

# Singers win high praise at festival

A LOCAL choir, formed less than five years ago, scored a major musical success at the weekend.

Faringdon Singers, with their founder and conductor Michael Perkins of Leamington Drive, took part in the 31st North Berks. Music Festival in Didcot on Saturday.

In class I for women's choirs, they won the Lloyds Bank Trophy with a total of 180 marks out of a possible 200 for their two items.

Of *The Water of Tyne*, arranged by Elizabeth Poston, adjudicator Mr Cyril Cope commented they had taken rather a lot of liberties with the rhythm — but he appreciated enormously the admirable singing throughout. "Quite first class," he added, marking them 89/100.

*Breadbaking* — by Bela Bartok — met with Mr Cope's full approval. "This, too, was out of the top drawer, especially technically," he said. "It was in the virtuoso class! The tricky music had been so well mastered that it sounded fully competent and sparkling." He marked it 91/100.

## COMPARED

In Class M, for mixed choirs of more than 25 voices, Faringdon Singers won the Owen Williams Cup with a total of 182 marks out of 200.

Of *Shenandoah*, arranged in eight parts by James Erb, Mr Cope announced: "Gentlemen, you

compared well with the ladies. And that's saying something. This was such warm and sensitive singing; the overlapping of the ladies' voices, with the male voices supporting chords below, was quite enchanting. Bravo." Marks were 91/100.

An old favourite of the choir, *Among the Leaves so green-o*, arranged by John Byrt, brought further praise. "Excellently done — bravissimo," enthused Mr Cope. "The technical difficulties — and there were plenty — were made light of. The singing sparkled." Another 91/100.

Of the eight choirs taking part, Mr Cope described Faringdon Singers as by far the most accomplished in the festival.

Formed in September 1975, Faringdon Singers now have some 40 members. Twenty-five public concerts have been given in and around Faringdon since their formation and summer concerts for 1980 include a recital in Fernham Priory — a popular annual event for the Sisters there — June 27; a recital at Kempford church the following day; a return visit to Cumnor Parish Church for Evensong and a recital on July 6 and a recital at Burford Parish Church on July 12.

Rehearsals are held each Thursday in the Faringdon United Church Hall, Coxwell Street