

Corby Male Voice Choir “In the Beginning”

At the end of his working life with Tarmac Construction Ltd in Corby, Mr David Fleetwood-Morris (affectionately known as 'Fleet') was nearing his retirement at the end of 1975 and was in discussion with his friend and fellow worker at Tarmac Mr Rowland Lovell as to what he could suggest he might do in his retirement. Rowland 'affectionately known as 'Rowley' suggested he should think about forming a male voice choir. He knew 'Fleet' had attempted this some 25 years earlier without success due to the shift work rotas at the Corby Stewarts & Lloyds Ltd steelworks. 'Rowley' made another offer that if 'Fleet' did form a choir he would take on the necessary secretarial duties involved.

This suggestion was agreed and Rowland put an advert in the local Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph on Friday 16th January 1976 inviting anyone interested in forming a Corby Male Voice Choir to meet in the lounge of the then Strathclyde Hotel in George Street, Corby on Monday 19th January 1976 at 7.30pm.

On the evening of 19th January 1976, the following 18 gentlemen met in the hotel lounge;- Messrs; Danny Campbell, David Charles, Graham Green, Bob Griffiths, Neil Hunter, Keith James, Glyn Jones, Emrys Jones, Tom Love, Rowland Lovell ('Rowley'), David A.F.Morris ('Fleet'), Bill Munro, Mal Prodger, Stan Rowlands, Terry Sheen, Alf Taylor, Barney Thomas and Griff Williams. The meeting agreed to the formation of a Corby MVC and the first rehearsal was held in the Rockingham Road Methodist Hall on Thursday 29th January at 8.00pm.

At this first rehearsal the choir membership had grown to 30 singers. The first committee meeting was held on Tuesday 30th March in the lounge at the Strathclyde Hotel with the following members being elected to serve on the committee; Choirmaster; David Fleetwood-Morris, Secretary; Rowland Lovell, Accompanist; Bill Munro, Treasurer; Glyn Jones, 1st Tenor Rep; Tom Love, 2nd Tenor Rep; Eddie Fremantle, 1st Bass Rep; Alf Taylor and 2nd Bass Rep & Choir Marshall; Stan Rowlands.

The choir, now with 37 choristers, performed its first concert on Sunday 20th June 1976 at 6.30pm to a capacity audience in Rockingham Road Methodist Church by taking part in the evening service.

The choir sang 6 pieces from its music repertoire, namely; We are climbing Jacob's Ladder (No;3); Go Down Moses (No;4); Soldier's Farewell (No;10); The Old Woman (No;8); Were You There (No;13) and Handel's Largo (No;12) interspersed with the Congregational hymns.

Excluding the above concert, the choir performed 12 more concerts in the remainder of 1976 in the following venues; Corby Conservative Club; St Andrews Church of Scotland; Thrapston Methodist Church; St Andrews Church Hall (Harvest Supper); O.A.P's Corby Community Centre; Weldon Parish Church; St Ninian's Church of Scotland; Cottingham Methodist Church; Rothwell United Reformed Church; St Johns Parish Church Corby; Rockingham Road Methodist Church (Carol Service); and Corby Golf Club.

By the end of 1976, the music repertoire numbered 28 pieces and the choir membership had grown to 46.

People to whom we were grateful in 1976 our first year, were Mr 'Fleet' Morris, 'Rowley' Lovell, Beryl Goodman (Accompanist), Terry Sheen (Soloist), Vera Moore (Guest Soloist) and last but not least 'The Choir Committee'.

Remembered and recorded on the 6th of September 2015 by Tom Love (CMVC Founder Member)