

Choir 2000 Choral Day, 2016:

Ralph Woodward conducting John Rutter's 'Magnificat' with Eleanor Cramer (Soprano) and David Warham (accompanist)



Since the Choir 2000's beginnings, we have run Choral Day events at least once a year; these days provide a chance for singers to learn a new choral piece and, in some cases, reinforce what they might be studying in their own choirs.

This year, around 80 people turned out for our Choral Day at Histon's Baptist Church on Saturday 11th June, led by Ralph Woodward. This year's piece was the beautiful '*Magnificat*', composed by John Rutter around 1990. It is a piece with exciting contrasts between movements, some featuring exuberant latin dance rhythms and others beautifully calm and serene.

Ralph Woodward, a talented freelance conductor and keyboard player who leads one of Cambridge's leading chamber choirs, the Fairhaven Singers, led the day's event. Ralph is a hugely energetic and charismatic conductor who extracted energy, confidence and laughs from the chorus, pleading with us to sing loudly and not worry about wrong notes – 'just sing something, then there is something to work with!' ...which sounds like good sense but it's hard to sing the wrong notes confidently! (Even with the

promise of chocolate buttons as reward to the individual who sang the 'most joyously wrong' note)

The morning sing-through was accompanied by regular Choir 2000 accompanist, David Warham who also played the organ part with the orchestra in the afternoon. A tiring day for both Ralph and David!

A small orchestra joined us over lunch to have their rehearsal and it was lovely to join the hurriedly-learned choral parts with the music, which brought life to the piece. Whilst it was

small 'band', the piece demands a harp, organ, timps and percussion as well as woodwind and string sections. Again we are fortunate in having Peter Britton as our Musical Director who seems to know every musician in Cambridge and can rally an orchestra for days such as these.



The *Magnificat* also features a soprano soloist, and one of Ralph's contacts, Eleanor Cramer was superb in that role and a new name for Choir 2000.



However, the choral days are not all about hard work. Whilst the pace was fast and sometimes demanding (it was helpful to have done it before!) they are also a great deal of fun. There is a hog roast provided by local supplier or attendees bring their own picnic lunches. The weather held out for us on Saturday and lunch was held outside on the grass at the Baptist Church. It is also a chance to see singers again from other choirs but who join us for the day each year.



We are fortunate to have so many talented conductors and musicians nearby and singers come not just from Cambridgeshire but also further afield, thanks to the advertising of neighbouring choral societies.

Days such as these could not happen without the input and help from a large number of choir members and their relations. Thanks must go to Douglas de Lacey, our Chairman and MC; to Beatrix Bown and the Choir Committee for deciding on the programme and engaging the conductors; to the librarians Ann Scott and Lesley Turney who order, collect, number and return the scores; to various choir members; to enrolled people on the door; to Mary Easy and her refreshment-providers for providing tea throughout the day and to Jerry Walton for being car park monitor. Without the support of all these people, these days would just not be possible.

Next year when we'll be singing Mozart's 'Coronation Mass' under the tuition of Ghislaine Morgan. Put Saturday 20th May in your diaries!