

After successful trips in previous years to Spain and more recently to Italy, August 2010 saw the Summertown Singers make their first collective visit to France. A very enjoyable week of singing and sightseeing in and around the small town of Saint-Gengoux-le-National, in Saône-et-Loire in southern Burgundy, culminated in a concert performed to an appreciative capacity crowd at the Romanesque church of St Martin in the village of Chapaize.

The week got off to a good start with the group assembling in a local restaurant for a dinner of traditional Burgundian fare: coq au vin, frogs' legs (for the more culinarily adventurous!) and, naturally, a glass or two of the local wine. The following morning, our schedule of twice-daily rehearsals got underway in the striking venue of the small theatre (complete with red velvet-covered cinema-style seating!) attached to the *chambre d'hôte* Les Tilleuls.

As usual, our concert programme was divided equally between sacred and secular music, all in the *a cappella* style. The core of our sacred repertoire was Tomás Luis de Victoria's *Missa O Magnum Mysterium*, which was complemented by works by Maurice Duruflé and William Byrd. The secular half of the programme also included works by both French and English composers, and covered a range of five centuries, from madrigals through Victorian part-songs to barbershop quartet! In addition to the final evening's concert in Chapaize, the group was also pleased to be invited to give a short afternoon performance for the de Murard family and their guests at the Chateau de Bresse-sur-Grosne.

Two or three hours' singing every day still left plenty of time to explore the beautiful Burgundy countryside, visit historic towns such as Cluny and Tournus, or simply take it easy and do some holiday reading. The trip finished with a post-concert party at which we raised a toast to a week of good music and good company, and began to look forward to next year's travels.