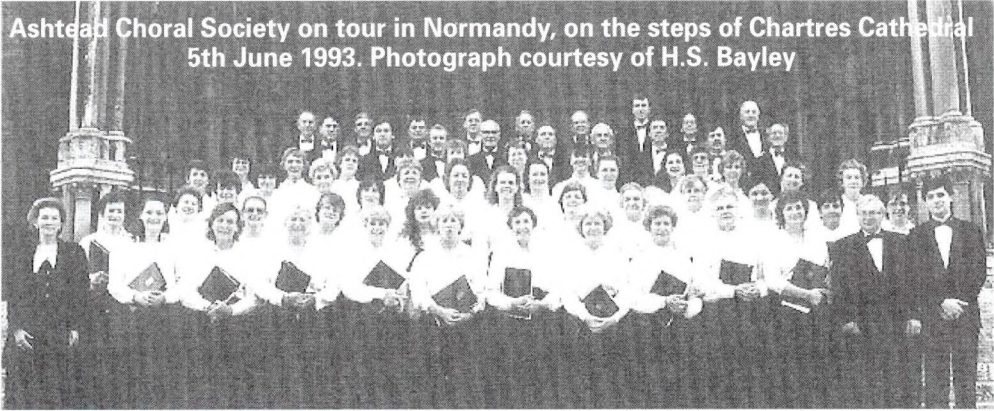


# POTTED HISTORIES

FROM THE LEATHERHEAD & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## ASHTEAD CHORAL SOCIETY

Ashtead Choral Society on tour in Normandy, on the steps of Chartres Cathedral  
5th June 1993. Photograph courtesy of H.S. Bayley



The existence of the Choral Society in Ashtead was due to the enterprise of George Pizzey, the initiator and founder, who came to live in Ashtead in 1944. When he formed the Society, he had been a professional singer, chorister and soloist for some 25 years, during which time he had sung with the foremost conductors of the day and with choirs of all ranges of ability. He had been a member of the Westminster Abbey choir from 1941 to 1946. With his considerable experience, he was keen to establish a choir of his own.

In September 1949, encouraged by the response to an Easter performance in St. George's Church, he called and chaired the public meeting at the Peace Memorial Hall, at which it was resolved to found the Society. Leslie Woodgate, the BBC Chorus Master, agreed to be the first president. The first two concerts were given at the Peace Memorial Hall: in April 1950, Coleridge Taylor's *Hiawatha*,

and in April 1951, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

The Peace Memorial Hall soon proved to be too small, and the production in December 1951 of *The Messiah* was given at the Crescent Cinema, Leatherhead. Concerts continued there until 1967 when it was demolished to make way for the Thorndike Theatre. The Society in 1968 performed at the Dorking Halls, and from then on, it made the Dorking Halls its 'home'.

In 1974, it celebrated its Silver Jubilee. George Pizzey decided to stand down and the baton was handed to Arthur Diamond. In May 1987, it made its first appearance abroad with two concerts in Paris. George Pizzey died in 1990, aged 92.

Why not visit the website for current activities?

[www.ashteadchoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.ashteadchoralsociety.org.uk)

*Goff Powell - extracted from L&DLHS publication 'A History of Ashtead', 1995.*

For information regarding membership, lectures and museum opening hours, contact:

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