

History of K Shoes Male Voice Choir Kendal



We evolved from Netherfield Choir, a mixed voice works choir of K Shoemakers Ltd. The Somervell family, owners of the company, founded the choir in 1929 to raise monies for the local hospital.

They had a long association with it, from John the founder through his son Arthur (later Sir), then his twin sons Hubert (in the 1930s) and Ronald (1940s) as conductors.

After World War II, as Netherfield Male Voice Choir, most of their efforts went into competing in the biennial Mary Wakefield festival.

Opening the membership to non-employees in 1969 attracted singers from a much wider area, the name K Shoes Male Voice Choir was adopted and our current President Mary Powney became Musical Director.

The success of Mary's leadership in conjunction with accompanist Colin Tolson, was reflected at music festivals, in broadcasts on local and national radio and television and on several commercial recordings.



Martin Webster took over in 2001 on her retirement. He had ten years experience with Welwyn Garden City Male Voice Choir between 1983 and 1993, initially as singer, then accompanist and finally as conductor. While living in Hertfordshire he combined working life (his last post before retiring to Cumbria was as head at Haslewood School, Hoddesdon) with a wide range of conducting or accompanying roles, including school choirs, church organist and choirs and Hertfordshire Gilbert and Sullivan Society.

Participation in festivals involved travel, but in addition trips to Kendal twin towns Rinteln, Germany and Killarney, Eire have been made as well as to Holland. Tours in the UK to sing with other choirs have added to the variety of life.

Within the last ten years we have been honoured to sing at the funeral service of Donald Campbell in Coniston (2002) and to take part in a charity concert for Derian House Children's Hospice. Three other choirs accepted our invitation to sing with us at our 40th anniversary concert on 13 June 2009.

There was a small, but significant name change in 2011, when 'Kendal' was appended to more clearly identify the choir with the town of its origin.



In July 2011 a new chapter in our history began when Ian Allan took over as Musical Director.

The extent of his training and experience acquired during a twenty three year career in the British Army has meant we have acquired someone to challenge the members, and keep their enthusiasm at the usual very high level.