

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 1988

By Norman Martin
Registrar & Honorary Archivist

JANUARY

Tuesday January 12th

In the rehearsal tonight Denzil Brewer explained that Brewer's Bus Company had been sold to United Welsh. He assured choristers they would see little change as the buses still maintained the Brewer name and the Choir would be served by the same drivers. He thanked the Choir for their support for the past 35 years. Thus the link with the brewers Bus Company has now been broken. A link forged in 1952 when they provided the transport for a concert in aid of Caerau Football Club where the choristers wore a concert dress for the first time.

Thursday January 21st

The visitor to the rehearsal room tonight was the intrepid explorer Rosie Swale. She has sailed to Australia and back via the Cape Horn, sailed single-handedly across the Atlantic and travelled to India, Nepal and Russia. For her her expedition in 1984 she travelled the length of Chile on horseback, and the Choir's services were requested. On her long, lonely trek of 2,000 miles she wanted to keep the moral high and requested tapes of the Choir. The Choir duly obliged and help her relieve the tension. She is currently on a walking holiday through Wales with her husband Clive and decided to offer her vote of thanks to the Choir. She was introduced to the choristers by John Davies (PRO) and expressed her admiration and gratitude to the Choir for their kindness and cooperation and her delight at being able to attend a rehearsal and see the Choir for the first time. Although they came fully equipped with a tent, the weather was particularly harsh and so they spent the night with Islwyn and Margaret Morgan.

Thursday January 28th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The Choir gave the first concert of the year in Treorchy where the proceeds were donated to the David Jones Appeal Fund. The fund was established to assist with David's recovery who suffers with a rare disease and is unable to move any part of his body except his eyes. He is the son of Alex Jones, former MP of the Rhondda who died so tragically a few years ago. With the Cory Band (Conductor Major Arthur Kenny) sharing the stage, the concert was a successful one. "Nidaros" was sung with the Band, under the leadership of John Cynan Jones, for the first time. The hall was full and over £1,500 was raised. The appearance of John Cynan was greatly appreciated as his wife Mary underwent an operation today. It was an enjoyable night for Ron Green (2T) who made his first stage appearance.

FEBRUARY

Saturday February 20th

Dudley Town Hall

On the day Wales beat Scotland in rugby, the Choir paid their fourth visit to Dudley. To enable the choristers to see the game the buses didn't leave Treorchy until 4.15pm, reached the Town Hall at 7.20pm. A film was shown to the audience about the fund the concert was held in aid of – Polio Plus. For this concert the choristers were more "keyed-up" than usual as owing to the illness of John Cynan, Jenny was conducting with Bryan Davies at the piano. The concert started at 8.15pm before a full house.

Jenny was a brilliant raconteur, in a confident mood, along with Bryan at his very best and Mair as melodious as ever. The choristers were certainly on their toes and the concert flowed from strength to strength. The success of the evening was displayed by the rapturous applause received. At the end of the concert Jenny received a bouquet, a thunderous applause and a standing ovation from “the boys”. Afterwards the choristers were conveyed to the Lodge Hotel for a hot meal.

MARCH

Tuesday March 1st

The Choir held their AGM on St David’s Day with 94 choristers in attendance. Mr Haydn Erasmus was elected Vice Chairman. Mike Gale received Life Membership and Geoffrey Howard, Ken Baldwin and John Mallin were all made Long Service Members.

Saturday March 12th

St Mary’s Church, Redcliffe

Leaving Treorchy at 5.30pm the Choir as pleased to see Elwyn (not well enough to drive) come along for the ride! Unfortunately the staging was most inadequate and when the Choir did stage it was clear that it was not conducive to moral as there was a large space between a section of the 2nd Tenors and 1st Bass. A further difficulty arose when the concert started as Jenny could not be seen by many choristers. Before the staging of the second group, the forward rows of choristers were told to sing from a sitting position, but before the singing of the third group, Jenny was elevated to a higher position via extra staging thus all choristers then stood! Despite the difficulties the concert was a very successful and enjoyable one. The Elizabethan Church, said to be “the most fairest, goodliest and famous parish church in all of England” was acoustically superb. The music staff of Jenny, Bryan and Mair were at their very best. The Choristers were determined not to let Jenny down and the attentive and appreciative audience all added to a perfect night. The concert was organised by the Avon and Somerset Police Force. Plaques were presented to the Choir and hospitality was enjoyed at T.A. barracks nearby. As a footnote, talk about “some choirs do have ‘em”...despite the venue changing from Colston Hall, Bristol, some choristers turned up in the wrong place. Once they phoned the police they were told where to go and reached there by half time!

Sunday March 13th

Another rehearsal for the Rhondda Concert was held in the Rhondda Sports Centre. It was held in the main hall but unfortunately there was no band or piano present and a children’s skating disco was pounding away in the lesser hall. The only conductor present was John Asquith of Morlais and he arranged for a piano to be transported there for the rehearsal to take place.

Saturday March 26th

Bourton Vale School, Bourton on the Water

It was the initiation time again with a first visit to the Cotswold village of Bourton-on-the-Water. The buses left Treorchy at 4.10pm but owing to a lack of communication they arrived in Stow-in-the-Wold, before eventually reaching the proper venue! The school hall was small with the majority of the audience and the Choir on the same level. On this concert Jenny had a new accompanist in Jonathan Gulliford with John

Cynan's daughter, Eldrydd as "page turner". Jenny also accompanied Mair in her solo items. Another first for Jenny was the first public performance of "Eli Jenkins' Prayer" in this concert. Despite the sadness of the death of Marion Bates (Brian's wife) and the singing of "Llef" in her memory, the concert was a huge success both musically and financially and the proceeds were in aid of the Moore Cottage Hospital. This was where Marion spent her last period of treatment. Brian thanked everyone for their support, especially the Treorchy Male Choir for the kindness and consideration to his wife during her long illness. After the concert the buses left for the Old New Inn where a buffet meal was provided.

APRIL

Friday April 1st

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The 23rd Annual Good Friday Concert was marked by several interesting facts. For the first time John Cynan was unable to conduct the Choir owing to his continued illness but happily he was in the audience. For the first time Jenny's name appeared on the programme as the Conductor of the Choir. Also for the first time the members of the Parc & Dare National Fuel Distributors Band wore their new uniforms. Also this evening, after a period of 20 years, the Choir sang "The Lost Chord". The atmosphere of the evening was set by bandmaster Nigel Seaman whose pleasing manner and humorous jokes soon had the audience in the right frame of mind. Maintaining this atmosphere, Jenny and Bryan pleasantly surprised everyone when after introducing "Crossing the Plain" they both put on Indian head-dress! So with Chief Bryan (Piano Under Hands) Davies and Squaw Jenny (Waveing Hands) Jones, the happy band of the Treorchy "braves" crossed the plain. Another pleasant surprise was the arrival at the concert of one of the Australian Honorary Members, Douglas Firstbrook. With the band playing well up to standard and the Choir under the inspirational leadership of Jenny, the concert was another hugely successful one. It was a memorable night for Stuart Hill (1T) who made his first stage appearance.

Saturday April 9th

Town Hall, Cheltenham

The Choir travelled to one of their favourite venues for this evening's concert. Leaving Treorchy at 4pm, the concert started at 7.30pm and was organised by the Dean Forest Railway Society which has a firm link with the Rhondda as one of the pillars of the society is Rhondda-born Bernard Davies. The concert was like a train – full head of steam and a capacity of passengers. There was a singing female guard in Mair, a delightful ticket collector in Sian, a sufficient transport staff in the Choir, a first class fireman in Bryan and all under the most competent of drivers in Jenny. It ran to a completely successful destination to the satisfaction of all involved. The concert had a very many high points, particularly the "four hands at the piano" performance of Bryan and daughter Sian. So well did they perform that all present was brought to such a state of sheer enjoyment. The participants all retired for a buffet before returning home by bus...not train!

Tuesday April 12th

A meeting was held to discuss the resignation of Jenny was received by the Committee. Jenny had requested to appear before the Committee to explain her decision. She stated her frustration and lack of communication and liaison between

her and some of the officers. These were explained by the Chairman and at the end of her address she said it was “time for a change” and she did not wish to continue indefinitely as accompanist but would be available if required.

Thursday April 14th

Mr John Cynan Jones addressed the committee stating his views on the present situation and the future of the Choir. He said in his view the “choir comes first” and he would carry on but was concerned on the accompanist question and hoped they would approach Jenny again so she could change her mind.

Thursday April 19th

Tonight at the end of rehearsal the Chairman informed the choristers of Jenny’s decision to resign as accompanist of the Treorchy Male Choir he explained the efforts of both the Committee and Conductor to dissuade her from such a step, but she felt that after 17 years it was time to broaden and pursue her musical abilities in other directions and her resignation takes effects in three months time.

Saturday April 23rd

St Andrews Church, Chippenham

The Choir returned to Chippenham to give its seventh concert in St Andrews Church. This time the proceeds were in aid of Toc H and the church itself. The concert started at 7pm and as it was the first engagement for John Cynan since his illness, he conducted the Choir from a seated position until the final group. The artists were Mr Jones’s daughter Eldrydd and she was accompanied by Jonathan Gulliford. With Mary Cynan making her first appearance as “page turner” since her illness, it really was a “Jones Night”.

Friday April 29th

St David’s Hall, Cardiff

For the “Rhondda Concert” in St David’s Hall, one bus left at 2.30pm for choristers able to attend rehearsals and the later followed for those choristers who could only attend the concert. The concert, under the baton of Owain Arwel Hughes, was officially called “Rhondda in Harmony” and was performed to a full house at the theatre. The Rhondda organisations taking part were Cambrian, Ferndale, Morlais, Pendyrus and Treorchy Male Choir as one massed Choir. The bands were Cory and Lewis Merthyr Brass Band as one augmented band. Bryan and Sian Davies were pianists with Jonathan Gulliford as organist. The success of displaying some of the Rhondda’s great musical talents were amply shown by the wonderful response of the audience. The concert finished at 9.45pm when the participants and VIPs went to various tiers of the hall for food and refreshment. At tier 5 Owain Arwel Hughes started it was one of the finest concerts of his career, not purely for the standard of musical ability, but for the hwyl and fervour it engendered. It was a fine concert for John Williams (1B) making his first appearance.

MAY

Saturday May 7th

Leisure Centre, Carmarthen

The Choir made a return to Carmarthen after a period of 28 years. The buses left at 5.20pm and a seating rehearsal was required. As with the majority of leisure centre,

the acoustics are limited to say the least but with the teamwork of Jenny on piano and harp, Mair and the Choir all under the “in form” conductor John Cynan, the concert was an enjoyable and successful one. This was displayed by the standing ovation from the audience which includes the Mayors of Carmarthen and Whitland. This engagement was also the first time for a concert to be video-recorded and the proceeds were in aid of the Whitland Bowls Club who organised the concert. It was pleasing to note that in the audience was one of the first Honorary Members of the Choir, D.O.Griffiths, the leading light in the Birmingham Concerts of the 1950s and 60s. It was a very pleasant return visit to Carmarthen.

JUNE

Sunday June 12th

Brangwyn Hall, Swansea

It was record time again and the Choir travelled to Brangwyn Hall to make a record with Harry Secombe, although he wasn't present. The buses – for want of a better word – as they were old, dirty and decrepid! On assembling on the stage John Cynan introduced Ronnie Cass, Honorary Member to the choristers and expressed the pleasure with working once more with Gordon Lorenz and his team. The recording ran from 12.20pm to 6.15pm. For the promotion of the record a photograph of the Choir was required, so members changed into their dress suits for the session to take place.

Tuesday June 14th

St George Church, Cwmparc

The choristers assembled in St George's Church, Cwmparc for a sound recording for the television programme “Myfanwy”. The recording last just an hour. Four members appeared as lead singers with Wyn Davies, Benny Griffiths, Haydn Erasmus and Alun Davies representing each of the sections who had to “come in” at appropriate times during the song. After the recording it was back to the rehearsal room where interviews with Bryn Howells (1T) and Roger Morse (1T) took place against the hub of the normal rehearsal room procedure. When this was completed it was announced that Roy Bobbett had suffered another heart attack and was in hospital.

Thursday June 16th

Dumfries Street, Treorchy

The filming of the “Myfanwy” television programme took place to match up with the sound recording. The street was cleared of cars which caused quite a commotion with the general public! The huge hydraulic apparatus, lifting the crew and equipment to heights unknown, the lighting, the hurrying and scurrying, orders and counter orders, made it all seem like organised chaos. It was typical of television, but at the end of it all is a satisfied producer and hopefully a satisfied public! The session started at 2pm for the lead singers and at 6.45pm the rest of the choristers appeared with the filming ending at 8.10pm when the choristers made their way to the rehearsal rooms where John Cynan thanked everyone for the making of the programme.

Saturday June 18th

St George's Church, Telford

The Choir sallied forth to fresh fields on their first visit to Telford and a concert at St George's Church. With a 7pm start it was “change on the bus” time for the boys as

they reached the venue in the nick of time. The concert's aims were twofold. Firstly it celebrated the 125th anniversary of the church and secondly the proceeds were to help provide a new roof for the church. The church was a splendid acoustical building, like a miniature cathedral and with Jenny and Mair both in excellent form and the Choir – somewhat less in number – raising to the challenge under the relaxed and competent control of John Cynan, the concert was a huge success. The audience rewarded the performers with a standing ovation which was most satisfying as many of the audience contained many choristers from local choirs.

Tuesday June 21st

It was an eventful rehearsal! Our Canadian friend, Bill Dyche, who was staying with Phil Wall, was introduced to the choristers. He read a letter from the Premier of Ontario, David Pateerson, extending greetings from the government to the Choir and thanked them for their tours there. He presented the Choir with a Canadian Flag, Province of Ontario Flag and City of Mississauga Flag. The Chairman, Cliburn Willis, thanked him for this wonderful gesture and asked him to return the thanks and express admiration and respect the choristers held for the people of Ontario. Then the Chairman went on to say that a chorister had fulfilled a role with dedication and efficiency for 25 years. To his utter amazement, the “flabbergasted” registrar, Norman Martin was called forward to receive the presentation of an appropriate “Grogg” in recognition of his service as Registrar and Honorary Archivist. Then a Special Annual General Meet was called by the required number of choristers. It was to discuss the future policy of tours. A frank and open discussion was expressed and these were taken on board for consideration should another tour become available.

Thursday June 23rd

St Martin's Church, Cardiff

Leaving Treorchy on one of the warmest evenings of the year at 6pm, the Choir travelled to Cardiff. With the now well-seasoned musical team, performing to their usual standards in a magnificently acoustic church and in front of an appreciative and enthusiastic audience, the evening was a complete success. The proceeds were in aid of the church organ fund which received a financial boost. Thus ended the sixth engagement in 11 days!

JULY

Saturday July 2nd

Victoria Church, Weston-Super-Mare

The Choir returned to Weston for another concert in the Victoria Church. The concert began at 7.10pm following the grand entry of two Mayors. It was a memorable final engagement for David Lewis (2T) who, as John Cynan explained, was emigrating to Australia. The first public performance of “You'll Never Walk Alone” was dedicated to David and his wife on their journey. The programme also contained the first public performance of “Blessed Assurance” and “Prayer Perfect”. At the end of the concert the audience displayed their obvious enjoyment of the Treorchy team with their sustained applause. As the time is approaching for Jenny's resignation to take effect this was the last time for her to travel on the bus as accompanist of the Choir.

Thursday July 7th

Brecon Cathedral

The Choir returned to Brecon Cathedral after seven years. The proceeds of the concert (in which there was no interval) was the Cathedral Choir Fund to enable them to visit Denmark. This fund received a large financial boost as a capacity audience was present. The concert was not only a financial success, but with 93 choristers on stage and singing in such a magnificent building, it was also a musical success. The late bus enjoyed the hospitality of the RAFA Club.

Tuesday July 12th

Tonight was a sad rehearsal as it was the last for Jenny as Accompanist of the Treorchy Male Choir. She had served the Choir faithfully and diligently for 17 years and will be fondly remembered by the choristers. Also this evening John Cynan interviewed a prospective replacement in Miss Ann Stephens. The Choir also made a sound recording for the BBC Open University programme. It was pleasing for Mike Bloxsome (2B) as he is an Open University student.

Wednesday July 13th

Leaving Treorchy at 5pm, the Choir travelled to HTV Studios, Culverhouse Cross for another television recording. The artist was Eirian Davies (WNO) and organist Robert Court. The show is called “Cannwn Moliannwn” and will be shown on S4C later this year. As with all television engagements the time seems to be of little importance to the crew and the recording finished at 9.05pm – thus taking three hours to record three songs!

Saturday July 16th

Norwich Cathedral.

Today the Choir set another cathedral ringing with its dulcet tones as their made their first appearance in Norwich. Leaving at 9.10am and a short break, the long drive was interspersed by a pleasant hour in the “White Horse” hostelry. On reaching the Cathedral at 5pm a rehearsal was held and it was soon discovered the wrong programme had been printed. With their usual efficiency, the organisers – The Rotarians – ran off new ones to be inserted in the already printed programme. Making her first appearance with the Choir as soloist was Mrs Annette Merriman (mezzo-contralto). The Cathedral is a magnificent building, which made singing, in such surroundings, an absolute pleasure. The rehearsal finished at 5.40pm and the choristers travelled to the University of East Anglia where they were being “bedded down” for the night.

The concert started at 7.30pm and after the singing of the signature tune of “Cwm Rhondda” it was obvious that it was going to be a first class concert. In such majestic surroundings with a capacity audience, coupled with Jenny as a pianist and harpist and Annette performing well, the Choir raised to the occasion. It was ranked as one of the finest concerts ever given by the Choir. A truly magnificent “send off” for Jenny who made her last appearance as Accompanist. After the singing of the last group, Mr. John Cynan Jones announced it was her last appearance. He stated she gave her first appearance in St David’s Cathedral in 1971 and her last would be there in Norwich. He publicly thanked her for all she had brought to the Treorchy Male Choir. In admiration and gratitude for all she had done he dedicated the performance of “My Way” to her, with many thinking it had never been performed better.

Afterwards a hot meal was provided in Norwich School. A pleasant time was had there with the singing of a few numbers and a few words by Mr Cliburn Willis (Chairman). He thanked Jenny – we all loved her – regretted her leaving – respected her decision – and wished her well. The Choir responded with a standing ovation and singing “For She’s A Holly Good Female”. Indeed an emotional time. The bus left at midnight for the overnight digs. On the Sunday morning the Choir departed at 9.40am with one bus stopping at Sandhurst for a refreshing few hours!

AUGUST

During the summer break it was sad to record the death of a chorister. Only a short time ago Jack Newman (2T) had his operation, which unfortunately was not successful and he died on August 9th. His funeral took place on Tuesday 16th with a service in St John’s Church where the organist was Peter Morris and hence to Glyntaff Crematorium. Despite the holiday period there was an excellent attendance of choristers. John Cynan was way be he would have been pleased by the singing of “Llef” by the choristers. Thus the Choir sadly paid its last respects to a faithful member.

SEPTEMBER

Friday September 16th

Gloucester Cathedral

For the opening concert of the new season the venue was the magnificent Gloucester Cathedral. Leaving Treorchy at 4.15pm the buses arrived at the cathedral for rehearsals and a splendid tea but it was at that point we learned Mair Roberts had been left at the BBC Studios in Cardiff. Fortunately she followed by car. Although it was the same team of Conductor, Choir, Soloist and Accompanist, it was a different set-up as Jenny was a “guest accompanist”. She decided that in her new role she should not accompany Mair and the accompanist for the soloist was John Cynan Jones. In such superb acoustics, the concert was an overwhelming success, both musically and financially. With a capacity audience, including our Australian friend Dr Miles, which were most appreciative of the singing. The charity, Sue Ryder Homes, reaped a rich award for their fund.

Tuesday September 20th

It was with regret that the Committee accepted the resignation of Miss Ann Stephens, the prospective candidate for the post of accompanist of the Choir

Saturday September 24th

Fairfield Hall, Croydon

The Choir paid its sixth visit to Fairfield Hall, Croydon. Leaving Treorchy at 2.40pm to reach the concert hall by 7.15pm. a rehearsal was held before sandwiches served. The concert started at 8pm and this time the accompanist for Mair was Jonathan Papp who lived in London and was engaged by the Choir for this performance. The end result was a splendid concert and any doubt was dispelled by the tremendous response of a plainly delighted audience. At the end of the first half John Cynan announced the death of Will Jones (2B), Life Member and Mr Arwel Hughes. “Arglwydd Mae Yn

Nosi” was sung in their memory. At the end of the concert Mike Sammes was called to the stage to “take a bow” for this arrangements of the music that the Choir had just performed. The concert concluded at 10.50pm. Unfortunately the Severn Bridge was closed at 1am and therefore the buses travelled via Gloucester, arriving home at 5.30am – a very tiring day and surely the longest “up and down” concert performed by them.

Thursday September 29th

Today the choristers paid their last respects to Will Jones. The high regard held for Will was displayed by the number of choristers attending his funeral. Gathering outside the house in Hopkin Street, Treherbert, some 60 members sang “Gwahoddiad” and at Llwycoed Crematorium they performed “Arglwydd Mae Yn Nosi”. So the Chair bid their last farewell to a much respected person and chorister.

OCTOBER

Saturday October 8th

John Cleveland College, Hinchley, Leicester

The Choir made its first visit to Hinchley, leaving Treorchy at 1.55pm and arriving at the College four hours later. A rehearsal was held with a new accompanist for the evening, Jeffrey Howard, a Second Year Student at Cardiff University whose services were obtained by John Cynan Jones. The venue was a typical school hall with average acoustic value. The tone of the evening was set by the capacity audience, which included the Mayor and Mayoress who applauded the choristers on to the stage as they passed through the hall. At the commencement of the second half John Cynan introduced the audience to a “Happy Birthday” routine for Jack Knappgate and Jeffrey Howard! Despite the fact of the show acquaintance between Choir and Accompanist, the success of the concert was amply displayed by the speech given by the Mayor and the tremendous applause as the choristers passed through the audience to leave the stage.

Tuesday October 13th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The Choir appeared in the Seventh Annual Concert at the Park & Dare Theatre. The artist was Margaret Tomkinson, mezzo contralto. As always there was one unusual happening in the concert. During the piano introduced to “Speed Your Journey”, John Cynan stopped the performed due to some extraneous noise that could be distinctly heard from the pedal! This was soon put right! At the opening of the second half Clifford Taylor, President, made a presentation to Jenny on behalf of the Choir in recognition of her services and with best wishes for the future. The choristers stood and showed their appreciation in the usual way.

Friday October 21st

City Hall, Cardiff

The Choir appeared in City Hall under the auspices of the Associated Law Society of Wales with the proceeds in aid of the Solicitors Benevolent Association. It was an early start as the concert began at 6.40pm with Mair Roberts as soloist, who incidentally was celebrating her wedding anniversary that day. It was a “straight-through” concert (with Bryan Davies as accompanist) which concluded at 8.10pm.

The enjoyment, success and admiration of the evening's performance was amply displayed by the standing ovation given by the enthralled audience.

Sunday October 23rd

City Hall, Cardiff

Tonight was the start of the Christie Tyler Concert marathon of nine consecutive concerts at City Hall, Cardiff before an invited audience. Leaving Treorchy at 8.10pm the show started at 10pm. The other artists were the Cory Band, with which the Choir performed two combined items with John Cynan conducting. Bandsman Howard Jones led the "Welsh Finale" of "Myfanwy" and "We'll Keep A Welcome". The other artist was Mike Doyle, a comedian and singer who won his heat in "New Faces" on television and came second in the Grand Final. The Caerphilly Castle Singers entertained at the medieval night in the castle. At the end of the concert (11.40pm) the audience warmly applauded as the performers left the stage.

Monday October 24th

City Hall, Cardiff

With the buses leaving home at 8.35pm the concert marathon of the Christie Tyler Furniture Fortnight continued in the City Hall, Cardiff. The format was repeated, with one small difference as the Choir a different song.

Monday October 25th

City Hall, Cardiff

Another slight song change. Tonight's artist was Stan Stennett

Monday October 26th

City Hall, Cardiff

Mike Doyle returned and with only two changes of songs the format remained largely the same.

Monday October 27th

City Hall, Cardiff

Two changes to songs tonight. Nigel Phillips in black and white for the concert.

Monday October 31st

City Hall, Cardiff

The start of the second week of the fortnight with the format as before.

NOVEMBER

Tuesday November 1st

City Hall, Cardiff

At tonight's performance the Lord Mayor and Mayoress of Cardiff was present. John Cynan stayed until the end and conducted the Welsh finale.

Wednesday November 2nd

City Hall, Cardiff

At the announcement of his birthday Ken Fox was a most pleasantly surprised guest as the Choir serenaded him. Nigel Phillips changed continually like a chameleon. The penultimate concert drew to yet another successful end.

Thursday November 3rd

City Hall, Cardiff

So to the final concert. With a “Last Night of the Proms” atmosphere and the Choir singing extra songs, the concert saw Mike Doyle on top form, the Cory band maintaining their high standards and the Caerphilly Castle Singers giving an excellent performance. John Cynan conducted the Welsh Finale after presentations by the Managing Director of Christie Tyler. The audience displayed their pleasure in no uncertain terms with loud applause and cheering. The concert concluded at 12.30am and a free bar was provided for the artists.

Tuesday November 15th

The rehearsal was broadcast for a Japanese TV network for a programme covering the history of the mining community. The Choir sang “We’ll Keep A Welcome” for the crew.

Saturday November 19th

New Hall, Winchester College

On arrival at the New Hall in Winchester College a rehearsal was held with the Hampshire Youth County Band prior to refreshments. The concert started at 7pm and with such a splendid youth band whose director, Haydn Rich, hails from Treherbert, a fine acoustic hall and a warm appreciative audience, this was a successful night indeed. This was particularly pleasing as the concert was broadcast over the hospital service network. The incident was different from normal as the interval was scheduled for twenty minutes but ended up lasting an hour! The concert finished at 10.20pm but owing to car park programmes the buses did not leave the hall until 10.40pm, with one going to the Green Jacket’s Barracks for the evening.

Tuesday November 22nd

Bethlehem Chapel, Treorchy

The Choir met in Bethlehem Chapel to film “Dechrau Canu Dechrau Canmol” for S4C. Treorchy Choral Society also took part. The conductors were Norman Harris, John Cynan Jones and the organist was Jonathan Gulliford. The entire event was over in 45 minutes!

DECEMBER

Thursday December 1st

Memorial Hall, Barry

Almost a year to the day the Choir returned to the Memorial Hall for a concert in aid of the Merthyr Dyfan Church Restoration Fund, which had a substantial boost from the large audience. The artist was Sylvia Rhys Thomas (soprano) from Barry who was an excellent singer and was accompanied by David Seaman. Despite the fact that the hall is not the best acoustically, the response of the audience left the performers in no doubt of the success of the concert.

Saturday December 3rd

Winter Gardens, Malvern

After a period of 23 years the Choir returned to the Winter Gardens in Malvern. The concert started at 7.30pm to a capacity audience. With Mair back in the soloist spot,

John Cynan in a jovial mood and the choristers responding as usual, the concert was most enjoyable. This was verified by the most appreciative audience. It was leasing for both Brian Bates, who organised the concert, and to the Choir as the proceeds were for their own funds. John Cynan publicly thanked Brian for all he is doing for us as a Choir.

Wednesday December 7th

Teddington Studios, London.

Leaving Treorchy at 12.10pm the Choir travelled to London to appear in the Teddington Studios for a TV programme. Following rehearsals the broadcast took place. But this engagement was clouded in mystery and the “sound of silence” as only a few privileged members knew what it was about. The programme was “This Is Your Life” where secrecy is essential. It was at this rehearsal that choristers were told that the subject was Cliff Morgan. Following a splendid meal the choristers relaxed until they were called for the final shots. The show finished at 9.15pm and the choristers returned to the restaurant and bar for the evening. As with this type of programme the studio is festooned with famous personalities. This included rugby stars, television stars, political and musical fraternity and sports commentators were abound. Bleddyn Williams, Jack Matthews, Nerys Hughes, Gloria Hunniford, Des Lynham, Harry Carpenter, Neil Kinnock, Owain Arwel Hughes to name but a few. Tonight the festivities saw a “take-over” bid for conductorship of the Choir. The first candidate was Cliff Morgan who displayed his capabilities for the first few numbers. The second candidate was Neil Kinnock who instead of being the Leader of the Opposition tried to be the Leader of Treorchy. The third candidate was Owain Arwel Hughes who showed a bit of class!

Saturday December 10th

Civic Centre, Litchfield.

For their first performance in this venue the Choir left Treorchy at 3.40pm and arrived at 7.20pm in time for the 8pm concert commencement. This is a small, intimate venue where the audience and Choir was close to each other. The enjoyment of the performance was clearly shown by the volume and length of shouts, whistles and applause which demanded an encore. The concert finished at 10.35pm with the late bus visiting Litchfield Rugby Club. It was a splendid evening and a satisfactory way to end this year’s engagements.