

Côr Meibion Gwalia
50 Years 1967-2017 A History
CHAPTER 8: 2003-2007

2003

President: His Honour Judge David Griffiths

Chairman: Dave Sweet

Secretary: Dave Hurlbut

Musical Director: Lyn Evans

Accompanist: Carys Hughes

15 March 2003 - Watford Welsh Society. Soloist Mirain Haf (soprano).

21 March 2003 - Cabaret Hilton Hotel. Wooden Spoon Society dinner

1 April 2003 - Café Royal?

26 April 2003 - Banqueting House, Whitehall. Cabaret for Deutsche Telecom dinner.

28 April 2003 - City Airport. The choir sang before the inaugural flight of Air Wales from London City Airport to Cardiff and Swansea.

17 May 2003 - Joint concert Braintree MVC at Christchurch, Braintree

24 May 2003 Wedding Woking

Natural History Museum x 2 ?

28 June 2003 - Concert with Morlais MVC at St Dunstan's Church, Ferndale.

We stayed in the Heritage Park Hotel, Trehafod Nr Pontypridd

21 July 2003 - Hampstead wedding

26 July 2003 -Croydon wedding

11 October 2003 - Concert St Andrews West Kensington.

1 November 2003 - The opening Concert of the two-week Gorleston Music & Arts Festival. St Andrews, Gorleston. Solos: Glenys Roberts; Ted Sellick; Carys Hughes

Stayed at Brooklands Hotel Oulton Broad.

11 December 2003 - Cabaret. Property Lunch. Hilton Hotel.

13 December 2003 - Pennyhill Park, Camberley

20 December 2003 - Wedding St Edmund Campion Church, Maidenhead

.....

2004

President: Dai Griffiths

Chairman: Dave Sweet; Ted Sellick

Secretary: Dave Hurlbut

Musical Director: Kim Kirkman; Michael Thomas; Janet Haney

Accompanist: Carys Hughes; Annabel Thwaite; Chris Duckett

A turbulent year for the choir as conductors came and went:

Conductor Lynn Evans retired back to north Wales at the end of 2003. Lynn, was an ex-military bandsman (French horn) and had been one of our basses before taking on the role of conductor from James Hearn in 2001. Lynn died 13.9.07.

Our accompanist Carys Hughes was diagnosed with bone cancer at the beginning of the year and sadly died in late 2004. A superb organist, Carys had been accompanist for the London Welsh Chorale before becoming the Gwalia's accompanist in 2001.

An Australian Kim Kirkman was appointed as MD in January '04; despite assurances that he intended to stay in the UK, in June he resigned to go back to Australia. He arranged two songs for the Gwalia - Calon Lan and Click Go The Shears. Kim had conducted two concerts. Michael Thomas agreed to stand in and was offered the job full time before he became ill.

Accompanist Janet Haney offered to conduct the choir in Geneva and she officially became the MD in Jan '05, and Chris George Duckett became our accompanist.

Dave Sweet resigned as Chairman at the AGM in November and Ted Sellick took over the role.

Dai Pres had retired as a judge and moved from Kent to Llandoverly, and he and Anita were enjoying their retirement when he died suddenly on 4 December. He had been our President for 37 years.

20 March 2004 - Wedding St Michael's Cornhill

26 March 2004 - Royal Courts of Justice (cancelled)

4 April 2004 - Horton Kirby

29 May 2004 - Wedding. Chilham nr Canterbury

12 June 2004 - Dolgellau MVC at LWC (?)

3 July 2004 - A Night at the Opera. LW Centre. Michael Thomas conducted.

15 October 2004 - Unesco Charity Gala Dinner in support of Unesco Education for Children in Need, Theatre Pitoeff, Geneva, Switzerland

We met Dr Markus Jerger, the organiser of the Unesco dinner, a couple of years earlier at the Banqueting House in Whitehall where we had been singing in at 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. He later got in touch and invited us to go and sing in at the Unesco Gala Dinner in Geneva, all expenses paid. We shared the stage with an Abba tribute band, and Shirley Bassey and Petula Clark were among the large audience.

[we had sung at the Banqueting House before - 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]

27 November 2004 - St John's Church, Crystal Palace

4 December 2004 - Carol singing Peckham

10 December 2004 - Dai Pres funeral, Llangadog

2005

President: Huw Edwards

Chairman: Ted Sellick

Secretary: Dave Hurlbut

Musical Director: Janet Haney

Accompanist: Chris George Duckett

Huw Edwards became our President in March.

19 February 2005 - Welsh Night at Enfield Church Social Club

6 March 2005 - Charity Concert, St Mary's, Horton Kirby Kent

Soloists: Ted Sellick; Katherine Allen.

14 May 2005 - Concert at LW Centre with Braintree Male Voice Choir

Katherine Allen (mezzo-soprano); Ted Sellick (tenor). *[programme in archive]*

26 May 2005 - Funeral, Petersham

4 June 2005 - Concert organised by Llandoverly Rotary Club, in memory of our late president His Honour Judge David 'Dai Pres' Griffiths who had retired from Kent to Llandoverly.

Conductor Janet Haney. Accompanist Chris George. Llandoverly MVC. Glenys Roberts (soprano), Aled Hall (tenor), Rhys Matthews (xylophone), Hugh Thomas (piano), John Gwynne (compere) *[programme in archive]*

17 June 2005 - Memorial Service for Dai Pres. All Saints Church, Maidstone. *[programme in archive]*

3 Sept 2005 - **John Evans** funeral Streatham Vale Crematorium. *[Order of Service in archive]* John had died on 21 August. He was a founder member of the Gwalia and a great character. John was an avid supporter of the London Welsh Association, LW RFC and the Voyagers sports charity.

By Russell Jones - fellow chorister:

John Evans was a cornerstone of the London Welsh Centre from the days of rationing after the second world war until his death on 21st August, 2005. He was the eldest son of Auntie Nellie, who had a dairy in Bingfield Street,

Kings Cross, and had a brother Gwilym and a sister, Anne, who became a famous soprano in international opera. They were a musical family and Auntie Nellie, John and Gwilym sang with the London Welsh Choral Society for much of the 1940s and 1950s. With his wife Megan, John was a driving force in music throughout the London Welsh community. Like many of his generation, John was an evacuee during the war and hated being in Cornwall so much, that he gathered his brother and hitch-hiked home to London. The streets of London were as loved by John as the hills of Wales.

Singing was his great love. He sang with the Kentucky Minstrels, Hammersmith MVC (where Megan's father, Emrys, was a chorister), the St David's Singers, London Welsh Youth Choir, London Welsh Male Voice, the London Welsh Festival Choir, and for 37 years the Gwalia Male Voice Choir. In his younger days he appeared in films, notably "A Matter of Life and Death" (1947) and "Valley of Song" (1953). He loved competing in Eisteddfodau, so much that he invented three choirs - The Lincoln Singers, The Grays Inn Singers and the Mecklenburgh Singers to enable him to perform on stage. And of course he was always there when the Côr Glannau Tafwys went to compete. Competition was not limited to singing. He was good at table tennis, snooker, golf and darts. He also enjoyed putting a few pennies on the gee gees!

It was John, supported by his wife of almost fifty years, Megan, who organised the Young Welsh Singer of the Year competition, which has become such an important event. From the 1940s to the present day John was a central figure in the life of the Centre at Grays Inn Road.

24 September 2005 - Wedding Harrow

16 October 2005 - Gymanfa Ganu Clapham Welsh Chapel. Sunday morning. Huw Edwards on organ. Dr Haydn James conducted.

21 October 2005 - 80th birthday party of Irene McDonagh. Dulwich Golf Club

3 December 2005 - St Bart's Sydenham. Concert in aid of St Christopher's Hospice with the Crystal Palace Brass Band

Wed 14 December 2005 - Livery Dinner (Welsh Master), Clothworkers Hall, Mincing Lane, EC3

2006

President: Huw Edwards

Chairman: Ted Sellick

Secretary: Dave Hurlbut

Musical Director: Janet Haney

Accompanist: Chris Duckett

21 January 2006 - John Evans Memorial Concert, Borough Chapel SE1

12 February 2006 - 70th Birthday Party, Ashford Kent. Peter Knapp conducted.

23 March 2006 - Warrant Officers' Annual Dinner, Royal Artillery, Woolwich Barracks

2 April 2006 - Horton Kirby, Kent. The venue for our regular concerts switched from the Village Hall to St Mary's church. With local soprano Victoria Stanyon.

8 April 2006 - Wedding Chalfont St Giles, Gerards Cross

20 May 2006 - Wedding Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Batcombe near Frome Somerset

21 May 2006 - Longleat

Steve Davies says: When I first joined the choir the uniform was DJs, bow ties and frilly red shirts and we used to joke that we looked like Spanish waiters. After we got the green blazers we joked that we looked like coach drivers. The day after we sang at a wedding near Frome Dave managed to get us a gig singing in the cafeteria/shopping area at Longleat Safari Park which was nearby. We got there a bit early so a number of us decided to go round the big House. When Huw and I walked into the ticket office in our uniforms they said 'You look smart', and I said, 'Yes we're coach drivers'. They said, 'Oh in that case you can go in for free', which we did, much to the annoyance of those choir members who had paid to go in because they had their coats over their blazers. I didn't think any more of it until I went to the gents between our two singing sets, when the guy next to me, totally unprompted, said 'You coach drivers don't half drive slowly round the safari park!'

3 June 2006 - Wedding St Peter & St Paul's, Tunbridge Wells

11 June 2006 - Recording of first part of new CD at St Giles, Cripplegate, Barbican EC2
24 June 2006 - Wedding High Easter nr Stansted
8 July 2006 - Wedding Our Lady & St Bridget's, Isleworth
23 September 2006 - 2nd Recording. St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood SE19
6 October 2006 - Visit of Dublin Garda Ladies Choir. LW Club presented by the Lodon Cardiganshire Society. Mike Wyn Jones conducted. Accompanist: Chris George. Ted Sellick and Nenette Cowman sang a duet. [programme in archive]
2 December 2006 - St Bartholomew's Church, Sydenham. Carol Concert with Crystal Palace Brass Band
6 December 2006 - Celebrity Carol Service, St Mary's, Gt Milton, Oxfordshire compered by Gabrielle Drake. Reception afterwards next door at Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons.

2007

President: Huw Edwards
Chairman: Ted Sellick
Secretary: Dave Hurlbut
Musical Director: Janet Haney
Accompanist: Chris George Duckett

This year we released a CD '**Celebration - 40 years with the Gwalia Male Voice Choir**'

It contained 12 new tracks plus some from previous recordings:

1979: We are Climbing Jacobs Ladder; Were You There; Ar Hyd Y Nos; All in the April Evening; Close Thine Eyes

1986: Marching Song; Hava Nagila; Heimat; Yankee Doodle; Nant y Mynydd

2006: Calon Lan; Myfanwy; Men of Harlech; Steal Away; Comrades in Arms; Troyte's Chant (Eli Jenkins Prayer);

Llef; The Rose; Gwahoddiad; There is Nothing Like a Dame; Rhythm of Life; Banana Boat Song.

6 January 2007 - Wedding Bromley

4 February 2007 - Cardiff City Hall. John Asquith conducted

29 April 2007 - Charity concert, St Mary's, Horton Kirby, Kent with Victoria Stanyon *[programme in archive]*

9 May 2007 - Funeral of Ellis Jones at Clapham Welsh Chapel. Ellis had been a founder member of the choir and was its Treasurer for many years. He was Chairman 1999-2003. *[Order of Service in archive]*

11-13 May 2007 - Garda Boat Club, Dublin. Joint concert with Garda Ladies Choir. *[photo in archive]*

25-28 May 2007 - Wuppertal - *cancelled following the sacking of the Ronsdorfer Mannechor Union choir conductor for 'making sarcastic remarks' which were upsetting the choristers.*

8 June 2007 - Annual Ball, Lensbury Centre, Teddington (Shell Sports and Social Club) with Morris Dancers, Scots piper, Irish band, plus Egham brass band. *[photo and programme in archive]*

12 June 2007 - East Winter Garden, Canary Wharf (we sang 'Yellow Bird') for a French company.

30 June 2007 - Concert St Mary's High Halden, Kent. Victoria Stanyon soloist, Chris George jazz piano solos.

7 July 2007 - Wedding St John the Baptist, Pinner

4 September 2007 - Dinner at Capital Hotel, Knightsbridge for David Morgan, retiring chairman of E&W Cricket Board.

19 September 2007 - Memorial Service for John Travers CEO Cushman & Wakefield UK, All Souls Langham Place, W1

27 October 2007 - Charity Concert London Welsh Rugby Club, Richmond

1 December 2007 - 50th Wedding Anniversary, Eastwell Manor, Ashford Kent

15 Dec 2007 ? - wedding Wellington College?

22 December 2007 - Wedding St Mary's, Hertingfordbury, Herts