

**Côr Meibion Gwalia**  
**50 Years 1967-2017 A History**  
**CHAPTER 7: 1998-2002**

**1998**

President: His Honour Judge David Griffiths

Chairman: Wynne Davies

Secretary: John Evans

Musical Director: James Hearn

Accompanist: Jenny Trew

**30 January 1998** - Oxford

**20-22 March 1998** - Unofficial tour to Dublin

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> Concert in a pub in the Wicklow Mountains.

22<sup>nd</sup>: concert in Anglo-Irish Banking Corp HQ on St Stephens Green.

**1 April 1998** - Banqueting Hall, Whitehall

**Fri 22 May 1998** - Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane W1

**Fri 29 May- 1 June 1998** - Wuppertal

**Sat 6 June 1998** - Derby Day, Epsom Race Course. Singing with the Gurkha band on the course as the Queen arrived at the Epsom Derby.

**Wed 10 June 1998** - Natural History Museum

**Wed 10 June 1998** - Kensington Roof Gardens. BIAS Property Summer Party

**Sat 13 June 1998** - Lydd, (Appledore?) Kent

**Wed 1 July 1998** - Gala Evening, Kempton Park Racecourse

Floodlit performance in front of the Grandstand with the Band of the Welsh Gurds, the Pipe Band of the Scots Guards Assoc, Leonie Page (soprano) and the Guns of 16 Regiment Royal Artillery.

*We were asked to stay in position on the temporary stage while the Band played the 1812 Overture. When the cannon went off right behind us we all jumped out of our skins!*

**Sat 12 September 1998** - Queen Elizabeth Conf Centre, Westminster

**Tues 6 October 1998** - Grosvenor House Hotel

**Sat 24 October 1998** - London Welsh Rugby Club, Richmond

**14 November 1998** - Lord Mayor's Show singing 'Georgia' (many times) dressed up as golfers and waiters because the new Lord Mayor owned a country club in Georgia.

**14 November 1998** - After the Show we jumped on a coach and went to Gorleston in Norfolk and straight on stage as part of the Gorleston Music Festival.

**15 November 1998** - Oulton Broad

**Sat 28 November 1998** - Concert for Knights of St Columba at Church of Christ the King, Southgate.

Conductor: James Hearn Accompanist: Jenny Trew. Plus soprano and tenor soloists.

(see scanned programme)

**5 December 1998** - Cabaret: Royal Lancaster Hotel, Bayswater

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## 1999

President: His Honour Judge David Griffiths

Chairman: Wynne Davies. Ellis Jones

Secretary: Dave Hurlbut

Musical Director: James Hearn

Accompanist: Jenny Trew

**Sat 16 January 1999** - Grand concert. London Welsh Supporters Club, Queen Charlotte Hall Richmond.

Introduced by John Dawes.

Conductor: James Hearn Accompanist: Jenny Trew. Jill Padfield (soprano). Edward Sellick (tenor).

(programme in archive)

**Sun 14 March 1999** - Horton Kirby

**12 April 1999** - Whitbread Brewery, Chiswell St, City?

**24 April 1999** - Biddenden

**29 April 1999** - Chairman Wynne Davies died aged 68. A founder member of the Gwalia, a great supporter of the London Welsh Association and LW Rugby Club, Wynne had been at rehearsal the previous evening. It was a dreadful shock. His funeral was at Streatham Park Crem on 10 May.

*By Russell Jones – fellow chorister: Wynne Davies was born in Penclawdd near Swansea and was educated at Gowerton Grammar School and University of Wales where he graduated in Education. In Penclawdd he was brought up with his cousin Carl Jenkins, the famous composer. He came to London in 1954 as a National Serviceman where he was Senior Instructor with the Army Education centre at the Royal Artillery Depot, Woolwich, where he played rugby for London Command. Wynne married in 1955 and after his Army Service he joined Tulse Hill Comprehensive in 1956 and later became Head of Upper School. In the mid-60s he moved to Goldsmiths College, where he lectured in Educational Policy and Management.*

*In London Welsh Circles, Wynne was Secretary of the London Welsh Trust and Association from 1983 to 1990 and its Chairman from 1996 to 1998. He was also Vice President of the London Welsh rugby Club for 16 years. He attended the Boro Welsh Congregational Chapel where he was a Deacon and Trustee from 1985.*

**Sat 15 May 1999** - Concert. London Welsh Centre. Music For Your Pleasure - Opera, Songs from the shows, Welsh favourites. £7 including supper.

Conductor: James Hearn Accompanist: Jenny Trew. Claire Seaton (soprano). Edward Sellick (tenor). Jenny Trew & James Hearn piano duet

**28-31 May 1999** - Antwerp

*Steve Davies says: We have been to Antwerp a few times, and I think this is the time when the coach we hired was not the most modern, and unfortunately it broke down near Dunkirk. We managed to pull off the motorway into an industrial estate. I was the only one who had a mobile phone that would work abroad, and the driver used it to call his office. They arranged for a Volvo repair truck to come from Calais. The rear suspension had collapsed and when the mechanic said it could take quite a while to fix, the tour party split up to search for a bar - some went east and others went west. Others chose to remain on the grass verge with Dai Pres and open their Duty Frees - a big mistake when Dai Pres is about! The mechanic fixed the problem more quickly than we had expected, so we then had to try to round everyone up. As I was walking back to the coach I could see that one of our newer members had been sick and had collapsed on the ground - too much Dunkirk spirit! Mike was using the coach driver's broom to clean him up. But that wasn't the worst of it - Bryn had had a funny turn and had been carted off to hospital in an ambulance!*

*We all got back on the bus and decided to find the hospital to see how Bryn was. We could see the hospital but couldn't work out how to get there - eventually I knocked on the door of a house to ask for directions, but as I couldn't understand the lingo, she said 'Follow me' and jumped in her car and led the coach to the hospital. Everywhere seemed closed but Dr Hilary James and I got in through the loading bay and we somehow found the ward where Bryn was - in bed linked up to a drip. The doctor wiggled his fingers indicating the universal sign that Bryn was 'tipsy' and said he ought to remain overnight. Bryn lived in Kent, and at that point he was nearer home than he was to our ultimate destination. We made sure he had enough money and suggested he make his way back the following day. Not surprisingly we arrived at our hotel in Antwerp much later than expected but it didn't dampen our spirits. The following morning, much to everyone's surprise, Bryn breezed into the hotel, fit as a fiddle!*

*Ken Brickell says: The coach we had was like a school bus only worse. When we got to France, we headed north to Dunkirk and the rear suspension gave way and we were stranded for hours on end. We were on our way to Antwerp. Dai Pres broke out all the booze he had bought on the ferry and it was drunk until none remained. Bryn & his wife ended up in hospital with alcohol poisoning and the guy who was organist at one of the London Squares puked all over the driver's jacket before he fell off the bus, cracking open his head. He was helped into the 4\* hotel in Antwerp dressed only in his underpants. On the way back, smoke billowed from the coach at every opportunity and when we got to Calais, it could hardly move at all. Fearing it would not get up the hill out of Dover, I cadged a lift on a Belles of Lowestoft coach so that I could get back to Kessingland and home.*

**Sat 12 June 1999** - Appledore

**Wed 23 June 1999** - Cabaret: British Museum with LPO

*From Ken Brickell:*

*From what I remember, James was in the US and Lyn couldn't do it so David rang and asked if I could conduct. The LPO had been rehearsing that morning at Glyndebourne, so whilst they were setting up, I asked their conductor if I could run through our pieces because I hadn't done anything with the choir for some time. he agreed and when I was finished, he asked me to stay on the rostrum and do it all again where the LPO was involved so that he could listen to the balance at the back of the room. I was gobsmacked, but nevertheless, duly obliged. I then had to travel on the underground back to Newberry Park station to collect my car. I was carrying the biggest bouquet of flowers I'd ever seen. I was afraid to look up in case some thug decided to have a go at me. Elaine was happy to receive them. I was just very proud. Looking at the program again, some literary idiot has put a gap between Gwa and Hoddia!*

**September 1999** - Claridges (3 evenings)

**October 1999** - Marden?

**November 1999** - Russell Square(?)

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## **2000**

President: His Honour Judge David Griffiths

Chairman: Ellis Jones

Secretary: Dave Hurlbut

Musical Director: James Hearn

Accompanist: Jenny Trew

**Sun 9 January 2000** - Cabaret: New Connaught Rooms, Covent Gdn

**Fri 25 February 2000** - St Lukes Church, Clapham

**Fri 3 March 2000** - Sergeants' Mess, Woolwich (lunchtime)

**Sun 12 March 2000** - Charity concert: Horton Kirby, Kent

**31 March-2 April 2000** - Concert with Garda Ladies Choir. St Martins Church, Tallaght, Dublin

Conductor: James Hearn Accompanist: Jenny Trew

*The choir of 22 flew from City airport and almost didn't take off because a seagull had flown into an engine.*

*Instead of checking in the hotel (the Paramount in Temple Bar) the coach brought the choir direct to the concert.*

**Uniform changed to Green blazers and black striped ties**

**Sat 6 May 2000** - Millennium Concert with LWMVC & Chorale at City Temple, Clerkenwell

**16 May 2000** - Aeronautical Society

**May 2000** - Party on Wellington?

**16 June 2000** - Aeronautical Society

**17 June 2000** - Concert: LW Association

**24 June 2000** - Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds

**Sat 8 July 2000** - International Eisteddfod, Llangollen.

Conductor: James Hearn Accompanist: Jenny Trew. 39 on stage. Not placed. Set piece Pilgrim's Chorus.  
We stayed at the Lion Hotel in Shrewsbury. *(several photos can be viewed in the archive)*

**19 July 2000** - Natural History Museum or Mon 17 July 2000 - Albert Hall?

**27 July 2000** - Banqueting House, Whitehall

**30 September 2000** - Royal Thames Yacht Club

**Wed 8 November 2000** - Cabaret Royal Lancaster Hotel Bayswater

**Wed 6 December 2000** - Carols Concert Richard Cloudsley School

**Sat 9 December 2000** - Fundraiser at LW Centre

**13 December 2000** - Dave Waller's retirement home

**21 December 2000** - St Lukes, Clapham?

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## 2001

President: His Honour Judge David Griffiths

Chairman: Ellis Jones

Secretary: Dave Hurlbut

Musical Director: James Hearn. Lyn Evans

Accompanist: Carys Hughes

**Mon 22 January 2001** - Full page article in the Evening Standard about the London Welsh Centre under the heading 'Ethnic London' and features interviews with Rita Clarke and members of the Gwalia and a photo of us rehearsing with James and Jenny. *(article in archive)*

**Sat 20 January 2001** - St Mary's Church Weybridge/Walton

**Sun 11 March 2001** - Horton Kirby

**Sat 31 March/Sun 1 April 2001** - Roundhouse Camden. 'Because I Sing' written and conducted by Orlando Gough and The Shout for a concert of 16 of London's amateur choirs featuring the Gwalia, a children's choir, a refugee choir, a deaf choir (who signed while the Gwalia sang), London Gay Men's Chorus, Maori, Jewish, Lloyds Insurance and Georgian choirs, a socialist choir, The WI choir and others. Produced by Artangel. We each sang our own songs and then sang Because I Sing together. The concert was reviewed well in the Daily Telegraph (*3 April, the press cutting is in the archive*). Channel 4 made a documentary (broadcast June 2001) about the project, directed by Sophie Fiennes who filmed one of our rehearsals.

**Tues 3 April 2001** - Banqueting House, Whitehall

*[we have sung at the Banqueting House several times - it is an amazing venue: Designed by Inigo Jones in 1619 with ceilings painted by Rubens the place has fabulous acoustics and a gory history - Charles I was executed there in 1649]*

This was James Hearn's last concert having been Musical Director of the Choir for 5 years.

*Steve Davies says: I'm pretty certain that this is where we met Dr Markus Jerger, the organiser of the 2004 Unesco dinner. This was a dinner for hedge-funds, high-wealth individuals and their families. While we were having refreshments in the undercroft the organiser came down and handed out Swiss Army knives and chatted to us. In 2004 he got in touch and invited us to go and sing in at the Unesco Gala Dinner in Geneva, all expenses paid - see 14.10.04.*

**Sat 21 April 2001** - Concert by Côt Meibion Morlais (conductor John Asquith, a past Gwalia baritone) at LW Centre

**4 May 2001** - Natural History Museum

**23 May 2001** - Construction Confederation Annual Dinner, Chiswell St Brewery, Barbican. Cliff Morgan was guest speaker. The chairman was Welsh. We had to sing Bob The Builder!

**Sun 27 May 2001** - Cabaret for Steve Davies' 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, Cannizaro House Wimbledon.

**Sat 2 June 2001** - Joint concert and buffet supper with Garda Ladies choir (from Dublin) at LW Centre

**Fri 29 June 2001** - wedding Downton, Salisbury

**21-23 September 2001** - Trinity Church, Sutton?

**29 September 2001** - Epsom

**16 October 2001** - Guildhall

**3 November 2001** - Hailsham, E Sussex. Remembrance Day Concert. Introduced by BBC Southern Counties radio.

Dame Vera Lynn was in the front row (of the audience, not the choir!) (*programme in archive*)

**9 December 2001** - Horniman Museum Dulwich. Carol concert with Crystal Palace Band

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## **2002**

President: His Honour Judge David Griffiths

Chairman: Ellis Jones/Dave Sweet

Secretary: Dave Hurlbut

Musical Director: Lyn Evans

Accompanist: Carys Hughes

**Sun 13 March 2002** - Horton Kirby with Mosaic barbershop choir

**19 March 2002** - Funeral

**4 April 2002** - Recording with Lemon Jelly at Metropolis Recording Studios in Chiswick

The album is 'Lost Horizons', released in summer 2002. We appear on a track called 'Return to Patagonia'.

**21 April 2002** - Ponti's in Liverpool St

**25 May 2002** - City Temple - three LW choirs

**15 June 2002** - Wedding Sunningdale

**23 June 2002** - Churchill Theatre, Bromley with Margaret Davies's barbershop choir. In aid of Fireman's Benevolent Fund

**12 October 2002** - Wedding Kemsing, Sevenoaks. Eirlys Bebb's son

**26 October 2002** - Centenary Festival of Male Choirs organised by LWMVC at the Royal Albert Hall.

*(the music is in the archive)*

**9 November 2002** - Concert LWC

**7 December 2002** - Egham