

# EXCELSIOR



## THE VOICE OF THE TREORCHY MALE CHOIR

RECORD FOR THE  
YEAR 2016

Edited by DEAN POWELL, *Publicity Officer and Honorary Archivist*  
and Sub-Edited by SELWYN JONES, *Secretary*



TREORCHY MALE CHOIR  
2016

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Arthur Miles	Michael Tibbott	Derek Thomas	Alun Davies
Mark Williams	John Williams	Ray Daniels	David Evans
<i>Above denotes Committeemen of each section</i>			
Cyril Bevan	Andrew Costin	David Bebb	Kevin Bebb
John Bowen	Philip Francis	Alan Bowen	Tony Davies
Ernald Brooks	Gary Horgan	Hywel Bryant	Gareth Evans
Graham Cox	Ken Johnson	Norman Cox	David Harris
Wyn Davies	Derek Langley	Paul Cunningham	Robert Hopkins
Wayne Dury	Norman Martin	Philip Edmunds	David Hughes
Jorge Garcia	Mark Milsom	Gerald Emanuel	Alan Iles
David Griffiths	Keith Owens	Ron Evans	Bryn Jones
Alwyn Lewis	David Powell	Sean Evans	Lee Phillips
Dillwyn Llewellyn	Jeff Priday	John Fletcher	Jeff Powell
Ivor Lock	Ian Reynolds	Ryan Howells	John Radford
Gwyn Morgan	Callum Richards	John Jones	Mike Russ
Islwyn Morgan	Robert Saunders	Selwyn Jones	David Williams
Roger Morse	Ken Simcox	Robert Morgan	Dennis Young
Adrian Owen	Glyn Thomas	Keith Newman	
Dean Powell	Martin Wilkins	David Phillips	
Ceri Rees		Sean Rees	
Reg Stephens		Daryl Stacey	
Gareth Thomas		Jonathan Stanton	
John Weaver		William Thomas	
David Williams		Ceri Warren	
		William Watkin	
		Roger Watkins	
		Brian Williams	

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## FOREWORD

By THE MOST REVERED DR BARRY MORGAN  
ARCHBISHOP OF WALES

We often do not realise the influence that music has on our lives. Shops have background music because their owners obviously think that music helps to put people in the right frame of mind for making purchases. Even if we do not deliberately stop and listen, subconsciously we are being put in the mood to buy. Likewise too, during films, the music gets louder or more spooky depending on what is happening on screen.

So music has a deep influence upon us even if we are not conscious of it. But the one place where we are conscious of the need for music, and expect it is, as part of our worship. It is as if we realise that it is difficult with words alone to convince people that there is a God. Music, because it does not pack its message into the capsule of ideas, can utter the unutterable and can help us express feelings, emotions and desires which are deeper than any words and touch parts of us which almost nothing else can.

So at the service of commemoration in Mametz Woods last year, where thousands of British troops were massacred during the First World War, what stands out in my mind was the hymn sung by the Treorchy Male Choir. It was incongruous to have such a wonderful sound in a place of bleakness.

The strong link between music and worship is attested to in Holy Scripture. In the Old Testament, the Temple of God where God resides is full of music. Psalm 150 is but one example – “Praise God in his sanctuary, praise Him with the sound of the trumpet, praise Him with the lute and harp, praise Him with the cymbals”.

David danced before the Ark of the Covenant containing The Commandments and it is quite difficult to dance without having music.

In the New Testament, the vision of Heaven and the dwelling place of God, presented by the Book of Revelation are profoundly and fundamentally musical. The elect sing and play musical instruments. No mention of clergy, or painting, or poetry. Music has the prime place – indeed the only place. In fact, in the Apocalypse’s vision of Heaven, people do not play football, or poker, go swimming, read novels, or play golf. Insofar as we see them do anything, they make music and cast down their crowns before God’s throne. Heaven seems to be a musician’s dream.

God seems to be a God of music. It therefore follows that if Heaven is full of music, then the music of earth needs to point towards that heavenly vision which is precisely what we attempt to do in worship by singing and praying to God. Worship is giving worth to God with all that we have and are, and music is integral to it. The Treorchy Male Choir has done that many times.

The contribution of musicians to the liturgy of the Church is not an incidental extra, the icing on the cake, but belongs to the very essence of what worship is all about and our cathedrals, and great churches, remind us of that truth for here we often have the very best music that human beings are capable of, and that is as it should be, for only the very best ought to be offered to God.

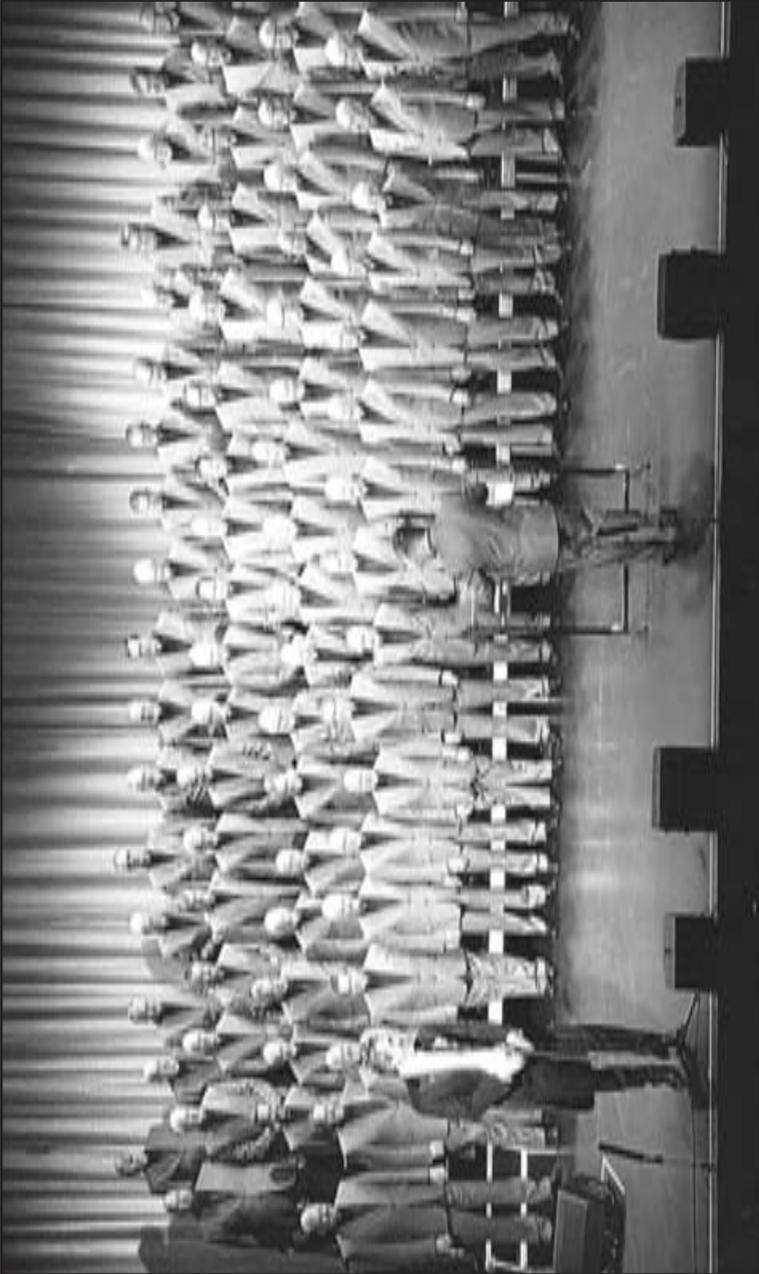
And the fact that the language of music frequently colours our everyday language suggests that we are created to make music. It seems part of our DNA. We speak of harmony and of a harmonious society. We agree a concord with nation states. When things are going well, we speak of an 'up-beat' atmosphere and of feeling 'good vibes'. Conversely, we can encounter disharmony and discord in our day to day dealings with each other. Some situations may appear to be rather bleak, so we speak of the 'blues' and we are well used in Church, at any rate, to 'singing from the same song sheet'!

Music, of course, is in any case, its own language: and a universal language, at that. We will be aware of its immense capacity to move people from a range of ages and backgrounds: from the cheering audience at the Last Night of the Proms, to the crowds of people at a pop concert to hear Take That or McFly, to the quiet experience of a solitary person who wants to escape from themselves and from the world for a while, to the singing of a male voice choir. Music meets all our demands, all our requirements and many of our emotional needs.

Music helps us to express feelings and emotions which go far beyond our normal expressions. It enables us to express ourselves on levels deeper than we can understand. Thank God for it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jimmy Cambanis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Jimmy" is written in a larger, more prominent script, and the surname "Cambanis" follows in a similar but slightly smaller script.

Archbishop of Wales



*Treorchy Male Choir and special guest Jason Howard at the 70th Anniversary Concert in the Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy*

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

By BRIAN BATES

What a wonderful achievement! The 16th October 2016 marked your 70th anniversary and this was a year with much to celebrate, at the same time recalling our Choir's great history. I doubt if those founding fathers in 1946 would have thought that the Choir they set up would carry the music of Wales across the globe and become world famous.



*President Brian Bates and partner Pauline*

Finding early fame as a male voice choir was much down to our first conductor John Haydn Davies, rightly recognized as the master teacher of tonic solfa and choral music. He moulded a group of male voices into a prize-winning choir in just a few short years.

I feel sure this did not happen by chance, rather much more by hard and dedicated practice three times each week on a Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday and this should be a reminder to all present choir members that staying at the very pinnacle of success does

require much time in the practice room. Having then been to the rehearsals, what a thrill it must be to sing on the concert stage!

Once again throughout the year I have been able to join you at many of your concerts, the most moving to witness was our trip to commemorate the Battle of Mametz Wood. I know much will be written by others about this amazing experience, while for me it was a very special honour to travel with you to such an important event.

There were other concerts I was able to enjoy over the year at Monmouth, Bibury, Brewood, Cheltenham and Caerleon to name but a few. At the Brewood concert I was so pleased to catch up with Mel Thomas, a dear and faithful friend to our Choir for more than a few decades. Mel is a fine MC and raconteur and I will always remember his presentation of Norman Martin's

"This is Your Life" after a concert in Walsall Town Hall and who will ever forget his "There's Always a Warm Welcome", a tribute to the Members of Treorchy Male Choir.

Your magnificent annual Park and Dare concert celebrating the Choir's 70th Anniversary was well received by all and the audience were able to enjoy a fantastic evening of music with all of you singing your hearts out. Our very special guest soloist for the evening was internationally renowned Welsh baritone Jason Howard, who flew in especially from his home in Canada to perform for us. His presence on stage and choice of songs brought much pleasure to the packed audience. Also working hard and adding much to the great success of the evening were our own Conductor and Musical Director Jeff Howard, accompanist Helen Roberts and compere Dean Powell.

It was during the Annual Concert that I was invited on stage to receive from our Chairman David Bebb the new President's Chain of Office, commissioned to mark the anniversary and made especially by the Royal Mint. I am very humbled and highly honoured to be the first President of Treorchy Male Choir to wear such an important symbol and will do so with much pride whenever I attend engagements with you.



*Brian pictured in Usk with Barbara Hughes, the great niece of John Hughes who composed "Cwm Rhondda"*

I offer my heartfelt thanks to our Chairman David Bebb, Secretary Selwyn Jones, Treasurer Jeff Priday and their fellow committee members for all their hard work and enthusiasm. I also thank Jeff, Helen, our soloist Ray Daniels and all of our choristers for their huge contribution over the year, together with everyone who in any way helped enhance the work of our wonderful Choir during 2016.

As President of the Choir it gives me great pleasure each year to contribute to our yearly Excelsior. I trust everyone will enjoy reading about our choir life together. I send my very best wishes to everyone at Treorchy Male Choir and to all who enjoy your music.

## THE SECRET INGREDIENT

By PHILIP HARPER  
MUSICAL DIRECTOR, CORY BAND

In my role as Musical Director of the Cory Band, I cross over into Wales at least twice a week to lead rehearsals, record CDs and conduct concerts. Ever since the moment I walked into the Cory bandroom for the first time in April 2012, I was aware that this was more than just a room with 30 people in it. There was something in the air, an atmosphere, a feeling.

What was this extra thing I was experiencing? It seemed like when the band got together, there was some kind of aura or magic spell at work, something intangible, but definitely something real. There was something transcendental about the energy created by this disparate group of people who came together with a shared objective in music.

We all know that collective music-making can have these kind of effects, but with Cory this was something else – something different. As I travelled back and forth across the Severn Bridge to my home in Gloucester I often pondered this question – whatever this thing was, I was hooked!

Now several years have gone by, and I have reached my conclusion – this extra element, I think, is something which I can only call ‘Welshness’. As a foreigner in the Principality, I have always been aware of the difference in my nationality – the road signs are in a different language and the accents and dialects are very distinctive in comparison to the everyday sounds I hear. But this ‘Welshness’ has taken me a longer time to fathom, although I’m guessing it exists in most if not all Welsh organisations – including of course the Treorchy Male Choir.



It seems to me to be a combination of pride, passion and fierce protectiveness. The pride and passion were there for all to see at last summer’s European Football Championships, and they took the Welsh team much further than anyone expected, and certainly further than the abject English who floundered at every step. (Fortunately, through my work with Cory, I feel entitled to support the Welsh on such occasions!)

The protectiveness is of course a common characteristic of small nations – the UK feels it on the global stage (maybe one of the reasons for Brexit?) and the Welsh feel it when looking furtively east towards England. In its negative form you might call it suspicion. Before I got the job with Cory I filled in as



*Treorchy Male Choir and The Cory Band  
at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama*

conductor at a few concerts and, although everyone was welcoming and friendly, the guardedness was evident. Who was this guy? What's he like? Does he know what he's doing?

From the moment I took the job as Cory's Musical Director things changed and I was instantly backed by absolutely everyone as I made the crucial step from outside to inside the organisation. Everyone knew that the only way the group could prosper and develop was by backing the leader – even if he was English!

The amazing thing is that, although 'Welshness' is never discussed and really only exists as a theory in my head, my English reserve and apathy has gradually transformed to encompass this most wonderful of characteristics. And I still feel it every time I walk into a rehearsal room or onto a stage. It's addictive and invigorating and I think it gives Wales the edge in many situations, be it at a brass band competition, on a football field, or in a Male Voice Choir.

I look forward to many more years of tapping into the infinite reserves of 'Welshness' as I continue to lead Cory, one of the jewels in the Welsh musical crown, and I look forward to the next occasion we can share the stage with another – the Treorchy Male Choir.

## CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

BY DAVID BEBB

Another year, another full calendar of concerts and other activities. In total there were no fewer than 39 events during 2016 and with only 52 weeks in the year, it does emphasise the level of commitment necessary to ensure we maintain the standards we have demonstrated over the last 70 years, since the Choir reformed after World War II.

70 years is a landmark in itself, but as we now move in 2017, pride of place must go to Norman Martin and Islwyn Morgan who have achieved 70 years of service. The feat in itself is remarkable and any words from me will not do it justice, but suffice to say that they may be the two longest serving current members of any choir worldwide. Additionally, they are two fantastic blokes who rarely miss a concert or practice. They are a credit to us all and if we can achieve a fraction of what they have done, we would have done ourselves proud.

A raft of concerts during 2016 was also supplemented by a recording for BBC, HTV and other media groups, showing that our popularity remains at a high. BBC made several visits to our practice room, the first in February to record the hymn tune Cwm Rhondda, before returning in June to film us singing the national anthem for use during their coverage of Wales during Euro 2016 – in what turned out to be an amazing competition for many reasons. We returned the favour after being invited by BBC Radio Wales to perform at Coopers Fields for what seemed like thousands of delirious Welsh supporters. A very proud moment. On calmer territory we performed the Welsh version of Amazing Grace with Rhys Meirion and Iris Williams on television in July, before another filming for BBC's Songs of Praise (together with our friends Dunvant and Pendyrus Male Choirs). Also, we were invited to the showing of Paul Robeson's Proud Valley at Cardiff Chapter Arts Centre where we performed several items.

Further prestigious events included recording a CD with the Cory Band, followed by a performance with them in October, continuing our strong musical relationship with the Parc and Dare Band in our Good Friday concert and then performing with world renowned baritone Jason Howard in our 70th Anniversary Concert in November. Jason really knows how to win a crowd and the Treorchy faithful loved that night, culminating in a joint performance of Impossible Dream. A highly enjoyable evening was performing at the

Albany Church in Cardiff, which gave us the opportunity to watch and admire the skills of the Mountain View High School of California.

Whilst I cannot cover every single one of the events, they all deserve a mention in that they give us the opportunity to do what we enjoy so much – singing. There were many many concerts where the audience reaction was phenomenal, which only serves to spur us on more, sometimes giving Jeff Howard a headache trying to keep us in check!



*Long Service Membership Certificates were presented to Andy Costin, Derek Langley and John Weaver in 2016*

In July we had the honour of performing at the centenary commemorations of the Battle of Mametz Wood, France, a very sombre occasion next to the actual woods where so many Welshmen lost their lives fighting for our country. It was a very fitting occasion. The sun was shining, the boys performed admirably and the whole event was immaculate in terms of how to pay appropriate homage. We are so indebted to the Western Front for asking us to assist them at this very respectful occasion. Following this, many of the congregation joined us for our performance that same evening in the Notre Dame du Burbierre in Albert, a night where Jeff demonstrated his versatility by both conducting and accompanying us at the same time.

We managed to let our hair down a bit also, firstly by singing Calon Lan at Arras where we were staying – a performance which went ‘viral’ on social media with 600,000 views.

Special thanks go to Jeff Howard, who has continued to guide us through another year with consistent skill and enthusiasm. None of the boys want to let Jeff down and so will spend many hours perfecting their musical parts. Helen Roberts is a constant here also, linking Jeff's teaching and our performing with her skills on the piano. This is the Treorchy Male Choir team and long may it continue.

There are a host of people who have supported our concerts throughout the year, that are too many to name. These are the people who have conducted or taught us in Jeff's absence and the many soloists (some new) who we have had the pleasure to perform with over the year. You know who you are, so on behalf of the Choir please accept my thanks for doing such a great job.



*2016 Junior Musician of the Year Competition winners were flautist Grace Jones (Oaklands Primary School) and singer Frances Taylor (Parc Primary School) with BBC Wales newsreader Rebecca John*

Sadly, the year also saw us lose choristers, which is something I comment on every year. It's a sad fact of life, that with an organisation of this size and number of members past and present, that it is inevitable we will lose good friends throughout the year. Ken Waldin sadly passed, a man who gave so many years to this choir and also Peter Morris, who achieved the life membership status. Whilst all are difficult to accept, this was never more so than the sad loss of David Stanton, who due to his young age, was taken far too early. Dai (as he was known) is still missed by so many within the choir and the public outpouring of grief at the time, showed what he meant to his family, friends and the community.

It is a huge task to maintain the business needs of the Treorchy Male Choir, but such an important one as we strive to maintain our status at the top. Selwyn Jones and Jeff Friday work tirelessly as our secretary and treasurer respectively and these are ably supported by a sound committee, whose job it is to make the right decisions for the betterment of all concerned. Thanks too, to Dean Powell for his publicity & archive work and compering (honourable mention to Gareth Evans, who stands in for Dean) and to Tony Davies who organises such a good Junior Musician Competition, as well as selling CDs and other merchandise at all of our concerts. Derek Langley, Alan Bowen, Norman Cox and Roger Morse all have their jobs outside of the rehearsal room/concert hall which they do so well, so thank you all for your efforts.

Obviously, the men who stand and perform are the lifeblood of this Choir and their efforts cannot go unmentioned. There are men who attended every one of our concerts in 2016 – Ernie Brooks, Arthur Miles, Keith Owens, Ray Daniels and Tony Davies. Whilst talking about commitment, there are none that put in the effort that John Williams (2nd tenor) does, in that he lives in Llanidloes and travels 180 miles roundtrip, twice a week for every practice.

Consistency is key to ensuring that our performances remain standout, so special thanks are due to all concerned. Also, with each year numbers unfortunately drop, so we are indebted to the new starters and there were many during 2016 and now into 2017. This choir is like a family and the door is always open to those interested in joining. It is something that you will never regret.

Onto 2017 and who knows what the year will hold, but it's sure to include an array of new songs, re-polishing of some old ones, some sweat and tears, but also a lot of laughter along the way.

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## TREORCHY RAISES THE ROOF

By CHRIS BRYANT

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR RHONDDA

'If music be the food of love, play on', mused Shakespeare's melancholy character Duke Orsino at the start of his play Twelfth Night. By the end of the play he has discovered that the woman he thought he loved was never really meant for him, but both he and nearly everyone else has navigated their way through endless hilarious deceptions and misunderstandings to find their true love.



Like Orsino, we all know the power of music. I don't suppose there is a single person who hasn't cried to a sad tune or shouted along to a ballad like Bridget Jones. And is there a couple that doesn't have a favourite song? The truth is that music can make the heart dance, it can inspire a nation, it can turn hard-hearted men to jelly, it can remind us of times gone by, happy or sad. It has a power that few can resist.

Which is why we Welsh are so proud of our musical tradition. It's such an amazing mix. The hymns like *Cwm Rhondda* and *Calon Lan* that echoed round the Valleys and the rugby stadium and now count amongst the world's favourite tunes. The Welsh love songs like *Myfanwy* and that perennial mad-cap favourite *Sosban Fach* (try explaining to an English friend that yes, *sosban* does mean *saucepain*!)

Right at the heart of that tradition lie the Male Voice Choirs with their vast repertoire, their dedication to live music and utter professionalism. There are few sound better than the Treorchy Male Choir at the Millennium Stadium or in the Parc and Dare, raising the roof with one of the old favourites, or surprising everyone with a new number. Broadway and the West End have added to the list with great numbers like 'Bring Him Home' from *Les Miserables*, and 'The Impossible Dream' from *Man of La Mancha*.

People will point to the phenomenal recordings that the choir has made and their appearances on television with Tom Jones, Julie Andrews and Burt Bacharach, but what really makes choirs like Treorchy stand out from the rest is the dedication of its members. You don't produce that amazing sound just by turning up for the concerts. You have to be there week after week for long rehearsals, learn your lines, train your voice and listen to your colleagues. It's not about making your voice stand out, but being part of the whole balanced sound of the choir. It's about volunteers putting on a really great, thoroughly professional show.

So I pay tribute to everyone who has sung, conducted or played for the choir. You have given so much pleasure to thousands. You have made the Rhondda proud. And we all say thank you.

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## CONDUCTOR'S NOTES

By JEFFREY HOWARD

I remain continually impressed by the scale, quantity and variety of performances the Treorchy Male Choir undertake in just one year. 2016 was no exception, with venues ranging from large scale theatres to football fan zones and television studios to a First World War battlefield.

I will look back on 2016 as another busy and rewarding year which marked the 70th anniversary since the Choir was reformed from the ashes of human conflict. During the past year the Choir has performed more than 30 concerts throughout the country with visits to Weston super Mare, Bristol, Wolverhampton, Bibury, Cheltenham and Taunton to name but a few.

Choristers were delighted to perform at the official opening of the new Royal Mint Visitor Experience and at the premiere of the re-mastered version of Paul Robeson's *The Proud Valley* in Cardiff's Chapter Arts Centre.

We also enjoyed the opportunity of working alongside our colleagues The Cory Band on their championship tour of the UK with a memorable concert in the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. The concert came only a few months after the two renowned Welsh musical institutions combined for the recording of our latest CD, "A Festival of Fanfares and Carols".

Our 70th anniversary year has included many highlights including the opportunity to welcome Welsh baritone Jason Howard home for an unforgettable

concert here in Treorchy (and no, he isn't my brother!). According to reports from the choristers and surrounding community, the Annual Concert was one of the best in living memory - which is gratifying to know.



*Choristers appeared live on BBC Radio Wales at the Euro 2016 Fan Zone in Cardiff*

The Choir made a guest appearance on Songs of Praise this year, as well as joining Pendyrus and Duvant all under my baton for recordings of standard male choir hymns to be kept 'on file' for Songs of Praise to use whenever they feel it appropriate. We also recorded a television programme with Rhys Meirion and Iris Williams. We broadcast frequently on BBC Radio Wales, including a live appearance on the Wynne Evans show from Cardiff's Coopers Field to mark the Euro 2016 football celebrations.

Our trip to France was not to share in the celebrations of the Welsh football team, but to perform at the Centenary Commemorations of the Battle of Mametz Wood. It was undoubtedly the highlight of its 70th anniversary year and one of the most prestigious engagements the Choir has ever undertaken. The invitation came from the South Wales Branch of the Western Front Association. Plans were in place to hold a major commemoration event in the shadow of Mametz Wood to honour the memory of the 38th (Welsh) Division who fought there a century earlier. This would involve a full scale Remembrance Service featuring heads of state, church leaders and senior army personnel.

The location of the ceremony was at the iconic memorial to the 38th (Welsh) Division. Erected in 1987 by Welsh sculptor David Petersen, the memorial is a Welsh red dragon on top of a three-metre stone plinth, facing the wood and tearing at barbed wire. It was a poignant and moving occasion for the Choir to perform at such an auspicious occasion, with thoughts of many of the fallen heroes from the two Rhondda battalions that fought there a hundred years earlier. An eerie moment was experienced by all during the 2 minute silence as in the distance we could here gunshots - knowing that we were standing on exactly the same ground that had been a battlefield exactly one hundred years previous. The evening concert at Notre Dame du Burbierre in Albert must surely be ranked as one of the best performances in the history of the Choir - and we had prepared *Plaisir D'amour* and *La Marsellaise* in French!

Musically we continue to develop our style and repertoire. With the dedication of all concerned, we can look forward to another enjoyable and musically rewarding year ahead. Once again I would like to thank our accompanist Helen, the very many soloists who have shared our stage and to each and every chorister for their commitment to the cause.

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## THE LEGACY OF A CENTENARY

By PROFESSOR SIR DEIAN HOPKIN

As members of the Treorchi choral community will know, a highlight of the current four-year programme of First World War centenary commemorations was the moving ceremony at Mametz Wood on 7th July 2016 to remember that dreadful encounter during the Somme offensive which cost the lives of so many members of the Welsh 38th Division and scarred so many communities in Wales. The ceremony took place in that beautiful and remote green wood straddling a gentle valley and overlooked by David Peterson's remarkable memorial dragon dedicated in July 1987, now a major destination on the Somme battlefield. The incongruity of the setting was unmistakable, the calm and peaceful setting of 2016 contrasting with the scene of utter devastation and horror on that July day a hundred years ago,

The Treorchi choir's rendering of the hymn, *O Iesu Mawr*, provided a moving musical context to the readings and prayers given during the ceremony which culminated with the singing of the national anthems of Britain, France, Germany and, of course, Wales - a powerful message of the unity forged over

the past fifty years. That was not the Choir's only contribution, however. That evening an enraptured crowd listened to a wonderful programme of Welsh, French and English pieces by the Choir at Albert's Basilique de Brebieres, unperturbed by the growing cacophony of car horns, whistles and yelling as France's football team defeated the German football team in the Euro 2016 Semi-finals being played at precisely that time, a great tribute to the determination and perseverance of the Treorchy choristers. It was ironic that it should be the combatants of the Somme who played against each other that evening although on this occasion the only blood spilt, if any, would have been from fans falling over in excitement and over-indulgence.



The centenary of the First World War has enabled many people to reflect on the history of their families and communities. Although there are no living survivors of that war, the sense of identity between the

generations remains strong. Indeed, the programme of centenary remembrance has reinforced the awareness of the course of the war and its impact despite fears, at the outset, that interest would gradually diminish. The latest survey of public interest, conducted by the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport, has shown that knowledge of the war and a commitment to remembrance has increased. In part this is due to the generosity of the Heritage Lottery Fund in funding a host of local projects, the role of cultural programmes such as 14-18 Now, and not least the extraordinary Poppy installation at the Tower of London, visited by over 4 million people. Now a version of that installation, the Weeping Window, has been touring the UK and will be in Cardiff later in 2017. At the same time the BBC and other media have provided a remarkable flow of documentaries, dramas and performances to sustained interest.

In Wales, there is no doubt that cultural programmes including music have played a crucial part. Who will forget the memorable re-enactments of the battle of Somme, in Owen Sheers' play, *Mametz* performed in the fields and woods of Usk, or Ian Bell's opera *In Parenthesis*, based on David Jones' complex and innovative prose-poem, premiered in Cardiff and then at the Royal Opera House?

This year we commemorate the dreadful battle of Passchendaele (Third Ypres). On 31 July 1917, the 38th Division went into action yet again, barely a year after the disaster of Mametz, and again acquitted themselves with great courage at Pilkem Ridge. On that first day, the notable poet Ellis Evans (Hedd Wyn) died, unaware that he had won the Chair of the National Eisteddfod, awarded to him posthumously five weeks later and draped in black in respect. The empty “Black Chair” is now a symbol of the loss of promise and talent, a stark reminder that when individuals die, so do their futures. In November 2017, the Flanders Parliament will present a modern bardic chair to the Welsh Parliament because, by a great coincidence, the original chair was crafted by Eugeen Vanfleteren, a refugee from the very Flanders where Hedd Wyn died and where his memory is still held strong. Today, at the town of Langemark-Poelkabelle, near the place where he died and is buried, a new Welsh National Memorial Park has been created, dominated by a ferocious red dragon by Lee Odishaw and set on a cromlech of great stones from a quarry in Pontypridd.

Legacy has been a vital element in the planning of the centenary programmes. Apart from the Langemark memorial and the restored Mametz site we will presently have a new national heritage site at Yr Ysgwrn, Hedd Wyn’s family farm in Snowdonia. There will be a great digital legacy, material of every kind stored at the National Library and elsewhere as a permanent source for study. But there will also be a truly marvellous musical, literary and theatrical legacy for future performance and presentation.



This is no ordinary centenary but an opportunity to reflect on the horror of one of the most devastating and far reaching military conflicts in the modern era, which had a terrible impact on the lives of individuals, families and communities. At the Mametz ceremony in 2016, I was privileged to read a poem by Lance Corporal Harry Fellows, a reflection of his two visits to Mametz, first as a soldier in 1916 and then as a pilgrim in 1984. He asks the question, in the heat of battle, “Will the birds sing again in Mametz?” He ends by concluding, fifty years later, that the birds were indeed singing again, a message of hope and reconciliation. Remarkably, and on cue, a chorus of real birds did sing, their sonorous voices echoing across the valley. It was the most powerful reminder that, whatever happens in the world of politics and diplomacy, nothing like this should ever happen again.

*Professor Sir Deian Hopkin is Chair of Wales Remembers – Cymru'n Cofio, the Welsh Government's First World War Centenary Programme, and is Expert Adviser to the First Minister. He is a historian and was Vice-Chancellor of London South Bank University.*

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## IN MEMORIAM DAVID CHRISTOPHER STANTON



Beloved husband of Martine,  
much loved father of Daniel and Callum,  
devoted son of Carol and Michael  
and loving brother of Jonathan and Donna  
of Bryntirion, Mountain View, Tynwydd

Born October 19th, 1967  
Passed Away March 9th, 2016

Aged 48 years

Treorchy Male Choir has been left in a state of shock and devastation by the loss of David (“Dai”) Stanton whose remarkable courage throughout his long battle with illness endeared him to all he came into contact with.

As an organisation we have lost many dear friends over the years, but few as young as Dai, which makes his premature passing all the more tragic. Without doubt Dai was one of life's great fighters who kept smiling with that widest of grins and sparkling eyes even during the darkest days of his condition.

He loved life, his family and his friends of which he had far more than many of us will ever make in a lifetime. His good humour, vitality and zest for life, fun and enjoyment made him a huge part of any group he was part of, whether at work or play.

Dai joined the Second Bass section of the Treorchy Male Choir in 2009 and was a dedicated and faithful member of the ranks who liked nothing more than spending time in the company of his fellow choristers. He travelled across the UK with them over the intervening years, performing in theatres, cathedrals and concert halls and enjoyed weekend visits to Berlin and more recently to Guernsey where he revelled in the camaraderie of the Choir.

Dai was the middle child of Carol and Michael and was born in October 1967 at Mountain View, Tynnewydd – a street where he remained for the rest of his life. With elder sister Donna and younger brother Jonathan, he attended Dunraven Primary School and later Treorchy Comprehensive School.

On leaving school he worked for his grandfather's building merchant business also in Mountain View. This street undoubtedly had a huge place in his heart because it's where he later settled with his wife Martine after they married almost twenty five years ago. Their home and family life became complete with the arrival of sons Daniel and Callum

Dai enjoyed sport in all its forms, but particularly rugby which he played as a young man for Treherbert Boys Club. He later played for Treherbert RFC and went on to become a coach for the Boys Club team. Young players all enjoyed their coaching sessions with Dai and he made a positive impact on many of them over the years.

His other great love was gardening and he was at his happiest tending his plants while listening to his favourite music of a bygone era, from Dean Martin to Frank Sinatra. It was his love of singing which inevitably led him to the rehearsal room of the Treorchy Male Choir.

However his association with the Choir began because of the friendships he made with many of the choristers who worked alongside him at the Royal

Mint in Llantrisant. Dai was a Team Leader at the Melting Rolling Blanking Department and recently received his 25 Year Service Award. It was a deeply humbling moment when in honour of Dai's memory the Royal Mint flag was flown at half-mast on the day following his passing

The wonderful memories all of us share of Dai will ensure his memory will live on forever. We can be certain than none us will ever forget him.

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**A WONDERFUL NIGHT**  
A REVIEW OF THE CONCERT  
AT CHINA STREET CHAPEL, LLANIDLOES

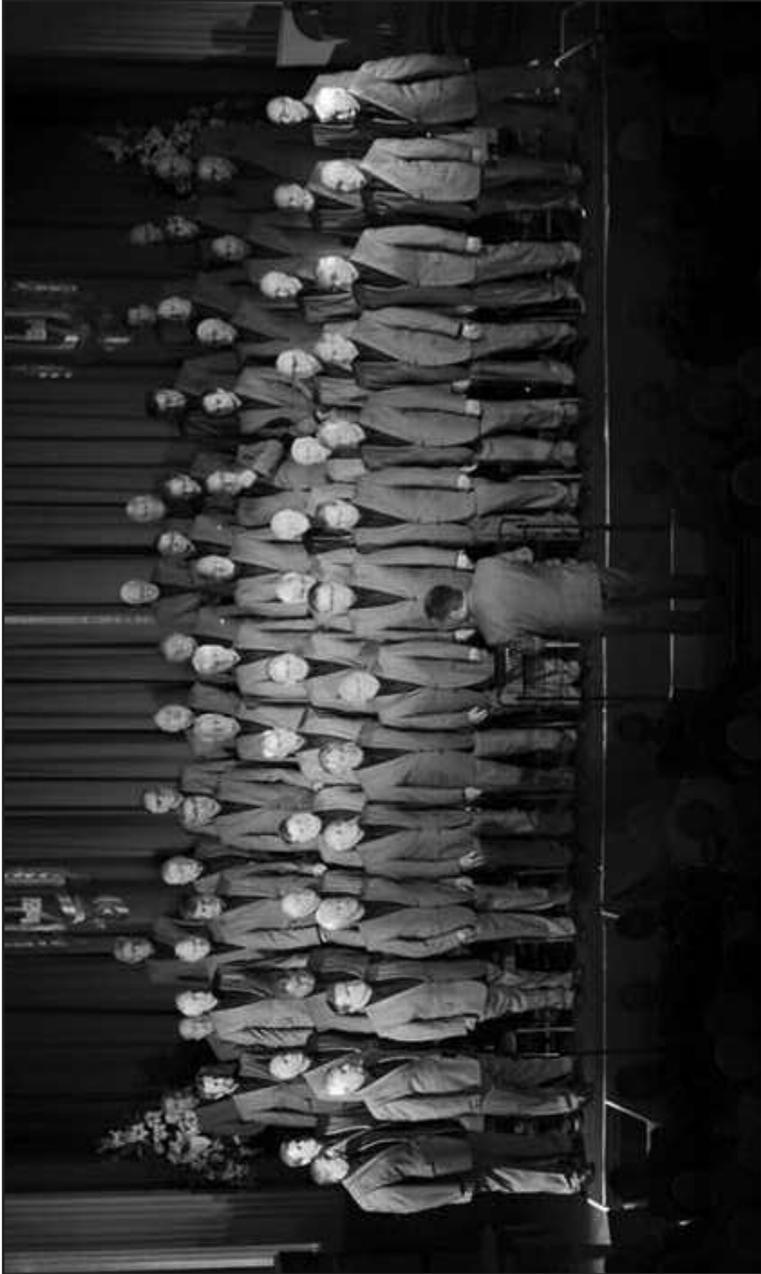
Well what a night spent with friends old and new! All brought together over what makes this wonderful country of Wales such a special place – music, culture and humour.

Treorchy Male Choir along with soloist Jessica Robinson under the direction of conductor Jeffrey Howard and accompanied by Helen Roberts treated the audience of over 500 people in Llanidloes' China Street Chapel to a musical treat.

Pieces ranged from the tear jerking World War 1 song Roses of Picardy featuring baritone soloist Ray Daniels and the most well-known of Welsh love songs Myfanwy to the modern You Raise Me Up and You Make Me Feel So yYoung which I dare any one to sit still to! The three youngest members of the audience lead the way swinging from side to side and showing us all how to really enjoy a truly awe inspiring choral treat.

The singing alone would have sufficed however what made it even more special was the compere for the night Dean Powell who tied everything together with well researched facts about the Choir, Choristers and Llanidloes. Not forgetting good old-fashioned funny jokes and quips.

In all I think everyone had a truly wonderful evening and I know that the enjoyment of the Choir went on into the small hours singing and chatting with new friends at the Llanidloes Rugby Club.



*Treorchy Male Choir at the Maesteg Festival*

IN MEMORIAM  
KENNETH JOSEPH WALDIN



Beloved husband of the late Gillian,  
much loved father of Donna and Ralph and father-in-law of Rossalyne and Alan,  
devoted grandfather to Daniel, Dewi, Laura and Esther  
and beloved great-grandfather of Benjamin

Clark Street, Treorchy

Born February 2nd, 1932

Passed Away January 2nd, 2016

Aged 82 years

Members of the Treorchy Male Choir were deeply saddened by the loss of Ken who had made so many dear friends during his time as a chorister. Ken was a stalwart member of the Second Bass section for 21 years and only recently received his Long Service Membership Certificate in recognition of his dedicated service.

Ken joined the Choir in 1994 and enjoyed the camaraderie and good nature of his new-found friends. He endeared himself to all and enjoyed every aspect of Choir life, from frequent rehearsals, concerts and overseas tours. He spent a month in Australia with the Choir in 1999 and also enjoyed the tour of Canada and USA during the following year.

Ken was born in the neighbouring coal mining area of Maesteg and was raised in Nantylfyllon with his siblings John, Anita and Margaret. After finishing school he trained as an apprentice car mechanic in Bridgend before joining the South Wales Constabulary as a Police Constable in the early 1950s. Ken enjoyed a career of more than twenty five years in the police force before retirement in 1978.

It was married life that originally brought him to the Rhondda when he met Gillian Evans, the daughter of well-known Treorchy shopkeeper Emrys "Yeast" Evans. The couple were married in 1957 and settled in the thriving valley town where they raised their two children, Donna and Ralph and loved the opportunity of being surrounded by an ever-growing family.

Ken and Gillian enjoyed a mutual love of travel, spending many weeks away from home to explore new European cities and landmarks. With their self-converted camper van they spent up to six weeks on the Continent, enjoying the many sightseeing opportunities and different cultures.

Ken enjoyed many different pastimes, but the most important to him was as a follower of the Welsh rugby team and of course his time as a chorister. He was a kind and generous man, who loved his family and lived life to the full. He will be sadly missed by all those who had the pleasure of knowing him. Today we salute his memory and mourn his passing.

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## TOUR OF MAMETZ WOOD JULY 6 – 8 2016

Treorchy Male Choir's invitation to perform at the Centenary Commemorations of the Battle of Mametz Wood was undoubtedly the highlight of its 70th anniversary year and one of the most prestigious engagements it has ever undertaken. The invitation came from the South Wales Branch of the Western Front Association with the financial support from the Welsh Government. Chairman of the branch, Philip Davies.

Plans were in place to hold a major commemoration event in the shadow of Mametz Wood to honour the memory of the 38th (Welsh) Division who fought there a century earlier. This would involve a full scale Remembrance Service featuring heads of state, church leaders and senior army personnel. The location of the ceremony would be at the iconic memorial. Erected in 1987 by Welsh sculptor David Petersen, the memorial is a Welsh red dragon on top of a three-metre stone plinth, facing the wood and tearing at barbed wire.

It was with widespread excitement and a sense of great responsibility to uphold the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice a hundred years earlier, that choristers departed the Rhondda during the early hours of Wednesday July 6. They eventually reached the Dover ferry port by midday – during which time the late bus had consumed four boxes of Welsh cakes supplied by the families of Will Thomas and Arthur Miles! It was a tense moment as choristers were ordered to walk through Customs and display their passports – particularly so for John Bowen in the First Tenor section who had mistakenly brought his wife's passport rather than his own! Fortunately they



*Treorchy Male Choir at Mametz Wood*

were understanding of this plight! The choristers boarded the P&O “Spirit of France” ferry for the hour-long crossing to Calais, enjoying the opportunity of a few celebratory drinks in the bar.



*Chorister Arthur Miles with the medal which belonged to his father Isaac who fought at Mametz Wood*

Typically, word spread throughout the vessel that the Choir was on board and performances of “Let it be Me” and “I Bob Un” were requested from the growing audience of fellow travellers. The choristers also burst into “Happy Birthday” for Choir treasurer Jeff Priday who celebrated his 71st birthday. It was amidst the atmosphere of sheer fun and enjoyment that the Choir reached northern France and were soon travelling through the beautiful countryside.

However it wasn't long before they glimpsed the sight of a World War I cemetery standing proud in the lush green countryside which had once been a battlefield of unimaginable horrors. Thanks to the diligent work of the War Graves Commission, all of the cemeteries were meticulously well kept, not a blade of grass out of place it seemed. Yet the sight of those lines and lines of white graves, marking the names of brave men and boys, some of them innocent teenagers weighed heavily on the choristers' minds as the journey to the continued.

At 4pm the Choir reached its destination, the Holiday Inn Express on the Rue du Dr Brassart in Arras. Choristers were keen to explore their surroundings once their suits were duly unpacked in their rooms and so, wearing their red polo shirts, they ventured into La Grand 'Plas. Chorister Norman Cox had undertaken a motorcycle holiday to the region and had already “scouted” out a suitable bar which could cater for the choristers on a rather special night. For this trip fell on the semi-final of the Euro 2016 football tournament. Wales were about to undertake the biggest game in their history when they took on Portugal in Lyon for a place in the final of Euro 2016. Chris Coleman's side enjoyed a memorable run to reach their first semi-final at their only major tournament since 1958.

The Choir settled into the street-side café bar of the Le Saint Christophe, enjoying the warm welcome of their new French friends who supported their

hopes for football victory! Before the 8pm kick off, the choristers gathered on the cobbles of La Grand 'Plas and burst into song of "Calon Lan", "Sospan Fach" and "Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau". Shoppers, visitors and passers by stopped to listen to the Welsh men sing songs from their homeland under the baton of Jeff Howard. The performance of "Calon Lan" was filmed by the publicity officer and placed on the Choir's social media accounts. Within 24 hours the video had gone viral with 3,700 shares, 176,000 views and 620,000 people reached.



*Performing on the main square of Arras*

Choristers watched the game on the outdoor screen, enjoying the fine wines, beers and food on offer from the helpful bar staff. As the sun slowly set, the atmosphere in this beautiful town square was one of tension, hopes and dreams of a Welsh win. Wales' fairytale run at Euro 2016 ended with Cristiano Ronaldo and although the game was lost, there was still celebrations to be had on how far the Welsh had come in the tournament.

On Thursday morning choristers were greeted with a continental breakfast before boarding the coaches for a 10am departure to Mametz. It was clear that this was a community that wanted to show its huge debt of gratitude to the Welsh people. Gardens, homes, lampposts, schools, churches and even the cars were festooned with Welsh and French flags.

Travelling through a narrow country lane, the Choir reached the site of the Memorial overlooking the woodland in the distance and saw the large marquees, seating areas and plethora of television cameras in place for the 12noon start. As choristers wandered the area they began to get a real feel for the events of July 1916 when as part of the Battle of the Somme, the 38th (Welsh) Division was detailed to capture Mametz Wood, the largest wood on the whole Somme battlefield.

The audience sat in rows of white seats below the hillside, facing the Memorial. At the foot of the hill was a row of chairs, a small stage and lectern where the official guests were invited to address the audience. It was here that the Choir enjoyed another prestigious moment when their Publicity Officer, Dean Powell was invited to lead the entire ceremony as Master of Ceremonies. It was a great honour for Dean and one he undertook with nervous apprehension!

The ceremony began with the arrival of the Band of the Royal Welsh led by Musical Director Denis Burton before the congregation was invited to perform "O Valiant Hearts". This was followed by prayers from The Most Reverend Dr Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales. A second hymn followed with "Jesus Love Of My Soul" before the 38th (Welsh) Division Lieutenant-General Jonathon Riley CB DSO gave a detailed account of the battle.

Dean then had the pleasurable task of welcoming the First Minister of Wales, The Rt. Hon. Carwyn Jones. Mr Jones' address in English, Welsh and French was absolutely outstanding and he certainly caught the attention of the many hundreds of English, Welsh, French and German who were present.

A series of prayers then followed led by the Archbishop of Wales Dr Barry Morgan, Abbé Joel Dulin of Notre-Dame de Brebières, Albert and Rev Steven Whiting MBE CF, Military Chaplain. Treorchy Male Choir then joined forces with the Band of the Royal Regiment for a performance of O Iesu Mawr under the direction of Jeffrey Howard. Despite a lack of rehearsal, an outdoor performance and the overwhelming heat of the midday sun, the Choir gave a majestic performance of this beautiful Welsh hymn.



Phil Davies of the Western Front Association read St John's Gospel, Chapter 15 vs 7-17, followed by a prayer of thanksgiving and reconciliation to be given by Abbé Joel Dulin. It was a pleasure to hear a reading of A Mother's Letter by Marietta Crichton-Stuart, the great-granddaughter of the Marquis of Bute and granddaughter of Lord Ninian Crichton-Stuart who fell in battle.

The exhortation was read by Harold Evans and the bugle sounded The Last Post. It was then that the minute's silence was held, the completion of which was signalled by sounding of the Reveille. It was during those moments of silence and quiet reflection that the haunting sounds of the lark could be heard in the air. As a slight breeze blew through the microphone systems, it sounded as if artillery fire had begun, creating an even more sombre and reflective mood under the circumstances.

The Kohima Epitaph was read by Gareth Pennell of the Royal British Legion before a reading of "Reflections on two visits to Mametz Wood 1916 & 1984" by Lance Corporal Harry Fellows" read by Professor Sir Deian Hopkin. Wreaths were laid by a variety of organisations at the Memorial and with final prayers and the four national anthems of Germany, France, Britain and Wales performed, Dean Powell closed the ceremony before the Band of the Royal Welsh departed, followed by the special guests and audience.

It had been a remarkable, emotional and deeply moving experience to have been part of such a prestigious event. The Choir was also honoured to lay wreaths at the Memorial. Chairman David Bebb was the first to lay a wreath on behalf of the Choir. He was followed by Norman Cox whose grandfather Ernest James Crabb fought at Mametz Wood and survived. The last wreath was laid by Arthur Miles whose own father fought and survived the Battle of Mametz Wood.

Choristers wandered back to their coaches, greeted by audience members, meeting Chelsea Pensioners, being approached by politicians including Leanne Wood and even Neil Hamilton, on their way. It was also an opportunity to step into the cornfields and pick poppies of their own, to be pressed inside the covers of the programme of service and kept in remembrance.

The coaches travelled for just a few short miles, choristers quietly reflecting on the overwhelming experience of the morning and realising their role in such an historic event. On reaching the Poppy Restaurant they enjoyed a four course lunch including beef bourguignon or pork, coupled with plenty of wine, cheese and delicious desserts.



Later the Choir gathered outside the magnificent Basilica Notre Dame du Brebierre in the heart of Albert. Choristers ventured inside this absolutely magnificent cathedral, overwhelmed by the sheer majesty and beauty of it. Almost 400 people filled the cathedral for the concert, including many of the dignitaries who had attended the ceremony earlier in the day, such as the Archbishop of Wales, Professor Sir Deion Hopkins, Marietta Crichton-Stuart and Abbe Joel Dullin. The Choir walked to the steps of the altar and prepared for the first musical onslaught of “Builth”. Without an accompanist on this tour, it fell on the shoulders of Conductor Jeff Howard to not only play the keyboard but also conduct the Choir at the same time. The incredible volume of the hymn in such a magnificent place of worship, set the standard of what would be one of the finest concerts in the history of the Treorchy Male Choir.

Dean Powell acted as MC for the evening, speaking only four times in the concert to allow choristers a short break in between the performance of items. The programme continued with “Y Darlun”, “Cwm Rhondda”, “Eli Jenkins’ Prayer” and “Myfanwy”. Many of the French members of the audience were particularly overjoyed to hear “Plasir D’Amour”, while the performance of “Lords Prayer” in this glorious setting was breathtaking. The first half concluded with the rousing “Calon Lan”.

A short interval followed before Jeff led his musical troops into the “Men of Harlech” which again thrilled the capacity crowd. “My Love is Like a Red Red Rose” was followed by two of the most emotional items in the entire programme. The first was “Roses of Picardy”, rehearsed and performed in preparation for this special occasion. With Ray Daniels as soloist and Dean

as narrator, the rendition was absolutely outstanding, causing cheers and loud applause from the audience. This was followed by the incredibly moving “For the Fallen”, the words of which captured the entire mood of the day.

Phil Davies of the Western Front was invited onto the stage to receive a Choir plaque from Chairman David Bebb and gave his vote of thanks to all those who had made it such an unforgettable day. The Choir continued with “You Raise Me Up”, their debut performance of “La Mer” and the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” which brought the audience to its feet. With “Gwahoddiad” as an encore and the national anthems of “Le Marseilles” and “Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau”, the Choir concluded their concert safe in the knowledge they had given one of the very best performances.



The journey to Arras was one of celebration and profound satisfaction as choristers realised they had given of their very best. On returning to the hotel many changed into casual clothing and returned to Le Grand Plas where they were greeted by an incredible party-like atmosphere as French football supporters celebrated their win over Germany that evening. Cars beeped their horns up and down the streets, flags were flown, impromptu singing, fire crackers exploded in the streets. The celebratory mood was something many of the choristers had never experience in their lives. It was an evening of enjoyment and typical Treorchy camaraderie.

At 10am on Friday morning the Choir departed Arras and reached the Calais ferry terminal in time to catch the 1.35pm “Spirit of Burgundy” ferry back to Dover. Once on board the Choir settled into the bar and again entertained

the enthusiastic travellers with “Let It Be Me” and “Gwahoddiad” before reaching the English coast. The heavy motorway traffic caused plenty of delays on the return journey but it allowed “Captain Clec”, Daryl Stacey to read the “Bing Bong” Awards for the greatest errors and mishaps which took place on the trip. Eventually the coaches reached The Hatchet Inn at Newbury for an end-of-tour drink. It was here that chorister Jonathan Stanton bought every chorister a drink in memory of his dearly departed brother David who certainly would have loved every minute of this tour.

The journey home continued, reaching the valley after 9pm as weary choristers bid each other a fond farewell until the next rehearsal. This had been a deeply emotional journey for many of the choristers. For some it was a personal pilgrimage to remember their forefathers. For most it was the opportunity to pay tribute to those many thousands who laid down their lives a century ago.

*“They shall grow not old  
As we that are left grow old  
Age shall not weary them  
Nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun  
And in the morning  
We will remember them”*

Lest we forget.

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## BING BONG AWARDS

### Mentions in Dispatches

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Selwyn Jones | At the Poppy Restaurant he filled his water bottle with white wine                                     |
| Alwyn Lewis  | At Calais he gulped his pint because the captain called departure time. We had another 25 minute wait! |
| Andy Costin  | His driving licence photograph is like “Teen Wolf”   |
| Derek Thomas | Caught someone out for being twp and said “That’s going to be a Boom Boom”                             |
| Ivor Lock    | Following the huge celebrations in the streets of Arras he asked “who won the football?”               |

Boyo Watkins	Late for the bus
John Jones	Left his chicken at home
John Bowen	Put on deodorant but ended up spraying his suit with shaving foam
Hywel Bryant	Following in his family's footsteps. He missed the concert in Albert as his uncle John Radford missed the one in Guernsey
Daryl Stacey	Left his suit in the hotel
Brian Bates	Dean bought a bottle of water in the Poppy Restaurant and the President opened it and offered it around the table
Alun Davies	Said he was so hot he'd become "hyperglaciated".
Brian Williams	Left his grey trousers in the cathedral
Ian Reynolds	"You don't need a hearing aid if other people would just speak louder!"
Rob Saunders	Embarrassed when talking to a French lady about the football and she said she hoped to "play with him tomorrow" (she meant Wales vs France!)
Mark Williams	Ordered a Pig Porkioniuu in the restaurant
Alun Davies	Bought a round of drinks, one was poured down the drain and he was charged 32E instead of 25E.

## **Awards**

### Bronze

Roger Watkins	When asked what was the name of the jewellery shop beginning with "C" he answered, "Pandora"
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### Silver

Ivor Lock	For his use of phrasing while climbing a set of stairs
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### Gold

John Bowen	For impersonating his wife by bringing her passport on the tour Mastermind (Twpness) Award
Ceri Rees	While sat in the traffic jam he exclaimed, "Duw there's a

lot of cars on the M25”

Phoned home and got through to Mike Russ who was standing 6ft away.

While standing in front of Mametz Wood, asked “Where is the wood?”

Lost his passport – it was under his feet

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## REMEMBERING MAMETZ

By PHILIP DAVIES  
CHAIRMAN, SOUTH WALES BRANCH  
OF THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

July 2016 marked the centenary of the Battle of the Somme which began on the 1st July and lasted until the 18th November 1916. This was arguably the most significant battle of the First World War with 419,654 British and Commonwealth soldiers killed, almost 20,000 of these on the first day, and many more wounded. It had a lasting impression on the nation’s psyche. The first of July is often remembered for the sacrifices of the “Pals” battalions of Kitchener’s New Army, the citizen army, made up of volunteers raised from specific neighbourhoods, workplaces and professions who joined up with their friends and work colleagues.



On July 7th 1916 the 38th (Welsh) Division was introduced into the battle and tasked with the capture of Mametz Wood, whose capture was essential to the second phase of the great battle. The 38th (Welsh) Division contained the Welsh equivalent of the “Pals” battalions of the English towns and counties. The 38th (Welsh) Division was composed of battalions raised from Welsh Volunteers. There were battalions of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, the Welsh Regiment and the South Wales

Borderers raised from the Rhondda, Cardiff, Swansea, Carmarthen, Gwent, North Wales and from the London Welsh. Many were recruited locally and were made up of men who had worked and socialised together and who had a common heritage and outlook on life. This was a microcosm of Welsh life and was dubbed Lloyd George's "Welsh Army".

Mametz Wood near Albert on the Somme is the largest wood in the area. It is approximately one mile square and in 1916 (as today) is dense woodland of deciduous trees with thick undergrowth which made it almost impenetrable. It lay between the German front line trench system captured in the 1st of July and the second line trench system a few kilometres north and was defended by an elite regiment of the Prussian Guard, the Lehr regiment. The wood was attacked by the Welshmen on 7th July 1916 and the battle for control of the wood was spread over the next few days until the 12th of July when the Welsh troops were relieved having captured the wood.

Casualties were high with over 1,000 killed and a further 3,000 wounded, a quarter of the strength of the division. The actions of the Welsh at Mametz Wood and the loss of life had a profound effect on Welsh Society at the time, effects which are still felt to this day in many Welsh communities.



On Thursday 7th July 2016 a congregation of more than 800 people, many from Wales, but a few from as far away as Canada and Australia, gathered together to commemorate the Battle of Mametz Wood. This event was the Welsh National Service of Commemoration and Reconciliation for 2016, and was held opposite the wood in

the shadow of the magnificent "red dragon" sculpture created in 1987 by Welsh blacksmith artist, David Petersen.

The service, organised by the South Wales Branch of the Western Front Association, and supported by the Welsh Government, was led by the most

Reverend Dr. Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales and Monsignor Joel Dulin, Abbe of the Basilica of Notre Dame des Brebières, Albert. Music was provided by the band of the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Welsh Regiment and the Treorchy Male Choir. The regiment also deployed a colour party and marching contingent with the colours of the 1st and 3rd Battalions along with the regimental pioneers in their ceremonial uniforms. Several hundred 'Old Comrades' of the antecedent regiments of the Royal Welsh also paraded with their association standards which added to the visual impact.

In a very moving service, readings were given by the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, Lieutenant-General Jonathan Riley, Marietta Crichton-Stuart, Sir Deian Hopkin and Philip Davies of the WFA. The exhortation was delivered by Harold Evans of the South Wales WFA who had been Chairman of the Memorial Committee when the Dragon Memorial was first inaugurated in July 1987. Sadly Harold passed away a month later; he had been determined to be at the commemoration.

The service was attended by leaders of the political parties in the Welsh Assembly, Andrew R T Davies, Leanne Wood and Neil Hamilton, who laid wreaths on behalf of the Welsh people as did local French political leaders including Madame Odile Bureau the Sous-Prefet of Peronne, and the Mayor of Mametz, Stephane Brunel.

It was fitting that the Service was so ably led by the Treorchy Male Choir and its Publicity Officer, Dean Powell, who kindly stepped in to act as master of ceremonies. Two Battalions of the Welsh regiment, the 10th (1st Rhondda) and 13th (2nd Rhondda) were recruited from the miners of the Rhondda Valley and were heavily involved in the battle suffering enormous casualties. Several members of the choir had relatives who fought in and luckily survived the battle.

After the formal wreath laying by the political leaders of Wales and the leaders of the three services, wreaths were laid by the representative of the German Ambassador and various French communities. Pride of place was given to the families of those who died or served at Mametz Wood, among these was the grandson of C.S.M "Dick" Thomas of the 16th (Cardiff City) Welsh, who was killed on 7th July 1916, along with relatives of John Thomas Davies 14th (Carmarthen) Welsh who won the military medal in the action. Two members of his family had travelled from Canada. Wreaths were also laid to remember the relatives of two members of the Treorchy choir who had fought in the battle.

Following the service the villagers of Mametz laid on a Champagne reception and refreshments for the many visitors, while the band of the Royal Welsh played on the village green. The villagers of Mametz had gone out of their way to help make this a special occasion and the village was bedecked with Welsh and French flags. The welcome and sense of gratitude of this small village was palpable.

In the evening a wonderful concert was given to an appreciative audience by the Treorchy Male Choir in the basilica of Notre Dame de Brebieres in Albert. Members of the choir were the first to comment that this was one of their finest performances in a Cathedral with amazing acoustics. The hwyl and passion of the choir was evident from the first item right through to the last.

One person attending the concert commented; “This was tremendous and truly memorable. My friends who accompanied me on the visit to France all commented on its quality and the emotion which it generated”.

On subsequent days the commemoration was continued with moving ceremonies at the three main cemeteries containing casualties from the battle, Flat Iron Copse cemetery, Dantzig Alley cemetery and Heilly Station cemetery.

At each of the cemeteries visited, participants were handed a specially commissioned poppy, a Welsh Flag and a card giving information on the life, family and background of each individual soldier who was killed in the battle and buried in that cemetery. The participants were invited to locate and then stand at the grave of the soldier whose name they had been given. In this way tributes were placed at each grave marking a soldier of the 38th (Welsh) Division killed or died of wounds at Mametz Wood. Following this a short service was held at each cemetery led by Father O’Shea, padre to the QARANC (T), and accompanied the band of the Royal Welsh. A bugler sounded the last post and reveille and two minutes silence was observed. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Royal British Legion were extremely supportive throughout the events.

The whole event was a fitting remembrance of those who had served as well as those who had fallen in this terrible battle and ensured that their sacrifice was not forgotten.

**IN MEMORIAM**  
**PETER MORRIS**



Beloved son of the late Gwladys and Gwyn  
 and brother of the late Brian  
 of Matexa Street, Ton Pentre  
 Born November 1st, 1938  
 Passed Away March 1st, 2016  
 Aged 78 years

Peter was born in Llwynypia Hospital in November 1938 to Gwladys Eira and Gwyn Morris of Matexa Street, Ton Pentre. He was their second son, following his brother Brian who was born three years earlier. Their father was a teacher at Pentre School and Peter spent the remainder of his life in Matexa Street. After leaving school Peter began working at Wiggins Teape paper manufacturer in Treforest.

Peter's great love of music stemmed from his childhood when he would eagerly attend services at St Peter's Church, Pentre with his mother. He became a member of the church choir and was also the church organist for many years. His passion for music was encouraged by his mother who introduced him to piano teacher Charlie Hall in Pentre.

He joined the Treorchy Male Choir sixty years ago in 1956 and remained a faithful member of the Second Bass section until ill health made it impossible for him to continue singing. Peter joined in the John Haydn Davies era of the Choir's history and enjoyed the many eisteddfod victories under his baton over the coming years.

Peter, who possessed a deep bass voice, also enjoyed the opportunity of touring Canada, USA and Australia during his time in the ranks as well as the many hundreds of concerts across the UK. As a gifted organist he assisted with producing music in tonic solfa for some of the previous musical directors of the Choir. During his tenure in the Choir he became a Long Service Member, Life Member and a Fifty Year Member, receiving a gold watch in 2006.

Despite his disability, Peter led an active life. He devoted much of his time to the local bowls club where he was Secretary and was an experienced photographer. Sadly in August 2014 Peter was hospitalised and continued to receive around-the-clock care at Pentwyn Nursing Home. In the last few months he was looked after by a dedicated team of caring staff whom the family remain forever grateful.

Peter quietly passed away on March 1st – St David’s Day.

## VICE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED

Following 60 years of faithful service to the Treorchy Male Choir William Watkin has been presented with Vice Presidency of the organisation.

Affectionately known as “Boyo” he received his Award at the Choir’s 70th Anniversary Concert in the Park & Dare Theatre. It was a special moment in the life of the 87-year-old who has rarely missed a concert or rehearsal in the past six decades.

Boyo was born in Penyreglyn, Treherbert to World War I veteran William Rhys and his wife Sarah Jane Watkin. He was the youngest of six children – and the only son in the family – which resulted in his nickname coming from his grandfather.

Boyo was educated at Penyreglyn School before starting a lifelong career in the roofing business where he specialised in cladding. His work took him across the whole of south Wales and beyond before his retirement at the age of 63.



A keen sportsman, he played football for Treherbert Town and several factory sides in Treforest where he worked periodically. Boyo also has a love of horses and has kept many of them near his home in Treherbert over the years.

He started singing as a young boy in school and later joined the Treorchy Social Choir, which was a popular male glee party in the 1950s, before becoming a member of baritone section of Treorchy Male Choir in 1957. Since then Boyo has performed in almost 2,000 concerts from the Millennium Stadium and Royal Albert Hall to the Sydney Opera House.

We congratulate him on this prestigious and well deserved award and thank him for 60 years faithful service.

## ITS GREAT FUN TO SING IN CHOIRS

By MEL THOMAS

INSPIRED BY AND DEDICATED TO TREORCHY CHORISTERS  
NORMAN MARTIN AND ISLWYN MORGAN

Its great fun to sing in choirs,  
Be they female, male or mixed;  
If ou sing off-key, no problem,  
It's a fault that can be fixed.  
And even if aged sixty  
Your voice it hasn't broke,  
Pretend that you are singing  
And like a frog, just croak.

Its great fun to sing in choirs,  
Be you tenor, alto, bass  
Or a baritone or soprano  
Whatever is the case.  
Just do your best with high notes  
And watch conductor's beat  
The hell out of the music,  
On the ground just keep your feet.

Its great fun to sing in choirs,  
Ask Treorchy they should know  
For coupled with hard drinking  
Brings a warm contented glow.  
Learning words though, quite a challenge,  
Those in Welsh, for some, a test  
"La, la la" might be the answer,  
What the heck, just do your best.

Its great fun to sing in choirs,  
Good excuse, get out of house,  
Gives you break from moaning partner  
Freedom from their groans and grouse.  
It's a joy just to be able  
For one night to be yourself:  
Have a drink, a chat, a sing-song  
Without doubt promotes good healf  
*(rhyming was never my strong point)*

Its great fun to sing in choirs,  
It's for young and old alike  
If some try to dissuade you  
Tell them straight "Get on your bike!"  
Trips abroad, United Kingdom,  
See the world, fill it with song.  
All you need is pocket money  
Believe me pal, you can't go wrong

Its great fun to sing in choirs,  
Dressing up and looking posh.  
Magic nights when in performance,  
Followed by some high-class nosh.  
Meeting fans and keen supporters  
Critics praise? Not to be missed!  
Celebrations now in order:  
Time to get, yes Brahms and Liszt!

Its great fun to sing in choirs,  
So exciting to compete,  
Down in Wales in eisteddfodau,  
On the stage you'll feel the heat.  
But to win is really awesome  
Such a joy to find you're tops.  
Keeping fans at bay a nightmare  
Time I think to call the cops!

## ATTENDANCES

*“There remains the central core of the choir, those faithful ones, regular in attendance, attentive and alert in rehearsals, with the music in their heads and not with their heads in their music, singing at concerts with confidence and courage, cheerful at all times and ever patient and long suffering despite the idiosyncracies of the conductor. They in truth are THE Treorchy Male Choir.”*

John Haydn Davies  
 Founder Conductor, 1954

(Figures Based on 24 Official Engagements & 68 Official Rehearsals)

## Rehearsals

## Engagements

## CENTURY CLUB (100% Attendance)

Ernald Brooks  
 Islwyn Morgan  
 Norman Martin  
 Alan Bowen  
 Tony Davies

Ernald Brooks  
 Arthur Miles  
 Keith Owens  
 David Bebb  
 Ray Daniels  
 Tony Davies

## NIFTY NINETY CLUB (90% Attendance)

Jeff Priday  
 Alwyn Lewis  
 Ivor Lock  
 Arthur Miles  
 John Jones  
 Daryl Stacey  
 Mark Milsom  
 Alun Davies  
 David Evans  
 John Radford  
 Dennis Young

Jeff Priday  
 Alwyn Lewis  
 Wayne Dury  
 Michael Tibbott  
 John Jones  
 Daryl Stacey  
 William Thomas  
 Alun Davies  
 David Evans  
 John Radford  
 Dennis Young  
 Gary Horgan  
 Gwyn Morgan

Ray Daniels  
 David Powell  
 Keith Owens  
 Derek Thomas  
 William Watkin  
 William Thomas

IN

Paul Cunningham  
 David Phillips  
 Sean Rees  
 David Morgan  
 Ryan Howells  
 Philip Thomas  
 Daniel Thomas  
 Callum Richards  
 Sean Evans  
 Joshua Hughes  
 Phillip Gregory

OUT

Alex Davies  
 Wayne Coles  
 Phillip Thomas  
 Phillip Gregory  
 Daniel Thomas

1T

2T

1B

2B

TOTAL

24

20

28

17

88

**ENGAGEMENTS****FEBRUARY**

Monday 8th Treorchy Rehearsal Room: Making a BBC Radio Cymru programme on the history of the hymn “Cwm Rhondda”

**MARCH**

Saturday 5th China Street Chapel, Llanidloes with Jessica Robinson

Thursday 17th Stanwell School, Penarth with Stanwell Schol Choir

Wednesday 23rd Treorchy Comprehensive School: Junior Musician of the Year Competition

Friday 25th Parc & Dare Theatre, Treorchy: 51st Good Friday Concert with the Parc & Dare Band

**APRIL**

Saturday 9th Blake Theatre, Monmouth with Shoned Llewellyn and Charlotte Poler

Thursday 14th Albany Road Baptist Church, Cardiff with Mountain View High Schol of California

Wednesday 20th High Street, Treorchy: Second unveiling of a Blue Plaque on the former Red Cow Hotel

**MAY**

Saturday 7th Playhouse Theatre, Weston Super Mare with Sophie Gregory

Friday 20th Maesteg Town Hall with Sally Kingsbury

Saturday 21st St Mary & St Chad Church, Brewood with Jean Martin

**JUNE**

Saturday 4th St George’s Hall, Bristol with Ros Evans

Monday 13th Treorchy Rehearsal Room: Filming with BBC Wales for Euro 2016

Thursday 16th Coopers Field, Cardiff: Appearing live on BBC Radio Wales’ Wynne Evans Programme for Euro 2016

Saturday 18th Longmeadow Club, Whitchurch with Georgja Williams

Saturday 25th Rhondda Heritage Park, Trehafod: Unveiling of a Blue Plaque to A.J. Cook

Thursday 30th Savoy Theatre, Tonyrefail with Cwmlai Primary School

**JULY**

- Saturday 2nd Ysgol Rhydywaun, Aberdare: Recording a Christmas album with the Cory Band
- Wednesday 6th Grand Plas, Arras, France
- Thursday 7th Memorial to the 38th Welsh Division, Mametz Wood, France
- Tuesday 19th Notre Dame Du Burbierre, Albert, France
- Tuesday 19th Soar Centre, Merthyr Tydfil: Filming a television programme with Iris Williams OBE and Rhys Meirion
- Saturday 23rd St Mary's Church, Bibury with Jessica Robinson

**SEPTEMBER**

- Saturday 10th Sir Thomas Picton School, Haverfordwest with Goodwich Brass Band
- Saturday 17th Cheltenham Town Hall with Gail Pearson
- Sunday 25th Tabernacl Chapel, Morriston: Filming "Songs of Praise"
- Monday 26th Treorchy Rehearsal Room: Filming a promotional video for author Sion Tomos Owen

**OCTOBER**

- Saturday 8th Queen's College, Taunton with Iona Jones
- Monday 24th Royal Mint Experience Opening Event
- Saturday 29th Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama with The Cory Band

**NOVEMBER**

- Thursday 3rd Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy with Jason Howard
- Friday 11th St Cadoc's Church, Caerleon with Iona Jones
- Sunday 13th Blaenrhondda & Treherbert War Memorials
- Sunday 13th Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff: Performing at Black Star Festival showing of Proud Valley

**DECEMBER**

- Saturday 10th High Street, Treorchy: Performing at the Christmas Parade & Fair
- Saturday 17th Royal Mint, Llantrisant
- Monday 19th Ty Hafan Children's Hospice, Sully

**PATRONS**

Mrs. Pauline Rumsey  
Mr. Michael James  
Mrs. M. Olver  
Mr. J. J. Tucker  
Mr. Mark Thomas  
Mr. D. M. Rees  
Mr. D. Floyd  
Mrs. C. Reaich  
Mr. G. M. Vaughan-Edmunds  
Mr. T. A. Curl  
Mr. Nigel Chivers  
Mr. J. D. Thomas  
Mr. Paul L. Evans  
Mr. J. W. Randall  
Mrs. Mary Kerridge  
Ms C. H. Rogerson  
Mr. S. Gould  
Mr. J. M. Thomas  
Mr. & Mrs. D. Bolton  
Mr. David Downton  
Mrs. Val Dix





