

Richard Brown

For orchestra, choir and percussion in four movements, with words by Charles Kingsley

Hereward

The Norman Conquest of England brought about one of the most fundamental changes of kingship this country has ever seen. In the aftermath of this military conquest, pockets of resistance to the invaders sprang up in different parts of the country and Hereward the Wake is celebrated as the leader of resistance from Ely. Despite Hereward's fame, remarkably little information survives about him, save material in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and various descriptions in the Domesday Book. But he clearly embodied many of the qualities admired by those who espoused anti-Norman ideals, for heroic traditions grew around his name and eventually resulted in the writing of a text devoted to his deeds, the early twelfth-century *Gesta Herewardi*.

The *Gesta* is a mixture of myth and possible truth. There's the heroic killing of a huge magic bear and the rescue of a Cornish princess from an unwanted marriage. There's also the more convincing story of his return from exile in Scandinavia to avenge the slaying of his brother by the Normans. Leading the final resistance to William the Conqueror, he supposedly sheltered the last Anglo-Saxon claimant to the throne. Holed up in Ely, protected by the swampy Fens, his band held off the Norman army led by William, luring them in battle onto a causeway which was then set on fire so the soldiers perished in the water. But eventually, or so the story goes, the monks of the Cathedral tired of the situation and revealed a pathway to the besiegers. Hereward and his men slipped away into the mists of time, though one legend claims that he later became a friend and adviser to William in a spirit of reconciliation and respect.

No 1. *Mystery of the Fens*

This movement celebrates the beauty of the Fens of Cambridgeshire - the 'boundless expanse and freedom', the sunsets and sunrises, the frost on the reeds. Hereward used their mysterious swamps and paths to stay safe from Norman attack. The choir sings of Hereward the hero, 'warrior and brave defender, fighting for his father's lands, striving to avenge his brother...' And they tell of his exploits, saving a child when he slew the fierce Witch-Bear and now 'Guardian of the Saxon heir.

No 2. *Battle*

Percussion and the sound of weapons join the orchestra, as Hereward fights to keep the Norman army from the Saxon stronghold on the Isle of Ely. "Ut, ut, ut", shout the defenders as their Anglo-Saxon battle cry, and Hereward wields his mighty sword, Brainbiter. "From Lincoln to Ely he fought for the free!"



Picture from <http://www.englishandancienthistory.com>



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As the local community orchestra, Ely Sinfonia aims to give players the chance of orchestral experience close to home, to provide local schoolchildren with the opportunity to learn about music and instruments, and to bring a wealth of wonderful music to local music-lovers.

Your subscription will go towards developing the orchestra, allowing it to give more concerts in Ely and to take live music out to rural East Cambridgeshire and beyond. Our Friends help us to perform in local venues and to run workshops during which young players have the chance to play alongside more experienced musicians and learn new, challenging pieces.

For more information about becoming a Friend, please ask for details and a membership form at the Friends' stall or email friends@elysinfonia.co.uk.

Ely Cathedral Choir

Ely Cathedral choir has been part of the English choral tradition since the mid 16th century and, in terms of monastic heritage, its history can be traced back considerably further, to the time of King Canute.

Many of England's finest musicians started life as Cathedral choristers. This is no surprise because professionalism is the hallmark of a cathedral choir. Today the Choir consists of some 22 boy choristers and six adult lay clerks, augmented on Sundays and Feast Days by additional singers and sometimes instrumentalists.

Alongside daily rehearsals and schedules, there is a demanding schedule of concerts, broadcasts and recordings.

The team is headed by the organist and director of music, Paul Trepte, and his assistant Edmund Aldhouse. Former organists have included musicians of high repute such as Christopher Tye, Robert White, Basil Harwood, Tertius Noble and Arthur Willis.

Under the direction of Paul Trepte, Ely Cathedral Choir is much in demand for radio and television broadcasts, recordings, concerts and tours.

There are a few remaining vacancies for boys aged 8+ in the cathedral choir. We are on the look out for bright, intelligent boys who show musical potential and who clearly love to sing. Formal voice training is not a pre-requisite. The voice trial procedure consists of singing performance (a simple hymn tune will do, but more complicated choices are frequently offered), voice checks, ear tests and reading/academic tests.

Further information on voice trials and King's Ely Junior may be obtained from King's Ely Junior, Ely, CB7 4DB Tel 01353 660732 Fax 01353 665281
Email: admissions@kingsely.org

The Ely Imps

The Ely Imps are children aged 7 to 13 from the local area. Since their debut performance in the Cathedral in May 2006, they have participated in key services and performed alongside high profile musicians and artists including Aled Jones, The Mediaeval Baebes and John Rutter. The Ely Imps also regularly support the Ely Cathedral Choristers at concerts in the Cathedral including appearances in the annual Christmas Charity Carol Concert.

The popularity and profile of The Ely Imps has increased year on year and the emphasis is on singing and having fun. This choir is always looking to increase its membership. Informal auditions are held regularly for anyone who is aged between 7 and 13 and interested in music, singing and performing.

For further information, contact the administrator of The Ely Imps, Anne Mizen, Tel: 01353 664470, Email: a.mizen@elycathedral.org

No. 3 Peace

Though the Saxons under Hereward are not defeated in battle, they lose the war, and the Normans are in total charge of England. It is time to make peace with William and his knights - 'Dona nobis pacem', sing the choir. But the people also remember the dead warriors on both sides. The Latin in this movement comes from *Gesta Herewardii*: 'You beg me for peace, for the men killed in battle. Remember brave warriors that were slaughtered like cattle. Those of us remaining here, for peace we must strive.'

No 4 Celebration

One legend of Hereward says that he was reconciled with William the Conqueror and became his advisor in later years. Perhaps - but in any case, it is time to celebrate peace: "Sing cheerily in the hall, with beards a-wagging all..." Life must go on as best it can, even under foreign rule: "Henceforth to plough and sow, to reap the fields and mow". The counter melody sings of the roe deer leaping, after the tempest wanes: "In our labour and our daring lies good fortune we are sharing". Both tunes come together in triumphal song: "May we ever continue in peace and love and joy!"

Hereward has been commissioned by Linda Fairbrother, High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, as a piece of community music for the county. This is its world première.

The High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire and the music

The office of High Sheriff goes back at least one hundred years before the time of Hereward, when the King of England needed someone in each county to collect his money and administer justice. Nowadays the role is purely voluntary and honorary, but still has a particular emphasis on law and order, and on helping build a better community.

This première of *Hereward* marks the last event of Linda Fairbrother's year of office. She commissioned the music to be something special for Cambridgeshire, which could last beyond her term and be played by musical groups and choirs in years to come. The score is flexibly written, so can be performed in full, as tonight, with a symphony orchestra and SATB choirs; or in simpler form with piano accompaniment. Her idea is that groups who wouldn't normally come together might co-operate: a church choir with a youth orchestra with an ethnic drumming group, for instance. Or a pianist with a secondary school choir with A level music technology students for the battle music... let imagination loose!

Any groups who are interested in performance can contact Cambridgeshire Music or contact Linda on fairbrother.linda@googlemail.com.

