

Benjamin Phillip (Ben) Jones

Founder Member & Accompanist 1924 — 1950



Although there seems very little knowledge of the activities of the co-founder of the choir, Emlyn Drew, it must be said, that Ben was instrumental in creating this magnificent organisation. Having worked so hard in establishing it in the first instance, he was appointed their first ever accompanist in May 1924.

Early concert programmes indicate that he was awarded a gold medal, presented by the Royal Academy of Music, held in the archives of the choir, are two certificates also awarded by the Royal Academy of Music. He certainly was a fine pianist, and accompanied many “top-line” soloists at the choir’s Annual Concerts.

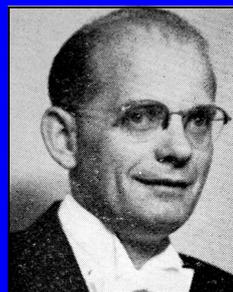
His great knowledge of music certainly enhanced the quality and performance of this developing organisation, and combined with the charisma of Arthur Duggan, established it as one of Wales foremost choir's.

In 1950 he had a disagreement with Arthur Duggan about the readiness of the choir for a major competition, and resigned his position. The two never again shared a platform until 1964, when the then Musical Director Glynne Jones, invited them to conduct, and accompany the choir in one work at the 40th Anniversary Concert.

A very emotional night for those who were there, particularly, because the choice of music was the much loved hymn tune composed by G.H. Jones, school teacher, musician, and bard “*Llef*”, (*Deus Salutis*). An arrangement by Mansel Thomas was first performed by Pendyrus and dedicated by the composer to the memory of Dilys, Ben’s wife who died tragically in child birth. Mansel Thomas was a personal friend of Ben Jones.

Glan Lewis

Accompanist 1951-1960 Sub Conductor 1958-1960 Musical Director 1960 — 1962



Glan Lewis accepted an invitation to become accompanist to Pendyrus in 1951 taking over from Bryan Davies who had briefly filled the breach after the retirement of Ben Jones in 1950. Glan was an accomplished musician having been involved with other Rhondda choir's. Immediately before arriving at Pendyrus he was accompanist to Cymmer Pioneer Glee Men, and as an accompanist, perhaps this was his greatest contribution to choral singing. Taking on the baton from Arthur Duggan was always going to be a difficult task, and not possessing the charisma, flair, and showmanship of his predecessor he was at a disadvantage. He directed just two annual concerts, but perhaps his biggest achievement was to prepare the choir for two performances of the Messiah, in 1959 and 1960 when Pendyrus provided the male part of what is traditionally a mixed choral oratorio. Joining them were, Maerdy Choral Society, and Pontypridd Shelly Singers. Both concerts were staged at London’s Festival Hall which was part of the London Welsh Society’s Autumn Festival. The event was a very significant part of the choir's concert performances in those two years, so much so a train was chartered to convey the three choirs and their supporters to London. When returning from the 1960 concert, because of heavy and persistent rain which fell continuously throughout that week-end, the train was unable to proceed beyond Porth Railway Station because of flooding and landslides on the railway line between Porth and Maerdy.

He also directed them at a concert in the Royal Albert Hall London in 1961, which was the London Welsh Society’s St David’s Day Festival.