

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 2008

By Dean Powell, Publicity Officer
& Honorary Archivist

January

Tuesday January 15th

BBC Studios, TV Centre, London

The first engagement of the new year was in rather special surroundings as the Choir made a return journey to BBC Television Centre in London to appear on the Alan Titchmarsh Show with guest artists Simon Callow, Charlie Dimmock and Trisha Penrose. Leaving Treorchy early in the morning, only one coach-load of 49 choristers was required for the trip to the capital city. Conductor Jan Ball and Accompanist Helen Roberts travelled with on the four-hour journey from the Rhondda to Shepherd's Bush. On arrival at Studio 4 the Choir was welcomed by composers Adrian Munsey and Jeff Chegwin who had organised for the choristers to appear on the afternoon chat show to promote the single *Faraway Place*. The Choir was ushered into the busy environment of Studio 4 and amongst the many cameras, lights, sets, audience and staff, rehearsed the item which they would later perform on the show. Following a lengthy break in the nearby Green Room they were invited to join the studio audience to watch one of the shows in progress. The second broadcast featured the Choir and they performed and recorded it in one take to be broadcast a few days later on BBC1. Before the journey home to Wales the choristers enjoyed a few hours in the BBC Club to entertain the staff while taking full advantage of the bar!

Saturday January 19th

Chichester Cathedral

The Choir's first engagement in Chichester Cathedral was organised by David Morris, cousin of long-standing chorister Reg Stephens. It was rather a splendid evening before an all-star celebrity audience including former sweetheart Dame Vera Lynn, veteran BBC broadcaster David Jacobs, BBC Royal Correspondent Nicholas Witchell and TV actor Christopher Timothy of *All Creatures Great and Small* fame. The 12th century Cathedral, filled with 800 people, provided a magnificent setting for this outstanding Choir performance in aid of Queen Alexandra Hospital Home for Ex Service People with Jan Ball as conductor, Helen Roberts as accompanist, Canon Graham Holcombe as organist soloist Kate Woolveridge and compere Dean Powell.

In this perfect acoustic the Choir opened the concert *With a Voice of Singing*, *Mae D'Eisiau Di Bob Awr*, *Y Darlun* and a rousing *Llanfair* which certainly set the scene for the music to come. Kate warmed the audience still further with another first-class performance followed by the Choir's *Lord's Prayer* and *Eli Jenkins Prayer*. Following the last item actor Christopher Timothy gave a passionate performance of the opening sections of *Under Milk Wood*. The Bala-born entertainer created a wonderful mood as he read the lengthy, passionate prose with a warm Welsh lilt.

The Choir continued with *Bryn Myrddin* and the first performance of *Ai Am Fod Haul in Machlud* before Dean Powell performed the solo item of *Unwaith Eto'n Nghymru Annwyl* to rapturous applause. The veteran radio broadcaster David Jacobs then took to the stage to welcome the guests and explain a little more about the marvellous work undertaken at Queen Alexandra Hospital for the victims of war.

The second half welcomed Dame Vera Lynn, Christopher Timothy, Nicholas Witchell to draw the prize raffle before the Choir opened with *Soldier's Chorus*, *Speed Your Journey* and the *Anvil Chorus*. The performance of *Faraway Place* and *Adiemus* was

thrilling, followed by *Senzenina* which certainly had the pulses racing. Richard Morrison performed a soliloquy from Shakespeare's Henry V as the same king had worshipped in Chichester. Then the Choir was allowed to complete an unforgettable performance with *You Raise Me Up*, *My Way* and *Nessun Dorma* to a unanimous standing ovation from all concerned. Refreshments were available at a local theatre bar where Dame Vera Lynn joined the Choir to enjoy even more entertainment until late in the evening.

Wednesday January 23rd

International Conference Centre, Birmingham

A return visit to the International Convention Centre in Birmingham was made to perform at the Variety Club of Great Britain's 21st Midlands Business Awards. Hosted by former newsreader Angela Rippon, the Choir was invited to participate in the evening's entertainment at the behest of Rod Natkiel. Following the evening meal, the Choir lined on stage and were introduced by Mr Natkiel as "a global star, an internationally famous Choir and the greatest in the world". After such a huge introduction, the Choir burst into a short programme of rousing items. Dean Powell performed the solo part in *Senzenina* for the first time due to Ray Daniel's unavailability. Then the Choir launched straight into *Men of Harlech*, *You Raise Me Up* and finally *Nessun Dorma* which resulted in a standing ovation.

Sunday January 26th

Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff

An afternoon performance at the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay was held in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust unit at the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff. The Choir returned to the venue for a combined concert with the Band of the Welsh Guards, conducted by Major David Cresswell. Compere for the evening was Frank Lincoln and the Choir was conducted jointly by Jan Ball and Dr Haydn James for the combined items with the band. This marked the first combined performance with the band for over seventeen years.

Despite the rather poor acoustics in this auditorium, the Choir certainly gave an excellent performance before the near-packed crowd of 1,700 people. *With a Voice of Singing*, *The Lord's Prayer* and *You Raise Me Up* opened the Choir's short selection of items, followed by a combined performance of *Soldier's Chorus* and *Speed Your Journey* with the Band.

In the second half the Choir performed *I Dreamed a Dream*, *Y Darlun* and the ever-faithful crowd-pleaser, *Nessun Dorma* before completing the concert with a series of combined items with the Band, culminating in *March of the Peers*. A congregational hymn of *Sanctus* accompanied by Choir and Band brought this enjoyable, rousing concert to a close with plenty of funds raised for this incredibly worthy cause.

Friday February 29th

Holland House Hotel, Cardiff

This post-dinner concert was not recognised as an official engagement for the Choir as only 35 choristers were actually required. The dinner was held in the main ballroom of the Holland House Hotel, Cardiff in aid of the cancer charity Tenovus. The engagement was made possible due to Dr Ian Lewis, the son of chorister Alwyn Lewis, who works for the charity. At 11.30pm the choristers marched on stage to a

tumultuous applause and despite the large consumption of alcohol and food, the audience remained perfectly silent for every item performed which came as a great surprise to us all.

Under the baton of Jan Ball, accompanied by Helen Roberts and presented by Dean Powell, the small choir gave a truly outstanding performance of around ten items, including *Senzenina*, *Harlech*, *You Raise Me Up*, *Nessun Dorma*, *Cwm Rhondda* and at the stroke of midnight - *Delilah* - to honour the start of St David's Day! The audience was obviously delighted and many of them joined the choristers afterwards for drinks, including former Christie Tyler chief executive Nigel Phillips and TV grand designer, the flamboyant Lawrence Llewellyn Bowen.

Saturday March 1st

Colston Hall, Bristol

A St David's Day Concert before a sell-out audience of 1,600 people at the magnificent Colston Hall, Bristol welcomed two of Wales's greatest musical legends - Max Boyce and the Treorchy Male Choir. This was the second combined concert organised for the Choir and Max, whose relationship goes back over thirty years. Now an Honorary Member of the Choir he was enthusiastic for the choristers to once again join him on stage and St David's Day seemed to obvious choice of dates for a night of Welsh hwyl!

The first half of the concert was performed solely by the Choir who gave one of the most outstanding performances of recent years. Jan Ball conducted the evening with Helen Roberts as accompanist and Dean Powell as compere. With plenty of fun and laughter his presentation skills warmed the audience considerably and he was invited to act as "warm up" for Max prior to his arrival on stage in the second half.

The large Choir certainly gave a first-class performance and one that left the audience in raptures from start to finish. The first half was divided into four sections to allow the choristers time to relax while Dean presented the next selection of items, interspersed with his own inimitable tales of Wales and the world of music. It was with this in mind that the concert was divided into a suitable selection of different genres of music.

Some of the major highlights included *With a Voice of Singing*, *Llanfair*, *Unwaith Eto'n Nghymru Annwyl* and the debut performance of *Sit Down Your Rocking The Boat*. Renditions of *Faraway Place*, *Adiemus* and of course *Senzenina*, followed immediately by the blast of *Men of Harlech* saw the crowd of red rugby-jersey wearing and inflatable daffodil waving crowd into hysterics.

It was with such an electrically-charged environment that the Choir concluded the first half with *You Raise Me Up*, *My Way*, *Nessun Dorma* and a thrilling *We'll Keep a Welcome*. Leaving the auditorium to a tumultuous applause, the Choir could be certain they had indeed conquered the Colston Hall.

The second half was performed totally by Max Boyce and at the end of the concert the Choir returned to the stage for the grand finale of *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* to a standing ovation. A wonderful, memorable night.

Wednesday March 12th

Treorchy Comprehensive School

Talented schoolchildren throughout the Rhondda gave the performance of their young lives at the Grand Final of the Treorchy Male Choir and Coca Cola Junior Musician of the Year Competition. A total of 27 children took to the stage at Treorchy Comprehensive School hall, which had been magically transformed into an atmospheric theatre, before a packed audience of 600 parents, teachers and supporters for the major event.

In a special announcement by Cllr Jane Ward, Mayor of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, sponsorship was made available by the local authority for the third year running. It meant that the two winners would be able to enjoy an all-expenses paid holiday to EuroDisney in Paris.

The winner of the Singing Category was Treorchy Primary School pupil Ffion Wilde who performed *My Favourite Things* from *The Sound of Music*. The winner of the Instrumentalist Category was Charlotte White of Maerdy Junior School who performed *Moon River* on the piano.

Now celebrating its third year, a total of 15 primary and junior schools in the two valleys entered the competition which is sponsored by Coca Cola Enterprises. The patron for the competition is Welsh bass-baritone Bryn Terfel MBE.

Rhondda Assembly Member Leighton Andrews opened the evening's proceedings and BBC broadcaster Roy Noble presented the prizes. The compere for the evening was this year's competition organiser, Dean Powell. A performance of items by the Choir was also given, resulting in rapturous applause.

Over the past six weeks hundreds of schoolchildren have auditioned in a series of preliminary heats, judged by members of the Treorchy Male Choir. The finalists received a certificate, trophy and tickets for themselves and an adult to a day out in London to The Lion King in the West End.

The two winning finalists of one singer and one instrumentalist each received £200 prize money, a trophy and the Treorchy Male Choir & Coca Cola Trophy to be retained by their school for one year.

The Grand Final had an impressive list of adjudicators, including BBC Radio Wales broadcaster Beverley Humphreys, Cory Band Conductor Dr Robert Childs, Mezzo Soprano Kate Woolveridge, Conductor of the Four Counties Youth Choir Derek Holvey and Janice Ball, the Conductor of the Male Choir.

Thursday March 20th

The death of Honorary Member Adrian Dix was announced to the Choir and following an eulogy by the Choir Chairman, *Arglwydd Mae Yn Nosi* was performed

Friday March 21st

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The 42nd Annual Good Friday concert with the Parc & Dare Band proved another incredibly successful night of music from two of the Rhondda's greatest organisations.

Conducted by Craig Roberts, the band gave another excellent evening's entertainment while the Choir, directed by Jan Ball and accompanied by Helen Roberts with Dean Powell as compere, were once again on top form. A sold-out theatre audience appeared thrilled from the opening lines of *With a Voice of Singing*, and delighted in the rousing renditions of *Bryn Myrddin* and *Mae D'Eisiau Di Bob Awr*. The first half culminated in the joint performance of *Llef*.

The second half opened with the Choir's new arrangement of *Senzenina* followed by *Men of Harlech*. Both Ray Daniels and Dean Powell provided the stereo affect of the solo items from the Zulu burial chant. The response was quite overwhelming. The Choir also delighted the audience with its Christmas Number One bid, *Faraway Place* and *You Raise Me Up*. It was also a joy to bring *Love Could I Only Tell Thee* back into the repertoire, which was dedicated to Dean's parents, Carole and David Powell on their 38th wedding anniversary. followed by *Somewhere over the Rainbow*, *Nessun Dorma* and the joint finale of *Soldier's Chorus* from *Faust*.

The concert had some other delightful highlights. It was an opportunity to welcome the winners of the Treorchy Male Choir and Coca Cola Junior Musician of the Year 2008 onto the stage to perform. Ffion Wilde and Charlotte White gave another outstanding performance to a packed auditorium of family and friends.

During the second half the Choir surprised former accompanist and guest conductor Jennifer Jones onto the stage to present her with Honorary Lady Membership of the Choir much to her obvious delight and pride in accepting the award.

Thursday April 10th

In recognition of a fifty-year relationship between opera giant Stuart Burrows OBE and the Treorchy Male Choir he was presented with Honorary Membership of the organisation. Mr Burrows first performed with the Choir at Trerhonda Chapel, Ferndale on his birthday in Februar 1958. At the time he was a schoolteacher in Bargoed before becoming a professional singer. Since then he has appeared with the Choir many times both on the concert stage and on regular radio broadcasts. The last time they performed together was in 1992 prior to his retirement.

A mutual respect and admiration for one another had started fifty years ago when Mr Burrows befriended the Choir's founder conductor John Haydn Davies. In recent years he has continued to contribute written articles for Choir publications and has become an outstanding ambassador for the Choir.

The Cilfynydd-born singer entertained the packed choir rehearsals with tales of his illustrious career when he became the recipient of the highest honour that can be bestowed upon an individual by the Choir.

Stuart Burrows OBE scaled the peaks of international success through a long and distinguished career which saw him become known as the "King of Mozart" for his unique and unequalled performances of the composer's work. He has performed in many of the great venues across the globe such as La Scala in Milan and Carnegie Hall in New York City. His 12 consecutive seasons at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, is a record for any British singer.

A former primary school teacher who was also an outstanding rugby player, his first major international engagement was at the Athens Festival in Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex" at the behest of the composer himself. In the twenty-nine years since his debut at the Royal Opera House in 1967, Mr Burrows established himself as one of the world's greatest lyric tenors.

With world-class concerts, tours and recordings making him a household name, he also scaled the peaks of television fame with his acclaimed programme Stuart Burrows Sings which enjoyed 18 million viewers a week throughout Great Britain.

Mr Burrows received the OBE in the Queen's Honour's List in 2007 and this year was presented with the Freedom of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

Saturday April 12th

Assembly Rooms, Derby

A return to the Assembly Rooms, Derby saw the Choir join forces for the first time with the superb Derwent Brass Band, conducted by Keith Leonard. This hugely versatile band thrilled and entertained the packed audience of more than 1,000 people throughout the evening. Once again of course the Choir sang superbly and won very many new admirers who clearly were overwhelmed by the standard of performance.

The individuals involved in the concert were a little different to normal also. Conducting the Choir owing to the unavailability of Jan Ball (whose daughter, Hawys was getting married on the same day) was our friend and Honorary Member Dr Alwyn Humphreys. Helen Roberts accompanied the Choir and the concert was jointly compered by Dean Powell and actor Steven Blakely, better known as PC Geoffrey Younger in ITV's Heartbeat.

A rousing opening of *March of the Peers* by band and choir under the direction of Dr Alwyn Humphreys certainly set the scene for the first-class music making ahead. The Choir opened with three religious items in *With A Voice of Singing*, *Lord's Prayer* and *Give Me That Old Time Religion* before impressing the audience still further with a magnificent performance of *Tydi a Roddaist*, *Y Darlun* and *Unwaith Eton'n Nghymru Annwyl* which received tumultuous applause.

During the second half the Choir and Band opened with the *Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves* from *Nabucco* and the Choir followed with *Faraway Place*, a tremendous performance of *Adiemus* and a thrilling rendition of the *Senzenina* and *Harlech* duo with Ray Daniels and Dean Powell as soloists. In the final section the Choir further enhanced its reputation as a tour-de-force in choral music with *You Raise Me Up*, *My Way*, *Nessun Dorma* and the finale number of *Morte Christe* with the Band. A memorable, thrilling and enjoyable evening was had by all.

Thursday April 15th

The Annual General Meeting of the Treorchy Male Choir was held in the rehearsal room. Life Membership for 35 years combined service was presented to Ken Simcox for 35 years service and Long Service Membership for 21 years combined service was presented to former tenor soloist Wyn Davies, Stuart Hill, Alwyn Lewis and Choir Chairman, Gareth Evans.

Thursday May 8th

Parc Primary School, Cwmparc

A group of 20 choristers attended the Memorial Concert at Parc Primary School in Cwmparc. They were asked to perform a selection of items for the large audience who were attending this special service to remember those who lost their lives in the 1941 bombing of the village. With the laying of the wreaths, choristers sang *Cwm Rhondda* accompanied by the primary school orchestra followed by *For The Fallen* outside the main school building for a delighted audience of teachers, parents, children and local residents.

Saturday May 10th

Worthing Rugby Club

For the first visit to Worthing one coach left Treorchy earlier than the second to arrive at Worthing Rugby Club by 2.35pm. Here Treorchy Rugby Club were playing against the local team and the 45 choristers performed *Cwm Rhondda* and *Calon Lan* prior to the match to inspire them to win. Afterwards they travelled to the Chatworth Hotel to check into their rooms and enjoy the glorious weather by strolling along the beach and gardens

Worthing Assembly Rooms

The first visit to Worthing saw the Choir perform in the Assembly Rooms before a near-capacity audience in which Honorary Member Dr Haydn James was present. With Gareth Evans (Chairman) acting as compere, the Choir gave the first performance of the new arrangement of *Bring Him Home* and *Dyma Gariad* (Ebenezer). Helen brilliantly accompanied both Choir and soloist under the inspirational leadership of Janice Ball with the inimitable Kate as mezzo soprano.

The success of the evening's concert was enhanced by the wonderfully responsive audience. The presentation of Honorary Lady Membership to Kate could not have occurred in a more happy and pleasant ambience.

The post-concert relaxation period was spent in a local public house before retuning to the hotel. The homeward journey on Sunday saw the coach stop at the Queen's Head in Ludgershall. Part of the afternoon's festivities saw interviews and singing being recorded by the local press which will be played in area's hospital radio service,

Thursday May 15th

At a special presentation evening, Honorary Lady Membership was awarded to Marion Williams (Accompanist 1989-1998) and Heather James (Associate Accompanist (1995-1998). This month Honorary Lady Membership was also sent via airmail to Fran Wheat (organiser of the 1991 Mid West Tour) and Linde Macpherson (one of the organisers of the 1986 Australia Tour)

Sunday June 15th

Tabernacl Chapel, Swansea

A rehearsal was held with the Welsh male choirs who will participate in this year's London Welsh Festival of Male Voice Choirs at the Royal Albert Hall in October – under the baton of the Choir's Honorary Member, Dr Haydn James.

Thursday June 19th

A group of choristers visited Station Café, Treorchy to film *Calon Lan* in preparation for the CIA Concert.

Saturday June 21st

Birmingham Town Hall

The Choir made a welcomed return to an auditorium that has played a significant role in its history for over fifty years. During the 1950s the Choir made regular visits to the Hall as guests of the Birmingham Welsh Society and their secretary D.O.Griffiths became the Choir's first Honorary Member. So it was with this sense of history and tradition that choristers returned to this fine auditorium, which has recently undergone a spectacular multi-million pound refurbishment.

It was also a momentous evening in that the Choir welcomed Iona Jones as soloist for the first time in almost a decade. She performed with the Choir several times from the late 1970s onwards and on one occasion Jan Ball was actually her accompanist! Iona performed solo items with the Choir as well, including the first performance of the new arrangement of *Y Nefoedd* and the finale number of the first half, *Morte Christe*.

The Choir gave yet another outstanding concert for a very appreciative packed audience in these magnificent surroundings. The first performance of *Ebenezer*, *Do You Hear The People Sing* and *Bring Him Home* took place this evening and all went exceedingly well. It was also a pleasure to perform such firm favourites, like *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*, *You Raise Me Up* and of course *Nessun Dorma*. The evening concluded with a buffet at the Banqueting Hall of the Mansion House and a late-night sing-song in the nearby J.D.Wetherspoons pub!

Thursday June 26th

At a special presentation ceremony, Honorary Lady Membership was presented to Judy Chivers and Val Dix from the Chairman of the Choir.

Tuesday July 1st

The death of former Deputy Conductor Edgar Taylor was announced and following an eulogy by the Choir Chairman, *Arglwydd Mae Yn Nosi* was performed. At a special presentation ceremony, Honorary Lady Membership was presented to Mezzo Soprano Soloist Helen May.

Saturday July 5th

Gower Pub, Cardiff

A small choir of no more than 35 members spent a very enjoyable evening in The Gower public house, Cathays, Cardiff to perform in a charity fundraising evening. The event was held in memory of the daughter of the landlady of this establishment who had suffered mental health issues and funds were raised for a charity which dealt with this condition. Under the baton of Janice Ball and accompanied by Helen Roberts, with Dean Powell as the Master of Ceremonies, the Choir performed two sections for the very appreciative audience. Following the event an informal performance was enjoyed in the bar until the late – or early – hours!

Wednesday July 9th

Cardiff International Arena

For the second consecutive year the Choir was invited by South Wales Fire & Rescue Service to perform at the Cardiff International Arena. This year the event was of international significance as the conference included over 500 firefighters from Canada, the USA and Australia. The Choir marched into the darkened hall wearing miner's helmets and with the turning on of the cap lamps burst into *Cwm Rhondda* to tremendous effect. Conducted by Janice Ball and accompanied by Helen Roberts, the Choir gave a very enjoyable twenty minute performance of items for this very appreciative international crowd who certainly had a taste of Welsh culture at its finest during their visit.

Tuesday July 15th

At a special presentation ceremony in the rehearsal room, the Choir Chairman presented Soprano Soloist Ros Evans with Honorary Lady Membership.

Saturday July 19th

College Chapel, Ardingly

For the first time the Choir travelled to the beautiful town of Ardingly to perform in its magnificent College Chapel. The concert was held in aid of the Wooden Spoon rugby charity of which the Choir remains faithful supporters. The particular evening was in support of the Sussex Region of the charity which aids disabled and terminally ill children.

The pre-concert rehearsal began with a slight problem in that the Conductor, Janice Ball, had accidentally left all of her music at home. Fortunately chorister Jeff Priday had copies of his own and with some quick photocopying the concert was able to begin. Despite being a considerable distance from the front row of the audience, the Choir gave an exceptionally good performance in such wonderful settings. The Choir also welcomed a new addition to the Treorchy family in David Jeffrey Thomas, the organist of Llandaff Cathedral, who accompanied the Choir in many of the religious items throughout the evening.

One of the absolute highlights of the evening was a new medley of songs from Les Miserables which included the Choir opening with *Bring Him Home*, followed by mezzo soprano Kate Woolveridge performing *I Dreamed a Dream*, then soloist Dean Powell sang *Stars* and finally the Choir and soloists joined for *Do You Hear The People Sing*. The effect was quite breathtaking and ensured a thunderous and prolonged applause to conclude the first half of the concert.

The second half opened with a grand rendition of *Love Could I Only Tell Thee* and included a powerful performance of *Men of Harlech* followed by *You Raise Me Up*, *My Way* and *Nessun Dorma*. Such a selection certainly ensured the best of responses from the capacity audience who clearly had enjoyed their evening with the Treorchy.

Thursday September 4th

Honorary Lady Membership was presented to former accompanist Rhiannon Williams.

Saturday September 6th

The Guildhall, Axminster

The return visit to Axminster saw the Choir perform in a very small, but intimate auditorium in aid of the Axminster Operatic Society, Inner Wheel and the local Rotary Club. The Choir was conducted by Janice Ball with accompanist Helen Roberts and Mezzo Soprano Kate Woolveridge. The evening had several “firsts” about it with the first performance of *Ysbryd Y Nos* and the first performance of a new arrangement of *Y Nefoedd* with Dean Powell as soloist.

Despite the constraints of room on stage, the Choir performed magnificently, a fact displayed by the sheer excitement of the packed concert hall following each item. *With a Voice of Singing* set the standard for the evening, while *Y Darlun* provided a beautiful, delicate contrast and the rousing *Llef* concluded the first section of items. Once again the Choir was assured the best of responses with the Les Miserables medley which was obviously enjoyed by everyone present.

The second half saw firm favourites in *Gwahoddiad*, *Morte Christe* and *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*. There was also a much-improved performance of *Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat* and the final section of favourites concluded as always with a brilliant rendition of *Nessun Dorma*, much to the delight of the crowd who rewarded the Choir with a standing ovation,

Tuesday September 16th

At a special presentation ceremony, Honorary Lady Membership was presented to Soprano Soloist Mair Roberts.

Saturday September 20th

No 8 Centre, Pershore

As the Choir performs so many concerts per year it is often difficult to recall one from another. However, choristers are unlikely to forget. It was the first time for the Choir to visit the little town of Pershore, but the welcome was unbelievable. All tickets in the theatre had been sold out months in advance (in fact they sold out with two days of becoming available!) and with every seat taken some decided to take “standing room only” and certainly packed the auditorium throughout.

With such a welcome from the enthusiastic audience, it was obvious the Choir was about to give its very best and certainly provided a memorable evening's entertainment. *With a Voice of Singing* once again set the standard for the entire evening which included highlights in *Ysbryd Y Nos*, *The Lord's Prayer*, *Adiemus* and *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*.

The Les Miserables medley was quite superb and left the audience awe-struck at such a majestic performance. It was followed by more favourites in *Speed Your Journey*, *Senzenina*, *Men of Harlech*, *You Raise Me Up* and *Nessun Dorma*.

The Choir was conducted by Janice Ball and for the first time accompanied throughout by organist David Jeffrey Thomas who divided himself between piano and organ to great effect. The soloist was Kate Woolveridge and as always Dean Powell filled the role of Master of Ceremonies.

Friday September 26th

The Golf Club, Llanishen

An unofficial engagement was held in Llanishen Golf Club at the request of club captain Gerry Stacey who is the Chief Executive of Coca Cola Enterprises Ltd Wales & West. As such firm supporters of the Junior Musician Competition, a Choir of 40 members agreed to entertain the one hundred dinner guests at the golf club. With Janice Ball and David Jeffrey Thomas available to conduct and accompany the Choir, the crowd were assured of a truly memorable night.

Following their sumptuous meal, the Choir marched on stage to rapturous applause and opened with the rousing *With A Voice of Singing* which certainly saw the diners sit up straight and take notice of the singers before them! The choristers gave a forty minute performance of items including the Les Miserable medley, *Senzenina*, *Men of Harlech*, *You Raise Me Up*, *Cwm Rhondda*, *Delilah* and *Nessun Dorma*, much to the sheer delight of everyone present.

Sunday September 28th

Tabernacl Chapel, Swansea

A rehearsal was held with the Welsh male choirs who will participate in this year's London Welsh Festival of Male Voice Choirs at the Royal Albert Hall in October under the baton of Honorary Member Dr Haydn James.

Saturday October 4th

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

A return visit to the Royal Spa Centre was another memorable and enjoyable concert as the Choir welcomed back to the stage – following a four year absence – of soprano soloist Ros Evans. Conductor for the evening was Janice Ball, accompanied by Helen Roberts and with Dean Powell as Master of Ceremonies.

Once again the Choir performed to its usual high standard and with a warm response from the capacity audience it was obvious they were impressed by the musical splendour the evening produced. Many favourites were performed, including *Llef*, *Lord's Prayer*, *Y Nefoedd* (soloist Dean Powell), *Ebenezer* and *Ysbryd Y Nos*.

The first half of the concert concluded with the spectacular Les Miserables medley introducing Ros Evans as the soloist in *I Dreamed A Dream*. With the final chord of *Do You Hear The People Sing*, the audience rewarded the performers with a rousing applause.

In the second half the Choir opened with the beautiful *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*, followed by *Adiemus* and the very enjoyable *Senzenina* and *Men of Harlech* section with Ray Daniels as soloist. *Speed Your Journey*, *Faraway Place* and *Cavatina* followed and to conclude Ray Daniels sang the new verse in *Over the Rainbow*, followed by *You Raise Me Up*, *My Way* and *Nessun Dorma* to conclude.

Thursday October 9th

Park and Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The Choir's 27th Annual Concert at the Park and Dare Theatre was a complete sell-out more than a month before the evening took place. This was not only due to the

international reputation of the Choir itself, but also because of the exceptionally high-standard of soloist who accompanied them. This year the Choir welcomed back to the Treorchy stage the international singer Iris Williams OBE who had also performed with them during their Diamond Jubilee Concert two years earlier.

The Choir performed the first half of the concert un the baton of Janice Ball, accompanied by Helen Roberts and compered by Dean Powell who provided the links between the three individual sections. Mezzo Soprano soloist Kate Woolveridge also appeared in the concert to perform her solo in *I Dreamed A Dream*.

With a large Choir of more than 80 on stage, the audience couldn't fail to be impressed by the majesty of the performance of so many new items to suit all tastes. *With a Voice of Singing* was followed by *Y Darlun*, *Ysbryd Y Nos* and a very rousing *Llef*.

The second section opened with Ray Daniel's performance in *Senzenina*, followed in full-throated style by *Men of Harlech*. *You Raise Me Up* was also very well received, along with *Over the Rainbow* and *Nessun Dorma*.

To conclude the Choir's first half, they performed the Les Miserable medley which left the audience somewhat dumbfounded. This unique selection of items, combined in such a stage-show setting, took the Choir to a totally new dimension with its hometown audience and they left the stage to the sound of thunderous applause ringing in their ears.

Iris Williams performed the whole of the second half with the Choir joining her at the finale to perform a combined arrangement of *Bless This House*. With an appreciative audience still singing her praises, Miss Williams was shocked, surprised and overjoyed when Choir Chairman Gareth Evans stepped forward an in a special presentation ceremony awarded her with Honorary Lady Membership of the Treorchy Male Choir. It was a fitting tribute to a superb performer who has done so much to support the Choir over the years and was certainly appreciated not only by Iris herself, but by the hundreds of fans of both Welsh musical institutions who were there to witness it.

Saturday October 18th

Royal Albert Hall, London

For almost two years the Choir had rehearsed the very large musical programme for this special concert. It had been an arduous experience, but the result left choristers in no doubt that it had all been worthwhile. On the previous evening the Choir travelled to Heathrow to stay at the Holiday Inn where they enjoyed the warmest of welcomes in the local King William IV public house in Sipson. On the following morning choristers travelled into London and arrived at the magnificent Royal Albert Hall for the beginning of a lengthy day of rehearsals under the baton of Dr Haydn James. Following lunch in the nearby Imperial College, it was time to change into concert uniform and prepare for the evening performance ahead.

Treorchy Male Choir was one of fourteen male voice choirs from Wales, Ireland, England, Hong Kong, New Zealand, USA, Ukraine and Australia to participate in the 21st London Welsh Festival of Male Choirs at the Royal Albert Hall. This was indeed

a thrilling event both musically and visually for the Choirs were stood in individual rows and the different colours of each uniform made them easily distinguishable from one another. Treorchy was in a prime spot behind the London Welsh Choir who were hosting the event. With over 800 voices on stage it was time for choristers to turn their attention to the size of the audience. It was a magnificent sight to behold with over 5,000 people packing this truly superb concert hall.

The Cory Band were the accompanying ensemble this evening and with Frank Lincoln as compere, Annabel Thwaite as accompanist, Jeffrey Howard as organist, soprano Gwawr Edwards and tenor Gwyn Hughes Jones, the concert was complete with the arrival on stage of the musical director for the evening, the inimitable Dr Haydn James,

From the very first bars of the opening song in the *Cadwyn o Emynau Gymraeg*, it was obvious that this was going to be an evening to remember for everyone present. This was certainly a justified thought as each item was received with thunderous applause. Despite the magnitude of the massed choir, the discipline remained strict and the performance of each item was quite breathtaking. *Speed Your Journey* was performed in Italian, followed by *Buddugoliaeth*.

Following Gwyn Hughes Jones's debut performance, the Choir returned with a selection of Les Miserables items including *I Dreamed A Dream*, *Bring Him Home* and *Do You Hear the People Sing* which caused a shiver down the spine for many of the performers and audience alike. The Cory Band gave an absolutely superb performance of *Where Eagles Sing* followed by a selection of items by the beautiful soprano soloist Gwawr Edwards. The Choir then returned to their feet with the conclusion of the first half in a performance of *Memory*, *Am Fod yr Haul yn Machlud* and a rendition of *Love Could I Only Tell Thee* which left many in tears. It was a truly breathtaking performance indeed.

The second half opened with Jeffrey Howard, the accompanist of the Last Choir Standing winning *Only Men Aloud*, to perform a solo organ recital of the *Toccata* from Widor's 5th Organ Symphony. The Choir returned to sing *Prayer* and *The Creation*, closely followed by *You'll Never Walk Alone*, *Ysbryd Y Nos* and a very lively performance of *Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat* which caused the entire crowd to begin tapping their feet and rocking along with the tune. The evening's soloist once again gave excellent individual performances for the Choir returned for the grand final of *Ole Time Religion*, *Y Darlun* and *Gwahoddiad*. The encore could be nothing less than a bit of fun, and so the Salvation Army gospel song *God's Choir* brought the Royal Albert Hall to its feet. This was a magnificent evening.

Each of the Choirs were then asked to stand along with their individual conductor and accompanist. Without doubt the Treorchy Male Choir, the last choir on the list, received the loudest applause of them all and choristers realised that so much work had indeed been a worthwhile experience.

Following the concert and with spirits higher than ever, the Treorchy choristers joined many of their fellow singers in the nearby Imperial College for an afterglow to remember. Dr Alwyn Humphreys and his wife Joy, joined their friends in Treorchy and conducted them through a plethora of male voice choir favourites, including

Martyrs of the Arena, Llanfair, Myfanwy and Nessun Dorma, much to the sheer delight of the hundreds present. It was enough to cause Dr Humphreys to contact the Choir that week and say “I think the Master Choir of them all beat off all opposition and proved they are the afterglow choir of the universe.” What a night to remember!

Saturday November 1st

Regal Theatre, Minehead

The Choir’s first visit to the Regal Theatre in Minehead was a very memorable one. The venue was a small, intimate auditorium which sat 400 people. The position of the Choir on stage, which was all on the same level, made it an even greater challenge. The Choir, under the direction of the impeccable Janice Ball and assisted by Helen Roberts responded superbly to this challenge.

For the first time Kate Woolveridge and Ray Daniels sang a duo in *People Will Say We’re In Love* as part of a section consistently of love songs. The other artist was young harpist Charlotte Kelham who also charmed the audience. The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Gareth Evans.

The response from the capacity audience for each of the Choir’s items and the thunderous acclamation at the end left no doubt of the outstanding success of the engagement. The benefactor of the evening’s performance was the Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance. The choristers felt they had won supporters and friends as the result of this first visit.

Unfortunately the evening was marred by the sudden illness of William “Boyo” Watkins. During the afterglow at the Queen Hotel he collapsed and paramedics were called to transport him to hospital. He returned home to Treherbert on the following day having recovered from his bout of illness.

Sunday November 2nd

Rhondda Sports Centre, Ystrad

The Choir was invited for the second time to perform at the Rhondda and Pontypridd County and Treherbert and District Royal British Legion’s Festival of Remembrance Concert at the Rhondda Sports Centre with conductor Janice Ball, accompanist Helen Roberts and compere John Asquith. The Choir was joined on stage by The Regiment Band of The Royal Welsh, the Corps and Drums of the Royal Welsh and young soloist Ben Vaughan.

Following the impressive parade of service men and women who marched onto the stage with typical military precision, the Royal British Legion began the Entry of Standards followed by an address by Baroness Gale of Blaenrhondda. The Choir and Band combined to perform *Llef* and in its own individual section the Treorchy men sang *Love Could I Only Tell Thee*, *Bring Him Home*, *Do You Hear the People Sing* and *Stars* (soloist Dean Powell) to the capacity audience.

During their second section of music the Choir sang *Ebenezer*, *Y Darlun*, *You Raise Me Up* and *My Way* to rapturous applause. The Choir and Band also performed *Senzenina* and a rousing *Men of Harlech* which certainly brought the crowd to its feet. With a traditional sing-along to conclude the concert, a Service of Remembrance was

held before the Choir and fellow performers marched off stage as a flurry of red poppies cascaded onto the auditorium to sombre effect.

Saturday December 6th

The Cathedral, Llandaff

For the second-year running the Choir returned to Llandaff Cathedral for a candlelit Christmas concert in aid of a cancer charity. This year the concert was held in aid of Tenovus and the Choir was joined on stage by the Howells Girls School Senior Choir. Although a short concert, the event was certainly a complete success and enjoyed by the capacity audience in the cathedral.

The Choir's repertoire included the Les Miserable section with Iona Jones performing the soprano solo item in *I Dreamed A Dream* complete with a new section which included the Choir. Dean Powell, who compered the Choir's performance also resurrected the solo item in *O Holy Night*. One of the highlights of the entire evening was the Choir's thrilling rendition of *Men of Harlech* after Ray Daniel's performance of *Senzenina*. Leaving the stage with a rousing applause, the Choir retired to the nearby Black Lion public house for the remainder of the evening.

Saturday December 13th

The Town Hall, Walsall

Returning to one of the Choir's favourite venues, Walsall Town Hall, was another joy for the choristers. This magnificent auditorium, dominated by the superb 100-year-old organ provided the perfect setting for the Choir's return performance after several years. Present in the large audience were the Choir Chairman and Honorary Members Judy and Nigel Chivers and John Tucker. The soloist this evening was Mezzo Soprano Kate Woolveridge while Organist David Jeffrey Thomas also joined the Choir with a superb performance in several of the items. The Master of Ceremonies was Dean Powell.

Conductor Janice Ball and Accompanist Helen Roberts led the Choir through a truly outstanding evening performance. As the final official engagement of the year the Choir, albeit small in number, gave a truly memorable concert which thrilled the audience and brought them to their feet with thunderous applause ringing in the ears for prolonged periods after each item.

There were many highlights to the concert, including the Les Miserables section and the new Love section. The concert also saw the Choir give its first performance of *Hwiangerdd Mair*. Following more than a decade the Choir also performed *On Great Lone Hills* with an incredible organ introduction by David. Other highlights included *Love Could I Only Tell Thee* and an additional verse in *You Raise Me Up*. Following the concert the Choir retired to Walsall Rugby Club for the afterglow.

Monday December 22nd

Ty Hafan Children's Hospice, Sully

As Christmas was fast approaching a small selection of choristers were invited for the second consecutive year to perform in a very moving Memorial Service at Ty Hafan Children's Hospice in Sully. The evening was held to remember all those little children who had passed away from terminal illnesses during their care at the Hospice. The service was held before a crowd of 70 mourning parents, grandparents

and brothers and sisters of the children. It took place in a marquee outside the hospice with everyone attending holding a lit candle. The atmosphere of such an emotional gathering of people on this wintry night was one that few of would ever forget. As Christmas was almost upon them the choristers realised how fortunate their own lives were as they paid tribute to those dear children and their families.