

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 2007

By Dean Powell, Publicity Officer
& Honorary Archivist

January

Tuesday January 16

Former conductor Andrew Badham was made an Honorary Member of the Treorchy Male Choir.

Tuesday January 23

Haydn Erasmus, Norman Martin and Islwyn Morgan were made Vice Presidents of the Treorchy Male Choir.

Thursday January 25

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

A news team from Channel 4 news visited the rehearsal room this evening. They were invited to film the choir as part of a news programme highlighting the closure of the nearby Burberry factory in March.

Saturday January 27

Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

The first concert engagement of the year saw a return visit to the Spa Centre following a decade. In a neighbouring venue the London Welsh Male Choir was also performing an evening concert and the Treorchy choristers were delighted when Dr Haydn James visited them during the rehearsals. The performance was conducted by Jan Ball, with Helen Roberts as accompanist and Dean Powell as Master of Ceremonies. The packed audience were also entertained by vocalist David Kidd and for the first time in the choir's history, a comedian by the name of John Evans. The "new format" arranged by concert organiser Peter Hughes was not quite what the choristers, or audience, expected, although plenty of hilarity was displayed thanks to the stand-up comic during his two spots. The choir gave another memorable performance with Jan at the helm. The return of With a Voice of Singing has assured us once more of its popularity with the audiences. Similarly Sara has made a "come-back" and for the first time in almost a year Dean Powell returned to the stage as a soloist in Unwaith Eto'n Nghymru Annwyl which received rapturous applause. The second half saw first-class renditions of Comrades in Arms, You Raise Me Up and of course Nessun Dorma as a memorable encore.

Wednesday January 31

Millennium Stadium, Cardiff

For the past two years the choir has continually enjoyed a close association with Woodenspoon, the rugby union charity that has numerous district committees spread across the UK. The Welsh section of Woodenspoon is run by Rhondda boy Rob Harris and it is through the choir's association with him that Treorchy has become the Woodenspoon's official musical representatives. To celebrate their ongoing fundraising success in aid of disadvantaged children, they held the launch of their latest DVD in the Millennium Stadium. The choir was invited to perform two items on the ground as more than two hundreds guests sat in one of the stands. Following this they were escorted to one of the stadium suites for dinner where the choir entertained the guests, which included former rugby international Neil Jenkins, with a

short concert, conducted by Jan Ball, accompanied by Helen Roberts and compered by Dean Powell.

February

Tuesday February 6

St Stephens Church, Ystrad

For the first time in the choir's history they were invited to perform at St Stephens Church in neighbouring Ystrad. The guest artistes for the evening were Cor Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bodringallt under the conductorship of Ellyn Llewellyn and accompanied by Gareth Williams. The soloists for the evening were Treorchy choristers Ray Daniels and Dean Powell – the latter also undertaking the role of master of ceremonies. The children's choir, who won the 2006 Urdd Eisteddfod and performed with the Treorchy Choir in the Parc & Dare Theatre more than a year ago, were quite simply superb.

This well-disciplined group of children performed magnificently and certainly won the hearts of all those present that evening. Under the baton of Jan Ball and accompanied by Helen Roberts, Treorchy also gave an outstanding performance which thrilled the packed church. With a Voice of Singing proved a tremendous opening song, followed by a selection of firm favourites including an array of Welsh hymn tunes that perfectly suited the setting of the lovely little valley church. The audience, which featured many parents of the children in the school choir, had probably never heard Treorchy live before and their response to the light arrangements was breathtaking. It was one of those rare occasions when the choir received a standing ovation during a concert in the valley – with My Way securing the first rousing applause followed by Nessun Dorma for the second. The two choirs also combined for a joint performance of Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau before the concert drew to a conclusion.

Saturday February 17

The Forum Theatre, Malvern

A return visit to the Forum Theatre after a period of four years saw the choir perform under the leadership of Dr Alwyn Humphreys and accompanied by Helen Roberts. The soloists for the evening were vocalist David Kidd and stand-up comedian John Martin. Master of Ceremonies for the concert was Dean Powell. Once more the choir gave a very memorable performance to the packed audience who appeared thrilled at their varied repertoire of old favourites and new arrangements. The concert opened with a selection of traditional Welsh hymn tunes and religious items, culminating in superb renditions of Tydi a Roddaist and Unwaith Eto to conclude the first half. The second half of the concert opened with the Soldier's Chorus from Faust and included Speed Your Journey, Comrades in Arms and the Kings of Swing medley. Once again the choir brought the concert to a close with a first-class selection of light arrangements including Over the Rainbow, You Raise Me Up, My Way and Nessun Dorma. Undoubtedly the choristers are responding magnificently to Dr Alwyn Humphreys as conductor. This superb musician continually brings out the best in the Treorchy choristers and with such unforgettable performances of Myfanwy living long in the memory, his time with the choir will become a "golden era" for all those involved.

March

Saturday March 3

Community School, Newent

It was with great excitement that the Treorchy choristers made a return visit to Newent after a period of two years. Once again the guest artists were members of the Community School's Jazz Band. The Treorchy Choir was conducted by the great Dr Alwyn Humphreys, accompanied by Helen Roberts and the compere for the evening was Dean Powell. Once more the choir responded magnificently to Dr Humphreys. His ability to conduct each item in a different manner than previously performed ensures that every chorister remains focussed on his technique. There is no room for complacency as he ensures that every single item performed is of the highest possible standard and brings out the best in every one of the singers. The choir's time with him is indeed proving an education as each of the concerts are becoming an absolute joy to perform in.

Similarly the audiences are noticing a vast difference in the standard of performance in each of the concerts while choristers themselves leave the stage elated after yet another gripping finale of encores and standing ovations. Newent was certainly no exception as he literally dragged every ounce of concentration, strength and note from each chorister with his demanding conductorship of every item. From the first notes of With a Voice of Singing, the choir knew this would be another memorable evening of song – one that nobody wanted to end so soon! The Lords Prayer was breathtaking, while his interpretation of Myfanwy is quite superb. Tydi a Roddaist also allows choristers the opportunity to give of their best, while the second half saw some booming performances of the operatic choruses – not to mention a memorable Men of Harlech! The finale of My Way resulted in a standing ovation, followed by a second one for Nessun Dorma. Unwilling to leave the concert stage, there was more to come as he led the choir into Cwm Rhondda and We'll Keep a Welcome before the exhausted, but elated choristers left the stage.

Tuesday March 20

Honorary Membership presented to the Choir's webmaster Dr Malcolm Williams

Saturday March 24

Artrix Theatre, Bromsgrove

An air of excitement pervaded through the concert hall during the rehearsals as choristers prepared for the evening performance. This was the choir's first visit to Bromsgrove and their venue was an intimate theatre built only two years beforehand. It provided a very suitable location for Treorchy's debut performance in the town. Once again the choir revelled in the opportunity to perform under the baton of Dr Alwyn Humphreys who excelled himself once more – not only as a conductor but also as a raconteur. His dead-pan humour left audience and choristers in howls of laughter, particularly during his unique storytelling of how the song Myfanwy symbolised his lost love – who happened to come from Bromsgrove! This, coupled with Dean Powell's humours compere skills and the magnificent Kate Woolveridge giving yet another of her first-class stage performances turned the entire evening into a

unforgettable night of laughter and song. The concert was in aid of the Mayor of Bromsgrove District Council's named charities being Parkinsons Disease Society and the Multi-Agency Resource Centre. The packed audience was thrilled by the performance which once again saw Treorchy giving a first-class concert from start to finish. With a Voice of Singing, Sanctus, Llef and Tydi a Roddaist allowed the magnificent Amen sections to reverberate around the hall. The operatic items, particularly Soldiers Chorus, were superb, while My Way, Nessun Dorma and finally Llanfair raised the roof in splendid fashion making this a triumphant debut in Bromsgrove.

Wednesday March 28th

Treorchy Comprehensive School

A capacity audience of more than 600 people attended the grand final of the Treorchy Male Choir & Coca Cola Junior Musician of the Year Competition at Treorchy Comprehensive School. Deputy Mayor of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Cllr Jane Ward opened the proceedings and surprised the crowd with the news that the local authority has agreed to sponsor the two winners of the competition to visit New Hampshire, USA with a parent and teacher in a bid to secure better relations with the American state. Last year the winners of the competition also visited New Hampshire in an effort to begin twinning arrangements with schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The winners, Bryony White and Shona Evans of Penyrenglyn Primary School, Treorchy, performed in schools throughout the state and were welcomed by Senator Lou D'Allesandro. Cllr Ward also read a letter from the senator to the Treorchy audience, sending his best wishes for another successful evening.

A panel of five adjudicators for the grand final included Treorchy Male Choir's Deputy Accompanist Helen Roberts, Ynysowen Male Choir's Musical Director and Harpist Jennifer Jones, Conductor Emeritus of the Ardwyn Singers Helena Braithwaite, Conductor of the Four Counties Youth Orchestra Derek Holvey and BBC Radio Wales presenter Dewi Griffiths. Twenty one finalists competed for the top prize of £200 each, a shield, a trophy for their school to keep for one year, the opportunity to perform at a Good Friday Concert in the Parc & Dare Theatre, Treorchy on April 6th and of course a holiday of a lifetime to the United States. Compere for the evening was Treorchy Male Choir soloist Dean Powell and the presentations were made by BBC Radio Wales presenter Roy Noble OBE.

In total 770 children from 19 primary and junior schools from throughout the Rhondda subscribed to this year's competition. Each of them held "X-Factor"-style talent shows within their own schools and two semi-finals were held at Porth County Community School and Tonypandy Community College. The 21 finalists, which included 11 singers and 10 instrumentalists, all received certificates, shields and a free trip to the West End to see Connie Fisher perform in the Sound of Music at the London Palladium. Miss Fisher has even signed the envelopes containing each of the finalist's tickets to the show on June 13th.

The main hall of Treorchy Comprehensive School was transformed into an atmospheric theatre setting for the grand final. The instrumentalists ranged from pianists, cornetists, violinist, harpist and a euphonium player. The singers performed such diverse items as show tunes from Les Miserables and Annie and even a selection

of Welsh folk tunes. During a short break while the adjudicators made their decisions, the choir performed a selection of items under the baton of Jennifer Jones and accompanied by Helen Roberts. The winner of the singer's category was Callum Richards of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bronllwyn with his rendition of Wedi'r Gaeaf. The winner of the instrumentalist's category was Treorchy Primary School pupil Sophie Davies who played A Whole New World on the cornet.

Friday March 30th

Treorchy High Street

One of the most devastating events in the history of the town of Treorchy since the closure of the coalmines was the news that its only other main source of employment was also closing down. Originally known as Polikoffs, the Burberry factory was due for closure on March 30th with production going abroad. It meant the loss of three hundred jobs and end of a seventy-year history for the clothing manufacturer in the Rhondda town. A major campaign was launched by Assembly Member Leighton Andrews which enjoyed widespread national media and the support of Hollywood film stars no less. In an effort to support their plight, members of the choir joined forces with Cor Meibion Cwm Rhondda to join a protest march through the town. They sang Speed Your Journey outside the plant before marching down the main street to the Park & Dare Theatre to perform once again for the massive amount of television, radio and newspaper media who witnessed the event.

Friday April 6th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

It was probably one of the finest Good Friday concerts performed by the choir in its 41-year partnership with the Parc & Dare Band. The choir, positioned on new platformed tiers on stage sang under the baton of Dr Alwyn Humphreys MBE and the result was simply stunning. It was as if the choir had been reborn under his leadership and choristers recognised this fact from the opening bars of the first song. The audience and bandspeople looked on in wonderment at such a sparkling performance which certainly thrilled all those fortunate enough to be there.

Such a pleasurable concert saw the choir perform a wide selection of items, emphasising the beauty of the Welsh hymnal tradition in the first half with some absolutely outstanding renditions of Tydi a Roddaist, Llanfair and Sara. The choir also saw the return of March of the Peers and enjoyed plenty of applause for its performance of Unwaith Eto'n Nghymru Annwyl and a superb Myfanwy rendition. It was also the opportunity to introduce plenty of new music to the audience such as Over the Rainbow, You Raise Me You, I Dreamed a Dream and Nessun Dorma. Dr Humphreys revelled in the opportunity to bring out the very best in our choir and for a Morriston Choir Conductor Emeritus to conduct Treorchy Male Choir in its hometown, was quite an honour. As always, he charmed the audience throughout.

The concert also allowed the choir the opportunity to welcome the two winners of the Treorchy Male Choir & Coca Cola Junior Musician of the Year competition to the stage. During the second half of the performance Callum Richards and Sophie Davies both performed for the packed audience to rousing applause. The Parc & Dare Band, under the baton of Craig Roberts, entertained the audience throughout with some first-

class playing. With joint items between choir and band including Morte Christe, the concert heralded a successful night in the history of both world-famous Rhondda organisations.

Sunday April 15th

The Stadium, Twickenham

The EDF Energy Cup Trophy Final at Twickenham saw the Ospreys play Leicester Tigers on a beautifully sunny April afternoon. The choir was invited to perform on the pitch under the baton of Dr Haydn James and accompanied by Aveley & Newham Band. A second choir made up of members of the Odd Fellows and the Huntingdon Male Choir also walked on the pitch to perform English items while Treorchy of course performed the more famous Welsh songs and choruses. On reaching Twickenham by midday a short rehearsal took place in an open field, with crowds of people gathering to listen to the sound. With an hour or so to spare the choir lined up in the tunnel about to go on the pitch and with thousands of Ospreys supporters standing on overhead balconies and in the tunnel area itself, the Treorchy men decided to burst into song. I Bob Un Sy'n Ffyddlon and Men of Harlech left the audience overjoyed as was displayed by their incredible reaction to each piece. It was with their hearts in their mouths that the choir marched onto the pitch and performed Cwm Rhondda, Delilah and Calon Lan before kick off. Despite a disappointing game for the Welsh side, it was still a very memorable occasion and a delight to have taken part. As one of the coaches returned home to the Rhondda it was decided that the second coach enjoy the facilities on offer at the London Welsh RFC Clubhouse in Richmond where choristers sang until late in the evening on the lush green lawn. A wonderful day indeed.

Saturday April 21st

Civic Hall, Aylesbury

Tonight's concert marked the 10th Anniversary of Treorchy's first performance in aid of Blackberry Farm. It was a special evening as we returned to Aylesbury to perform once more for Robin Woodruff's designated charity. The choir gave another excellent concert, this time under the baton of Jennifer Jones, accompanied by Helen Roberts and compered by Dean Powell. The soloist this evening was the lovely Kate Woolveridge and it was a delight to welcome her back onto the concert stage. The choir opened with a selection of Welsh hymns, followed by well known spirituals, opera choruses and the obligatory light arrangements. Poor acoustics made it a little difficult to give a full-throated effect in places, but the choir received a well-deserved encore from the packed audience once they'd finished Nessun Dorma! With an encore of Softly as I Leave You followed by the anthems, the concert was recognised as another great success for such a very worthy cause.

Saturday May 5th

Palace Theatre, Redditch

The choir's first performance in the town of Redditch saw them take to the stage at the beautiful Palace Theatre. Filled with deep red and gold colours of curtains, balconies and upholstery, the grand interior provided an exquisite location for the concert. Although a small choir of just 57 performed, it was nonetheless an enjoyable

evening. The soloists for the evening were soprano Natalie Sinnott and comedian John Evans with Dean Powell as compere, Jan Ball conducted and the accompanist was Helen Roberts. The concert was thoroughly enjoyed by the packed audience who displayed their enthusiasm with rapturous applause for each and every item. The concert programme remained largely the same as the last engagement, although with the added addition of the first public performance of Faraway Place. The second half saw the choir perform a selection of hymns, spirituals and the usual selection of light arrangements before concluding with another rousing Nessun Dorma.

Wednesday May 16th

The funeral took place of Long Service Member Jack Moses.

Thursday May 17th

Parc Primary School, Cwmparc

A group of 30 choristers attended the Memorial Concert at Parc Primary School in Cwmparc. They were asked to perform a selection of items for the large audience who were attending this special service to remember those who lost their lives in the 1941 bombing of the village. With the laying of the wreaths, choristers sang Cwm Rhondda outside the main school building for a delighted audience of teachers, parents, children and local residents.

Saturday May 19th

The Stiwt, Rhosllanerchrugog

An unforgettable visit to north Wales for several reasons! Rhosllanerchrugog is a musical capital for this area of Wales, having been the birthplace of Arwel and John Hughes, as well as the hometown of the successful Rhosllanerchrugog Male Choir and Rhos Orpheus Male Choir. Both organisations were well in attendance in the packed auditorium as the Treorchy men took to the stage with Janice Ball as conductor, Helen Roberts as accompanist, Dean Powell as compere and Natalie Sinnott as soprano soloist for the evening. What should have opened as a heartwarming, welcoming concert for the crowd, became something quite different when the theatre's programme manager took to the stage. Myrddin Davies made a series of remarks against the choir, not even mentioning them by name nor that of the conductor or accompanist. In fact his remarks bordered on rude from the outset and made the Treorchy choristers all the more determined to ensure this was a concert to remember. It was most certainly that. The choir's first performance in The Stiwt was quite spectacular as they gave a first-class concert from the very outset. The selection of songs included With a Voice of Singing, Ar Hyd y Nos, Sara, Llanfair, Llef and Unwaith Eto in the first half alone received tumultuous applause. It was also a pleasure to sing Tydi a Roddaist in the hometown of the composer.

Unbeknown to the choir until the final curtain, also sat in the audience was none other than John Tudor Davies, who famously arranged Gwahoddiad for male voice choir. He made himself known to the choristers at the end of the concert and received a warm reception from all concerned. The second half also produced some magical moments, especially Speed Your Journey and Soldiers Chorus. However, none of us were prepared for the closing remarks of Myrddin Davies prior to the last section of music. What had been a series of bad jokes in the first half were downright rude in the

second with such phrases as “They sang some songs, tried to sing other songs. We’ll see what the other choirs think of them etc.” He received the most incredible response from the audience as they heckled him off stage, called offensive remarks until he disappeared into the darkness. Such a response made Treorchy all the more determined to finish on the highest note possible and this was certainly achieved. Dean Powell carried the concert through with plenty of humour to relax the audience and choir alike following the earlier outbursts and as the choir performed You Raise Me Up and My Way, the reaction was startling. A standing ovation was followed by another and another with the performance of Nessun Dorma which can only be described as breathtaking.

Following the concert the Treorchy choristers fostered new friendships with the men of Rhos in the most memorable after-concert evening for many years. Joint singing and plenty of humour allowed the choristers to forget the very few negative points of the night and a new air of friendship prevailed throughout the organisations. It was also interesting to note the amount of newspaper coverage in north Wales over the coming days relating to the outbursts of Mr Davies!

Saturday June 9

Landmark Theatre, Ilfracombe

The last concert with Jennifer Jones as Musical Director was an event to remember. Organised to raise funds for the North Devon Festival, the soloist for the evening was Kate Woolveridge with Dean Powell as compere and Helen Roberts as accompanist. The content of the programme remained largely the same as the previous concert and was well received by the packed audience in the seaside auditorium. Kate provided the most tremendously warm performance which endeared her to all. The audience was clearly delighted with the choir’s performance of so many firm favourites, with Tydi a Roddaist, Unwaith Eto, Speed Your Journey and You Raise Me Up providing plenty of tumultuous applause. Special thanks were also extended to Jennifer Jones on her support of the choir during this difficult time as a new musical director was appointed.

Saturday June 23

Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon

The last of the current season of concerts with Dr Alwyn Humphreys MBE took place in Brecon and was held in aid of the Soroptimists International. Helen Roberts was accompanist for the evening with Kate Woolveridge as soloist. Owing to the unavailability of Dean Powell, Alwyn took on the dual role of conductor and compere. The natural raconteur provided a most thrilling performance in both regards and endeared himself to choristers and audience alike once more. It was a poignant and yet triumphant evening in many respects. On the one hand this would mark the final concert for Alwyn as conductor as Jan Ball has now been appointed the new Musical Director of the Treorchy Male Choir. However, along with his wife Joy, the Humphreys duo are also prepared to continue their association with the choir and are available to conduct in future concerts or rehearsals whenever required. It was with this in mind that the choir took to the stage at Brecon for another memorable performance under the baton of the maestro himself. Delighting in the traditional Welsh hymn tunes, he also had great fun with the audience and choristers with his

storytelling, causing plenty of laughter when he forgot to conduct “Memory” at one point! With a rousing finale of You Raise Me Up, My Way and Nessun Dorma, the choir left the stage safe in the knowledge that once again they had indeed conquered Brecon.

Thursday July 12th

Cardiff International Arena

The Choir was invited to perform in the CIA for an audience of more than 500 firefighters! The firefighters from the length and breadth of the UK gathered at the CIA for the weekend to participate in the UK Rescue Organisation Challenges 2007. They battled it out to prove themselves the quickest and best at cutting live casualties out of realistic crashed vehicle scenarios. The Challenges form the centre piece of a three-day initiative, entitled Rescue Cymru and hosted by the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The choir marched into the main hall, performing Cwm Rhondda as they walked. With Helen Roberts at the piano and Jan Ball conducting, the short performance was a total success when considering the response of the packed auditorium. The choir also performed Unwaith Eto'n Nghymru Annwyl, You Raise Me Up and Nessun Dorma for the delighted crowd of firefighters.

Saturday July 14th

St Michael's Church, Somerton

Tonight's concert marked the first official concert for Jan Ball since her appointment as Musical Director of the Choir and it was most certainly a delightful evening to remember. The large choir were overjoyed to return to this stunning village church with its impressive acoustics and setting. Helen Roberts was the accompanist, with Kate Woolveridge as soloist and Dean Powell as compere. The opening section of music saw the debut of Suo Gan with Kate as soloist and concluded with a brilliant performance of Laudamus. The operatic selection of Speed Your Journey and Soldiers Chorus set the scene for the grandness of the choir, followed by the firm favourite of Tydi a Roddaist and Unwaith Eto to conclude the first half. The second half of the concert included the first public performance of Alwyn Humphreys's arrangement of the Karl Jenkins composition, Adiemus. The choir also raised the roof with Men of Harlech and concluded the evening with My Way and another breathtaking performance of Nessun Dorma. The audience rewarded them with a magnificent standing ovation, making it a memorable evening for all concerned.

Tuesday July 17th

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

It was amid an air of grateful thanks that Dr Alwyn Humphreys MBE and Dr Haydn James attended the rehearsal room this evening. Both men were under the impression they would visit Treorchy Primary School for photographs to be taken of them with the choir. This was not the case as Chairman Gareth Evans took to the podium and surprised them both with the news that they were to both receive Honorary Membership of the Treorchy Male Choir. Both conductors were shocked and delighted by the news and received their awards before sharing a few anecdotes with the choir. Dr Humphreys concluded by expressing his deep admiration for the choir, one in which he was proud to be a part of and looked forward to many more times

with the “Treorchy family”. His wife, Joy, who has recently been appointed conductor of the Morriston Orpheus Male Choir following the much publicised departure of its conductor Sian Pearce, was also present to receive a bouquet of flowers.

Friday July 20th

Malborough College Chapel

Following last year’s memorable debut concert in Malborough it was a delight to receive the invitation to make a return journey to this delightful town and perform for the first time in the College Chapel. This incredible setting was quite breathtaking with a cathedral-like interior and atmosphere about the venue. Dr Haydn James was the conductor for the evening, marking his first full concert as musical director of the Treorchy Male Choir. The accompanist was Helen Roberts as Jan Ball performed as organist on the mighty chapel organ which recently cost £1million to refurbish. The soloist was Kate Woolveridge and compere for the evening was Dean Powell.

Sadly the evening didn’t go quite according to plan. The choir found itself in a very difficult situation as they attempted to travel to the venue. Stormy weather and flash floods had caused chaos on the roads and the choir took almost six hours to travel to Malborough, not reaching the venue until 8.15pm. Fortunately many had changed their clothes on the coach and with little time to spare they walked on stage without a rehearsal and the concert began.

The audience was incredibly appreciative from the very outset, congratulating the choir on every song with the most rapturous of applause. With a Voice of Singing certainly set the scene for the evening ahead, with Llanfair and Llef, followed by Tydi a Roddaist enjoying the wonderful acoustics and organ accompaniment. It also marked the first concert for Jan to perform a selection of solo items, much to everyone’s delight.

The second half saw a selection of operatic choruses, followed by a confident second performance of Adiemus followed by the series of light numbers, including Memory, You Raise Me Up, My Way and the truly magic Nessun Dorma. With a standing ovation from the audience, the choir concluded with an emotional performance of We’ll Keep a Welcome in the Hillsides, much to everyone’s obvious delight.

Sunday July 29

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

Following many months of preparation, the Choir attended a recording session at the Rehearsal Room in Treorchy. It was the brainchild of Adrian Munsey, the film producer and managing director of Odyssey Video and Television, working in conjunction with composer Jeff Chegwin (brother of Keith) and Sarah Brightman’s personal arranger, Paul Bateman. The choir recorded a solo version of Faraway Place and also a version that would require another vocalist to record their section. They also recorded the items Voice of an Angel and I’ve Been Praying for the album, which will be entitled *Based on a True Story* and feature a variety of soloists and orchestras

Tuesday September 4

Janice Ball was officially appointed the new musical director of the Treorchy Male Choir. She is the first lady to fulfil this prestigious role.

Thursday September 6

City Hall, Cardiff

The Choir were invited to perform at a banquet in the main ballroom of Cardiff's City Hall. The occasion was Joint 32nd International Conference on Infrared and Millimetre Wales and the 15th International Conference on Terahertz Electronics, hosted by the School of Physics and Astronomy of Cardiff University. It was the first time for the conference to be held in Wales and the University felt it was appropriate to have a "Welsh" feel about their final banquet. It was with this in mind that we took to the stage with Helen Roberts as accompanist and Jan Ball as conductor. The choir performed a variety of songs for the appreciative audience and Dean Powell carried out his duties as Master of Ceremonies. The final item, Nessun Dorma, was dedicated to the memory of international Italian operatic tenor Luciano Pavarotti who passed away earlier in the day.

Tuesday September 11

Canada Square, London

Beginning their day at 7.45am, just under half of the choir spent a truly rewarding and memorable day supporting more than 20 charities at the BGC Charity Day in London. BGC is a leading inter-dealer brokerage firm that was separated from Cantor Fitzgerald in 2004. Since its inception, the company has continued its long legacy of fundraising on behalf of a wide variety of charitable causes. For the third successive year they have held charity fundraising days on September 11th, to remember the 700 members of staff they lost during the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York six years ago. One of the charities to benefit from the \$5million raised was the Woodenspoon, which the choir continues to support in various capacities. Therefore choristers began their day with an open-air performance in Canada Square on Canary Wharf, London. With Dr Haydn James and Jan Ball in attendance, each conducted a series of songs for the general public who were enjoying their lunch in nearby café bars or simply sitting on the green to enjoy the performance.

Tuesday September 11

Barclays Building, Churchill Place, Canary Wharf

The BGC Charity Day continued throughout the day with choristers enjoying the opportunity of visiting the hub of the company on the 19th floor. This floor contained the area of stock brokers who were dealing for the best competitive prices on the open market. It was in such a loud, exciting environment that choristers met the wife of former British Prime Minister Cherie Blair who stood for photographs with the choristers. They also had the opportunity to meet a variety of well-known individuals including Daley Thompson, Duncan Goodhew, Martin Johnson and Douglas Hurd.

After an enjoyable buffet and drinks in the one of the main boardrooms, choristers took to their places in the open foyer of the 18th floor. This large, imposing room stood five storeys high and had a glass side to it, allowing breathtaking views of the

rest of Canary Wharf. With Jan Ball as accompanist (owing to the unavailability of Helen Roberts) and Dr Haydn James as conductor, the choir performed ten items for the champagne-drinking audience of more than 300 staff. Although only a handful stood and listened, the choir provided plenty of entertainment, adding to the atmosphere of a very special day for all the charities involved. With many choristers retiring to the Park Bar in Canada Square, they continued to entertain the audience in the open air until late in the evening.

Saturday September 15th

The Cathedral, Llandaff

A memorable concert in Llandaff Cathedral was held in aid of Welsh Children's Cancer Charity, Latch. Many of the choristers had previously performed in Arthur Miles's son's wedding that day in St Mellon's Country Club and spent an enjoyable afternoon in Llandaff village prior to the evening performance.

The concert, before a packed audience and held on the same day of the Welsh defeat against Australia at the Millennium Stadium, saw a vast array of performers take to the stage. Set beneath the controversial statue by Epstein, the Cathedral School Orchestra opened with the Dambusters march and following a rousing applause it was the choir that set the scene with a selection of religious items including With a Voice of Singing, The Lord's Prayer and Llef. Once more Jan and Helen displayed their typical professionalism as they led the choir without a hitch. Dean Powell performed his usual role as Master of Ceremonies with typical wit and distinction.

The Cathedral School Girl Choristers and pianist Piers Kennedy were also included in the first half before the choir concluded with Myfanwy, Sara, Unwaith Eto and a very memorable Tydi a Roddaist. The "amen" section certainly raised the eyebrows in such a marvellous setting.

The second half saw a similar format of performers, with the additions of singer-songwriter Rob Allen. However, nothing prepared us for the performance of 10-year-old harpist Benjamin Creighton-Griffiths. His performance of Hasselman's La Source was simply breathtaking and as the audience and choir congratulated him with a standing ovation it was obvious we had all witnessed a child prodigy perform.

The Choir concluded with Memory and a magnificent Nessun Dorma which brought the audience to its feet. However, it was the performance of Over the Rainbow that will live long in the memory. This is the theme song for Latch and as we performed it the entire audience held candles high above their head and the cathedral lights were turned off. This atmospheric performance was both thrilling and deeply emotional.

Also present on the evening were a large collection of local dignitaries, including mayors of local authorities, the Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan and our old friend Roy Noble who addressed the audience in his own inimitable, comic style.

In tribute to Sir Tasker Watkins, whose memorial service was held in the Cathedral earlier that day, the choir performed Men of Harlech.

Tuesday October 2nd

The funeral of First Bass chorister Maldwyn Morgan took place today at Coychurch Crematorium. The choir performed Gwahoddiad under the direction of Jan Ball.

Saturday October 6th

Borders Book Store, Cardiff

A group of 35 choristers were invited to perform at the launch of the new Borders Book Store on The Hayes, Cardiff. Amid plenty of publicity and celebrity visits, the choristers performed two groups of popular music at the entrance of the store with the new choir display board on show. Several hundred shoppers stopped to listen throughout the afternoon and showed their obvious approval.

Thursday October 11th

Parc & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

This year's annual concert at the Parc & Dare Theatre allowed us the opportunity to introduce our new musical director, Jan Ball to the home audience. They were all obviously impressed by our new appointment as the choir gave another first class performance. With a Voice of Singing certainly set the scene for the music to come, with some memorable performances of Morte Christe, Bryn Myrddin and Llanfair. The choir also gave its first performance of the Jeff Howard arrangement, Y Darlun which received enthusiastic applause.

The guest artists for this evening's concert were the eisteddfod-winning choir of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bodringallt. Also on stage was soprano Laura Rees of Pontypridd. The second half of the concert saw the Choir open with a selection of operatic numbers with March of the Peers enjoying rousing applause. Adiemus was also warmly received, as was Faraway Place and the concluding performance of Nessun Dorma was undoubtedly a highlight.

Friday October 19th

Brains Brewery, Cardiff

The Choir was invited to perform at a corporate event in the capital city to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Brains Brewery Company. The Chief Executive, Christopher Brain and his family, friends and special guests, enjoyed a dinner in a marquee in the grounds of the brewery. Prior to their meal the Choir performed a 30-minute concert. Jan Ball conducted with Helen Roberts at the piano and Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Dean Powell

Tuesday October 23rd

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

Honorary Membership of the Treorchy Male Choir was bestowed on accompanist and arranger Bryan Davies in recognition of more than forty years faithful service to the organisation.

Saturday October 27th

Rhondda Heritage Park, Trehafod

A group of choristers were invited to perform a selection of items at the 60th Anniversary of the Nationalisation of the Coal Industry event at the Rhondda Heritage Park. The choristers performed prior to and following a resounding speech by Professor Dai Smith, and once again in the main section of the museum.

Saturday October 29th

Subscription Rooms, Stroud

This evening's concert, organised by our old friend, David Green, couldn't have been for a more worthy charity than the Acorns Children's Hospice in Stroud. The Choir and mezzo-soprano soloist Kate Woolveridge gave of their best before the packed audience. This evening's concert was extra special in that composer Adrian Munsey, who wrote Faraway Place, was in the audience. He was asked to stand and give a bow when the Choir performed this item which is being released as a single in December.

Compere for the evening was Dean Powell, who also performed his usual end-of-first-half solo Unwaith Eto'n Nghymru Annwyl. The Choir certainly lifted the room with Llanfair, Llef, Tydi a Roddaist and Soldier's Chorus. The performance of Y Darlun began incorrectly, then suddenly corrected itself and nobody was any of the wiser- off stage at least!

The second half had many magical moments also, especially I Dreamed a Dream, Faraway Place, Over the Rainbow, You Raise Me Up and of course the usual finale showstopper of Nessun Dorma. The first performance in this venue certainly won't be the last given the response from the audience who rewarded us with a thrilling standing ovation.

Saturday November 10th

Oakengates Theatre, Telford

A return visit to Telford saw the choir share the stage with not only Kate Woolveridge as mezzo-soprano soloist, but also comic John Evans who certainly livened up the audience with his remarkable wit and storytelling technique. It was also a special evening for Kate and Jan as they launched their new joint cd, Mezzo Piano. The concert itself was another remarkable performance as each chorister paid the utmost attention to Jan in every way possible. Her precision, extension of phrases and technique has certainly endured her to all. Tonight the usual repertoire raised the roof at Telford, but more remarkable was the incredible response to You Raise Me Up which almost proved the showstopper of the night had it not been for My Way and Nessun Dorma which certainly secured us two standing ovations. A memorable evening indeed.

Friday December 7th

St Georges Bristol

There could have been no better way to conclude the official engagement list of the year than by the choir's debut performance at St Georges in Bristol. This converted

chapel, which is now an art centre complete with bar, restaurant and the most acoustically-perfect auditorium, proved an unforgettable venue for the concert. From the very outset it was obvious that this was going to be a remarkable evening to live long in the memory. It certainly was for First Tenor Gareth Thomas, who made his debut on stage with the choir.

The concert was an outstanding success, as witnessed by three standing ovations from this hugely enthusiastic crowd. Rousing applause, hilarious laughter and a wonderful connection between the audience and choir helped secure the foundation for a successful night. Fortunately we had the best of the best in soloists also as Kate Woolveridge proved a massive hit with the crowd.

The concert opened with a congregational performance of O Come All Ye Faithful, followed by With a Voice of Singing. As compere Dean Powell began his usual repartee with the audience, it was obvious they were thrilled with the concert from the very outset. In this perfect acoustic Ar Hyd y Nos and Myfanwy, along with Y Darlun and Cavantina, sounded close to perfection.

The rousing items of Llanfair, Llef and Unwaith Eto'n Nghymru Annwyl in the first half were quite amazing. Dean Powell performed the solo in the latter, and also in O Holy Night. His baritone counterpart Ray Daniels certainly had a memorable night as the soloist in the debut performance of Alwyn Humphrey's arrangement of the Zulu chant, Senzenina. It was absolutely superb.

As the concert drew to a close we were all aware that this was going to be a great finale. You Raise Me Up, My Way and Nessun Dorma simply wouldn't be enough to quash the thirst of this audience and so we performed Tydi a Roddaist and then We'll Keep a Welcome before the congregational singing of Hark the Herald Angels Sing and the two anthems. The choir left the stage victorious crusaders, with the sound of rapturous applause ringing in their ears.

Thursday December 13th

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

Adrian Munsey and the staff of his Infinity Records attended the rehearsal room this evening to record a series of radio "jingles" for a selection of DJs in the hope they will support Faraway Place. The single, which was released last week, has been tipped as a Christmas Number 1 by bookmakers Ladbrokes. With 33-1 odds, the choir is now on par with the Spice Girls and Kylie Minogue for the big spot. This thrilling news allowed the choir plenty of newspaper, tv and radio publicity on the run-up to Christmas! The evening was extra special for one particular chorister also. W. Raymond Watkin, better known to all as "Boyo" reached a milestone in his choral career by celebrating his fiftieth anniversary as a member. Chairman Gareth Evans presented him with a gold watch in recognition of his dedicated service.

It was also a momentous evening in the history of the choir. Following a recommendation to the general body it was felt the time had come to recognise the efforts of women in the history of the Treorchy Male Choir. In this regard it has been decided to change the constitution and present Honorary Lady Membership awards to certain individuals. This evening Chairman Gareth Evans gave the first of these to our

new musical director Jan Ball. An award was then presented to accompanist Helen Roberts in recognition of their unstinting loyalty to the Treorchy Male Choir.

Tuesday December 18th

On the last rehearsal of the year, the Choir bestowed Honorary Lady Membership of Jean Lawrence for her faithful service to the organisation.

Friday December 21st

Ty Hafan Children's Hospice, Sully

As Christmas was fast approaching a small selection of choristers were invited to perform in a very moving Memorial Service at Ty Hafan Children's Hospice in Sully. The evening was held to remember all those little children who had passed away from terminal illnesses during their care at the Hospice. The service was held before a crowd of 70 mourning parents, grandparents and brothers and sisters of the children. It took place in a marquee outside the hospice with everyone attending holding a lit candle. The atmosphere of such an emotional gathering of people on this wintry night was one that few of us would ever forget.

The choir led the congregational singing of carols during the service before performing Myfanwy and Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn with Dean Powell as soloist. The families placed cards on a memorial table with their child's name written on them before we all moved outside to the Garden of Remembrance. The choir stood across a small footbridge. Below was a flowing stream filled with pebbles with their children's names written on them. As the choir sang Speed your Journey and Nessun Dorma, the families placed candles in little boats and sailed them down the stream. The effect, as one can appreciate, was deeply moving indeed. As Christmas was almost upon us the choristers realised how fortunate their own lives were as they paid tribute to those dear children and their families.