

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 1998

By Norman Martin
Registrar & Honorary Archivist

JANUARY

Tuesday January 13th

The choristers were saddened by the announcement that regretfully Marion Williams had tendered her resignation – operative in six months – as accompanist of the Choir. Her reasons for this difficult decision were that the demands on her time by the illness of her husband and her private teaching sessions left her with the fact that she could no longer devote the time necessary to maintain her own high standards of musical accompaniment. Another added problem was the travelling on her own from Barry, especially during the winter months, which caused more worry and stress as time went by. The Conductor and Chairman thanked her most sincerely for her faithfulness, dependability and professionalism during her years as a member of the musical staff. Although dismayed by the announcement, all present understood and were sympathetic to her problems, and showed their warm-hearted appreciation in no uncertain manner.

FEBRUARY

Saturday February 28th

Parr Hall, Warrington

The arrangements of the return to Warrington were a replica to the 1996 visit. A short rehearsal was held, where it became known that it was Norman Martin's birthday, which resulted in the singing of "Happy Birthday" then to the Town Hall to receive the official welcome from Mayor Roy Humphreys and a splendid buffet. The concert, arranged by Mel Absalom, who proved to be a most capable Master of Ceremonies, started at 7.30pm before a near-capacity, warmly appreciative audience and the artists who appeared with the Choir on the North of England Tour, Cecelia Eleni Smiga, joined us once again. The choristers were resplendent in their daffodils – as tomorrow is St David's Day – singing with renewed confidence. All under the influence of Andrew Badham and Marion Williams, which resulted in a very successful evening – musically, socially and financially. In celebration of Mr & Mrs Absalom's Ruby wedding Anniversary, "Myfanwy" was sung for them. The concert was broadcast live through the hospital network. The charity benefiting from the concert was the St Rocco Hospice and as a token of their appreciation Ann Woods, the Chairman, presented the Choir Chairman with an inscribed plaque. The concert was an excellent start for Eifion Evans (1B) and Clive Taylor (2B) who were making their concert debut.

MARCH

Tuesday March 3rd

Another sad announcement at tonight's rehearsal was the resignation of Heather James as Assistant Accompanist which will be operative at the end of the summer. This was due to her increased work commitment which now necessitates her travelling overseas, particularly to Hong Kong. With these extra demands on her time, she will be unable to devote the time required to maintain her own high standards she needs as Choir accompanist. The Chairman expressed the regrets of everyone at the loss of her. We will all miss her bubbling personality, charming nature, guiding

influence on the choristers and her outstanding contribution to the success of the Choir.

Saturday March 14th

Dudley Town Hall

The Choir returned to Dudley for its seventh engagement in the Town Hall. A short rehearsal and the concert started at 7.30pm before a capacity audience. The Choir renewed its acquaintance with Ros Evans whose first-class performance and cheerful disposition won the admiration of everyone. The upsurge in the Choir's commitment was totally apparent with the appearance of 82 choristers on stage and the effect of the performance on the completely enthralled audience was evident by the rapturous applause and standing ovation. The concert was followed by a buffet while some choristers were privileged to attend Mayoress Mary Hill's reception, with the residue leaving to enjoy the pleasures of the Woodcross Social Club. A thrilling start for Haydn Parfitt making his concert debut on his return to the Choir.

Thursday March 26th

Tonypandy Comprehensive School

The Choir returned to the school with a concert in celebration of the Centenary of the Dinas Mission Church which was officially opened on July 24th 1897 and had grown up as a direct result of the coal industry. The Dinas that existed then has long gone, but the one remaining feature is the Church. The artist was Katherine Maria Jenkins (soprano), a young talent who will be attending the Royal Academy London in September. Despite the limited audience and a hall doubtful of acoustic value, it was a creditable performance. Congratulations to Mel Parfitt (1T) on his initial concert appearance.

APRIL

Tuesday April 2nd

At the AGM tonight Ivor Lock was elected Librarian, Roger Morse was elected Vice Chairman and Kevin Bridgeman was Assistant Librarian. All other posts were unopposed.

Saturday 4th & Sunday 6th April

Embassy Theatre, Skegness

The Choir paid its third visit to the Embassy Theatre in Skegness. A short rehearsal was held and after an excellent buffet, it was on to the Seacroft Hotel, then back to the venue for the concert. Despite the long journey the performance of the Choir, together with the irrepressible Ros Evans, brought thunderous applause from the large, receptive audience. A very special evening for the lady in the audience as "Myfanwy" was sung in celebration of her birthday. The concert finished at 9.45pm and the choristers dispersed to enjoy the pleasures of Skegness. After a hearty breakfast on the Sunday morning the buses left for home, with one bus watching the Wales vs France rugby game at Leamington Rugby Club – the spirit was subdued as Wales lost 51-0!

Thursday April 9th

In the "Paul Robeson Room" at the Park & Dare Theatre, the Centenary Celebrations of the birth of Robeson (1898-1976) were held. It was in the Miners' Eisteddfod in Porthcawl, October 1957 that the Treorchy Male Choir sang with him on that famous

historic trans-Atlantic exchange broadcast. The Choir was honoured to be represented there with other representatives from Cwmbach and Morlais Choirs. With moving contributions from Martha Edwards (archivist of the Paul Robeson collection), Tyrone O'Sullivan (Tower Colliery) and the performance of "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" by the singers, it was a dignified and sincere tribute to the Honorary Welshman. The celebrations were broadcast on S4C.

Friday April 10th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The 33rd annual Good Friday concert was a "glad and sad" occasion. Mr Harry Errington of Carlisle, the most faithful supporter, paid his fourth visit to the concert. In the dressing room prior to the concert Harry, who assisted with the North of England Tour last year, spoke of the interest the tour had stirred and envisaged another tour. In appreciation of the Choir's efforts in bringing enjoyment to innumerable people, charities and organisations, he presented the Choir with a shield embellished with the Carlisle Coat of Arms. The Chairman sincerely thanked him for this shield and promised it would be in a place of honour in the Choir's trophy case. In the concert Robert Griffiths informed the audience that it was the last local appearance of Marion Williams before her retirement in the summer. He spoke of her immense value of her musical contribution and her dedication and commitment in maintaining the standards synonymous with the Choir. She will be greatly missed but fondly remembered. The Chairman presented her with an illuminated address signed by the three conductors she had worked with, John Cynan Jones, John Jenkins and Andrew Badham. She thanked everyone for their support during her time and of her great pleasure at being the Accompanist of the Treorchy Male Choir.

Tuesday April 14th

Representatives of the Choir were in Parc Chapel, Cwmparc to support the television series "Iechyd Da" for S4C.

Thursday April 23rd

National Museum, Cardiff

The Welsh Development Agency organised a concert for the European Union as part of the UK's Presidency of the European Union. The Choir performed for the first time at the National Museum in Cathays Park for a consortium of European scientists. The Choir sang on the steps in the main foyer of the museum and with 85 singers (including Geraint Owens making his first appearance) staging in a restricted area there was a resounding acoustic. The response to the performance was warm and appreciative.

Saturday, April 25th

All Hallows College, Lyme Regis

There were new fields to conquer when the Choir paid its first visit to Rouson, Lyme Regis. On arrival the gates to the venue, All Hallows College, appeared too narrow for the buses, but our consummate professional drivers negotiated it expertly! All Hallos is a school of considerably antiquity dating from the 13th century in the town of Honoton before moving to the present position of Peek Mansion in 1938. the concert was held in the Sports hall which had a fine acoustic and was further enhanced with the presence of a capacity audience. The Conductor exploited this value and the reaction from the audience were ones of sheer delight, admiration and enjoyment.

This was made abundantly clear as when Keith Moore, Headmaster, rose to give his vote of thanks, the volume, warmth and length of the applause and acclaim was such that he gracefully sat down and allowed the Choir to perform an encore. Sharing the platform was the Lyme Regis Town Band whose splendid contribution to the music-making made it a memorable occasion.

Tuesday April 28th

The rehearsal was marked with good and bad news. The Chairman introduced and warmly welcomed the new accompanist of the Treorchy Male Choir, Rhiannon Williams. He wished her all the success with the Choir and assured her of the total support of the members. She sat with Marion (her own piano teacher!) to start to “learn the trade”.

The Chairman then announced the death of Mr Clifford Taylor, Choir President. He spoke of the tremendous value of him, particularly in the early days. As Managing Director of Polikoff’s International Factory in Ynyswen, he allowed the premises to be used for the Choir’s first Annual Dinner in 1948. Mr Taylor was instrumental in providing the Choir’s first uniform in 1952. He became Choir President in 1967 and was made a Life Member of the Choir in 1985. As a Chartered Accountant he assisted, whenever asked, in financial matters involving the Choir. He had been a power of strength in the community and was on the Board of Governors of Rhondda and Pontypridd colleges. Many local organisations and charities had reasons to be grateful to him for his efforts in promoting and supporting many fundraising functions. Mr Taylor was one of life’s gentlemen and will be truly missed and ever remembered.

Thursday April 30th

The Choir returned to Cardiff for a performance in the Castle. Arriving at 8.35pm, as the choristers patiently waited to perform, they were provided with refreshments. At 10.10pm the concert started with a large choir in a limited area in the Banqueting Hall, so much so that many choristers had difficulty actually seeing the Conductor. The engagement was under the auspices of the Automatic Vending Association of Britain (AVAB) and despite the long wait and limited room, the performance received a standing ovation from the delighted audience.

MAY

Tuesday May 5th

An eventual day in the annals of the Treorchy Male Choir. The cremation of Mr Clifford Taylor, Choir President, took place in the Taunton Deane Crematorium in Somerset. A representation of the Choir, including Mr and Mrs John Cynan Jones travelled by cars to attend the funeral. There was an heartfelt emotional interlude as the body was borne through the crematorium to the singing, from a recording of his favourite tune “Myfanwy”. The dignified service and large amount of people present gave proof to the esteem in which he was held. Mr Taylor was a committed, supportive and loyal President of the Treorchy Male Choir. He will be ever missed and ever remembered.

In the evening the rehearsal was held in Treorchy Comprehensive School where the official Choir photograph was taken. The Chairman heartily welcomed Mr John

Cynan Jones who would conduct the rehearsal. He last conducted a rehearsal on Tuesday April 30th 1991.

Friday May 15th

The Chapel, Royal Naval College, Greenwich, London

The Choir prides itself in the amount of prestigious engagements it is offered from year to year. Tonight's concert was certainly no exception to that! At 10.45am the bus left Treherbert, finally reaching Llandaff and heading west along the M4. With two drivers per coach there was no need to stop for lunch, although a 10-minute visit to Heston Service Station was allowed and given the heavy traffic on the approach to London, it proved a worthwhile idea!

The Choir travelled along the Embankment, before visiting the lesser affluent areas of Lewisham, Camberwell and Peckham and suddenly reaching the picturesque district of Greenwich where the bus arrived at the gates of the spectacular Royal Naval College at 4.20pm. With its extensive views of the Thames, the College was built in the 18th century by that great architect Sir Christopher Wren and stands as testimony to his wonderful achievements. On arrival the Choir was greeted by concert organiser Sally Payton, who ushered the choristers through the tight security checks into the Chapel.

This spectacular sight will live long in the memory. Its magnificent marble pillars, impressive gallery, organ and awe-inspiring art work. Completed in 1752, it was gutted by fire in 1779 and redesigned and decorated by James Stuart and William Newton in Rococco style and Wedgewood colours. The ceiling is curved and has a delicate pattern of rosettes and panels, but dominating all, is the huge canvas above the altar which depicts the landing of Saint Paul on the island of Malta after his shipwreck. The nautical theme is continued in the marble floor with its pattern of ships' ropes and mariner's compass. The organ was built in 1787 by Samuel Green and the case is of Spanish mahogany.

Mrs Payton explained that tonight's concert was a fundraising exercise in aid of the Duke of Edinburgh's Trust and the 300 guests had paid £150 each for the privilege of hearing the Choir followed by a banquet in the Painted Hall. John Cynan Jones made his return to the rostrum tonight after seven years in retirement and one wondered whether he had ever actually been away at all! The 80 choristers responded to his every move and facial expression throughout the rehearsal and concert performance alike. Following the rehearsal the Choir was led into the college bar where a feast was prepared. At 7pm it was time to prepare for the performance and one by one the singers walked into the chapel to huge applause. Once seated the principal guests arrived, namely Commander Jonathan Maughan LVO and the Director of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme Vice Admiral Michael Gretton CV.

In typical showman form, John Cynan emerged in long black tails and with the drop of his hand Marion began to play and the Choir opened this most prestigious of concerts with "Cwm Rhondda". The Conductor typically took full advantage of the excellent acoustics and following the performance of the first item many members of the audience stood to applaud. The rousing "Harlech" finale of "Fantasia on Famous Welsh Airs" prompted the same response and was followed by Eldrydd Cynan Jones making a return appearance as soprano soloist in "Unwaith Eto'n Nghymru Annwyl".

Once the Choir was comfortably seated following the end of their first selection of items they were introduced to the renowned trumpeter Crispin Steel Perkins. He played a selection of wind instruments, some dating back over 200 years. Eldrydd Cynan Jones also performed a selection of items with him and was accompanied by organist Leslie Pearson. The Choir returned with a selection of Welsh hymns. "Tydi a Roddaist" received an excellent response. However, nothing prepared the choristers for the reaction of the combined performance of "Battle Hymn of the Republic" with Eldrydd. Once the standing ovation silenced, the chief guests left their seats and the Choir departed the Chapel to enjoy a free bar in the College. At 9pm the early bus made its way home, with the late bus enjoyed the atmosphere of the Cricketeers pub, many choristers not reaching home until 5am.

Saturday May 30th

Civic Hall, Bedworth

Leaving at 2.30pm, the Choir returned to a favourite venue at the Civic Hall in Bedworth. Although this was the ninth visit to the hall, it was full. This was a special significance for the newly appointed accompanist, Rhiannon Williams as she made her initial concert appearance, sharing the piano with Marion. The first item she accompanied was "Unwaith Eto'n Nghymru Annwyl" with Dean Powell as soloist. This was followed by "Deep Harmony" which played a part in the evening's performance. This is a very quiet song and after a few bars a noise from the hall prompted the Conductor to stop the singing, pause, and restart. "Tydi A Roddaist", "Fantasia", "Were you There" and "The Lord's Prayer" ended her contribution to the concert. The response from the audience and in the opinion of the choristers left no doubt that Rhiannon will carry on the fine tradition set by previous accompanists of the Choir. It was another successful concert under the guidance of Brian Bates and his supporters.

JUNE

Thursday June 4th

A busy day as representatives of the Choir went to the Pavilion in Porthcawl to take part in a broadcast on S4C celebrating the centenary of the birth of Paul Robeson. It was in this theatre in 1957 during the Miners Eisteddfod that the transatlantic link between him and the Choir was made. Today the members had the privilege of meeting Mr Paul Robeson Jnr. During the recording the Choir Chairman presented him with the Choir tie. This was apt as he said, "My wife packed four suits but forgot to pack a tie!" He wore the tie for the many photographs that were taken. In the evening the BBC visited the rehearsal room to film for the programme "Coal Products."

Sunday June 7th

At 8am the choristers reported outside the Park & Dare Theatre in their dress suits, carrying casual clothes. Thomas' buses transported them to the top of the Bwlch Road, Cwmparc. Here amid adverse weather conditions, wet and cold and only with the sheep present, filming of the Choir singing "A Valley Called the Rhondda" took place. This will be used on a forthcoming Mike Bogdanov film called "A Light in the Valley". Following the filming the Choir returned to the rehearsal room, changed into their casual clothes, and filmed until 1pm. Despite all the trying tribulations 76 choristers were present.

Saturday June 13th

Little Ditchling, Sussex

Leaving home at 11am the Choir returned to Little Ditchling. Memories came flooding back of the last visit in 1995 when in glorious weather the fete was most enjoyable. What a change this time! Travelling and arriving in incessant rain which greatly marred the whole event. On arrival it was stated that the afternoon performance was cancelled and the evening's concert would be held in the village hall. Under the guidance of the village policemen, the choristers disembarked and went to the village hall to deposit their clothes and were left to spend the afternoon around the village. The concert started at 8pm, with Dame Vera Lynn present. The Choir sang four items and then a break for food took place. The audience being served a light buffet. After half an hour the concert continued and finished at 10pm presentations of a rosette to Dean Powell and Islwyn Morgan in comic fashion were made by organiser Bob Mayston. Despite the problems the concert was a most enjoyable one. A really frustrating day for the choristers. However disconcerting for the Choir, the heartfelt sympathies and admiration went out to the organisers and people of the village who fought gallantly and won the battle to make sure the fete was not a "ash out" by the atrocious monsoon conditions.

Saturday 27th & Sunday June 28th

Astoria Ballroom, Rawtenstall / Queens Hall, Widness

It was an incident-packed engagement when the Choir made its first visit to Widness for a weekend engagement. Arriving at the Everglades Park Hotel in Widness at 4pm, the choristers were informed that Phil Edmunds, Alwyn Lewis and Keith Owens had been involved in a motorway accident and thankfully they were not injured but the car was a "write-off". The effects of this sad news, a worry regarding these choristers and as a number attending was disappointing, the loss of their services was doubly felt. The buses left the hotel for Rawtenstall, some 40 miles away, and arrived at the Astoria Ballroom at 6.30pm. The concert started at 8pm and the Choir was applauded until every member was on stage. Although the hall was not acoustically good, from the first item it was obvious the audience enjoyed the singing. Before the singing of the second group in the second half there was a "buzz" about the stage as the injured choristers walked on stage and were greeted with warm applause and appreciate shouts from everyone in the hall. Mr Badham remarked that what they had done was above the call of duty. In a relieved atmosphere the concert continued and despite all the trials and tribulations it was a successful one. Rose Evans was at her very best. Heather tinkled the ivories with dexterity and the Choir performed to win a new public on a first visit. All this was under the confident control of Andrew Badham and the emotionally-filled concert was brought to a successful conclusion, with the audience applauding every choristers off the stage. On returning to the hotel a happy incident occurred. There was a wedding in full swing and the bride and groom were serenaded by the Choir singing "Love Is A Many Splendoured Thing". Surely an occasion they will remember in coming years.

On Sunday the choristers had plenty of free time until the concert in the evening. Most choristers either walked, taxied or bussed to town and generally kicked their hells until concert time. During this period it was discovered that there was no piano in the Queen's Hall but frantic efforts were made and a piano was made available. The Victoria Road Methodist Church was refurbished and renamed the Queen's Hall.

As with churches they are acoustically fine halls and the singing was easy. During the second half Mr Robert Griffiths announced that this was Heather's last concert. He spoke of her charm, her musical abilities and her loyalty whilst with the Choir. He presented her with an illuminated address with the choristers standing and all the hall applauding her. The Treorchy team of Ros, Heather, Choir and the efficient Andrew Badham produced another successful engagement. The audience, although limited, amply displayed their enjoyment and the satisfaction of the evening's performance with prolonged applause and delighted sounds, which continued until the last chorister had left the stage. On the following morning a letter was read on BBC Radio Wales's Roy Noble Show from a woman in the Widnes concert who stated her pleasure at the performance and hoped the Choir had a pleasant journey home.

JULY

Tuesday July 9th

This rehearsal saw the last appearance of Heather James as Assistant Accompanist. The Chairman spoke of her invaluable musical contribution in upholding the high standards of the Choir and of her dedication and dependability in spite of all her travelling. Her charm, personality, cheerfulness and infectious enthusiasm had won her the admiration of all. It was a pleasure and delight to have met and worked with her. Robert Griffiths presented her with a cut glass bowl, suitably inscribed amid cheers and applause of the choristers. On addressing the Choir she related her fears of returning to Wales after 30 years. Her determination was to return to the Welsh tradition and one of the best things that had happened to fulfil this was to become Assistant Accompanist of the Choir. Her joy at being among the choristers, with the fun and laughter at every occasion, was something she will remember as one of the most satisfying periods of her return to Wales.

Saturday July 18th

Salvation Army Osborn Memorial Hall, Boscombe

The Choir paid its first visit to Boscombe with a concert in the Memorial Hall. A short rehearsal was held which displayed the ease of singing in this fine building. Following a splendid buffet the concert commenced at 7.30pm. re-aquaintance was made with soloist Iona Jones who last appeared with the Choir in Bethany Chapel, Tonypany in November 1991. One of the most surprised persons in the hall was Marion when the Choir sang "Happy Birthday" to her. The warm, enthusiastic applause from the audience was adequate confirmation that the Treorchy team had given an excellent performance. This was a momentous engagement as it was Marion's last performance as accompanist of the Treorchy Male Choir. Marion had been the Choir's "lucky penny" as in 1967 she stepped in to accompany the Choir at the National Eisteddfod in Bala. When Jennifer Jones finished, Marion solved the problem by accepting the position and returning to the Choir. During the traumatic period of an unscheduled change of Conductor from John Cynan to John Jenkins and then to Andrew Badham, Marion kept the Choir afloat and assisted the new conductor with her expertise, advice and suggestions. During the overseas tours to the Mid West, Atlanta and California she was the pillar of strength. Marion's contribution to the success of the Choir has been immense. Not only her brilliant accompaniment but her for the Choir but her playing for the many professional artists which brought the most complimentary comments from them. Andrew Badham and Robert Griffiths thanked her for the dedication, loyalty, dependability, charm and wonderful contribution she

had made over the last nine years, in upholding the reputation of the Treorchy Male Choir.

AUGUST

Wednesday August 26th

The Choir lost one of the pillars on which it was built today with the death of Benny Griffiths. He joined the Choir in 1948, making him a member of the “Fifty years Service Club” (for which his widow received his gold watch posthumously). In 1971 he was awarded his Long Service Scroll and in 1980 Life Membership of the Treorchy Male Choir. Benny served as Second Tenor Committeeman for 24 years (1968-1991) and during this period had the most difficult post of Bus Steward. He was a happy-go-lucky, cheerful person with a smile for everyone. His “Bennyisms” – comical sayings were a joy and will be recalled and enjoyed in the years to come. Benny made visitors to the rehearsal room most welcome and his commitment and loyalty to the Choir was absolutely and he was a role model for all to follow. He was a respected and admired person. As a former miner, the time had now come for him to “put his tools on the bar” for the last time. He will be sadly missed, but ever remembered.

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday September 2nd

The choristers bid their last farewell to Benny Griffiths today. A large number of present and former choristers attended the funeral in Treorchy Cemetery which displayed the feeling of regret and respect for Benny. The bearers were Fred O’Brien, David Foulkes, Leighton Wales and Alun Davies and with the singing of “Gwahoddiad”, conducted by John Cynan Jones, he was laid to his final rest. On the following evening’s rehearsal the Chairman paid tribute to him, reflecting the dedicated service of more than 50 years to the advancement of the Choir. Silence was held and “Deep Harmony” sung in his memory.

Saturday September 12th

Opera House, Buxton

The five and a half hour drive to Derbyshire saw the Choir perform for the first time in the town of Buxton. Travelling through the wild, rugged and breathtaking scenery of the Peak District, the Choir arrived at the Opera House for 5.20pm. it was obvious this was a superbly acoustical theatre. Built in 1903 it has been and still is a venue for many prestigious musical performances by international artists, orchestras and performers. The concert commenced at 7.30pm and in such a venue Ros Evan maintained her high standards of performance both singing and as an hilarious raconteur. Rhiannon accompanied the Choir and artists brilliantly. The Choir, determined to win new admirers, rose to the occasion with a fine performance, all under the leadership of the cool competency of Andrew Badham. The evening was a complete success. The response from the capacity audience confirmed this with sustained applause and cheering. With the presentation of bouquets, the concert finished at 9.50pm and a buffet and relaxing hour was spent in the Old Courthouse Hotel. This engagement was the first stage appearance of Ray Daniels (1B) and the first full concert accompanied by Rhiannon Williams.

Saturday September 19th

Capel Newydd, Llandeilo

After a period of twenty years the Choir returned to Llandeilo. The concert was a sell out so much so that the Choir had to stage in and around the pulpit, which caused a problem for the marshals! Thus achieved, when the artist appeared, some choristers had to move! Despite all this commotion, the capacity audience, which included people from Madagascar, Toronto and members of Llanelli Male Choir, displayed their enjoyment of the performance with rapturous applause.

OCTOBER

Thursday October 8th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The 17th Annual Autumn Concert was a very special one. With a large Choir, Ros Evans and Rhiannon Williams making their first appearance in Treorchy and a substantial audience, everything was in place for a musical bonanza evening. This was verified by the tremendous response from the audience. Added to this the Chairman made the presentation of watched to four choristers who had completed 50 years service to the Choir, namely Islwyn Morgan, Ben Jackson, Norman Martin and Ieuan Lawrence. This brought immense reaction from the Choir and audience. There should have been another there, Benny Griffiths, but as he had passed away only two months ago, the watch was present to his widow and a silence was observed to his memory. Yet another presentation was made, this time by Conductor Emeritus John Cynan Jones to Marion Williams of a cut-glass inscribed bowl in appreciation of her services to the Choir. Mr Jones reminisced of the era of John Haydn Davies and Tom Jones, the contribution of Clifford Taylor, the Canadian Tour, Bala Eisteddfod and the Greenwich Concert. Thus Marion was the accompanist at the beginning and end of his time “on stage”. Andrew Badham thanked her for her unwavering support during his time. Yet another contribution to the evening was the singing of “Happy Birthday” to Jack Knapgate. This was certainly the most memorable Annual Concert to date of the Treorchy Male Choir.

Saturday October 19th

Llantwit Major School Hall

With the return to Llantwit Major the Choir was delighted to share the stage with the St Athans Voluntary Band (Conductor Alan Bourne) in celebration of their fiftieth anniversary. With the band on stage and the Choir positioned on the floor of the hall in front of them, the evening’s performance brought forth unbridled enthusiasm from the delighted audience. A splendid atmosphere for Gary Horgan (47) and George Jacob (71) on their birthdays. Afterwards choristers enjoyed a satisfying hour in the Old Brewery before departing for home.

Thursday October 22nd

At tonight’s rehearsal a request was made for the Choir to perform live on the Ann Robinson television programme “Watchdog” from the Sports Bar Café, Cardiff Bay. The programme is tomorrow at 4.45pm and the Conductor and Accompanist are unavailable! There was no piano and a full Choir was not required.

Friday October 23rd

Sports Bar Café, Cardiff Bay

At 4.45pm the choristers reached the Sports Café Bar in Cardiff Bay and the Choir assembled in a corner of the main foyer. A short rehearsal took place and any problems were overcome. Notwithstanding the difficulties of performing live, coupled with the lack of music staff and piano, the Choir's performance was greeted with admiration and enthusiasm from the television personnel and limited audience.

Saturday October 24th

Guild Hall, Axminster

In atrocious weather conditions the Choir ventured out to pay a return visit to Axminster. The cause was the Flamingo Pool, as it had been on the previous visit. The artists this time was Claire Bunton, a pupil of Rhiannon's and only 15 years of age. The concert was warmly accepted by the enthusiastic audience.

Thursday October 29th

The month of October saw the new President of the Treorchy Male Choir nominated. The Choir has only had two presidents in its history – Iorwerth Thomas (1946-1966) and Clifford Taylor (1966-1998). An invitation to fulfil the office was offered to Mr Cliff Morgan, the famous rugby player, broadcaster and lifelong friend and ardent supporter of the Choir. Unfortunately for valid reasons, he staged gracefully he was unable to accept this honour. An invitation was sent to Brian Bates, whose sterling efforts over many years had promoted the name of the Choir throughout the UK. This he did by promoting and organising concerts in a wide variety of excellent venues with proceeds of around £100,000 coming to the Choir. He was made an Honorary Member in 1983 and his unstinting efforts and work rate has never faltered in his quest to ensure the continued success of the Choir. It was announced this evening that Brian had accepted the office of President. This was greeted with cheers and applause from the delighted choristers.

NOVEMBER

Saturday November 21st

The Forum, Bath

For the return visit to Bath the Choir paid its first visit to The Forum Theatre which proved an excellent, ornate and bright hall. The Chairman introduced Brian Bates to the Choir before rehearsals. He addressed the Choir, explaining his complete surprise, pride and honour at the appointment and pledged his total commitment to promoting the continued success of the Choir. In the concert the Choir renewed its concert with the Silver Ring Choir and the performance of each choir brought a tremendous response from the capacity audience. The choristers left the stage to tumultuous applause.

Wednesday November 25th

Tynewydd Labour Club

For the first time the Choir performed in Tynewydd Labour Club. In a splendid hall, and a most attentive audience, with Rhiannon on a portable keyboard and Andrew foraging amongst the audience, it was a great success. This was evidently displayed with a standing ovation and continued applause.