

HANES CÔR MEIBION Y BONT FAEN THE HISTORY OF COWBRIDGE MALE VOICE CHOIR FROM 1970 TO 2011

Compiled by RAY Pritchard Tenor 1 Section to cover the ten year period
from 2001 to 2011



CMYBF - 2011 - CMVC



Founded in 1970 in an area with no tradition of male voice singing, the Cowbridge Male Voice Choir - Côr Meibion Y Bont Faen, have for the last forty years provided choral singing enjoyment to many audiences both at home and abroad. The choir is a registered charity - No. 514917, which in changing and challenging times has perpetuated the great Welsh tradition of male voice choral singing. It has extensive overseas links and has been privileged to host excellent choirs from many different parts of the globe. The choir has traditionally drawn its members from a wide area surrounding Cowbridge - from Kenfig

Hill to Cardiff and Beddau to Rhose with a particularly strong representation from Brynsadler, Pontyclun and Llantwit Major. There are still five founder members singing with the choir - Mike Edwards, Keith Brown, Glyn Jones, Gwyn Jones and Bob Whitaker. Choir rehearsals have taken place at different venues over the years. The choir's permanent practice venue is now Holy Cross Church in Church street Cowbridge. The Church is hundreds of years old and stands proudly in the centre of the town. It is very well suited for the practice of choral singing. This document details the history of some of the choir's achievements

over the forty years since it was formed. It is not intended that it should replace any other historical material or known facts relating to the choir. It is meant to bring existing historical records of the choir up to date and to let future generations know what the choir achieved during the forty years. Many early documents relating to the choir can be seen at the Old Hall (History Section) in Cowbridge. I have to thank Glyn Jones (T1) for other documents that I have used in this publication. I have tried to be as factual as possible with the very limited resources available to me. I hope I've made it interesting for the reader. RP.



The five remaining founder members of Cowbridge Male Voice Choir - left to right: - Meic Edwards, Glyn Jones, Keith Brown, Gwyn Jones and Bob Whitaker.

Three of the founder group live in Cowbridge, one in Arberthin and one in Pentref Meuryg.

Meic Edwards is a lecturer, Glyn Jones farms near Aberthin, Keith Brown runs a printing business in the town, Gwyn Jones is a game keeper and last but not least Bob Whitaker is a retired company director of a printing business.

All of them are respected members of the community in Cowbridge and each one is a stalwart member of the choir.

The Choir received its first big break in June 1973 when it competed with honour against some of the best Male Voice Choirs in Wales in the very popular HTV series of that summer 'Côrau Meibion'. This series brought Cowbridge to the fore and led to an invitation to sing at the 28th Reunion of the Burma Star Association at The Royal Albert Hall in London on 27th April 1974 along with the South Wales Burma Star Choir and the Maesteg Glee-men; they shared the stage with such notables as Dame Vera Lynn and Larry Adler. That successful combined concert was followed by two more successes' one at the Sophia Gardens Pavilion in Cardiff and the other at The Maesteg Town Hall where the three choirs sang accompanied by the band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines (Flag Officer Plymouth).



*Photograph - Left to Right
Shelley Thomas - Brown (Musical Director)
Janice Ball (Accompanist - Iona Jones)
Gwyn Thomas (Chairman)
Iona Jones (Welsh Soprano & Hon. President of Cowbridge MVC)
Sandra Williams (Accompanist - Cowbridge MVC)*

Mr David J. Richards, B.Mus., F.T.C.L.

The founder - conductor of the choir was Mr David J. Richards who was educated at Gowerton Boy's Grammar School and at the University of Cardiff where he gained a Bachelor of Music Degree. Then he spent a period of research after which he received a Fellowship from Trinity College London (F.T.L.C.) in composition. He was also a principal flautist with the National Youth Orchestra of Wales and performed as a soloist both vocally and instrumentally with the Glamorgan Youth Choir. He was a keen 'Eisteddfodwr' he had successes at the Urdd National Eisteddfod, the Royal National Eisteddfod and the Llangollen International Eisteddfod. He was inducted into the Blue Robe Order of the Welsh Bardic Circle in Carmarthen during the early 1970s.

David Richards also arranged music for various musical and choral ensembles and also arranged incidental music to accompany a twelfth-century play at the annual Caerffili Arts Festival.

MAESTEG
TOWN HALL

SATURDAY
4th OCTOBER, 1975

VOICES AND BRASS

In aid of Spina Bifida (Bridgend Branch)



ALAN CHARLES

Guest Accompanist: ALUN JOHN

IN CONCERT WITH

COWBRIDGE MALE VOICE CHOIR

Conductor: DAVID J. RICHARDS, B.Mus., F.T.C.L.

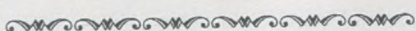
Accompanist: MISS CAROLE VANN, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., L.T.C.L.

AND

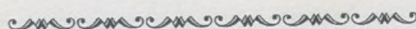
OGMORE VALE SILVER BAND

Conductor: ROY WILLIAMS

AT 7.30 P.M.



Souvenir Programme 10p.



*Sandra Williams-Accompanist
CMVC*



10 Years
of Photographic
History of CMVC
2001 - 2011
Compiled by
Ray Pritchard
Tenor 1 Section



Cyprus Tour Choir 2007 - performed two concerts in aid of the 'Help the Heroes' charity



40th Anniversary Celebration Dinner at The Bear Hotel Cowbridge on Saturday 26th March 2011

Photograph - Left to Right

Mr Alun Cairns MP, Mr Gwyn Thomas Chairman, Sandra Williams Accompanist, Shelley Thomas-Brown Musical Director, Iona Jones Welsh Soprano & Hon. President of Cowbridge MVC, Jane Hutt AM and Mr Len Taylor Mayor of Cowbridge with Llanblethian

Because of commitments the Choir had to celebrate its fortieth anniversary in March 2011, although the actual date should have been during the late summer of 2010. However; a few months did not take away from the excellent achievement of the founder members of the choir. After a gigantic effort, which included the delivery, on foot of over a thousand posters advertising for chorister, or any male interested in singing to join the fledgling choir, a mighty Oak grew from small a acorn.



*Millennium Centre Concert
Cardiff 2007
Note the old style Maroon Blazer and
Grey trouser choir uniform. This was
changed in 2010 to a Green Blazer
and Black trouser combination and
given its first public showing during
the second half of the May 2010 An-
nual Concert in the Cowbridge Lei-
sure Centre.*



The Magnificent Seven in the above photograph are all long serving members (10 years or more) of the Choir. Starting top left - I present Leon Fear (T1), Ray Pritchard (T1), Neville Thomas (B2), Gareth Davies (T2) - Bottom left Phil Insley (T1), Alan Mottershead (T2) and Steve Hopkins (T2). Alan is fondly referred to as dad by the rest of the choir, he is a sprightly, beer drinking and squash playing eighty six year old who is well respected by his colleagues. More photographs below - Choir Members 2011



Sandra Williams

Frank Maynard

Lyn Evans

Mr & Mrs Ernie Coates



PRESS RELATIONS OFFICER



*Bob Whitaker
Press Relations Officer
Cowbridge MVC*

Bob Whitaker, pictured here during the choir's tour of Cyprus in 2007, has been the Press Relations Officer for many years. It is a job that he has taken very seriously and he has been successful in raising the profile of the choir for home and worldwide consumption.

Bob lives in Cowbridge and is a retired business CEO. He sings in the Bass 2 section and has a

natural deep singing voice. Most of the pieces written about the choir emanate from his pen.

They are always interesting and informative; he likes to involve choristers in the promotion of the choir and his writings reflect this. Bob has been a long standing and very committed member of Cowbridge MVC and was one of its founder members in the 1970s.

CONCERT SECRETARY



*Frank Maynard
Concert Secretary
2010*

The important post of concert secretary has been held by a number of choir members. Currently the work is done by Frank Maynard (B2) section. It is one of the most important and time consuming tasks that a committee member can hold. Arranging home and away concerts has its difficulties, not least of which is booking trans-

portation to get the choir to concert venues. Frank is also a committed member of the choir; he also sings with Côr De Cymru when he can but doesn't let that interfere with his CMVC duty. He is photographed here counting the money realized from the sale of concert programmes for the Annual Concert in Cowbridge Leisure Centre in 2010.

CHOIR SECRETARY & SOCIAL SECRETARY



*Ray Pritchard
Secretary 2010*

Ray Pritchard joined the choir in November 2001; after a few months he was encouraged to take the post of Social Secretary. Later in 2007/8 when the Secretary's post became vacant due to the incumbent leaving the area, he took it on; and

has done both tasks since. Ray's legacy to the choir will be the Annual Hog Roast BBQ, held every summer at the Cowbridge RFUC. He is also the editor of the choir's Newsletter - Llais Y Bont which is published ever six months.

CHOIR TREASURER & PERSONAL ASSISTANT



Rob Parsons is the choir's treasurer. It is very demanding task. Rob has almost single handedly transformed the choir's finances during the last seven years and placed the organization on a firm financial foundation. His predecessor Des Williams had started to modernize the system; however, due to ill health he had to stand down. Rob is pictured here during the tour of Malta in 2005 with his lovely wife Jaci, who is also acts as his personal

assistant where choir financial records and bill paying are concerned. Together they make a great team. Both of them are fully committed to the choir and always give a 100% effort in all that they do on its behalf. Rob is always cheerful and very optimistic about the future of the choir's finances. He is a professional financier so the future of CMVC finance is in safe hands. Rob has a business partnership and lives in Cowbridge.



CHAIRMAN & Mrs GWYN (Cath) THOMAS

Gwyn Thomas has been chairman of the choir since 2005. He is a retired business man and he resides with his lovely wife Cath in Llantwit Major. During his tenure Gwyn, together with his committee/s has overseen major changes in the structure and organization of the Choir's administration by updating and modernizing the financial and numeric accounting system and re-vamping the choir's constitution to reflect its modern day image. Most organizations are happy to carry on with outdated methods and resist change; Gwyn realized that change was necessary if CMVC was to survive and prosper in the 21st Century. His legacy will be the sure foundation rock that the choir is now secured to.

It will stand the test of time and it will ensure the choir's survival for years to come. Behind every man they say is a good woman! This is true in Gwyn case; his wife Cath has been an exemplary partner in all his choir ventures; she organizes and prepares all the culinary requirements for 'Afterglow' functions and is always on hand to meet and greet choir guests or VIPs. She is an asset that the choir would be very hard put to replace! Gwyn is pictured at the 2010 Annual Concert and Cath is photographed in Cyprus during the 2005 choir tour preparing for a night out in Limasol with the other wives and partners on tour. Together Gwyn and Cath are a great team and have been a massive benefit to the choir.



OUR MUSIC DIRECTOR & PIANO ACCOMPANIST



Shelley Thomas-Brown BA. Hons and Sandra Williams B.Ed are the team who have helped to make choir successful. The dedication and commitment that these two marvelous ladies have given to the choir over many years have been second to none.

Sandra has been with the choir for forty years and Shelley has twenty seven years service. Both of

are school teachers, so they are very busy and dedicated professionals.

It is not an easy matter for them to devote their limited spare time to other activities; however, they are both very strong supporters of the choir and its charitable work. They are a great credit to Cowbridge Male Voice Choir and they are well respected by every choir member.

IONA JONES L.R.A.M. HON. PRESIDENT CMVC



Iona Jones is a renowned Welsh soprano who has sung with many of the leading Male Voice Choirs from the Principality. She is highly respected at home and internationally in the world of music; she is the proud and worthy winner of the National Eisteddfod's coveted Blue Ribbon Medal. Iona has lived in Cardiff since childhood, but originally hails from

St Asaph in North Wales. Iona is an avid supporter of the choir and she takes her presidential duties very seriously. She very often provides her services free of charge when she sings with the choir. Her last appearance with the choir was in May 2010 at the 40th Anniversary Concert held in the Leisure Centre in Cowbridge. She is Star quality in all respects!

GUY JONES - DEPUTY CHAIRMAN



I have chosen this very happy picture of Guy and Janet Jones because sadly in 2011 Guy suddenly passed away after a short illness. Guy was well known in Llanmaes where he resided with Janet. Guy originated from Pwllheli in North

Wales; during his National Service in the Royal Air Force at St Athans he met and eventually married Janet. He never returned to North Wales. He was dedicated to the choir and to its charitable aims - he is well and truly missed.



SNAPSHOTS OF HISTORY - 2001 TO 2011



Selection of photographs taken at the May 2010 Millennium Centre free public concert



In Memory of Arthur Evans (Tenor 2) who sadly passed away during 2011



Tesco Concert at Culver House Cross, Cardiff and photographs taken during the May 2011 Annual Concert in Cowbridge



Sandra Williams and Shelley Thomas - Brown pictured with the choir's unofficial mascot after a concert in Northampton in 2010. The story goes that somewhere in Eastern Europe many years ago a couple of very inebriated choir members couldn't resist her charm and released her from the captivity of a shop window; it beggars belief that they actually paid a ransom for her!



Gwyn Thomas (Chairman) pictured with Shelley Thomas-Brown, Janice Ball (Accompanist) pictured with Hon. President Iona Jones and members of the choir changing into their New Choir uniform for the second half of the May 2010 Annual Concert in Cowbridge



Shelley Thomas-Brown conducting the choir during the 2010 Annual Concert in Cowbridge and also (Centre picture) at St Teilo's Church in Llandeilo in 2010



Front of hall and back stage photographs Annual Concert 2010 at Cowbridge



*Cowbridge MVC - Hog Roast 25th June 2011
At
Cowbridge RFU Club*



*Presentations (Centre Pictures) to the lady's of the choir
Who grace us with their presence and work hard to support our
Charitable Organisation*