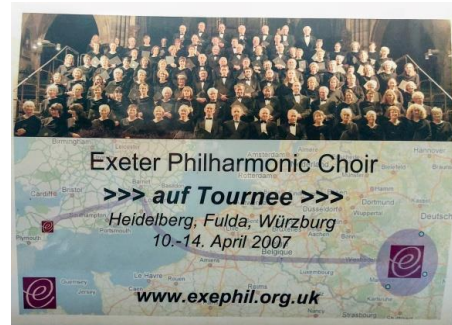


As well as performing our annual programme of concerts in Exeter Cathedral and beyond, EPC occasionally goes on tour at home and abroad. We performed in Spain in 1998, with concerts in Madrid and Salamanca. We toured in Germany in 2007, performing in Heidelberg, Fulda and Würzburg. In 2012, we took part in a concert on the Isle of Wight to commemorate the Polish defence of Cowes and East

Cowes in 1942. Sadly the Covid pandemic meant our 2020 tour to Poland had to be cancelled, but we have plans to go to Spain in September 2024 to perform in Salamanca and Zamora Cathedrals.



CHORAL PILGRIMAGES

Stuart Mole explains the thinking behind our choral pilgrimages:

The idea of an EPC choral pilgrimage arose in the aftermath of the global pandemic.



Following lockdown, loss and isolation, many felt the need to reconnect. In our case, it was important to talk and sing again with others; to rediscover our landscape, our history and our sense of place; to reaffirm our identity; and to ask questions about what the crisis has meant for us, and for our world. In the process, we may touch on the spiritual, whether we are religious or not, inspired by the historic pilgrimage routes we travel or the ancient sites we pass but in particular by the music we sing together as a 'Pilgrims' Chorus' during the journey.

Taking a pilgrimage route

In 2021, our first pilgrimage took the Pilgrims' Chorus along the St Michael's Way in Cornwall – the English stage of the *camino* to Santiago de Compostela – to an unforgettable finale in the chapel of St Michael's Mount. In 2022, we travelled from Crediton to Exeter Cathedral along the St Boniface Way, mirroring a journey Devon's patron saint would have made during his religious training and before his ministry and martyrdom in central Europe in 754. Summer 2023 saw the pilgrims celebrate the memory of St Ethelbert, walking through the Welsh Marches from Leominster to Hereford Cathedral, where they performed their final concert by his shrine.



Songs of the Soul

Stephen Tanner, our associate director of music, leads the Pilgrims' Chorus. As he says, a pilgrimage is a journey. Each year he has chosen a programme that creates a



musical journey, from sacred music of the last 400 years to folk music and African-American Spirituals. Singing in the Pilgrims' Chorus gives EPC members a chance not only to explore a different repertoire from our usual big choral works but also to perform *a capella*. Some 40 singers have taken part in each pilgrimage.