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# LLANGWM LADIES CHOIR

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W. Grenville Thomas



An excerpt from W. Grenville Thomas' book  
Some Remarkable People of Llangwm and Hook, published in 2018.

# Llangwm Ladies Choir

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*Some Remarkable People of Llangwm and Hook, published in 2018.*

In the 1940s, a widowed lady, well known to the village, returned and took up residence with her son Penry at Nash Villa, Main Street, later the home of (and Post Office run by) Mr Eddie and Mrs Lily Jones. Mrs Lilian Fawcett, the daughter of the Rev. D. M. Pryse, a former minister of Galilee Baptist Chapel, was well-remembered for her considerable musical talent and was prevailed upon to form a choir. Soon ladies from the three places of worship, together with some from nearby villages, came together and so the Llangwm Ladies' Choir was founded. The professionalism of their public appearances soon earned them a positive reputation in the towns and villages of South Pembrokeshire. Their repertoire covered a wide range of secular and popular music including pieces such as "Pipes of Pan", "Bless this House", and many more. The accompanist of the choir was the well known organist of the Methodist Chapel, the quiet, unassuming but very talented Mrs Lizzie Roach, and together with Mrs Fawcett's exuberant personality, they presented a formidable team. They met weekly to practice at Llangwm school, and many a village schoolboy who tried to sabotage these meetings will remember being given a severe reprimand and shaking by a member of the choir!

They were driven to their various venues across the county by choir member and local bus-driver Miss Olwen Morgan. From all accounts, the ladies of the choir were a lively group, always ready for a prank and practical joke. Once when performing at Wolfscastle, the platform collapsed, but the choir continued as though nothing had happened. Another time, after a concert at Albany Chapel, Haverfordwest, some former members remember the whole choir going to the May Fair on the Green, and being treated to rides by Mrs Lizzie Jane Bennett. On another occasion, they were singing at Johnston, and when the then vicar rose to give the usual vote of thanks, he made a disparaging remark about Llangwm, whereupon, the whole choir spontaneously broke into a rendition of a slightly naughty song entitled "The Curate and the Vicar", much to the embarrassment of the Johnston clergyman!

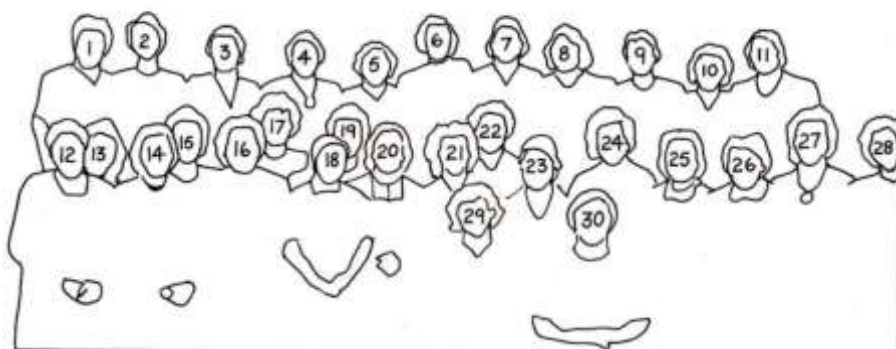
The soloists of the choir were Miss Olwen Morgan (contralto), Mrs Mari Absalom (soprano), duettists Miss Betty Goodridge (later Mrs Dougie Morris) and Miss Dorothy Warlow (Mrs Raymond Palmer). The elocutionist who travelled with the choir was Miss Betty Bennett (Mrs Johnny Davies). They were later joined by more soloists - Mrs Maggie Roach, and her daughter Jeanette who became a professional singer and was a member of the D'Oyly

Carte Opera Company, and Mrs Rona Stephens. Sometimes the choir was augmented by two male soloists – Mr Raymond Palmer and Mr Johnny Jennings.

The choir continued until the early 1950s when Mrs Fawcett remarried a Mr Oliver and left the area. It was fortunate for both the village and the choir that around this time a young man, Mr Ashley Davies, was appointed assistant teacher at Llangwm School. Showing a talent and enthusiasm for music, he was quickly approached to conduct the Ladies Choir. Thus the choir was able to continue until Mr Davies left the village to become Head of Lamphey Primary School, where he later lived in active retirement for many years.

Pictures on next two pages ...

## Llangwm Ladies Choir Late 1940s



### Top

1. Lily Jones, 2. Lily Morgan, 3. Flossie Lewis, 4. Lizzie Jane Bennett, 5. Rhoda Morgan, 6. Cynthia John, 7. Olwen Morgan, 8. Elsie Brock, 9. Sylvie Hitchings, 10. Florrie Morgan, 11. Betty Cale

### Middle

12. Lilian John, 13. Ellen Skyrme, 14. Annie Jacob, 15. Megan Jones, 16. Mavvy Allen, 17. Edith Jones, 18. Clarice Rees, 19. Betty Goodridge, 20. Lizzie Payne, 21. Dorothy Palmer, 22. Maggie Roach, 23. Emily Davies, 24. Viney Hughes, 25. Winnie Jones, 26. 'Mrs Mac' (Mrs McKenzie), 27. Blodwen Gettings, 28. May Prout

### Front

29. Mrs Lilian Fawcett (Musical Director), 30. Mrs Lizzie Roach (Accompanist)

### Llangwm Ladies Choir 1953-4



**Back Row (L to R)** Ria Morris, Shirley Prout, Norma Lewis, Jeanette Roche, Aline Lewis, Pearl Lewis, Ruth Rees, Rona Stephens.

**Third Row (L to R)** Maggie Roach, Evelyn Williams, Lizzie Payne, Sylvia Hitchings, May Prout, Winifred John, Lilian John, Cynthia John, Blodwen Gettings.

**Second Row (L to R)** Lorna Bevan, Flossie Lewis, Ellen Skyrme, Lizzie Jane Bennett, Elsie Brock, Emmy Watkins, Annie Palmer, Lily Jones, Chrissie Davies, Annie Jacob, Lena Palmer.

**Front Row (L to R)** Megan Jones, Betty Bennett, Brenda Vaughan, Emily Davies, Ashley Davies, Lizzie Roach, Gladys England, Doreen Childs, Eliza Jane Churchill.