



MUSIC APPEAL



The Choral Foundation



Patron: Ed Sheeran MBE





Welcome!

The sublime sound of a church choir at Evensong is one of the timeless cultural and religious treasures of the Anglican church.

At great national events, in the spectacular surroundings of St Paul's Cathedral or Westminster Abbey, the experience of hearing a well-trained choir can be spine-tingling and unforgettable.

Being a member of a choir is a truly formative experience and, for young choristers, it can offer life-changing opportunities, as our world-renowned Patron Ed Sheeran can verify.

The Choral Foundation for St Mary-le-Tower in Ipswich is an independent charity that enables choral scholars to receive professional singing lessons and aims to increase the number of young people who can benefit from such training.

On these pages we tell you about the high standards achieved by the choir of St Mary-le-Tower, the opportunities it has created for them, and our ambitious programme for bringing those benefits to schools and other institutions across Ipswich.

The Trustees of the Choral Foundation

We are proud to have the hugely successful Ed Sheeran as our patron. Brought up in Suffolk, Ed sang in a local church choir from the age of four and is a firm believer in the opportunities singing can bring.

The Choral Foundation for St Mary-le-Tower is an independent charity formed in 2013. Its trustees include internationally-known conductor and composer Ben Parry as well as other professional people in music, the law, accountancy and community work.

We have recently set up an investment sub-committee of financial experts to safeguard our legacies and to ensure the best possible return on our income.

Every year, the Foundation supports Choral Scholarships and the services of a singing coach. It also funds soloists' fees for special events and aims to provide funding for the commissioning of new music, and bursaries towards touring costs. Sheet music, robes and exam fees must be added to the list, along with the salaries of the professional Director of Music and the Organist.

The Foundation needs to raise £500,000 to develop and promote choral music at St Mary-le-Tower and for an exciting outreach programme to benefit schools across Ipswich.

The choir gives frequent concert performances including Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* and our annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* which brings in a valuable source of income for the Foundation. We have also received generous grants from the Ouseley Trust and the Friends of Cathedral Music.

Belonging to a choir can be transformational and we believe it is an opportunity that should be available to everyone. That's why we are spearheading a singing outreach programme which will benefit the wider Ipswich community.

Our targets are ambitious but we believe them to be achievable with your help.

'As a former chorister myself, I appreciate the benefits singing brings to young people'

Ed Sheeran



Our patron Ed Sheeran

Ed Sheeran is one of the world's best-selling musical artists and has won multiple awards. He sang in a choir from the age of four and is in no doubt about its benefits.

"I am thrilled to be asked to be Patron. As a former chorister myself, I appreciate the benefits singing brings to young people, both physically and emotionally. Singing teaches you lots of skills and provides many opportunities that will help, enrich and sustain you throughout life. There is nothing equal to the joy of performing wonderful music with other, like-minded people."

Born in Halifax in 1991, Ed moved to Framlingham as a child and attended Brandeston Hall and Thomas Mills High School. He has worked with a range of charities and has a close connection with East Anglia's Children's Hospices which he backs as an ambassador. In 2015, Ed received an honorary doctorate from the University of Suffolk for his outstanding contribution to music and received an MBE in 2017 for his services to music and charity.

'Being in the choir is enormous fun. We get to sing some amazing music, sometimes in French, German or Latin. As well as all the singing, I have really enjoyed meeting new people and making some great friends.'

Chorister Chloe Beeston

Lifetime chances

Young soprano Taylor London was a Senior Music Scholar at St Mary-le-Tower. While at the Royal Hospital School near Ipswich, she gained a vocal diploma and worked to become Head Chorister of the Chapel Choir, Head Soprano of the Chamber Choir and ran her own upper voices a Cappella (without instrumentation) group. She is now building her repertoire and studying with Lynne Dawson at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.



In 2016, Jonathan Hanley was awarded a place on the prestigious Genesis Sixteen young singers programme and is now embarking on a professional career singing with The Sixteen and other world-class ensembles. He says being a chorister and choral scholar at St Mary-le-Tower hugely influenced his life chances and choices. "The whole educational experience helped me develop interpersonal, organisational and presentational skills. I have found these essential in my music career so far and indeed in many other aspects of life."



Nick Freestone became a choir member in 2006. He went on to hold organ scholarships at Tewkesbury Abbey, Worcester College, Oxford, Wells Cathedral, St Albans Cathedral and St Paul's Cathedral where he accompanied the world-famous choir on one of the finest organs in the world. Nick is now Assistant Organist and Assistant Director of Music at Worcester Cathedral. "I've no doubt it was the education I received at the Tower that set me on my way as a professional church musician."



The Choir at St Mary-le-Tower



The choir has three sections: boys, girls and adults from a range of backgrounds. Choristers are girls and boys aged 6-12 and, at ages 13-18, they become choral scholars and receive increased bursaries and singing lessons funded by the Ouseley Trust and the Choral Foundation. The church offers a broad musical and cultural education for everyone and the choir offers musical teaching few schools in Ipswich can match. Appearing on BBC's Songs of Praise, recording CDs, giving world premieres, concert performances and singing on local radio are all part of the experience of being a choral scholar at St Mary-le-Tower.

The choir tours regularly and venues include Edinburgh, Durham, Paris and the US as well as recent visits to sing in the Chapel Royal at Hampton Court Palace and Merton College Oxford. Anyone can become a chorister, as long as they are keen to sing, able to recall notes and short melodies on the piano, able to read to a sufficient standard and to commit to a busy but rewarding schedule. All choristers receive first-class training in vocal technique, aural skills and music theory. We're proud to have produced so many successful musicians, paving the way for choral and organ scholarships at top universities.

Choral tradition

St Mary-le-Tower is the Civic Church for the town of Ipswich and has long been part of a great tradition for choral singing.

The choir has led worship for many decades with young people playing a key part. They sing six services a week: Matins, Eucharist and Evensong on a Sunday, Evensong on Mondays and Tuesdays, and Choral Compline on a Friday. At Sunday services the boys, girls or (adult) sopranos are joined by the male choral scholars singing the alto, tenor and bass parts. For major festivals and other events, such as the County Justice Service, the choir joins forces with the Cathedral choir.

Choristers come from all backgrounds and 70% are from state schools. The experience will enrich lives for years to come and, for some, it will lead to a career in the music profession.

The Choral Foundation is committed to sharing these benefits with the wider Ipswich community and works in partnership with the Director of Music on the Outreach programme.

One boy chorister reached such a high standard he was accepted into the choir of King's College Cambridge, perhaps the most famous choir in the world.



The Director of Music

Christopher Borrett was appointed Director of Music at St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich in 2015. In this time the choir has appeared on BBC 1's Songs of Praise and BBC Radio Suffolk, made recordings and has premiered works by Classic FM presenter John Brunning and Ben Parry.

After school, Christopher continued his musical education at New College, Oxford, where he was a choral scholar. As an undergraduate he was conductor of Oxford New Orchestra and New Chamber Opera.

Christopher has performed with many of the UK's leading ensembles. Most notably, for eight years he was a permanent member of the Monteverdi Choir which was voted "the best choir in the world." (Gramophone Magazine, 2011). Alongside his varied musical career as a singer and conductor, Christopher is also a published composer with Novello.



The Organist

Organist William Baldry was a chorister, and later organ scholar at St Mary-le-Tower. He held a gap-year organ scholarship at Rochester Cathedral and King's School, Rochester before studying for a degree in music at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he also held an organ scholarship.

He accompanied the Choir of Royal Holloway in many English cathedrals and on tours to the US and Belgium. Before returning to St Mary-le-Tower, William was the Organist in Residence at Dean Close School, Cheltenham, and Organ Scholar at Tewkesbury Abbey. At the school, he accompanied the Chamber Choir on their CD, 'A New Heaven'.

Being a chorister is a wonderful start for any young musician and an experience they will treasure for the rest of their lives.

Our outreach programme aims to ensure this experience is available to those in the wider Ipswich community from schools and music groups to charities and care centres.

The Director of Music of St Mary-le-Tower already visits primary schools and some pupils have the chance to perform at the town's civic church. This enables them to aspire to ideals they may previously have thought beyond them.

Our musicians now have an exciting and innovative programme that seeks to educate, encourage and inspire children and young people across Ipswich through music and the arts. The aim is to engage with as many Ipswich schools as possible, irrespective of their religious affiliation or none. The hope is that music can flourish where it may have been sidelined due to the pressure of improving outcomes in other subjects.

Children will learn the basics of breathing, projecting the voice, communicating the words, performing in public and, most of all, to enjoy making music. All those skills are transferable to other aspects of their

education and social life.

There is also an annual Celebration Open Day bringing all the schools together to sing and perform with the choir of St Mary-le-Tower. We strongly endorse our Patron Ed Sheeran in his support for East Anglia's Children's Hospices and our aim is to foster closer links with the hospices as well as with day and residential care centres where music can contribute so much to wellbeing.

Our outreach goals also extend to offering practical support for charities promoting literacy, numeracy classes, mutual understanding and rehabilitation – all highly relevant to the complex and changing population of Ipswich.

Work is now in progress to refurbish a dedicated song school at 17 Tower Street, opposite the church, which will provide much-needed teaching and rehearsal rooms as well as leisure facilities. When funding is secured to complete the project, this space will be of huge benefit to the wider singing community.

Our target is £500,000, not only to safeguard the future of the choir but to ensure the huge benefits of professional musical training bring hope and aspiration to people of all ages.

'We are spearheading an exciting new singing outreach programme'



How you can help

- Becoming a Member of the Foundation for £50 a year will entitle you to discounted tickets to certain concerts.
- Corporate membership for a minimum of £200 a year will entitle you to discounted advertising rates and ticket prices for certain concerts.
- If you would like to set up a regular donation via direct debit, leave a legacy gift or are involved with a Charitable Trust that would like to contribute, please contact Philip Shaw, Chairman of the Trustees at philipshaw@btinternet.com
- You can make a simple one-off donation online via our website www.choralfoundationipswich.org.uk or by calling 01473 225610.
- Even small amounts, for example from events such as a sponsored singathon or coffee morning, can make a difference.



'Whether we're listeners or performers, we know, we feel,

we believe deeply that music is not mere entertainment but one of the most powerful forces for good that we have.

'It makes us smile, it makes us weep, it brings us closer to each other. We live in a world that all too often seems dominated by division.

'In times like these, music inspires, consoles, heals and gives hope. It has the power to unite us in beauty and in spiritual strength.'

**Conductor
Sir Andrew Davis**



'Singing teaches you lots of skills and provides many opportunities which will help, enrich and sustain you throughout life. There is nothing equal to the joy of performing wonderful music with other like-minded people.'

Ed Sheeran

The Choral Foundation
PO Box 125
8 High Street
Ipswich IP1 3JX
Charity number: 1157955

www.choralfoundationipswich.org.uk

Twitter: @Chorallpswich

Email: philipshaw@btinternet.com
(Chairman of the Trustees)

Design: realworkstudio.com