

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 1973

By Norman Martin, Registrar
& Honorary Archivist

JANUARY

Thursday January 11th

University Hospital, Cardiff

A concert was held at the Heath Hospital, organised by the hospital's Music Society. The Choir gave the first public performance of *Gwahoddiad*.

Thursday January 17th

Parc Chapel, Cwmparc

At the concert in Cwmparc, elocutionist Herbert Jones gave his first performance of *The Owl Critic*.

Thursday January 25th

Tabernacl Church, Pontypridd

A concert was held in aid of the Urdd Eisteddfod.

Sunday January 28th

The Choir, through the good offices of Lieutenant Gareth Thomas (former 1B) received a firm proposal to tour Cyprus from June 23rd to July 3rd.

FEBRUARY

Thursday February 8th

Goppa Methodist Capel, Pontarddulais

The concert was given in aid of the Pontarddulais Male Choir Canada Tour Fund. This was an unique occasion as Mr John Haydn Davies is a Life Member of both choirs.

Tuesday February 13th

BBC Studios, Cardiff

In celebration of 50 years of broadcasting, a special "Aelwyd Y Gan" programme was performed. The artists were Stuart Burrows (tenor) and Betti Jones (soprano) with the BBC Welsh Orchestra conducted by Arwel Hughes. John Haydn conducted the Choir by special request of the BBC and the kind consent of John Cynon, and *Ezekhiel* was sung in Welsh for the first time.

MARCH

Sunday March 4th

At the AGM it was passed that the Choir be fitted out with a new concert dress. This dress with comprise of a midnight blue blazer, grey trousers and a blue tie with the old badge as a motif on it.

Saturday March 17th

Parish Church, Upton on Severn

The Choir paid its first visit to Upton where the concert was held in the magnificent parish church.

Tuesday March 27th

County Hall, Cardiff

On the invitation of Glyn Wales OBE, Chairman of the County Council, the Choir attended a dinner in the County Hall, Cardiff. After the dinner the Choir sang in the Council Chamber with the conducting shared by John Cynan and John Haydn.

Thursday March 29th

The Hospital, Whitchurch

A concert was organised by the Whitchurch Hospital League of Friends and was given in the church on the hospital grounds.

APRIL

Tuesday April 3rd

A letter was read by the Secretary, W.J. Donna Griffiths, giving the reasons for the cancellation of the Cyprus tour. The cost of transport and accommodation proved more than the budget allowed for the tour.

Saturday April 7th

The Choir held a Social Evening and Dance at the Penrhys Community Centre.

Thursday April 12th

Zion Methodist Chapel, Tonypany

The concert was held in Zion to celebrate the Chapel's centenary.

Saturday April 14th

Brecon Cathedral

A television broadcast in Brecon Cathedral was the last in the series of the Sunday Night programme "Glory Glory". The series showed four different choirs singing from four different cathedrals and included Pendyrus (St Davids), Pontarddulais (Llandaff), Rhos (St Asaph) and ourselves. The series was shown on the national network and our programme was broadcast on May 28th.

Friday April 20th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The eighth annual Good Friday concert with the Parc & Dare Band. In the concert the Choir gave the first performance of the *Roman War Song* from *Rienzi*, accompanied by the band.

MAY

Sunday May 6th

Brangwyn Hall, Swansea

Making a record for EMI under the Columbia Label, and classified the Choir under "pop" for better sales potential. The recording was made in Swansea and the producer was Bob Barratt. Owing to the trouble with the organ, *Battle Hymn* could not be recorded. The provisional name of the record was "Glory Glory" but Mr Barratt asked choristers to submit a title.

Thursday May 24th

Brecon Cathedral

A concert organised by the Brecon Cathedral Concert Society with Herbert Jones and Harry Price. There was no applause for this concert.

Saturday & Sunday May 26th and 27th

Municipal Hall, Colne

The choristers packed their bags for another weekend trip. This time it was to the Colne Valley, with the concert in Colne organised by the North East Lancashire Juvenile Liaison Association. The choristers stayed in the Kierby and Sparrowhawk Hotels in Burnley. In order to fulfil this engagement a 500 mile round trip was travelled.

JUNE

Thursday June 7th

Zoar Chapel, Merthyr Tydfil

For the concert, organised by the Merthyr Music Society, the choir wore their concert dress for the very last time. This dress was first worn in concert in Maesteg in February 1953, thus giving 20 years of glorious service

SEPTEMBER

Thursday September 13th

Memorial Hall, Barry

The choristers wore the new Choir dress. The concert was in aid of the Hensol Hospital, and was memorable for the two choristers making their first concert appearance – John Lewis (1B) and Graham Gibbs (2B)

Tuesday September 18th

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

The Choir made a recording of Kimigayo, the Japanese National Anthem, which was sung in the best Welsh / Japanese language! The recording for HTV was to be used as background music for a documentary on the visiting Japanese rugby team who are presently touring Wales. The recording was made in the rehearsal room and Lloyd Williams of the HTV news programme was present.

Friday September 21st

Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre, Cardiff

In the audience at tonight's concert was the son of Sir Hugh Robertson. The Choir sang a group of Scottish songs, arranged by his father, for him. The Choir was photographed wearing the new concert dress for the first time.

Saturday September 29th

The Greathouse, Chippenham

A return visit to the Greathouse on the 25th Anniversary of the founding of Cheshire Homes.

Saturday September 29th

St Andrew's Church, Chippenham

The concert marked the 100th appearance of Herbert Jones with the Choir. The engagement also coincided with John Cynan's 40th birthday. A recorded for the radio programme "Good Morning Wales" was made during the stay in Greathouse.

OCTOBER

Saturday October 20th

Netterswell School, Harlow

After a period of eight years, the Choir paid a return visit to Harlow with a concert in the Netteswell School Hall

NOVEMBER

Thursday November 1st

Trinity Church, Risca

The concert in Risca saw the Choir perform with soloists Sam Griffiths and Herbert Jones

Sunday November 4th

Double Diamond Club, Caerphilly

It was the first venture into club land! A social engagement was carried out by the Choir in the Double Diamond Club in Caerphilly. The choristers were accompanied by wives and friends and the Choir performed from 10pm to 11.30pm to an appreciative audience.

Wednesday November 14th

The Bulgarian State Male Choir Concert took place in Noddfa, Treorchy and was organised by the Secretary. Choristers acted as stewards. John Cynan Jones presented the Conductor of the visiting Choir with the record "Speed Your Journey."

Friday November 16th

Maesteg Town Hall

The concert was in aid of the Fire Service Benevolent Fund. John Cynan was presented with a Fire Service plaque.

Saturday November 24th

Civic Hall, Brierly Hill

The Choir paid its first visit to Brierly Hill near Birmingham. For the first a rehearsal was held before the concert. The reason for this was that owing to the pressure of work and the lack of time, every opportunity for a rehearsal of the ATV music was essential.

Tuesday November 27th

Once again the Choir was engaged to appear on a television Christmas Show. This time it was the Julie Andrews Christmas Show. The Choir arrived at the ATV Studios at 1.30pm and had a band call at 3pm and were introduced to Ian Fraser, the Musical Director for Julie Andrews. The sound recording for the show started and Mr Fraser conducted the Choir in *Come All Ye Faithful*. The recording finished at 6.15pm and after a meal the choristers made their way to the Beehive Hotel

Wednesday November 28th

The Choir arrived at the studio at 11.16am and made its way to rooms 3 and 4 where John Cynan Jones rehearsed the music for the record to be made on Sunday. Before rehearsals a presentation of a box of chocolates and a card signed by all the choristers was made to Jennifer on the occasion of her birthday. Needless to say *Happy Birthday* was sung to her. Later Julie Andrews also signed the card. After dinner an amusing time as had by all the choristers who had to dress in old miss-fitting clothes ready for a scene in the show. After make-up by four girls, the Choir waited for the call and waited and waited, but no call came. They had to change back to their "civvies" and leave the studio at 7.15pm!

Thursday November 29th

Choristers arrived at the studio at 9am and the morning was spent filming the *Ring Christmas Bells* scene with Julie Andrews and Peter Ustinov. The scene depicted an industrial area of a large town with artificial fog being an essential part of it. This artificial fog had an unfortunate affect on Gwyn Phillips as his face began to swell. He finished the scene and was immediately taken to a medical centre in the studio. Over the phone Gwyn's symptoms were explained to a doctor and he sent the necessary drug to be administered. The afternoon was spent re-recording *Come All Ye Faithful* under the baton of Ian Frazer and the Choir left the studio at 3.45pm.

Friday November 30th

The Choir arrived with Gwyn Phillips recovered at 10am and after an hour reported to Rooms 3 and 4 where the shirts for the show were issued. A rehearsal of the record music was held and after waiting all the afternoon the Choir was called to the stage at 5pm. This was the final take of the show where Julie Andrews, Peter Ustinov and The Second Generation appeared in the Grand Finale. This ended at 8.45pm when the Choir made their way to the studio canteen. In the meantime John Cynan went to Julie Andrews' dressing room and presented her with the record "Speed Your Journey" together with a Choir plaque

Miss Andrews expressed her delight at this gesture and her joy of having the Choir to perform with her. She hoped it would not be too long before she had the pleasure of the Choir's company again. The Secretary presented Jon Schoffield, the Producer of the show with an Honorary Membership of the Choir. He expressed his pleasure of having Treorchy Male Choir on the show and added that Christmas Shows are never quite the same without them. At the festivities in the canteen, free beer for the boys with the compliments of Julie Andrews and Jon Schoffield. The Choir sang *Kwmbayah*, *Llef*, *Nant y Mynydd*, *Lile of the Valley*, *Silver Birch* and *Just A Closer Walk*. Also present in the festivities were Leslie Crowther, Sheila Sims, Glyn Houston and William Stewart, the producer of shows like "Father Dear Father", "Bless This House", "My Good Woman" and the David Frost programme. The Choir left for the Beehive Hotel at Midnight.

DECEMBER

Saturday December 1st

The Choir left the hotel at 9.30am and as the buses were not going to stop it was expected to be home at 1pm. This was important as John Cynan had a rehearsal of the

“Messiah” at 2pm. Unfortunately a tyre punctured and with the subsequent loss speed until the arrival at the service station, an hour was lost. On arrival in Caerphilly John Cynan and Jennifer transferred to Cli Willis’ car which was parked at Gwyn Phillips’ home. The buses arrived in Treorchy at 2.30pm, while their car arrived at 2.20pm. So ended an enjoyable engagement at the ATV Studios with new friends made and old ones renewed.

Sunday December 2nd

Brangwyn Hall, Swansea

Back to the notes with the making of a record with the Cory Band. As always it was a long day from 2pm to 9pm and the producer was Bob Barratt. The name of the album was “Cwm Rhondda” Recorded were the first performances of *The Holy Grail* and *Arouse Ye*. This was the second record made by the Choir for EMI this year.

Saturday December 8th

Colston Hall, Bristol

A Christmas Festival Concert with the Stanshaw Band concluded the concert engagements for 1973.