

Vivace's singing cyclists stop off en route to London

A GROUP of singing cyclists received rapturous applause when they rode into Guildford town centre on Sunday.

Eleven singers from Guildford's Vivace Chorus were nearly at the end of their 200-mile ride from Paris to London, to raise money for the Rainbow Trust children's charity.

Team members chose the route to coincide with their performance of Verdi's *Requiem* in the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday May 18. They wanted to start in Paris as this is where the composer started writing this work.

The choir decided to raise funds for the Rainbow Trust because of its connection with Guildford-based composer Will Todd, who was asked to write a piece for a children's choir for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee

service at St Paul's Cathedral in 2012.

Mr Todd's eight-year-old daughter, Rowan, has a brain tumour and his family has relied on the Rainbow Trust for support with care and treatment.

He said: "The Rainbow Trust has been an amazing support for us. They have started where the hospital stops.

"They provide practical support as well as being a shoulder to cry on. They are amazing and we value their support enormously."

The cyclists arrived at Tunsgate in Guildford on Sunday and they continued into London the following day, completing the route.

James Garrow, 66, chairman of the Vivace Chorus, said: "There were 11 of us who set off on Friday afternoon.

"Will Todd is a great friend of the choir. We have raised nearly £10,000 for them.

"It was worse in anticipation than actually doing it. We weren't blessed with the best weather - we had some beautiful times and some wet times."

Cyclist and choir member Michael Jeffery, 80, of Broad Street Common, added: "The reception was staggering. It was an achievement."

The idea of doing the charity ride came from tenor Owen Gibbons, a keen cyclist and a relatively new member of the choir.

"Not long after I joined, I heard about this fantastic opportunity we were being given to sing at the Royal Albert Hall," he said.

"It's an expensive business for an amateur choir to put on a concert on this



scale and we needed to make as many people as possible aware of it.

"It seemed like the perfect

excuse to do something a bit mad and raise money for a local charity at the same

time."

The team started out from Paris on Friday and arrived at the Royal Albert Hall in London on Monday.



The singing cyclists arrive in Guildford town centre by friends and family, before continuing their journey to London. Also there to greet them was composer Will with his wife, Beth, and daughters Petra and I