Parc Primary School, Cwmparc

Choristers attended the Memorial Service to remember those who were killed by the German bombings of Cwmparc in 1941.

JULY

Monday July 3rd

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

S4C's Heno programme came to the rehearsal room to interview Islwyn Morgan, Norman Martin, Norman Cox, David Hughes and Hywel Bryant about the forthcoming anniversary concert.

Sunday July 9th

St David's Hall, Cardiff

It was a night to remember! The 70 Glorious Years concert at St David's Hall was an evening of celebration to mark the Choir's seven decades of song. It was a huge event to coordinate and a small team had worked diligently for months to make it a success. They weren't disappointed as a sell out audience of almost 2,000 flocked to the capital city venue for the afternoon evening.

Treorchy Male Choir took centre stage at the concert which was held in their honour and they welcomed the three large male voice choirs who had played such pivotal rolls in their development – both as rivals in the National Eisteddfod arena and as Comrades in Song. Morryston Orpheus Male Choir, Pendyrus Male Choir and Cor Meibion Pontarddulais all appeared at the concert to perform a selection of time honoured Welsh classics as combined choirs.

Jeff Howard conducted the entire evening which was accompanied by the Chamber Orchestra of Wales and pianist Helen Roberts. The guest star of the evening was the wonderful Welsh soprano Shan Cothi who gave a truly stunning performance. The entire evening was in the capable hands of MC Dean Powell who struggled to appear following a spinal injury, but maintained his expertise as MC to give a first-class performance. Together this evening was one to remember. Glorious singing, plenty of fun and laughter all combined to make it one of the most unforgettable concerts in the history of the Treorchy Male Choir.

Saturday July 15th

Community Centre, Rhiwhiriaeth

For the Choir's first performance in Rhiwhiriaeth they welcomed Honorary Member Dr Alwyn Humphreys to the podium and he conducted this concert with his usual inspiring technique. The soloist for the evening was Jessica Robinson and Gareth Evans took on the role of MC. A large audience welcomed them to the mid Wales venue for another great evening of song which resulted in a standing ovation.

Thursday July 13th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

Treorchy Male Choir has rehearsed in Treorchy Primary School since as far back as 1885 when their Conductor William Thomas demanded they leave the pub for a

schoolroom to practice. To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the School, the Choir was invited to participate in a special concert at the Park & Dare Theatre. It was a pleasure to share the stage with the school children for this milestone moment in the history of the town.

SEPTEMBER

Saturday September 16th

Sherborne Abbey

Following many years the Choir made a return visit to the beautiful Sherborne Abbey in Dorset. Soprano Iona Jones joined them for the sell-out concert along with Jeff Howard, Helen Roberts and Selwyn Jones as MC. The glorious acoustics of this fine building allowed the small choir of just 47 men give a first-class performance.

Monday September 18th

Porthcawl Pavilion

The Choir spent the evening at the Porthcawl Pavilion where 60 years earlier they had competed at the Miners Eisteddfod and then made a transatlantic link with American political activist and singer Paul Robeson. To commemorate that event in 1957, BBC's The One Show decided to film the Choir in the same venue. They recorded "Deliver Daniel" and the Welsh National Anthem alongside the original recording by Paul Robeson himself. Choristers Islwyn Morgan and William Watkin who both attended the original event, were interviewed by Welsh singer Cerys Matthews.

Friday September 29th

Truro Methodist Church

The Choir made its first visit to Cornwall in more than 30 years for two concerts over a weekend period. They stayed in Cambourne before travelling to Truro and joining forces with the Marazion Apollo Male Choir for a performance in the Methodist Church near Truro Cathedral. It was a great opportunity to join forces with their Celtic cousins and celebrate their mutual admiration for good choral singing. Jeff Howard, Helen Roberts and Dean Powell led the Treorchy men through a rousing programme of favourites – all performed to an excellent standard in such fine acoustics. Despite a poor sized audience, the concert was a great success and celebrations ensued in a local hostelry.

Saturday September 30th

Poldark Mine, Heston

Choristers paid a visit to the fascinating Poldark Mine in Heston where they gathered to perform Men of Harlech to their fellow tourists,

Chapel Street Methodist Church, Penzance

The second concert of the weekend trip to Cornwall took place in Penzance where they were joined on stage by the Penzance Ladies Orpheus Choir. A splendid evening indeed with a packed audience thrilled by the performances of both musical organisations. The Choir gave another outstanding performance of choral favourites and joined forces with their new-found friends for the finale.

OCTOBER

Thursday October 12th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The Choir welcomed students from Treorchy Comprehensive School at this year's annual concert in the hometown theatre. Jeff Howard and Helen Roberts led the Choir while musical friends Nick Bristow and Stewart Roberts led the students through an impressive selection of music. Dean Powell was MC for the entire performance. It was another hugely enjoyable annual concert for friends, family and neighbours.

Saturday October 15th

Leatharhead Theatre, Leatherhead

The long journey to Leatherhead was worth it when faced with such an enthusiastic audience. Sports commentator John Inverdale opened the concert which was held to support the Surrey branch of Woodenspoon. Then the Choir burst into song and performed a first-class concert for the packed theatre. They were joined on stage by students from the Therfield School Jazz Band and guitar club. Dean Powell was MC for the evening while Jeff Howard and Helen Roberts performed as music staff. Unfortunately Helen was too ill to join the Choir on stage for the second half and Jeff displayed his musical mastery by both accompanying and conducting the choristers – much to the delight of the crowd.

Monday October 20th

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

The Choir filmed a song for a Christmas TV show starring cooking expert Mary Berry.

Wednesday October 19th

The Oval, Pentre

A selection of choristers were invited to perform Winter Wonderland for a television programme featuring Mary Berry. Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins.

Saturday October 29th

Trinity Methodist Church, Leighton Buzzard

The Choir made its first visit to this venue with a rather different musical line up. Helen Roberts took on the role of Musical Director while Sian Davies, the eminent pianist and daughter of the late Brian Davies, performed the role of accompanist. There was no soloist for the concert which was held in aid of the St Francis Children's Society. A full audience was thrilled by the magnificent sound of the Choir who left the stage with the ringing sound of applause in their ears.

NOVEMBER

Thursday November 9th

Albany Road Baptist Church, Cardiff

The Choir made its third visit to this venue for Prostate Cymru. Tonight's concert – before a sell-out audience was another triumph. Jeff Howard celebrated his 100th concert with a Choir by receiving a unique presentation of a signed card from the

choristers. The soloists included soloist Jacqueline Hill and xylophone player Antony Capel. A very enjoyable evening indeed.

Sunday November 12th

Blaenrhondda War Memorial & Treherbert War Memorial

Members of the Choir performed in the British Legion Commemoration Services at both the Blaenrhondda and Treherbert War Memorials.

Thursday November 30th

Salem Chapel, Church Village

The Choir made its first visit to Salem Chapel for a concert organised by Llantwit Fardre Community Council. This was a “pilgrimage” for any male choir as Salem was the venue where composer John Hughes spent so many years as chorusmaster. Naturally the finale of “Cwm Rhondda” went down a total storm! Unfortunately Helen Roberts was unable to be present and therefore Jeff Howard conducted and accompanied the Choir. Despite a few slightly shaky moments the concert was another success. Featuring soloist Manaon Ogwen Parry and MC Dean Powell, the evening went smoothly and the audience was thrilled by the standard of performance.

DECEMBER

Thursday December 7th

St Peter’s Church, Pentre

The Choir joined forces with the world champion Cory Band for their 64th joint concert since 1951 at the “cathedral of the Rhondda”. This was a Christmas spectacular and the packed audience had an unforgettable festive evening of fun. Philip Harper led his band through a stunning selection of music. Dr Alwyn Humphreys gave an outstanding performance as conductor of the Treorchy Choir, raising the roof with his versions of Llanfair and Gwahoddiad. Dean Powell acted as MC and returned to the stage as soloist for the first time in four years with a performance of O Holy Night. It was also the debut performance of a new arrangement of Climb Every Mountain. The Choir gave another first-class evening of song. A great evening for all concerned.

Saturday December 9th

High Street, Treorchy

Choristers performed on High Street, Treorchy for the Rhondda Rotary Club and helped bring some festive cheer to their hometown,

Monday December 18th

Ty Hafan, Sully

Once again a group of choristers performed a selection of songs and carols at the Ty Hafan Candlelit Memorial Service.