

August 2004



an extract from "In Tune"

The Quarterly Newsletter from the Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir

The Tenerife Trip.

This year's choir outing took us all the way to Tenerife. Though a lot further than last year's walk to Wales, we got there a lot quicker courtesy of XL Airlines who whisked 54 of us off from Gatwick on 22nd June!

The first thing you notice when you get off the plane is the heat. The air seems to have less oxygen in it. Those of us however who grew up around the steel works in South Wales soon got used to it.

The Choir were the guests of the El Sauzal Council for the week. Allan Sengelow (brother of Norman) and organiser in chief met us at the airport. He quickly got used to choir banter and made us feel extremely welcome right from the off.

Our home for the week was Puerto de la Cruz on the northern part of the island. It wasn't long before we settled into the hotel and various choir members and their partners were out and about scouting for what they could find. They found many wonderful attractions and plenty of shops. One find of note was an English speaking church, the vicar for which was one Reverend David (no not Eli) Jenkins. The concert squad went swiftly into action and before you knew it we were booked to sing at the Sunday morning service. This turned out to be a glorious event and all the ex-pat parishioners made us extremely welcome.

Another find was a bar known as Boca-Boca (I understand this means Mouth-Mouth) set just off the main square. The perfect afterglow / impromptu sing-song spot for a number of reasons. We could attract an audience of strollers as they passed by. It wasn't far to walk back to the hotel! The waitresses were very friendly and pleased to see us there. And of course though not known at the time, the translation of the name of the bar fitted the scene of a large group of people singing their hearts out!

Our first official engagement was at a televised open air concert in El Sauzal. We walked on stage in front of some 2-3000 people, TV lights and cameras. We gave them the action - 3 pieces each of which got rapturous applause. The remainder of the open air show consisted of acrobats, comedians, dancers, a pop band and an elegant beauty pageant parade. The whole show went out live on Spanish TV the following day.

Our second official engagement was at the El Sauzal Auditorium. We were the star attraction, in fact we were the only attraction, and sang to a warm spirited ex-pat audience who enjoyed the concert greatly. Alan compered the evening and at its conclusion an array of different gifts with thanks and good wishes from the people of Oxford to those in El Sauzal were exchanged. The afterglow took us to a tiny bar near the square we had performed in for the TV show. Probably because of the acoustic, the good feelings we all shared at performing so well at the concert and the thought of this fantastic trip coming to a close, it was some said 'the best afterglow they have ever sung in.'

During the week we were also treated to a bus trip around parts of the island which took in the great volcano - El Teide. Alan and his wife Celia were once again the perfect hosts, they knew all the best places to see and kept us informed along the way of what the view from the bus had in store.

Those of us who like to keep fit made full use of the hotel swimming pool and invented a new game - water rugby. It's like ordinary rugby only more difficult because the referee can't see you cheating in the line out and the underwater scrum has to be over in less than a minute to avoid water-filled lungs.

It was a great trip all in all and we were sad it came to an end so soon. Still we can now look forward to and start planning next year's choir outing.

Roger Martin