



DOUBLE LIFE TEACHER SINGS AT WEMBLEY FOR 15TH TIME

South Manchester Tenor Martin Toal is preparing to sing for the fifteenth time at Wembley.

The St. Ambrose College Head of Modern Foreign Languages leads a double life as a specialist French teacher at the top Hale Barns Catholic grammar school and one of the nation's go to performers for the major sporting occasion.

Next Sunday he will be singing the National Anthem live on BT Sport before the National Football League play off final, but has previously done the honours at five England matches and he says proudly: "To many in the world of sport, I am known as the 'Winning Tenor' as I have sung five times for the England football team with the team winning all five games without conceding a single goal, including at Wembley for what was the team's first ever competitive international at the new stadium."



He added: "It is always an honour to sing at such a wonderful stadium that has been part of my career since its opening back in 2007. The sense of pride I get from singing there is the same as when I first sang there for England."

"It is always exciting, some might think nerve racking, but having stood up in front of a class all my working life, you use that sense of

performance to give your best even though 90,000 eyes and millions on television is I suppose different to 30 lads in a class room at St. Ambrose. Still it works for me."

Martin boasts a proud record of having sung on the pitch at all the major UK stadiums including Twickenham in London, the Principality Stadium in Cardiff, and both Old Trafford and the Etihad stadiums in Manchester. He has even sung for the Queen and Prince Phillip when he performed the national anthem to a backing track at a special royal opening in Lancashire. When meeting the royal highnesses after the event, Martin recalls with fondness encountering the wit of the soon to retire Prince who quipped "Excellent singing old boy but where was the bloody band?"

He has also played on the Wembley pitch in an England v Scotland charity football game alongside celebrities Angus Deayton, Gordon Ramsey and Ralph Little, although Martin did not quite enjoy the success he does when singing, nearly scoring an own goal prompting his son Jonathan to tell Toal to "stick to singing"!

A recent St George's Day performance in London with England Rugby Soprano Laura Wright plus an invitation by ex-England cricket captain Graham Gooch to sing on HMS Victory at the end of the month, along with a return to Wembley stadium shows that Toal has heeded his son's advice.

An active charity worker singing around the region at many high profile fundraisers, Martin recently released *Passione*, an album of favourite sporting anthems. He has also worked with local primary schools offering Opera Workshops to develop their choral skills and demonstrate both vocal and recording techniques.

He concluded: "I love working with young people and I love singing, so what could be better than my double life."