

Alan Watson 'THE SINGER'

I began singing in public at the age of 9 or 10, which was in 1946/7. St Paul's Methodist Church in High Street, Runcorn, (no longer there), stands out in my memory the most. My church, Camden Methodist in Lowlands Road, Runcorn, (also no longer there), held their Anniversary Services in the bigger church. I remember standing alongside the massive pipe organ and singing my solos, which was an awesome experience.

I sang solos at my junior school in Victoria Road, and then went on to singing lessons with a Mrs Rylance who got me to sing solos at the Runcorn Townswomen's Guild concerts during my early teenage years. My wife-to-be, Blodwin, and I sang with the Runcorn Orpheus Choir for a couple of years when I was aged 16 to 17.

When I was eighteen I joined three other teenagers of a similar age and we formed a harmony group called 'The Kadds' (Keith, Alan, David and Dennis). And we were good! We performed in the Runcorn's *La Scala Ballroom* (ex-Cinema), and we also travelled around Cheshire in a chauffeur driven car to other dancehalls and events. At our zenith we appeared on a BBC show, part of which was broadcast. The newcomers like us, were there for the experience and a possible further appearance to be broadcast. Shortly after this event we began to be called up for National Service; two of us going into the RAF and two into the Army, and that, unfortunately, was the end of 'The Kadds'!

On my return to civilian life I joined a six piece band under Alan Williams leadership. This was followed by a ten piece band which was run by Don Moreman, before taking my first professional job with the Stan Clarke Band at the Scala Ballroom, singing three nights a week, with a wage packet for my troubles.

I also had experience with the Ken Turner Band at the Mecca Dance Hall in Liverpool, 'The Locarno', and appeared at the Grafton Ballroom with the Johnny Hilton Band, which was an eight piece.

After a few years doing cabaret with a Trio called 'Nice & Easy', travelling all over the North of England and down to Stoke on Trent in the South, I did restaurant work with Trio's in Liverpool and Manchester. After this I worked as a compère in clubs around Runcorn and Northwich for almost twenty years.

In my 40's I teamed up with The Freddy Smith Big Band (17 piece), staying with them for about ten years. After parting company with them I joined The Merseyside Big Band, which was also a 17 piece, and have remained with them up to date.

In addition, since my early 40's I have sung in my church many times, along with my wife. We have appeared in many musicals at our church and travelled around the North of England performing them as well.

During 1987, my wife and I went to the USA to represent our church, singing and talking to congregations at churches in Seattle and Los Angeles who supported our church building project with both financial and practical help. We travelled for three weeks, staying with Christians from the churches, and enjoyed some wonderful hospitality.

In recent times I have made two CD's which have been well received, and had a live interview on BBC Radio Merseyside. I have also had tracks from the CD's played on the radio on numerous occasions on BBC Merseyside and GMR. More recently again, I have just released a CD of Worship songs on the Sheer Joy Music label.

I've appeared with The Merseyside Big Band all over Merseyside, the top venue being the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, where I sang on two great occasions, where all the top International artists have appeared, people such as Jack Jones and Vic Damone.

To my great delight a CD and tape that my wife and I made has travelled all around the globe, from Australia to Africa, through USA and Canada, where I sang in a church in Alberta two years

ago. It is also being used on Christian Tape Messages in the UK, and was broadcast on the West Coast of Africa during Christian broadcasts.

In addition I have sung with Terry Duckers Band, with the John Dunbavand Trio, and with the Les Bolger Trio. I appeared in cabaret in Halkadiki, and spent a week in Tunisia in El Kantouhi in the Green Park Hotel lounge. I have also performed for a Summer Season in the lounge of the Royal Clifton at Southport, singing with the house trio.

It's been very pleasing to hear people say how they have been blessed and encouraged by our songs of praise and worship. I have often sung at weddings and funerals, and as long as people want to hear my/our voice/s then we will go on until our voices fail.

2005 marked my fiftieth year as an entertainer.

No doubt there will be many people, bands and events that have slipped my memory, but suffice to say that I have enjoyed every minute singing with the many talented musicians over the years.