

# TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



## BRIEF HISTORY 1979

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# January

## **Wednesday January 3<sup>rd</sup>**

The year began very sadly with the death of Mr Herbert Jones. He was visiting his son in London and on his way home, in Paddington Station, he collapsed and died. Mr Jones first appeared with the Choir as an elocutionist on March 12<sup>th</sup> 1969 in Llantarnam School, Cwmbran and made his last appearance on Saturday June 10<sup>th</sup> 1978 in the Town Hall, High Wycombe. Over this period he performed in 150 engagements.

He was a first-rate artist and always captured his audience with excellence performances of such favourites as “The Fire”, “I Forget”, “The World We Live In”, “Under Milk Wood”, “Jacob Strauss”, “McGinty”, “The Girl On The Stairs”, “Hole in the Road,” “The Social Scale”, “What’s The Use of Grumbling”, “Benigo’s Sermon”, “Owl Critic”, “Brown Boosts”, “Smile”, “ A Day Too Late”, “The First Settlers Story”, “Diary of a Church Mouse”, “Someone Worst Off Than You” and “The Welsh Incident”.

At the first rehearsal of the Choir in 1979 Mr W. J. Griffiths expressed, most deeply the excellent qualities of Mr Jones as an artist with the Choir and his tremendous contribution to the way of life of the Rhondda. Out of deepest sympathy also comes the joy of having travelled and performed with him. The Choir sang “Close Thine Eyes” in his memory.

## **Wednesday January 10<sup>th</sup>**

The funeral of Mr Herbert Jones took place today and as a final tribute to him many choristers attended and sung at the graveside with the rest of the mourners, “The Lord Is My Shepherd”.

## **Thursday January 11<sup>th</sup>**

The melancholic start of the year continued with the announcement at rehearsal tonight of the death of Life Member Mr Idris Thomas. Idris was a very faithful member of the Choir until his illness several years ago. Mr W. J. Griffiths expressed the value of Idris’ contribution to the Choir in the earlier years. He kept contact with the Choir with visits to the rehearsal room in his wheelchair and he will be sadly missed. “Close Thine Eyes” was sung to his memory.

## **Sunday January 14<sup>th</sup>**

### **New Theatre, Cardiff**

The Choir paid a return visit to the New Theatre, Cardiff after a period of 20 years (June, 1959) when the Choir was part of a star-studded programme in the “Ryan Davies Memorial Fund” Concert. The star of the show was Harry Secombe and other artists were Glyn Houston, Helen Fields, Philip Madoc, Bryn Williams, Parc & Dare Band and the Richard Williams Singers. The Choir accompanied Helen Fields in “Thee Easter Hymn” and Bryn Williams in the Choir’s first performance of “O Gymru”. With such a large cast the concert was a long one with the Choir arriving at 6.15pm and after a long period of waiting left the stage with the rest of the cast at 11.15pm. The Glamorgan Wanderers organised the concert and presented Mr J.C. Jones with their pullover and tie.

### **Wednesday January 17<sup>th</sup>**

The funeral of Mr Idris Thomas took place today and there was a good attendance by choristers despite the wintry conditions. "Rhys" and "Crimond" were sung at the crematorium.

### **Thursday January 25<sup>th</sup>**

Owing to the severe weather conditions the concert in Blaenavon was postponed.

### **Saturday January 27<sup>th</sup>**

Owing to the continued severe weather conditions the Choir's Dinner and Dance at the Angel Hotel, Cardiff had to be postponed.

## **February**

### **Thursday February 8<sup>th</sup>**

The concert programme was further interrupted when the engagement at Tonyrefail Comprehensive School was cancelled because of an overtime ban on the school caretakers.

### **Saturday February 17<sup>th</sup>**

The Siberian weather conditions continued and the concert, a weekend trip to Hull, was called off by the organisers.

### **Thursday February 22<sup>nd</sup>**

#### **Central Hall, Tonypany**

After the frustration of the long lay-off of concerts, the Choir returned to the concert platform with an engagement in Central Hall, Tonypany. This was a fitting engagement to start with as it was in aid of another choir. The proceeds of the concert were in aid of the Cambrian Male Choir American Tour Fund. The artist was Miss Josephine Jones, a second year student at the Cardiff College of Music and Drama. Her accompanist was Mr John Samuels. The other artist was unable to appear so the Choir filled in with extra items. The Mayor of Rhondda spoke, thanking everyone for their support and with an audience of 350, the fund received a deserving boost.

### **Sunday February 25<sup>th</sup>**

The Choir held its AGM in Noddfa Chapel today. Mr Edward Davies was inaugurated as Chairman and Mr Reg Davies was voted as Vice Chairman. All the other officers were unopposed. The outgoing Chairman, Mr Dan Williams was presented with a plaque for his term of office.

## **March**

### **Saturday March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Sunday March 4<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Coventry Cathedral**

It was travelling time again for the Choir as they set out for the first weekend engagement of the year. After a period of 13 years the Choir return to Coventry Cathedral to give a concert in aid of the Spina Bifida Association. The Choir left Treorchy on a wet, miserable day at 12.30pm and arrived at the cathedral at 4.30pm. After tea (sausage, peas, chips, tea and pastries) a seating rehearsal was held in the

cathedral and then the choristers were taken to the Trust Forte Post House (a first-class place) to change and return to start the concert at 7.30pm.

Sharing the concert was the City of Coventry Band and with an audience of 2,000 it was such a magnificent setting the concert was indeed a very successful one. The Choir gave their first performance of "Ave Maria" (Bruckner) and Evan McCarter and Daryl Stacey made their first concert appearance. After the concert a convivial evening was spent at the hotel with old and new friends. The first coach left at 9.45am on Sunday morning in pleasant sunshine, arriving home at 1pm, while the later bus stopped in Ross on Wye.

### **Tuesday March 6<sup>th</sup> & Sunday March 11<sup>th</sup>**

The association with Mr Gordon Langford continued as during these rehearsals two new arrangements by him for sole use by the Choir were rehearsed. These were "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and "There Were Many Babies Born", this being arranged for bass soloist and Choir – another winner for Harry Price!

### **Saturday March 24<sup>th</sup>** **Colston Hall, Bristol**

The Choir return to the Colston Hall, Bristol with an engagement in aid of Parkinson's Disease Fund, a repeat of the 1977 engagement. Owing to a previous commitment Jenny was unable to attend, so once again Mr Bryan Davies stepped into the breach. The Choir resumed its acquaintance with Mrs Gilliam Petherham-Davies who was the soloist. It was an excellent concert and a fine start for Dilwyn Llewellyn who was making his first concert appearance.

## **April**

### **Thursday April 5<sup>th</sup>** **University Hospital, Cardiff**

The Choir paid a return visit to the University Hospital, Cardiff with a concert in aid of the Leukaemia Fund. The timing of the engagement proved beneficial to Mal Beynon who had recently been admitted to the hospital. With the concert being broadcast to patients, Mr J.C. Jones wished Mal, over the air, a speedy recovery. After the concert many choristers went to the Glamorgan Wanderers Club where a night out had been arranged with the other artists who took part in the Ryan Davies Memorial Concert. This was the club's way of saying "thank you" to all the artists.

### **Friday April 13<sup>th</sup>** **Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy**

With the same team of the Parc and Dare Band, Mr Alex Jones, Mr Cliff Taylor etc., the Choir gave the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive Good Friday Concert in the Park and Dare. The Choir donated their proceeds of the concert to the Rhondda Branch of Cancer Research. Keith Bould made his first concert appearance.

### **Thursday April 19<sup>th</sup>**

Owing to the illness of Mr J.C. Jones, his son David Cynan Jones took the rehearsal.

### **Saturday April 21<sup>st</sup>**

#### **Royal Hall, Harrogate**

The Choir once again travelled into regions unknown with their first visit to Harrogate. They set forth at 7.30am and journeyed as far as Warrington where an hour's break was taken. On leaving Warrington on the M62 the traffic jam slowed down the journey considerably as buses were at a standstill for an hour and a half and travelled only two miles! On arrival in Harrogate at 4.30pm, the choristers had a cooked dinner in the Pump Room and a seating rehearsal in the Royal Hall. This was a fine hall to perform in and with a capacity audience of 1,300 the concert was a successful one.

Fortunately Mr J.C. Jones had recovered from his illness to conduct the Choir and Jack Moses made his first concert appearance. During the interval Mr J.C. Jones asked if any lady in the audience the name Myfanwy and the lady who did was presented with a bouquet of daffodils by Mr Robert Griffiths. The Choir then sang "Myfanwy" to her. After the concert in the informal get-together in the Crown Hotel where most of the choristers were staying and many new friends were made.

## **May**

### **Tuesday May 1<sup>st</sup>**

A Choir photograph with choristers wearing dress suit concert attire was taken in the Upper Rhondda Comprehensive School. Ninety nine members were present, with the following absent: (First Tenor) Ken Elliott, John Francis; (Second Tenor) Cyril Howard, Cliburn Willis, Don Guy; (First Bass) Geoffrey Howard, Vivian Payne, David Rees, Ken Davies, Gwyn Hopkins; "(Second Bass) Ken Baldwin, Harry Price, Alun Hughes, Kevin Jones". Mr John Davies and Mr Cliff Taylor were both present. After the taking of the photograph a rehearsal took place.

### **Saturday May 5<sup>th</sup>**

The Annual Dinner and Dance was held in the Angel Hotel, Cardiff. The Chief Guest was Lord Parry, Chairman of the Welsh Tourist Board and his after-dinner speech captivated everyone. Among the other guests present were Mr Alex Jones MP, Mr Rufus Ashton, Mayor of Rhondda, who presented the Choir with the Rhondda Coat of Arms in recognition of the Choir's contribution to the cultural life of Rhondda.

### **Saturday May 12<sup>th</sup> & Sunday May 13<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Winter Gardens, Bournemouth**

Continuing their travels the Choir paid their first visit to Bournemouth. The concert was held in the Winter Gardens Pavilion, the popular venue of many stars in the summer season. Many choristers took their wives and their bus left at 8am. Due to the Cup Final between Arsenal and Manchester United, the rest of the Choir left at 10am to arrive in time to see the game in the hotel. After seeing Arsenal win 3-2 the choristers had a cooked meal in the Pavilion and returned to their hotels – Summerhayes, Cliff Court or Matland.

The concert started at 7.30pm and was a considerable success with 900 people present. The Pavilion was a fine hall to sing in and the audience gave the Choir a standing ovation. Unknown to most people, including the choristers (but not the Conductor), the police arrive during the concert stating that they had received a bomb

scare message. Fortunately this was a hoax. In the after-concert get-together many new friendships were made. With the weather being most kind, glorious sunshine on Saturday and Sunday, a very pleasant weekend was spent in Bournemouth.

### **Thursday May 24<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Welfare Hall, Blaenavon**

In paying their first visit to Blaenavon the Choir was also fulfilling a commitment. This engagement was to be held in January, but owing to the severe weather conditions it was postponed. The buses travelled to Blaenavon via Pontypridd, Nelson and Pontypool on a glorious sunny evening and arrived at the Welfare Hall a little late. Despite this it was a most enjoyable concert with a most appreciative audience of 400. For the first time the choristers received a glass of sherry during the interval. "Ezekiel" was given its first performance under Mr J.C. Jones.

## **June**

### **Saturday June 9<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Subscription Rooms, Stroud**

Once again the Choir travelled on 'virgin ground' with a first visit to Stroud. The concert was held in the Subscription Rooms before an audience of 250 people. This was a capacity audience for the Subscription Rooms but being a small audience they compensated with the warmth of their applause. This appreciation continued throughout the performance, terminating in a standing ovation at the end of the concert. Indeed a fine start for Kevin Jones making his concert debut. Wyn Davies was the artists and had trouble with his bow tie, so he sang in his full regalia but no bow tie! What he lacked in dress he certainly made up with his singing. After the concert a ploughman's lunch and a drink was provided for each chorister in the New Lodge Hotel. The concert was organised by the Minninhampton Scouts Movement and the proceeds were in aid of the Scouts Choir.

### **Monday June 11<sup>th</sup>**

Today Mr Gwynne Williams, Life Member and Treasurer of the Choir for the past 29 years, died at East Glamorgan Hospital.

### **Tuesday June 12<sup>th</sup>**

At tonight's rehearsal Mr W.J. Griffiths spoke of the value of Gwynne not only for his magnificent contribution to the Choir but to the community in his office of County Councillor, Justice of the Peace and his deep involvement in the educational life of Rhondda. Although in indifferent health in the past number of years, he was a fighter to the end, as he continued to attend rehearsals and concerts whenever he could. His last engagement appearance was in Bournemouth. He will be sadly missed. Mr J.C. Jones endorsed all the remarks made regarding Gwynne and added a few of his own, then the Choir sang "From The Dawn" in his memory.

### **Thursday June 14<sup>th</sup>**

Between 60 and 70 choristers paid their last respects at the funeral of Gwynne. Outside the house "Rhys" was sung and in Treorchy Cemetery "Llef" and "Arglwydd Mae Yn Nosi".

### **Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Saron Chapel, Williamstown**

The Choir was privileged to be invited by Mrs C. M. Richards, the First Chairlady of the Mid Glamorgan County Council, to her Civil Sunday Service in Saron Chapel, Williamstown. This was the Choir's first visit to the chapel. After the service members were invited to the Mid Rhondda Comprehensive School for light refreshments.

### **Saturday June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

#### **St Mary Church, Usk**

The Choir made its first visit to Usk with a concert in St Mary Church. This was a splendid church which has stood for approximately 900 years and is equipped with a fine organ. Mr J.C. Jones took advantage of this by handing Jenny the baton to conduct a group of hymns which he accompanied on the organ. The Choir gave its first public performance of "The Heavens Are Telling" and the proceeds of the concert were in aid of the Monmouth Mentally Handicapped Childrens' Society.

## **July**

### **Sunday July 8<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Brangwyn Hall, Swansea**

Off on the record-making trip again! With 100 choristers present in Brangwyn Hall, Swansea, another L.P record was made for the EMI Company. The recording team was the same, Bob Barratt, Stuart Eltham and David Bell and the Choir gave their first performance of "Bridge Over Troubled Waters", "There Were Many Babies Born", "Llan Baglan" and for many choristers, "Cytgan yr Helwyr,"

## **September**

### **Saturday September 15<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Parish Church, Upton-on-Severn**

On the first engagement after the summer break the Choir paid a return visit to the parish church in Upton-on-Severn after a period of six years. Again it was a splendid concert. A convivial evening was spent making new friends and renewing old friendships in the Talbot Hotel after the concert.

### **Sunday September 23<sup>rd</sup>**

At the Special Meeting called by a certain number of choristers on the resolution that "The Choir Compete in Eisteddfodau", it was resolved that in a year's time the Choir fulfils three criteria: 1) Punctuality in starting rehearsals; 2) Improvement in choristers attendance; 3) Greater effort from choristers, then the Conductor would consider competing.

### **Thursday September 27<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Salvation Army Citadel, Pentre**

The Choir was privileged to take part in the Centenary of the Pentre Salvation Army in the Citadel, Pentre. In the concert the Choir gave its first performance of "Great Is Jehovah the Lord" with Wyn Davies as soloist. Unfortunately it went wrong after the first few bars and had to be restarted. This it went without a blemish.

## **Saturday September 29<sup>th</sup> & Sunday September 30<sup>th</sup>**

### **Guild Hall, Hull**

The Choir paid their postponed weekend visit to Hull. In contrast to the severe weather last February, the weather was fine and sunny. Leaving Treorchy at 7.30pm, travelling up the motorways to Warrington where a lunch break was taken. The Choir arrived in Hull at 3.30pm. After booking into the Central Hotel an excellent cooked meal was given at the fine Guild Hall.

After the meal a rehearsal was held and when Mr J.C. Jones started, Jenny struck a chord on the piano and the Choir sang "Happy Birthday" to the unsuspecting conductor. This served a dual purpose as it was also John Mallin's birthday. The concert, in such wonderful acoustics, a full house, a well balanced Choir of 88, was a tremendous success – as was the get-together in the Central Hotel after the concert. The buses left Hull at 10am on Sunday morning, one bus stopping at RAF Cosford, but both arriving home at the same time! A total of 620 miles were travelled in fulfilling this engagement.

## **October**

### **Thursday October 4<sup>th</sup>**

#### **St Martin's Church, Cardiff**

The Choir paid its third visit to St Martin's Church in Cardiff with a concert organised by the Rotary Society. This was a celebration of 75 years of Rotary, with proceeds going to Muscular Dystrophy. This was the third engagement by the Choir in seven days.

### **Saturday October 13<sup>th</sup> & Sunday October 14<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Priory Place Church, Doncaster**

After a period of 15 years the Choir paid a weekend visit to Doncaster, with a concert in the Priory Place Church. The buses left home at 8.30am with a break in Loughborough (my, didn't it rain!) arriving at the Co-Op Hall, Doncaster at 3.30pm. The Choir immediately went to the church for a seating rehearsal, then back to the Co-Op Hall for a first-class meal where they were welcomed by the Mayor. It was then hotel and billets time.

The concert was scheduled to start at 7.30pm but unfortunately an elderly lady in the audience fell and broke her leg. An ambulance was called and she was stretchered away. As Jenny so aptly put it, "I've heard of them falling in the aisles, but this is ridiculous." The concert with Doncaster Wheatsheaf Girls Choir, in excellent singing form, a full house, made it a most enjoyable evening. During the performance Mr J.C. Jones presented Mr John Barker (Conductor) with three Treorchy records.

On the Sunday the choristers had a cooked dinner in the Coopland Restaurant, where Mr John Barker presented Mr J.C. Jones with a decorative plate, thus furthering the wonderful rapport between both choirs. The buses left by 3pm, arriving home at 7.30pm having travelled 500 miles in completing this pleasant weekend visit to Doncaster.

## November

### Thursday November 8<sup>th</sup>

#### Llantwit Major Comprehensive School

After a period of five years the Choir paid a return visit to Llantwit Major. The concert was again in the Comprehensive School, and was organised by the Carnival Committee. The funds were donated to various charities and organisations in the area. With a “full house” and the tickets at £2 each, it proved a musical and financial success.

### Saturday November 17<sup>th</sup>

#### St Mary's Church, Redcliff

Once more into Bristol for a concert, but this time in the magnificent splendour of St Mary's Church in Redcliff, stated as “the fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England”. It also has one of the finest organs in the country and this was faultlessly played by Gareth Benson. The concert was a little late starting as Bristol is a big, busy city and the church took some time to find. The proceeds were for the International Police Association and the Avon and Somerset Police Branch with the church filled to overflowing, the fund had a financial boost.

### Friday November 21<sup>st</sup>

#### Rhondda Sports Centre, Ystrad

A joint concert with the famous Rhondda band, the Cory Band, was given in Rhondda Sports Centre. The large audience had an extra significance as the proceeds were donated to the Rhondda “Year of the Child”.

### Tuesday November 27<sup>th</sup>

At a well attended rehearsal of 95, Mr W.J. Griffiths and Mr Islwyn Morgan explained the conditions of the Canadian Tour which had been received. Only the bare facts were known and these were: 1) The tour would take place in October 1980; 2) The Tour would be a fortnight's duration; 3) Hospitality found when the Choir arrived in the Canada; 4) Choristers paid their own fare; 5) No wages paid to choristers. After these facts were told the choristers suggested that fundraising projects could ease the problems and after a discussion the Secretary suggested that the members bring a firm answer on Tuesday December 4<sup>th</sup>.

## December

### Saturday December 1<sup>st</sup>

#### De Montford Hall, Leicester

With a concert organised by the Foresters, the Choir paid their first visit to Leicester. Leaving Treorchy at 12noon and not stopping on the way the buses arrived in Leicester Post House at 4pm. After the room allocation the Choir left for tea in the De Montford Hall (sausage, egg and chips!) and a short rehearsal with the Desford Colliery Band. Returning to the Post House to change for the concert at 7.30pm.

The De Montford Hall is a spacious hall, seats 2,600, with it being full and the band playing splendidly, the Choir responding, the concert was a very successful one. The proceeds were in aid of the RNLI and a £1,000 cheque was presented to the fund

during the concert. Unfortunately on returning to the Post House several rooms had been burgled. Mrs J.C. Jones had her handbag, containing valuable, stolen while Wally Breeze had his car keys stolen. This incident marred what otherwise was a pleasant weekend stay in Leicester.

**Thursday December 6<sup>th</sup>**

**St Mary's Church, Aberavon**

With the Choir's first visit to St Mary's Church, Aberavon, proved to be most rewarding. The proceeds were in aid of a fund to buy a special typewriter, costing £900 for a paralysed young woman and it was gratifying to see the church full of 500 people. Mr Bryan Davies was the accompanist as Jenny was previously committed to a school concert. After the concert, during tea in the church hall, Mr J.C.Jones was presented with a small steel plate bearing many coats of arms.

**Thursday December 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Hensol Castle Hospital**

For the last concert of the year, the Choir paid their first visit to Hensol Castle Hospital. It was a concert for the patients and staff, with the evening belonging to Sam Griffiths who invited the patients to sing and also during his performance. Herbert Stevens made his first concert appearance although he was not wearing a dress suit. What a better way to finish the year at Christmas time in bringing a little happiness to less fortunate people.