

# Singers now in England

A group of singers from the Peterborough area will be spending the next nine days as the choir-in-residence at Northern Europe's largest gothic cathedral.



**Natasha Regehr**  
TRAVELLING

I am one of the weary altos who stepped off the plane a few hours ago in Manchester and tried to figure out what day of the week it was after being magically transported across the ocean while I slept.

For me the excitement began several years ago when Syd Birrell, artistic director of the Peterborough Singers, stopped halfway through a Wednesday night choir rehearsal and casually asked, "Hey, is anyone here interested in going to sing in England in 2011?" A group from the choir had previously done a similar tour to Winchester, U.K., and now we were heading to England's magnificent York Minster.

I raised my hand, and the shopping began. Raincoat. Walking shoes. Tiny tubes of toothpaste. Zip-lock bags. Suitcase. Laptop. Tickets. Adventure.

Now I've travelled before, but never to England, and never with a choir. I'm usually the one who's at the airport dropping people off or picking them up, and gazing covetously at all of the purposeful people who actually enter airports because they are going somewhere.

So it was exciting to stand in line and see people holding passports that were different from mine.

It was exciting to smile at the baggage check-in guy when he told me my luggage was "cute." It was exciting to be on an airplane surrounded by a team of boisterous adolescent boys from England, stealing one another's hats, high-fiving each other, and sipping cups of tea.

I've always half suspected that England was some sort of carefully contrived myth, initiated in English literature and propagated in British television. But it's true. People really do speak of queues and loos. There really are sheep and goats and hills and dales, it really is cold and rainy, and there really is such a thing as Yorkshire pudding. I know, because I had some tonight with my roast beef dinner, and it was all this happy, hungry foreigner had hoped.

*Natasha Regehr is a member of the Peterborough Singers, and will be sending updates during the choir's stay in York Minster, U.K.*