The Tower Bridge Experience - page 3
Here is the news –
Huw Edwards for President!

At the last AGM a couple of weeks ago, Lord Morris stepped down as our President after seven years in that office. I am sure you will all join me in thanking him for his support during that period and in expressing the hope that we will continue to see him attending our functions at Gray’s Inn Road for many years to come.

It may be news to some of you that Huw Edwards has agreed to be our new President. I am delighted to welcome him in that role, although he is no stranger to London Welsh, having served as a Vice President of the Trust as well as being President of the Gwalia Male Voice Choir and a Vice President of the London Welsh Male Voice Choir. The official hand-over will take place at the Festival Of Male Choirs at the Royal Albert Hall on 18 October.

Lodwick Davies has retired after three years in office running the London Welsh Forum. His efforts have brought us some very interesting Forum meetings on a wide range of themes. Thank you, Lod. Unfortunately, we do not yet have a successor for Lod, so here’s an opportunity for somebody reading this to step forward.

Another quiz night was held at the Centre in June. This again proved to be a very popular event and I would like to thank those who organised it.

We are starting to sign up people for the next year of Welsh classes. We are looking for some additional help in this area. If you are interested, please contact Theo Brueton or myself.

We would like to use the fact that the Centre is not being used much during August as an opportunity to move forward with redecoration. I would like to hear from wielders of paint brushes or layers of tiles, etc. who would like to volunteer to help us.

For those not so manually inclined, we are also looking for people to strengthen our various committees.

Theo Brueton or myself.

Cadogan Hall Concert
The recent London Welsh Choirs concert at the Cadogan Hall raised over £15,000, which was divided equally between the London Welsh Trust and the London Welsh School. Thank you to everyone who organised the concert and to everyone who supported it.

Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru – Awst 2-9
Ar Faes yr Eisteddfod yng Nhaerdd bydd Stondin Cymry Llundain yn y Neuadd Arddangos.

Copy from contributors and advertisers needed by 30 September 2008 for inclusion in next issue.

Front Cover Picture courtesy of the Tower Bridge Experience Library
There’s Lovely See...

From the people who brought you ‘The Quiz’ comes a fresh new burst of marvellous mirth in the form of “There’s Lovely See” – a new comedy night on the third Friday of every month held in the bar at the London Welsh Centre.

It will feature the best Welsh talent on the comedy circuit, with resident Welsh compère in the form of Sion James. It will also feature the gibbering nonsense of London Welsh Centre’s very own Paul Harry Allen. It starts on the 19 September with discount for members.

Lod’s forum year – a towering success

The heavens looked down kindly on some 25 members of the London Welsh who attended the Forum visit to Tower Bridge on June 9.

We were escorted around this famous edifice by two very knowledgeable guides, willing to answer all our questions and obviously very proud of their association with the Bridge and its history.

We were shown the old engine rooms which housed the machinery used to operate the lifting gear before everything was electrified - beautiful feats of engineering with huge highly polished brass wheels and turning gear.

One of the many amazing facts we heard was that the Bridge is opened on average one thousand times a year. It is free to anyone if the boat has a mast of a minimum height - the only person for whom the bridge would be opened automatically even if she arrived in a rowing boat, is the queen.

At 8-30pm we were privileged to witness the bridge being opened for the fifth time that day - the whole operation took a brief 5 minutes. Many of us who have lived long years in London had never seen the opening of Tower Bridge - so it was really exciting.

We walked along the high walk-ways, on a beautiful summer’s evening we admired the fantastic views up and down the River Thames and the city with its famous land marks.

This was the final event and crowning glory of Lodwick’s years of organising the Forum and it turned out to be such a special evening that we decided not to throw him off the bridge after all! Diolch Lod.

Eirlys Bebb
Who’s doing what, and where

GWALIA MALE VOICE CHOIR
Musical Director: Janet Haney
Accompanist: Christopher George
16 August  Wedding, St. Andrews Church, Windsor.
6 September  Wedding, St. Mary’s Church, Sevenoaks.
18 October  Concert at Harvest Festival dinner, Eynsford, Kent.
22 November  Joint concert with Icelandic choir at the London Welsh Centre – all proceeds go to the London Welsh Trust.
29 November  90th Birthday party at Sidcup Old People’s Home.
Choir rehearsals are held from 7.30 – 9.30 p.m. every Wednesday at the London Welsh Centre, 157, Gray’s Inn Road. All visitors & potential new members always welcome.
For more information, please see our website at: www.gwaliamalevoicechoir.org.uk

LONDON WELSH MALE VOICE CHOIR
Musical Director: Dr. Haydn James.
Accompanist: Annabel Thwaites
17 September  St Anthony’s Church, White Plains, NY, USA
21 September  Regis College, Weston, Mass. USA
18 October  Royal Albert Hall, London
1 November  Leatherhead Theatre, Surrey
Choir rehearsals are held from 7.30 – 9.30 every Thursday evening at the London Welsh Centre, 157, Gray’s Inn Road. All visitors and potential new choristers are always welcome.
For more information, please see our up-to-date website at: www.londonwelshmvc.org

LONDON WELSH RUGBY MALE VOICE CHOIR
Musical Director: Michael Wyn Jones.
Accompanist: Mari Williams
2 August  Keith Roberts Memorial Concert, Bedford RFC
9 August  Wedding in Nykoping, Sweden.
4 October  Brecon Cathedral with Talgarth Male Choir
15 November  Concert at All Saints Church, Leavesden, Watford.

LONDON BRANCH OF THE WELSH FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES
4 October  Madge Dresser: Migration to Bristol
Please note new Venue: Meetings are now held at the Family History Centre 64-68, Exhibition Road, Kensington, London SW7, at 2pm. Anyone with an interest in Welsh family history is very welcome to join us.
Further details from the Secretary, Anne Jones, on 0208 925 4000, e-mail annee.jones@ntlworld.com.

WALES IN LONDON
Chairman: Robert John
17 September  Gerald Davies and John Taylor at the Arts Club, Dover Street, held in conjunction with London Welsh Rugby Club.
28 October  Dennis O’Neill and his International Academy of Voice. Dennis and his singers perform for us
For up-to-date details of functions, consult our website: www.walesinlondon.com
Email contact: bridget.robinson@rllj.com

ANRHYDEDUS GYMETHAS Y CYMMRODORION
President: Prys Morgan, DL, MA, DPhil, FSA, FRHistS
4 Awst  am 1.00 o’r gloch
Pabell y Gymdeithasau, Ar Faes Yr Eisteddfod, Genedlaethol, Caerdydd.
“Tiger Bay a Diwylliant Cymraeg”
Daribeth gan Dr Simon Brooks, Priysgol Caerdydd gyda Professor Prys Morgan yn y gadair.
10 September  “Ports,Resorts and Recreational Space, the Seashore, dock building and Urban Parks Movement in a British Coastal Town”
A lecture by Dr Louise Miskell, Swansea University with Peter Jeffreys in the chair.
16 October  “The Angel in the House: Rachel Thomas, Sian Phillips and the on-screen embodiment of the Welsh Mam”,
A lecture by Dr Gwennon Ffrancon, Swansea University with Rhian Medi Roberts in the chair.
Except where indicated, lectures are delivered at 6.30 pm at the British Academy, 10, Carlton House Terrace London SW1. Further and up-to-date information on www.cymmrodorion1751.org.uk or from Jon Parry, Hon. Secretary, 30, Eastcastle Street, London.
W1W 8DJ

LONDON WELSH CHORALE
Musical Director: Dr. Kenneth Bowen
13 December  Christmas Summer Concert.
Handel’s Messiah
St Paul’s Church, Knightsbridge.
Wilton Place, London SW1X 8SH
Choir rehearsals are held from 7.30 – 9.30 pm every Tuesday at the London Welsh Centre. For more information, or if you are interested in joining the choir please see our Website: www.londonwelshchorale.org.uk or e-mail: info@londonwelshchorale.org.uk
The London Welsh Camerata, drawn from the main Chorale membership, is a small group performing regularly at weddings, and special occasions of all kinds. If you would like to find out more about the Camerata, to discuss repertoire, or to make a booking, please contact Rhiannon Hughes: Camerata@londonwelshchorale.org.uk
Who did what, and where

Huw Edwards –
President elect London Welsh Trust

Lord Morris – to whom the LWT is indebted for 7 years of active Presidency

Members of the Welsh Classes celebrate at the end of year party at the Centre

Congratulations to our Young Singer of the Year, Natalya Romaniv, who has been selected to represent Wales in the 2009 Cardiff Singer of the World Competition

Wah Nei marries Steffan Jones in Hong Kong. Steffan is the son of Gareth (LWMVC) and Mair, and both are very active members of Slough Welsh Society

Married at her home in Northern Ireland was Rebekha Coffey and Danny Williams - Danny is the son of David (LWMVC) and Cherris Williams.

The Quiz night at the Centre

A tough question at the Quiz night

What have we here? Joan Sellick and Russell Jones at the Tower Bridge Experience with the London Welsh Forum
A particular plus of Welsh National Opera's summer season is the return of Richard Jones' production of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*.

The title roles are sung by Rebecca Evans in sparkling form as Gretel and Cora Burggraaf with a wholly convincing Hansel. Also memorable is Graham Clark's performance as the Witch.

This is a surrealistic and dreamlike production which weaves its way from dark and ominous to virtual slapstick with ease. It had these qualities when first premiered some ten years ago and it retains its appeal today.

What is particularly notable about this revival is the assured handling of score, sets and timing. WNO is clearly very comfortable with the production and performs it with aplomb. This is a 'slick' and thoroughly enjoyable offering.

One of two concert pieces also rates as a highlight with the premier of *Carbon 12*, a work commissioned by and for Welsh National Opera.

The piece, written by Belize-born Errollyn Wallen with libretto by John Binias, captures the contradictions implicit in the equivocal legacy of coal in the South Wales valleys.

The leading roles of John Jones and Bronwen Jones are ably sung by Jason Howard and Alwyn Mellor. The return to the WNO stage by Merthyr Tydfil's internationally acclaimed Jason Howard is particularly welcome and the part provides him with a perfect role. John ‘the bookcase’ Jones is a Dylanesque Welsh valley ‘everyman’ who should be assured a place in the literary pantheon of Wales.

The production is well served by a huge choral presence with the WNO Chorus ably supported by the Risca Male Choir and a 62-strong Carbon 12 Ladies Community Choir recruited from the Merthyr area.

*Carbon 12* is performed along with Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* for an evening not to be missed.

A new production of Verdi’s spectacular *Aida* is also welcome and Zvetelina Vassileva brings special vocal qualities to the title role. Dennis O’Neill sings Radames with another virtuoso display of the conducting skills of Carlo Rizzi.

This is a clever production although the historical mix of costumes requires some mental adjustment. The Millennium Centre stage can accommodate virtually any production, but the scale of Verdi's extravaganza would challenge any venue, particularly with the grand procession including the large Aida community Choir formed for the production.

The tiered stage devised by Yannis Thavoris, however, accommodates the grand entrance into Thebes very effectively. This is another production to enjoy.

The final summer production is *An Evening of Rossini* conducted by Carlos Rizzi. An anticipated highlight of what proved to be an excellent evening was former Cardiff Singer of the World winner Katarina Karnéus singing the role of Teti from *Le nozze di Teti, e di Peleo*. She was, however indisposed for the opening performance and the role was very ably sung by the excellent Caryl Hughes, a former recipient of an S4C scholarship for developing talent.

Caryl will certainly be one to watch for in future. For the present, all of the offerings of the summer season are well worth booking.
What’s Occurring?
It’s a quiz night victory!

Fourteen teams packed the London Welsh Centre bar for the Quiz night organised by the Welsh Learners.

A heady combination of cerebral activity and liquid inspiration saw What’s Occurin’ just pip Plaid Camberwell to the cash first prize. Special mention must go to The Twps, 3 Hwntws and a Gog, and Here for the Beer, for their names if not for their scores.

The other thirteen teams were very grateful to the Bar Baristos for their broad shoulders and strength in holding up the final score table. The top raffle prize was a copy of the Encyclopedia of Wales kindly donated by University of Wales Press.

The buffet provided as part of the tickets price was an absolute feast and all proceeds from the evening went to the Association.

WHAT’S ON AND WHERE

Interested in artists from Wales performing across a wide range of genres? Here are some dates for your diaries

August
2 - 7.30 Man band 40th anniversary tour - Phil Ryan, Martin Ace, Bob Richards, George Jones, Josh Ace - Boom Boom Club, Sutton Utd FC, Gander Green La, Sutton SM1 2EY
2 - Rod Thomas at The Albion, 121 Hammersmith Road W14
3 - Rod Thomas at Innocent Village Fete, in Regents Park
7 - BenSem at The Bedford (Solo)
22-25 - Gŵyl y Faenol - Brynfest! www.brynfest.com/
23 - Manic Street Preachers at Reading Festival

September
13 - Bryn Terfel - Last night of the proms
www.terfeliaid.co.uk/phpBB2/
www.bbc.co.uk/proms/2008/whatson/1309.html
15 - Bryn Terfel releases new CD: First Love: Songs from the British Isles www.play.com/Music/CD/4/-/5889164/-/product.htm (£8.95 advance orders)
18 - Al Lewis at The Acoustic Lounge, Clapham

October
8 - The Automatic at the Scala, Pentonville Rod, KX
28-30, 1-2 November Music Theatre Wales, a gripping new opera For You written by composer Michael Berkeley and novelist Ian McEwan. It explores the venemous sexual jealousy aroused in the comfortable, middle class household of a charismatic but ageing composer by a woman prepared to go to any lengths in the name of love… at Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House

November
4 - Funeral for a Friend at the Forum, 9-11 Highgate Rd NW5
15 Celtish at Landmark Arts Centre, Teddington
26 for one week RSPB Cymru and Richard Corbett (www.richardcorbett.biz), a Monmouthshire based artist, put on an art exhibition at the Smithfield Gallery. This is Richards artistic response to the nature of Newport Wetlands, a reserve site opened by RSPB Cymru in March of this year.

December
7 – 6.30 - Bryn Terfel with the RPO: Songs and carols to celebrate Christmas at the indigO2 (next to the O2 arena) Millennium Way SE10 0AX Twib - Jiwbii ( North Greenwich sta. [zone 2] )
Tickets Now Booking £8 - £100 www.theindigo2.co.uk hotline: 0844 844 0002
27 - Man band - Martin Ace, Bob Richards, George Jones, Josh Ace a Phil Ryan celebrate 40th anniversary at the 100 Club, 100 Oxford St Now Booking.
Dylan’s daughter takes centre stage – and it’s all her own work!

Aeronwy Thomas is very busy. She has recently completed a tour of the USA. Since returning she has been in constant demand from the media. Why this sudden interest?

The clue is in her surname. She is the daughter of one of Wales’ most beloved sons, Dylan Thomas. The release of the major new film The Edge of Love has brought Dylan’s life and work to a wider audience than ever before.

On the whole Aeronwy, 65, is pleased with the film. Although some facts have been distorted, as an artist herself she appreciates such use of dramatic licence. More importantly she feels the film has captured (albeit in a “utopian” way) the essence of her parents’ relationship, and in particular “a real understanding of the fun drinkers have – they may pay a price but they have a lot of fun on the way”.

Her main regret is that her help in promoting the film has left little time for her own work. Aeronwy, who lives in South West London - away from Wales where she spent her childhood - has written and published poetry and prose for 30 years now. She finds that “boredom and routine” are essential for her to be able to write anything, and both have been in short supply recently!

Inevitably, in producing her own writing Aeronwy has had to confront the enormity of her father’s influence and fame, although she did not in fact grow up in the shadow of his work. Her father died when she was only 10 years old.

She was educated in Sicily and worked in Italy until she was 30. She recalls that he would read nursery rhymes to her – he loved the sense of metre and the surrealism, both so characteristic of his work – but not his own poems. Had he lived longer she has little doubt that would have changed: “he would always share with you what interested him”.

Having trained as an actress Aeronwy was asked to give readings of Dylan’s work. Until the mid 1970s however she had written none of her own. This all changed when a British poet (Brian Walters) encouraged her to try.

She did so, conscious of wanting to develop her own voice, distinct from Dylan’s. An early influence was Buddhist philosophy. She feels her style is less “rhetorical” than her father’s – her language naturally simpler and less ornate.

To date Aeronwy has published four collections of poetry Later than Laugharne (Celtion, Wales 1976), Poems and Memories (Pedrini, Turin 1987), Rooks and Poems (Poetry Monthly Press 2004) and Burning Bridges (Cross-Cultural Communications 2008) and two of prose Christmas and Other Memories (Amwy Press 1980), re-released in 2006 by Merton Books with additional material as A Daughter Remembers Dylan.

Her work has some autobiographical elements, but she is careful not to use her family connection to promote it, wanting it to be judged on its own terms. During her recent tour of the USA conducting readings and workshops based on her own and her father’s work it was received with great enthusiasm: “people say to me, “I loved your father’s work and I loved yours just as much”, and though there may be some flattery there must be an element of truth in what they say”.

Excitingly Aeronwy should soon have more books in print: she has recently signed a deal to publish her memoirs (which will surely be eagerly awaited, especially given the new interest in the Dylan Thomas story generated by the new film). She also has a great deal of recent poetry ready for publication.

Copies of Aeronwy Thomas’ latest book Burning Bridges can be obtained from Cross-Cultural Communications (www.cross-culturalcommunications.com)

Matthew Holt
To begin at the beginning…

At the invitation of the Tricycle Theatre, Kilburn, I went to see The London Theatre Company’s excellent production of “Under Milk Wood” by Dylan Thomas. Let me first recommend the Tricycle Theatre itself. It is the epitome of what a small community-based theatre should be. Intimate, yet big enough to be able to deliver top-class productions with “star” names.

The star of this particular evening was Philip Madoc, playing, of course, “First Voice”. From the opening line, “To begin at the beginning” his sonorous voice (once described by a famous critic as “The Voice of God”) stamped an authority on the whole play, taking us quickly and convincingly to the shadow of Llareggub Hill, that “mystic tumulus”, to share the lives of Dylan’s amazing characters.

Director Malcolm Taylor kept it simple with minimal sound and lighting effects. This seemed to be absolutely the correct approach to this ensemble piece which, after all, was conceived as a “play for voices”. A cast of 5 men and 3 women played the forty + characters with skill and dexterity.

“The “Voice of the Guidebook” was played by David Jason (a pre-recorded reading). Each was perfectly cast but since space does not permit me the luxury of commenting on individual performances, I shall single out only the indomitable octogenarian, Howell Evans (“Captain Cat”, “Rev Eli Jenkins” “Mr Pugh” and others).

His meticulous portrayal of Mr Pugh (the schoolmaster who dreams of poisoning his wife) was the best I’ve seen and brought laughter to everyone in the theatre - including the cast! I even noticed one or two of the critics permitting themselves a smile.

John Edwards

On the ‘Edge of Love’ – how Matthew Rhys would never have been Dylan Thomas, if it hadn’t been for the London Welsh…

The film “Edge of Love” is based on the relationship between Dylan Thomas, his wife Caitlin and his childhood sweetheart Vera.

The part of Dylan Thomas is played by Welsh screen heartthrob Matthew Rhys.

So what is this to do with the London Welsh you say? His parents, Helen and Glyndwr Evans came to London from Machynlleth and Pembrokeshire respectively, to teach and they met - where?

Where indeed but at the London Welsh Centre which acted as an informal dating agency for so many couples in the fifties and sixties.

Helen and Glyn met in the youth choir in Grays Inn Road.

Glyn is a member of the Ardwyn Singers from Cardiff who sang at the London Welsh Centre St David’s Day concert last February.

Followers of Eisteddfod y Plant may recognise Matthew as a young drama student from RADA who came to adjudicate the recitation competitions some 15 years ago.

The following year he repeated his appearance and brought along his closest friend – Ioan Gruffydd – who was persuaded to adjudicate the folk singing as he had won prizes at the National Eisteddfod.

What would the odds be of getting those two together for the Childrens Eisteddfod in 2009?- all the way from Los Angeles!!

Eirlys Bebb

Having a ball – in the running, and cycling, for charity

Claire Jones ran 10k in less than hour to raise money for the Wellbeing of Women charity. She raised over £3,000 and with donations still coming in, the figure could rise closer to £3,500.

The Red Dragon Ball to be held on October 4 at the Porchester Halls (see details on page 8) promises to be a very special night. It is being organised by Eleri Cossllett to raise money for a number of charities and enterprises close to her heart.

Among the beneficiaries will be the London Welsh Trust and the London Welsh School. If you would like more details please contact Eleri at enquiries@international-property-finders.com or on her mobile 07881 813285

Alex Meredith, who sings for the London Welsh Gwalia is cycling to Kazakhstan this summer to raise money for two charities. One is SOS Children’s Villages, a charity designed to help under privileged children in Kazakhstan; the other is for SWLLC, a charity to help keep open Legal Advice Centres following cuts in government funding. Alex is an evening adviser at Morden Legal Advice Centre. You can sponsor Alex at his website www.tourdekaz.com

Philip Madoc with Dylan Thomas’s daughter, Aeronwy Thomas-Ellis, relaxing at the press evening
Striking railwaymen, small but perfectly formed audiences and stunning scenery – Chorale goes up country!

In May a large contingent from the Chorale set off on tour to Zurich and Lucerne. Some travelled by air, some by train, and braving the perils of Terminal 5 and striking French railwaymen we all reached our Swiss destination safely.

We performed two concerts to small (but as they say perfectly formed) and enthusiastic audiences. In time honoured fashion we took a few coals to Newcastle, singing three Swiss items including the Swiss national anthem, as well as an eclectic selection of repertoire pieces.

We were particularly pleased to be accompanied - in both senses of the word - on this tour by Jenny Trew, who not only played the accompaniments with her usual finesse, but also treated us to a lovely performance of a Chopin Nocturne. One of the benefits of performing two concerts was to get a double helping of Chopin!

Some of our time was taken up with concerts and rehearsals, but we also managed to pack in a range of sightseeing, shopping, boat trips, eating and drinking. The weather was kind, and the more energetic of us climbed mountains and rowed boats on Lake Lucerne, while others took things more easily wandering through art galleries and churches, or just sitting in lakeside restaurants and cafes.

The invigorating Swiss air, the stunning scenery and the general sense of bonhomie all contributed to a splendid trip, and we are most grateful to Barrie Lloyd and others who helped in the organisation. Thanks also, as ever, to Kenneth Bowen and Jenny Trew for their sterling efforts on our behalf.

A week later the small chapel at Gray’s Inn rang to the sound of the Chorale accompanied on the organ by Edward Kemp-Luck, including such rafter-raisers as Handel’s Zadok the Priest, and a version of Cwm Rhonda with a splendid organ accompaniment composed and played by resident organist Christopher Bowers-Broadbent. We were amply rewarded for our efforts with a delicious supper following the concert.

Do join us on 26 July for the second of our Silver Anniversary celebration concerts when we will be singing Mendelssohn’s Elijah at the Royal Academy of Music.

Kate Burton

Gwalia Male Voice Choir

From Cadogan Hall to Appledore – Gwalia hits the high notes

Our first engagement after the Easter holiday was the joint concert with the LWMVC and London Welsh Chorale at Cadogan Hall on 19 April.

This was reported on separately in the last issue, but suffice to say the Gwalia choir thoroughly enjoyed singing at such a prestigious venue. It was a very great pleasure to sing with the LWMVC and Chorale choirs and many thanks to their respective conductors and accompanists.

Many thanks also of course to all the people who helped organise this very successful concert.

Our next engagement was in the beautiful village of Appledore in Kent, where we sang at the St. Peter and St. Paul Church on 31 May. Our guest soloist on this occasion was the soprano Mari-Ffion Williams, a former winner of the “Young Welsh Singer of the Year”.

Mari-Ffion sang a mixture of operatic and light-hearted numbers, including a duet with our top tenor Ted Sellick which was “All I ask of you” from the “Phantom of the Opera”.

Ted sang one solo which was the spiritual – “No-one knows the trouble I’ve seen”. The choir sang its usual mixture of traditional Welsh hymns and folk songs, intermixed with a few upbeat numbers such as “Yellow Bird” – a calypso – and “The Rhythm of Life” from “Sweet Charity”.

The audience were very appreciative and it was a thoroughly enjoyable day out.

June 14 saw the Gwalia performing at a civil wedding at Shoreditch Town Hall. The bride – Lisa James – is the niece of one of our choristers – Ifor James.

The choir followed its usual formula of singing several numbers before the ceremony started. We sang “Calon Lân” as the bride walked up the aisle and “The Rose” as she left. After the ceremony, we sang several upbeat numbers including “Nothing Like a Dame” and “Cwm Rhondda”. The wedding guests were very appreciative and it was another thoroughly enjoyable occasion.

For details of our forthcoming engagements over the next few months, please see our website at:
www.gwaliamalevoicechoir.org.uk.

David Hurlbut
Druid Director is keeping the primitive alive – despite heading for retirement

Sian Busby talks to Dr Kenneth Bowen, Musical Director of the London Welsh Chorale

Few people have done as much for Welsh music in London as Dr. Kenneth Bowen, Musical Director of the London Welsh Chorale since 1983. A distinguished and critically acclaimed operatic tenor, he has performed all over the world, while remaining avowedly proud of his Welsh roots.

He has served as Patron of the Welsh Music Guild, as Vice-President of the Honourable Society of Cymrodirion, is a Council Member of British Youth Opera and a former chairman of the Association of Teachers of Singing. He is a Druid member of the Gorsedd of Bards at the National Eisteddfod and is a keen supporter of the London Welsh Association.

His outstanding singing career, he says with typical unpretentiousness, “mixed it” between oratorio and opera ranging from Monteverdi to Henze. He gave over 200 performances of Elgar’s Dream of Gerontius – a role with which he is particularly associated - and his interpretations of Handel were critically acclaimed. He is equally, and justifiably, proud of the rich legacy of Welsh music which he has imparted to members past and present of the LWC over the last 25 years.

Born in Llanelli, Dr. Bowen studied at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, before winning a choral scholarship to St. John’s College, Cambridge – renowned for its choir. He was still at Cambridge when, in 1956, he sang Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky’s The Rake’s Progress and was the first to sing the role in London, at Sadler’s Wells, a year later. Highlights of a remarkable career include Janacek’s Giagolithic Mass – “a very fine work” – and Vaughan Williams’s On Wenlock Edge. A sensitive, intelligent interpreter, his warm, radiant voice went all the way up to high D in its prime and possessed an exceptional beauty of tone.

Kenneth has worked with many eminent conductors, including Sir Malcolm Sargent, Stokowski and Pierre Boulez, and the singer Dame Janet Baker among others, but in the 1990s he retired from performing to dedicate himself to teaching a new generation of world-class singers. He was a Professor of Singing at the Royal Academy of Music for thirty years and for a time was Head of Voice Studies.

When he became conductor of what was then known as the London Welsh Trust Choir, in February 1983, Dr. Bowen inherited a corps of about a dozen singers with only one tenor. “Mercifully, we’ve come a long way since then,” he says. Today the Chorale has grown to as many as 65 singers. As with most choirs, tenors are often in short supply, but he is quick to point out that “there are more Welsh than English tenors, so we’ve not done too badly.”

The Chorale developed a wide and challenging repertoire in the Bowen years: the traditional fare of Bach and Handel and rarely performed pieces, such as Coleridge-Taylor’s Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast. But it is the Welsh music - both old and new – which gives the choir its unique identity. Recent additions include Geraint Lewis’s setting of Dylan Thomas’s In My Craft or Sullen Art, and William Mathias’s St David’s Service (Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis). Cecilia MacDowell has been invited to compose a setting of Welsh hymn tunes for the Chorale to be premiered next year.

As Dr. Bowen says: “A lot of the stuff we do – what I call the primitive music - such as Christmas Williams’s Dyn a Aned o Wraig and Dan Jones’s Gwêl Uwchlaw Cymylau Amser – is not getting done anywhere now, except by us. Not even in Wales.” This is the music with which Kenneth was brought up, and which he has done so much to keep alive.

At the end of this year Dr. Bowen will be retiring as the Chorale’s Musical Director. It is hoped that the deep bond that exists between him and us will not be severed, and that we will continue to benefit from his great talent and the powerful sense of his Welsh musical heritage for a long time to come. Quite simply, there would be no LWC without Ken: we owe it to him to take his legacy forward into the future.

Sian Busby
National Eisteddfod Memorial prize supported with Scholarship

FA Cup Final for Haydn as choir plays cathedrals and Shackleford ‘open air’

The London Welsh Male Voice Choir will again be donating a £500 scholarship in support of the Osborne Roberts Memorial Prize – the champion soloist under 25 years of age - at the National Eisteddfod in Cardiff this month. The Choir is proud to be associated with such a prestigious competition.

The cathedrals of Worcester and Peterborough were packed to the gunnels for the Choir's concert performances in May and June respectively. The guest soloists were Sian James (Harp/vocal) and Adele O'Neill (soprano), and the Choir soloist was Geraint Lewis. Haydn James has conducted and Annabel Thwaite accompanied the Choir at all its public engagements in recent months.

Cardiff City's appearance at the FA Cup Final resulted in Haydn James being asked to conduct the occasion at Wembly. However, it clashed with the Choir's concert at Worcester and contingency plans had to be implemented, resulting in Gren Gutteridge conducting the rehearsal and standing by to conduct the start of the concert. However, with no traffic problems Haydn got to Worcester with ample time to spare.

The Choir's concert in the open air at Shackleford's Aldro School, near Guildford, in July was a success, despite the poor weather in the preceding days. After picnicking before the concert the audience stayed the course of the concert despite a downpour in the second half.

This was the Choir's first appearance at this prestigious annual event organised by Gwilym James (from Maesteg) in aid of St Luke's Cancer Fund, Royal Surrey Hospital and Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice. Other participants were the Regimental Band Of The Royal Welsh, Anthony Stuart Lloyd (baritone) and Amanda Roccoft (soprano), with Mai Davies (BBC Wales) as compère.

Since late May, tickets for the London Welsh Festival of Male Voice Choirs at the Royal Albert Hall on 18 October, 2008, have been ‘sold out’. If you wish to join the queue for ‘returns’, please contact C. Jones, Ticket Secretary, London Welsh Festival Tickets, P.O. Box 101, London SW1V 3XX, using (if possible) the ticket application form which may be printed from the following web address http://londonwelshmvc.org/PUBLICAPPfinal2008.pdf.

In September choristers will again visit the USA with concerts planned for New York State and Boston. Full details of the Choir's public concerts for the next few months are given on page 4.

Welsh Choirs on TV

Best wishes to old friends Only Men Aloud who are competing in BBC television’s choral competition ‘Last Choir Standing'. Congratulations also to Ysgol Glanaethwy on their progress in the competition.
Note of excitement – as Cymmrodorion honour Archbishop of Canterbury

Anyone passing could not have failed to note a sense of excitement amongst the Members of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion congregating outside Lambeth Palace on 15 April.

It was a real treat to be able to enjoy the presentation of the Cymmrodorion Medal to The Most Reverend, the Right Honourable Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury in the Guard Room at the Palace itself.

Once inside, we were delighted to find the Archbishop extending a personal and informal welcome to everyone on arrival, and then circulating sociably with members of his family during refreshments prior to the presentation itself. The Archbishop was introduced by the Hon Sir R.J.L.Thomas, who shared some anecdotes from when he and the Archbishop had been neighbours as children, and described Dr Williams’ illustrious career from that point. Then the President of the Society, Professor Prys Morgan, presented the Medal to Dr Rowan Williams. In his address, the Archbishop said that he would “…accept the honour on behalf of Welsh Christians and especially Welsh Anglicans who have … held to and spoken for that depth and range of national inheritance which a proper awareness of the Christian tradition brings”

It was a memorable and thoroughly enjoyable event.

Details of the next meetings of the Society can be found on the website www.cymmrodorion1751.org.uk All welcome.

Gwenda Sippings

Sculpture by Helen Sinclair
An exhibition of painting and sculpture by two artists from Wales

at The Arndean Gallery, 23 Cork St., London W1S 3NJ
13 – 18 October 2008 : 10.00am – 6.00pm

Please email or ‘phone for private view details or for brochure/cd of work and other exhibiting details

Rhossili Farmhouse, Rhossili, Swansea SA3 1PL, tel. 01792 390798
helen@sculptureculture.co.uk or terry@sculptureculture.co.uk
www.sculptureculture.co.uk and www.terryryall.com

Painting by Terry Ryall

Red Shore
Idwal Jones

Yn enedigol o Lanbedr Pont Steffen cafodd Idwal Jones ei addysg yn Llanbed, Tregaron a Choleg yr Drindod, Caerfyrddin ble cafodd hyfforddiad gofynnwr a gyfra bywyd fel athro ysgol. Aeth o’r Coleg i ymchwil yr Llundain yn 1952 ac i’w swydd gyfraniad yng Ngfwrdd yr Ymdddiriws, rhwng 1961 a 1970 ym mynyddoedd ac i’w swydd gyfraniad yng Ngfwrdd yr Ymddiriaeth. Idwal Jones cafodd ei adysgu a’i adadwy fel athro ysgol i’w phen y 1971.


Noel Davies

Noel Davies was a conductor at English National Opera from the 1970s until 2002, was born in London on January 1 1945; but brought up in Abergavenny. He studied at the R oyal College of Music, where his tutors included Sir Adrian Boult and James Lockhart, and won the Michael M udie award for his opera conducting in 1966, and joined Sadler’s Wells Opera.

During his time with the ENO he frequently attended the LW Centre with the Company for rehearsals, and was Musical Director of the London Welsh Festival Choir for its Royal Festival Hall concerts from 1974-77 and 1980-83. During this time the choir’s performances included Mendelssohn’s Elijah, The Verdi Requiem, and Handel’s Messiah and Judas Maccabaeus. Noel Davies also conducted the London Welsh Festival of Male Voice Choirs in 1980.

In a Memorial Concert for him at St M artin’s-in-the-Fields on 7 July, 2008, tributes were paid by Edward Gardner, Richard Hickox, Sir Charles Mackerras, Dame Janet Baker and, on behalf of Noel’s family, Gareth Griggs. The ENO, conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, sang Mozart’s Requiem in D minor, with a galaxy of international operatic stars singing the solo/quartet parts.

Morfudd Jenkins

Ganwyd Morfudd Jenkins yn ferch hynaf a Lillie Thomas, Nant, Dollis Hill, yn 1915. Yn dilyn addysg gynradd y wyldeled yn ymddiriaeth. Yn 1950. Bu bwôn yn Harrow nes i Idris, ymdddeol ac yna wydym yn ôl i her gartref yn Dollis Hill. Wedi marwolaeth ei anwyl bwôn, wedi gwâd ei byw ym haro t y Capel yn South Harrow.

Trwy gydol ei byw, wedd roedd Morfudd Jenkins yn gysylltiedig ac Annibyniaeth, ym arbenig y Llundain. Magwŷd hi a daeth yn aelod yn y Tabernacle Crossing, ble roedd ei thad yn yr ysgrifennwydd. Yr oedd J. R. yn dylonwadol ac ym llyfr Eglwys Harrow yn 1937, ac yr oedd Morfudd Rhwyd wedi bresennol pan agorwyd y Capel yn 1949. Roedd yn briod a gweinidog Harrow o 1950-1965 a phan dcychwilodd gwasaenaethol fel diacon o 1981. Bu’n ysgrifennwydd Cyfundefn Llundain am 34 o flynyddoedd. Cyflawnodd y swydd fel ddifflun yd ga’r ddwydd ymwyd mwyaf a’r manylder eithaf a gyfraniad mawr y wrrth yr organ a bu’n organydd ac dros ddeugain mewn mewn ef a bob amser.

Yn aelod o Gôr M eibion H am m ersmith ac am flynyddoedd românig, bu’n aelod am lw g o Eglwys Annibynnol G ym raeg, ac wedi priodi, ac fe allai bod yr ysgrifennwydd. Yr oedd Morfudd yn gysylltiedig ac Annibyniaeth, yr arbenig y Llundain. Magwŷd hi a daeth yn aelod yn y Tabernacle Crossing, ble roedd ei thad yn yr ysgrifennwydd. Yr oedd J. R. yn dylonwadol ac ym llyfr Eglwys Harrow yn 1937, ac yr oedd Morfudd Rhwyd wedi bresennol pan agorwyd y Capel yn 1949. Roedd yn briod a gweinidog Harrow o 1950-1965 a phan dychwilodd gwasaenaethol fel diacon o 1981. Bu’n ysgrifennwydd Cyfundefn Llundain am 34 o flynyddoedd. Cyflawnodd y swydd fel ddifflun yd ga’r ddwydd ymwyd mwyaf a’r manylder eithaf a gyfraniad mawr y wrrth yr organ a bu’n organydd ac dros ddeugain mewn mewn ef a bob amser.

Yn ei gwâit” (E lfed)

D. Gwyllfa Evans

8 November 9:00 – 5.30

cwrs dwys undyyd

Intensive one-day Welsh course

at the London Welsh Centre

www.anoeth.demon.co.uk/pdc.html

or 020 7923 0302

Cymraeg yn y Ganolfan Welsh Language Classes 2008-2009

Classes at 3 levels will run on Thursday evenings in the Centre, starting on 25 September 2008.

There will be 10 sessions in each of 3 terms.

Enrolment is now open

Enrol by post, by visiting the Centre Office (9-5), or at the Enrolment evening on 18 September from 7pm. More information - www.cymryllundain.org.uk / www.londonwelsh.org.uk

D. Gwyllfa Evans
The Library of Wales series continues with four exciting new titles coming soon:

The Heyday in the Blood
by Geraint Goodwin

Alone to the Alone
by Gwyn Thomas

A Rope of Vines – Journal from a Greek Island
by Brenda Chamberlain

The Caves of Alienation
by Stewart Evans

For details of the whole Library of Wales series visit www.libraryofwales.org

All of these books are available from gwales.com
Allen Chilten passes to Jon Mills v Rotherham  
Photo by Dave Jackson

Moving back to Wales?

Beautiful Cardiff Victorian town house for sale in sought-after Pontcanna

Extra large master bedroom, double second bedroom and single third bedroom. Large bathroom with bath, power shower (purpose built shower unit) and double basins. Large living room with lovely working fireplace and original Victorian ceilings. Spacious dining room with Welsh slate floor and utility room off. Kitchen overlooking garden. Near restaurants and cafes, the Stadium, the Castle arboretum, river walks and enormous parks.

£315,000.  
For further information please call 029 2037 3626

Comedy Club

In the Bar of the  
London Welsh Centre  
Third Friday of the month

19 September opening night,  
7.30 for 8.00 till late  
17 October 7.30 till late  
21 November 7.30 till late

Big Screen

In the Bar of the  
London Welsh Centre  
Rugby Internationals

Saturday 8 November 2.30 pm  
Wales v South Africa

Friday 14 November 7.15 pm  
Wales v Canada

Saturday 22 November 5.15 pm  
Wales v New Zealand

London Welsh Fixture List Season 2008/09

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