

TREORCHY MALE CHOIR



BRIEF HISTORY 2012

By Dean Powell, Publicity Officer
& Honorary Archivist

January

Saturday January 14th

Bethel Baptist Church, Whitchurch

Probably one of the most heartbreaking engagements opened the New Year for a small selection of choristers. The invitation to perform at the Memorial Service of nine-month-old Noah Tyler came due to the Choir's annual performance at the Ty Hafan Children's Hospice in Sully. The Candlelit Memorial Service occurred just a week before Christmas and a group of nine choristers were asked to visit the specially decorated sensory bedroom of baby Noah who was terribly ill. Cradled in the arms of his young father, the group of singer gently sang "Gwahoddiad" as Noah slept soundly. Sadly, just two days later he passed away.

It was the request of the Tyler family that those same nine choristers who had lifted the spirits of them all, attend the Memorial Service to Noah in their local church in Cardiff. Therefore Dean Powell, Alwyn Lewis, Jeff Priday, Norman Cox, Tony Davies, Tom Belmont, Alan Iles and Phil Edmunds travelled to Whitchurch to not only attend the deeply emotional service, but once again perform "Gwahoddiad" to a congregation of more than three hundred people. It was indeed an honour to have been invited and to contribute in some way to such an unforgettable occasion.

February

Friday February 3rd – Sunday February 5th

Tour of Berlin, Germany to perform at the World Money Fair by special invitation of the Royal Mint. The group of thirty choristers, led by Janice Ball and Helen Roberts, gave three engagements over the weekend visit. For further details see the Berlin Tour 2012 Report.

Sunday February 12th

Millennium Stadium, Cardiff

Although the Choir has appeared many times on the hallowed ground of the Millennium Stadium prior to an international Welsh rugby game, this was the first time for the Choir to sing at one of the Six Nations. On this occasion it was the game between Wales and Scotland, another victory in what would develop into a Grand Slam winning season. For the Scottish match the Choir was once again led by Honorary Member Dr Haydn James and accompanied by the Royal Regiment of Wales Band. Also on this occasion a smaller Choir from North Wales was invited to join the Treorchy men. For the first time Cor Y Penrhyn in Bethesda enjoyed the atmosphere and spectacle of singing to tens of thousands of rugby supporters in the magnificent stadium.

As always the opportunity to march through the tunnel and onto the pitch is a breathtaking moment as literally 70,000 people applaud and yell their approval that Welsh entertainment of the finest order is on the way. By marching to three different areas of the pitch to sing, the entire stadium was soon ringing out with the sound of favourite Welsh melodies. "Sospan Fach", "Calon Lan", "Delilah" and "Cwm Rhondda" were the order of the day, while the most impressive of all, and the one that certainly captured the imagination of the television viewers at home was the

performance of “Tydi a Roddaist”. The Scots were not ignored either as the combined choirs sang “Loch Lomond” before walking to the middle of the field. Once both sides ran onto the pitch, amidst the glare of the shooting flames and explosions, both National Anthems were sung with gusto, leaving an emotional group of singers to walk off the pitch, their chests filled with the pride. An enjoyable day ensued as they watched Wales defeat the Scots and lead the way to further victory ahead.

Sunday February 12th

Radisson Hotel, Cardiff

Following the Wales vs Scotland game the Choir was invited to attend a Wooden Spoon Corporate Hospitality function at the nearby Radisson Hotel. Organised by Honorary Member Robert Harris, the choristers partook of the refreshments supplied and sang to the packed crowd of businessmen and rugby supporters alike. As always all funds raised were donated to Wooden Spoon, making it a profitable day for this very worthwhile cause.

Thursday February 23rd

Llantrisant Parish Church

As the previous year had been financially painful for the Treorchy Male Choir, choristers Dean Powell and Selwyn Jones established a fundraising committee to organise local concerts for Choir funds. On this occasion Dean arranged for the Choir to make its third visit to his hometown of Llantrisant by performing in the magnificent Norman parish church on the crest of the hill. Almost two hundred tickets were sold for the concert which was led by Janice Ball and accompanied by Helen Roberts. The guest soprano was Iona Jones and Dean Powell performed the duties of M.C. for the successful evening ahead.

The audience was clearly thrilled by the wide variety of music being performed, from the opening Welsh items of “Bryn Myrddin”, “Calon Lan”, “Unwaith Eto’n Nhyrnu Annwyl” and the magnificent “Tydi a Roddaist”, whose “amen” section continued to reverberate around the walls of the ancient place. Many more notable moments come with “My Way”, “This is the Moment”, “Nessun Dorma” and “You Raise Me Up”. Some of the quieter items, especially “Let It Be Me” and “Hallelujah” were absolutely sublime. As the concert began to draw to a close, the audience was left totally awestruck by “What Would I Do Without My Music”, the “Les Miserables” medley and finally to “Senzenina” and “Men of Harlech”, making for another successful evening of song.

March

Thursday March 1st

St John’s Church, Cymmer, Porth

A second fundraising concert for the Treorchy Male Choir took place thanks to the efforts of Assistant Secretary Selwyn Jones. Following several months of planning, the St David’s Day Concert was held at St John’s Church in Cymmer, Porth and welcomed to the stage the Choir and Soloists of nearby Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwyncelyn. The church was packed to the rafters, mostly with family members of the thirty young children who were also performing that night. With Janice Ball leading the Treorchy men, accompanied by David Geoffrey Thomas on this occasion and compered by Dean Powell, the Choir gave an outstanding performance as usual.

A wide range of music charmed the audience, many of whom had clearly never heard a male voice choir perform on stage before. The wide repertoire of songs from traditional Welsh to spirituals, modern anthems and operatic choruses couldn't fail to impress the capacity crowd. There were many notable moments which received the most rousing of applause, particularly "This is the Moment", "Nessun Dorma" and "My way". However, it was of course an evening focused on the children themselves and they performed their choral works, solos, duets, harp playing and even clog dancing, to the very best standards. It was another successful evening of music and song enjoyed by one and all.

Saturday March 3rd

Playhouse Theatre, Weston Super Mare

Few concerts can genuinely be called "perfect" or for that matter, "near perfection". However, there was something rather magical about the Choir's debut performance at the Playhouse Theatre in the seaside resort of Weston-Super-Mare. This was the first time for the Choir to sing in the town in thirteen years. A packed audience was clearly thrilled by our concert as they applauded and shouted wildly throughout the course of the evening. Janice Ball and Helen Roberts made up the musical team, while Ray Daniels performed as baritone soloist and Dean Powell acted as MC and soloist for the evening. The guest artist this evening was our dear friend Kate Woolveridge and together this ensemble gave a truly magnificent performance.

The concert was slick and professional from the very outset, as Dean charmed the crowd with anecdotes and Welsh humour. The Choir opened brilliantly in "With a Voice of Singing" and the high standard of the performance was maintained throughout the entire evening, from "What Would I Do Without My Music" and "Calon Lan" to "Hallelujah", "My Way" and the Les Miserables Medley. Kate absolutely enchanted the audience with her solo items and the duet with Ray along with the Welsh medley performed by Dean and herself. With all of these ingredients combined, the evening proved a real triumph and the Choir left the Playhouse Theatre assured that it would return very soon!

Tuesday March 27th

Treorchy Comprehensive School

A whole host of inspiring musical schoolchildren from throughout the Rhondda gave the performance of their young lives at the Grand Final of the Treorchy Male Choir Junior Musician of the Year Competition 2012. A total of 19 children took to the stage at Treorchy Comprehensive School hall before a packed audience of 600 parents, teachers and supporters for the major event. Attended by Mayor of Rhondda Cynon Taf Cllr Sylvia Jones and BBC presenter Roy Noble OBE, the performers sang or played instruments to the packed crowd.

The winner of the Singing Category for the second time was Katie Leigh Jones of Alaw Primary School for her performance "Christopher Robin Is Saying His Prayer". The winner of the Instrumentalist Category was Ellie Smith of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bronllwyn who played "Charlotte in Spring" on the harp. Now celebrating its seventh year, a total of 20 primary and junior schools in the two valleys entered the competition whose patron is Welsh bass-baritone Bryn Terfel MBE.

Over the past three months hundreds of schoolchildren have auditioned in a series of preliminary heats, judged by members of the Treorchy Male Choir. Two further Semi Finals were held in Porth County Comprehensive School and Tonypany Community College. The finalists received a certificate, trophy and tickets for themselves and an adult to see “Sister Act” at the Wales Millennium Centre in August.

The two winning finalists of one singer and one instrumentalist each received £200 prize money, a trophy and the Treorchy Male Choir Trophy to be retained by their school for one year. They also shared the stage with the Treorchy Male Choir at the Park & Dare Theatre on Good Friday.

April

Friday April 6th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The Choir's 46th Annual Good Friday Concert with the Park and Dare Band was performed once more to a full house in their hometown theatre. For those present, either as performers or spectators, this was one of the most enjoyable and pleasant Good Friday Concerts in living memory as it had all the ingredients of being a memorable night. Both organisations gave of their best on stage and the appreciative applause from the audience was testament to the success of the evening. A large Choir dominated the stage with Janice Ball as Conductor and Helen Roberts as Accompanist and once again Dean Powell fulfilled the role of compere for the evening. It was also a pleasant task to welcome the new Musical Director of the band to the home audience. Andrew Jones certainly had an enjoyable evening on stage.

It was Jan Ball who conducted all four joint items that opened and closed each half of the concert. As always the wave of sound from combined performers on stage received the tumultuous applause that is always expected. This evening was no exception with such items as “Battle Hymn of the Republic”, “Morte Christe”, “Tydi a Roddaist” and the resurrected “Anthem from Chess” to pleasing results.

For the Choir it was an opportunity to debut a new piece of music. For the first time they performed “Y Tangnefeddwyr” composed by Eric Jones, the President (and former accompanist) of Cor Meibion Pontarddulais. The words were written by Welsh poet Waldo Williams, himself a conscientious objector during World War II and his message of tragedy and hope through the conflicts shine through in the piece which translates into “The Peacemakers”. It was a very successful first performance.

As always there were many highlights to the evening's performance, but it was especially rewarding to see the two winners of the Treorchy Male Choir Junior Musician Competition 2012 take to the stage in Ellie Smith (harpist) and Katie Leigh Jones (singer). As always they both won the hearts of all present. One of the most memorable moments was the surprised look on the face of Choir Accompanist Helen Roberts when it was announced that today was her 30th birthday. As the Conductor took to the piano and all thousand people in the theatre sang “Happy Birthday” she was astonished at the beautifully made birthday cake, complete with a stage, curtains, choristers and even a chocolate piano! All together it was a very enjoyable and memorable evening for performers and audience alike.

Saturday April 21st

Atrix Theatre, Bromsgrove

The Choir made another return visit to The Atrix in Bromsgrove to a sold-out audience who clearly were thrilled by the concert performance before them. Organised by Honorary Member Jeanne Gray, the concert was another success with soloist Iona Jones, Conductor Janice Ball, Accompanist Helen Roberts, baritone Ray Daniels and tenor / compere Dean Powell. Although a relatively small Choir on stage, they nonetheless gave a first-class performance that was enjoyed by one and all.

The concert opened with a selection of Welsh items including “In Memoriam”, “Calon Lan” and “Y Tangnefeddwyr”, while highlights of the first half include “This is the Moment”, “My Way” and “Nessun Dorma.” The second half also brought “magic moments” including “What Would I Do Without My Music” and the medley of songs from “Les Miserables”.

Members of the Bromsgrove Court Leet and Court Barons were present in the packed auditorium and the Choir was congratulated for giving an outstanding performance by receiving a thrilling standing ovation. The relaxed atmosphere in the bar was enjoyed by one and all, including Honorary Member John Tucker who was present

May

Friday May 11th

Warrant Officer’s Mess, RAF Lyneham

For more than thirty years the Choir has enjoyed a close association with the Warrington Officer and Sergeant’s Mess at RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire. During that time choristers have enjoyed the facilities on offer at the Mess on very many occasions, from Mother’s Day Lunches and Charity Concerts. However, the most memorable visits have been those that took place on the Sunday following a Wales vs England Rugby International at Twickenham. On those long and enjoyable afternoons, choristers performed regularly to a packed Mess, filled with officers, wives, friends and family. Each and every one of those visits provided another memorable occasion to be cherished.

It was with deep regret that choristers, who regarded Lyneham as a “second home” and favourite “watering hole” learned of the decision by the Ministry of Defence to de-commission RAF Lyneham after more than seventy years of service. With this in mind the Entertainments Manager, and dear “Treorchy” friend, Flight Sergeant Mike “Clem” Clement decided to arrange a final Summer Ball at the base. This “Farewell to Lyneham” was a major event and one that wouldn’t be complete without an appearance by members of the Choir. Their performance at Lyneham was a huge surprise to the officers and their guests, many of whom had been long-standing friends and admirers of the Choir for many years.

The celebratory evening also included tribute acts to Queen and Girls Aloud, all of whom performed brilliantly to the 360 dinner guests, all dressed lavishly in uniform and ball gowns for the special occasion. This wonderful display of tunics, medals and officers regalia blended with the many colourful decorations of red, white and blue throughout the entire Mess building. On the bright summer’s evening the Helen Miles Quartet performed outside to the champagne reception and the thirty choristers made

a surprise appearance to perform “Jerusalem”, “Danny Boy” and “Land of Hope & Glory” with the musicians. The Choir then burst into “Those Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machines” as the fly-by of an RAF jet came by as a tribute to the base.

The choristers then staged to perform for half an hour while the dinner guests took to the seats and began the evening meal. The singers were treated to dinner and a free bar all evening, resulting in a celebratory night that will never be forgotten. They sang in the Mess to the many guests for hours, winning even more admirers as they bade one more final farewell to RAF Lyneham.

Saturday May 12th

Floral Pavilion, New Brighton

The Choir’s first visit to New Brighton on the Wirral, took place following a long and arduous six-hour journey from Cardiff. Choristers made a welcomed stop in Worcester for an hour before continuing the trek passed Liverpool to reach the seaside location and the venue for the evening, the Floral Pavilion. Despite the lengthy travelling time and the fact that so many choristers have visited RAF Lyneham on the previous night, a Choir of 63 men took to the stage at this very plush venue.

The concert, before almost 800 people, was a tremendous success. Although the large audience appeared reserved at first, they were clearly thrilled by the close of the performance. With Jan and Helen at the helm, the guest artist for the evening was Iona Jones, with Ray Daniels performing as baritone and Dean Powell as compere / tenor.

The debut concert at New Brighton was a memorable experience. Organised to raise funds for the Choir, the concert was another success with choristers performing to the very best of their ability. Some of the highlights included “Nessun Dorma”, “Calon Lan”, “Men of Harlech” and “What Would I Do Without My Music”. Once again the “Les Miserables” medley proved a tremendous success with the Choir concluding the evening with a poignant “We’ll Keep A Welcome” followed by the National Anthems. Afterwards choristers enjoyed a pleasant social evening in the venue with many of the audience members before beginning the long journey home, or an overnight stay for some in a local hotel.

Thursday May 17th

Parc Primary School, Cwmparc

Once again members of the Choir visited Parc Primary School to perform at the Cwmparc Memorial Service. Annually the school hold a ceremony to remember those residents and evacuees who lost their lives when the village was attacked by the German Luftwaffe in 1941. Before crowds of children, parents and local residents, the group of a dozen choristers gave their own personal tribute to the proceedings.

Thursday May 17th

The Coliseum, Aberdare

For the first time in thirty-five years the Choir performed in the Cynon Valley. Organised by Secretary Selwyn Jones, the concert was held to raise funds to help boost the finances of the Choir. The special guest artists for the evening were the children of Aberdare Park Primary School and soprano Stefanie Harvey-Powell. The Treorchy Choir was led by Janice Ball and Helen Roberts while the duties of Master

of Ceremonies were undertaken by Gareth Evans as Dean Powell had suffered a fall and fractured his shoulder and elbow.

The Choir opened and closed both halves of the concert, with the children performing a lengthy section in between to the delighted crowd. The audience appeared absolutely thrilled by the performance of the Treorchy men, with loud applause ringing in the ears. Some of the highlights included “My Way”, “Nessun Dorma” and “Senzenina”. The role of tenor solo in the “Pearlfishers Duet” was undertaken for the first time by chorister Graham Cox. To conclude the concert the Choir combined with the children for a first-class performance of “You Raise Me Up”, resulting in a standing ovation and cheering from the clearly delighted Aberdare audience.

Thursday May 24th **City Hall, Cardiff**

The concert at City Hall once again took place in the presence of HRH Princess Anne, The Princess Royal. For the second time in six months the Choir entertained Her Majesty’s only daughter in the Welsh capital. This time the occasion was the 2012 Annual Soiree and Exhibition by the Royal Academy of Engineering hosted by the University of Wales, Cardiff. The Princess is a Fellow of the Royal Academy.

The Choir was invited to perform just three items following the dinner attended by more than 300 guests. They opened with “This is The Moment”, “Calon Lan” and “Gwahoddiad”. Following a rousing applause they gave an encore of “Nessun Dorma”. The Princess again appeared delighted by the Choir and made a special point of thanking them and the Conductor as she left the grand hall.

Saturday May 26th **Community Centre, Knighton**

For the first time the Choir travelled to the Mid Wales town of Knighton for a performance in its large and impressive Community Hall before a packed audience of more than 400 people. The concert was organised by the local Rotary Club with all proceeds donated to the Rotary Charities. Once again the concert was led by Janice Ball and Helen Roberts with Ray Daniels as baritone, Graham Cox performing the tenor role in “Pearlfishers” and Gareth Evans as Master of Ceremonies.

The Choir gave another faultless performance which was clearly enjoyed by the audience who applauded and shouted loudly following many of the items. Some of the most welcomed included “Calon Lan”, “My Way”, “Nessun Dorma”, “You Raise Me Up” and “What Would I Do Without My Music”. Once again “Tangnefeddwyr” was well received as new item to the repertoire. “Les Miserables” concluded the concert which resulted in a rousing standing ovation and calls for encore. This came in the form of “Senzenina” and “Men of Harlech” to widespread applause.

One of the most poignant moments of the evening saw the MC welcome Dean Powell to the stage. Although he has still not returned to the ranks following his recent accident, he made the effort to bring his parents to Knighton for a very special occasion. Dean explained to the audience how it was his parents who introduced him to Treorchy Male Choir twenty-five years earlier when they organised a charity concert. It was due to their charity work for the Rhondda Polar Bears Disabled Swimming Club and Dreamflight to Disneyworld that earlier that day Dean’s father,

David, was an Olympic Torchbearer in Caerphilly. It was at that point that the entire Treorchy Male Choir spontaneously rewarded him with a standing ovation! Dean went on to explain that in love, admiration and gratitude to his parents he commissioned Jeff Howard to arrange a piece of music and dedicate it to them. This evening the Treorchy Male Choir gave the first public performance of “Nella Fantasia”, a beautiful piece of music which moved many to tears, not least of which Dean and his parents Carole and David Powell.

June

Saturday June 2nd

Millennium Stadium, Cardiff

The Treorchy singers joined a massed Choir at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff to perform to the crowd prior to the Wales vs Barbarians Rugby International. Following a lengthy rehearsal, the performance began under the baton of Dr Haydn James and supported by the Band of the Welsh Regiment. The large choir of several hundred male choristers performed a whole selection of firm favourites to the delight of the filling terraces before kick-off. With “Llanfair”, “Llef” and “Myfanwy” opening the performance, the singers continued with “Soldier’s Chorus”, “Sospan Fach”, “Gwahoddiad” and “Delilah” along with a medley of songs to commemorate the visiting Barbarian rugby team.

Saturday June 16th

Torch Theatre, Milford Haven

The Choir returned after a period of 15 years to Milford Haven with a performance in the Torch Theatre – the last time the Choir sang here it was the final concert for Conductor John Jenkins who passed away earlier this year. After the first song the response from the packed theatre was most gratifying, so much so that it galvanised the Choir to even greater efforts. As the programme progressed the response displayed the sheer delight of it by the satisfied audience. The rendition of “Nessun Dorma” to end the first half evoked a thunderous acclamation.

Kate Woolveridge’s performance was superb, not only her singing but also her rapport with the audience. Her duet with Ray Daniels both beguiled and charmed those present. They displayed their satisfaction and delight in no uncertain terms. Ray Daniels’ performance also gained the satisfaction and appreciation.

The second half was a mirror image of the first half with each item receiving rapturous applause. At the end of the concert the “Les Miserables” medley was greeted with thunderous applause, cheers and a standing ovation. The continuity of the performance was capably run with storied and joked by MC Gareth Evans. The relaxing hour following the concert was spent in the British Legion Club.

Friday June 22nd

Vale Hotel, Hensol

Once again the Choir agreed to support the Welsh branch of Wooden Spoon, the British Rugby Charity. At the invitation of branch chairman Robert Harris, the Choir was invited to attend the Vale Hotel in Hensol. A full Choir was not required for this event and rather a selection of choristers appeared with Jan Ball as Conductor and Helen Roberts as Accompanist. The charity fundraising evening took place following

the Wales vs England International Golf Tournament and was attended by more than two hundred dinner guests. Despite food and drinks being of utmost importance to the guests, they also enjoyed the performance of the choristers over a thirty-minute period.

July

Sunday July 1st

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

The Choir was invited to participate in a celebrity-edition of the BBC Television programme “Antiques Roadtrip” which was being filmed in Wales. Two celebrity groups were trying to outwit one another with a knack of purchasing antiques at low prices and making the most money at the end of the programme. To supplement the filming, the television crew wanted to give the programme a Welsh “feel” and where better than the Treorchy Male Choir rehearsal room on a Sunday afternoon?

Publicity Officer Dean Powell was invited to take a leading part in the filming and welcomed resident presenter David Barby and the celebrity Myleen Klass outside the school as they pulled up in their reproduction Volkswagon Beetle. Then he ushered them into the rehearsal room as the Choir sang “Bring Him Home” and gave an extended interview to the camera.

Conductor Janice Ball and Vice President Norman Martin also played their part in the proceedings. The Choir performed magnificently and completed the filming with a rendition of “Tydi a Roddaist” which moved Myleen to tears. A memorable afternoon.

Tuesday July 3rd

Rehearsal Room, Treorchy

A touring party of more than 40 members of the Metropolitan Male Voice Choir of Australia visited the rehearsal room. Leaving Adelaide just twenty four hours earlier, the choristers came straight to Treorchy on the day of arrival in the UK. They are undertaking an extensive tour and wanted to visit the rehearsal room. After several performances the two Choirs combined under the baton of the Australian conductor to perform “Lleft”.

Saturday July 7th

RFC Clubhouse, Llantrisant

Life Member Dean Powell celebrated his 40th birthday in June while his father, David was due to celebrate his 70th birthday in July. To commemorate the joint landmark, a 110th Combined Birthday Party was held in Llantrisant RFC and no evening would have been complete without a performance by the Choir. Sadly Janice Ball was unavailable at the last moment, but Helen Roberts agreed to take up the roll of accompanist and conductor and did so magnificently.

Almost 40 choristers came to the clubhouse which was packed with 300 party guests all enjoying a truly wonderful evening together. They took to the stage and absolutely rose the roof of the main hall with performances of “What Would I Do Without My Music”, “Cwm Rhondda”, “Calon Lan”, “Gwahoddiad”, “Let It Be Me” and “You Raise Me Up”. Comic chorister Phil Edmunds gave his hilarious renditions before the

Choir concluded with “Nessun Dorma”. Dean performed “Senzenina” as an encore followed by “Men of Harlech” which brought the audience to their feet. A wonderful evening.

Saturday July 14th

Venue Theatr Cymru, Llandudno

The Choir gave its first performance in Llandudno with a concert at the large Venue Theatr Cymru on the seafront of the famous Victorian resort. Choristers travelled more than five hours to the North Wales town that is dominated by its Great Orm and beautiful architecture. Sadly only 400 people had purchased tickets, but the concert was still well received and resulted in a standing ovation. Acoustically this was a very difficult hall to perform in and the Conductor was very displeased with the sound coming from the Choir. The first half was not up to the standards she expected, although the second half displayed a vast improvement.

The concert welcomed back Dean Powell to the stage following several months of recovery after his multiple fractures. Once again he ensured the smooth running of the night as compere and soloist. The guest soloist for the evening was soprano Iona Jones who moved many to tears with her performance of “Gweddi” in particular.

The second half included many familiar favourites including “Battle Hymn of the Republic”, “Let It Be Me”, “You Raise Me Up”, “Nella Fantasia” and the magnificent “Les Miserables” medley. Following the concert the Choir retired to Llandudno RFC for an enjoyable social evening.

September

Friday September 14th

SWALEC Stadium, Cardiff

The first engagement following the summer break was in the most auspicious of surroundings. It was held in one of the suits of the SWALEC Stadium at Sophie Gardens and arranged by the Sports Council of Wales. A special reception was being held later in the day at the National Assembly to celebrate the magnificent achievements of the Welsh Olympians and Paralympians.

Earlier in the day the Sports Council themselves wanted to congratulate the sporting ambassadors of Wales with a formal reception. To add some Welsh flavour to the proceedings, the Choir was invited to perform. As the sports men and women, accompanied by friends and family, enjoyed the afternoon’s proceedings, the Choir sang a selection of items to the delighted crowd. The mid-afternoon event concluded in time for choristers to return home and change for the evening performance.

Friday September 14th

Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff

The Choir was privileged to perform for the most deserving charity, Latch this evening at Llandaff Cathedral. Together with the Cathedral School Choir and soloist, amongst whom were Charles Lovett Jones (violin) and Katherine Shi (piano). The delightful singing of the school choir was a musical joy.

The guest artist was Sophie Evans, the finals of the TV competition to find the role of

Dorothy for Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Wizard of Oz". Her performance left no doubt that her success in the TV competition was fully deserved. The audience was bewitched and enthralled by her singing.

After the sweet tone of Sophie and the children's choir, the deep and powerful resonance of the Treorchy Choir filled the Cathedral, bringing a tumultuous ovation from the large audience. An emotional interlude in the performance was the lighting of candles by the audience for the people suffering with cancer and being cared for by Latch.

The concert finished with Sophie and the Treorchy Male Choir singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow", possibly sending a message of hope for all those afflicted by the disease.

Saturday September 22nd

St George's Church, Bristol

The Choir returned to the venue reputed to be one of the best acoustical halls in the country. The performance started before a capacity audience and soon it became obvious that they were enjoying the true audibility of the Choir. The very attentive and appreciated response in a most enjoyable and overwhelming manner!

The soloists Iona and Ray beguiled and charmed them with their solo items and the performance of the duet "All I Ask Of You" brought an irresistible response. Another innovation was the first concert for Nick Jenkins as MC. As a former Headteacher his sayings and amusing experiences of school environment amused the audience. His second half was certainly different with his colourful top hat, bow tie, a large inflated daffodil, balloons and flags. The "back chat" involving the audience and choristers and the whole demeanour was, to say the least, unusual!

The resonate sound of the Choir and the delightful singing of choristers, the excellence of the pianist and the surprising debut of the MC, brought the evening together. The wonderful heart-warming reception from the enthralled audience made this a most entertaining evening.

October

Thursday October 5th

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The Choir returned to its hometown theatre for the Annual Autumn Concert to find a rather disappointing turn out of audience. Only around three-quarters of the theatre was full despite the fact that the special guests of honour on stage were students from the local Treorchy Comprehensive School. Despite this minor shortcoming, the Annual Concert was yet another triumph due to the performance of the Treorchy men and the incredible talent of the younger generation of people from this musical town.

Under the direction of Janice Ball, accompanied by Helen Roberts and compered by Dean Powell, who was forced to talk with a stick on stage owing to his recent fractures, the concert went smoothly and was a very enjoyable affair. Conducting the young student's Choir was an Honorary Lady Member of the TMC, Helen May, while

Jonathan Davies accompanied them on the piano. Their choral, solo and duet performances were all superb.

The Treorchy Choir gave another excellent performance for their family and friends in the audience. Many highlights including “Nessun Dorma”, “My Way”, “Les Miserables” and “Calon Lan” received thunderous applause. It was also a special night for Stuart Smith (1T) as he gave his first solo performance with the Choir in “Sit Down You’re Rocking The Boat.” It must have been a nervous experience for him to debut in his hometown, but he gave a first-class performance.

The remainder of the concert was well received and as both the older and younger singers combined to perform the Welsh National Anthem, it was clear that Rhondda’s tradition as the valley of music and song is secured for many years to come.

Monday October 8th

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

The Choir resumed their association with TV and West End star Sophie Evans with a performance at the Wales Football Association presentation night dinner. This was a late show with the bus leaving at 8.30pm to arrive in Cardiff at 9.15pm. The staging of the Choir was difficult as the dinner was held on the ground floor with the Choir performing on the 4th floor. The first arrangement was changed because of a lighting failure. Finally the Choir filed along one side of the spacious hall while Helen, the Conductor, was on the opposite side. Despite all the problems, the performance of Sophie and the Choir singing “You’ll Never Walk Alone” and “Somewhere Over The Rainbow” brought a heart-warming response from the diners four floors below.

Saturday October 7th

Harrogate International Centre

The Choir made a return journey to Harrogate for the first time in a decade. On this occasion the concert was organised by Jeanne Gray and saw choristers undertake a lengthy journey to the venue and staying overnight near Leeds International Airport. Harrogate International is a large, spacious venue where an audience of 500 people came to hear the Choir perform.

Unbeknownst to the Choir at the time, this would be the final engagement for Musical Director Janice Ball as she resigned from her position a few days later. However, she conducted the concert with Helen Roberts as Accompanist and Iona Jones as soprano soloist. Owing to the ill health of Dean Powell, the roll of MC was undertaken by Gareth Evans.

As always the Choir gave a superb performance for the most appreciative audience. There were many magic moments, particularly “Nessun Dorma”, “This is the Moment” and the “Anthem from Chess”. As always Iona and Ray gave first-class renditions of their songs. The concert was brought to a conclusion with the immortal Les Miserables medley, much to the obvious delight of the audience. With an encore of “Senzenina” and “Men of Harlech”, the Choir was assured a thunderous final applause.

Choristers stayed overnight in the airport hotel before setting off mid-morning on their lengthy journey home. The trip was interrupted in the nicest possible way with a warm reception from the Sergeant and Warrant Officers Mess in RAF Cosford.

Saturday October 27th

Civic Hall, Bedworth

It was with an air of excitement and positive atmosphere that the Choir returned to the Civic Hall, Bedworth for their 15th performance at this particular venue. Following a traumatic few weeks owing to the sudden resignation of Janice Ball as Musical Director, it was a relief to find the continued support of Dr Alwyn Humphreys MBE, an Honorary Member of Treorchy Male Choir. With his charismatic presence and inspiring skills, he led the Choir into a truly first-class performance which the near-packed audience clearly enjoyed.

With an enjoyable lunch break in Tewkesbury, the choristers reached the venue for a rehearsal and walked on stage to rapturous applause. It was particularly delightful to welcome Kate Woolveridge to the audience as this had been a very special week for her. Kate had appeared on Lorraine Kelly's TV show several times in the past few weeks as she was nominated for the title of Inspirational Woman of the Year. This is due to her dedicated work with dementia sufferers who use music and song as a way of reconnecting with their loved ones. This week Kate attended a glittering ball in London where the actress Helen Mirren announced that the winner was indeed our lovely mezzo soprano!

Once again Helen Roberts performed her duties as accompanist superbly. Ray Daniels performed the baritone solo work and Stuart Smith once again performed in "Sit Down You're Rocking The Boat". It also saw the welcomed return to a full concert for Dean Powell who suffered further fractures to his shoulder and knee in the past few months. With the full Treorchy team back on stage the evening went smoothly and was a hugely enjoyable affair from start to finish.

Alwyn's precision and mastery on stage left many newcomer choristers awestruck. He was also clearly delighted with the Choir's performance too as expressed in his post-concert speech to the men. He especially enjoyed our performance of "Let It Be Me" which he called "beautiful!" on stage. There were many highlights to the evening, including "Anthem from Chess", "This is the Moment", "Llef" and "Calon Lan". The operatic items proved another memorable section to the evening whilst the Les Miserables medley wowed the crowd and resulted in several encores. Choristers retired to the Bedworth Ex-Servicemen's Club for refreshments before heading home – and taking advantage of the extra hour in bed as the clocks went back!

November

Friday November 2nd

Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy

The Choir eagerly accepted the invitation to appear in the fundraising Help for Heroes extravaganza, thus continuing to support the cause. It was a late start for this Choir arriving at the theatre at 9.30pm – on stage at 10.15pm. The stage being "polluted" with atmospheric smoke – such is showbusiness! The programme included the likes of Only Boys Aloud, Annaleise Bowen, Treherbert Silver Band, Twelve Strings, Jay

Worley, Phil Howe, Treorchy Primary School Choir, Spotlight and Selsig Theatre. What was also special this evening was the fact that the Treorchy Male Choir was conducted for the first time by Rhiannon Williams-Hale, former Choir Accompanist and Honorary Lady Member.

The Choir programme, synonymous with the ambient atmosphere –
The Liberation Hymn - echoing the aspirations and hopes for the future

Calon Lan – displaying quiet reflection and satisfaction

You Raise Me Up – giving hope, resolution and determination to carry out the aims

Anthem (Chess) – this patriotic song portraying dedication, fortitude and determination to all

This performance brought a thunderous ovation from the enthralled capacity audience!

Wherever You Are – depicting pride and emotion inspirational

This was sung by combined performance by all involved and Treorchy Choirs that drew another overwhelming ovation. The military personnel present profoundly expressed their appreciation, gratitude and admiration for all the participants involved. The reward for this extravaganza was the raising of £7,800 for the fund. With a minute silence, playing the Last Post with the theatre showered by assimilated poppies, the exulting and rewarding engagement signalled “light out”.

Saturday November 10th

Cheltenham Town Hall

A return visit to Cheltenham’s magnificent Town Hall saw the Choir once again raise funds for Acorn Hospice in a concert organised by Honorary Member David Green. A packed auditorium awaited the Choir which was conducted for the first time on stage by Joy Aman Davies, the Conductor of the Morrision Orpheus Choir and wife of Dr Alwyn Humphreys, Conductor Emeritus of the Morrision Orpheus Choir. Helen Roberts was accompanist with David Geoffrey Thomas as organist, mezzo soprano Kate Woolveridge and Dean Powell making his welcomed return as Master of Ceremonies.

Joy’s inspirational conducting, her bright smile and warm personality endeared her to all on stage and off. It was a delight to perform for such an upbeat and encouraging individual for this special evening of music and song. Highlights in the first half included “Llef”, “Tangnefeddwyr” and “Let It Be Me”. The operatic items were another joy to perform, concluding the first half with “Nessun Dorma”. The second half opened with “Calon Lan” and Stuart gave another great performance of “Sit Down You’re Rocking The Boat” while “Anthem” and “What Would I Do Without My Music” brought the house down.

David Geoffrey Thomas gave another splendid performance of the “Tocatta” and Kate Woolveridge left the audience transfixed. Once again her duet with Ray Daniels of songs from “Phantom of the Opera” received a rousing applause. Her finale, accompanied by David, was superb. The Choir concluded with “Les Miserables Medley” and left the stage once again to thunderous applause. A truly fantastic evening for all concerned.

Sunday November 11th

Treherbert / Blaenrhondda War Memorial

Annually members of the Choir attend two Remembrance Sunday concert in the upper Rhondda Fawr to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. This year a selection of choristers sang at the War Memorials in Blaenrhondda and Treherbert, accompanied by members of the armed forces and the standards.

Thursday November 15th

St Catherine's Church, Pontypridd

A fundraising concert, organised by Choir Secretary Selwyn Jones, took place in St Catherine's Church marking the Choir's return to Pontypridd in thirty years. The large Choir gave another outstanding performance, once again under the baton of the delightful Joy Aman Davies with Helen Roberts as accompanist and Dean Powell as Master of Ceremonies. The fellow artists this evening were two junior choirs from the local Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James whose presence undoubtedly filled the church with proud parents and grandparents. Clearly, however they were not there to hear the Treorchy men, but offered a warm response all the same. A second artist for the evening was the Spanish flamenco guitarist Rafael who travelled all the way from Oxford to perform in Pontypridd, the birthplace of his father.

As always the Choir sang magnificently with many highlights to the evening, especially "Calon Lan" and "What Would I Do Without My Music". However, the unforgettable moment came after "Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat". Much to everyone's surprise (except Dean Powell and Joy Aman Davies who were "in" on the proceedings) soloist Stuart Smith walked off stage, down the aisle and dropped to one knee in front of his partner Ruth Harris and asked for her hand in marriage!

For the first time in the history of the Choir a member proposed to his girlfriend in a concert! What made the evening even more special is that Ruth's father, Joe, was stood in the ranks of the Second Tenors as the event unfolded. Not a dry eye was seen in the church as the Choir and audience gave the happy couple such a rapturous applause. A bouquet of flowers was presented to Ruth by the Conductor and she was invited to come forward where the Choir serenaded her with "Let It Be Me". It was a wonderful moment in their lives and for that matter the history of the Choir.

Thursday November 29th

The Cathedral, Llandaff

For the fifth consecutive year the Choir returned to Llandaff Cathedral to perform in the magnificent Tenovus Lovelight Concert. The line-up of performances followed a similar pattern to last year, including the children of Howells School Llandaff Choir under the baton of Ian Beckett. The Year 5 and 6 pupils were magnificent as always and brought the house down. Also on stage was the fun-loving and upbeat singers of the Tenovus Sing for Life Choir, including Tenovus staff and friends, carers or relatives of those affected by cancer. What made tonight even more moving was the debut of the Big C Choir, made up entirely of those suffering with differing degrees of cancer. It was incredibly emotional for all concerned.

Before a packed audience, which included West End star Connie Fisher and Comperes Carl Edward (ITV) and Dean Powell, the Treorchy Male Choir gave a first-

class performance under another guest conductor, Honorary Lady Member Rhiannon Williams-Hale and accompanied by none other than David Geoffrey Thomas. With only seven items to perform, the Choir gave of their best, leaving the audience staggered by the high standards of music making. Highlights included “Nella Fantasia”, “Calon Lan”, “Let it Be Me” and “What Would I Do Without My Music”. Another memorable concert in this beautiful place of worship.

Friday November 30th

Station Road, Treorchy

Treorchy Christmas Parade was a highlight of the year for residents of the Choir’s hometown. Stalls, music, parades and the traditional turning-on of the Christmas tree lights, attracted several hundred people to the bridge over to Stag Square. As part of the celebrations a group of choristers performed to a very appreciative audience and as they launched into the Christmas Carols, Mayor of Rhondda Cynon Taf Cllr Sylvia Jones turned on the lights of the magnificent tree!

December

Wednesday December 6th

Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon

The return visit to Theatr Brycheiniog saw the Choir perform under the baton of yet another Musical Director. This time Honorary Member Dr Haydn James, who conducts prior to Welsh International Rugby Games at the Millennium Stadium, offered his helping hand to the men of Treorchy, With only two rehearsals taking place, the Choir still felt secure under the baton of such a professional as Dr Haydn and they certainly were not disappointed. However, what made the evening even more memorable was the enthusiastic response from the packed audience in the theatre. Clearly they enjoyed the performance given the rapturous applause, howls of laughter at the Comperé’s presentations and tumultuous standing ovation at the finale.

Iona Jones performed the role of soprano soloist superbly as always, while the duet with Ray Daniels once again benefited from a rousing applause. Helen Roberts accompanied the performers and Dean Powell as Master of Ceremonies. The Choir gave off its best with another full programme of favourite melodies. Some of the most well received included “Laudamus”, “Nella Fantasia”, “My Way”, “Nessun Dorma” and of course the “Les Miserables Medley to conclude. It certainly marked another unforgettable visit to Brecon where theatre staff and audience left a lasting impression on the minds of the choristers who performed them. Salute!

Saturday December 8th

St Mary’s Church, Welshpool

The Choir made its first visit to this venue for a fundraising concert in aid of the local Fire Service Christmas Fund. It was arranged by a retiring chief fire officer who wanted to organise a special event in his final year of employment. It was clear that both he, his friends, family and audience left assured they had attended a first-class concert. Once again Dr Haydn James took to the stage as Conductor with Helen Roberts as Accompanist and Iona Jones performing the soprano solo role. Ray Daniels also performed magnificently, whilst Gareth Evans undertook the role of Comperé due to Dean’s ill health.

Once again the Choir, although small in number, gave another excellent performance. The significant distance covered to reach the venue was undertaken in fine weather and the Choir was gratified to see a “full house” of around 400 people in the beautiful church. At first staging was a problem, but once the choristers were settled the concert began and with Dr Haydn at the helm they were assured of another magnificent evening. Substantial funds were raised in the process and the audience left the church filled with happy memories of the Treorchy Male Choir’s beautiful sound.

Wednesday December 19th

Ty Hafan, Sully

The engagement calendar concluded as it had begun – with an event for the Ty Hafan Hospice. Once again a large group of almost 40 choristers travelled to the Ty Hafan Children’s Hospice in Sully to lead the singing for the annual Candlelit Memorial Service. As on previous occasions the choristers sang in a marquee close to the Remembrance Garden for parents, families and friends of young children who had passed away while receiving wonderful end-of-life care at the hospice. The deeply emotional evening saw the choristers perform a selection of solo items as well as lead the congregational singing of Christmas Carols.