

June 2007



an extract from "In Tune"

The Quarterly Newsletter from the Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir

Morris Motors Band – by Glyn Newlands

Sixty years ago I left my 'Little Welsh Home' to join the Morris Motors Band, at the invitation of Harry Mortimer O.B.E., the world famous Brass Band personality.

Morris Motors band from Cowley, Oxford was formed in 1924 and its first Vice President was the late Viscount Nuffield. Harry Mortimer O.B.E. was musical director from 1945.



The Band made over 500 broadcasts, appeared on television and made numerous records. They had the honour of being Southern Area Champions 17 times, West of England Champions in 1960, Regional Champions, Bristol 1970, Wills National Champions 1970 and prize winners on 5 occasions at the British Open Championships at Belle Vue, Manchester. They undertook many concert tours abroad to destinations including Canada, The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Northern Ireland.

The Band was proud to be one of the original Men O' Brass team founded by Harry Mortimer. They appeared on BBC TV's World of Music program under the direction of Harry Mortimer and produced by Yvonne Littlewood.



The Brass Quartet and Solo Championships of Great Britain, one of the major events in the British Brass Band calendar, were promoted by the band.

The band had an extensive repertoire and possessed one of the finest music libraries in the country.

The band appeared at the Royal Albert Hall on 27 occasions including contests and were conducted by many famous conductors including Sir Arthur Bliss, Sir Malcolm Sargent and Imogen Holst.

We were always in demand and had to travel extensively, mostly at weekends. The Company built two coaches for the Band. I remember travelling to a live broadcast from Cheltenham when our coach caught fire – there was bags of panic to get all the instruments and kit off. A private coach came to the rescue, but we were late for rehearsal with the BBC Concert Orchestra who were not very pleased!

Over the years they played at concerts which included Male Voice Choirs: Morriston Orpheus, Rolls Royce with Owen Brannigan , Hanley MVC, Sheffield MVC, Dyffryn Tywi, Pontardulais and Rossendale MVC.

The Band's first broadcast took place on Monday April 18th 1927, for a fee of 10 guineas £10.10.0. After paying for the coach to London they made a loss of 5 shillings. It states in the minutes, that I have in my possession, that as the Band had made a loss they should not accept any more invitations from the BBC!

Looking back over my 34 years with the band all these achievements were due to practice, practice and more practice, hence we had such a good name in the world of brass. I retired because of ill health but, unable to leave music, I became a member of the Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir, which I enjoyed for further 25 years - top tenor of course!

My good wishes to you all, Glyn Newlands

KING'S HALL - DERBY

General Manager: N. G. Rushton

SUNDAY, 25th OCTOBER, 1970

at 7-30 p.m.

HARRY MORTIMER O.B.E.

Presents and Conducts

'MEN O' BRASS'

THE COMBINED BANDS OF

FAIREY (Kenneth Dennison) FODENS (Rex Mortimer) MORRIS (Cliff Edmunds)

THE ROLLS ROYCE MALE VOICE CHOIR
(Conductor — MAVIS WIBBERLY)

OWEN BRANNIGAN
(Bass)

PRESENTED BY
DERBY CORPORATION ENTERTAINMENTS

Programme - - Sixpence