

## Choral society success

On being told by a colleague who plays the trumpet for the Exeter Symphony Orchestra that they were performing the *Messiah* in Exmouth, I was enthused, not only by the prospect of hearing such a great work, but also by the fact that the venue was Holy Trinity Church, a landmark in Exmouth that I have never visited.

Although I am not an expert on classical or choral music, I am one of those who likes what she hears, but doesn't necessarily know the composer or the name of the piece – although most people have heard of the *Messiah*. On mentioning this to my mother, I was amazed to hear that, at the tender age of 18, she was a church chorister who had sung the *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall in 1949. Thus my decision to attend was made even easier and tickets (and mother) were reserved for the performance.

On arrival at the Holy Trinity Church there was an impressive turnout. The church was lovely and a more suitable venue would be hard to find on an early spring evening. There was a lovely sense of anticipation and excitement in the audience, and this was to be justified by the colour and enthusiasm of the performance. The performance itself began as it finished – brilliantly. The choristers were in fine voice and the soloists (Bronte Barber, Rowena Caine, Bethany Partridge, Harriet Gibson, Alice Hodgkinson, Michael Gormley and Julian Rippon) were exceptional, not least because all girl soloists were still at school. The orchestra was in fine form, led by Gillian Crew, with a good balance and warm responsive playing: *The Trumpet Shall Sound* was beautifully played by James Meredith: the choir gave exciting and varied vocal colour and, of course, the *Hallelujah Chorus* was sung with great enthusiasm – or as I would put it, they gave it some welly! It struck me that I could have been at home watching *Britain's Got Talent*, but then it occurred to me that I was actually watching true talent in real life where real effort and work were rewarded by a great result. Brian Northcott (conductor/musical director), who has decided to retire, gave a lovely speech and was warmly thanked by the choir for 27 years sterling service to great applause from the audience and musicians.

A fine performance all round and, from the buzz of the audience as we left, we weren't alone in thinking so. I am really looking forward to attending the next Exmouth Choral Society Concert.

**Jeanette Newman.**