

HALE ST MARY'S CANTATE TOUR TO THE UK - July 2009



The 2009 Music Tour took the Hale St Mary's Cantate to England in July. The choir had the opportunity to sing concerts and choral evensongs in Lincoln Cathedral, Eagle Parish Church, York Minster, Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, Westminster Abbey and St George's Chapel, Windsor, together with an outdoor performance at the Tower of London. In between rehearsals and gigs, students had the opportunity to take in other cultural offerings, including attending West End Theatres, dinner at the Hard Rock Café in Park Lane, London, a tour of Magdalen College, Oxford, visiting the ancient and historic Wheatley Manor, various ghost tours and tours of the magnificent buildings we sang in. At Wheatley Manor, we were guests of friends of the Bannan family (Gregory Bannan, Music Scholar Year 10 was on tour), where we met with Eric Clarke, Professor of Music at Oxford University. Eric's father is John Clarke – also in attendance at Wheatley – brother of the late Stuart Clarke, who instigated the Clarke Choral Cup, one of the prizes on offer at the Garland Music Competition. John was proudly wearing his old

Haleian tie and we cut some celebration cake, whilst serenaded by the barbershop boys! John also met the current holder of the Clarke Choral Cup, George Ashforth.

As tour 'organiser' I was delighted with the standard of our singing in a country where choral music and singing is a significant part of the culture. Indeed, one of the highlights for me was the Dean of Westminster congratulating Cantate on their 'fine singing' at Westminster Abbey. He was so impressed that he even allowed us to have our photograph taken in front of the high altar in the Abbey: a precious and unique photograph for us all to treasure!

Tours such as these cannot go ahead without the support of the parents, hard work of students or the willingness of colleagues to give up their vacation time. I am grateful to all of you for all that you did to make the tour such a success, particularly my colleagues at St Mary's and Hale; Lynette Taylor, Emma Petrie, Martin Taylor, Su-Lyn Chong and our tour organist, Simon Lawford.

As always, may music continue to be a source of joy, hope and inspiration in all of your lives.

Andrew Bushell
Director of Music