

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 1952

By Dean Powell, Publicity Officer
& Honorary Archivist

JANUARY

Sunday January 6th

Polikoff Canteen, Treorchy

The first concert of a busy year, spent rehearsing items for the National Eisteddfod, began with another performance of "The Rainbow". It was accompanied by the Cory Band and conducted by Frank Wright with soloists Sam Griffiths, Idris Higgon and cornet player Stan Williams.

APRIL

Friday April 11th

Park & Dare Theatre

The Choir held its first Celebrity Concert at the Park & Dare Theatre with soprano Gita de la Fuentsa and tenor Tano Feredinos.

JUNE

Saturday June 21st

Pentre Colliery Site

The Choir appeared in Rhondda Music Week at the Pentre Colliery site with soloists Norman Nowakowski and Mary Kendall.

JULY

Thursday July

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

A recording was made in the rehearsal room for the Scranton Radio Station in Pennsylvania, USA, where many Welsh mining families had settled.

AUGUST

Saturday August 9th

Welsh National Eisteddfod, Aberystwyth

The Choir gained the first prize at the Royal National Eisteddfod, Aberystwyth. The most memorable performance was of the 23rd Psalm in Welsh, "Duw Yw Fy Mugail". The adjudicators were so overwhelmed by this beautiful sound that they all put their pencils and notebooks down to listen.

It was the culmination of five years of dedicated work by choristers under the baton of John Haydn Davies. It also marked the first time for the Blue Riband to be brought back to Treorchy in 57 years. It was at this point that Mr Matthews-Williams paused to reflect on the Choir's final performance, that of Schubert's "23rd Psalm", performed in Welsh as "Duw Yw Fy Mugail". Treorchy had taken the risky strategy of interpreting literally the adagio marking on the copy of the piece, so that it took five minutes to perform and overwhelmed adjudicators and audience alike.

He said: "It is only once in a century one hears such marvellous singing which was so moving that tears came into my eyes and I was not the only one so affected. If there is singing like this in heaven then I am eager to get there quickly. It was so beautiful that the whole of the panel of adjudicators just put their pencils and notebooks down on the table and listened, not even putting down a note."

Treorchy & District Male Choir was awarded the First Prize of £120 and the Welsh Guards Challenge Cup with 275 points in front of Manselton (265 points), Ystradgynlais (259 points) and Penrhyn (248 points). This was the zenith of six years of tireless work. It was more than a victory but the crowning and successful climax to long and arduous preparations. Success paralysed the emotions.

SEPTEMBER

Monday September 29th

Jerusalem Chapel, Ton Pentre

A concert was held in aid of the YMCA National Service fund. Organist for the evening was Sandy Macpherson.

OCTOBER

Thursday October 9th

Saron Chapel, Ynyshir

At the concert in Ynyshir the Choir was joined for the first time by soprano Elsie Morison and organist Irene Jones-Morley.

Wednesday October 15th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

A concert was organised in the Choir's hometown to celebrate its National Eisteddfod success. The soloists were Sam Griffiths and Idris Higgon and guest pianist was Mary Rees. A capacity audience was present to congratulate the victorious choir.

NOVEMBER

Sunday November 16th

St Peter's Church, Pentre

A concert with Rev Desmond Price, Evelyn Venning and Brynmore Howells was held in aid of the Welsh Churches Fund.

DECEMBER

Thursday December 4th

Blaenycwm Chapel, Treherbert

A concert was held in aid of chapel funds with soprano Betty Baxter and Choir soloists Sam Griffiths and Idris Higgon. This was an important event as John Haydn Davies is a faithful member of the chapel.

Monday December

Bethlehem Chapel, Treorchy

Recordings of the Choir were made at Bethlehem Chapel and placed in a time capsule in the USA to be reopened in 2052